European Commission

Thematic Fiche:
Inclusion of young refugees and migrants through education

ET 2020 Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education

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edited by Barry van Driel

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Introduction

The Thematic Fiche on *Inclusion of young refugees and migrants through education* was produced by the members of the ET 2020 Working Group on Promoting Common Values and Inclusive Education. The Working Group operated within the context of the 2018-2020 Working Group mandate[1] and comprised representatives from Member States and Candidate countries, as well as from relevant EU agencies, stakeholder associations, social partners and international organisations. The Working Group was coordinated by DG EAC of the European Commission, supported by two consultants from Ecorys.[2]

The Thematic Fiche addresses one of the six sub-topics covered under Theme 2 of the Working Group's mandate: 'integrating refugees in education and training systems, as well as tackling the educational disadvantage of learners with a migrant background'.

The first version of the Thematic Fiche was prepared for the Peer Learning Activity (PLA), which took place in Istanbul, Turkey on 23-24 October 2019. The PLA was entitled: *Inclusion of young refugees and migrants through education: access, transitions, values.* The present document, incorporating presentations and discussions in Istanbul and in the subsequent Working Group meeting in Brussels, brings together some of the major insights, findings and discussions pertaining to the *inclusion of* young refugees and migrants through education. Attention is also devoted to education *about* refugees and migrants.

The Fiche further incorporates key messages and practices from the following Peer Learning Activities of the Working Group:

- Inclusion of young refugees and migrants through education: access, transitions, values – Istanbul, 23-24 October 2019
- Integration Policies for Migrants: principles, challenges and practices – Lisbon, 3-4 June 2018 (study visit in cooperation with the European Integration Network)
- Peer Learning Activity on Linguistic and Cultural diversity – Integration of Migrants through Inclusive Education in Schools, Helsinki, 22-23 March
- Intercultural dialogue as a tool to address migration, refugees and asylum seekers in educational contexts – Athens, 8-9 February 2018

In terms of content, the Fiche presents definitions, previous work of the European Commission and other relevant international organisations, key research and impact evidence, as well a brief mention of several (policy and applied) practices presently being implemented across the EU. It takes the form of a 'living' document. Working Group members contributed to the present version of this Fiche by suggesting additional challenges, inspiring practices and key issues.

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/et2020_mandates_2018-2020_final.pdf
[2] Barry van Driel and Vicki Donlevy

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Key definitions

Some key concepts for this Fiche are briefly defined below.

Asylum seekers: Asylum seekers are people who move across borders in search of protection, but who may not fulfil the strict criteria laid down by the 1951 Refugee Convention.[3] Asylum seeker describes someone who has applied for protection as a refugee and is awaiting the determination of his or her status. Refugee is the term used to describe a person who has already been granted protection. Asylum seekers can become refugees if the local immigration or refugee authority deems them as fitting the international definition of a refugee.

Refugee: According to the 1951 Geneva Convention, the term 'refugee' applies to any person who, due to 'a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. In the case of a person who has more than one nationality, the term 'the country of his nationality' shall mean each of the countries of which he is a national, and a person shall not be deemed to be lacking the protection of the country of his nationality if, without any valid reason based on well-founded fear, he has not availed himself of the protection of one of the countries of which he is a national' [Convention of 1951, Article 1A (2)].[4]

Migrant: The definition of a migrant, sometimes referred to as a first-generation migrant, is quite broad. According to the United Nations, a migrant is: an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate[5]. In the *EU/EFTA context*, migrants have been defined as persons who either:

  i.   Establish their usual residence in the territory of an EU/EFTA Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months, having previously been usually resident in another EU/EFTA Member State or a third country; or
  ii. Having previously been usually resident in the territory of the EU/EFTA Member State, cease to have their usual residence in the EU/EFTA Member State for a period that is, or is expected to be, of at least 12 months.

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[3] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/asylum-seeker/
[4] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/refugee/
[5] https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms

May 2020

Second generation and people with a migrant background[6]: 'People with a migrant background' is an umbrella concept which can refer to both immigrants and their children, and includes also asylum seekers and refugees, i.e. anyone with a migration experience, as well as returning migrants. 'Second generation' refers to the children of immigrants, but they are themselves not immigrants, therefore the preferred term of usage is **'second generation (children with foreign-born parents)'**.[7]

Unaccompanied minor: A person less than 18 years old who arrives on the territory of an EU Member State, not accompanied by an adult responsible for the minor, or a minor who is left unaccompanied after having entered the territory of a Member State.[8]

Inclusive education: According to the ET 2020 Policy Framework for Promoting Inclusive Education, 'inclusive education aims to allow learners to achieve their full potential by providing good quality education to all in mainstream settings. Inclusive policies actively seek to support learners at risk of exclusion and underachievement by responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners, including through individualised approaches, targeted support and cooperation with families and local communities.'

Whole school approach[9]**:** In a whole school approach, all members of the school community (school leaders, middle management, teaching and non-teaching staff, learners, parents and families) feel responsible and play an active role in tackling educational disadvantage and preventing drop-out. A whole school approach also implies a cross-sectoral approach and stronger cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders (social services, youth services, outreach care workers, psychologists, nurses, speech and language therapists, guidance specialists, local authorities, NGOs, business, unions, volunteers, etc.) and the community at large, to deal with issues, which schools do not (and cannot) have the relevant expertise for.

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[6] Eurydice speaks of children and young people from migrant backgrounds.
These individuals are defined as newly arrived/first generation, second generation or returning migrant children and young people: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/integrating_students_from_migrant_backgrounds_into_schools_in_europe_national_policies_and_measures.pdf
[7] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/second-generation-migrant_en
[8] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics#Main_countries_of_destination:_Germany.2C_France_and_Greece
[9] https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2014-2015/school/early-leaving-policy_en.pdf

Rationale for action

Recent trends in migration

The issue of migration and refugees has, in recent years, become a highly relevant, sensitive and politicised topic across Europe and beyond. It has powerfully shaped public discourse and has been globally instrumentalised for political agenda-setting, in particular by various nationalist-populist parties that have taken a strong position against immigration into their countries. Their rise has eroded support for traditional political parties. Nevertheless, migration has been a key part of human existence throughout history and it has always led to both societal enrichment and societal tensions. Wars, conflicts, the search for a better life, the need for labour and now also demographic transformation and global climate change have given rise to increasing levels of both traditional and also more novel push and pull factors. Migration also presents itself as a policy issue, both in terms of migration policy relating to the rules and conditions of entry and residence; as well as in terms of integration and inclusion, spanning over several interconnected fields: economic and social policies, health policy, education, youth, culture and sport. The ongoing COVID 19 crisis (as of the publication date of this document) will certainly have policy implications in the future. Already, disrupted migration-related procedures (such as migration processing and support services)[10,11] have exacerbated existing inequalities.[12]

According to the UN, the number of people forcibly displaced from their homes across the globe is presently the highest since World War II.[13] The 2019 edition of the joint OECD, ILO, IOM & UNHCR International Migration and Displacement Trends and Policies Report[14] shows that, by mid-2018, despite an easing of the numbers of refugees entering the EU and Turkey, the global refugee population had reached 25.7 million. This is the highest level recorded to date. G20 countries hosted 7.3 million refugees, approximately 36 per cent of all refugees under UNHCR's mandate. About half resided in Turkey, which continued to be the country hosting the world's largest number of people in need of international protection, according to this report. The number of people needing international protection in Turkey has increased to 3.6 million people, including 3,532,500 Syrians.[15] Although the number of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Europe has decreased since its apex in 2015, numbers have still been significant.[16] According to Eurostat data, a total of 612,700 first-time asylum seekers applied for international protection in the Member States of the EU in 2019, which represented a slight increase compared to the previous year, mainly due to a higher number of applications from Latin-America (Venezuela and Colombia), but was nowhere near the 2015 peak of around 1,3 million applications.[17] Also, In 2019, the European Union of 27 Member States (EU) granted protection status to 295,800 asylum seekers. Compared to 2018 (316,200), the total number of persons granted protection status was down by 6%.[18] There are initial indications that the COVID-19 health crisis has led to a significant decrease in the

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[10] https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-INFO-23-April.pdf

[11] https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/the-coronavirus-pandemic-could-be-devastating-for-the-worlds-refugees/

[12] See e.g. an article in the Economist: https://www.economist.com/international/2020/04/30/closing-schools-for-covid-19-does-lifelong-harm-and-widens-inequality

[13] https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html

[14] https://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/G20-migration-and-displacement-trends-and-policies-report-2019.pdf

[15] Turkey has 44 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants, Sweden 24 per 1,000, Malta (19), Austria (14), and Germany (12)

[16] IOM, the UN Migration Agency, reported, for instance, that 150,982 migrants and refugees entered Europe by sea in 2017 through 1 November, 2017, with about 75 per cent arriving in Italy and the remainder divided between Greece, Cyprus and Spain. This compares with 335,158 arrivals across the region through the same period in 2016.

