

Higher education: challenges and perspectives

Arar, K., Haj-Yehia, K., Ross, D.B. and Kondakci, Y. (2019) *'Higher education challenges for migrants and refugee students in a global world'*, New York: PeterLang, pp. 1-23.

Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugee Students in a Global World informs readers of theory, policy and practice of refugee and migrant equitable access to higher education, especially indicating how policy makers, educational leaders and practitioners can support refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants' inclusion in higher education institutions in the global world. The chapters composing each section of this book constitute a compilation of research addressing experience relating to the overwhelming flow of refugee and asylum seekers in various higher education systems. There are 41 contributors located in 12 countries (Austria, Canada, Czechia, Germany, Holland, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Palestine, Turkey and the United States) who deal with the topics of refugees and immigrants in higher education in different world regions, including Africa, the Middle East, Europe and North America.

Arar, K., Kondakci, Y., & Streitwieser, B. (2020). Higher Education for Forcibly Displaced Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers. *Higher Education Policy*, 33(2), 195-202.

Political, economic and ecological upheavals accompanied by developments in transportation and communication around the globe have created a constant flow of people from one country context to another. Although it is very difficult to measure the size and direction of international migration, estimates by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) suggest that 3.3% of the total global population, or 244 million people, are on the move (IOM, 2018). Overwhelmingly, international migration flows from low-income to high-income countries highlight the key role that economic concerns play in decisions to migrate, along with choice of destination for migration. Displaced people form a distinct group within the total number of international migrants. According to the IOM (2018), of the total number of migrants, 40 million are classified as being "displaced"; meanwhile, the total number of refugees currently registered exceeds 22 million. Future estimates do not envisage a decrease in international immigrants nor in the number of documented displaced people. Hence, the reality of international migration calls for effective policies that can manage international migration (IOM, 2018; OECD, 2016).

Castaño Muñoz, J., Colucci, E., & Smidt, H. (2018). Free digital learning for inclusion of migrants and refugees in Europe: A qualitative analysis of three types of learning purposes. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 19(2).

The increasing number of migrants and refugees arriving in Europe places new demands on European education systems. In this context, the role that free digital learning (FDL) could play in fostering inclusion has attracted renewed interest. While the existing literature highlights some general design principles for developing FDL for migrants and refugees, there is little information on the use of FDL at specific education levels, or for specific learning purposes. This paper presents the results of a qualitative study that was carried out as part of the Moocs4Inclusion project of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) between July and December 2016. The study, which has a European focus, disaggregates the analysis of FDL initiatives by what were identified as its three most common purposes:

a) language learning, b) civic integration and employment, and c) higher education. For each of these topics, the study sheds light on the approaches used by a wide sample of initiatives, users' levels of awareness of what is available and take up, and migrants' and refugees' perceptions of the current offer. In order to collect the information needed to cover different approaches and perspectives, semi-structured interviews with 24 representatives of 10 FDL initiatives and four focus groups with 39 migrants and refugees were carried out. The results show that there are indeed overlaps between the purposes of FDL initiatives and their design principles. Specific recommendations on how to better design FDL initiatives for migrants and refugees, taking into account their specific purposes, have also been identified.

Colucci, E., Smidt, H., Devaux, A., Vrasidas, C., Safarjalani, M., & Castaño Muñoz, J. (2017). Free digital learning opportunities for migrants and refugees. *An Analysis of current initiatives and recommendations for their further use. JRC Science for Policy Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.*

This is the final report of MOOCs4inclusion project, which was designed and financed by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The report summarises the research conducted between July-December 2016 on the efficiency and efficacy of free digital learning (FDL) for the integration, inclusion and further learning of migrants and refugees in Europe and in neighbouring regions in conflict. Drawing from a literature review, focus groups with migrants/refugees (third country nationals in Europe) and interviews with representatives of selected FDL initiatives, the report assesses the success factors and limitations of FDL and draws conclusions about how FDL's efficiency and efficacy could be improved. The report also proposes a categorisation of FDL offers according to their design and purposes. Emphasis is placed on initiatives that take a 'blended' (online and face-to-face) and 'facilitated' (support services and mentoring) approach, as this was found to be optimal by both users of FDL and providers. General recommendations are provided about how the European Union and other interested actors can invest in this field, enhance synergies and design effective and efficient FDL offers for migrants/refugees in the future.

