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ABSTRACT BOOK

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Well-being and Trauma of Ukrainian Child Refugees in the Context of Czechia

Authors: Mackova, Lucie

Organisations: Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic

Keywords: child refugees, trauma, exile, education, Czechia

Topics: Education

Well-being

Abstract:

This study aims to describe and analyze the personal stories of child refugees from Ukraine, exploring their unique experiences, attitudes, and needs. The study draws on theories of forced migration and trauma, emphasizing how displacement disrupts the psychosocial development of children. It also incorporates perspectives on the role of education in addressing the emotional and psychological needs of refugees, positioning schools as critical spaces for fostering resilience and supporting transitions to stability. This qualitative research analyzed 43 narratives of children and young people aged 7 to 20, with most stories written by children younger than 11. These narratives were collected to capture personal reflections on forced migration and displacement. A thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and themes related to trauma, adaptation, and emotional well-being. The findings suggest a strong connection between forced migration and trauma, as reflected in vivid descriptions of fear, loss, and uncertainty in the children's stories. However, the study also highlights the resilience of child refugees and the crucial role of schools in providing a safe space for children to process their conflicting emotions. The research emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive interventions to address the emotional and social needs of child refugees, enabling them to transition into their new roles and environments more effectively.

Anchored in Exclusion: Negotiating Hybrid Identities and Blended Belonging in Lebanon's Young Refugee Communities

Authors: Diab, Jasmin Lilian

Organisations: Lebanese American University, Lebanon (Lebanese Republic)

Keywords: Identity formation; Hybrid identities; Belonging; Exclusion; Marginalization; Social integration; Intergenerational identity

Topics: Well-being, Trust, Access to resources and services

Abstract:

Research Topic/Aim:

This paper examines the identity formation processes of Palestinian and Syrian refugee youth in Lebanon. It explores how prolonged displacement fosters exclusion, leading to the development of hybrid identities that blend cultural elements from both their heritage and the host society. The study investigates how systemic rejection, intergenerational marginalization, and everyday discrimination shape young refugees' sense of belonging and self-identification.

Theoretical Framework:

The analysis draws on theories of identity formation, social exclusion, and hybridity, particularly Stuart Hall's conceptualization of identity as fluid and context-dependent, Johan Galtung's theory of structural violence, and Homi Bhabha's notion of the third space. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner) is also employed to examine the construction of refugee identities in contrast to Lebanese societal perceptions. Additionally, Bourdieu's concept of habitus is used to explore intergenerational tensions in identity negotiation.

Methodology/Research Design:

This qualitative study is based on in-depth interviews with 50 Palestinian and Syrian refugee youth (aged 18-35) in Lebanon. A trauma-informed, participatory approach was employed to ensure ethical engagement with participants, allowing for nuanced insights into their lived experiences of exclusion, hybridity, and attempts at re-anchoring their identities. Interviews were conducted in Arabic and analyzed thematically to identify key patterns in identity negotiation.

Main Findings:

Findings reveal that young refugees navigate exclusion through hybrid identity construction, selectively integrating aspects of Lebanese culture while maintaining strong connections to their heritage. However, this blended belonging does not ensure full social acceptance, as systemic discrimination and legal barriers continue to reinforce their marginalization. Palestinian youth remain deeply tied to the "right to return" narrative, viewing their presence in Lebanon as inherently temporary, whereas Syrian youth, facing an uncertain future, oscillate between hope for return and reluctant adaptation to Lebanon. The study highlights how exclusion operates on both institutional and social levels, shaping refugees' self-perception and identity formation over generations.

IMMIGRATION AND INITIAL ADAPTATION OF UKRAINIAN YOUTH IN LITHUANIA

Authors: Mamaiev, Dmytro

Organisations: Lithuanian Centre for Social Research, Lithuania

Keywords: migration, adaptation, youth, migration policies, integration perception

Topics: Education, Social networks

Abstract:

Dissertation aims to disclose various perspectives on initial adaptation and subjective perception of integration and to have a look at the youth migration from Ukraine to Lithuania from different angles. Sociological research that has been carried out with the application of mixed methodologies assists the researcher in having a deeper look at the emigration trends that Ukraine tends to have when it comes to the case of Lithuania. Qualitative data allows the researcher to touch up on the issues of integration of the migrants in Lithuania and their economic, social, and cultural aspects of everyday life. While following the theoretical discourse, world systems theory, network theory, theory of phenomenology, path dependency, dual labor market theory and theory of neocolonialism have been applied to better understand why young people decide to emigrate. Some of the preliminary findings why young Ukrainians choose Lithuania disclose the following:

- security situation in the country of origin;
- lack of employment opportunities for young people and overall poor socio-economic conditions;
- level of state support by Lithuania (military, humanitarian, political, economic);
- the quality of the education in the state of origin.

The original empirical data of the research has already been collected using semi-structured interviews with the Ukrainian migrants. In total, 30 semi-structured interviews have been carried out. Quantitative data from research-project in Warsaw deployed for broader perspective of Ukrainians adaptation abroad.

The research covers two categories of Ukrainian youth migrants in Lithuania: the ones who immigrated before 2022, and the ones who immigrated after 2022. These two groups serve as a basis for research demonstrating the extensiveness and dynamic nature of the process of migration from Ukraine to Lithuania. Focus on the youth has been chosen due to the lack of research that would concern perceptions of the integration of young Ukrainians abroad.

Speaking Into the Silence: Refugee Students' Agency and Inclusion in Icelandic Primary Schools

Authors: Þorvarðarson, Haukur Þór

Organisations: University of Iceland, Iceland

Keywords: Refugee students, asylum-seeking children, participation, voice, agency, new-arrival programmes, inclusive education, recognition.

Topics: Education

Well-being

Social networks

Trust

Access to resources and services

Abstract:

This article examines how students experience voice and agency within the Icelandic primary school system by looking at it through the lens of participation as defined by Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At the same time, legislators have taken progressive steps in formulating inclusive educational policies and have implemented them into national law in 2013; however, the realities within new-arrival programmes (i., móttökudeild) often present complex challenges for newly arrived children seeking international protection regarding their belonging, recognition, and participation within the general school population. The article aims to investigate how asylum-seeking students are positioned as learners and social agents, for example, in their right to have their voices considered in decisions about their education. This research will employ qualitative methods, including interviews with nineteen parents, as well as the analysis of policy documents and classroom observations. The article will highlight the systematic and cultural factors that support or inhibit the agency of refugee students. Using qualitative methods, including interviews with parents as well as analysis of policy documents and classroom observations, the paper will highlight systematic and cultural factors which either support or inhibit the agency and participation of refugee students. Findings reveal tensions between staff who support inclusive and exclusive education as pathways for refugee education. Deficits also categorise refugee students (trauma, language barriers, interrupted schooling and othering), which limits students' agency in schools. Furthermore, refugee students are often subjected to reductive categorisation based on trauma, language deficiency, knowledge skill gap, interrupted or limited schooling, passive recipients of support and cultural outsiders - limiting their opportunities to act, decide and contribute meaningfully to the school community. The paper argues for a shift in educational discourse and practice from passive inclusion to active participation; new-arrival programmes must create relational learning spaces with a change from a deficit view as framing students as incomplete learners to an asset-based approach where students' existing knowledge, skills and experiences, both linguistic, cultural and academic, are valued and embraced.