[17] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/10554400/3-20032020-AP-EN.pdf/6ee052a9-ffb8-d170-e994-9d5107def1a8

[18] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/10774018/3-27042020-AP-EN.pdf/b8a85589-ab49-fdef-c8c0-b06c0f3db5e6

number of first-time asylum seekers in the EU.[19] As mentioned above, asylum procedures across Europe have been severely disrupted due to the COVID 19 crisis.[20]

In 2019, most applications for asylum were from Syria, Afghanistan and Venezuela. The main destinations were Germany, France and Spain. According to the same Eurostat report, 77.33% of first-time asylum seekers in the EU27, in 2019, were under 35 years of age. Those in the age range 18–34 years accounted for slightly less than half (47%) of the total number of applicants, while nearly one third (30.3%) of the total number of first-time applicants were minors aged less than 18 years, so of school age. In the age groups of 14-17 and 18-34, nearly 70% of applicants were men, the proportions slightly equalising in the 35-64 age group at 58%-42%. The Eurostat statistics show that, among the school age group from 14-17 years of age, 72% of first-time applicants were male.[21] In 2018, 19,700 asylum seekers applying for international protection in the Member States of the European Union (EU) were considered to be unaccompanied minors. This was down by more than one third compared with 2017 (31,400).[22]

While recent waves of humanitarian migration have stirred public attention and highlighted the precarious situation of refugees, the majority of foreign nationals migrate to the EU for labour and family reasons.[23] On 1 January 2018, 22.3 million people living in the EU[24] were non-EU citizens, out of a total population of 512.14 million, representing 4.4.% of the EU population.[25] Some 7.5% of people living in the EU were born in a third country (regardless their nationality).[26] According to data from the EU Labour Force Survey 2014 ad hoc module on the labour market situation of migrants and their immediate descendants, close to one fifth (17.7%) of working age (15-64) people living in the EU had a foreign background, i.e. they are either immigrants themselves, or have immigrant parents. Having a migration background has important economic and social implications for a significant segment of the population.

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[19] See for instance: https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2020/18/fewer-asylum-seekers-and-following-relatives-due-to-covid-19

[20] https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-INFO-23-April.pdf

[21] Among the youngest age group (0–13 years), males accounted for 51 % of the total number of applicants in 2019

[22] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/9751525/3-26042019-BP-EN.pdf/291c8e87-45b5-4108-920d-7d702c1d6990

[23] According to Eurostat, in 2018, 2,719,803 first-time residence permits were issued in the EU-27, out of which 814,944 for family reasons, 777,701 for remunerated activities, and 396,718 for education reasons. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-datasets/-/tps00170

[24] Data refers to the former EU-28 (including the United Kingdom)

[25] Data for 2019 and EU-27 had not been released at the time this document was finalised. The new data was to be released in June 2020

[26] Source: Eurostat (former EU-28)

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Migration and socioeconomic mobility

Third country nationals across the EU tend to fare considerably worse than the majority population in domains such as employment, education, and social inclusion. According to 2018 data, employment rates[27] for those 20 to 64 (64.5%) remain lower than for host country nationals (73.9%)[28], with significant gaps for women.[29] Though some 41.3% of the native-born population aged 30-34 in the EU-28 had attained a tertiary level of education, this was 35.8% for those born outside the EU.[30] Perhaps of greater concern are those young people who are neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET). In 2018, the NEET rate for young people aged 15-29 in the EU28 was 12.1% among the native-born population, while the rates for those born outside the EU were 21.6%, significantly higher.[31]

A 2017 study by Oberdabernig and Schneebaum,[32] using data from the 2011 European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), presents a more positive development pertaining to economic mobility. The analysis shows that the descendants of migrants are more often upwardly mobile (and less often downwardly mobile) than their native peers in the majority of European countries. Over the last two generations, the descendants of migrants have been able to make significant progress in reducing education gaps with natives. Nevertheless, mobility across generations has been found to be hampered by higher inequality, which frequently increases residential segregation, which in turn can decrease mobility.[33] Initial evidence points to set-backs in terms of progress with respect to reducing the above-mentioned education gap, due to the COVID-19 crisis, which appears to be having a disproportionate impact on migrant communities and has led to increasing inequality in European, as well as other societies.[34] Massive school closures and the disruption of schooling during the pandemic is having, and will most likely continue to have, disparate effects across the socioeconomic ladder.[35] It has been noted that especially primary schools are where educational gaps can be ameliorated and that this opportunity is now being lost.[36]

The fight against poverty and social exclusion is considered to be an important element for promoting the well-being of individuals and more generally society at large. The Commission's 2020 Communication on a Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions[37] points to social justice and reducing inequalities as the foundation of European social market economy, amid the transitions to a climate-neutral and digital economy and society. Nevertheless, Eurostat data points to serious challenges, among them a large gap in terms of the risk of being in poverty or being socially excluded. The data from 2017 show that 22% of nationals and no less than 50% of non-EU citizens[38] in the EU faced the risk of living in poverty or being socially excluded in 2017. Severe material deprivation in the EU was more than twice as high among non-EU citizens (17%) than it was among nationals (7%) in that same year.

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[27] Eurostat refers to activity rates
[28] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migrant_integration_statistics_%E2%80%93_labour_market_indicators
[29] EU-28 'activity rate' for women born outside the EU (63.7 %) was 20.1 percentage points lower than that recorded for men (83.8 %)
[30] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migrant_integration_statistics_-_education#Share_of_30-34_year-olds_with_a_tertiary_level_of_educational_attainment
[31] The trend for both the native born and non-EU born has been downward in terms of percentage NEET since 2013. See: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migrant_integration_statistics_-_education
[32] Oberdabernig, D. and Schneebaum, A. Catching up? The educational mobility of migrants' and natives' children in Europe. Applied Economics, 2017; 49(37): 3701–3728.
[33] http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC112247/jrc112247_ec_educational_mobility_report_final.pdf
[34] https://www.economist.com/international/2020/04/30/closing-schools-for-covid-19-does-lifelong-harm-and-widens-inequality
[35] See e.g. https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/love-money-and-parenting/202004/covid-19-and-children-s-education
[36] ibid
[37] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_20_49
[38] Note that here the data does not refer to individuals with a migrant background but non-EU citizens.

Migrants, especially those who hold foreign qualifications, are often employed below their level of qualification. In 2018, around 40.4% were working in jobs they were overqualified for, compared to 21.7% of host country nationals. Evidence points[39] towards a discounted value of qualifications obtained abroad. Young migrants generally face non-recognition of training credentials, which results in 'de-skilling', whereby they can only obtain jobs beneath their qualifications.[40] Migrants also face more material deprivation and are more likely to experience in-work poverty. Furthermore, those born outside the EU are more likely to be vulnerable and at risk of social inclusion than native-born (38.3% vs. 20.7% in 2017).

Integrating migrant students in education and training

School age children and young adults make up an important share of migrants and refugees in the EU. Analyses of PISA 2015 data shows that almost one in four 15-year-old students in OECD countries are foreign-born or have at least one foreign-born parent.[41] PISA 2018 results reveal that children with a migrant background,[42] in a majority of OECD Member States, still face an uphill battle in terms of school performance, when compared to students from the majority population,[43] even after controlling for socioeconomic status and gender. While they are generally in a more advantageous situation than recent newcomers, it is important to highlight that native-born children with migrant parents also face multiple disadvantages in education systems, which cannot be fully explained by variation in socioeconomic background. At the same time, patterns of performance in the key domains surveyed by PISA (reading, mathematics and science) tend to vary considerably between countries, depending on the size and composition of the student population. In 21 Member States, pupils with a migrant background represent at least 5% of the student body – proportions range between 5.8% (Finland) and 54.9% (Luxembourg).[44] Yet, teachers are not necessarily equipped to deal with diversity in the classrooms: results from the OECD TALIS 2018 survey show that teachers are in need of professional development in this area.[45] A report for the European Commission[46] on education that fosters tolerance, respect for diversity and civic responsibility points out that there is a good deal of evidence teachers in Europe tend to lack the competences needed to teach effectively in diverse classrooms, that there is often a cultural mismatch between teachers and their students (teachers tend to be white, monolingual, middle class and female, while the student population is increasingly diverse). Also, many teachers come from a monocultural, homogeneous background and have little experience with diversity in their own personal lives. The study also points to research that many teachers harbour unconscious biases that impact the expectations, sense of belonging and achievement of migrant students.

The *Pisa 2018: Insights and Interpretations Report*[47] by the OECD reinforces findings that many children with an immigrant background face enormous challenges at school, such as the need to adjust quickly to different academic expectations, learn in a new language, forge a social identity that incorporates both their background and their adopted country of

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[39] OECD/EU (2014) Matching economic migration with labour market needs

[40] https://style-handbook.eu/contents-list/migration-and-mobility/gender-and-migrant-workers-fragile-transitions-from-education-to-employment/

[41] OECD (2018): Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background: Factors that Shape Well-being, p.13.

[42] The OECD definition for pupils with a migrant background comprises all foreign-born students (both EU and non-EU), as well as native-born students with foreign-born parents. It is important to be mindful of the background concept when interpreting OECD PISA data.

[43] European Commission (2019): PISA 2018 and the EU: Striving for social fairness through education. https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/pisa-2018_en

[44] European Commission (2019): PISA 2018 and the EU: Striving for social fairness through education. https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/pisa-2018_en

[45] European Commission (2019): Education and Training Monitor

[46] https://nesetweb.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NESET2_AR3.pdf

[47] https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202018%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf

residence – and withstand conflicting pressures from family and peers. Although the OECD points to a documented growth in the share of students with an immigrant background in the OECD region, they note that this growth has *not* led to a decline in the education standards in host communities. The OECD argues that, while it is true that migrants often endure economic hardship and precarious living conditions, many immigrants bring to their host countries high aspirations for education, and valuable knowledge and skills (p.27). They further point out that, even if the culture and the education acquired before migration have an impact on student performance, the country where immigrant students settle seems to matter significantly.