Dryden-Peterson, S. (2011). The politics of higher education for refugees in a global movement for basic education. *Refuge*, 27(2), 10-18.

In the context of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), global movements for expanded access to education have focused on primary education. In refugee situations, where one-quarter of refugees do not have access to primary school and two-thirds do not have access to secondary school, donors and agencies resist supporting higher education with arguments that, at great cost, it stands to benefit a small and elite group. At the same time, refugees are clear that progression to higher levels of education is integrally connected with their future livelihoods and future stability for their regions of origin. This paper examines where higher education fits within a broader framework of refugee education and the politics of its provision, with attention to the policies and priorities of UN agencies, NGOs, national governments, and refugees themselves.

Kluijfhout, E. (2016) A viable role of MOOCs in European HEIs - Vision & recommendations.

This output consists of guidelines for policy makers at university level and at regional/governmental level how to maximise the potential of MOOCs for the educational system and for society.

Naidoo, Loshini, Wilkinson, J., Adoniou, M., & Langat, K. (2018). Navigating the Terrain of Higher Education. In L. N. W. A. Langat (Ed.), *Refugee Background Students Transitioning Into Higher Education Navigating Complex Spaces* (p. 184). Springer.

This chapter highlights some of the challenges faced by refugee youth as they negotiate the alien terrain of higher education. Drawing on interviews and case studies of refugee-background youth and university staff (academic and support), we document the journeys of students through three phases of their tertiary education: getting in to university, getting through their tertiary studies and getting on to employment in their chosen career. We argue that despite high aspirations and a desire to transition to tertiary education, refugee youth at university face a range of challenges in relation to the directed support so necessary for successful transition and participation at university. These challenges are examined in terms of two of the six key themes that emerged in our case study of refugee youth pathways from school to university: aspiration and politics and policy.

O'keeffe, P. (2020). The case for engaging online tutors for supporting learners in higher education in refugee contexts. *Research in Learning Technology*, 28, 1–15.

International development initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 are helping to position higher education as a key solution available to policy makers in their efforts to alleviate various ongoing refugee crises around the world. As technology develops and higher education embraces new forms of delivery, such as blended learning approaches, university courses can be accessed in far-flung places and reach more people than ever before. With this increased emphasis on higher education solutions and more refugees taking advantage of these solutions, there is a growing awareness among practitioners that digital learning requires adequate support beyond merely transmitting educational materials to learners. This support or scaffolding requires the input of various instructional and administrative actors to create a successful collaborative learning model. Using InZone's collaborative learning ecosystem for enabling higher education refugee contexts as a case study, this study examines the role of online tutors in such scaffolding. Various factors that shape online tutoring are explored and data collected from nine courses enabled in Azraq and Kakuma refugee camps in 2017 and 2018 are presented to support the use of online tutoring for improving course completion rates and ultimately making the case for engaging online tutors for higher education in refugee contexts.

Read, T. (ed) (2016) *The MOONLITE Meta-MOOC A MOOC detailing how to design and utilize MOOCs for refugees*.

This report presents the activities undertaken in Output 5 of the MOONLITE project (2016-1-ES01-KA203-025731). three MOOCs have been developed. One so called Meta-MOOC, since it is a MOOC that uses the format of these courses to actually present the research undertaken in this project, and two Language MOOCs (LMOOCs), that illustrate the details of how MOOCs can be designed, developed and deployed for refugees and migrants. Specifically, the Meta-MOOC follows the structure of the project and focusses on the application of MOOCs for displaced people (refugees and migrants), their access to employment, and to higher education. After an introduction to the topics being considered here, a contextualization of open and online education for displaced people, related to language learning and employability, is presented. Subsequently, four case studies of this application, undertaken by project partners (ESCP in Germany, LNU in Sweden, UNED in Spain, and UW in the UK) are presented.

Singh, S., & Tregale, R. (2015). From homeland to home: Widening Participation through the LEAP- Macquarie Mentoring (Refugee Mentoring) Program. *International Studies in Widening Participation*, 2(1), 15–27.

This article examines the impact of the LEAP-Macquarie Mentoring (Refugee Mentoring) program on high school students from refugee backgrounds who are mentees on the program and on the university students who are mentors on the program. A qualitative study was completed involving five focus groups, individual and semi structured interviews with 54 mentees and diary analysis of 45 mentors. Transcripts of interview and focus groups were analysed using a grounded approach. Key findings highlighted that the LEAP-Macquarie Mentoring (Refugee Mentoring) program supported both mentors and mentees in making a smooth personal, social, and academic transition from high school to university, helped them develop leadership potential, and provided them with a connection to community.