Identity and Belonging in the Art of 1.5-Generation African Asylum-Seeking Artists in Israel

Authors: Sadan, Hamutal

Organisations: Tel Aviv University, Israel

Keywords: asylum seekers, art, 1.5-generation, identity, belonging

Topics: Well-being

Social networks

Abstract:

This lecture presents the voices of African asylum-seeking artists who arrived in Israel as children. It explores how they express non-belonging in Israel and the intersectionality of ethnicity, nationality, and gender. As individuals who vaguely remember their homelands and the experiences of the refugee journey, who grew up stateless in Israel and were educated within Israeli school systems, these artists articulate a fragmented identity—one that navigates between the cultures of their homelands (past), the culture in which they were raised in Israel (present), and their aspirations for a better future and legal status (future). Situated at the intersection of migration studies and art history, this qualitative research conducts content analysis of the visual data (paintings) and verbal data (semi-structured interviews conducted over six years). The lecture's theoretical framework focuses on identity and belonging among asylum seekers, particularly the 1.5 generation. Findings highlight intergenerational gaps between the first generation (the generation of the parents who migrated to Israel) and the 1.5 generation (the artists who were born in the Horn of Africa but raised in Israel). First-generation artists often express gratitude for Israel's temporary protection and safety compared to the hardships of their home countries and the refugee journey. In contrast, 1.5-generation artists adopt a critical, postcolonial perspective, voicing critiques of racism and Israel's discriminatory policies against non-Jewish migrants. While first-generation artists express a clear identification with their countries of origin, 1.5-generation artists experience identity confusion, balancing their cultural heritage, Israeli identity, and a broader Black Pan-African identity. The presentation argues that Israeli policies toward asylum seekers shape how they construct their identities and sense of belonging to both the local society and the state. However, these policies have distinct impacts on first-generation individuals who arrived in Israel as adults compared to those of the 1.5 generation, who arrived as minors.

The Educational Challenges of Ukrainian Refugee Children in Montenegro

Authors: Grbovic, Sanja

Organisations: University of Montenegro, Montenegro

Keywords: Montenegro, refugee children, Ukraine, educational integration

Topics: Education

Abstract:

The war in Ukraine has displaced millions, creating one of the largest refugee crises in recent history. Among those affected, children face not only the trauma of war but also significant barriers to education in their host countries. This study examines the experience of Ukrainian refugee children in Montenegro, a country of 620,000 people that has taken in over 10,000 Ukrainian refugees under its Temporary Protection (TP) regime.

Despite government efforts, the influx of Ukrainian children has exposed significant limitations in Montenegro's education system. Overcrowding in elementary schools, particularly in cities with large refugee populations such as Budva and Bar, has prevented many from securing placements. Consequently, a significant number of Ukrainian children rely on online schooling from Ukraine instead of attending local schools. Linguistic and cultural differences further complicate their adaptation to the Montenegrin curriculum and classroom environment.

This study explores the structural, cultural and linguistic barriers affecting refugee children's access to education, using policy analysis and qualitative data. It offers a comparative perspective by analyzing Montenegro's approach in relation to other European host countries.

Preliminary findings suggest that while Montenegro has provided legal protection and collaborated with UNICEF to support refugee students, systemic challenges persist. Limited resources, overcrowding and language barriers pose significant challenges to the effective integration of refugee children into the education system. This study contributes to discussions on refugee education policies, offering insights into how small host nations can enhance access and integration for displaced children.

SensArticulate: Advancing Affect-Centered Research Methods in Trauma Research with the Most Vulnerable Displaced Individuals

Authors: Mocnik, Nena

Organisations: Universitat Pompeu Fabra, France

Keywords: art-based methods, trauma, youth, displacement, sensory research

Topics: Education

Well-being

Trust

Access to resources and services

Abstract:

This paper introduces SensArticulate, an interdisciplinary, affect-centered methodology designed to address critical gaps in conducting trauma research with forcibly displaced persons (FDPs), with particular attention to the most vulnerable among them—children and youth. It foregrounds the ethical complexities inherent in researching displaced minors and invites fellow researchers into a shared dialogue on developing alternative methodological approaches. New piloted approaches include non-verbal, playful, and creative methods that not only deepen our understanding of trauma beyond clinical frameworks, but also foster safer, more culturally sensitive research engagement with traumatized, displaced children and adolescents. Trauma research involving displaced minors is frequently avoided due to strict ethical restrictions, high risks of retraumatization, and pronounced adult-child power imbalances. Consequently, there is a notable absence of evidence-based, child- and youth-centered trauma epistemologies, raising important questions about the appropriateness of applying adult-oriented trauma research methodologies to younger populations. SensArticulate responds to these challenges by proposing the integration of playful, artistic, and community-anchored practices—including visual storytelling, participatory performance, embodied games, and laughter—as valid forms of knowledge production. Developed within the framework of a Horizon-funded project, the methodology was initially piloted with scholars working alongside recently displaced Ukrainian populations. The framework draws on affect theory (Ahmed 2013; Massumi 2015); arts-based research (Lenette 2019; Leavy 2020), and ethical issues with minors (Gaywood et al. 2020) acknowledging that trauma in children often escapes verbal articulation. It also critically engages with dominant clinical paradigms by foregrounding the emotional and sensory modalities through which displaced youth experience and process war and conflict related trauma. The preliminary application of these methods suggests that co-creative, affect-centered approaches are not only ethically necessary, but essential for accessing the often-silenced dimensions of displacement—particularly those experienced by the most vulnerable.

Positive Story Telling – A powerful tool for the young refugees inclusion

Authors: Dimou, Maria;
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Organisations: International Hellenic University, Greece

Keywords: Key words : Storytelling, young refugees, inclusion

Topics: Well-being
Social networks

Abstract:

For refugees and marginalized groups to challenge myths and stereotypes, they need to be given space to share their stories and speak for themselves. Stories are a human right and a responsibility – but most importantly, stories are a privilege that most refugees do not enjoy. Stories underpin all human activity as every culture has its own storytelling tradition. By telling stories and listening to individual migrants and people in communities that welcome them, youth can counter harmful stereotypes and emphasize into common humanity. Migrants and refugees are important messengers but, often, they lack the space or the platform to share their own story or participate in designing storytelling activities on migration. Storytelling is a powerful medium, a useful tool, an art. Consciously promoting positive refugee stories, can bridge any social gap and bring positive social change. The present paper documents an observational study of a mixed member of young people (people with/without migration/refugee experience) that participated in a study session held by a youth NGO in collaboration with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. Young people that participated in it, proved that stories, keep the spirit of home and honors young refugees family and heritage. Storytelling creates deep human connections with the young people around them or the young people of the host community. The storytellers, the people that participated in the study session in question, have also found that sharing their journeys, as difficult as it can be at times, allows them to come to terms with their experiences. Stories from those who have endured similar experiences pave the way for compassion and understanding. Listening to stories, and allowing perspectives and opinions that differ from the ones that one has brings young people together and creates inclusive societies.