The EU has set the Europe 2020 headline target of reducing the share of early school leavers at 10% within the EU. A 2018 report by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC)[48] points to the finding that, when controlling for individual and school characteristics, immigrant students do not structurally differ in their expected early dropout probability from natives across Europe. The report also points however to indications that early school leavers are more likely to come from immigrant student groups, and that their early school leaving (ESL) rates are nearly twice as high as for the native population. The report concludes that the school environment is a critical factor in predicting ESL. Two issues related to the school environment are highlighted: educational expectations and the practice of grade repetition. The JRC recommends that grade repetition practices need to be reconsidered by national policy makers since grade repetition is a predictor of ESL. The findings of this report have been corroborated by the recent European Commission stocktaking on the implementation of the 2011 Council Recommendation on Policies to Reduce Early School Leaving (ESL).[49]

Specific educational challenges for youth with a migrant background are detailed in the OECD-EU *Settling In Report*[50] from 2018. Some key findings are that youth with a migrant background face challenges such as:

- Higher risk of *ESL* (15% of foreign-born aged 15-24 in the EU are Early School Leavers) than their native peers.
- More likely to be NEET (*not in employment, formal education or training*), especially the second generation.
- 20% of young migrants[51] (aged 15-34), who arrived as children to the EU, are *unemployed*.
- Across the EU, a large number of young people with a migrant background tend to be *overqualified for their jobs* (EU average is approximately 23%, though this percentage varies greatly among the Member States).
- Young migrants are at risk of *discrimination* and *social exclusion:* the risk of poverty or social inclusion of young migrants aged 16-24, born outside of the EU, was 52.1% in 2017, in comparison to 27.8% of the native born.
- Native-born 18-34-year olds with migrant parents report *lower levels of political participation* than native-born with native-born parents.

Recently, the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) conducted in-depth research to explore the challenges faced by newcomers between the age of 16 to 24 years, who arrived in 2015-2016.[52] The Agency interviewed close to 200 young migrants in six Member States (Austria, Germany, Greece, France, Italy, Sweden), and identified measures facilitating integration as

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[48] http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC109065/jrc109065_techbrief_migesl_180202final.pdf
[49] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/72f0303e-cf8e-11e9-b4bf-01aa75ed71a1
[50] http://www.oecd.org/publications/indicators-of-immigrant-integration-2018-9789264307216-en.htm
[51] This report uses the word 'immigrants'
[52] European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2019): Integration of young refugees in the EU: Good practices and challenges; https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2019/integration-young-refugees-eu-good-practices-and-challenges

well as a number of practical barriers to access to both compulsory and post-compulsory education. In particular, children and young people who arrive beyond compulsory school age face a number of difficulties when attempting to enrol in secondary education.

There is further cause for concern regarding school-to-work transitions (STWs) for migrants, especially migrant females.[53] Fewer young migrant females are in education compared to their native counterparts in almost all EU countries. Also, the persistence of the gender gap (albeit reduced compared to the past) indicates continued barriers to employment, education and training for young women. There is evidence to show that policies characterised by an institutionalised vocational education and training (VET) system and strong counselling support for training and employment tend to function relatively well in facilitating STW transitions of different vulnerable groups while, for instance, employment-centred policies, characterised by fewer second-chance options, create an early disconnection of immigrant youth from education and the labour market.

With respect to refugees, there is a significant gap between the educational potential of young refugees to attend higher education and their actual access to higher education. A 2016 report by the UN High Commission for Refugees indicated that only 1% of refugees (globally) attend university, compared with a global average of 34%.[54] The European Commission, at a 2017 conference devoted to higher education,[55] refugees and the Mediterranean region, highlighted for instance that only 1-5% of refugees from the relevant age group of Syrians in Europe were able to find a study place at a university or community college, while around 26% of Syrian young people were enrolled in higher education before the Syrian conflict. A Eurydice Report from 2019[56] points out that the majority of countries in the EU have no specific policy approach to integrate asylum seekers and refugees into higher education. It also points out that only a handful of countries have introduced higher education policy measures in response to increased numbers of refugees, and a similarly small number of countries monitor the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into higher education institutions. Recognition of previous educational attainment is also identified as a major challenge in the report.

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[53] https://style-handbook.eu/contents-list/migration-and-mobility/gender-and-migrant-workers-fragile-transitions-from-education-to-employment/

[54] see, for instance: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/global-online-education-platform-launched-refugee-students

[55] https://www.rescuerefugees.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Case-Study-Jordan-ENG1.pdf

[56] https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f1bfa322-38cd-11e9-8d04-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-88265520

Attitudes and misconceptions regarding migrants and refugees

Studies continue to show that societal attitudes towards migrants and refugees tend to be fairly negative across the EU, and this applies to both attitudes of adults and young people. A study published in March 2019 by Pew Research group showed a strong desire in many countries for less immigration – roughly 70% or more in Greece, Hungary and Italy wanted fewer immigrants. In France, the Netherlands, the UK and Spain, roughly 40% stated they wanted less immigration.[57] A 2019 study by YouGov[58] compared attitudes towards immigration in the EU (and other countries). The study found that only approximately 20-25% in eight EU countries felt that 'the benefits of immigration outweigh the costs'. Earlier Pew Research studies[59] showed that the general public often connected refugees to the issue of terrorism and felt that refugees were a burden to society because 'they took jobs and social benefits that would otherwise be available to citizens of each nation'.

Various studies have found that the general population overestimates, sometimes vastly, the size of (ethnic) minority groups and refugees.[60,61,62] For instance, a 2018 Eurobarometer study confirmed that respondents tended to overestimate the number of non-EU immigrants: in 19 out of the 28 Member States, the estimated proportion of immigrants in the population was at least twice the actual proportion and in some countries the ratio was even higher. Such overestimates easily feed into discourses that see such groups as a threat to tradition, nation and culture. The image is created of foreigners 'flooding into the country' and taking over the nation. UNESCO has also pointed to the many myths surrounding refugees.[63] A further challenge in terms of attitude formation relates to the damaging impact of disinformation or so-called 'fake news'. In the modern era, disinformation is rapidly spread through new media. For instance, information shared on Facebook has been found to partly explain the rates of violence against minorities and refugees.[64]

It has been frequently shown that educational level, educational content and educational methodologies are associated with attitudes towards migrants. For instance, a recent cross-country analysis examined the dynamics of native populations' opposition to migration and the role of education in shaping such opposition in European countries, using data from the European Social Survey between years 2010 and 2016. The study shows that better educated individuals express lower opposition to migration than the poorly educated.[65]

In a 2020 study of migration and trust in the EU[66], the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission found that low income, low level of education, low population density and old age were better predictors of people voting for parties favouring restrictive measures on migration than the share of migrants actually residing in their area. The study also found a clear association between attitudes towards immigration and trust in the EU in all 27 EU countries and the UK. People with positive perceptions on immigration tend to have a higher level of trust in the EU.

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[57] https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/03/19/europeans-credit-eu-with-promoting-peace-and-prosperity-but-say-brussels-is-out-of-touch-with-its-citizens/
[58] https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/wyhdmyczxk/Globalism2019_immigration_softpower_general.PDF
[59] http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/16/european-opinions-of-the-refugee-crisis-in-5-charts/
[60] See, for instance: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2017-03-22/five-myths-about-syrian-refugees; http://www.academia.edu/31985043/Five_Myths_About_Syrian_Refugees
[61] Topline Data 2011. http://trends.gmfus.org/immigration/topline-data/
[62] IPSOS Mori Institute, *Perceptions are not reality: Things the world gets wrong*, 2014. https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3466/Perceptions-are-not-reality-Things-the-world-gets-wrong.aspx
[63] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/correcting_media_myths_about_refugees_and_migrants/
[64] Müller, K. and Schwarz, C. (2018), Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crime. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3082972 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3082972.
[65] https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6842942/
[66] https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/news/what-drives-negative-attitudes-towards-migration-and-eu

Most recently, in May 2020, the UN secretary-general António Guterres expressed his concerns that anti-foreigner sentiment has surged online and on the streets, and highlighted the spread of antisemitic conspiracy theories and COVID-19 related anti-Muslim attacks. He referred to a 'tsunami of hate and xenophobia, scapegoating and scare-mongering', and appealed for an all-out effort 'to end hate speech globally'.[67]

EU youth vary widely with respect to their views regarding refugees. A study published in 2017 by the Bertelsmann Foundation, focusing on European youth aged 15-24, found that, of six countries surveyed[68], 40% said that their country should take in refugees, while 59% said their country should not. A majority (on average 53%) also thought immigrants 'were a threat to the security of their country' (on average, 53% said 'yes'). These opinions demonstrate that young Europeans, in some EU countries at least, are not very accepting of migrants in general, and refugees in particular.

Much of the evidence confirms that many negative attitudes, such as those mentioned above, are based on misconceptions. For instance, the OECD's 2017 International Migration Outlook[69] showed that, in almost all OECD countries, migrants contributed more than they take in social benefits. They are productive members of society who work, set up businesses and have innovative ideas. The most recent publication of Migration Outlook (2019)[70] also showed that Migrants' employment prospects continued to improve in 2018, building on the positive trends observed during the five previous years. On average, across OECD countries, more than 68% of migrants were employed and their unemployment rate was below 9%. Also, initial OECD estimates showed that temporary migrants contributed significantly to employment in many OECD countries.

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[67] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/08/global-report-china-open-to-cooperate-with-who-on-virus-origin-as-trump-repeats-lab-claim
[68] Germany, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary.
[69] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2017_migr_outlook-2017-en
[70] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/international-migration-outlook-2019_c3e35eec-en

The need for inclusive education

Given the many misconceptions and negative attitudes among European adults and young people towards migrants and refugees, and the challenges associated with integrating (young) migrants and refugees into European society, it becomes critical to examine to what extent the educational realm can provide remedies. Schools are one of the first and potentially most influential services that migrant and refugee children engage with during their resettlement and have a sustained influence throughout childhood and adolescence. Schools are uniquely placed to support the psychosocial well-being, acculturation and resettlement of children.[71] Schools have also been found to be a stabilising feature in the unsettled lives of refugee young people.[72]

Previous and present work at the European level

Education and training are vital for the integration process and therefore play a key role in the European Commission's *Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals* (June 2016)[73]. This Action Plan aims to provide a common policy framework and support measures to help Member States as they further develop and strengthen their national integration policies. The Action Plan acknowledges education as a powerful means to provide migrants and refugees with the appropriate skills to achieve personal fulfilment, find employment, impart the values of the host societies and promote intercultural dialogue as a basis for integration. It identifies three main priorities for education:

    a) To integrate newly arrived migrants into mainstream education structures as early as possible;

    b) To prevent underachievement of migrants and to allow them to fulfil their potential;

    c) To prevent social exclusion and foster intercultural dialogue through drivers such as sport, culture and youth activities.