Soberón, M. A., Reuter, L., & Chibuzor, A. (2017). *Accessing Higher Education in Europe: Challenges for Refugee Students & Strategies to Overcome Them* (pp. 1–40). University of Cologne.

The Key Action 2 (KA2) Erasmus+ project "Supporting University Community Pathways for Refugees-Migrants" (S.U.C.RE.) began in 2016 as a joint project focusing on the response of universities to the needs of refugee students and scholars. S.U.C.RE. is carried out by the University of Cologne, the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Greek Council for Refugees, and is coordinated by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. This project analyzes the current refugee situation in the context of higher education institutions and explores five main areas called "Intellectual Outputs". These outputs are Admissions Procedures and Preparatory Programs (IO1), Institutional Support for Refugee Students (IO2), Institutional Support for Refugee Scholars (IO3), Psychosocial Support (IO4) as well as Health and Legal Support (IO5). This article addresses the topics established in Intellectual Output IO1: Admission Procedures and Preparatory Programs. The S.U.C.RE. project identified the need to not only collect information on initiatives for refugees looking to access higher education across Europe, but also the need for a framework that brings them together cohesively. Hence, this project will critically analyze the multiple barriers refugees face while trying to access higher education, as well as challenges experienced on the institutional side. It will also analyze the different programs initiated by higher education institutions (HEIs) that serve refugees on the road to integration in university degree programs. The main interest groups for this study are refugee applicants seeking admission at an institution of higher education in Europe and European universities seeking to provide a humane and realistic path to higher education integration for refugees.

Streitwieser, Bernhard, Loo, B., Ohorodnik, M., & Jeong, J. (2019). Access for Refugees Into Higher Education: A Review of Interventions in North America and Europe. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 23(4), 473–496.

This paper examines current interventions to reduce barriers to access into higher education for refugees in North America and Europe. We analyze a diversity of interventions sponsored by host governments, higher education institutions, foundations, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals. These interventions differ in size, delivery method, focus, and extent of support, and range from a single language course or limited online learning opportunity to fully accredited higher education programs. However, significant problems hamper the efficacy of many current interventions. We examine providers' rationales for working with refugees using Knight and De Wit's rationales for internationalization of higher education, later reconceptualized in four interrelated groups of rationales: academic, political, economic, and socio-cultural. To these, we propose adding a fifth category: humanism. To widen refugee participation and success in higher education, we suggest that policy makers and administrators should adopt a longer-term perspective, increase transparency, and use evidence-based approaches to develop and evaluate refugee programming.

Traeger, C., & Löwe, C. (2018). *Exploiting MOOCs for Access and Progression into Higher Education Institutions and Employment Market*.

This report summarizes the conceptual and methodological approach of the MOONLITE consortium to output 3 as well as the research and practical results and recommendations for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): Exploiting MOOCs for Access and Progression into Higher Education Institutions and Employment Market of the MOONLITE project. MOOCs are online courses designed for large numbers of participants, can be accessed by anyone anywhere as long as they have an Internet connection, are open to everyone without entry qualifications and offer a full/complete course experience online for free (Mulder & Jansen, 2015). Within this report, a specific focus is put on how and why various scenarios that address students' and refugees' skills development are put into practice.

Regional experiences

Berg, J. (2018). A New Aspect of Internationalisation? Specific Challenges and Support Structures for Refugees on Their Way to German Higher Education. In A. Curaj, L. Deca, & R. Pricopie (Eds.), *European Higher Education Area: The Impact of Past and Future policies* (pp. 219-235). Springer, Cham.

Education is a crucial topic for asylum seekers and refugees. Many of them have high educational aspirations, and the level of education determines their chances of integration and success in the host country. Supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the German Academic Exchange Service, universities, universities of applied sciences and preparatory colleges started programs to assist refugees and asylum seekers on their way to and through higher education. Based on a system theoretical intersectional perspective, this article works out what first contacts for refugees, members of the international offices and a vice-president of internationalisation at 5 German higher education institutions identify as specific challenges for refugees and asylum seekers on their way to German higher education. Then, it comparatively introduces the support structures those 5 German HEI have implemented. It recommends supporting HEIs financially to help them institutionalise their support-structures and argues towards a framing of refugees as potentially highly performing international students and a positive enrichment of a diverse and international HEI.