‘Unsettlement’: the manufactured precarity and uncertainty of refugeehood in Greece and its impact on young lives

Authors: Hunt, Lucy

Organisations: University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

Keywords: unsettlement, Europe, refugees, youth, education

Topics: Education

Abstract:

Abstract:

Across the migration literature, it is understood that young migrants’ and refugees’ lives are characterised by multiple, overlapping forms of precarity and uncertainty: being legal, financial, social, spatial and informational (Johnson & Gilligan, 2021; Ilcan et al., 2018). Drawing from data from a project on young refugees’ (aged 15-25) experiences in Greece, this paper develops and models the concept of ‘unsettlement’ (Vera Espinoza, 2018) to define these unstable conditions and their manufactured nature. The aim is to present a model of this concept which can help us understand these conditions and their impacts on young refugees’ lives, and particularly their educational trajectories.

The research is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Thessaloniki, Greece, involving in-depth interviews with young refugees aged 15-25 years, daily conversations and observations at four non-formal learning sites. Additional data was collected from interviews with 38 individuals close to the young refugees and analysis of relevant documents. Theoretically, the paper builds on the concept of ‘unsettlement’ as an antithesis to ‘resettlement’, drawing from theories of precarity, liminality and migration governance (Horst & Grabska, 2015). It extends Vera Espinoza’s (2018) definition of unsettlement, incorporating the idea of it being manufactured as a mechanism of migration control. Overall, the paper argues that on arrival in Europe, newcomers are forced to navigate ‘infrastructural’ conditions of unsettlement – meaning state practices such as encampment and neglect – which, in turn, can cause or exacerbate micro-level tensions in their everyday social worlds, causing ‘intimate’ conditions of unsettlement. The paper unpacks this term; discusses how it was explored and refined in the field, based on young refugees’ own accounts; and discusses the impacts of their unsettled conditions on their daily lives, dreams and navigational tactics, with particular attention to their education.

Divided families, divisive policies: the contentious politics of refugee family reunification in Europe and its impacts on children and young people

Authors: Hunt, Lucy

Organisations: University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg

Keywords: separated young refugees, family reunification, Europe, policy, impacts

Topics: Well-being

Abstract:

Family reunification refers to the process of family members rejoining after being separated across borders due to migration, conflict or other circumstances (Nicholson, 2018). While there have been efforts in Europe in recent years to enhance access to information and legal support for separated family members, application procedures for reunification remain complex, expensive and time-consuming (Phillimore, 2023). This can have substantial social, emotional and psychological impacts on separated young refugees (Christ & Etzold, 2025; Morris et al., 2021). Little research, until now, has explored these impacts, and particularly how they differ according to individual factors such as a young person's age, gender and asylum status.

This presentation introduces a pilot project at the University of Luxembourg which begins to fill these gaps. Drawing on extensive desk-based research, it examines national practices and socio-political debates shaping access to family reunification for refugees and beneficiaries of international protection across the continent. Drawing on Tilly and Tarrow's (2015) framework of contentious politics, the paper analyses how processes of boundary activation, identity formation, polarisation and repertoires of contention shape these debates and resulting policies. As a result, despite EU-level directives and legal frameworks promoting family unity, the implementation of reunification policies for refugee families remains fragmented - with significant disparities in access in terms of eligibility, documentation requirements and procedural timelines. The paper highlights how restrictive policies and prolonged separations then adversely affect refugees' inclusion and psychosocial well-being, paying particular attention to refugee children and youth. It concludes by arguing for more harmonised, rights-based approaches and youth-centered reform.

Art as a Bridge? How Art-Making Sparks Play and Fosters Inclusion for Refugee Children and Youth

Authors: Chang, Yi Jen (1);
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Organisations: 1: Division of Arts, Health & Society, European Graduate School, Saas-Fee, Switzerland;
2: Expressive Arts Institute Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Keywords: expressive arts, play and imagination, creative resilience, social and emotional well-being, refugee empowerment

Topics: Education, Well-being, Social networks, Trust

Abstract:

Play is a biologically rooted resource and a powerful language, especially vital for children. It shapes learning and development and, in times of crisis, becomes a crucial coping mechanism. For refugee children, play offers relief, connection, and a foundation for resilience, agency, and emotional balance. In contexts of displacement, art serves as both container and catalyst for play and imagination. Through art-making, participants connect, take risks, explore possibilities, and express beyond words, opening imaginative realms where difficult experiences can be safely transformed and integrated. This approach is especially valuable for refugee children and youth, helping them adapt inner resources to new contexts and reweave a sense of self. As a holistic, multimodal approach, expressive arts weaves music, movement, visual art, poetry, theatre, and nature-based practices into an embodied experience of presence and connection, enriched by imagination. Grounded in poiesis, it trusts the creative capacities of all humans to navigate change and bring forth the new, regardless of artistic training. Through sensory engagement, expressive arts cultivates resilience and belonging via play, ritual, and art-making, providing nonverbal pathways for exploration and healing. This study explores how expressive arts supports the social-emotional well-being of displaced communities. From January 2024 to June 2025, a biweekly program (43 sessions) engaged 18 adult participants (refugees and asylum seekers, ages 20–65) in two Icelandic community centers, Vitatorg and Andrými. Preliminary insights from session notes, reflections, and participant feedback highlight six contributions to well-being: embodied presence; agency and dignity; shared identity; transformation and hope; nature as a healing space; and gratitude fostering readiness to engage. These insights suggest expressive arts can complement systemic supports such as education, inspiring inclusive curricula and creative activities that empower refugee children and youth, while engaging educators in mixed classrooms to nurture belonging, self-expression, and compassion—supporting greater inclusion in Iceland’s increasingly diverse communities.

Educational Hospitality at the Intersection of Forced Migration and Disability: Listening to the Voices of Ukrainian Refugee Children with Disabilities

Authors: Bacakova, Marketa

Organisations: IU International University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Keywords: forced migration, disability, inclusive education, children's voices, educational hospitality

Topics: Education

Abstract:

In 2024, global displacement reached unprecedented levels, with over 120 million refugees worldwide - nearly 40% of them children (UNHCR, 2024). Among them are more than 350,000 Ukrainian refugee children currently residing in Germany, following Russia's invasion in 2022 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2024). Globally, 1.3 billion people live with disabilities, yet little is known about the intersection of disability and forced displacement, especially regarding refugee children. This paper explores the lived educational experiences of Ukrainian refugee children with disabilities in Germany - an often invisible population subjected to intersecting forms of exclusion.

Framed by Levinas's philosophy of the ethical responsibility to the Other (1986) and informed by inclusive education theorists such as Slee (2011) and Veck (2009, 2014), the study listens to voices rarely heard, seeking to learn from rather than speak for the Other. This ethical imperative challenges the technical framing of inclusion and instead calls for an openness to difference rooted in hospitality and asymmetrical responsibility.

Drawing on qualitative data from a broader mixed-methods study, the paper presents findings from interviews with five Ukrainian refugee children with disabilities, aged 10–13, attending various schools in Germany. Interviews, analyzed inductively (Strauss & Corbin, 1994), explored past and present schooling experiences and future aspirations.