The implementation of the Action Plan[74] was completed in 2018, with several concrete actions that support the relevant actors working on the ground (examples):

- Online resources for teachers and schools: European Toolkit for Schools and School Education Gateway, supporting teachers' professional development on the integration of migrants and , and providing resources for collaborative approaches for teaching and learning, involvement of parents and local stakeholders and other effective measures for promoting inclusive education and preventing early school leaving).

- As of 2019, 3,888 staff in adult or school education had participated in Erasmus+ mobility activities related to integration.

- The EU has supported cooperation between National Academic Recognition Information Centres and has funded toolkits for the academic recognition of skills and qualifications.

- Over 10,000 refugees used the Erasmus+ Online Linguistic Support (language courses and assessment).

- A European Policy Network on migrant education has been established to foster collaboration between practitioners, researchers and policymakers.

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[71] See: Horewood et al. (2019), School factors related to the emotional wellbeing and resettlement outcomes of students from refugee backgrounds: protocol for a systematic review, *Systematic Reviews*, (2019) 8: 107, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s13643-019-1016-6

[72] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/a3251a00-en.pdf?expires=1588848287&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=9F4A4BA254344198BB9C16923A5025CD

[73] https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf

[74] https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/education-and-migrants_en

- Between 2016 and 2019, the Commission organised a series of Peer Learning Activities to support national policymakers, on topics such as introductory classes, language assessment, unaccompanied minors, academic qualifications, integration into higher education and intercultural awareness.

In 2020, the Commission announced a follow-up to the 2016 Action Plan: the new Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion will focus on actions fostering social cohesion, anchored in a new comprehensive approach to migration and integration.

The European Commission's 2018 *Council Recommendation on Common values, Inclusive Education, and the European Dimension of Teaching*,[75] which seeks to strengthen social cohesion, fight xenophobia, radicalisation, divisive nationalism and the spread of fake news, remains a critical document at EU level. It targets the achievement of these objectives by:

- Promoting common values at all stages of education
- Fostering more inclusive education
- Encouraging a European dimension of teaching, while strengthening the competence of national administrations in this field
- Offering a diverse range of support to teachers and educational institutions

Within the European Commission's current work to create a functioning European Education Area by 2025, one of the central ideas is that everyone should be able to access high quality education, irrespective of their socioeconomic, cultural and linguistic background. This includes every individual's entire educational pathway, starting at pre-school level and taking account of the need for many children to acquire the language of schooling as a foreign language. In May 2019, the Council adopted two recommendations within this context, one on quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) systems[76] and one on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages.[77] The Council Recommendation on ECEC includes a focus on inclusion, as the second statement of the proposed European Quality Framework aims at ECEC provision 'that encourages participation, strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity'.

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education developed a position paper on inclusive education systems[78] in April 2016 and notes that:

> 'All European countries are committed to working towards ensuring more inclusive education systems [..] Inclusive education systems are seen as a vital component within the wider aspiration of more socially inclusive societies that all countries align themselves with, both ethically and politically. The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers.'[79]

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[75] https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/council-recommendation-on-common-values-inclusive-education-and-the-european-dimension-of-teaching_en
[76] https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/council-recommendation-on-high-quality-early-childhood-education-and-care-systems_en
[77] https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/council-recommendation-improving-teaching-and-learning-languages_en
[78] www.european-agency.org/about-us/who-we-are/ position-on-inclusive-education-systems
[79] ibid

The research evidence: inclusive and intercultural education

A 2016 report for the European Commission[80] - which examined the evidence regarding policies and practices that foster tolerance, respect for diversity and civic responsibility in children and young people in the EU - found, for instance, evidence that: (1) respect for others can be taught and that from an early age there is a need to correct misconceptions and provide opportunities for genuine intercultural experiences; (2) teachers need diversity training; (3) new effective methods for creating inclusive classrooms have been developed in recent years and can serve as positive models; (4) educational approaches that facilitate a child's social and emotional development have been shown to be powerful tools in promoting interethnic tolerance and respect for diversity; (5) effective leadership and governance are essential; and (6) mother tongue education (home language instruction) has a profound impact on a person's sense of identity and well-being.

The European Commission's online public consultation in 2017 on promoting social inclusion and common values through formal and non-formal learning found that almost all respondents agreed on the need to promote inclusive education that addresses the needs of all learners, but that only 16% felt that education was currently doing this.

The importance of inclusive education and intercultural education has been strongly supported by evidence from research in the education field. The main objectives of both inclusive and multicultural/intercultural education are to promote learning to live together in a society with cultural diversity[81]. It is intended therefore to benefit all learners. The objectives and content of inclusive education are also related to questions of respect, inequality, discrimination, ethnic /cultural diversity and citizenship.[82] Inclusive education activities also aim to decrease underprivilege for disadvantaged students and give them extra support for better academic success[83].

A 2019 Eurydice Report entitled *Integrating Students from Migrant Backgrounds into Schools in Europe*[84] notes that:

> In particular, providing teaching in a broader multilingual and multicultural learning framework – where migrant students' language(s) and culture(s) are valued – has two significant educational benefits: firstly it helps migrant students learn the language of instruction more easily; and secondly it also gives them a chance to recompose their self-identity in a positive way, as their own language(s) and culture(s) are valued alongside those of the host country (see sections on 'Teaching the language of instruction' and 'Home language teaching'). Intercultural education can create the space and conditions necessary for all students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds – native-born and migrant alike – to communicate, learn together, and develop as individuals aware of their own cultural identity and respectful of others'…This fosters a more inclusive school (p. 131).

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[80] http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/ee14cd84-ffa7-11e5-b713-01aa75ed71a1.0003.01/DOC_1
[81] Leeman, Y.A.M., 2003. School leadership for intercultural education. Intercultural Education, 14(1): 31-45.
[82] Banks, J.A. and C.A. McGee Banks, 2003. Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
[83] Leeman, Y.A.M., 2003. School leadership for intercultural education. Intercultural Education, 14(1): 31-45.
[84] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/integrating_students_from_migrant_backgrounds_into_schools_in_europe_national_policies_and_measures.pdf

With respect to language learning, the 2019 Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages introduces the concept of 'language awareness' in schools. In classrooms with a high share of learners with a migrant background, language awareness takes on a special significance. A positive attitude towards linguistic diversity can help to create a language friendly environment where learning and using multiple languages is perceived as a richness and a resource.[85] Awareness of the importance of language learning, and of the educational, cognitive, social, intercultural, professional and economic benefits of the wider use of languages can be increased and encouraged. Learners' entire linguistic repertoire can be valued and supported in school and also used as pedagogical resource for further learning of all learners. Pupils can help each other in learning, explain their language(s) to others and compare languages.[86] An example of a recent initiative regarding the appreciation of children's home language is the *Language Friendly School*.[87]

Various authors have highlighted the need for and importance of a *culturally responsive* curriculum and pedagogy.[88] Most European countries still tend to have a predominantly monocultural curriculum that reflects the histories and identities of the 'majority' population. Traditionally, textbooks and other educational materials have insufficiently incorporated the views, contributions and experiences of various minority groups in society, including women, migrants, refugees, people with disabilities, religious minorities, the LGBT community, etc. This lack of inclusion and diversity also applies to the books that students are required or encouraged to read[89] and the often nationalistic way in which history is taught. An inclusive curriculum can also serve as an antidote to the misconceptions and false reporting promoted through disinformation in the media.

The consequence of a monocultural curriculum is that schoolchildren from migrant and refugee communities do not see their identities reflected in the curriculum and, consequently, may find it difficult to engage with it. Accordingly, an *inclusive curriculum* can be defined as a school curriculum that accommodates the content-related needs of all children in the classroom and better reflects their histories, abilities, cultures, religions, etc. The cultural and social identities of pupils such as migrants and refugees are seen as assets rather than as deficits or limitations. It has been demonstrated that an inclusive and culturally relevant curriculum creates more equitable education for young people and helps reduce prejudice and discrimination against marginalised populations. Evidence gathered from analytical reports by the NESET II academic network (Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training)[90] concluded that education and training systems that uphold high standards of quality for all, foster personalised, inclusive approaches that involve parents, support early intervention, and target disadvantaged learners, can be powerful drivers of social inclusion.