Creelman, A., Witthaus, G., Padilla Rodriguez, B. C., & Witthaus, G. (2018). *Refugees' Educational Resources (RefER)* Project Final Report (November; pp. 1-28). The Open University.

The Refugees' Educational Resources (RefER) project was carried out between June and November 2018. The aim was to provide an understanding of the learning resources offered by organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, and to advise the Open University (OU) on how it might repackage existing resources, or create additional ones, to directly respond to the needs of these organisations and the individuals they support.

Détourbe, M.-A., & Goastellec, G. (2018). Revisiting the issues of access to higher education and social stratification through the case of refugees: A comparative study of spaces of opportunity for refugee students in Germany and England. *Social Sciences*, 7(10), 186

This paper presents new insights into the relationship between inequality in access to higher education and social stratification through the analytical lens of refugees' access to high participation systems of higher education (HPS). Taking stock of the growing numbers of refugees and their increasing-yet still marginal-demand for accessing higher education, the paper analyses the specific statuses and rights they are granted, and how they combine in two European Higher Education Area HPS, England and Germany. The comparative analysis draws on the desk-based study of immigration and access to higher education policies and mechanisms for refugees in the two countries. The concept of assemblage is called upon to highlight how complex combinations of asylum, welfare and access to higher education policies lead to differential rights which create different spaces of opportunity for refugees with higher education aspirations. More generally, analysing how these rights intersect allows for a better understanding of inequalities in access to higher education.

Garito, M. A. (2017a). A University for Refugees: Education without Boundaries. *Journal of Modern Education Review*, 7(8), 568–575.

One of the hardest challenges in European countries, and especially in Italy, we are facing these days is the escalating crisis of immigrants and refugees coming from the Arab World and Sub-Saharan Africa countries. The history of universities tells us that the first Universities realized a networked model in which students shaped their own study path, moving from one institution to another across Europe in order to attend the lectures by the best professors from different Universities. The Medieval higher education system, therefore, acted as a bridge between different cultures, fostering knowledge exchange, sharing and construction based on a networked organizational model, and an educational model promoting discussions and debates (*questio and disputatio*). Nowadays, ICT technologies, and above all the Internet, allow Universities to re-create a network of knowledge and of students and professors, sharing experiences and competences from different social and cultural backgrounds. The International Telematic University UNINETTUNO developed and implemented an internalization model and a psycho-pedagogic model, whose main characteristics are described in this paper, promoting the collaboration among Universities from the United States, Europe, Asia and above all from the Arab World countries. Through this collaborations, UNINETTUNO developed the first higher education portal in the world which is available in 5 languages (Italian, English, French, Arabic and Greek), enrolled students from 163 countries of the world. The success of these international cooperation activities inspired UNINETTUNO in the creation of an Internet-based portal — The University for Refugees — Education without Boundaries — allowing refugees

Grüttner, M. (2019). Belonging as a resource of resilience: Psychological wellbeing of international and refugee students in study preparation at German higher education institutions. *Student Success*, 10(3), 36–44.

After 2015, several German higher education institutions (HEI) expanded their capacities for the study preparation of refugees. Nowadays, international and refugee students prepare for higher education degree programs through languages courses and subject-specific preparation courses at universities and colleges. So far, empirical research on refugee students' wellbeing, in comparison to international students is scarce. This article elaborates on study preparation at German HEIs and refugee students' psychological wellbeing. I focus on the mechanisms of subjective social exclusion/inclusion. I examine novel survey data from international and refugee students (final sample N = 904) by path analysis structural equation modelling. Results show on one hand that feelings of social exclusion reduce wellbeing, but on the other hand course belonging can function as a social resource of resilience for refugee students in study preparation. HEIs can strengthen feelings of social inclusion and psychological wellbeing of refugee students by fostering their belongingness in study preparation courses.

Güney, I., (2017). *Widening Access to Refugees: Responses of Austrian Public Universities* [Master's]. Danube University, Krems.