Two key themes emerged: 'seeking recognition' at the individual level and 'epistemic ignorance' within educational institutions. Recognizing refugee children with disabilities requires encountering their unique epistemes - ways of knowing shaped by displacement and disability- without assimilating them into dominant discourses. Embracing the logic of the gift (Kuokkanen, 2008) may offer a path toward genuine educational hospitality.

This paper argues for a shift in inclusive education: from policy and provision to ethical engagement with the Other, resisting epistemic laziness and fostering spaces where diverse knowledges can be seen, heard, and respected.

From Objects of Study to Subjects of Research: Empowering Young Migrants with Disabilities Through Participatory Methods

Authors: Kurawa, Gwadabe

Organisations: University of Hull, United Kingdom

Keywords: Power dynamics, refugees, participatory methods, co-production of knowledge

Topics: Education

Abstract:

This research challenges the traditional power dynamic in refugee research, where refugees are often treated as objects of study rather than active participants. Many studies concerned with international migration, education, and disability have valued insights and experiences of 'insiders' and their way of understanding aspects related to disability and education. Using insider and outsider thesis, this research intends to bridge the role or power of insiders (in this case young migrants with disabilities) and outsider (researcher) in generation of knowledge about the insiders. Using qualitative methods such as focus group discussions and one-to-one interviews, this study explores how participatory methods can empower young migrants with disabilities to become subjects of their own research and contribute to knowledge production. The research also examines the challenges and opportunities for implementing participatory methods in refugee research. The preliminary findings are varied, detailed and wide-ranging. The disabled young migrants' views, thoughts and reflections on their own lived experiences, their successes and struggles are as expected impacted by intersectional issues, their individual histories, cultures and identities. Listening to their voices reveals implications for the successful educational integration of the young disabled migrants. These include implications for informal learning environments, the classroom and policy. This research argues to fully explore young disabled migrants' experiences, their voices must be heard clearly, ideally as fully participatory co-researchers in future projects.

Classrooms of Exclusion? The Role of School Climate in Early School Leaving in Greece

Authors: Karavas, Evdokia

Organisations: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

Keywords: refugee learners, school dropout, sense of belonging, school climate

Topics: Education, Well-being

Abstract:

Although European host countries have taken measures to facilitate refugee learners' participation in school systems providing language support classes (see Crul 2017), dropout rates among refugee and immigrant children remain disproportionately high (see European Commission 2016, Janta and Harte 2016, Mezzanotte 2022). In Southern Europe, the crisis is even more acute: over 40% of refugee children in countries like Greece, Italy, and Cyprus leave education prematurely (PPMI 2013).

This presentation shares findings from a qualitative study conducted in partnership with the NGO Solidarity Now, exploring the causes of school dropout among refugee learners in Greece. Ten focus groups were held with 51 refugee students (ages 9–18) and 20 parents across two refugee camps and the NGO's premises. Through systematic content analysis, a complex picture emerged: while language barriers pose significant challenges, they are far from the only obstacle. Refugee learners and their families consistently identified an unwelcoming school climate, bullying, and discriminatory treatment by teachers as key factors influencing their decision to leave school. These social and emotional experiences often outweighed academic challenges in determining school engagement.

The findings point to the crucial role of school climate and the quality of social relationships in shaping refugee learners' educational trajectories. They underscore the urgent need to move beyond structural inclusion and toward fostering genuinely welcoming, culturally responsive school environments. When schools fail to offer safety, dignity, and a sense of belonging, they risk becoming sites of exclusion rather than inclusion. This presentation will highlight the importance of relational dynamics—between students, peers, and educators—in promoting school retention. It argues for policies and practices that foster culturally responsive school environments that prioritize belonging, dignity, and emotional safety as foundational to educational inclusion.

Educational Inclusion of Migrant and Refugee Children: Strategies Across Three Border Regions

Authors: Zsögön, Cecilia

Organisations: The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Poland

Keywords: Migrant and refugee children, Educational inclusion, Human rights, Trauma and displacement, Integration strategies

Topics: Education, Social networks, Access to resources and services

Abstract:

This article examines the educational inclusion of migrant and refugee children, focusing on how host countries integrate these children into their education systems while addressing challenges such as trauma and displacement. Case studies from Colombia, the United States, and Poland illustrate diverse approaches to enhancing educational achievement, reducing grade repetition and drop-outs, and mitigating the psychological impact of forced migration. Drawing on international human rights principles, the study highlights the right to education as a stabilizing factor in the lives of displaced children, while acknowledging the socio-economic and policy frameworks that shape inclusion efforts.

The analysis is based on a literature review of reports from international organizations, local media, and policy documents, comparing strategies and outcomes in varying geopolitical contexts. Host countries adopt different measures, including providing access to public schools, implementing specialized programs, and addressing legal and bureaucratic barriers. However, they face significant challenges, such as resource limitations, cultural integration, and the mental health needs of displaced children. For instance, Poland's Better Learning Programme supports the emotional well-being of refugee students, while Colombia's citizenship grants for Venezuelan children address legal barriers to inclusion. Although these policies show promise, their success depends on sustained support and adequate funding.

While human rights treaties underscore the importance of immediate safety, well-being, and education for migrant and refugee children, host countries often struggle to meet these standards due to resource constraints and the sheer scale of displacement. This article explores how these challenges can be addressed to ensure the inclusion of migrant and refugee children in education systems in the host countries.

Thinking Together – Critical Reflexivity to Strengthen Diversity-Sensitive Competences in Teacher Education

Authors: Ha, Julia

Organisations: St.Gallen University of Teacher Education, Switzerland

Keywords: diversity competences, inclusive teaching, critical thinking, critical reflexivity

Topics: Education, Well-being, Social networks

Abstract:

Thinking Together is a cross-border, hybrid teaching project developed by the Universities of Teacher Education St. Gallen (Switzerland) and Vorarlberg (Austria). It aims to strengthen diversity-sensitive competences in pre-service teachers through structured reflection and critical reflexivity, particularly in the context of forced migration and inclusion (Barsch, 2017).

The project builds on existing mentoring and summer school programs, where students support newly arrived or refugee pupils. These practical experiences are the basis for professionally guided reflection sessions, led by experts from multiple disciplines, such as education, social work, and migration studies. The goal is to help students critically examine their professional roles, personal attitudes, and the societal power structures that shape education.

Reflection competence is viewed as a central pillar of teacher professionalization, integrating reflection-on-action and reflection-for-action (Christof, 2022). Critical reflexivity is fostered as an attitude that enables continuous negotiation between self-perception and external perspectives—vital for inclusive teaching in diverse classrooms.

Forced migration is used as a starting point to engage with broader issues of inequality and social justice in education. The project follows an interdisciplinary approach (Boix Mansilla, 2010), enabling students to integrate multiple perspectives to address complex educational challenges that transcend disciplinary boundaries.

The project is currently in its final phase. Evaluation has been conducted through a self-assessment tool focused on five key themes: asylum and forced migration, multilingualism, trauma and empowerment, school social work, and anti-racism. Initial findings from the self-evaluation indicate that participants' perceived knowledge across all five thematic areas increased over the course of the program. Knowledge self-assessments were conducted via questionnaires at the beginning and end of the winter school (n=20), showing growth in all focus areas. Focus group discussions are planned to further explore the program's impact from diverse viewpoints. The evaluation results and insights will be presented and discussed at the conference.