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[85] Garcia, O. and Wei, L. (2014) – Translanguaging: language, bilingualism and education, Palgrave, MacMillan

[86] See for example Auger, N., (2005) - Comparons nos langues. Démarches d'apprentissage du français auprès d'enfants nouvellement arrivés. CRDP Languedoc-Roussillon

[87] https://languagefriendlyschool.org/

[88] See Materials on Culturally Responsive Pedagogy and Practice from National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt): http://www.nccrest.org/professional/culturally_responsive_pedagogy-and.html

[89] There are multiple websites that list books appropriate for school aged children about the refugee experience. Using such literature can produce empathy. See for instance: https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/childrens-books-about-refugees/

[90] Policy and Practices for Equality and Inclusion In and Through Education: Evidence and policy guidance from European research projects funded under FP6 and FP7 (2015) http://nesetweb.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AR1_2015.pdf; Education Policies and Practices to Foster Tolerance, Respect for Diversity and Civic Responsibility in Children and Young People in the EU' (2016) c http://nesetweb.eu/en/library/education-policies-and-practices-to-foster-tolerance-respect-for-diversity-and-civic-responsibility-in-children-and-young-people-in-the-eu/

Though the evidence is somewhat mixed, there are growing indications that migrant and refugee youth are more often the victim of bullying in schools than children from the majority population.[91,92,93] The OECD offers evidence that refugee youth experience considerable negative treatment at the hands of their peers, also in and around schools. A recent OECD report[94] refers to a study in Canada among refugee children and youth, which found that 86% of refugee youth (12-21 years) experienced some form of bullying, such as teasing, social exclusion, physical bullying, unfair treatment, racial insults and intellectual belittling. It is unclear to what extent Canadian findings also apply to Europe. PISA 2018 data[95] shows that, on average across OECD countries, students were exposed to bullying slightly more frequently when they attended schools with a high concentration of students with an immigrant background than in schools with a low concentration of immigrant students. This points to the importance of creating safe classroom environments in diverse classrooms.

The negative impact of bullying on sense of belonging, self-esteem, well-being, self-efficacy, social relations, etc. has been documented in many studies.[96] It is unclear to what extent the above has an impact on the sense of belonging among immigrant students at school, but 2015 PISA scores[97] do show that on average in the EU, there is approximately an 11% gap between native and immigrant students in terms of the percentage who feel they 'belong' at school. The gap between immigrant students and native students is even greater in terms of underachievement (25% difference).

The development of a digital revolution in schools[98] across Europe poses both opportunities and challenges for those with a migrant and/or refugee background. There is evidence that ICT-related policies have the potential to decrease migrant-native achievement gaps[99]. Also, a recent report for the European Commission[100] points to evidence that new media products show great potential in fostering tolerance and encouraging respect for diversity. Furthermore, ICT and the unlimited possibilities of the internet have been shown to help buttress migrant youth cultural identity and allow them to connect to people and resources (e.g. cultural and informational resources such as blogs, television programmes, movies, online newspapers) in their country of origin (or their parents and grandparents).[101] The other side of the digital coin, however, is that students with a migrant or refugee background have become more vulnerable to hate speech and cyberbullying.[102]

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[91] See for instance: https://blogs.unicef.org/evidence-for-action/migrant-children-face-higher-rates-of-bullying/
[92] Vitoroulis, I., H. Brittain and T. Vaillancourt (2016), "School ethnic composition and bullying in Canadian schools", *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, Vol. 40/5, pp. 431-441, http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0165025415603490.
[93] https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/digital-learning-ict-education
[94] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/a3251a00-en.pdf?expires=1588848287&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=9F4A4BA254344198BB9C16923A5025CD
[95] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/cd52fb72-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/cd52fb72-en
[96] See for instance: https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/bullying/conditioninfo/Pages/health.aspx
[97] https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/volume-1-2018-education-and-training-monitor-country-analysis.pdf
[98] For instance: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/digital-learning-ict-education
[99] https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/can-digital-technologies-help-reduce-immigrant-native-educational-achievement-gap
[100] http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/ee14cd84-ffa7-11e5-b713-01aa75ed71a1.0003.01/DOC_1; see also: http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/culture_and_ict_as_drivers_of_sustainable_development/
[101] https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/docs/publications/2019077124541372ed66982.pdf
[102] https://en.unesco.org/news/new-evidence-bullying-revealed-world-anti-bullying-forum

The role of parents and close family members in the educational adjustment of migrant and refugee children, and in the efforts of such children to avoid exclusion, bullying and other forms of adversity, cannot be overstated. Like many children who have experienced war, the parents of young refugees have also often experienced trauma and have more difficulty providing the emotional support that children need in adjusting to a new school environment and pursuing their school careers.[103] Although the (social)-scientific literature contains multiple analyses of how important the role of refugee parents is in their children's school adjustment (and the negative consequences of missing parents), for instance in the United States and Canada[104], this field of study remains in its infancy in Europe.

Barriers relating to transitions

Migrant and refugee students face many obstacles in making the transition to secondary education and the labour force and often need guidance and extra support to negotiate the system successfully. Migrants and refugees too often get tracked and segregated into lower academic school streams.[105,106] Regardless of their intellectual capacities, a high proportion of refugee and migrant children are assigned to one of the lower levels of vocational education.[107] The short- and long-term consequences, in terms of student well-being, have received scant attention. There is ample evidence, however, that when students with an immigrant background are separated too early from other children and are grouped with other academically weak students, they will fall behind in the development of linguistic and culturally relevant skills that are needed to perform well at school and to transition to appropriate further education or labour opportunities.[108]

The SIRIUS network[109] has argued that quality second-chance programmes and flexibility in education systems need to be made readily available to help young people who have not had the advantage of supportive learning environments earlier in their lives.[110] It has also been argued that to further the school-to-work transition, students with a migrant background should be provided with an opportunity to learn through experience. This 'non-formal education' approach can help to develop personal and social skills and competences that improve the labour market opportunities of migrant children.[111]

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[103] http://www.shepostsonline.nl/2017/12/13/vluchtelingenkinderen-op-nederlandse-basisschool/ (in Dutch)
[104] see e.g. http://mra-mb.ca/being-involved-in-uninvolved-contexts-refugee-parent-involvement-in-childrens-education/ ; http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/refugee-school-students-parents-opinion-1.3814322 ; http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603120802609867?src=recsys&journalCode=tedl20
[105] See e.g. https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/Germany%20Press%20Release.pdf
[106] eui.eu/Documents/RSCAS/Research/ArchivesInstitutionsGovernanceDemocracy/20181205-Keynote-lecture-education.pdf
[107] http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/PERAE_Comparative-Report-1.pdf
[108] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/9789264292093-12-en.pdf?expires=1568838998&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=904544AB4835534EBC57BF89FF8FCCD1
[109] SIRIUS is an international leading Policy Network on Migrant Education
[110] http://www.migration4development.org/sites/default/files/agenda-and-recommendations-for-migrant-education_04112014.pdf
[111] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/integrating_students_from_migrant_backgrounds_into_schools_in_europe_national_policies_and_measures.pdf

Gender makes a difference. According to the Migration Policy Group:

> Despite having a share of tertiary-educated similar to that of native-born women and migrant men, women born outside the EU are both more likely to be over-qualified for their job and less likely to be in employment. The latter is partially due to difficulties they encounter getting their skills recognised, as studies underline that women in developing countries are more likely than men to have skills that are not formally certified by diplomas. Furthermore, the gap between the share of employed non-EU-28-born women and native women is 8 percentage points larger than the gap among men. This clearly shows that migrant women represent an untapped and under-utilised source of skills, and that their potential is not fully exploited.[112]

Mentoring schemes, which can take a variety of forms, have also been identified as promoting a more fluid transition from secondary school to higher education or employment. Mentoring can serve to help migrant students develop competences and build their confidence.[113] Students in higher education with an immigrant background can act as role models and coaches for younger students, often playing the part of an older sibling, and ultimately aiding mentees with core learning issues.[114,115] The SIRIUS network notes that all pre- and in-service training and mentoring programmes should systematically include training on, among other things, gender-sensitive skills.[116] Gender-sensitive policy-making has been shown to contribute to the development of policies and measures that respond to the distinct needs and interests of diverse groups of women and men who are third-country nationals. It has also been argued that gender sensitive policy making can serve to further advance gender equality in the EU.[117]

The special case of refugees and education

The educational challenges and provisions relating to refugees pose a special case and deserve special attention. Refugees and asylum seekers differ from other migrants in several ways that can impact the kinds of educational policies to be implemented to promote their educational and societal inclusion, and meet the needs of young people from these communities: (1) being a refugee implies having an official status, with a series of educational rights attached to this status; (2) refugees and asylum seekers, unlike others, frequently have had little if any preparation for their move to a new country and culture; and (3) before arriving in Europe, they have invariably experienced some level of trauma. In a 2019 report,[118] the OECD notes that acculturation stress[119] is considerably higher among refugees and that, in general, refugee children face more obstacles than other children with a migrant background. Refugee children tend to have more challenges adjusting to a new language and culture, are more likely to have disrupted or minimal prior education, have more often experienced disruption to family networks, insecure housing, poverty, negative stereotypes and discrimination. The report goes on to note that refugees might be affected by several

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[112] https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/feature/integration-of-migrant-women
[113] See for instance: https://mentoringsummit.eu/refugees-and-migrants-as-mentors-a-new-way-of-mentoring/; https://www.schulmentoren.de/schulmentoren
[114] See: http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SIRIUS_Mentoring_FINAL.pdf
[115] https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/news/well-track-mentoring-program-refugee-peers
[116] http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Agenda-and-Recommendations-for-Migrant-Education.pdf
[117] https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-sensitive-education-and-training-integration-third-country-nationals-study
[118] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/a3251a00-en.pdf?expires=1570701454&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=53F1995D0A04284DF08020BC43299992
[119] Acculturation is defined in the report as change in an individual or a culturally similar group that results from contact with a different culture

layers of disadvantage, linked to their forced displacement and low socioeconomic status, and harmed by the (often) negative attitudes of the host population towards refugees. Further challenges that are more prominent among refugee children relate to the nature of their forced migration, such as mental health issues, weak prior links with the host country and often the lack of documentation of their education, credentials and diplomas. Additionally, access to education is a challenge since refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school than non-refugee children.

