ITIRE

Improving teaching
to improve refugee children education

An overview of refugee education in Europe

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KA203
Strategic Partnerships for
Higher Education

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An Overview of Refugee Education in Europe

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PREFACE

The overview of refugee children education in Europe we provide in this book is part of the Erasmus + project "ITIRE: Improving teaching to improve refugee children education". Following the unprecedented flow of forced migrants to Europe in 2015, several countries have adopted measures to facilitate the enrolment of refugee children in the educational system. These actions have produced a positive impact on reaffirming the right to education, which is important for all children, but assumes a special relevance for those who have been uprooted and sometimes separated from their families. However, while there is wide consensus at the European level on the idea that school is a protective factor for refugee children, educational policies and practices are still mostly developed only at the national and, above all, local level. Although refugee children have specific profiles in terms of educational needs and potentials, they are often offered programmes that have been designed having other kinds of migrant students in mind. Moreover, most of the knowledge and good practices developed by institutions working in different European countries and regions tend to remain at the local level. Cultural and linguistic barriers still widespread in Europe are partly responsible for this fragmentation. Nevertheless, improvements in this area are undoubtedly held back by the current political climate, in which the refugee topic is seen as extremely delicate and, consequently, put often aside.

Our book aims to contribute overcoming this stalemate, by providing an outline of policies and practices brought about in Europe regarding refugee children's education. Dissemination of existing knowledge would help not only enhance educational interventions, but also inspire practitioners working in this field, who frequently feel isolated while they do their best to support children with forced migration background.

The collection of information has been divided by identifying five broad European areas. This option has been adopted only for functional reasons. It doesn't imply that these areas have clear features and trends in common, even though some shared patterns can be detected. Moreover, a relevant share of information concerning refugee education is published only in the national languages. Accordingly, we made an effort to retrieve all relevant data accessible in several European languages. However, data available widely vary depending on the country examined or, more precisely, on the level the country has been affected by the refugee waves and/or able to carry out research on refugee children's education. This is especially evident regarding good practices, which are rarely recognised and documented in-depth.

Regardless of these limitations, we hope this publication will provide researchers and practitioners with a more systematic picture of current refugee children's education in Europe. This, in turn, would enable us to develop more effective strategies in this critical sector.

1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE: AN OVERVIEW OF REFUGEE EDUCATION IN EUROPE

According to the UNHCR's report *Global Trends - Forced Displacement in 2018* (UNHCR, 2019) on changes in UNHCR's population of concern related to ongoing crises, the number of refugees under UNHCR's care is almost double that of 2012, with two thirds coming from just 5 countries. Furthermore it is stated that the total global refugee population under UNHCR's mandate is now at the highest level ever recorded, 20.4 million and has nearly doubled since 2012 when it stood at 10.5 million (UNHCR, 2019).

When the origin of refugees is analysed it appears that, as in 2017, over two thirds of the world's refugees come from just five countries: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia and since 2014, the main country of origin for refugees in 2018 was Syria, with 6.7 million at the end of the year 2018. Refugees from Afghanistan were the second largest group and South Sudan the third most common country of origin.

Turkey continued to host the largest population of Syrian refugees, or 3.7 million at the end of 2018. Pakistan hosted the second largest refugee population with 1.4 million refugees, almost exclusively from Afghanistan. Uganda continued to host a large refugee population, numbering 1.2 million at the end of 2018, the largest being from South Sudan. Looking at Europe it appears that during 2018, the refugee population in Germany continued to increase, numbering 1,063,800 at the end of the year. More than half were from Syria (532,100), while other countries of origin included Iraq (136,500) and Afghanistan (126,000). Other countries hosting significant refugee populations at the end of 2018 included DRC (529,100), Chad (451,200), Kenya (421,200), Cameroon (380,300) and France (368,400) (UNHCR, 2019).

In a recent book on *The integration of migrants and refugees*, published by the European University Institute (Bauböck & Tripkovic, 2017) it is argued that current circumstances in Europe regarding migrants and refugees, poses challenges to traditional approaches to immigrant integration employed by the European countries. Parallel there are challenges related to negative reactions in some EU countries due to increased numbers of newcomers in countries that have so far not had so much experience with immigration (p.2).

Other and similar reviews have identified the challenge of collecting data on refugee children in education per se as this group of students are most often not distinguished separately. On the other hand there are a huge number of studies on the education of children of immigrants (Ibid, p.62). Depending on the situation in each country it can vary if and how these two groups of students – immigrants and refugees – are taught together. The rapid changes the last few years in Europe regarding refugees fleeing from war or hard living conditions can't be seen anymore as temporary and something that will settle. The rate can and will vary from year to year but those who have already migrated and are refugees across Europe need appropriate support in order to keep on their lives. Thus, it's important to recognize the need and the responsibility within each country.

Evidence from countries with an extensive experience on RE show that the ability of schools to provide immediate and appropriate support is pivotal to favour a smooth accommodation process and ensure settlement, safety, and security for children (Bash, 2006; Porche et al. 2011). Conversely, inadequate educational support often translates into students' disengagement, feelings of disempowerment, poor relationships with peers, and early school leaving. This, in turn, can affect not only learning achievements of refugee children, but also their coping strategies and resilience, undermining future prospects in terms of employment and socio-economic status, so heightening social exclusion (Block, 2014; Taylor, Sidhu, 2012).

In order to respond actively and systematically to this situation, educational practitioners and directors need to have relevant knowledge and an overview of the situation, both globally and locally. This report is aimed to give an overview of the different approaches and strategies adopted in order to improve the current understandings and resources related to refugee students' education in Europe.

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2. RE APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES IN NORTHERN EUROPE

2.1 THE FRAMEWORK OF RE IN NORTHERN EUROPE

In the UNHCR data base on refugees, Northern Europe consists of eight countries, the Nordic countries: *Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway* and *Iceland*, and the Baltic countries: *Lithuania, Latvia* and *Estonia* with a total population of 33,121,044. At the end of year 2017, the total number of refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons in Northern Europe was 788,717 (UNHCR, 2019, table 1).

Country	Country Population	Asylum-seekers arriving in 2018	Number of people granted protection in 2018	Refugees resettled in 2018	Top 5 countries of origin among asylum-seekers arriving in 2018	Recognition rate for protection status in 2018*
Sweden	10,120,242	18,045	10,640	4,862	Syria, Iran, Iraq, Georgia, Eritrea	34%
Denmark	5,781,190	3,120	1,315	0	Syria, Eritrea, Georgia, Iran, Morocco	50%
Finland	5,513,130	2,945	2,740	611	Iraq, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Somalia	55%
Norway	5,295,619	2,530	1,460	2,324	Turkey, Syria, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq	69%
Lithuania	2,808,901	385	135	18	Tadjikistan, Russia, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan	50%
Latvia	1,934,379	175	30	0	Russia, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia	24%
Estonia	1,319,133	90	20	29	Ukraine, Russia, Egypt, Pakistan, Bangladesh	27%
Iceland	348,450	730	105	52	Iraq, Albania, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan	28%

** the share of positive decisions in the total number of asylum decisions for each stage of the asylum procedure (i.e. first instance and final on appeal)*

Table 1. Regional Representation for Northern Europe: Overview (UNHCR, 2019).

The Nordic and Baltic countries have divergent historical and political experiences of migration. Among the Nordic countries Sweden has been an exceptionally inclusive migrant-receiving country since World War II, while global migration to Finland did not pick up until the 1990s and in 2006 it was still the EU-15 country with the lowest foreign-born population in proportional terms (United Nations, 2006). Denmark is known for its strict migration policy, Sweden has been regarded as the most liberal Nordic country while Norway and Finland are considered to land somewhere in between. The dynamics of migration politics and research in Iceland are on a decidedly smaller scale. Although the number of asylum-seekers quintupled from 200 in 2015 to some 1000 in 2016, and the foreign-born denizens already form a nearly 12 percent minority of the country's total population, the crisis framing is mostly missing in the Icelandic public debate. Research-wise, interest in migrancy has gradually increased in the country (Pyrhönen, Leinonen & Martikainen, 2017).

2.2. AN OVERVIEW OF RE IN NORTHERN EUROPE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Baltic countries: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

Historically, the population in the Baltic States has been diverse, due to the earlier immigration waves during 1950–1988. Having been made part of the Soviet Union in 1940, the Baltic States were subjected to centrally planned industrialization after WWII accompanied by high migration flows from other territories of the Soviet Union. Latvia and Estonia both have large historical minority groups – 26% and 25% of the total population respectively. The historical minority in Lithuania is much smaller or 5.8% from Russian origin and outnumbered by the population of Polish origin (6.6% of the total population). As relatively new European Member states (joined the EU in 2004), the three Baltic countries – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – are among the few EU countries with negative net migration rates (Mägi & Siarova, 2014).

Due to geographical position the origin of immigrants vary between the countries. In Estonia the majority comes from Finland (26%), then Russia (23%) and Ukraine (8%). In Lithuania most immigrants are coming from Russia (25%), Belarus (16%) and Ukraine (13%) and in Latvia, most immigrants come from Russia (42%), Ukraine (7%) and Uzbekistan (6%) (49). In addition to this statistics show an increase in flow of asylum seekers in the Baltic States (52).

All Baltic States have a long path of integration of historical minority children in education and a significant number of minority pupils as part of their school population. In the school year 2013/2014 the numbers were: Estonia: 24%, in Latvia: 28% and in Lithuania: 7%. All Baltic States have a relatively low share of newly arrived immigrant pupils in general education institutions. In the school year 2013/2014 the numbers were: Estonia: 0,12%, in Latvia: 0,37% and in Lithuania: 0,27%.

The need to distinguish between different pupils' groups in the context of current and future educational needs and policy responses, has been recognized. Thus to make clearer distinction between the groups of; historical minority pupils (the Russian-speaking minority in Latvia and Estonia and both Russian and Polish-speaking minorities in Lithuania); newly arrived immigrants; and returnees (former residents returning to the Baltic States). Recent inflows of immigrants who do not speak the national language or Russian, as well as the growing tendency in returnee rates in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania pose new challenges for the national education systems. According to the policy research done by Mägi & Siarova (2014) many schools are not prepared to meet diverse needs of students like linguistic and cultural needs, in terms of both human and financial resources. Therefore, even though newly arrived immigrants and returnees form only a fractional share of the overall pupil body in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, in the light of growing mobility and transnationalism, the Baltic education systems have, according to the report to demonstrate ability to support all pupils with various needs, including those arising from linguistic and cultural differences.

The Nordic countries: Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Norway and Finland

The Nordic countries have organized the migration process in chain-systems, where the first years are strictly regulated concerning residence, obligation, and contains a collaboration between the different authorities. The migration chain is the process from a person deciding to apply for asylum or citizenship until the person is granted or rejected residency. Different authorities have defined tasks in the migration chain; several ministries in the government, immigration authorities, education system, municipalities, and the police. If the refugee application is granted, the refugee follows an integration program. The programs components are housing, income, and courses in language and society. The aim is to prepare the refugee for the society and assist in the integration process.

The Nordic countries differ regarding civic orientation, they emphasize the process of integration and receiving citizenship differently. In Norway, Denmark, language and society knowledge courses are mandatory, but in Sweden, Iceland, and Finland it is voluntary courses. This difference between these Nordic countries is associated with the term "the civic turn"; a discourse in the immigration politics focusing merely on the integration process, but all of the Nordic countries are influenced by the integration discourses (Borevi, Jensen, and Mouritsen, 2017). The courses in the three countries that are dominated with the civic turn , the authorities attempt to support the process to become a community member and enhance the refugee in establishing a social network in the society. For example, in Norway, the municipalities are an important part of the chain, running the integration program and providing counselors to help the refugee in the process (IMDI, 2020). This means that the different authorities, as school-, health-, and, welfare authorities have infrastructures facilitating collaboration coherence in the support system. For schooling, it means that there is some cohesion between the children's school program and the adults integration programs. As an overall frame, this migration chain enables the school to outline school practice that corresponds well with the migrant children's needs. However, the difference in children's rights causes some difference between the countries, on the practical levels.

In the Nordic countries the children's right has a high standing, due to the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Families with children receive additional attention in the integration phase. If the refugees have children the authorities provide parents support, as kindergarten, integration classes in school, childcare, and parenting courses. Children have both rights and obligations to education. In order to learn the language, the most common is to organize integration classes, although it can vary between countries. But the municipalities have crucial roles to outline the local integration practices. The residential practice is strictly regulated and the refugees have limited possibilities to influence the process. Only by giving up funding, the refugees can influence the place of residence, courses, and receiving counseling. However, if the children have special needs, caused by educational, health or social needs this might affect the choice of place of residence.

Asylum seekers without parents or guardians are due to extra intentions. They are enrolled in educational programs for refugees, but often in a separate process compared with other immigrants. They both have school rights and receive special designed education meeting their needs. Sweden has just granted a new law, giving adolescents applying for asylum, rights to stay to finish high school (age 15-18). In Finland, enhanced the development of the immigrant student's education paths, as one of several measures to promote the integration process. In Norway, there has not been a similar funding initiative, instead the stress has been put on the residence process. The settlements of refugees depend on the municipalities that demonstrate history and ability to provide good integrational practice. Only some municipalities get the rights to settle refugees and receive funding for the measures defined in the integration practice.

The Nordic countries is a region with a strong social democratic tradition and highly developed welfare states (Kangas and Kvist, 2018). The welfare system is funded and organized by the government. There is little emphasis on the private network. The concept community in the welfare system is focusing towards the state and their institution, and not dependent on the public. Therefore the chain process in the asylum process is dependent on the public services. There is little expectation on the members and volunteers. However, in all the three countries, the focus on the possibilities in collaboration with volunteer, associations, sport clubs, private initiatives, and local organizations, are raised. While the integration chain is quite well-organized, the local capacity is an underused resource. The potential to enhance the work with refugee and minority children and adolescents, is most likely to further develop the local initiatives and engagements. Hench, innovation in Scandinavian refugee service for children and youth, are collaboration with local associations and organizations. In these matters, inspiration from other European countries has the potential to create innovation.

Nordic countries are often described as having similar culture and emphasis regarding education and welfare, often referred to as the "Nordic welfare model" with a focus on social justice (Wozniczka & Rosvall, 2019). In terms of education there is a history of emphasis on "School for All" rooted in ideas on normalization, integration, and later inclusion, for all students (Bjarnason & Persson, 2007). Although there are similarities in

this regard, the Nordic countries have developed their own path and, for example, Swedish policies include ideas of social justice the country has since the 1980s turned from a strong social democratic agenda to a market oriented agenda with a focus on the choice of the individual and perhaps on the expenses of social justice (Wozniczka & Rosvall, 2019).

When the Nordic countries are compared regarding immigration and the ratio of foreign citizens it is evident that Denmark and Norway are different regarding this. In 2015 11,6% of Denmark's citizens had a *foreign citizenship* and in Norway it was 9,9% but in 2016 this picture changed down to 8,3% in Denmark and up to 10,3% in Norway and has increased since. For Iceland the numbers were in 2016 7,9% for Iceland and Sweden and in Finland 3,8% (Haraldsson, 2017).

During the last few years, there has been a shift in the Nordic countries regarding people coming to the Nordic Region. The population of the Nordic Region grew by 16% from 1990-2017, with immigration as a major driving force to this increase (Karlsdóttir, Norlén, Rispling & Randall 2018). Number of asylum seekers has increased dramatically, most notably in Sweden. The majority is coming from Syria and Afghanistan as well as Iraq. This influx has had substantial impact on the Nordic Region evidentially in Sweden, which received more immigrants per capita than any other European country in 2015 (ESPON, 2015).

The arrangements for refugees and asylum seekers vary between the countries. In Sweden asylum seekers have the right to settle anywhere in the country but in Finland, the majority of asylum seekers live in asylum centres, a portion reside though in private accommodation. In Norway, accommodation in asylum centres is optional for asylum seekers, though a majority do choose this form of accommodation. In Denmark and Iceland, asylum seekers are concentrated in a smaller number of municipalities corresponding with the locations of the country's asylum centres (Karlsdóttir, Norlén, Rispling & Randall 2018). The large wave of asylum seekers in 2014 and 2015 included many unaccompanied minors, the number is estimated to be 46 thousands in total, of which 35 thousands arrived in Sweden. In 2015, more than half of the unaccompanied minors who sought asylum in the EU did so in a Nordic country. The most common country of origin was Afghanistan followed by Eritrea, Syria, Iraq and Somalia (Karlsdóttir, Norlén, Rispling & Randall 2018).

The findings from the Nordic countries related to immigrant youth having a lower educational attainment is in accordance with recent studies from several European host countries. These studies show that school dropout rates are higher and that educational attainment is lower among children of non-Western immigrants than their native peers (Brinch, Bratsberg & Raaum, 2012).

Findings from a Nordic project (Learning Spaces for Inclusion and Social Justice: Success stories from immigrant Students and School Communities in Four Nordic Countries 2013-2015) revealed some general issues among the Nordic countries, both positive and challenging. Among the challenges at preschool level are the need to include more actively second language learners in the play as there were missed learning opportunities for some of the immigrant children (Iceland). In Norway it was mentioned that there is a need to work with the children's first language but access to people who speak the children's first language is limited, varying and random. At the compulsory level an identified challenge was to involve all teachers in the schooling of newly arrived students. In Finland a challenge related to preschools was regarding more competences in teaching Finnish as a second language in the group and at the compulsory level researchers identified that some teachers took almost alone the responsibility to develop the practices towards more just schools. These types of visionaries may burn themselves out and the practices may fade away. Regarding upper secondary schools the concerns were related to the minimal number of immigrant background students who enter this level of education as this again minimizes their chances to enter higher education. In Sweden, identified challenges at preschool level were related to big groups of children and difficulties to work with each child's needs as well as a lack of mother tongue teachers directed towards preschools. At compulsory level the importance of shared norms, values and a Christian identity was emphasised by one Swedish school. The researchers thus added that linguistic and ethnic diversity at this school could sometimes be interpreted as a threat to the school culture, e.g. when values among the students were considered as "incompatible" with Christian values (Ragnarsdóttir, 2015).