Guidance and Access to Higher Education: Perspectives of Refugee Youth

Authors: Fean, Paul (1);
Nasrallah, Mai (2)

Organisations: 1: University College London, UK;;
2: Mosaik Education

Keywords: Higher education, guidance, youth

Topics: Education

Abstract:

Higher Education (HE) enables students to gain advanced knowledge in subject areas and key transferable skills, supporting both personal and professional development. Refugees face systemic barriers to accessing HE, notably financial constraints, restrictive policies, and inadequate infrastructure (Martin and Stulgaitis, 2022). As a result, only 7 percent of refugees access HE (compared with a global average of 42 percent), which the UNHCR aims to increase to 15 percent by 2030 through the 15by30 goal (UNHCR, 2023). Literature on HE for refugees is limited, with sparse evidence on support required to access HE and the experiences of refugee students.

This paper aims to explore the role of guidance in supporting refugee youths to access HE and the transformative effects of HE on their lives. The paper is based on a tracer study with former participants of the Mosaik Education Guidance Programme for refugee youth in Jordan, Lebanon and Uganda. Grounded in the Capability Approach (Sen, 1999), the paper considers the role of guidance as a conversion factor to enable refugees to turn available personal, social and institutional resources into an HE opportunity. Furthermore, reflections of the refugee youth on the impact of HE on their personal and professional lives uncovers the diverse functionings and capabilities of refugees accessing HE.

The tracer study, conducted during 2025, followed a mixed methods methodology to develop in-depth understanding of the perspectives of the refugee students and graduates. The methodology comprised a quantitative survey of 32 participants of the Mosaik Education Guidance Programme, followed by qualitative interviews of eight selected refugee participants from Syria, Iraq and Sudan residing in Lebanon and Jordan. Findings of the study are framed around access of refugees to HE, impact on personal and professional development, challenges and barriers for refugees in HE, and effectiveness of guidance.

Multilingual Tutors Bridging School and Migrant Families

Authors: Lankinen, Ninni Vivian

Organisations: University of Helsinki, Finland

Keywords: multilingual tutors, newly arrived students, co-operation with families, culturally responsive education

Topics: Education, Well-being, Trust

Abstract:

From an equity perspective, fostering inclusion among marginalized students is central in education. In Finland, migration over the past few decades has diversified schools. Still, ethnic educational inequalities remain pronounced, and students from non-Finnish backgrounds often report weaker sense of belonging to school. In Finland's largest cities, a new group of professionals—multilingual tutors—works with students from non-Finnish backgrounds and their families.

Multilingual tutors facilitate interaction between schools and families, support the learning of linguistically and culturally diverse students, and advocate for ethnically marginalized students within the school community. These tutors are often described as language and culture bridges (Munhall et al., 2024). Their professional role and practical work have not been studied in the Finnish context, even though such roles have existed since the early 2010s, and their number has grown. Research in neighboring Nordic countries has found that these professionals often are excluded from the pedagogical decision-making and left at the margins of education (Dávila, 2016, Hedman & Fisher, 2022).

This presentation investigates the challenges and opportunities of multilingual tutors in supporting the sense of belonging of culturally diverse students in Finnish schools. My research asks, 1) How do Finnish urban schools engage with students' diverse cultural backgrounds and religions, and 2) How do multilingual tutors perceive their role in supporting the well-being, learning, and inclusion of culturally diverse students? The ethnographic research data includes field notes over the course of one school year and individual interviews with six multilingual tutors, as well as teachers and principals. The data will be analyzed using the theoretical framework of culturally responsive education (Gay, 2010).

Even culturally diverse Finnish schools vary in their cultural responsiveness in pedagogy and practices. One of the schools was more organized around multicultural practices, which reflected the principal's views on student agency and inclusion

Digital literacy as a lifeline: Refugee teenagers' use of digital media in navigating language learning and everyday life in Greece

Authors: Mitsikopoulou, Bessie

Organisations: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

Keywords: teenage refugees, digital literacy, digital practices, out-of-school practices, language learning

Topics: Languages: heritage language/s and second-language acquisition

Abstract:

This paper explores the role of digital literacy practices in the language learning journeys of refugee teenagers living in Greece and attending Greek secondary schools. Drawing on mixed research methods including ethnographic data, interviews, digital artifacts, and questionnaires, the study examines how teenagers engage with digital media both inside and outside the classroom to manage linguistic, social, and cultural challenges. While schools often position students as passive recipients of language instruction, refugee teenagers actively use smartphones, social media, translation apps, YouTube, and messaging platforms to construct personal learning pathways and build networks of support. In this way, digital media act as both a language learning tool and a bridge to inclusion, enabling access to resources in multiple languages, promoting peer communication, and supporting their emotional well-being (Alencar, 2018).

These practices are not only educational but deeply social, allowing students to maintain connections with their transnational families and communities (Leurs, 2015), while also helping them with their new identities within the Greek society. The findings bring to the foreground the disconnect between school-based language instruction and students' rich out-of-school literacies (Mills, 2016), calling for a rethinking of how digital literacy can be meaningfully incorporated into formal education. By centering the voices and lived experiences of refugee youth, the paper argues for the recognition of their digital practices as valid and valuable contributions to language learning and social integration. It further suggests pedagogical approaches that embrace students' everyday digital literacies, promoting equity, agency, and culturally responsive teaching (Mitsikopoulou, 2022). This research contributes to broader conversations on inclusive education, migration, and the transformative potential of digital media in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

Imagining Futures in Uncertainty: Exploring Refugee Youth Aspirations Through Arts-Based Methods

Authors: Fetić Mujić, Erma

Organisations: University of Minnesota, United States of America

Keywords: aspirations, arts-based methods, nonformal education, Greece

Topics: Education, Well-being

Abstract:

By mid-2024, 122.6 million people were forcibly displaced due to conflict and violence—a 107% increase from a decade ago (UNHCR, 2024). As a key transit point for migrants entering Europe, Greece remains a critical site for youth seeking education and stability. Despite the challenges of displacement, educational aspirations persist along refugee youths' journeys, serving as a protective factor and key source of joy (Palaiologu et al., 2024; Palaiologou & Prekate, 2023). However, refugees face significant barriers to education in Europe, including language differences, bureaucratic obstacles, and policy restrictions (Kalocsányiová et al., 2023). In response, nonformal education (NFE) programs are essential, creating safe spaces that address youths' educational and well-being needs while fostering their aspirations.

This study explores how NFE programs and safe spaces help displaced youth imagine their futures and pursue educational aspirations amid uncertainty. Anchored in the Capability Approach and Community Cultural Wealth framework (Yosso, 2005), the study conceptualizes aspirations as relational (DeJaeghere, 2018) and engages with participatory and decolonial approaches, foregrounding voice, agency, and reflexivity in contexts often dominated by deficit narratives. Using an ethnographically-informed multi-method design, including semi-structured interviews, field observations, and arts-based activities (mask-making, poetry and visual storytelling), the study explores themes of identity, mobility, aspirations, and future dreaming.

Preliminary findings indicate that while education is deeply valued, youth often struggle to translate their dreams into outcomes. They rely on NFE and diverse forms of cultural capital to navigate systems and learn on the move. Arts-based engagement and creative expression offer effective ways for youth to construct meaning, produce nuanced narratives and images of self and kin, and envision alternative futures.