Refugee education rights in the EU have been acknowledged and enshrined in international conventions and treaties (e.g. in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention), and the EU has also developed various internal rules to guarantee refugee rights. The right to access compulsory education is generally guaranteed by law in EU countries.[120] However, European regulations that require that children entering a Member State need to be included in education within three months (article 14(2), Directive 2013/33/EU) have not been fully put in practice in various EU countries due to prolonged procedures (multiple relocations, time lag in finding a school place, etc.).

On the other hand, some EU countries have been proactive in providing additional rights to refugees and other migrants or have taken extra measures to promote the inclusion of refugee students. For instance, in Sweden, children also have the right to lessons in their own mother tongue on a regular basis, if there are more than five pupils with the same language in the area. Itinerant home language teachers are employed for that purpose.[121] In Bulgaria, the Ministry of Education and Science, school principals and teachers of refugee students exchange information with NGOs and the UNHCR in order to identify students' specific needs.[122]

A recent EU transnational project entitled SOFIE,[123] funded by Erasmus+, conducted a research and needs analysis of refugee families in multiple EU countries and Turkey. The project identifies access to quality education as a continuing and serious challenge. Key challenges included, in addition to the challenges identified above: (1) lack of access to the labour market, which is further exacerbated by language barriers to accessing employment, difficulties in recognition of certificates obtained abroad, lack of knowledge of the local labour market and how to find a job as well as racism and discrimination; (2) social isolation, marginalization and lack of opportunities to understand the local culture and norms, genuinely interact with the locals and create new friendships; (3) difficulties of parents to support their children in their homework and communicate with their teachers; and (4) additional challenges that particularly impact women such as social isolation, partly due to their role as the family's caretaker and cultural norms, as well as lack of childcare support, which hampers their ability to go to language classes, get employed or socialise and better integrate in their community.

At the higher education level, the European Commission has taken several initiatives to support (university) students who have a refugee background. Around 10,000 newly arrived migrants gained access and used linguistic support (OLS) as part of the Erasmus+ programme. Erasmus+ has equally supported a wide range of transnational projects the recognition of qualifications held by refugees. Along similar lines, the Council of Europe has created the so-called *European Qualifications Passport for Refugees*.[124] This

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[120] Crul, M. (2017). *Refugee children in education in Europe. How to prevent a lost generation?* SIRIUS Network Policy Brief Series, February 2017, Issue No. 7.
[121] http://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/sweden/reception-conditions/employment-and-education/access-education
[122] http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/current-migration-situation-eu-education
[123] https://support-refugees.eu/media/io1-en-web.pdf
[124] https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications

European Commission

Qualifications Passport provides an assessment of the higher education qualifications based on available documentation and a structured interview. The need for the recognition of qualifications, as well as training needs of migrants and refugees, has also recently been identified by the OECD and the European Commission.[125]

With respect to the very low number of refugees (globally) who have access to higher education, the UNHCR recommends, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4[126], that the following provisions be made:

- Scholarship programmes in the first country of asylum.
- Connected Learning programmes: a blended learning approach in partnership with a network of accredited universities.
- Technical and vocational education and training (TVET): education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods.
- Establishing complementary pathways to protect refugees through higher education opportunities in third countries.
- Advocacy with ministries, universities and academia to expand access for refugee students to universities and to mitigate barriers that prevent refugees from enrolling in university.

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[125] https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/87a8f92d-9aa8-11e6-868c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en
[126] *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.*

Some key questions and challenges

Meeting one's full potential?

A particular challenge relates to the circumstance that many migrants and refugees, young and old, lose social status when they migrate. During the first years in a receiving country, migrants and refugees often experience occupational downgrading.[127] Downgrading is a loss of occupational status between one's last job in the home country and first job in the receiving country, often resulting in overeducation or overqualification. They are thwarted from reaching their full potential and aspirations they held earlier. The consequences are often stress, anxiety, depression, irritation, and frustration.

The foregoing also applies to the educational realm. A 2019 Eurydice report[128] concludes that: 'A student who is well-integrated into the education system both academically and socially has more chance of reaching their potential. Students from migrant backgrounds, however, face a number of challenges in this respect that can affect their learning and development.' (p. 9) The Eurydice Report identifies the following main challenges: (1) those related to the migration process itself; (2) those related to the general socioeconomic and political context; and (3) those related to student participation in education.

It was mentioned earlier in the present document that migrant students get tracked into lower academic streams, irrespective of their cognitive abilities. They are therefore less likely to reach their full potential. On the other hand, tracking into vocational education can imply easier access to employment (though often below the individual's capacity). The question is which should have higher priority.

Emphasis on special care versus emphasis on resilience?

A good deal of discussion focuses on provision of therapeutic care for school students with a migrant background and especially refugee children. The question arises, however, to what extent an approach that focuses primarily on trauma and deficits is appropriate.

A 2018 study by the European Commission[129] examined how disadvantaged students with a migrant background succeed academically in European education systems. The study found that, at the EU level, students with a migrant background were more likely than their non-migrant background peers to experience socioeconomic disadvantage. Also, smaller shares of migrant background students were academically resilient, particularly first-generation migrants, when compared to non-migrant students. Nevertheless, the study showed that specific migrant integration policies might play an important role in promoting resilience among students with a migrant background. Key patterns related to academic resilience among such students included: (1) higher academic self-expectations - very high academic self-expectations were associated with the most 'robust' forms of academic resilience; and (2) skipping or being late for school had a negative association with academic resilience. Further factors included: (3) School staff providing support with homework was positively associated with highly resilient first-generation migrant students; and (4) the provision of a study room was associated with academic resilience. The study also

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[127] See: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3654177/

[128] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/integrating_students_from_migrant_backgrounds_into_schools_in_europe_national_policies_and_measures.pdf

[129] Cutmore, M., MacLeod, S., Donlevy, V., Spence, C., Martin, A., & Collie, R. (2018) Against the Odds – Academically resilient students with a migrant background and how they succeed. https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/document-library/against-the-odds-academically-resilient-students-with-a-migrant-background-and-how-they-succeed_en

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pointed to non-EU countries such as Australian and Canada which have more resilient students with a migration background and attributed this to relatively stronger policies for migrant integration, specifically in relation to creating new educational opportunities for migrants and targeting the needs of migrant students and intercultural education.

With respect to refugees and asylum seekers, most educational research has focused on gaps in both the cognitive and the language skills that especially first generation children have because of the disruption of their school career in the country of origin and during the – sometimes lengthy – travel to the destination country.[130] The evidence shows that despite difficulties in accessing school or mental health problems that may impede learning, refugee and asylum-seeking children tend to be very motivated and many make educational success their priority.[131,132] Various researchers have noted that a remarkable number of refugee and asylum-seeking young people have few identifiable behavioural or emotional difficulties, suggesting that the emphasis on the vulnerability of refugee and asylum-seeking children may require more nuance (see for instance O'Higgins 2012).[133] Research findings also show that going to school can give children a sense of routine and 'normality', enable them to make friends and develop social networks while learning the local language and making academic progress which is essential to integration. In sum, it has been emphasised by various experts on refugee issues that although some refugee youth need more therapeutic care, there also needs to be a greater emphasis on the strengths and resilience of refugees.[134] The challenge is to find a balance. The risk of focusing too much on trauma is that is that the social capital and resilience of refugees can be forgotten, while too much of a focus on resilience can hide the need for extra therapeutic care.

Key challenges at various policy levels

Remaining challenges at the policy level include:

1. How to best promote a positive and inclusive climate in schools that receives support from all stakeholders and is sustainable (systemic and structural rather than ad hoc).

2. How to best develop policies that take full advantage of the potential for digital learning and ICT to decrease the migrant-native achievement gap.

3. Whether policies that are intended to ameliorate exclusion, (cyber)bullying, discrimination, etc., which disproportionately impact youth with a migrant and/or refugee background, should be any different than those aimed at addressing such phenomena in general.

4. Whether policies addressing migrants and refugees need to be more gender sensitive, rather than general in nature, and what this would look like in practice.

5. How to best develop policies at all levels that put mechanisms in place to assist young migrants and refugees in reaching their full educational potential and preventing early school leaving.

6. How to best put in place policies at the national, local and school levels that create sustainable (versus ad hoc) and systemic mechanisms of inclusion.

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[130] https://www.eui.eu/Documents/RSCAS/Research/ArchivesInstitutionsGovernanceDemocracy/20181205-Keynote-lecture-education.pdf

[131] http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/PERAE_Comparative-Report-1.pdf

[132] https://www.cmy.net.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Facilitating%20the%20Transition%20to%20Employment%202014.pdf

[133] O'Higgins, A., Ott, E. M., & Shea, M. W. (2018). What is the Impact of Placement Type on Educational and Health Outcomes of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors? A Systematic Review of the Evidence. Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review. http://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-018-0256-7

[134] Hayward, M. (2017) Teaching as a primary therapeutic intervention for learners from refugee backgrounds. Intercultural Education, 28,2. 165-181.

7. How to best identify and implement the kinds of policies at all levels that can best take full advantage of the social capital that young migrants and refugees, and their communities, take with them into educational contexts.

8. How to identify the most appropriate policies that take full advantage of children's home languages and use them as a resource in the education process.

9. Residential and school segregation negatively impact both societal integration and school outcomes. A challenge is how to best develop effective policies at all levels to address segregation as a path to promote societal integration and improve educational outcomes, without placing an unfair burden on schools, parents and communities.

10. A key factor impeding the progress of young migrants and refugees is the assessment of prior learning and the recognition of qualifications. A key challenge is how to best implement policies (primarily at the national level) that can acknowledge previous qualifications and previously acquired knowledge and competences.

11. How to best promote research that examines the potential of refugee-related policies that focus on resilience versus 'trauma' in terms of being more effective in helping refugees and young migrants succeed. This requires collaboration with higher education (research) institutions.