Sweden

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, immigration in Sweden has always been rather extensive but in recent years, it has changed from being foremost economic immigration to immigration of refugees due to conflicts

and war, which is the dominant form today. Immigrants to Sweden are mainly from Iran and Iraq, former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Syria (Wozniczka & Rosvall, 2019). Debates have been about the existence of Swedish as a second language, as a subject, and how it should be taught. Advocates stress that non Swedish speakers need specific teaching arrangements in order to effectively learn the language but opponents point out the separating effects resulting from this approach as it may place students in different learning groups.
Another aspect that is explored in research is related to teachers' feelings when it comes to immigrant students with low socio-economic background, and how the teachers attitudes affect the organization of education in the classroom. The main findings in the article is the importance of presenting this particular group of students with challenges in their education. It is claimed that the lack of challenges in the educational setting in combination with little room for students' own initiatives resulted in low enthusiasm among students when it came to schoolwork and as consequence also low learning. This would be in contradiction to a pedagogic approach that stressed active involvement in the classroom by the students, and that at the same time gave the students influence on what happened in classrooms. This last approach would result in a high level of students' engagement and high learning outcome (Wedin, 2015).
Another research article highlights how teachers experience pressures due to test-based performativity that will be in contradiction to the teachers preferred pedagogical approaches (Lunneblad and Dance, 2014). The research in this specific article is based on ethnographic case studies of two non-mainstream high schools in Sweden and the United States. It explores the group of immigrant students who are second-language learners in Sweden. Most of these students come from low socio-economic backgrounds, and are often described as being 'in the risk zone' while their schools are seen as to be 'in crisis'. When looking closer into these schools it is clear that the teachers working there are genuinely committed to student-centered teaching and to teaching Swedish as a second language. At the same time are the schools facing market demands something that have consequences for everyday school.
Another study focuses on different forms of learning among adult refugees that will contribute to a stronger integration in the Swedish society (Andersson and Andersson, 2011). This research explores how Somali refugees have experienced the educational approaches offered by the Swedish community and other alternative ways of achieving knowledge about Swedish society. It is emphasized that the participants' way of shaping an alternative form of education should be of general interest. This notion of what is seen as ''authentic learning'' can be used to understand contextual learning. This implies that learning takes the learners' perspective, the content relates to the learners' interest areas, and learning refers to real activities and real situations. The main findings of this research emphasize how the adult refugees' influence on their own learning would contribute to active participation, and how this approach is characterised by considering that cultural contexts influence the learners' interpretation, and meaning-making.

Iceland

Iceland is the smallest of the Nordic societies, with a population of 356.991 as 1st of January 2019 (Statistics Iceland 2020). For a long time, Iceland has been portrayed as a very homogenous country with few immigrants. Throughout the 20th century the immigration ratio was around 3% and in the year 2000 only 2,6% of the population were registered as immigrants. This has changed fast the last few years as immigration to Iceland has grown rapidly. In 1995, 1.8% of the population were registered as non-Icelandic citizens, but in 2017 the numbers are 12% of the population (35,997 individuals) originated from other countries (Ragnarsdóttir & Lefever, 2018). The largest immigration group is from Poland (45%) and other but smaller groups are from Lithuania, Philippines and Thailand (Statistics Iceland, 2020). The number of asylum-seekers and refugees coming to Iceland has increased as well. These changes in population are reflected in Icelandic schools. According to Statistics Iceland around 13% of all preschool children and 10.8% of all compulsory school students had heritage languages other than Icelandic in 2018 (Statistics Iceland, 2020a). These numbers are much higher in some municipalities. Although the percentage of immigrants in Iceland is not high in general, the changes have been fast and for a small nation of 350,000 inhabitants this can have a major impact on small towns and villages and their schools.
A small part of the immigration to Iceland are quota refugees who arrive in Iceland through the UNCHR resettlement program. In total 704 quota refugees have settled in Iceland between 1956 and 2019. The last five years these people have mainly been from Iraq, Syria, Uganda and Congo (Government of Iceland, 2020).

Ragnarsdóttir & Hama (2018) have done research among some of the quota refugees who have recently arrived and described the setup for their situation. The setting is the same for all quota refugees coming to Iceland. They receive support for one year. The support includes contact with three or four support families, housing, courses in Icelandic, financial assistance, healthcare, and various services related to settlement. Teams include representatives from the Red Cross, municipalities, schools, social services, and healthcare. Each municipality prepares for the arrival of the families assigned to its area. Following a medical examination, the refugee children start school. This is normally a few weeks after arrival (p.83).

The public education system in Iceland is divided into four levels from preschool education to higher education and by and large free of charge. Compulsory education is in one stage from the age of 6 to 16 and preschool and secondary school participation, although optional, is widespread. Preschool education for children from 2 years old or even younger is offered by municipalities and enrolment of 3–4-year-olds is over 95% (Ragnarsdóttir & Lefever, 2018). Children who are refugees or asylum seekers have according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted into Icelandic law in 2013, the right to attend school as other children at no cost. Since 2016, there has been a surge in the number of applications for asylum in Iceland, including families with children, as well as unaccompanied children (Guðmundsdóttir, Gunnlaugsson & Einarsdóttir, 2018).

The current legislation on schools in Iceland emphasizes the principle of equality. The role of schools is that they "shall [...] seek to organize their work in a way that corresponds as fully as possible with the circumstances and needs of pupils, and to promote the all-round development, well-being and education of each individual"(Compulsory School Act No.91/ 2008). This emphasis is reiterated in the National Curriculum Guidelines for each school level (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). In addition, Icelandic education policy is based on the ideology of inclusive education (sometimes referred to as "School for All") and schools are supposed to offer students appropriate education with an emphasis on equal or equivalent study opportunities. Schools should operate as learning communities where diversity and the different needs, abilities, and characteristics of students are respected and addressed (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2012a).

Ragnarsdóttir & Lefever, (2018) have pointed out that while educational policy and curriculum guides in Iceland emphasize equity and inclusion, multilingual and heritage language issues have generally not been sufficiently addressed in official policy documents. Their research and others have documented inequalities and marginalization of immigrants in schools and communities in the Nordic countries, including Iceland but there are evidence as well in research findings from recent research in Iceland that have indicated that particular schools and communities have succeeded in their quest for inclusion, equality, and social justice for this group of students.

Very little research has been done in Iceland on children who are asylum seekers but a recent study adds evidence on this and highlights the importance of school and education for children and families who seek asylum in Iceland. In line with the CRC and Icelandic law, asylum-seeking children should have access to normal education as soon as possible after arrival. Yet, many of those participating in this study had to wait for weeks and even months before admission and the conclusion is that it is urgent to formulate and implement a long-term policy regarding the education of children who seek asylum in Iceland (Guðmundsdóttir, Gunnlaugsson & Einarsdóttir, 2018).

In general when it comes to immigrant students, research in Iceland has revealed the need to formulate better education for immigrants and refugee students. Research shows for example that teachers are unsupported in their quest for understanding and managing education for this group of students and that the Icelandic school system challenges immigrant parents' understanding of school as a traditional place of learning. There is a lack of collaboration and discussion between both parties on students' needs and parental expectations (Gunnþórsdóttir, Barillé & Meckl, 2018). The research findings of Ragnarsdóttir & Hama (2018) among refugee families indicate both positive and challenging issues by teachers, the children and their parents. Most of the children show signs of doing well both academically and socially in school after the first few months while the parents worry that their children are not gaining enough academic knowledge and they would like to have more information about their children's schooling. They are also concerned about their future in terms of education and if they will be successful in school. Teachers are concerned about the challenges facing the older children, both academically and socially and the fact that support is lacking for the children's heritage languages as very few teachers speak both Icelandic and Arabic. The researchers claim that multilingual education is generally not in place in schools and the emphasis is laid on teaching Icelandic as a second language. In general, based on their research findings they suggest that schools develop educational and cultural activities, programs,

and support inside and outside of schools to help to overcome cultural barriers between families and schools as this kind of support is needed for refugee children to help them gain a sense of belonging and successfully participate as active members of their school and society (Ragnarsdóttir & Hama, 2018).
These findings and suggestions are in line with another recent study of Gunnþórsdóttir, Barillé & Meckl, (2018) which found some positive signs regarding the welfare and wellbeing of students, as both parents and teachers reported that students feel good in school and in their classes. There is a good relationship between teachers and students, and parents and teachers describe this as friendly and supportive. In Iceland, schools are seen to be responsible for establishing and maintaining collaboration with all parents and according to the teachers, the immigrant parents need a supportive network of other parents to help them be more active and integrated as parents of school-age children. This can be seen as an opportunity for schools and parents of all children to actively contribute to mutual collaboration.

Denmark

Over a long time, Denmark has been at the forefront of promoting asylum policy and the protection of refugees. From the ratification of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1951 to the Aliens Act promulgated in 1983 in connection with the contemporary asylum crisis, Denmark has fostered a strongly liberal agenda concerning the asylum legislation (de Montgomery et al., 2018). However, starting from 2000 the Danish government has taken a completely different path, as more and more restrictive measures have been carried on to prevent migrants and refugees from either arriving in Denmark and accessing its asylum system. Deterrence policies regarding refugees developed by the Danish institutions have been taken as a model and further supported at the European and international levels. The recent influx of asylum seekers occurred in 2015 has provided Denmark the opportunity to strengthen and expand measures of indirect deterrence, designed to depict the national reception system and protection conditions as unappealing as possible, so as to push forced migrants looking for asylum to target other countries. Therefore, Denmark has been actively sustaining management of country reputation in the form of 'negative nation branding', adopting systematic measures aimed to project a negative image of Denmark towards asylum-seekers and, more generally, unwanted migrants (Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2017). Beyond pursuing symbolic purposes and internal political goals, in recent years these policies have been successful in lowering the number of asylum applications to Denmark, which dropped from 21.316 in 2015 to 2.716 in 2019 (Statistics Denmark, 2020). Nevertheless, negative branding has been subject to criticisms. While the medium and long-term effectiveness of indirect deterrence policies is controversial, they strongly affect the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees, have a negative impact on the first- and second-generation migrants integration, and more generally damage the country internal and external image.
In recent years, the literature on asylum seekers highlighted the condition of children as especially vulnerable. Asylum-seeking children are the subject of an ambivalent political discourse that attributes them a dual identity both as asylum-seekers and children. As a result, they appear embedded—and trapped—in two political identity discourses (Vitus & Lidén, 2009). In Denmark, these children are primarily positioned as asylum-seekers—with the possibility of a humanitarian residence permit based only on their or their parents' illness, with no separate hearings, and with access primarily limited to schooling without credits. (Vitus & Lidén, 2009). In contrast, their situation is different in Norway where they are positioned as both asylum-seekers and children, with rights to normal schooling, being heard in the asylum process, and possible humanitarian residence permits based on attachment to Norway.
Data indicate that, compared to the ethnic minority and native-born peers, refugee children in the Nordic countries suffer more from mental health problems (Norredam, et al., 2018). These problems are connected not only to the traumatic events they have suffered before and during their flight, but also to experiences of discrimination or poor social support they may face in the arrival country. Literature shows that the ability to access the school system (and, later on, labour market) in the arrival country is paramount to ensure refugee children better health and wellbeing conditions (Børsch et al., 2018). However, refugee children perform worse in school than native-born pupils. Only those who live in a context with low discrimination rates and achieve a good command of the new country language usually have higher educational attainment and better opportunities to enrol in higher education. Access to social networks that provide continuous support and guidance is also pivotal for the professional integration of young refugees. Nevertheless, compared with other

immigrants and native-born, a wider share of young asylum-seekers are unemployed or outside the job market (Børsch et al., 2019).

As a consequence of the arrival of asylum-seekers in the country, in the last few years a relevant number of children fleeing from conflict-affected areas or being reunited with parents with a refugee status has been enrolled in the Danish primary school (Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut, 2016). In June 2016, the Parliament passed the "Special Offers Act" on primary education of foreign children, which enables municipalities to organise flexible forms of teaching aimed at newly arrived children (Undervisningsministeriet, 2016). Consequently, beyond being enrolled in mainstream classes, immigrant children participate in reception classes where they are taught Danish as a second language in small groups. Moreover, Danish regulations require that 0 to 6 year-old immigrant children attend daycare services, so that their parents can attend language school or obtain an internship.

The inclusion of refugee children in early childhood and school services poses some challenges to the Danish education system. Thommessen and Todd (2018) present findings that, on the basis of interviews with adults who had arrived as asylum-seekers in one of two countries when they were children, compare Denmark with England on this subject. Qualitative findings based on Interpretative Phenomenological Analyses demonstrate the participants' focus on *Language-based challenges that extend to further difficulties*, *Choosing to succeed*, *Gaining strength through social support, encouragement and guidance*, *Integrating two separate worlds into one* and *Seeing, hearing and understanding children's needs*. The participants have had time to reflect on their early experiences of integration, so their voices can inform researchers, educators and other practitioners currently working with refugee children and families. The research results suggest that there is an urgent need to facilitate the integration of refugee children by providing appropriate training for teachers when dealing with them.

Other investigation delves into the way cooperation with parents of refugee children is developed in Danish educational services (Bregnbæk & Jørgensen, 2020). On the one hand, the idea of helping children thrive by systematically developing collaboration between parents and practitioners is regarded as a pillar of the Danish education system. Therefore, the expectation from the system is that parents and institutions must work together and communicate in a close way to bring about the best conditions for the joint upbringing of children. On the other hand, in the face of the special circumstances newly arrived families are usually dealing with - poor language skills, limited knowledge of local regulations and practices, multiple demands from the institutional agencies - the way this cooperation should be developed and managed is often unclear not only to the parents, but also to the practitioners themselves. Practitioners have usually a sincere desire to help both refugee children and parents take advantage of the educational experience. However, they frequently are confronted with a difficult choice between taking good care of children without ending up disempowering their parents. As these needs are inherently contradictory, research shows that pedagogical work with refugee families requires special tact and sensitivity in this regard, as there is not an easy solution to this dilemma (Bregnbæk, 2020). Another difficult dilemma pedagogical practices face is the double social identity that, as we noted, current regulations in Denmark ascribe to refugee children. Accordingly, practitioners struggle to find a balance between treating children as individuals whose profile is mainly characterised by their special mental and emotional needs or, vice versa, simply as regular students with their own capabilities and potentials (Moldenhawer & Ruskjær, 2017).

Examination of successful examples concerning the inclusion of refugee children in the Danish education system highlights that school resources play a critical role in this regard. More precisely, good practices that help develop a 'refugee-competent school' as a supportive environment encompass four key dimensions: a clear school ethos with regard to inclusion, taking on collective responsibility towards all students, a strong orientation to promote positive intercultural relationships, and the provision of intensive courses on Danish as a second language (Børsch et al., 2019). These dimensions are further investigated by recent research on the condition of refugee children in Danish schools (Shapiro, 2018, 2020). Recommendations from the studies include: developing holistic and coherent psychosocial interventions based on professional strategies favouring a prevention and resilience approach; promoting teachers skills in the field of Danish as a second language, as well as activities addressed to value children mother tongue as a resource; developing educational materials aimed to strengthen intercultural education and understanding in school; fostering refugee parents involvement and cooperation through networking; providing continuous professional development and supervision to teachers that work with children with a refugee background; and ensuring timely identification of mental health problems related to children forced migration, as well as access to specialised resources for examination and treatment.

Norway

In 2017, The Statistic Norway made a whole series of different aspects of the situation for immigrants in Norwegian (NSD 202). One of the reports focused on the schools roles (Steinkellner, 2017). In 2017 about 16 percent of the students in Norwegian primary and lower secondary education and about 17 percent of the students in upper secondary education were immigrants themselves or children of immigrants, originating from many countries, cultures and languages. Immigrant students, especially those who arrived in Norway as teenagers, face tougher challenges than other students in achieving good results from their education (Thorud, 2017). However, the tendency is that the situation is improving, where the pupils with an immigrant background more often finish high school (Steinkellern, 2017).

In Norway, a comprehensive school system that benefits all students is a central aim for the education policy. The objective is to provide good learning opportunities for all students, with special consideration of the needs of specific groups of children, such as those from language minorities or children who need special educational support. The main legislation for this area is the *Education Act*, the *Act Relating to Universities and University Colleges* and the *Introduction Act* (Thorud, 2017). According to the Education Act, children and youth arriving in Norway as asylum seekers shall have the same rights and duties as their Norwegian peers. Everybody at the age of 6 to 15 years old, who live in Norway for more than 3 months, have the equal right to education in the obligatory school system independently of his or her legal status. These rules apply therefore to every child, including children of asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors seeking asylum and irregular immigrants.

For pupils who have recently arrived in Norway, the local authority may organise their education in separate groups, classes or schools. This applies to both primary, lower and upper secondary schools. If some or all of the education is to take place in such an introductory group-, class- or school, this must be stipulated in the decision to provide adapted language education for the pupil. The decision for such education in specially organised facilities may only be made if it is considered in the pupil's best interest. Education in a specially organised facility may last for up to two years, and decisions about such kind of education may only be made for one year at a time. For this period, the teaching may deviate from the curriculum defined for the pupil in question to the extent it is necessary in order to provide for the needs of the pupil. Decisions pursuant to this section require the consent of the pupil or his/her parents or guardians (Thorud, 2017).