This paper contributes to interdisciplinary conversations on refugee youth by highlighting the transformative potential of participatory arts-based research, and invites reflection on how educational systems might better support aspirations through creative and relational approaches.

Dominant Language Constellations of Refugee Children Living in Greece: Their Relationship with the Dominant Language(s) of the Host Society

Authors: Iakovou, Maria

Organisations: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

Keywords: dominant language constellation, language portrait, refugee children, plurilingual identity

Topics: Languages: heritage language/s and second-language acquisition
Education

Abstract:

Based on the Dominant Language Constellation concept (Lo Bianco & Aronin, 2020), this study explores the dominant language constellations of refugee children living in Greece and their evolving relationship with the dominant language(s) of the host society. Drawing on the methodological tools of the Language Portrait (Molinié, 2009) and the Language Road (Iakovou et al. 2023), the research captures the lived experiences and language journeys of 30 refugee children who are currently part of the Greek educational system. Participants created visual representations of their linguistic repertoires and provided narrative explanations of their language trajectories, from their departure from their countries of origin to their current integration into Greek society. These linguistic visualizations, triggered by both reflective and expressive tools, offered a safe and creative space for the children to articulate their sense of self in relation to their languages. Through their drawings and accompanying narratives, the children conceptualized their plurilingual identities, illustrating both the fluidity and resilience of their linguistic resources (Picardo et al. 2019). Special attention was paid to how they position themselves with respect to Greek, the dominant language of the host country and how it features in their “most expedient” languages constellation (Lo Bianco & Aronin, 2020) in comparison to their home languages and any additional languages they may have acquired during migration or are willing to learn in the future. Findings reveal diverse attitudes towards Greek, ranging from acceptance and aspiration to tension and ambivalence. The children’s stances are shaped by their daily interactions in school, their social environments, and their perceived need to navigate a new cultural and linguistic landscape. The study contributes to a broader understanding of how refugee children construct meaning around language, belonging, and identity, while also offering pedagogical insights into fostering inclusive, linguistically responsive educational practices in host countries.

Migrant students' integration in schools in Finland, Scotland and Sweden

Authors: Pantic, Natasa

Organisations: University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Keywords: teacher agency, diversity and inclusion, collaboration, migrant integration

Topics: Education, Social networks, Access to resources and services

Abstract:

Conducted within an international TEAMS project (Teaching that Matters for Migrant Students) this study aimed to understand the levers of migrant integration in schools. Focusing on teachers' agency in meeting the needs of migrant students in Finland, Scotland and Sweden, the study examined: 1) how teachers and other school staff work together with communities; and 2) how the different social and institutional context enabled or constrained teacher agency to facilitate migrant students' learning, socialization and belonging to the school community.

Teacher agency is recognized as a key concept in the contexts of increasing diversity of school populations (Pantić & Florian, 2015). Relationships are central in mediating the social and institutional contexts of schools and education policies (Pantić et al., 2024). The study applied a particular form of relational agency - working flexibly with teachers and other professionals (Edwards, 2010), together with the lens of inclusive pedagogy (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011) to conduct a mixed-method social network analysis of teacher collaboration for migrant support.

TEAMS data including online logs, network surveys, and interviews with staff and students from 7 schools in Scotland, Finland, and Sweden is triangulated with policy analysis to examine how policies account for teachers' agency within the educational landscape, spanning from the macro policy perspective to the micro-level of schools and teachers, positioning them as enactors of policy objectives.

The findings illuminate how teachers exercise relational agency to support migrant pupils as they reach out to others, exchange expertise and mobilise resources for supporting migrant students. The paper discusses the lessons for policy and practice to improve conditions for inclusive relational practices for migrant integration in schools. The comparison of policies in Sweden, Scotland and Finland maps the envisioned support systems and their alignment with real-world interactions, and the intricate relationships between policy, school structures and teachers' agency.

Constructing “Asylum”: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Greece’s Immigration Policy in 2025

Authors: Garidi, Efthymia (1);
Apergis, Spyros (2)

Organisations: 1: University of Athens, Greece;
2: The Greek National Commission for Human Rights

Keywords: asylum, critical discourse analysis, representations, migration policy, refugees

Topics: Access to resources and services

Abstract:

This paper presents a Critical Discourse Analysis of public discourse by Makis Voridis during his 2025 tenure as Greece’s Minister of Migration and Asylum, focusing on how “asylum” is constructed in policy-related discourse. Drawing on a corpus of official statements and interviews, the study combines frequency analysis with lexicogrammatical investigation to explore how language is used to legitimise exclusionary practices while maintaining a façade of legal order and institutional fairness.

The analysis applies Halliday’s model of transitivity and van Leeuwen’s framework for the representation of social actors to examine how asylum is framed as an administrative burden rather than a humanitarian right (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004; van Leeuwen 2008). Asylum is repeatedly represented as something to be processed, denied, or regulated, and never as a right owed to individuals in need of protection. Most notably, the term “refugee” is almost entirely absent from the discourse, replaced by abstract or legalistic terminology that obscures the human stakes of migration policy.

These patterns are interpreted through the concept of strategic silencing, which refers to the systematic marginalisation of refugee voices, rights, and needs. This silencing is not incidental but central to how restrictive migration policies are normalised and justified in democratic contexts. It aligns with broader European discursive shifts that reframe protection as control and humanitarian obligations as technical matters of governance (Krzyżanowski et al. 2018; Boucher & Hathaway 2022; Triandafyllidou 2017).

The paper also considers the consequences of this discursive framing for the everyday lives of asylum seekers, particularly youth. These include gaps in protection, barriers to inclusion, and restricted access to education and support – outcomes that emerge when policy discourse erases the human realities it claims to regulate.

Multilingualism, inclusion or a cultural erasure? Family language policies amongst newcomer families in Northern Ireland

Authors: Nandi, Anik

Organisations: Woxsen University, India

Keywords: Family language policy; Superdiversity; Northern Ireland; low-intensity language policy; Newcomer languages

Topics: Languages: heritage language/s and second-language acquisition
Education, Well-being, Social networks

Abstract:

Building on the theory of “low intensity language policies” (Nandi et al., 2023) that focuses on complex interaction between ideology, power, discrimination and human agency in policy research, the article examines the family language policies of newcomer parents in Northern Ireland, United Kingdom. The analysis of their discourses and actions, including the family dynamics such as negotiations, appropriations or implementations of certain linguistic decisions will allow us to understand the ideologies behind the use/non-use of the home language(s) in the context of migration. Although the Good Friday Agreement (1998) recognises the linguistic diversity of the region and calls for “respect, understanding and tolerance” towards the languages of the various ethnic communities, debates around governmental language policy and planning in the geo-political domain primarily focus on its two indigenous languages: Irish and Ulster-Scots. However, in this region, many other languages coexist, such as Polish, Chinese, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Spanish, Somali, Arabic and several other languages from India (Carruthers and Nandi, 2021). However, in practice there is no policy to protect or promote these languages (Nandi, 2024). Drawing on ethnographic observations and three focus groups, the paper analyses the language dynamics of fifteen Belfast-based newcomer families. It further demonstrates how these parents become policy intermediaries by supervising their children’s home language learning through explicit teaching, creating a favourable literacy atmosphere, ensuring its use in the family through continuous policing and developing identity through constant dialogue with children about the culture of their country of origin. The findings further demonstrate that there are also a series of factors that affect the linguistic practices of these transnational families, such as the lack of a clear governmental policy towards their minority languages, the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland and socio-economic factors among others.