Europe has been a scene of mass migration unparalleled in scale since the World War II in the last couple of years. With the recent migration flow, higher education institutions have confronted with the new challenge of managing a diverse student body from refugees and asylum seekers. Likewise, refugee and asylum seeking students have encountered various barriers in accessing higher education. Whilst significance of higher education for refugees is well- documented in the literature, higher education has not been prioritized for international support and education of refugees has received little attention until recently. Being one of the main transit countries for refugees, Austria has received approximately 90.000 asylum applications in 2015, an increase of 200% as compared to 2014, which is equivalent to about 1 percent of country's population. While policy discussions in Austria have revolved around handling the refugee crisis and offering humanitarian aid, the role of higher education in integrating refugees has not yet been considered by the policy side. In this context, the aim of this study is to analyze how the Austrian higher education system is responding to including refugees and asylum seekers and what policies and strategies they are adopting to this end. The study adopts qualitative methodology, and employs documentary research and interviews as data collection tools. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews from various stakeholders representing Austrian higher education system; universities, students, student unions and analysis of the official documents "Leistungsvereinbarung" (performance agreements) of public universities. Findings reveal that language, funding and lack of documentation constitute major obstacles for refugee students' access to higher education. While efforts are being exerted by individual universities and NGOs to meet immediate challenges, funding and support from the policy side of higher education remain scarce. Thus, a concerted national action plan for education of refugees is needed.

Iwers-Stelljes, T., Bosse, E., & Heudorfer, A. (2016). Responding to the challenges arising from flight and migration: The case of an higher education institution. *Gruppe. Interaktion. Organisation. Zeitschrift Fur Angewandte Organisationspsychologie*, 47(3), 215-223.

This paper presents an analytic framework for the organisational dynamics in educational institutions focusing on categories such as the historic and social context, potentials and resources as well as the scope of action. Adopting the perspective of higher education research and development, the framework introduces three levels of analysis: the macro-level of the higher education institution, the meso-level of the faculty with its study programmes, and the micro-level of the learning environment. First, the paper describes the theoretical background for the analytic framework. Second, the framework is used to analyse the current development of programmes and courses designed to provide solutions for challenges posed by flight and migration. The University of Hamburg serves as an example to reflect upon emerging spaces and opportunities for learning. At the macro-level, the analysis reveals a process of opening the higher education institution for refugee students. At the meso-level, it shows how the current challenges turn into a common subject for dialogue within the faculty, while at the micro-level the challenges are reflected in the topics and design of selected courses. Overall, the organisational dynamics are characterised by the finding that the expertise and engagement across different stakeholder groups and institutional boundaries contribute to the emerging spaces and opportunities for learning. At the same time, the analysis suggests that there are limits to activating potentials and the scope of action. As our analysis can only provide a snapshot of the current processes, further research is needed to investigate the sustainability of the identified dynamics.

Jungblut, J., Vukosovic, M., & Steinhardt, I. (2020). Higher education policy dynamics in turbulent times—access to higher education for refugees in Europe. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(2), 327–338. Scopus.

Apart from teaching, research and service to society, since 2015 higher education systems and institutions in Europe have faced an additional expectation—to respond to the largely unexpected yet nevertheless growing demand for higher education by refugees. This study explores system and organizational level responses to such environmental pressures in Germany and Flanders, both affluent systems, but different in terms of size, attractiveness as destination and the extent to which their languages are widely spoken. Relying primarily on document analysis and interviews, the study highlights three elements of policy dynamics: policy styles, main drivers, and extent of involvement of non-state actors. While, as expected, in both systems the dynamics were re-active, solution-driven, and with strong involvement of non-state actors, contrary to expectations both countries responded primarily in a bottom-up manner. The study provides a conceptual tool and a first empirical insight into this novel phenomenon. © 2018, © 2018 Society for Research into Higher Education.

Kontowski, D., & Leitsberger, M. (2018). Hospitable universities and integration of refugees: First responses from Austria and Poland. *European Educational Research Journal*, 17(2), 248–270.

European universities responded in different ways to the 'refugee crisis' of 2015. Some subscribed to the agenda of higher education (HE) as a universal human right, while others stressed different long-term benefits of offering access to it. Yet, the unprecedented sense of moral urgency that guided immediate declarations of support and subsequent actions has largely remained unaddressed. With the crisis becoming a new reality for many countries, HE has a role to play in the social inclusion of refugees, even in countries that were not attractive destinations for refugees in the past. In this article, we provide an overview of the reasons why HE institutions supported refugees, and present the results of an empirical study of Poland and Austria during the 2015–2016 academic year. We then evaluate those first responses utilizing parts of Ager and Strang's framework of integration, and discuss issues of institutional readiness, capabilities and the public role of HE stemming from this comparison. Our findings suggest that reasons such as acknowledgement of basic rights, or utilizing social capital are insufficient to explain and understand strong integrative support measures. We propose that refugee support by HE institutions is both better understood and promoted through the language of hospitality.