According to the Danish and Norwegian scholars Vitus, & Lidèn, (2013) asylum-seeking children in Norway are positioned as both asylum-seekers and children, with rights to normal schooling, to being heard in the asylum process, and to possible humanitarian residence permits based on attachment to Norway. By contrast, in Denmark these children are primarily positioned as asylum-seekers—with the possibility of a humanitarian residence permit based only on their or their parents' illness, with no separate hearings, and with access primarily limited to schooling without credits.

One important potential is that refugee children and youth express great motivation to attend school. Education is an important asset for access to the labour market and the Norwegian society as a whole. Still, research literature on refugee and migrant children and youth in Norway has documented great disparities of educational experience and performance compared to their Norwegian peers. The dropout rate among pupils with refugee backgrounds in Norway has been high compared to Norwegian pupils (Hernes & Pastoor, 2013). Research examining how refugee children and youth, particularly young unaccompanied minors, experience secondary school, point out that leaving or "dropping out" from school are caused by multitude of reasons. One challenge is the experiences young refugees have when they arrive in Norway, many originate from countries where access to formal schooling was difficult or disrupted (Pastoor, 2017). School attendance from the native country might also make it difficult to understand the Norwegian culture and the Norwegian school culture in particular. Transition from the school in the native country to a Norwegian school might represent a severe challenge for newcomers.

Much research on children and youth with refugee backgrounds has been conducted within disciplines as psychiatry and psychology, focusing on challenges caused by trauma and individual psycho-social conditions. The research points out that particularly many of the unaccompanied minors have been exposed to traumatic events prior to arrival. Worries and lack of family members and friends, concentration difficulties and lack of language competence has a great impact on the participation in the daily activities in school, well-being and the abilities for learning. The young unaccompanied minors have to make a living in the new host country, without the support from parents, well known family members and friends. In such situations, it is of vital importance with psychosocial support and guidance from adults in educational settings. Research point out that access to

adults with almost similar cultural background, as role-models, can function as important “translators”, explaining and documenting the importance of education in the Norwegian society, and to establish a link and coherence between the past and the present situation for children and youth with refugee background (Hernes & Pastoor, 2013).

Norwegian research has also focused on the mediational role of classroom discourse in the development of shared understanding in a Norwegian primary school. Pastoor (2005) points out that successful participation in classroom discourse not only requires linguistic and cognitive competence, but also demands cultural knowledge, and claims that this kind of knowledge often is taken for granted. Based on research carried out in a multi-ethnic third grade class, the research reveals a discrepancy between teachers’ implicit assumptions of what is “common knowledge” and minority pupils’ lack of background knowledge might impede joint meaning construction. Discourse episodes, illustrating various misunderstandings, are analysed and compared. The analysis focuses on how the topical content, the multiple reference frames applied, and the particular forms of discourse used, jointly create the framework within which development of shared understanding occurs or fails to occur. The analysis shows how various discourse patterns create different premises for pupil participation, causing different ways of dealing with the misunderstandings encountered. It is argued that disparities in understanding should not be looked upon as “transmission errors”, as something to be avoided in classroom dialogue, but might be viewed as generators of new understandings. The article is based on qualitative analysis of discourse excerpts, using transcribed audio recordings, field notes and interviews (Pastoor, 2005).

Another article discusses Norway's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in relation to the field of asylum. The main purpose is to explore the dilemmas and challenges posed by efforts to realize children's right to express their views and have these views given due weight in decision-making processes as stipulated in Article 12 of the CRC. The Norwegian authorities have sought to uphold this right through the introduction of "child conversations" within the asylum process. As the authors explain, children's participation may be crucial in terms of revealing persecution and thus the need for protection in accordance with the 1951 Refugee Convention. The article points out that the early experience of implementing child conversations suggests limited usefulness, claiming that the practice may be questioned in the light of the primary obligation of state parties to the CRC to attend to children's best interests. The article also draws upon experience from Sweden and offers suggestions for how the pursuit of children's participation within the Norwegian asylum system might be developed to ensure that it genuinely serves their best interests (Lidén, & Rusten, 2007).

An European overview written by the European Student’s Union’s Ethnic Minorities Working Group (EMWG) claims that perhaps the most challenging barrier to education for underrepresented groups is the fact that a highly disproportionate majority of policy makers and leaders are from the traditional majority groups. In order to truly adapt to a more inclusive model of governance in education, those responsible for governance must more accurately reflect the groups for whom higher education is available--which should, of course, be everyone.

Another important challenge is that the educational and psychosocial needs of resettled refugees are diverse and complex. According to Pastoor, (2017) it is unlikely that schools are able to meet them all. She claims that participation in diverse settings, activities and practices beyond school may expand young refugees’ opportunities for meaningful learning as well as promote their social inclusion. Facilitating access to adequate learning contexts, along with supporting their own commitment to succeed, is decisive for young refugees’ educational achievement, psychosocial adjustment and inclusion in society. Pastoor, (2017) emphasizes the need for reconceptualising refugee education as inclusive of diverse learning contexts in and outside of school. Based on that, potential opportunities to overcome such challenges might be enhanced collaboration between schools, local community organizations and wider society will facilitate and support resettling young refugees’ opportunities to achieve their fullest potential.

Brinch, Bratsberg and Raaum (2012) have focused on educational policy and examined whether it can alleviate ethnic disparities in attainment. The question posed was whether school capacity constraints might contribute to lower observed attainment among ethnic minority youth. The question was explored through examining the outcome of a major reform of Norwegian secondary education that was implemented in 1994. An important component of this reform was an expansion of upper secondary education, and a promise that every graduate from compulsory schooling became entitled to enrolment in public upper secondary education. The research showed that the largest difference in attainment between immigrant and native youth could be attributed to the transition between compulsory schooling and the first year of upper secondary education. Findings showed that for immigrant youth, and Pakistanis in particular, dropout was substantially reduced by the reform. The

researchers pointed out that this was the major reason for the improved educational attainments of immigrants compared to natives. The main conclusion was that the Norwegian upper secondary school reform implemented in 1994 played an important role in reducing differences in educational attainment between native and immigrant youth. The researchers claimed further that the wider implication was that non targeted reforms, with an emphasis on securing access to secondary education for everyone, might have an important potential for a sharp reduction in educational dropout rates for groups that are constrained by limited access to upper secondary education. Since ethnic minority youth and children from poor families are likely to be over-represented in these group, the evidence from the study is thus in line with findings of other studies of compulsory schooling reforms, such as Aakvik, Salvanes, and Vaage (2010), Meghir & Palme (2005), and Oreopoulos (2006). The studies showed that extensions of years of compulsory schooling have significant effects on the attainment of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and with short expected education careers.

Another study is related to processes of inclusion and exclusion of immigrant students that tend to have less opportunity to access quality education, many leave school earlier and their academic achievements are lower (Hilt, 2015). This group of students have therefore got increased attention and become a frequent addressee for inclusive policy measures. Education in Norway for newly arrived immigrant students is organised in segregated classes called introductory classes. The aim is that these classes will increase minority language students' ability to be included in the general school in the longer run. The main findings of this study suggests that introductory classes, as it is organised, create barriers towards newly arrived students' educational careers, in particular towards the group of students that belong to the basic level of school performances. It is problematic when the barriers to inclusion are as multifaceted as they are with the group of students that are lowest ranked. It is not the organizing aspect but rather the education offered in introductory classes that is based on a construction of newly arrived students as deviant from the mainstream. This research suggests whether newly arrived students might have a better basis for educational careers if the requirements of the systems were more attuned to the language skills, cultural references and competencies that these students already have. It further points out that as a consequence of educational exclusion, informal network systems emerge as alternatives that will include on the basis of mother tongue, and become a means for educational support.

A recently defended dissertation at Uppsala university (Mathisen, 2020) based on qualitative research conducted in four schools with students in introductory classes, language training classes, and also in separate preparatory schools for newly arrived migrants in different places in Norway. The research points out both potential and particularly social challenges concerning placing newly arrived pupils in separate classes. The potential is that placing refugee and newly arrived pupils in separate classes, the pedagogical task becomes more manageable, as language training and diversity work can be gathered in one place. Challenges pointed out by Mathiesen (2020) is that although newly arrived pupils felt comfortable in separate classes, (i.e. introductory classes), they also expressed feelings of being 'out of place' in the whole school setting. They expressed feelings of insecurity in the ordinary classes, because of not knowing the language well enough, and sensing the experience of being different from their peer pupils. The research shows that one important challenge is that newly arrived young people are often given little social support in the transition from introductory classes to ordinary classes.

One important challenge that several scholars have pointed out concerning refugee education is the ignorance of the multiplicity of childhoods that pupils with refugee backgrounds represent. Following this, the Norwegian educational system has been criticised for, even though having a political focus on equality and multiculturalism, several scholars claim that the Norwegian educational system is monocultural (Phil, 2009; Seberg, 2003; Lidén 2001; Mathiesen 2002).

Finland

Compared with many European countries, Finland has a shorter history of immigration. Recent research points out that Finland has become a more multicultural country during the last generation. Together with rising levels of immigration, teachers' concerns regarding how to manage an increasingly diverse school population have arisen. There are an increasing number of students with different cultural and native language backgrounds in

Finnish schools. Still, Finnish research literature claims that the school system is far from being an all-encompassing multicultural environment for all (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014).

Knowing that Finland has both an indigenous population and other national minorities, as the Rome population, to understand Finland as more multicultural in the last year can be surprising. But research on multiculturalism in education in Finland has demonstrated the discourses in Finland draw a line between multiculturalism between the Samii indigenous people and the national minorities as the Roma population (Holm and Londen (2010). This research shows how identity and language issues are dealt with differently between indigenous and national minorities on one side and immigrants on the other sides. For indigenous and national minorities, the education discourses understand identity as an important aspect of their education, language is treated differently; for the indigenous pupil the Samii language is concerned as important but not for the Rome. For immigrant pupils, it is most important to learn about Finland and the Finnish language. This division between different types of minorities in Finland, are shared by the other Nordic countries with indigenous and national minorities. e This differences in the educational discourses for different types of minorities, demonstrate that the education system can be understood as a political tool, not only as a learning institution. The close link between the government's political goal and the education system might be understood in light of the strong welfare state in the Nordic countries. That the education system can be criticized for being a political tool can be understood as a challenge for the school's goal to make the best practice possible for the immigrant pupils. However, as we will see in the discussion of the best practice in the Nordic countries, the level of autonomy for the teachers, make a defence for the patronage of the political integration focus in the civic turn (Boevi, Jensen, and Mouritsen, 2017) driving the immigrant policy. It is the professional teachers' knowledge about good learning strategies and pupils best, heading against the states integration object. This is called a governmentalization of the welfare professionals (Larsen, 2013).

Despite research in Finland demonstrates the challenges for immigrant education in the welfare states in the Nordic countries, the main focus is on multiculturalism as a new dimension in Finland, leading to research that aims to reveal as much as possible concerning educational and immigrant pupils. Issues covers, international relations, the pupils school performance, and the teachers experiences. Korjonen-Kuusipuro & Kuusisto (2019) have studied intercultural relations. Their focus on the process of belonging. Their research is part of the Nordic interest of the children's rights by its attention to the youths' voice. The research also is part of the research paradigm that sees the children as “being”, not “becoming”. The purpose of the school is not only to prepare a child for the future, but also to treat the child as an agent, being an active part in the making of their own life and a participant of the community. From this perspective, the research challenges the governmentalism that is a result of the civic turn that Boevi, Jensen, and Mouritzen (2017) discussed. Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Kuusisto (2019) discuss how young migrants create belonging and build capacity as being an agent in their own life through meshwork and relations.

Trotta (2005) is another example of Finnish research that draws from an agent perceptive. Focusing on the teachers and the learning environment, this study analyses a teacher training course that facilitates transference from homogeneity as the norms, toward a school that works is based on diversity. The theoretical starting point is a figure of how schools might aim towards human dignity and being an agent in the world. This is also a contrast to the governmentalization process, where the schools shall help the governments to integrate the immigrant pupils. The teachers and the volunteers are viewed as capable of assisting a process that creates a diversity-friendly milieu in the schools and in the society. This serves both the schools, and the needs of the immigrant pupils. Both Trotta (2005) and Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Kuusisto (2019) are examples of the significance of the children's rights in the Nordic countries.

The migrant pupils rate of success in the school is another perspective in the Finnish research. Yeasmin & Uusiautti (2019) is an example of this, by their comparative study between Finland and Singapore. The similarity of these two states is the top student achievement. The question they ask is if the two educational systems support the immigrant children's academic success. The article gives an illuminating description of the two education systems and how they differ on many aspects, like free education in Finland versus subsidized in Singapore, the teachers in Finland having more freedom and the Finnish education system being more flexible compared. They conclude that the level of integration enhances educational success. The Finnish educational system shall accommodate the students' needs. The researchers believe that this might provide the Finnish system with a practice that can support learning among immigrant children. The immigrant pupils in Singaporean might benefit from the high aspiration and motivation to strive for success that is characteristic for the education system in Singapore. Research on how to succeed in schools is important knowledge in order to work with the long-term challenges immigrants face; drop-out; lack of stable affiliation to the work-life;

poverty; and social exclusion (Block, 2014). Another research that highlights good school practice is a study by Sinkkonen & Kyttälä (2014), interviewing nine teachers about how they work with immigrant children. The focus was to identify good practice. The results of the interviews was that the teachers believed that through lingual support, co-planning and co-teaching, school assistances, rapidly integration process, social integration, and various and creativity in teaching methods, the schools can offer an equal school for the immigrant pupils. The teachers' voices are both in line with the governmentalisation process, where the schools are a tool in the integration process, and the autonomous teachers, where the teachers' methodical freedom is part of the good practice. This paradox reveals how the education system in the Nordic countries is a straddle-legged between the states integration politics and the teachers professional knowledge of good learning environments.

2.3. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES ON RE

A report from 1989 Johnson pointed out that the minority populations in Scandinavia, as in all of Europe, increases. This situation creates a greater need for minority education at all levels and will benefit both individuals as well as the whole society. Cooperation among Scandinavian nations (Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden) is important in order to develop an effective policy regarding the education of immigrants and refugees. Each of the Scandinavian countries has a definitive education policy for refugees and immigrants. However, cooperative efforts among the nations through the Nordic Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Nordic Council, and the Helsinki Agreement set no firm policy on refugee and immigrant education. Significant issues for policy makers to evaluate and consider in studying refugee and immigrant education include minority language, culture, and group development (Johnson, 1989). This has indeed happened.

Municipalities and school owners in Scandinavia have both resources and autonomies to pilot promising practice. Additional have the teachers also some degree of freedom in choice of teaching methods, giving them possibilities and opportunities to work out good practice. Furthermore it provides a working environment in the schools for ongoing bettering processes. On the other hand, freedom can make it challenging to implement promising and evidence based practices. It is not the school owner that chooses the practice, but every school and each teacher based on their knowledge of good practice. Whether or not the practices are documented also depended on the schools and the teachers' time and resources to do so. Having in mind the huge workload for teachers, there is an understandable lack of descriptions and documentation of good practice. Henceforth, the same things that might be an infrastructure for ongoing piloting of good practice (the methodical autonomies for schools and teachers) are also the reasons for the relatively few narratives of good practice (lack of time and possibilities in everyday life to document the practice). In Scandinavia this paradoxical twofold situation regarding innovation in practice, is one of the key challenges for gathering examples of good practice. There are reasons to believe that there are many examples of good practices, but there are few examples showing this. Despite this, there are some good examples, and we will in the following describe some of these. In Denmark, a research review conducted by Olsen et. al (2018) identifies and evaluates promising intervention for immigrant children and families, among them school based interventions. The evaluation measures methodical standard, relevance, and transferability, using three unit measurements; low; medium; high. School based programs receiving the score high on all three dimensions are considered promising. Two programs meet the standard of both good research methods, relevant for Danish needs, and are transferable to Danish contexts. These two, along with most of the others are not, or on the very start, implemented in Denmark and cannot serve as examples of good practice in Denmark. However, it does demonstrate that the Danish government is searching for well described, promising education methods with high research evidence. This is challenging the two folded paradox in Scandinavia where most of the practice is developed by the schools or the teachers. This might be a progression in the practice that benefits the migrant pupils. They will be less exposed to pilot practice that does not work, but can receive practice that is less characterized by testing and more of quality.

On the other hand, the Scandinavian teachers autonomies means a system that trusts teachers, leading to practitioners with high levels of self-confidence and creativity. Thus, the implementation of promising methods should not subjugate the local initiatives to work out new models to enhance the practice. There is little documentation of such practice because it is mostly local. Most of the Scandinavian research concerning

migrant children is concerned about different aspects of children's rights, their experiences, and documentation of needs. Less is documentation of models and handling questions that confirm it as good practice.

Some expectations are to be found. The common theoretical basis in practice in Scandinavian schools is to understand the schools as a prevention arena. Not only shall the schools emphasize learning subjects and language, but also serving as an arena for prevention of negative effects that are associated with long-term effects of migration, such as psychological problems, unemployment, social marginalisation, and economical strains (Montgomery & Linnet, 2012). The STROF-model serves as a good example of good practice in the Nordic countries as it clearly defines principles common in Scandinavian schools that are conducting good practice.