12. How to best develop educational policies at all levels pertaining to young migrants and refugees that are rooted in human rights considerations.

13. Parents play an important role in supporting their children's educational progress. How to best develop policies at all levels that 'support parents with a migrant background that helps them support their children'. What policies at what levels, and what kind of outreach, improve parent involvement and prevent disengagement?

14. How can policy makers be assured that evidence and data are relevant, reliable and comparable? What kinds of policies, especially at the national level, can further such data collection without impinging on the freedom of researchers to collect information?

15. How to best identify and implement the most effective and sustainable policies at all levels that can empower young migrants and refugees to take the most important steps that lead to lifelong learning, including enabling access to vocational education and training and higher education.

16. How best to develop effective and sustainable policies at the national, local and school levels that can promote holistic approaches to tackling the transition-related challenges that young migrants and refugees face.

17. How to best address, through policies, the widening gap between children with a migrant background and majority students, exacerbated by the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Key recommendations

Learning content, pedagogical approaches and fostering an inclusive and democratic learning environment

1. The curriculum should be expanded to include migration and refugee stories and narratives in order to promote inclusion and empathy for newcomers. The voices of migrants and refugees need to be amplified more and they need to have more decision-making power than they presently have.

2. The curriculum needs to be examined to determine if stereotypes and blatant or subtle biases are present that promote a deficit approach. This should be the starting point for curriculum improvement.

3. Schools should promote language awareness and language sensitive teaching, recognising and valorising each learner's linguistic capital and use competences in home languages to support the acquisition of an adequate level of the language(s) of schooling.

4. The role of the arts and sports in creating empathy, changing attitudes and combatting discrimination in schools is significant and ought to be addressed more comprehensively in formal as well as non-formal education.

5. National governments can contribute to presenting a more positive image of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers by approving education materials that have been developed by respected international organisations such as UNHCR and UNESCO. They can also support in various ways positive publicity campaigns, in collaboration with schools and other educational institutions.

6. Addressing diversity in schools requires promoting whole school approaches that are sustainable, supported by and involving local communities. Policies at all levels need to have this as a framework for all policy development and implementation.

7. ICT-related learning poses great opportunities to promote inclusion, respect for diversity and also the maintenance of cultural identity. Policies at various levels should support such learning in a sustainable manner.

8. ICT poses threats to youth from migrant/refugee backgrounds through for instance cyberbullying and disinformation. Many successful programmes across the EU and elsewhere have been found to be effective in preventing and addressing cyberbullying, hate speech and disinformation. These need to be studied carefully to assess to what extent they are replicable and sustainable.

9. A person's home language(s) is important for one's identity, self-esteem and performance. It can also scaffold learning of the host country language. Educational authorities need to become more aware of the many advantages of home language learning for personal and socio-emotional development, as well as school performance.

10. There is a great deal of religious diversity in European classrooms, yet there is a lack of adequate pedagogical tools to address religious diversity in classrooms. There are also many misconceptions and biases among teaching staff and students. On the other hand, there are also many best practices is using religious diversity as a bridge builder of understanding. Such best practices need to be studied carefully and more widely implemented.

Empowering teaching professionals

1. All teachers, not just specialised teachers, should have basic insight into inclusion processes and also insight into migration and refugee issues. Both in-service and pre-service teachers need sufficient access to training relating to such issues.

2. All teachers need professional development in the field of language awareness, language sensitive teaching and embracing linguistic diversity.

3. EU Member States should fast track teachers with a migration and or recent refugee background into the education system and build on their insights and experiences for curriculum and pedagogical purposes.

4. Bullying in all its forms (including cyberbullying) is detrimental to well-being, social adjustment, inclusion, etc. and it promotes withdrawal, disengagement, and violence, as well as early school leaving. The recent results from the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2018 shows that pupils' sense of belonging at school is declining and bullying is widespread. Mental health issues such anxiety and depression become also widespread. Migrants and refugees are often the target of bullying behaviour by both fellow students and also teachers. Policies need to remain up to date (to include new forms of bullying) and map bullying behaviour. Clear and easily accessible mechanisms to report bullying are needed. Policies should also be comprehensive and address the many dimensions of bullying, as well as promoting effectively a culture of well-being.

5. The use of school intercultural mediators (especially from backgrounds similar to the students) have shown to be effective tools in promoting inclusion and resolving conflicts. Educational authorities and policy makers should examine to what extent such cultural mediators can be utilised as effective tools. Educational authorities should also examine to what extent so-called 'mobile intercultural teams' can be utilised where mediators are absent.

6. Teacher mobility (e.g. Erasmus+ programme) programmes can sensitise teachers to (inter)cultural aspects of learning and teaching. The most effective need to be identified and shared among policy makers, especially at the national level. Such exchange programmes also need to be reinforced and strengthened.

7. Reception classes for newcomer students are a widespread phenomenon across Europe but have also been criticised for preventing social integration and promoting segregation.[135] Solid research needs to be supported by policy makers at the national level to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of various types of reception classes and the approaches they represent.

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[135] See e.g. page 82 https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/integrating_students_from_migrant_backgrounds_into_schools_in_europe_national_policies_and_measures.pdf

Enhancing cooperation with parents, communities and wider partners

1. Parents are critical factors in their children's educational attainment, in helping them develop their identity, their sense of belonging, as well as their attitudes and social behaviours. A positive school-parent relationship, and also community-parent relationship, can lead to better educational outcomes, also in terms of becoming a responsible and active member of society. Challenges have been identified regarding relationships between schools and parents of youth from migrant communities. Policies should support collaboration between parents and communities, on the one hand, and schools, on the other hand, in culturally respectful and sensitive ways.

2. Parent organisations often lack diversity, making it more difficult for the voices of migrant/refugee communities to be heard. Further efforts are needed to have the voices of parents from migrant/refugee communities heard in formal and informal parent organisations.

3. Closer cooperation and coordination in needed in the work of national institutions (e.g. ministries) and international (non-governmental) organizations, at an early stage.

4. All EU Member States need to be reminded that refugee children have the legal right to education and that the receiving countries have the obligation/responsibility to provide this.

5. EU Member States need to facilitate/encourage the synergy/complementarity of accredited non-formal education methods and practices with formal education in schools (with the help of IOs and NGOs). The starting point should be Council of Europe's *Competences for Democratic Culture* framework[136] for assessing the impact of non-formal education on building certain skills and competences.

6. EU Member States should devote more energy to invite national and local media to cover (positive) examples of educational activities with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. They should also provide recommendations regarding educationally sound materials. The Fundamental Rights Agency's toolkit for media professionals[137] can be used as an example.

7. More (sustainable) mechanisms need to be put in place to support the cooperation between all relevant stakeholders, such as social services and health professionals, when it comes to taking actions and implementing measures to support the inclusion of migrants and refugees in education. The Whole School Approach and the creation of 'learning communities' should be encouraged.[138]

8. There is a need for more decisive actions among policy makers that put the spotlight on positive practices relating to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and make use of the public space to raise awareness about the situation as well as publicise existing activities.

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[136] https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc07
[137] https://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2017/toolkit-media-professionals-coverage-fundamental-rights-angle
[138] Resources are available in the European Toolkit for Schools:
https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/toolkitsforschools.htm

Promoting a lifelong learning approach

1. In most Member States, early school leaving (ESL) rates are significantly higher among migrants and refugees than the native population, and there are initial indications that the COVID-19 crisis has impacted such communities more severely.[139] Such phenomena need to be mapped and targeted strategies (effective practices for prevention, intervention and compensation) need to be developed to address such issues.

2. With respect to new arrivals, EU countries should focus more on differentiated learning, after mapping of student's prior learning has taken place.

3. Asylum-seeking procedures need to be accelerated so that newly arrived migrant children can be integrated into the education system as soon as possible, so that education deficits do not lead to lifelong education and employment deficits.

4. Mechanisms should be in place to help prepare newly arrived migrant children for the transition to adulthood/leaving State care.

5. More collaboration is needed between secondary and tertiary educational actors, as well as with labour market actors, to improve the (educational and work) career trajectories of migrants and refugees, especially during the critical stages of school-to-work transitions.

6. In tertiary education, drop-out rates among students with a migrant background[140] (and from poor socioeconomic backgrounds in general)[141] are relatively high.[142] Measures need to be in place to make Higher Education environments more sensitive to the needs of students with a migrant background, especially those from underserved communities. Initiatives such as mentoring of school students and university students with a migrant background by those with similar migrant backgrounds (role models)[143] help prevent drop out and need to be supported by policy makers. Mentoring should become an integral part of the educational support system for children of migrants who need extra support.[144]

7. There is a significant gap between the educational potential of young refugees to attend higher education and their actual access to higher education. Research needs to be supported that looks into the various causes for this gap and how to best reduce it, helping refugees (and migrants) reach their full educational potential.

8. The EU, through the Erasmus+ programme, has supported the development of many inspiring projects in the field of primary, secondary and higher education related to migrants/refugees. These examples of inspiring practices need to be shared more widely among ministries of education and key NGOs, especially with respect to what makes these projects successful and sustainable, and how they can be replicated in different (national, local and cultural) contexts.

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[139] See e.g.
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Nasir_Mustafa/publication/340849956_Impact_of_the_2019-20_coronavirus_pandemic_on_education/links/5ea0ae4c299bf143893ff447/Impact-of-the-2019-20-coronavirus-pandemic-on-education.pdf
[140] http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/e3defd63-1db4-11e7-aeb3-01aa75ed71a1.0001.01/DOC_1
[141] https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/european-semester_thematic-factsheet_tertiary-education-attainment_en.pdf
[142] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304025193_Drop_out_and_Retention_of_Under-represented_Students_in_Higher_Education_in_Europe
[143] See e.g.: http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/2012-2-2-Handbook-Mentoring-for-Migrant-youth-in-education.pdf
[144] http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SIRIUS_Mentoring_FINAL.pdf

Strengthening the role of research, assessment and sharing best practice

1. Research relating to impact assessment regarding the inclusion of migrants and refugees can contribute a great deal towards informing the decisions and actions of national policy makers.