“It means we are babies”: An ethnography of language classes for refugee students

Authors: Turk-Yigitalp, Gulsah

Organisations: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain

Keywords: language learning, refugees, ethnography

Topics: Languages: heritage language/s and second-language acquisition, Education

Abstract:

Classes designed for teaching the school language to migrant students are a common education policy in migrant-receiving countries and they exist under various names such as preparatory, introduction, reception or integration. These classes mainly target teaching the school language to ‘newly arrived’ students as soon as possible and maintain monolingual ideologies (Martín Rojo, 2010; Panagiotopoulou & Rosen, 2018). As part of an EU-funded education project for Syrian refugees in Turkey, such classes labeled uyum [adaptation, integration] were first opened in Turkish public schools in 2016 to assist refugee students in their Turkish language and literacy development. While they are organized for language and literacy training, ‘success’ in them is not necessarily language-related and they have consequences for students beyond language proficiency. In this year-long study at a primary school in southern Turkey, I adopt the critical sociolinguistic ethnography (Heller, 2006) approach, which examines how language and meaning-making processes shape knowledge production, social order, and access to resources, and how these dynamics manifest in everyday practices to produce social inequality. Through the analysis of fieldnotes, interviews with students conducted through art activities, and photographs, in this paper I will present refugee students’ sense-making processes of these classes, the narratives they build around them, and how the experience of being in these classes shapes their schooling journey. I will particularly show how the social category of the uyum class student as ‘unable’ and ‘unruly’ is discursively constructed at the school and the way uyum class students internalize these notions causing them to shy away from participation, which together lead to academic and social exclusion.

Compulsory Education as a Human Right: The case of Syrian refugee children in Turkey

Authors: Karaagac, Dilara (1);

Ovacik, Gamze (2);

Bilecen, Basak (1)

Organisations: 1: University of Groningen, The Netherlands;

2: McGill University Faculty of Law Centre

Keywords: right to education, children's rights, compulsory education, Syrian refugee children, educational policies in Turkey

Topics: Education

Abstract:

Despite hosting the world's largest refugee population since 2011, Turkey has been struggling to ensure access to compulsory and accessible primary education for over 1.5 million Syrian children. While primary education is a core right under international human rights law, nearly %20 of Syrian children in Turkey remains out of school at the primary level, with even lower enrolment rates documented in earlier years. These numbers contribute the emergence of a "lost generation," where education should act as a protective mechanism against child labour, early marriage, and social exclusion.

This article aims to investigate the extent to which Turkey fulfils core education rights of Syrian children in Turkey since their arrival. It focuses on the minimum human rights obligations of States concerning refugee education and critically analyses Turkey's education policies between 2011 and 2024. Applying doctrinal and analytical legal research method, the article examines domestic legislation, evolving education policies, and their compatibility with Turkey's international obligations. It analysis the issue through the lens of right to compulsory, and accessible education and non-discrimination under human rights law, as enshrined and interpreted by Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights and their relevant committees.

The paper traces the transition from temporary schooling models to integration into the public school system, highlighting how legal and policy frameworks have failed to uphold the compulsory nature of education in practice. It also identifies significant policy gaps and inconsistencies that contribute to ongoing rights violations. Unlike existing literature, which primarily addresses socio-political or integration dimensions, this article is the first study to comprehensively approaching the issue through a human rights law lens in terms of access to primary education as a human rights—demonstrating both the scale and structural nature of these violations since 2011.

Invisible at the Border: Reimagining Refugeehood through the Case of Yemeni Children and Youth

Authors: Haimed, Saber Naji

Organisations: Albaydha University, Yemen

Keywords: Yemeni youth, refugees, forced immobility, non-migration, cultural barriers, displacement

Topics: Education, Trust

Abstract:

This study investigates the puzzling underrepresentation of Yemenis (both youth and children) among global refugee populations despite more than a decade of ongoing conflict, humanitarian crisis, and economic collapse. Unlike other war-torn areas such as Iraq or Syria, Yemen's displacement patterns remain mostly internal or regionally bound, with minimal international asylum-seeking. Hence, this study seeks to unpack the cultural, political, and structural reasons behind this phenomenon by focusing on the lived experiences of Yemeni youth and their communities' decisions to remain within or near national borders.

Based on interdisciplinary refugee and migration theory—including Mallick's and Schewel's concepts of "non-migration" (Mallick, 2020; Schewel, 2019), Ravenstein's laws of migration, and "forced immobility" (Carling, 2002)—the study draws on qualitative interviews with aid workers, educators, and displaced families in Yemen, Djibouti, and Egypt, alongside policy analysis and secondary data on refugee flows. It investigates how tribal customs, local-conflict resolution traditions, gender roles, and distrust of exterior systems shape both practical and symbolic choices about mobility. Findings indicate that children in Yemen often remain within kinship networks or local displacement camps, where access to education and psychosocial support is extremely limited, yet the option to flee internationally is constrained by tribal, legal, logistical, and cultural barriers. In several cases, Yemeni young men and women are discouraged from seeking asylum abroad due to perceptions of moral risk, loss of family honor, and fears of social fragmentation. This paper argues that Yemen challenges dominant frameworks of refugeehood and calls for greater recognition of non-migratory displacement, particularly among youth who remain largely uncounted in international systems. It advocates for policy and scholarly approaches that consider rootedness, tradition, and regional displacement patterns as central to understanding child refugeehood in the Global South.

Inclusive Education Policies and Refugee Youth: Building Dialogues Between Portugal and Norway in a Shifting European Scenery

Authors: Almeida Santos, Sofia (1);
Iamroz, Olena (2)

Organisations: 1: University of Porto;
2: Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences

Keywords: inclusive education policies ; refugee education; equitable education

Topics: Education

Abstract:

This presentation explores the conceptual and political dimensions of inclusive education policies for refugee youth in Portugal and Norway. By fostering a comparative dialogue between two national education systems, it reflects on how refugee inclusion is framed and enacted in distinct sociopolitical and migratory contexts. As the reception and integration of refugees become increasingly politicized in European and global discourses, education systems are called upon not only to provide access but also to engage in the complex effort of cultivating belonging, equity, and opportunity in contexts marked by increasingly uncertainty and exclusion. Therefore, the aim is to explore how inclusive education is mobilised as a response to forced displacement in an increasingly polarized Europe. The analysis is informed by theories of social inclusion and exclusion (Hilt, 2016; Nilsen, 2017), and by critical perspectives on the re-nationalization of refugee education (Pastoor, 2016). It also engages with Sarah Dryden-Peterson's work (2016, 2019) on refugee education as preparation for "unknowable futures," and probes the tension between global human rights frameworks and their uneven national implementation.