The STROF-model: The model's name (an acronym for: structure; speech, time and drawing; rituals; organized play/activities and care; and parent cooperation) summarises the principles for a refugee-friendly school. The model is described by Dansk Flygtningehjælp (2016) based on the work of Montgomery and Linnet (2012) and Hamilton and Moore (2004) and in close collaboration with the teacher Jette Thulin. Structure is important because refugee pupils will be in new countries and contexts that appear chaotic. Structures will help them handle the chaos. Folders in different colours, being the same across different subjects, is one way to create visual structures. Daily, repeating routines is another way to create structure. Ways to escape routines - loopholes - when pupils feel less able to handle the situations, is also important to build into the structures. Speak and time are associated with the necessity of building good relations with the pupil so the pupil can talk about problematic memories and long-term effects of difficult experiences. children need to talk about these experiences, and the teachers need to be one the pupil can trust with his stories. Rituals are closely connected to structures; the pupil needs to have repeating day rhythm to feel secure and safe. In order to learn, these are essential factors. Organisation of the teaching with activities and alternative work position can help the pupil to handle anxiety and restlessness. Also supporting pupils with traumatic experiences to play is a strategy that also supports educational purposes. It can be to establish rules or playing together to support the process of playing with the other children. Collaboration with the parents is a fundamental part of the Nordic schools strategies to enhance good qualities in the pupils education. Parent collaboration is reckoned as more difficult with parents from other parts of the world. But since it is a cornerstone in the Nordic school system, the collaboration is also important for refugee pupils. Henceforth, the STROF-model stresses the parent collaboration with working with refugee pupils. It builds trust and creates an atmosphere of respect. The teachers can do this by ongoing dialogue with the families.

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FABIO DOVIGO

3. RE APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

3.1. THE FRAMEWORK OF RE IN SOUTHERN EUROPE

Countries in Southern Europe - Albania, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain - are undoubtedly more exposed to the flows of refugees and migrants, attempting to travel to Europe through the Mediterranean. Even though the number of people has decreased since 2015, when almost one million refugees tried to flee conflict and persecution in Syria, Afghanistan or Iraq, this route is still the most used and, unfortunately, the deadliest. In 2018, more than 80.000 migrants had arrived in Southern Europe, especially to Greece, Spain and Italy (UNHCR, 2018b).

A large share of them (around 30.000) were children arrived in Greece, Italy and Spain between, of whom 12.717 (42%) were unaccompanied or separated children. Current statistics for 2019 show that, even though overall fewer people crossed through the Mediterranean to Southern countries compared to 2018, the share of children has increased (UNHCR, 2019c).

In Greece, 14% of 17.123 children arrived by land and sea are unaccompanied and separated children. Most of the children arrived in Greece from Afghanistan, Syrian, Iraq and Pakistan. In Italy 4.278 children arrived between January and December 2018, mostly from Tunisia, Eritrea, Guinea, Iraq, Pakistan and Sudan. 83% of them were unaccompanied or separated. As for Spain, in the same period 7.793 children arrived mostly from Morocco, Guinea, Syria, Algeria and Mali. Among those, the share of unaccompanied and separated children has increased from 63% in 2017 to 81% in 2018. Nearly two-thirds of children were boys, even though the proportion of boys arriving in Italy and Spain is significantly higher than in Greece (UNHCR, 2019d).

Among the 602,920 new asylum applications recorded in 2018 in European countries, one third of them (32%) were children (191.360). Central and Northern countries, as Germany or Sweden, were the top destination for refugee and migrant children, registering 43% of all child asylum applications. However, a relevant portion of child asylum claims concerns Southern Countries as Greece (21.770 children, 11%), Spain (11.035 children, 6%), and Italy (8.535 children 4%). It is worth noting that many child asylum applicants received negative decisions from the European authorities, especially among those from North African countries (80% on average), Iraq, Côte d'Ivoire (46% each) and Afghanistan (41%) (UNHCR, 2018c).

Lack of support and services, as well as insufficient care arrangements, can contribute in turn to worsening the experience of loss and trauma children may have suffered before arriving in Europe. However, after getting to the arrival country in Europe, children still have to pass tests to demonstrate that they are under age. Because procedures adopted for age assessment (like wrist X-rays) are frequently arbitrary and inconsistent, many children are illegitimately registered as adults. Consequently, they are denied the right to get access to the national child protection system, as well as to social, educational and psychological support services. This erroneous initial assessment of children as adults at their arrival in Europe can reflect on further lack of assistance when they later move to another country (UNHCR, 2018d).

In Southern European countries, unaccompanied and separated children are legally entitled to receive systematic support from trained guardians and social workers. However, the number of guardians and social workers appointed to this activity is usually too limited in relation to the number of children, as sometimes dozens of children are nominally put into the custody of just one guardian. Moreover, in countries like Greece, Italy and Spain, where responsibility for guardianship relies on institutions designated by the government, delays of weeks, or even months, in assigning an individual guardian to children are quite common (UNHCR, 2019b).

Another common issue migrant children experience in Southern European countries is the limited access to information about local procedures in place to ask for asylum and what support services they could apply for. Even where information is provided, it is rarely available in a language and communication style that children can actually understand. Consequently, even though some countries (like Spain and Italy) automatically grant residency to migrants if they are under age, information is frequently not sufficient or friendly enough to ensure them the right to apply for asylum. Lack of information on asylum and legal procedures is one of the main

reasons why children frequently try to leave the accommodation centres by going underground, especially in view of joining family members in other EU countries (Ambrosini, 2018).
This dangerous decision is usually originated by the many hindrances children are faced with in getting access to social and educational services, as well as work opportunities. Another decisive factor that pushes young migrants to continue their travel is that they frequently lose the right to support when they come of age. However, risks linked to children travelling onwards have increased in the last few years, as many countries have instituted stricter border controls all over Europe (Bloch, Sigona, and Zetter, 2014).
As for education, even though international and regional human rights law entitle children arriving in Southern Europe countries to have access to educational services, this right is frequently undermined by multiple administrative or legal barriers concerning unclear policies about the attendance of compulsory education for children without a legal residence permits or those living in accommodation centres, complicated registration procedures and deadlines, the lack of available places in schools, and inadequate first and second language support. This situation especially affects refugee children's access to education in Greece, Italy and Spain (UNICEF – IOM, 2017). As emphasised by several studies, supporting refugee children to develop both the host country language and their mother tongue is pivotal in view of their successful inclusion. The first enables them to be socially integrated, as well as to achieve proficiency in school by acquiring the language of instruction, through a process of language learning that can take at several years. However, it is equally important that refugee children can maintain and develop their mother tongue, as it has a positive effect on their identity and sense of belonging to their community of origin (Block et al., 2014; Dovigo, 2018; Hayward, 2017; Pinson and Arnot, 2010; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012).
More generally, refugee students often have very limited educational experience or had to interrupt their education path due to the flight from their country. This condition proves to be especially challenging to overcome for countries in Southern Europe, as the enrolment of children in school is often overshadowed by the widespread misconception that children will leave sooner or later in view of their transition to another settlement country (Cerna, 2019).

3.2. AN OVERVIEW OF RE IN SOUTHERN EUROPE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Greece

Greece had a quite homogeneous population until 1980, when the socio-political instability in Yugoslavia and the Balkan countries, as well as the collapse of the former USSR lead to an increase of migration from the Eastern countries (Dimakos and Tasiopoulou, 2003). As a consequence, when many documented and undocumented immigrants started entering the country, the Greek state struggled to deal with this massive flood of people, perceived as an uncontrolled phenomenon (Brooks, 2016). Although the government launched various policies to sustain welfare and social cohesion, it never managed to establish an effective and long-term strategy to eradicate nationalism and social stereotypes (Drosopulos, 2018; Voutira, 2004) As a consequence, Greece rapidly switched from being a migration country to the state of transition and settlement territory (Tsokalidou, 2005). This framework was radically altered by the so-called "refugee crisis", which had a dramatic peak in 2015, but since then has transformed into an endemic and unresolved issue for Greece. The sudden increase in the arrival of refugees occurred at a time when the country was facing a severe economic crisis, which was deeply affecting the sustainability of the social welfare system. In a few months, national authorities and the local communities had to urgently provide housing, meals and medical care to thousands of forced migrants. About 30 percent of them were children, most of them unaccompanied or separated from their family members (Unicef, 2016).
The proportions of the phenomenon can be estimated by considering the number of asylum applications of unaccompanied children. In the 2002–2007 period, where unaccompanied children applicants for asylum were mostly 16–18 years old, there were 247 applications in 2002, 314 in 2003, and only 44 in 2007 (Dimitropoulou and Papageorgiou, 2008). The number of applications started increasing in 2012-2014 (from 829 to 1500 applications), but reared suddenly up in 2016-2017, when the number of unaccompanied children applying for asylum risen to 9673 (93% boys). Since then, the number of children arriving has not deflected. Nowadays the total number of children present in Greece is 34.800 - 6.400 of them living in Greek islands centres - including

4.600 unaccompanied and separated children. However, the official statistics probably underestimate the real number of refugee children in Greece, as registrations of arriving children are often incomplete or inaccurate (Kohli, 2007; AIDA-ECRE, 2019). In this regard, the Greek protection system has been denounced by human rights organisations over the previous years, as it fails to provide adequate protection and support to refugee children arriving in the country. As a consequence, recent policies aiming at reviewing the procedures through which refugee children cases are managed in the country have been issued in 2016, as a response to those criticisms (Buchanan and Kallinikaki, 2018).

Greece ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, which establishes that the rights enshrined are not dependent on the child nationality or ethnic origin, nor whether the child is legally or illegally resident within the country. Until recently, the support provided for refugee children at the local and school levels has been inadequate, as there were not clear guidelines for assisting the action of teachers, local communities and parents (Triandafyllidou, 2016; Dumčius, et al., 2013). Additionally, due to the geographic concentration of immigrant families in urban community ghettos, most of the students attending schools in the main Greek cities (as Athens and Thessaloniki) are immigrant children. As a consequence, there is an overrepresentation of immigrant children in some institutions, which could easily produce a condition of school segregation (Asimaki et al., 2018). To overcome these issues, Greece has recently developed a set of programmes aimed to favour the inclusion of refugee children into the country's school system. With the Law 4251/2014 all children have been enabled to enrol in public schools even in case they don't have legal documents. In 2016 the Ministry of Education issued an educational plan addressed to ensure a preparatory programme aimed to guarantee the transition and gradual integration of refugee children in the Greek educational system through the provision of pedagogic and psychosocial support. Open to all children from a refugee background, the programme focuses on ensuring them compulsory education from kindergarten up to upper secondary school (Hellenic Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs (2016). In the 2016–2017 school year, the programme provided for the setting up of 800 reception classes in the public schools, attended by around 15.000 out of 22,000 refugee children aged between 6 and 15 currently present in the country. Children aged between 6 and 16 were offered a four-hour programme which included Greek language, computer science, maths, art, music, theatre and gymnastics. To this aim, 211 teachers have been enrolled to work in the reception classes. Moreover, 36 teachers from primary school and 33 teachers from secondary school have been appointed as Refugee Training Coordinators, to facilitate interaction between refugee children and families and school organisation (Ministry of Education, 2017). According to the Ministry of Education data, in the following 2017–2018 school year around a thousand schools across Greece enrolled refugee children. 30 kindergartens operate within refugee accommodation centres and a total of 2.360 unaccompanied children attend school. Children who attended preparatory programme in the previous year were expected to join the mainstream programme in public school.

Notwithstanding the provision of a legal framework and policies aimed at facilitating the inclusion of refugee children in compulsory school, a number of issues still prevent the majority of unaccompanied children to be actually integrated into the Greek educational system.

Firstly, very few schools adopt an intercultural education programme in Greece, most of them being located essentially in large cities, as Athens or Thessaloniki. Moreover, enduring delays in the procedure of appointing a guardian often prevents refugee children from accessing school, as the guardian's consent is a requirement for enrolment. Last, but not least, due to the pressure from the family in the country of origin, many children are more interested in finding a job that would allow them to send back money to the family than in attending school (Palaiologou, 2007).

As other Southern Countries, nowadays Greece consequently faces up conflictual demands regarding refugee children education. On the one hand, the government, local authorities and NGO organisations are dealing with the management of scarce resources, compared to the number of children present in the country, in order to secure attendance and minimal quality education at the compulsory level. On the other, refugee children and their families are often more interested in securing a job than in enrolling in school, especially if they feel compelled to stay in Greece instead of moving to another country, as it was in their original plan.

Italy

Since 2015, Italy has been one of the main gateways for the vast majority of unaccompanied and separated children arriving to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea (UNHCR, 2017a; UNICEF-IOM, 2017). Once in

Italy, children are the responsibility of local administrations, usually supported by voluntary civil society organisations as well as national and international NGOs. Even though the growing number of unaccompanied or separated children arriving in Italy has been a matter of concern for public and private bodies involved in providing immediate humanitarian response, until recently, data on children's country of origin, migration trajectory and, more generally, living conditions, have not been collected systematically. Reports based on primary and secondary data show that refugee and migrant children arrive in Italy escaping from poverty and/or conflict areas, where basic rights to security, freedom, and protection are scarcely guaranteed, or not guaranteed at all (REACH, 2017; DGIPI, 2019). Children come from a variety of countries, especially from West Africa, Eritrea, and Somalia. Most of them are unaccompanied (91%), aged 16 to 17 (93%), and boys (92%). Moreover, some children want to settle in Italy to pursue an educational and future working career, while others express the intention of joining their relatives in other countries. However, children's plans soon come up against the time required by the public administration to track down documentation and grant the required asylum permits. Faced with the intricacies of a bureaucratic system they can barely comprehend, children often decide to flee or depart from the reception system, seeking to reach their target destination in illicit and dangerous ways that expose them to the risk of exploitation and violence.

The decision to migrate is almost always made by the individual child, who usually takes the migration route in order to flee from ethnic or political persecution in their home country, as well as from a situation of family violence or economic troubles at home. Getting to Europe is the goal of nearly half of all migrant children, who are looking for a country that will offer better human rights conditions and access to education. Other children are initially led to a neighbouring or North African country, essentially seeking work. Many interviewed children disclose they didn't know about the risks involved in the journey (Rigon & Mengoli, 2013). Conversely, others admit they were aware that their life might be in danger during the long journey, but were still resolved to leave at any cost. On average, the length of the journey is one year and two months, but for some children - for example those from The Gambia and Guinea Conakry – it takes even longer as they have to work (usually illegally and exploitative conditions) to pay for the journey.

Most children leave their country without thinking of Europe as a final destination, as they are simply looking for a place where there will be more job opportunities or better education. However, after they move to North Africa they frequently change their minds, as they face widespread violence or abuse. Children also report the sea crossing towards Italy as the worst event they have to deal with during their journey. Nevertheless, the decision to embark on this dangerous crossing is usually driven by the terrible conditions they are living in in Libya: during their stay, many of them are indiscriminately arrested and taken into custody without charges, while others report that their families had to pay a ransom after they were kidnapped (Accorinti et al. 2019).

The few children traveling with siblings also underline that being separated by accident from other family members was a constant risk throughout the journey. Separation usually takes place during the transfer, but sometimes it also happens after arrival in Italy.

Once in Italy, children have to deal with new issues in terms of access to international protection and/or achieving legal permissions for onward travel (ASGI, 2016). Indeed, obtaining legal status in Italy as a refugee can take several months (or years, in some cases). Likewise, the process of assigning a legal guardian to unaccompanied children can take almost one year in some cases. The appointment of a legal guardian was only recently removed as a requisite for applying for international protection or a residence permit, enabling children to benefit from enrolment in education. As a consequence, children often live in a kind of prolonged limbo that hinders their ability to plan their future and settle in the country. As most of the children are 16 to 17 years old, they are particularly exposed to the risk of discouragement and disempowerment. On the one hand, they are not allowed to work and acquire economic independence; on the other hand, this long wait puts them at risk of losing the special protection ensured by the norms as long as they are minors.

Similarly, children who rule out settling in Italy – as they aim to travel onward to join relatives who are living in other European countries – find it very difficult to reach this goal while complying with the legal requirements. As procedures addressed at examining the claims for family reunification or relocation are still unclear, each process usually takes more than one year to be managed. As a matter of fact, over the years only a minor proportion of migrant children have actually been transferred from Italy to another country for reunification or relocation purposes.

This issue is worsened by the complexity and lack of clarity that affects bureaucratic practices connected to the application process (Gruppo di studio sul sistema di accoglienza, 2015). Scarce information, intricate procedures, and uncertain timelines contribute to increasing children's anxiety and sense of vulnerability. By law, newly arrived unaccompanied children should stay in short-term accommodation structures for no longer

than thirty days. After this period of time, they should be relocated to specific long-term accommodation structures managed by the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR). However, the shortage of available places in long-term accommodation structures actually forces children to remain in short-term reception centres longer than expected, hampering their access to the educational system (Save the Children Italia, 2017; SPRAR, 2017).

Living in centres with a lack of perspectives and few activities, children already marked by distressing experiences easily feel abandoned once more. Accordingly, some of them escape from reception facilities and try to reach services located elsewhere in Italy, assuming that they will be able to speed up the procedure. Many others decide to break with the Italian reception system to continue their travel in hiding, once again putting themselves at risk of exploitation and violence.

Access to education would be a primary resource for reducing that risk and promoting personal health and wellbeing, especially considering that many children undertook the journey precisely in order to access better education (Catarci, 2012, 2016). However, by law in Italy, it is mandatory only for unaccompanied and separated children living in secondary reception centres to be enrolled in school. As children spend, on average, six months in primary reception centres, most of them cannot attend school at all or, at most, are able to spend only a few hours a week in school.

In March 2017, a new law established a number of measures to improve the protection level of refugee children on the basis of the "best interest of the child" principle. These measures include, among other things, the prohibition on executing border rejection of unaccompanied and separated foreign children, reducing the maximum amount of time spent in first-line reception centres to 30 days, extending opportunities to assign guardians to children, improving procedures for age assessment, and guaranteeing children's right to access health and educational services. As for the latter, the analysis that follows will introduce the main features of the organisation of the refugee children's education system in Italy.