2. Few school systems across Europe engage in professional assessments of what newcomer children learn abroad.[145] Shortly after arrival in the host country and after starting school, all new arrivals should be assessed on their prior learning. The mapping/assessment should take place in the native language of the migrant. This policy is already present in Sweden and can serve as a model for other countries.

3. Research should be supported that includes an analysis of gender-related issues when examining the interface of education and migrant background, since gender is critically related to various educational processes and domains (such as ESL, expectations, academic achievement and transitions within the educational realm and between school and employment).

4. More sharing of best practices and the evaluation of initiatives, pilot projects and programmes in different national and local contexts is needed and needs to be supported. Upscaling of successful pilot projects and local projects, guided by evidence and evaluation, also needs to be supported.

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[145] http://www.mipex.eu/education

Examples of resources and inspirational practices

Teachers for Migrants' and Refugees' Rights[146] is an initiative of Education International. Their online portal aims to support unions and teachers in their efforts to promote migrants' and refugees' rights, by sharing evidence, information, resources and good practices from around the world. This organisation has developed a toolkit for educators and education unions that work with migrant and refugee children. The toolkit aims to allow educators, support personnel and union activists to design plans to include migrants and refugees, advocate for their rights, and empower and support school communities to address diversity. The toolkit provides a solid knowledge base and concrete tools to: (1) understand the phenomenon of migration and forced displacement worldwide and the challenges it poses in relation to the education sector; (2) understand and defend refugees' and migrants' rights in education as protected by international, regional and national law; (3) develop activities in favour of migrants and refugees' rights at national and local levels, and; (4) challenge the predominant negative narrative about migration and refugees.

Norwegian policies on early childhood education. The overall objective of the Norwegian educational system is to provide all children and young people with education and training of a high standard, independent of gender and ethnic, religious, sexual, social, economic and geographical factors. Norwegian schools are based on the principle of equal and adapted education for all in an inclusive, unified school. For children in refugee reception centres the government expanded funding to allow two-year olds and three-year olds to attend pre-school in 2018. Starting in 2019, one-year old children in refugee reception centres also have the right to attend pre-school for 20 hours per week for free.[147] The Norwegian Kindergarten Act[148] expects schools to: 'take account of children's age, level of functioning, gender, social, ethnic and cultural background'.[149]

The **Nightingale Mentoring Project**[150] is an initiative that has gained a foothold in Austria, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uganda. It seeks to recruit students from cultures and societies where there is little or no tradition of children being involved in higher education. The mentor gives the child a positive role model by establishing a personal relationship with the mentee child. This in turn helps strengthen the child's personal and social confidence. The goal is that the child will perform better in school and will be more likely to apply for university when the time comes.

SOFIE[151], referred to earlier in this document, is a European project funded by Erasmus+. It aims to contribute to the social inclusion of refugees through the provision of educational training targeting women and children on the one hand, and on the other hand by training trainers and volunteers in order to better prepare them for the needs of the refugee families. Research at the national level was conducted in five countries – Austria, Cyprus, Italy, Sweden and Turkey and identified the needs and challenges that refugee families face at the national level, especially in terms of integration and training support, best practices on the integration of refugee families as well as the training needs of volunteers.

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[146] https://www.education4refugees.org/
[147] https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-reforms-early-childhood-education-and-care-48_en
[148] In Norway, 'pre-schools' are referred to as Kindergartens
[149] https://lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/2005-06-17-64
[150] http://nightingalementoring.org/?page_id=85
[151] https://support-refugees.eu/media/io1-en-web.pdf

The **Tandem Now** project[152], a Transfer of Innovation project in the framework of the European Leonardo da Vinci programmes, helps young people with a migration background to develop social and professional skills and provide the support needed to stay in school through mentoring. Participating partners come from Austria, Turkey, Ireland, Italy, Germany and Spain. Project mentors with the same cultural background act as role models, encouraging their mentees to take up education and/or training and pursue individual career paths. The mentors support young people by giving them guidance and support in the areas of education, training, and personal development, and introduce ICT as a means of communication in the mentoring process. The introduction of ICT represents a 'Blended Mentoring' approach, which is a mix of on-site (face-to-face) and online activities designed to allow for adopting mentoring as an ordinary practice in career counselling and development services.

(MentoMigri) Mentoring Migrants in the Upper Secondary Level Education This project of the Jyväskylä Educational Consortium is developing a model for mentoring migrant students in Upper Secondary Level Education (USLE) and a model for training mentors. The starting point is two-way integration and the aim of the mentoring model is [153]to prevent educational drop-out. The mentoring model is also expected to be effective in teaching mentoring and multicultural skills to mentors and supporting their studies.

The **MORE** project[154] is an initiative of the National University Federation in Austria. The project offers: (1) *MORE-courses*, which aim to provide a space for reflection to refugees so that they can explore whether university studies are an option for them in the future. The courses offer orientation in academic and artistic study fields and language trainings; (2) *MORE-perspectives* is aimed at academics and scientists who had to flee their country. It is a platform for knowledge and experience sharing; (3) *MORE-activities* help refugees feel at home. An initial evaluation of the programme showed that: a large majority of MORE participants were men - 88%; most participants came from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq; approximately 5% of MORE students successfully moved from the MORE programme into degree studies or preliminary study programmes, though this is rapidly increasing; almost all MORE graduates transfer to economic and technical fields of study.

The **coLAB Toolkit Inclusive Practices Towards Refugees in Higher Education**[155], published in November 2019. The coLAB project, a collaboration between five higher education institutions in Europe, was born from the observation that many refugees bring with them substantial professional experience and qualifications, but that their prior achievements may not be recognised by their new host communities. The toolkit also starts with the recognition that is common for refugees to experience higher than average levels of unemployment, or to be employed below their level of skill. The project, implemented within the framework of the European Union/Council of Europe joint programme 'Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation' (DISCO), aims to remedy this by hiring refugees as 'visiting experts' who can share their knowledge with students and teaching staff, within the frame of the academic curriculum. It provides valuable training to refugee experts and promotes inclusive academic practices that can potentially benefit everybody in higher education. The toolkit is primarily aimed at those working in the higher education sector - course designers, teachers, academic leaders, policymakers, human resources – but can also be of value to those working in other educational or work-based learning settings.

The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR)[156] initiative is based on the Council of Europe Lisbon Recognition Convention and is a document providing an assessment

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[152] www.tandemnow.eu
[153] See: https://www.memore.be/mentoring-models/mentomigri/
[154] https://uniko.ac.at/projekte/more/?lang=EN
[155] https://rm.coe.int/colab-toolkit-inclusive-practices-towards-refugees-in-higher-education/16809c3f94
[156] https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/recognition-of-refugees-qualifications

of the higher education qualifications based on available documentation and a structured interview. It also presents information on the applicant's work experience and language proficiency. The document provides reliable information for integration and progression towards employment and admission to further studies. It is a specially developed assessment scheme for refugees, even for those who cannot fully document their qualifications. Multiple Ministries of Education in Europe support the project, as does UNHCR. The project was launched in 2017 as a pilot initiative. During the pilot phase, three assessment sessions were held in Greece: 92 refugees were interviewed by credentials evaluators and 73 EQPRs were issued. In total, since the beginning of the project, as of December 2019, 525 refugees had been interviewed and 438 EQPRs issued. The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees is issued and valid for five years from the date of issue.

The **VINCE** project[157] (Step by Step towards Higher Education: how to guide newcomers and refugees in validation procedures) was co-funded by the EU Erasmus+ programme, coordinated by EUCEN, and ran from January 2017 to December 2019. The VINCE project included 13 project partners (plus EUCEN) from different countries and had multiple components, including: (1) the development of guidelines for universities to facilitate access for refugees and migrants. The guide was created as a set of frequently asked questions and related answers (FAQ). Employees at universities were also trained; (2) policy recommendations aimed at the EU and national decision-makers; (3) a Vince Course, intended for teachers, validators, advisors and administrators, as well as training workshops in multiple languages. NGOs also played an important role in the project.

The Erasmus+ project **Home away from Home: Best practices in the integration of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in European societies**[158] brings together partners from 5 countries. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the better integration of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in Europe through promoting innovative youth actions and empowering young volunteers and professionals. The project provides training for young people in order to engage themselves and other young people in facilitating the inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants into their communities. Various inspirational practices on the project website have an educational dimension. The specific project objectives are: to document and disseminate inspirational practices of innovative community integration approaches initiated by youth or in which youth play a major role, and to raise the capacities of young volunteers and professionals for supporting the integration of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

A special **UNHCR portal** offers useful resources to help teachers create a welcoming environment for refugee pupils and to help explain the meaning of refugee, asylum, migration and statelessness to school children aged 6–18.[159] The portal contains a toolkit and teaching resources in more than 20 languages, and the resources are appropriate for all ages. The subject areas touched upon include history, civics, etc. While the site acknowledges that not all children who have experienced armed conflict and flight suffer from trauma and stress, the portal contains multiple resources relating to stress and trauma related behaviours in refugee children. The materials aim to help teachers understand how stress and trauma can affect refugee children and students, and also to give some tips and advice to teachers on how to successfully include children and students who suffer from stress and trauma in their classrooms.

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[157] https://vince.eucen.eu/about-vince/
[158] http://hafh.eu/
[159] http://www.unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html

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