Lambrechts, A. A. (2020). The super-disadvantaged in higher education: Barriers to access for refugee background students in England. *Higher Education*, 80(5), 803–822.

Based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with nineteen refugees and asylum seekers residing in England, this study explores refugee background students' perceptions of the barriers to higher education and builds on previous research by including participants of varied ages, locations and study statuses — namely, aspiring to enrol, or currently enrolled in universities. While existing previous research provided extensive accounts of barriers to access, these were presented as separate issues, where in reality, these factors rarely occur in isolation. Thus, the analytical focus in this paper concerns how these different barriers to access not only accumulate, but also inter-relate and exacerbate each other, leading to what can be described as a super-disadvantage. This new term is proposed here as indicating the extreme degree of denial of equal access to educational opportunities experienced by those with refugee background, resulting from the added, independent effect of their migration experiences, status, and the socio-economic realities of living as a refugee. It is argued that this 'super-disadvantage' cannot be overcome without deliberate changes to outreach and support delivered by universities. These must be developed in partnerships with third sector experts and the refugee background students themselves.

Marcu, S. (2018). Refugee students in Spain: The role of universities as sustainable actors in institutional integration. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 10(6).

This article examines the role of institutions-particularly universities-in the recent refugee crisis. It contributes to the debate on the integration of refugees through the higher education system in Spain. Based on semi-structured interviews with refugees and experts in the institutions linked to the reception and integration of refugees, the paper presents evidence-albeit within an under-developed field of analysis-which has strong practical and sustainable policy implications. I argue that expanding access to university, by recognizing refugees' qualifications and their overcoming of language barriers, increases the potential of refugees to contribute to the socio-economic progress of the receiving country and thus avoid marginalization. The evidence-based analysis of the effectiveness of the existing initiatives and programs for the integration of student refugees identifies challenges that still need to be addressed. The conclusions highlight the role of universities as sustainable actors in the integration of refugees, which through their programs make the reality of refugees more visible to other actors throughout Europe in the hope of encouraging institutions and other organizations to follow their lead in effective and sustainable initiatives.

Naidoo, L. (2019). Traversing the terrain of higher education: Experiences of refugee youth on the inside. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*.

This chapter explores issues relating to the education of refugee youth through a rights-based framework to provide conceptual clarity and theoretical engagement about the development of human rights as a critical social justice instrument. The aim of this chapter is to trace the roots of rights-based education and to consider its changing conceptual frameworks. Such an insight would allow for the development of a critical pedagogical framework for human rights education. As such, the chapter explores the conceptual, historical development of rights-based education to transformative action in an open and democratic society. This chapter links an understanding of human rights to education as a humanising practice.

Schneider, L. (2018). Access and Aspirations: Syrian Refugees' Experiences of Entering Higher Education in Germany. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 13(3), 457–478.

Despite high educational aspirations amongst asylum seekers and refugees (ASRs), scholarship on international student migration and mobility commonly lacks insight deriving from forced migration research. Drawing on qualitative research concerned with Syrian ASRs' educational aspirations and lived experiences regarding higher education access in Germany, this article speaks to the intersection of refugee and education politics. German Higher Education Institutions commonly subsume ASRs under the more general admission classification of "international students". While an intentional blindness of the background of non-European Union students in the admission procedure is justified on the grounds of equal treatment, findings indicate that ASRs experience the disregard for their distinct struggles as particularly stifling and disillusioning. At the same time, an analysis of the symbolic significance young ASRs attribute to the student status suggests that educational aspirations are shaped by the prospect to "raise" one's migration status and identity to that of international students.

Student, R., Kendall, K., & Day, L. (2017). Being a refugee university Student: A collaborative auto-ethnography. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 30(4), 580–604.