As we noted, education is seen as a protective factor for refugee children. Nevertheless, even though in the last few years the number of asylum-seeker and refugee children in Italy has increased significantly, we still lack official figures indicating how many of them enrol in schools and where. Moreover, although the Italian government has promoted some actions to sensitise schools about this situation, so far no long-term educational policies have been put in place with the aim of providing systematic inclusion in education for refugee youths. As the current system puts local municipalities in charge of the management of newly arrived adults seeking asylum, the government similarly assumes that refugee children will be managed by local schools within the wider framework of immigrant education (Giovannetti, 2014). Consequently, while the Ministry of Education recently launched a campaign to spread information about students with refugee experience, schools have not been provided with clear-cut plans or stable resources to specifically meet their needs.

Evidence from countries with extensive experience with refugee education shows that the ability of schools to provide immediate and appropriate support is pivotal for favouring a smooth accommodation process that will ensure settlement, safety and security for children (Education Unit Division of International Protection, UNHCR, 2016; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Conversely, inadequate school support often translates into students' absenteeism, disengagement, feelings of disempowerment, poor relationships with peers, and early school leaving. This, in turn, can affect not only school achievements of refugee children, but also their coping strategies and resilience, undermining future prospects in terms of employment and socio-economic status, and heightening social exclusion (Korac, 2003). According to Italian law, all minors, both native and foreign, have the right to education within the national school system until age 16, regardless of their legal status. Even if their legal status is irregular, foreign children have equal rights to education as Italian children. They are subject to compulsory education and entitled to receive assistance and arrangements in case they have special needs. When a refugee child applies to attend a school, the required documents should be the same as for Italian children. In addition, child enrolment should be ensured even if documents related to identity, health, or school certificates cannot be provided. Even if the child is not able to produce an identity document, s/he should be registered on a reserve list that enables him/her to attend classes and get the final certification related to school attendance.

However, until recently, formal education for asylum-seeking children has not received special attention in Italy, as it has been assimilated into the ordinary activities already aimed at first or second-generation migrant children. Not being considered a population with a specific profile, the insertion of unaccompanied children in education has not been monitored over time, so we lack comprehensive information about their age, gender, and the overall path they follow when they enrol in the Italian education system (MIUR, 2017). To reverse this trend, in 2015 and 2016 the Ministry of Education launched two calls to submit programmes asking schools to

design programmes to ease the integration of unaccompanied children by providing psychological support and providing courses in Italian as a second language, specifically targeting refugee pupils. Moreover, a share of European Funds on Asylum, Migration and Integration (FAMI) has been used to develop administrative staff and teachers' skills with regard to refugee education and training courses on linguistic-cultural mediation. It also supported projects that addressed the promotion of school activities focused on deepening the understanding of human rights in relation to migration issues. Furthermore, based on a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the UNHCR, a website has been developed to inform teachers and students about unaccompanied minors' personal and educational trajectories, as well as to help develop projects aimed at increasing awareness of refugee children' rights and opportunities.

The regulation differentiates between children under and over 16 years of age. The former should be enrolled in a grade corresponding to their age in compulsory education. However, after assessing the curriculum provided in the country of origin and the competences already acquired by the child, school teachers can opt to assign the pupil to the class immediately below or above the one corresponding to his/her age in order to adjust school integration to the actual level of skills. Enrolment can take place at any time throughout the school year. According to the Ministry of Education, the number of foreign students in school classes should be limited to 30%. Preparatory classes are not planned at the national level, as Italian laws do not allow schools to organise special classes for foreign students. Moreover, schools are not obliged to provide specific language support for newly arrived students. However, taking advantage of the relative degree of autonomy granted by the Italian education system, some educational institutions expand what is ordinarily offered by organising additional courses for refugee youths. According to the level of competence of foreign students, the school can implement some adaptations to curricula and adopt individual or group interventions to promote inclusion. By law, educational institutions should also ease the learning of Italian as a second language through the organisation of specific workshops in schools, delivering about 8-10 hours per week (about 2 hours per day) over 3-4 months. Students over 16 are no longer subject to compulsory education in Italy. Nevertheless, they are eligible to study to obtain an upper secondary school diploma (5 years) or a professional qualification (3 to 5 years). As a consequence, to be enrolled in school immigrant children have to provide evidence of all skills required to apply for the class they would like to attend. This usually implies that children must receive extra help from voluntary teachers or associations in order to obtain the competences they need. Those who do not have a lower secondary school certificate or are not able to show an equivalent level of competence can be enrolled in a CPIA in order to acquire this certification. Children enrolled in such courses are entitled to obtain the final certification even if they turn 18 years while attending the course.

However, effective school enrolment and attendance of refugee children in Italy is often hindered by some important factors: first of all, reception centres are sometimes located in areas far from schools or even not reachable by public transportation. Moreover, even where schools are close to the reception centres, they cannot ensure that places are available to accommodate refugee students. Additionally, although all children between 6 and 16 are entitled by law to go to school whenever they arrive in Italy, some schools exert direct or indirect pressure to discourage their enrolment. On the one hand, there is a lack of knowledge of the norms and national decrees related to the rights to instruction of refugee children. On the other hand, school personnel often feel overwhelmed and unable to cope with the breadth of the educational tasks the attendance of refugee children would imply having to deal with. Additionally, although the law establishes the principle that refugee children should be enrolled in classes corresponding to their age, it is very common to find children who are allocated to school grades merely on the basis of language and educational skill assessment, even though they are two or even three years older than their peers. Some schools also have to face the reactions of Italian parents, as the attendance of a large group of immigrant children is perceived as having a negative effect on a school's reputation. Finally, it is not uncommon for refugee children to refuse to go to school or be dissuaded by family members, as they do not see education as an investment or, more often, consider Italy just a temporary stop of their journey to another European country (Grigt, 2017).

These factors notwithstanding, many schools are doing their best to use the limited degree of autonomy currently allowed by the centralised Italian educational system to identify and leverage the residual resources available for promoting refugee education. Good practices addressed at bettering the educational experience of refugee students are constantly being developed, especially with regard to children whose curriculum has to be accommodated according to their specific linguistic or personal needs (Santagata & Ongini, 2016). As we will examine in the next paragraph, in this respect the most important challenge Italian schools are facing nowadays is the lack of coordination and networking between those initiatives. Good practices tend to be fostered on the basis of individual, voluntary efforts made by teachers. Even when actions that have been proven to work are

adopted by the entire school, they are rarely systematised, documented and, above all, disseminated to other schools. As a consequence, the knowledge one school develops about how to solve administrative or educational issues related to refugee children's attendance is generally confined to that same institution, or even limited to the know-how of individual teachers. This explains the wide gap between the rights to integration and education that the law, in the abstract, guarantees for refugee youths and the good, but isolated, practices many schools are trying to put in place to manage the arrival of this new population of students (UNHCR, 2017b).

With regard to school levels, barriers to accessing education in early childhood are a critical issue for refugee families. Education in kindergarten is not compulsory in Italy. Nevertheless, more than 90% of children are enrolled in pre-primary schools, which are divided into public (managed by national government or municipalities) and private (fee-paying) institutes. A large number of studies highlight that pre-school access plays a pivotal role in ensuring children from a migratory background develop learning and participation that will help them to succeed in further school levels. However, refugee families often find it difficult to enrol their children in pre-primary school. Institutes managed by the national government are free, but frequently crowded. Consequently, places are limited, especially for children arriving in the middle of the school year. In turn, municipalities usually link access to pre-primary schools (and connected services such as transportation and meals) to legal proof of residence in the area, which refugee families cannot provide. Finally, private institutes are generally not available to refugee families to enrol their children in for financial reasons.

Another weak point of the Italian educational system in terms of granting access to refugee youths is the upper secondary school level. By law, from the age of 14 all children can enrol in secondary education, provided that they can demonstrate the required associated competences. For those who do not have a lower secondary school certificate, the teachers' board can make an assessment based on oral and/or written tests in order to admit them to the secondary school. Even though the educational path of refugee children has been not systematically documented in Italy, empirical evidence shows that most of them, generally aged between 16 and 18, are usually enrolled in CPIAs or, alternatively, in the vocational education and training school system managed by regional authorities, so as to attend training courses aimed at providing professional qualifications for the labour market. A major problem for refugee children succeeding in enrolling in upper-secondary school is that once they turn 18 they lose the rights connected with being underage. Consequently, they have to prove they have a passport, as well as available accommodation and a suitable livelihood for the time left until the end of their schooling. These requests are rarely compatible with the completion of a course lasting 3 to 5 ye*ars*. Moreover, some vocational education and training centres adopt discriminatory policies by declining to register unaccompanied children who do not have a residency permit. Actually, most refugee children aged over 16 are not able to demonstrate that they possess the required qualifications or competences to attend upper secondary education. As a consequence, they often enrol in CPIAs, where they can find basic literacy and Italian language courses (including a test for the residency permit for long-term residents), first-level education courses leading to obtaining the lower secondary school certificate, and second-level education courses created to guarantee a technical, professional, or artistic preparation diploma. Even though CPIAs offer valuable support to refugee students' education, both in terms of effective assessment of competences developed in non-formal settings and instruction provided to foreign language speakers and illiterate children, they also have some relevant shortcomings. Firstly, CPIAs were originally conceived to support adult workers' education through the provision of lifelong learning courses. Their mission only recently expanded to include remedial courses for early school leavers aged over 16. As a consequence, the organisational ability of CPIAs to accommodate refugee youths' educational requirements is quite limited. With the exception of a few centres, children are not usually enrolled in specific courses aimed at minors. Because of the lack of resources, they attend classes devised for adult students, which do not take into consideration the different learning and psychological needs of refugee children. In addition, classes mostly take place in the evening, as they were created for adult workers. Consequently, refugee children can attend only a limited number of class hours per week. As a result, opportunities for education are reduced with regard both to class content and rates and, more generally, the impact education can have on the daily life of children. More adequate organisation would imply an investment of specific resources in terms of time and teachers involved in refugee children's education, as well as comprehensive inter-professional and multi-agency cooperation with other practitioners (Edwards et al., 2017). Finally, the number of young Italian students enrolled in CPIAs has steadily decreased over the years. While they attend adult classes in the evening, refugee children naturally tend to group together. As the chances to meet other Italian peers are very limited compared with mainstream schools, opportunities to develop social

interaction through school attendance are scarce in this context. As a result, CPIAs risk becoming an umpteenth segregated environment that hinders children's integration.

As we noted, the availability of a number of skilled practitioners, as well as inter-professional and multi-agency cooperation are pivotal for ensuring that schools can foster a smooth integration process for all asylum-seeker and refugee students. Head teachers play a key role in this sense, as they are not only legally responsible for the management and coordination of all interventions planned in school, but should also take the lead on sensitising all school personnel to this topic and to the importance of developing adequate organisational and pedagogical strategies to help refugee children to settle in school. Furthermore, as public funding is conceived as ensuring only the basic functioning of mainstreaming schools, head teachers are also compelled by the lack of resources to find alternative ways to provide viable educational opportunities for all children with specific needs, including the implementation of integration activities aimed at refugee students.

Administrative support staff, too, play a central role, as they are usually the first point of contact with school for refugee families or children's guardians. Moreover, they are responsible for managing the highly complex procedures related to the children's enrolment, as norms on this subject are frequently subject to further revision and specification. Administrative support staff are also involved in preparing school applications for getting external funding from the Ministry of Education. These applications are aimed at acquiring additional resources to promote "special" linguistic and/or educational projects addressed to refugee children. However, many schools suffer from endemic administrative understaffing, so they are often unable to deal with the large bureaucratic load involved in the application and report process.

As for teachers, it is important to consider that since the 1970s, the Italian approach to inclusion has traditionally been based on the accommodation of all children – regardless of disability or specific needs – in mainstream schools. This means that organising separate classes (for example with the aim of offering preparatory linguistic courses to refugee children) cannot be devised within the normal framework of schools. However, by law, educational institutions can deliver specific support to disadvantaged students in terms of additional small-group activities aimed at learning Italian as a second language. Such activities have been defined by the Ministry of Education as a weekly intervention providing 8 to10 teaching hours that should be developed over a period of 3 to 4 months. However, only a few schools actually have educational staff teachers who are specialised in teaching Italian as a second language and/or can afford to devote extra time to this activity. As a consequence, linguistic support is offered only for a very limited number of hours per week, usually by unspecialised teachers who are essentially working on a voluntary basis.

In addition to Italian as a second language, refugee children also need the help of other subject teachers, as many of them are illiterate or, more generally, have received very little education in their country of origin. Italian law affirms that students with specific socioeconomic, linguistic and cultural needs – as is the case with refugee children – are entitled to follow personalised school paths, which can be adapted to meet the skill levels and learning pace of each student. Indeed, in pedagogical terms, refugee students constitute a considerable challenge for teachers, whose teaching skills should be expanded to acquire the basic level of intercultural competences needed to work with refugee children. More precisely, it is important that intercultural competences are not confined to the interventions of specialised teachers or other consultants, but become a common ground for all teachers, especially in schools where refugee children are attending classes (Fiorucci, 2015). Through this, it would be possible to improve both the accuracy of the evaluation process used to assess refugee children's skills as they enrol in school, and the ability of teachers to adapt the curriculum according to the needs and potential of this specific population of students.

Such arrangements are mandatory to favour the enrolment and success of refugee youths in school. Therefore, investing in the provision of dedicated training courses for teachers on these topics is pivotal. However, so far teacher training in Italy has been underdeveloped, especially at the secondary school level. While a master's degree in early childhood education – commonly including classes about intercultural education – is currently delivered by many Italian universities to prospective teachers, training that addresses future secondary teachers is still limited and fragmented. This lack of preparation and guidance is especially detrimental, as most refugee students are usually enrolled in secondary schools. As a result, educational projects focused on refugee children are frequently supported by individual, well-intentioned teachers, instead of being part of a systematic and shared effort towards inclusion supported by the whole school. In upper secondary institutions (including most vocational schools), the situation is further complicated by the fact that schools are regularly crowded, often including up to 30 children per classroom. This large number of students significantly hinders the ability to successfully integrate refugee children by providing the level of care and attention they need. As a consequence, some schools are indirectly discouraging children from enrolling in or persevering with attending classes, while

others categorize them according to the places available on the spot, rather than on the basis of their actual age or skills.

Furthermore, to pursue refugee students' inclusion, teachers' interventions must be associated with other contributions from specialised practitioners, especially in terms of linguistic and cultural mediation, as well as psychological support (Catarci, 2011). The role of mediators is critical, especially in the initial phase immediately following the enrolment of refugee students in school: on the one hand, the mediator can provide vital information to teachers and other practitioners about the child's migration story and current situation; on the other, s/he facilitates the child in gradually getting to know and integrating into the new educational setting. Moreover, where the child is accompanied by parents or other relatives, the mediator ensures that smooth communication about the child's education and effective integration can take place. Mediation services are usually offered by external partners, such as asylum-seeking reception centres or local municipalities. However, these activities are provided on a limited and irregular basis, covering only a small portion of the actual schools' requirements for mediation.

As regards psychological support, a large number of studies show that refugee children are at a high risk of developing psychological disorders related to their forced migration experience, especially in terms of post-traumatic stress disorder, distress, anxiety, and depression. Research emphasises that improvements in children's mental health are strongly associated with the development of safe conditions characterised by stable settlement and social support. In particular, school participation, acquiring language proficiency, and building a network of local friends are all factors positively associated with children's levels of wellbeing and resilience. Even though appropriate health care access should be provided to all refugee children in Europe – as a right guaranteed by the first host country – the organisation of public health services in Italy, coupled with the poor competences of health staff in this particular area of intervention, tend to reduce the actual opportunities for children to receive proper help in psychological terms. As a result, specific support for refugee children's mental health is not as widespread as it should be, as it is mostly delivered by private organisations on a voluntary basis.

Another final point that needs to be highlighted is the chronic underfunding that affects Italian schools, which undermines their ability to ensure refugee students school access, permanence, and success. In 2015, the Ministry of Education launched an annual call for applications for funding for school projects related to the inclusion of refugee youths. The call for applications to the fund, which allocates one million euros per year, aims to implement activities promoting refugee students' integration through the provision of linguistic, cultural, and community support. However beneficial this initiative could be, it has a number of shortcomings. First of all, the allotted funding is not sufficient to guarantee that the minimum range of actions required to ensure school enrolment and attendance of all refugee students over one year will be covered. Secondly, being a competitive call for applications, it implies that institutions will invest extra time and resources in applying for the funds. As a consequence, disadvantaged and/or understaffed schools, which would be the primary target of the funding, are often unable to sustain the workflow required by the application process. Moreover, the irregular flow of refugee children arriving in Italy throughout the year does not match the rigid procedures and deadlines of the application system. Therefore, schools that welcome refugee children in the middle of the year are excluded from the opportunity to obtain additional resources in a timely manner. Finally, as funding is provided on a yearly basis, school projects are at risk of being discontinued, even if children's attendance lasts for longer than one year – as is usually the case.