Rather than presenting empirical data, this contribution is based on a conceptual and policy-oriented analysis. It draws on qualitative content analysis of national inclusive education policies, legislative frameworks, and strategic documents for refugees' education in Portugal and Norway. This is complemented by current literature and comparative insights from international sources, particularly OECD reports and UNHCR policy documents.

We will highlight how each country operationalizes inclusive education policies and practices regarding refugee youth. While both operate under shared European and international commitments, their responses are shaped by differing migration histories, national imaginaries, and political agendas. Through some dialogic lens, this presentation argues for inclusive education not only as a humanitarian response, but as a deeply political project—shaped by broader debates over citizenship, belonging, and the future of public education.

Normative Contestation and Policy Responses: Comparing Migrant Education in Transit in Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Authors: Karabegovic, Dzeneta

Organisations: University of Salzburg, Austria

Keywords: migration and refugee education; Turkey; Bosnia and Herzegovina; mixed methods; policy frameworks

Topics: Education, Access to resources and services

Abstract:

This paper examines and compares the integration of migrant and refugee populations into educational systems in Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a focus on how each country addresses the educational needs of those in transit or awaiting resettlement. The study analyzes the period from 2017 to 2021, exploring the intersection of migration management and education policy in the border region of the Una-Sana Canton in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Hayat region in Turkey. The research incorporates qualitative insights from interviews with educators, policy makers, and investigating their experiences teaching refugee and migrant children, the challenges encountered, and the strategies employed to overcome these obstacles. Further, interviews are triangulated using policy document analysis in both countries. The study also explores how refugee children are placed into classes, the subjects taught, and the extent of institutional support-including strategic plans, directives, and training opportunities provided by ministries and relevant agencies. By comparing these findings, the paper provides a nuanced understanding of how policy frameworks and local practices interact. It highlights how subnational units diffuse and localize international norms in accordance with their own conceptual assumptions and within the means/resources available. The comparison underscores the dynamic interplay between international expectations, national policies, and local realities, offering insights into the evolving landscape of migrant and refugee education in transit settings in both Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Accessible, inclusive and enabling contexts for university students from refugee and migrant background

Authors: Cefai, Carmel;
Spiteri, Rachel;
Galea, Natalie;
Briguglio, Marie

Organisations: University of Malta, Malta

Keywords: Well being

Topics: Well-being

Abstract:

The pathway to higher education for students from a refugee or migrant background is not an easy one. Despite their potential, they face numerous challenges both in accessing higher education as well as completing their studies successfully. They remain an 'underrepresented equity group' necessitating specific policies and actions to facilitate their access to higher education which take into consideration their past experiences and the challenges they face, and that provide flexible and alternative entry pathways to higher education. They also require a safe, inclusive and enabling learning environment with adequate academic, social and psychological supports tailored to their needs. This paper discusses these challenges, focusing on the University of Malta as a case study on how it is seeking to address this challenge. It proposes a policy proposal for broadening access and increasing participation for students from a refugee and migrant background. The policy describes policy actions to attract and recruit students from refugee and migrant background so as to enhance their participation in higher education, including flexible and alternative entry pathways, and to improve the academic and psychosocial support systems so as to enhance their inclusion, wellbeing and learning experience.

Greeks in Canada: pursuing heritage language maintenance among the third immigrant generation

Authors: Chatzidaki, Aspasia;
Aravossitas, Themis;
Arkadianos, Dionysios

Organisations: University of Crete, Greece

Keywords: Greek language, heritage language(s), community language(s), family language policies

Topics: Languages: heritage language/s and second-language acquisition

Abstract:

Besides the multiple challenges facing migrant and refugee communities, intergenerational language transmission remains an important objective for several ethnic groups. Societal pressure for inclusion and the monolingual mindset all too often prevalent among educators may dissuade families' from maintaining their home language. However, international research suggests that numerous ethnic groups rally around their language and pursue its maintenance, even when it has no practical value whatsoever in their host country. It is usually the strong link between language and the group's identity and cultural heritage that motivates families to invest in heritage language learning (e.g. Alsahafi, 2022; Chatzidaki & Maligkoudi, 2023; Hatoss & Sheely, 2009).

Diaspora Greeks are a case in point, maintaining the heritage language (HL) well into the third-generation (Karidakis & Arunachalam, 2016). As Greek language use diminishes from one generation to the next, second- or even third-generation families have to rely to a large extent to heritage language schools to provide spaces for language development and use. This paper examines the perspectives of Greek-Canadian parents on Greek-language education in this country. It forms part of the 'Hellenic Relay' study, commissioned and funded by the Hellenic Heritage Foundation (HHF) with the aim to offer a comprehensive evaluation of the current state of Greek-language education in Canada and to propose practical strategies for its preservation and enhancement.

In this paper we draw on data from 276 parent questionnaires completed online. The survey explored parents' and children's language practices, parents' motivations and expectations regarding heritage language education, and the degree to which they consider that these programs (both day schools and after hours, community-run institutions) meet their objectives. The analysis reveals that intergenerational transmission of the Greek language remains a significant challenge, in view of the minimal exposure students have to Greek in their daily interactions. On the other hand, however, HL schools are considered important hubs for ethnic identity development and the formation of strong ethnic networks among the younger generation.

In our presentation we will attempt to draw a connection between this context and other transnational populations' endeavour to maintain their language in a new country.

Religious Literacy Beyond the Classroom: Exploring Teachers' Engagement with Students' Faith Backgrounds

Authors: Skrefsrud, Thor-André

Organisations: University of Inland Norway, Norway

Keywords: Religion, Faith

Topics: Social networks, Trust, Access to resources and services

Abstract:

This paper presents findings from the Norwegian research project Non-formal Faith Education, the Public School, and Religious Minorities in Norway (FAITHED), funded by the Research Council of Norway. More specifically, it explores how public school teachers of Religious Education (RE) perceive the relationship between RE in schools and students' engagement in non-formal religious education.

In the broader European context, RE is increasingly recognized as a vital tool for enhancing students' sense of identity, raising awareness of diversity and inclusion, and fostering understanding of 'the other' (Jackson, 2014; Weisse, 2010). Given that religious beliefs and practices represent a key dimension of diversity in pluralistic societies, RE teachers are tasked with promoting knowledge and skills essential for democratic citizenship and peaceful coexistence. They are also expected to create inclusive spaces for students to reflect on existential questions and explore multiple worldviews (Engen, 2018; Bråten, 2015; Skrefsrud, 2022; Reiss, 2016).

This paper pays particular attention to how RE teachers approach the religious lives of young people from minority backgrounds – including young refugees – many of whom participate in non-formal religious education such as Quran schools and Catholic catechesis. The findings reveal that teachers are highly aware of classroom diversity and strive to include all voices. They recognize the importance of students' lives outside school and express a desire to make curricular connections to their broader experiences. However, many RE teachers report limited knowledge of non-formal faith education and express uncertainty about its relevance and skepticism toward its pedagogical approaches.

Given this ambivalence, the paper asks whether students' religious experiences remain an untapped reservoir of cultural and existential competence. Their religious literacy often stays confined within faith-specific settings and is rarely acknowledged as a form of symbolic capital within the non-confessional RE classroom. The paper argues for a more deliberate engagement with students' diverse religious backgrounds as a way to strengthen inclusive and reflective pedagogical practices in increasingly diverse school environments.

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