In this article, we adopt a collaborative auto-ethnographic approach to explore the experiences of one refugee university student. Our method involved all three authors systematically analysing narratives written by one of us: R Student. These accounts provide deep descriptions of his life while studying at three different United Kingdom universities and our analysis of them demonstrates that higher education was a double-edged sword for R Student. Our research illuminates how R Student's past as a survivor of genocide and forced migration, his corrosive and supportive relationships, and neo-liberal policies and practices all intersected in complex ways to circumscribe his agency and inform his experience as a refugee student. This understanding runs counter to neo-liberal policies and practices within higher education which often blame individuals for the problems they encounter and obscure social and relational forces. In describing the operable effects of abstract policies and concepts upon R Student, our study provides a counter-narrative to neo-liberal discourse and identifies systemic issues that may affect other students, too.

Validation of qualifications

Bunar, N. (2017). Migration and education in Sweden: Integration of migrants in the Swedish school education and higher education systems. *NESET II ad hoc Question*, 3, 1-19.

The following report presents and discusses the current situation, challenges and opportunities, resulting from the increased numbers of newly arrived students in the Swedish education system. The primary focus is on developments since 2015, and on students in school education (compulsory and uppersecondary). To a lesser extent, the report touches upon students in higher education and the recognition and validation of skills and foreign qualifications of migrants.

Eckhardt, L., Jungblut, J., Pietkiewicz, K., Steinhardt, I., Vukasovic, M., & Santa, R. (2017). Refugees welcome? Recognition of qualifications held by refugees and their access to higher education in Europe—Country analyses. *European Students' Union*.

This chapter introduces the main objectives of the project that led to this study and marked a milestone in the European Students' Union's (ESU) work on integration of refugees through education in Europe by widening access to higher education institutions and recognition of their qualifications. It presents the European context of the so-called 'refugee crisis', explains why education is a good catalyst for refugees' integration and finally gives background information about the publication – its scope and methodology.

Katarina Mozetič. (2018). Validating highly educated refugees' qualifications. *Forced Migration Review*, 58(38–39).

Qualification certificates play a central role in the labour market integration of highly educated refugees but validating them presents considerable challenges. Sweden and Norway have introduced some positive developments to address such difficulties.

NOKUT. (n.d.). *Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees' Qualifications: First aid kit for staff looking for ways to evaluate inadequately documented qualifications*.

The Toolkit is intended for: Staff looking for ways to evaluate qualifications which are inadequately documented – credential evaluators, admission officers at higher education institutions, and immigration officers or integration advisers for newly arrived refugees and migrants

Toker, H. (2020). The Norwegian Way: Protection through Higher Education the Recognition Process for Syrian Refugees in HE. *International Migration*, 58(4), 101–116.

The current Syrian refugee exodus to Europe has created an urgent need for European societies to implement faster integration methods, to reduce the risk of social and economic alienation. Since the latest refugee wave includes more highly educated people, higher education institutions might serve as a strong inclusion instrument to integrate them into local communities. Norway has established a novel recognition procedure for persons without verifiable documentation. This study introduces this new methodology to policymakers and discusses its limitations, to enlarge scholarly debate on creating a joint European framework for recognizing prior qualifications. The study adopted a qualitative methodology, with a descriptive account of data derived from interviews with NOKUT officers. The findings highlight an urgent need in Europe to start an initiative for establishing a joint European qualification passport, which would be very useful due to the transferability of recognition decisions across European countries.

Vickers, M., McCarthy, F., & Zammit, K. (2017). Peer mentoring and intercultural understanding: Support for refugee-background and immigrant students beginning university study. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 60, 198–209.

This study explored the effects of the Equity Buddies Program, an intercultural cross-level mentoring course designed to link more advanced university students, as mentors, with first year refugee-background or immigrant students. It was designed to address the needs of refugee-background and immigrant students as they transitioned into university culture. The data included mentors' written reflections, log books, and a brief demographic survey. Through the processes adopted in the course, it was found that cross-cultural pairing influenced mentors' intercultural understandings, enabled cross-cultural relationships to develop and provided opportunities for students to interact with people of other cultures and religions. Mentors changed their views of others – of immigrants, of refugees, and also of Anglo-Australians. They experienced increased personalised understanding or gained a widened perspective of their mentees who were of cultures different from their own. Mentors stated that over time their interactions evolved into either a mutually rewarding friendship or a comfortable relationship within a learning community that valued collective learning. It is proposed that increased intercultural understanding emerges from an increased emphasis on the creation of meaningful, transactional relationships among culturally diverse students within a supportive academic environment.