Italian delays in envisioning and implementing clear-cut policies on this issue reflect the prolonged invisibility of asylum-seeker and refugee children within the official educational paths. This void has, to a certain extent, been filled by NGOs and voluntary associations. However, when responding to the needs of refugee children, such organisations risk framing them as a homogenous group, even though we know that being a refugee is more an outcome of bureaucratic process, than a homogeneous reality (Rutter, 2006). This way, they tend to adopt a one-dimensional view of refugees' backgrounds, typically focused on a "victim's history", which often fails to take into account how refugee biographies differ widely according to individual experiences and feelings. Moreover, NGOs and associations are usually concentrated in large towns in Italy, whereas current administrative policies tend to scatter asylum-seekers and refugees to small towns for reasons essentially related to public order. Therefore schools, along with social services, are the only public agencies left that could offer widespread and extensive educational support to refugee children. In addition, while social services may be unfamiliar or be regarded with suspicion as they are frequently connected with legal requirements, schools are generally respected and appreciated by refugee families, which consider them as an opportunity for socio-economic mobility (Dutton et al. 2000). However, this implies that schools would have to increase their ability

to organise outreach, assiduously working to involve individual students and families in educational activities instead of restricting themselves to applying bureaucratic procedures for enrolment.
All in all, the current approach to the integration of refugee students in Italian schools is shaped by manifold positive interventions. Nevertheless, such interventions are fragile, as they are mostly based on short-term funding (provided by the central administration or private bodies) or on voluntary contributions. This poses a question about the actual perspective from which refugee children education is seen and managed in Italy. On the one hand, we find a legal framework that ensures a high degree of protection and promotion of the educational rights of refugee children. On the other, actions taken to fulfil those rights are not adequately supported as they are based on short-term funding. Planned interventions still seem to refer to a conception of refugee children's arrival and integration in schools as a temporary (or even exceptional) event, even though international reports highlight that it is an enduring, probably permanent phenomenon. Without proper allocation of funding, refugee children not only end up being excluded from educational experiences they would be entitled to participate in, but are also increasingly exposed to the risk of going underground and, consequently, being exploited or even abused. However, the introduction of regular long-term funding schemes is a necessary but not sufficient condition for ensuring sustainability of actions related to refugee children's education in Italy. Faced with the extended development of valuable, but scattered and often isolated practices emerging from institutions that work on fostering refugee youths' school experiences, it is also pivotal to promote greater coordination and cross-dissemination of interventions, so as to ensure that positive actions can be spread and reinforced in all schools in an effective way.

Spain

Among Southern European countries, in the last few years Spain has received a large number of refugee children. Between January and December 2018, nearly 8.000 children arrived in Spain coming from Morocco, Guinea, the Syrian Arab Republic, Algeria and Mali. Among those, over 6.000 were unaccompanied or separated, with a two-fold increase compared to the previous year (CEAR, 2019). Moreover, the share of unaccompanied or separated children grew by 18% from 2017 to 2018. Most children are currently relocated in Madrid, Andalusia, Catalonia, Melilla and the Basque Country. They are legally entitled to receive the same protection and care as Spanish children, but due to the current decentralisation of the child protection system in Spain, the conditions of their reception significantly differs depending on the actual location.
Foreign minors in Spain have the right to education, health care and basic social service under the same conditions as Spanish children. The public administrations are responsible for ensuring access to education of vulnerable groups, including unaccompanied foreign minors and those with international protection needs.. This right is also affirmed in the Spanish immigration legislation, which establishes that foreigners under sixteen have the right and duty to education, including access to basic, free and compulsory education (Organic Law 1/1996). In the case of foreigners under eighteen, they also have the right to post-compulsory education (Lázaro et al., 2016).
In general, regardless of the time of the school year in which refugee children arrive at the reception centre, their access to school has immediate priority. Parents or guardians, supported by psychologists, have primary responsibility for school enrolment and monitoring. The enrolment process at school would be greatly improved if administrations would invest more resources on the activity of intercultural mediators, who can play a pivotal liaison role between parents, guardians and the school administration (Barbulescu and Grugel, 2016).
In response to the difficulties raised in this area, the creation of a Coordination Group for the Educational Integration of Refugees in Spain (CIER), constituted by Autonomous Communities, universities, students, has been announced by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports , and NGOs, with the objective of integrating the refugees that Spain receives into the education system.
Even though some obstacles concerning the registration and schooling of refugee children still persist, the rapidity of the enrolment process in Spain has generally improved in the last few years (Escorial et al., 2016).
The inclusion in school is easier for younger children, especially in terms of language learning. Conversely, teenagers often find it difficult to integrate as they often have to repeat courses or are put in classes at a different age level. It is particularly difficult to integrate older children in the education system according to their needs, especially when they do not have basic skills. Moreover, the procedure of recognition of previous certificates acquired in their countries is usually complex and uncertain, even if they come with a diploma.

In the sixteen to eighteen age group, education is non-compulsory. Consequently, if children don't meet the minimum education level required, they cannot formally continue with their studies. Sometimes schools decide to integrate them informally and help them take the test to get access to the secondary education level. If they pass the test, they are usually enrolled to attend a preparatory year, depending on the places available. Moreover, some schools let children arrive in the middle of the school year enrol in courses, while others have less flexible procedures (CEAR, 2018).
However, as we mentioned, policies on facilitating the access to education of refugee children are not homogenous in Spain. For example, the Autonomous City of Ceuta recently signed an agreement with the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports to support the integration of students with specific educational support needs. Specifically, the agreement aims to reduce the differences and discrimination that, due to different circumstances (e.g. late or irregular schooling, lack of knowledge of the Spanish language, cultural differences, etc.), generate difficulties in ensuring the normal school attendance of children and determine a risk of early school leaving.
However, the situation in Melilla, the other Spanish enclave in Morocco, is very different. The lack of schooling of children residing in the accommodation centre with their families, as well as the lack of leisure activities suitable to their situation, are worrisome. The situation would be tolerable only if the time spent in the reception centre would be short and the transfer process to the mainland would be quick and smooth. But in the current situation, children in Melilla heavily suffer for the consequences of the lack of schooling (Lázaro et al., 2016).

Albania

Albania is not new to the effects of massive migration, as at the beginning of the 1990s the country was strongly affected by the dramatic emigration of thousands of nationals to other European countries. Nowadays, Albanian citizens have full access to movement in the EU Schengen Area for up to 90 days due to the liberalisation of visas in 2010. In 2015 a new wave of migration, in the form of unaccompanied minors attempting to move to other EU countries, reached a peak. Most of them later were repatriated, as the Schengen visa guarantees the right of movement, but not allows for taking up employment and settling permanently in other European countries. Consequently, Albania is the fourth in a list of top 30 non-EU countries whose citizens were apprehended and found to be illegally present in Europe from 2008 to 2017 (Eurostat, 2017a).
Albanian residents usually apply for what is called "economic asylum", claiming that they are pushed to move to Europe due to poor economic conditions and unemployment in their country. However, in the last few years Albania also experienced a new phenomenon of immigration into the country, which included asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors fleeing from war, violence or persecution areas. The Albanian government attempted to regulate this influx through the Law 121/2014, which identifies the conditions and procedures for granting asylum and establishes the rights and duties of asylum-seekers, refugees and persons under temporary protection.
At the same time, the prolonged economic crises that hit many Southern European countries starting from 2008 originated relevant return migration of Albanian nationals, who have previously moved to Greece and Italy. Even though most of these migrants returned with their partner and children, there is a lack of information on the exact number of children that were involved in such a return movement (INSTAT, 2013; Eurostat, 2017b).
As an element of the current path towards integration into the European Union, Albania has recently developed a number of laws and strategies aimed at ensuring a policy framework in agreement with European regulations (Save the Children, 2012). However, this framework has not been actually engrained into the practices concerning child migrants. As a consequence, most of the activities held by institutional bodies are still limited to the identification of minors, because public resources needed to address the issue and provide help to children affected are not in place. Therefore, the provision of social and educational services mostly relies on voluntary contributions from donors, both at the national and local levels.
Services' mission is focused on children in special conditions - because of neglect, abandon, or sexual exploitation. Unaccompanied minors are automatically included in the social protection system, as central and local-level institutions are required to follow legal procedures to address cases. However, a specific budget is allocated for these children at the national level, but not at the local one. Moreover, the principle of ensuring rights and legal protection to children before they come to age is often in conflict with the widespread cultural

assumption that boys over 14 years old should fend for themselves and provide for their family (Vathi and Richards, 2019).
Another important issue is the way the increasing level of formality and bureaucracy concerning unaccompanied minors often forces them into a condition of statelessness, pushing them to easily wander within the country, and sometimes to move from one country to the other. Bureaucracy is also linked to the persistent lack of cross-sector and inter-institutional coordination and cooperation mechanisms. While border police staff is not adequately trained to work with children, the number of professionals employed in social and education services related to children protection is still limited, with a high rate of turnover among staff. As a consequence, inconsistencies in the system for the protection of children, coupled with the country's uncertain economic situation, make it especially difficult for Albania to ensure refugee children's rights, resulting in the exclusion of many of them from social care and education services (Vathi and Richards, 2019).

Cyprus

According to Eurostat (2018), the Republic of Cyprus has experienced a large increase in the number of first-time asylum applicants from 2014 (1,480 applications) to 2018 (6,064). In the second quarter of 2018, this made Cyprus the country with the highest number of first-time asylum applicants in Europe, compared to population. In the face of this, Cypriot institutions have promoted policy aimed to ensure quality services for migrants. However, many areas are still deemed problematic, as Cyprus has not developed an established policy framework concerning the inclusion of migrants, in general, and more specifically of asylum-seekers .
The reception conditions of asylum-seekers are managed by the Social Welfare services, which are responsible for providing reception and assessing the conditions of living of asylum-seekers. The Social Welfare services are mandated to carry out an initial assessment of whether asylum-seekers have sufficient resources to secure an adequate standard of living, as well as to examine the option of placing asylum-seekers in the reception centre. Due to the lack of housing capacity at the centre, the majority of asylum-seekers are currently accommodated in shared houses or apartments that they are expected to find on their own. Administration provides a maximum amount of €735 for material assistance (for a family of 4 or more members) and €320 for an individual. However, this amount is not enough to cover the standard cost of housing in Cyprus (UNHCR, 2018a).
Another major issue of the current management of refugees in Cyprus is the bureaucratic delays in examining applications and granting assistance. These delays, due to several administrative difficulties that include staff shortages, lack of adequate resources, and inadequate implementation of the recently approved Reception Conditions framework, have a huge impact on the living conditions of asylum-seekers.
According to the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, all children have the right to attend public educational institutions, irrespective of their residence status, nationality, and parents' origins. Following the Refugee Law (2000/2016) all asylum-seeking children have access to education under the same conditions that apply to Cypriot children, immediately after applying for asylum and no later than 3 months since the submission of the asylum application. Public primary and secondary education is free for all children, the language of instruction is Greek.
The Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) promotes intercultural education as the most productive way to achieve social and cultural development, foster global values and tackle prejudices and stereotypes. The Ministry, in collaboration with the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, also developed a code of conduct against racism in school. In 2015 the Ministry launched a new programme - DRASE - addressed to the student population in about 100 public educational institutions at all school level. The aim of the programme is to support students from economically disadvantaged families and improve social cohesion and inclusion in school by reducing the rates of the early leaving (UNHCR, 2018). However, this range of initiatives from the Ministry had only a limited impact on the actual participation of refugee children in education. On the one hand, some refugee families urge their adolescent children to find a job instead of enrolling in school. On the other hand, only recently the second language needs of newly arrived children have been recognised as a primary issue for integration and included in the DRASE programme (Zembylas et al., 2015).
The most problematic group to be integrated in education are refugee children over the age of 16. They can attend language classes, funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and managed by municipalities

in cooperation with NGOs. Nonetheless, these classes are only offered in big cities, so people living in suburbs or rural areas are usually excluded (Zembylas and Papamichael, 2017).
In conclusion, while Cyprus faces a growing number of asylum applicants, it still lacks a comprehensive migration policy. As a consequence, refugees still experience various difficulties concerning many important aspects of their lives, including education.

Malta

Malta, the smallest European Union member state, has seen the arrival of numerous migrants from various African countries since the late 1990s, as it often serves as a gateway to Europe due to its location in a central position in the Mediterranean Sea.
The last available data show that there were 2045 applicants for asylum in 2018. 1421 cases are still pending, while only 126 individuals were recognised the refugee status. Most of the applicants come from Syria, Somalia, Libya and Sudan. 20% of them are children (AIDA, 2018).
According to the Refugees Act, asylum seekers have free of charge access to public education and training. Reception Regulations state that asylum-seeking children are entitled to access the same education system as Maltese nationals. Access should be ensured within 3 months from the date of submission of the asylum application, but this period can be extended to one year in case "specific education is provided in order to facilitate access to the education system". As for Maltese students, primary and secondary education are compulsory for asylum seekers up to the age of 16. However, asylum-seeking children find it difficult to access school because of the children's limited educational background and language difficulties, the lack of a formal assessment process to identify the most suitable educational entry level to school, and the lack of preparatory classes. Moreover, as a consequence of delays in the registration of the applications for asylum, access to education for unaccompanied children is often hindered. Another common issue is the location of accommodation centres, as the transport provided by schools is not free of charge. Provisions for children with special needs, which include a Learning Support Assistant appointed to provide individual attention to the child, are the same as for Maltese children (Calleja et al., 2010).
However, the second language acquisition remains the most difficult issue in terms of education of refugee children. In 2014, the Ministry of Education launched the "National Strategy on Literacy for the period 2014-2019" programme. Acknowledging the need to support third-country nationals living in Malta, the programme encourages the review of the education system concerning the participation of migrant children in schools. Moreover, the programme contains a list of recommendations that include the provision of information about schooling options for migrant parents, the establishment of supplemental language support classes, the implementation of assessment procedures for children concerning the school entry level, training courses for teachers, as well as the active involvement of parents through the organisation of literacy courses for adult migrants. While the implementation of this programme is still underway at a national level, other initiatives are in place at the local one to provide refugee children in school with further support in basic and functional language learning in addition to the teaching provided by the class teacher (AIDA, 2018).
In 2018, the Maltese government introduced a new programme ("I Belong") addressed to the beneficiaries of international protection. The programme, open to all individuals of migrant background regardless of their residency status, offers English and Maltese language courses, as well as basic social and cultural orientation as a way to facilitate the integration process (Ministry for European Affairs and Equality, 2019).

Portugal

Also in Portugal, the number of asylum seekers has been especially high in 2015, when there was a dramatic increase compared to the previous year (from 562.680 in 2014 to 1.255.640 in 2015). Afterward, the number has decreased, but Portugal is still the sixth country in Europe in terms of acceptance and relocation of refugees (Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras, 2018). Unlike the rest of the European Union, asylum seekers in Portugal do not come primarily from the Middle East and North Africa, but from Ukraine (42% of total asylum seekers in 2015), Mali (9,8%) and China (8,6%). The latest available data on asylum and international protection show

a reduction in the number of applications compared to the previous year (-27%), which includes the relocation mechanism. This is in line with what happened at the European level, where there was also a reduction, although less significant (-10%). Regarding the place of application for asylum, two-thirds of them were submitted in the national territory, while the rest at the border posts. Regarding the dimension of international protection, there was a decrease in the total number of requests, due to the lower use of the relocation mechanism. Compared to other countries of the European Union, the share of unaccompanied minors among asylum seekers is not very significant in Portugal. Since 2008 the highest percentages were recorded in 2013 and 2015, although in the last few years there has been a progressive increase. However, the granting of refugee status is fairly uncommon in Portugal (20 in 2014, and 33 in 2015) compared to other EU countries, despite the increase in the number of asylum seekers in the past few years (AIDA, 2018). Portugal is not an elective country for refugee settlement as it does not offer the long-term reception schemes and integration mechanisms that other European countries, like Germany and Sweden, provide.

The migrants who have arrived in Portugal are also a very heterogeneous group in terms of countries of origin, religious affiliation, social class, professions, age and gender (Santinho 2013, 6). This, together with the relatively small numbers of refugees, explains why the public debate on asylum seekers has not acquired the same relevance as in other EU countries, while the integration process still remains confined to a small group of institutions like the Portuguese Councils for refugees, the Support Platform for Refugees, and the General Directorate of Education (Santinho 2013). Consequently, the refugee question has not been prioritised at a central issue because the small number of refugees accommodated didn't have a real socio-political impact on the Portuguese society. However, starting from 2015 the number of non governmental and third sector organisations involved in initiatives addressed to support refugees the inclusion of refugees in the Portuguese society has constantly increased, witnessing a new interest of public opinion on the topic of asylum seekers. Moreover, compared to other EU countries, the Portuguese legal framework is historically more open to migrants and asylum seekers, granting them the right to access social aid, medical assistance and education. Furthermore, asylum seekers have the right to work in the country while they are waiting for their application to be evaluated. Even in case their application would be rejected and they decide to appeal, they keep the right to hold a job with the related income.

One of the most relevant initiatives followed to the emergence of the humanitarian refugee crisis in Europe in 2015 is the development of the *Refugee Support Platform* (PAR –*Plataforma de Apoio aos Refugiados*), which gathers 30 founding organisations from the private sector aiming to 'promote a culture of welcoming support for the refugees, both in Portuguese society and in the countries of origin and transit'. The platform is formed by a group of 'civil society institutions with the will, availability, and experience to receive refugees who, through a collaborative and articulated model, can make a meaningful contribution to address this challenge, as something complementary to what is expected from the State'. While PAR wants to foster solidarity and strengthen an effective European response to the refugee emergency, it also aims to promote intercultural mediation activities and tackle the spreading wave of nationalism that attempts to transform refugees into scapegoats for the country's structural problems (Matias, 2017).

The platform launched two main actions, the Families and the Front Line projects. The first refers to the reception and inclusion of refugee children and their families within a community context with the help of local institutions as municipalities, local associations and schools, as well as families that volunteered to support the families. Unlike the institutional reception model practised by various European states, which segregates refugees in accommodation camps or similar isolated facilities, this approach promotes a communitarian model that helps refugees to find accommodation within families and/or private homes with the support of the Portuguese public administration. Within the project framework, PAR developed a training course on intercultural mediation that helps members of local institutions and families to acquire basic competencies required to adequately sustain refugees in dealing with the Portuguese culture and lifestyle. The second action, Front Line, provides support to refugees in the countries of origin or in neighbouring countries, like Greece, through the direct aid of Caritas and the Jesuit Refugee Service in the form of goods and financial support (Vieira et al., 2017).

Notwithstanding these important initiatives, the Portuguese reception and integration system remains underdeveloped, as the capacity and resources available are inadequate, often permanently based on volunteer social activities and limited field support in refugee camps. Moreover, many asylum seekers see the option of electing Portugal as a permanent settlement country as in conflict with the current difficulties to acquire the refugee status, as well as the aspiration to join their relatives in other European countries. As a consequence, many refugees - 42% in 2017 - relocated to Portugal frequently choose to leave the country (AIDA, 2018).

3.3. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES

Italy: A network approach to support volunteer guardians in Palermo

In Palermo (Italy), in the last few years an innovative approach to build and implement a Guardian Support and Monitoring Unit based on a system of volunteer guardianship for unaccompanied minors has been introduced (UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM, 2019a). The aims of what has been called "the Palermo Model" are to develop:

- Tailor-made solutions for each boy/girl (instead of providing more general assistance)
- A participatory process aggregating the main institutional stakeholders working on the reception and care of unaccompanied minors to find those individualised solutions;
- A monitoring activity aimed to collect positive and critical information concerning the child and to convey it to the institutional bodies in charge;
- Ongoing access to ethno-psychological support services to address the needs of minors that went through traumatic experiences.

The Guardian Support and Monitoring Unit activities are promoted through cooperation with a network of stakeholders involved in the inclusion process of the children. Each volunteer guardian can use the network as an intermediate level service, which supports the guardian in referring critical issues to the competent bodies by maintaining an impartial stance. Data show that the Unit support and monitoring activity is pivotal to ensure that volunteer guardians receive adequate and specific assistance. The organisational model is based on a network approach to the emerging requests, multidisciplinary teams, mediation and problem-solving abilities, a strong institutional commitment and inter-institutional coordination.
The Palermo model has been recently replicated in other Sicilian towns (Messina and Catania), although the implementation of the approach highly depends on the different levels of institutional commitment and coordination of all stakeholders involved .

Greece: A research programme supporting children from immigrant family

The Research Programme "Linking School and Community" has been developed as a national level project addressed to tackle school failure and social exclusion of the immigrant students. The programme, carried out for three school years (2010-2013) in all Greece, put in place innovative ways to get immigrant families involved in various dimensions of the school's life (Diapolis, 2013).
The programme included school units that had high percentages of immigrant student population. In total, 278 primary and secondary schools participated in the project, in cooperation with 462 teachers. The project involved 1,000 families, which were given the opportunity to participate in at least one of the project's planned actions.

3.4. CONCLUSIONS

In the last few years, several efforts have been made by Southern European countries to promote refugee children's access to primary and secondary school. For example in Greece, one of the countries deeply affected by the refugees' influx, between 50% and 62% of all school-age refugee children have been integrated into the formal education system as of December 2018 (UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM, 2019b).
However, in spite of these progress, we can identify some common issues that still prevent many refugee children from exercising their right to education in Southern European countries (UNESCO, 2018). First of all, although national legislations state that children have a fundamental right to compulsory education, the kind, quality and duration of school experience offered to refugee children actually depends more on the procedures related to the asylum process than on their educational needs. Secondly, the kindergarten and upper secondary school levels are usually beyond the scope of national regulations on compulsory education. Consequently,

refugee children 3-5 and 15+ years old are often excluded from school integration programmes. Thirdly, lack of information on enrolment procedures, as well as insufficient transportation to/from remote accommodation centres, often hinders children's access to school. Moreover, Southern European countries deal with insufficient school capacity in terms of administrative and economic resources allocated, as well as of staff not adequately trained to work with refugee children. In addition, refugee children attending school continue to face psychosocial issues and language barriers, as well as a limited offer of make-up classes. Finally, schools often underestimate that students with a refugee background, especially new arrivals, usually underperform academically in the first phase of their school attendance, particularly if the educational environment does not provide them with essential additional support.

However, many successful examples of refugee children's integration in the Southern Europe area, as well in other countries worldwide, show that children can take full advantage and thrive from education when they are offered fair and adequate school conditions (UNHCR, 2019a).

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4. RE APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Due to the geographical location, Central Europe is defined by the following countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. These countries were part of the Soviet Union till the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, different national states are built with their own governments, legislatures, and different national languages. Thus, the establishment of a new educational system, changed from a socialist collective to capitalist individual ideology, has to be taken into account (Bacakova & Closs, 2013). Central Europe also covers the German-speaking countries: Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. These countries stand for stable economic conditions (affected by current tendencies towards neoliberal austerity measures and economic cuts put aside), and a well-working public health care and public education system. These circumstances play an important role in understanding the intersection between migration, refugee movements and education.

4.1 THE FRAMEWORK OF RE IN CENTRAL EUROPE

Nowadays, Germany, as well as Austria, are one of the main target countries for people from the Near East and African countries. Many people escape from the civil war in these regions used to travel via the so-called Balkan route. Due to this, countries of the central region (Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia) can be seen as countries of transition (Pokorn & Cibej, 2018b, 288). Before the closure of the Balkan routes, those affected have stayed for some months before receiving permission to continue their journey heading to German-speaking or other Northern European countries or being sent back to the countries where they entered the European Union in with the Dublin II Agreement. Others may also face detention or deportation. Data shows that the numbers of asylum-seekers and especially those receiving refugee status diverge massively compared to German-speaking countries. The closure of the so-called Balkan route in 2016 has left many asylum seekers stranded in countries of Eastern Europe. Samek-Lodovici et al. (2017) report that compared to other countries, Hungary has drastically cut the length of support for newly arrived and even acknowledged refugees, education-related allowances have been completely ceased.

Country[2]	Population 2018[1]	Asylum-seekers in 2018	Number of people granted protection in 2018	Refugees resettled	Top 5 countries of origin among asylum-seekers arriving	The recognition rate for protection status
Austria	8,847,037	37,364	128,769	-	Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Iran, Russia[3]	
Czech Republic	10,625,695	1,935 (UNHCR) 1,70 (Czech government)	2,186	750[4]	Ukraine, Kuba, Georgien, Armenien, Vietnam	2,76

Germany	82,927,922	369,284	1,063,837	-	Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Afghanistan, Nigeria	
Hungary	9,768,785	124	6,040	-		
Luxembourg	607,728	1,485	2,046	-		
Poland	37,978,548	3,065	12,506	-		
Slovakia	5,447,011	17 (UNHCR) 178 (Slovakian government)	949	128[6]	Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Azerbaijan, Iran	2,81
Slovenia	2,067,372	263	749	-		
Switzerland	8,516,543	14,797	104,037	-	Eritrea, Turkey, Afghanistan, Syria, Algeria[7]	

Table 2: Regional Representation for Central Europe

On the contrary, Luxembourg is one of the smallest countries in the EU. Nevertheless, 46.6% of the whole population are from other countries (European Commission, 2016, 92). Mostly people immigrated from other European countries; they have Portuguese and French roots. Switzerland is not a member of the EU but due to its geographical location, the country is also the main target country for many people, mostly Eastern Europeans. German, French, Italian, and Romansh are the four national languages in Switzerland (Grin & Schwob, 2002, 411). Compared to Luxembourg, German is the residents' language proficiency (ibid., 410). Nevertheless, many schools in both countries use a bilingual education approach (ibid., 414).
Out of a historical perspective, Austria and Germany play an important role in European internal migration. These countries have been the first points of contact for displaced people after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989. Also, the war in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s let many people leave their homes heading to Austria and Germany and also surrounding countries like Slovenia, Czech Republic, and Poland. Data on Austria shows that the three largest groups of migrants are people with Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian migration backgrounds (European Commission, 2016, 8). According to Austrian education authorities, approximately 15.000 children and youth with refugee backgrounds have arrived in 2015. In Slovenia the highest rate of people with a migration background is from Bosnia; followed by people from Kosovo, Croatia, and Serbia (UNHCR, 2016, 124). During World War II many German people were forced to flee to different neighbouring countries. Hereby, Poland used to play an important role. Till today, people with German roots are the biggest group of migrants in Poland (European Commission, 2016, 106). During the 1960s and 1970s many Italian and Turkish people have moved to Germany. The reasons were working conditions: On the one hand, unemployment rates were high in these countries. On the other hand, German companies were in need of foreign workers' professionalism in the industrial sector. People with Turkish roots are still the largest minority population in Germany, followed by Polish and Russian people (European Commission, 2016, 56).

[1] UNCHR (2019): ttps://www.unhcr.org/dach/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2019/06/2019-06-07-Global-Trends-2018.pdf
[2] The World Bank (2019): Online: https://data.worldbank.org/
[3] BMI (2019): https://www.bmi.gv.at/301/Statistiken/files/2019/Asylstatistik_November2019.pdf
[4] MVCR (2019): https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/souhrnna-zprava-o-mezinarodni-ochrane-za-rok-2018.aspx

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[6] MINV (2019): https://www.minv.sk/?statistiky-20
[7] SEM (2019).
https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/publiservice/statistik/asylstatistik/2019/stat-q3-2019-kommentar-d.pdf

4.2 AN OVERVIEW OF RE IN CENTRAL EUROPE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The literature review shows diverse perspectives on refugee education and related topics. Nevertheless, five issues are presented extensively: policies and politics, teacher education, linguistic education, technology in an area of digitalisation, and the students' socio-economic background.

In all nine countries, refugee children have the *right to quality education*. It is defined in different national policies, for example in National Education Acts (European Commission, 2016, 20; Hartmann-Kurz, 2002). Nevertheless, Bacakova (2011, 163) points out that not all students benefit from this right (in the Czech Republic). She has identified different barriers to lacking access to education (ibid., 166 ff.). The situation is similar in Austria, Poland, and Switzerland. Migration policies are in the early stages (Lukasiewicz & Grzymala-Moszczynska, 2014, 387; Stanat et al., 2010). Thus specific groups among refugees will fall short of educational access due to a number of characteristics: They might be too old and not eligible to enter compulsory education offers or they might be referred to special schools to to a lack in receiving education in their countries of origin. These two serve as examples for discrimination in some of Europe's richest countries. Regarding missing policies or lacking implementation strategies, there is no national structure for refugee education (Grin & Schwob, 2002; Luciak & Khan-Svik, 2008). It means that the power of decision making is given to institutions or individuals (Lukasiewicz & Grzymala-Moszczynska, 2014, 388). On the contrary, the Slovenian National Institute of Education published an Intercultural Education Program in 2016 (UNHCR, 2016, 41). The toolkit provides national integration strategies and different resources. The toolkit is not focused on refugee or asylum-seeker students (ibid.). The focus lies on teaching strategies for students experiencing (cultural) changes during their lifetime. Regarding still outstanding evaluations, there is no evidence about the policies' effectiveness on educational processes yet.

The first relevant educational aspect defines *teacher education* as the key to refugee education. It is mostly linked to "insufficient teacher experiences and qualifications" as the teachers themselves claim to have not enough or none at all training when it comes to refugee education (Bacakova, 2011, 167; Otto et al., 2016, 28). In Switzerland, intercultural education is an essential part because of national multiculturalism. Thus, it is anchored in curricula since the 1990th (Lanfranchi, 1999). Nevertheless, the author criticised that teachers are aware of such resources; but it is not obligatory. Lanfranchi postulates a change in teacher education (ibid., 316). The situation is similar in Austria Intercultural education is anchored in the curriculum since 1990 (Luciak & Khan-Svik, 2008, 493). Their research shows policies are available, but the implementation lacks (ibid., 498). The authors also postulate the change in or at least a revision of teacher education regarding the topic of intercultural education (ibid., 501). Almost the same demand is asked by Bacakova & Closs (2013). They claim a continuing professional development in the Czech Republic (Bacakova & Closs, 2013, 203.).

Subsequently, teachers' attitude and teaching style is an important and general aspect of quality education (Pawlack, 2005, 299). He exposed two different teaching attitudes related to refugee education in Polish schools (ibid., 300). One attitude is ideologically driven by motivation, engagement, and commitment. The other one is marked by negative motives. Hereby, students with migration background are described as lazy and unmotivated by teachers. The author points out that negative attitudes towards refugee students root in discriminatory and exclusive mindsets. Following this Lukasiewicz & Grzymala-Moszczynska (2014, 387) recommend multicultural and anti-discriminatory teacher training in Poland (ibid., 387).

To overcome discrimination and exclusion, the educational concept of team teaching is worth to mention. It is used in Poland in the form of teacher assistance. The teacher speaks the students´ language and builds a bridge between the school, parents and the student. Educators can be seen as "intercultural mediators, facilitators of integration" (ibid.). Here, another important aspect appears. Bacakova (2009) also shows the importance of

teaching assistants in class. It provides intensive support for refugee children without being separated from their classmates (UNHCR, 2011, 40).

When flipping the classroom, refugee education also is a highly current pan-European (research) topic when it comes to adults, to be precise teachers with refugee background. In recent research (Proyer et al., 2019a, 10) these teachers are referred to as internationally trained teachers (with refugee background), to put the qualifications first and minimize the labelling as refugee. Teachers, who experienced flight and migration, can hardly go back to their former profession in the country of asylum. Due to the differences in teacher training programmes worldwide, the transferability of formal qualifications passed in the former home country to the asylum country is a worrisome procedure. If internationally trained teachers manage to work as a teacher, it is only possible with patience, the will to adapt, enormous efforts such as engaging in further studies/specific education programmes to complete the teacher training of the home country, learning the teaching language of the asylum country and managing loads of bureaucratic barriers (see chapter 4 for best-practice examples of Central Europe).

Another scientific discourse about internationally trained teachers with refugee or migration background covers the narrative of them functioning as role models for students. This need is also postulated by Luciak & Khan-Svik in 2008. They point the missing diversity among Austrian teachers (Luciak & Khan-Svik, 2008). Research shows that in Germany 7.3%, in Slovakia 0.7%, and in Slovenia 3.3% of the teachers have a refugee or migration background (UNHCR, 2011). On the contrary, Austria, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, and Switzerland did not provide any data (ibid.).

The second thematic identification can be seen in *language education***.** Otto et al. (2016, 15) point out that learning the national language is one main key to integration in society. In other words "current language policy [...] aims to integrate newly arrived children into the German society through language assimilation in schools" (Panagiotopoulou & Rosen, 2018). Stanat et al. (2010, 146) bring up that speaking the national language correlates with educational success in general. In North-Rhine Westphalia (a federal state in Germany) for example, newly arrived students who do not speak German visit a regular school with peers their age (ibid., 17). If they show struggles, the students receive individual support in form of extra lessons or a different grading system depending of their language level (ibid., 25-28). There is one exception. Unaccompanied minors attend the so-called preparatory class right from the beginning (ibid., 17). It means they attend classes separated from their peers. The aim of separated classes is deepening and fostering their language skills. Thus, they are able to attend regular classes faster again (ibid., 25). After two years of separated schooling, the students return to regular classes (ibid., 26). The authors mention concludingly that one task in refugee education is the extension of linguistic diagnostic (ibid.). Nevertheless, this kind of education is exclusive and contradicts an inclusive approach. The situation in Austria is similar. Proyer et al. (2019b) published their research findings about Viennese school authority who established temporary classrooms in refugee accommodations. They point out that these educational settings refer to the monolingual frame within the Austrian system. Lems (2019, 15) mentions the ambivalence between the "peculiar status of being allowed in, simultaneously kept out". Worth considering, schools in North-Rhine Westphalia also provide language classes for students with different first tongues (ibid., 18). Although the students deepen their identity as well as their first language skills. This case underlines Panagiotopoulou & Rosen's (2017) findings. The authors postulate the need for "dynamic plurilingual pedagogies, which take into account the complex multilingualism of students in order to respond to the linguistically heterogeneous classroom of the twenty-first century and current and future social challenges, such as inclusion in migrant societies" (2017, 406).

There is no separation among learners in Poland. Polish students have the right to attend the Polish language courses in addition to regular classes (UNHCR, 2011, 106). These Polish lessons are free of charge for one school year. Alternatively, the students can deepen their knowledge in different school subjects during tutoring programs by peer supportive activities after regular school (ibid.). It is also free of charge for one school year.

In Slovenia, the situation is different. According to Pokorn & Cijeb (2018a) people on the flight are not interested in learning the Slovene language. As already mentioned, they are looking forward to continuing their journey to Northern countries. Pokorn & Cijeb (2018a) work on the importance of translation and interpretation for refugees instead of learning the language. The state offers free usage of translation services and courses (ibid., 111). On one hand, users are positive about the free service (ibid.). On the other hand, they stress the importance of quality communication (ibid.). Translation or interpreting services reduce the independence of oneself (Pokorn & Cijeb, 2018b, 288). Alternatively, the usage of Lingua Franca is preferred in short-term activities by many people (ibid.). It is very helpful to communicate directly. Following the results, learning

Slovene is the most desirable strategy for long-term inclusion. According to the authors´ study, linguistic approaches are related to the duration of stay (ibid.).

The third aspect is found in the field of digitalised education. The research discusses the advantage and disadvantages of *technology for educational processes*. Hykova (2004) works on online learning tools to support language education for refugees in the Czech Republic. She remarks the potential of online learning related to language courses (ibid., 293). The author names two main preconditions for a successful implementation: First the online course must be designed well, otherwise the users' needs cannot be covered; second the technological infrastructure as wi-fi connection, working PC/tablets/smartphones must be provided by the institutions. It should not be depending on individual resources (ibid.). An Austrian researcher goes even further. She says that "networked technologies are the new key tool for today's refugee" (Kauffmann, 2018, 882). Nowadays technology has the potential for coping with everyday challenges (ibid.). Mostly, the smartphone is used for translation and interpretation services. On the contrary, refugees in Slovenia criticized the involvement of technology while translation and interpreting processes (Pokorn & Cibej, 2018b, 288). The usage of media always implies an inaccuracy leading to scepticism.

The last issue refers to *students' socio-economic background*. Hereby, parental involvement is the main focus of research (Bacakova, 2009; Fibbi & Troung, 2015). In Switzerland Fibbi and Truong (2015) researched the relation of parental involvement and educational success of students with Kosovar roots. They figured out that there is "a lack of education success [...] in families where the parents cannot provide secure guidance to their children" (ibid., 2). Also, Stanat et al. (2010, 147) remark the parental provision mostly depends on their language skills (Stanat et al., 2010). If they do not speak German, they could not guide their children in educational needs in Switzerland (Fibbi & Truong, 2015).

We do not lose sight of a special group within students with refugee experiences: unaccompanied minors. These youngsters had come to a country without their parents (Otto et al., 2016). Lems (2019, 14) argues, they are the "most vulnerable members of society in need of special care and protection, giving them access to educational opportunities that are closed to other asylum seekers". It means that the public youth services take care of them till "turning eighteen and losing their status as humanitarian exemptions" (ibid, 15). After 18, they face the omnipresent situation of deportation again. On the contrary, Hillmann and Dufner (2019, 331) point out that "nowadays, facilities for unaccompanied children are well planned and meet [...] high standards"; compared to the situation of many accompanied children living in badly equipped reception centres or collective living quarters. Here the authors raise provocatively the research question: Better off parents?

This leads to another interesting research from Switzerland. Ossipow et al. (2019) have researched Kurdish, Tamil and Vietnamese refugee children's experiences with racism and racialization. The results are that children tend to deny or relativize the racism they face every day. Furthermore, they "name and reject forms of racialization that have an effect on their socio-economic mobility as discrimination and racism" (ibid., 1). The authors postulate a correlation between those mentioned results and the behavior of adults reporting on their feelings not fitting despite their upward socio-economic mobility.

The following topics are rarely represented research topics regarding to refugee education in Central Europe: In Austria, researchers examine the theoretical topic of intersectionality between refugee status, disability, and gender and the inclusion of students in mainstream schools. (Besic et al., 2018). In general, the results show that the attitude is more positive towards the inclusion of (1) Austrian students, (2) students with physical disabilities, and (3) girls into mainstream primary school. Hereby, neither the refugee status nor the type of disability is included in these attitudes. Other findings show that there is a differentiation between refugee boys and girls when disability is one point of interest. In a nutshell, "the results demonstrate that focusing on only one category of a difference does not allow seeing the complexity of how multiple discriminations interact each other" (Besic et al., 2018, 1)

Another research in Poland shows the existence of a gap between urban and rural areas (Pawlak, 2005, 299). The author says access to quality education in Poland depends on the geographical location because in urban areas the "educational market" is more developed than in rural areas (ibid.).

The next research area deals with didactical approaches in RE. For example in Germany, school material often places the topic of migration and flight as problematic, conflict or crisis instead of showing the potential of it (Frieters-Reermann & Sylla, 2017, 23). It connects migration/flight primarily with negative associations like strangers, danger, bad people (ibid.).

4.3. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES ON RE DEVELOPED IN CENTRAL EUROPE

The first example shows an informative seminar for in-service teachers and other educators in the Czech Republic. It was implemented by Bacakova & Closs (2013) in collaboration with the UNHCR. The seminar was structured in two different blocks. In the first block, participants have gained knowledge about potential barriers identified by Bacakova and Closs (2013). Furthermore, it is important to consider the used educational approach. Bacakova and Closs (2013, 207) aim for the implementation of inclusive education. It includes "all students, non-Czech students, and refugee children" (ibid.). In the second block, teachers received information about eight different topics (ibid.):

1. The individual refugee child
2. Educational support measures and an optimal utilisation
3. Communication strategies with parents
4. The experience of flight
5. Opportunities for further teacher education
6. Available resources
7. Grade placement
8. Induction programs

Building upon the informative part, the teachers need to experience and face the challenges in class. According to the participants, the positive outcomes are knowledge on legal frameworks, the motivation to gain more knowledge on inclusive education, the effectiveness of cooperating with different stakeholders, and their own involvement in form of open space to exchange concerns (ibid., 213). Additionally, they remarked that the constant repetition of the seminar would be reliable to update and reflect their practices (ibid., 214). Bacakova and Closs (2013) point out that an informative seminar about an unknown topic is the first step. Nevertheless, it needs more support for teachers to establish an inclusive approach in school.

The second good practice comes from Germany. The compulsory school uses an inclusive approach which stands for involving all learners up to their ability (Siegert, 2016, 26). Newly arrived children living a reception centre have to go to school in their accommodation. Thus, the teachers´ working place is split. They teach in the centre and in regular school. Refugee children living in collective living quarters visit the regular school. Nevertheless, the school head tries to overcome spatial separation. According to Siegert (2016), all this is just an expression of a heterogeneous society. She sees various abilities and knowledge as an additional resource for the whole school community. In regular schools, the learners practice in groups. The constitution of groups changes once a week. These changes show the benefit of interpersonal learning. The didactical focus lies on an individual and competence oriented approach (ibid.). Students decide their learning targets by themselves in agreement with their teachers. The school staff works together with different reporting, reflection, and planning strategies. Thus, they try to follow a holistic approach to learning. Students attend school the whole day long. The concept of all-day schooling implies freelance time as all. Therefore, the school cooperates with different non-schoolish stakeholders. They work together with the reception centres in the district, the collective living quarter, with NGOs and the city government. All these institutions want to create an environment where children can grow up and learn easily. Siegert (2016) points out that the integration of people with migration background is not only a task of the compulsory school. Moreover, it is a societal responsibility to create an inclusive space for everyone. It is important to introduce pupils to an inclusive everyday life besides schooling.

The third example of good practice of a project called XENOS. The project is funded by UNHCR, in cooperation with the European Union, the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, as well as caritative organisations such as the Red Cross. Mueller (2002) describes that the project focuses thematically on flight and asylum. It aims at awareness rising of racism and xenophobia in school (ibid., 24). Therefore, the project names three different focal points (ibid.):

1. Provided school material & workshops for various stakeholders teaching or caring for children
2. Cooperation with different stakeholders outside the school community
3. Change in societal perspectives.

1. Mueller (2002) postulates the use of racial sensitive school materials. The topic should already be implemented in primary school and across all school subjects (ibid, 25). Therefore, they have designed and edited a handbook for secondary school (Kleff et al. 2006). The handbook deals with information about different historical and geographical migration waves; it also describes legal frameworks on (inter-)national level (ibid., 4). Furthermore, it offers opportunities to implement the topic in different curriculums and school subjects. This underlines the necessity and possibility of teaching the topic interdisciplinary (ibid., 7-9). The handbook also provides pictures to illustrate the diverse situation refugees face. Additionally to school material, the project designed a seminar for in-service teachers (ibid., 25). Content-wise, the seminar deals with information and background knowledge about flight and asylum in part 1. Part 2 offers the opportunity of active reflection (ibid.). The participants hold on to look at their own concerns, prejudice, and their (re)production. This shows parallels to the Czech seminar mentioned above (Bacakova & Closs, 2013). One difference shows in the participatory approach of organising the seminar (Mueller, 2002, 25). Mueller (2002) notes the importance of teachers´ experiences in everyday school practice. These reported experiences are a common base to work collaboratively. Furthermore, it is important to consider the used educational approach. Mueller (2002) aims for the implementation of a gender-sensitive and intercultural education. Regarding intercultural education, she points that academic teacher training does not provide any related content (ibid., 25). Thus, the seminar offers the possibility to extend teaching skills.

2. The development and design of school material and seminars happened together in cooperation with non-schooling stakeholders like different NGOs, policymakers, etc (ibid., 26).

3. The author also underlines that cooperative and interdisciplinary work foster societal responsibility (ibid.). So, topics like flight and asylum are no special issues; moreover it is an essential part of modern society which frames and constitutes it.

The forth good example of refugee education in Central Europe (Germany, Austria) and also Northern Europe (Sweden) are requalification programmes for internationally trained teachers. Aim of these programmes, which exist pan-European, is, to enable teachers to get back to their profession. As mentioned before, a de-qualification happens, as the teacher training differs in every country. A simple comparison of formal qualification often leads to immense de-qualification and, therefore, the hindrance to continue teaching in schools in the country of asylum. Proyer et al. (2019a) depict in a participatory research process the barriers to re-enter the job market, show the national differences of these programmes (Sweden, Germany, Austria) and provide a perspective for internationally trained teachers.
In summary, all countries in Central Europe have many experiences with migration and refugee movements. As Benholz et al. (2016) remark that there are just pilot concepts or provisional arrangements despite all the experiences over the last decades. The literature research on RE in Central Europe shows that only one out of nine countries use national established concepts or guidelines in terms of refugee education. The others have concepts on federal state level. Several authors recommend the provision of guidelines on the impact of refugee experiences on educational processes (Bacakova, 2009, 48; Otto et al., 2016, 15). The example of current language policy shows that the school system (re)produces the monogastric hegemony (Panagiotopoulou & Rosen 2018).

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5. RE APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

5.1. THE FRAMEWORK OF REFUGEE EDUCATION IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

Introduction

Although the countries included in this chapter differ substantially, what they have in common is that all have been focusing on inclusion of different groups in the education system for a long time. Mostly, until the refugee crisis in 2015, the groups in need of integration in education were the internally displaced people, migrants and the Roma population (Feijen, 2005; Bobic, 2009; Babic, Semic & Friedman, 2017; Policy Impact Analysis, 2015). Thus, much of the literature originating from this region engages with general educational inclusion and challenges regarding internally displaced people, particularly the Roma population. Since the start of the refugee crisis in 2015, more comprehensive strategies and interventions concerning the refugee children's integration in education have been developed in each of the countries. However, documentation and research in this area is scarce, or not available in English. In addition to mapping the literature in English, we searched for relevant literature in Macedonian, Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian language.

Table 3: Regional Representation for Southeast Europe: Overview

Country	*Country population (2018)*	*Applicants in 2018*	*Number of people granted protection in 2018*	*Refugees resettled in 2018*	*Top 5 countries of origin among asylum-seekers arriving in 2018*	*Recognition rate for protection status in 2018*
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,323,929	1,567	16 subsidiary protection	-	Syria Pakistan Iraq Iran Algeria	1.2% subsidiary protection
Bulgaria	7,024,216	2,536	317 refugee status; 413 subsidiary protection	-	Afghanistan Iraq Syria Pakistan Iran	15% refugee rate; 20% subs. protection rate; 65% rejection rate
Croatia	4,089,400	1,068	225 refugee status; 21 subsidiary protection	-	Afghanistan Syria Iran Iraq Algeria	52.1% refugee rate; 4.9% subs. protection rate; 43% rejection rate
North Macedonia	2,082,958	3,405	416 refugee status	-	Pakistan Iraq Afghanistan	1.8 refugee acceptance rate

					Iran Bangladesh	
Romania	19,473,936	2,137	305 refugee status; 290 subsidiary protection	-	Iraq Syria Iran Bangladesh Turkey	23.6% refugee rate; 22.4% subs. protection rate; 54% rejection rate
Serbia	6,982,084	8,436/ 327	11 refugee status; 13 subsidiary protection	-	Afghanistan Pakistan Iran Iraq Syria	25% refugee rate; 29.5% subs. protection rate; 45.5% rejection rate
Turkey	82,319,724	114,537 (84,170 from January 1st to Septemb er 10th)	5,410 (on the basis of the 84,170 applications)	16, 042 submitte d for resettlem ent	Iraq Afghanistan Syria Somalia Iran	6.42% refugee rate

Some of the countries addressed in this chapter have in common that they were constitutive parts (republics) of Yugoslavia until the beginning of the 1990s, and gained independence following an armed conflict. These include Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, North Macedonia and Serbia. Slovenia and Montenegro were also republics of Yugoslavia. We could not identify relevant literature for Montenegro, and Slovenia is addressed in another chapter in this report. These countries have been marked by political and economic turmoil and upheaval since 1990. The armed conflict was between Serbia, Croatia, and BiH, but it affected the entire region in multiple ways. In the 1990s, all the countries experienced different waves of refugees and internally displaced people, and a lot of people from the region became refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the EU and other western countries (Opalic, 2005). The movement of refugees during this period was mostly within and from the region- e.g. Bosnian refugees arriving in Macedonia and living in refugee centres.

The recent flow of refugees (from 2015 on), which is in focus of this report, has been coming from outside the region and from beyond Europe. This flow also affected Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, which are also included in this chapter under the heading southeast Europe. Each of the countries in this wider European region is characterized by different socio-economic, political and cultural features and different structural conditions for dealing with refugees in general and with education of refugee children in particular. While Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania are members of the EU and are bound by common EU strategies and support systems, Turkey is in a process of intensive political negotiations and tensions concerning the influx of refugees with the EU, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia have to rely on individual capacities and the absence of substantial support from the EU or the wider international community.

The geo-political situation concerning the refugee crisis from 2015 in the region is in many ways defined by what is termed “the Balkan route”, meaning that countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia and Serbia serve as transit routes for refugees coming from the global south and the Middle East, mostly through Greece or Turkey, transitioning through Croatia, Bulgaria and/or Romania towards safer future in the western and northern parts of Europe.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

According to Clark (2013), the Bosnian education system is highly segregated, affected by overloaded bureaucracy; the federation is divided in 10 cantons, each with their own government and prime ministers. The

cantons are ethnically diverse; while in some one ethnic group is dominant, others are more ethnically mixed and no one ethnic group holds the majority. The OECD evaluation of the education system in 2001 emphasised the lack of coordination and collaboration between the federal and canton educational authorities (legislative and administrative units) as one of the major problems, in addition to the lack of resources, insufficient teacher professional development, information technology and management capacity.

Following the breakup of Yugoslavia and the formation of the federation Bosnia and Herzegovina, nationalism and xenophobia have been visible in parts of the curricula and textbooks, particularly in the subject of history, with each ethnic group (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbians) favouring their own version of historical events from the 1990s (Kolouh-Westin, 2004).

Torsti (2009) emphasizes that the system has remained relatively immune to efforts by the international community to make peace building and reconciliation integral parts of the educational agenda.

The influx of refugees/migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina started in late 2017 and beginning of 2018. Over the first 8 months in 2018, 9,730 refugees/migrants arrived in BiH.

The most comprehensive report related to education of refugee children in BiH we could identify was the rapid assessment of education needs of refugee/migrant children in BiH conducted by Save the Children and supported by UNICEF (Ušanović & Pavlović, 2018). In relation to education, the assessment, based on interviews with parents and children (ibid: 6), showed that:

- The majority of the respondents reported Persian languages (Dari and Farsi) along with Arabic as the main languages they considered their mother tongues, followed by Kurdish and Pashto.
- Every second interviewed child understands English (55%) and every fifth child demonstrated a basic understanding of the local languages: Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (19%).
- The vast majority of interviewed parents (99%) reported that their children knew all the numbers and 96% of parents reported that their children knew all the letters of their native alphabet.
- The majority of interviewed children (93%) said they knew all the numbers and 82% believed they knew all the letters of their native alphabet.
- 33% of the children reported having received formal education in their country of origin prior to arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- 45% of interviewed children reported not having received any kind of education in the last 12 months.
- All of the interviewed children reported they wanted to take part in education activities.
- The vast majority of interviewed parents (95%) reported they would like their children to take part in education activities.
- The majority of the interviewed children (79%) want to attend formal education rather than non-formal education (11%).
- Further, the findings relating to the capacity of the education system, based on interviews with stakeholders (ibid: 7) showed the following:
- All five assessed schools and one kindergarten claimed they had the capacities and were willing to organize preparatory education activities for refugee/migrant children, but required assistance in implementing these activities.
- All assessed ministries reported that refugee/migrant children had never received any assistance in terms of education.
- All assessed ministries reported that there were pre-school and primary education facilities in close proximity to the refugee/migrant sites.
- Respondents at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Una-Sana Canton, the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton and the City of Cazin reported that there was a lack of learning materials (textbooks, stationery, some teaching and learning aids) available for refugee/migrant children.
- None of the assessed schools or the kindergarten reported having available stationery or teaching and learning aids to support the education of refugee/migrant children.

Bulgaria

According to statistical data on UNICEF website (2020) (www.unicef.org), as of June 2019, a total of 156 children (85% boys and 15% girls), including 54 unaccompanied children, were accommodated in reception facilities in Sofia and southern Bulgaria. This represents a 27% decrease in the number of children compared to December 2018, mainly due to continued onward movements.

Refugee and migrant children are recorded in national education statistics only if they are asylum seekers or beneficiaries of international protection. Starting from 2019, school enrolment for refugee and migrant children was five times higher compared to the 2016- 2017 school year due to increased outreach and support provided by the government and humanitarian agencies (UNHCR, 2019)

In mid-June 2019, a safe zone for unaccompanied asylum seeking children opened in the reception centre of Voenna Rampa in Sofia. This is the first of its kind in the country, and currently 39 unaccompanied children (mainly from Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan) benefit from its services. A total of 50% or 81 out of 161 school age refugee and migrant children accommodated in government reception centres in December 2018 were enrolled in primary and secondary public schools, while a total of 121 asylum-seeking and refugee children were registered overall in the formal education system in the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year (ibid.).

The main regulation laying down the basic principles, conditions and procedure for granting protection to foreign citizens in Bulgaria is the national Law on asylum and refugees. According to law, the Refugee Agency shall organize language training courses for refugees" (Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, 2011, 2019). Recognized refugees should have access to Bulgarian language courses held at the Refugee Agency Integration Centres. The established duration of courses is 10 months (or 600 hours in total) for children. For the adults, education is organised in two stages. In the first stage, which lasts 4 months (400 hours), refugees receive knowledge of the language for communication at the domestic level. In the second stage, 600 hours of training are delivered to provide the knowledge necessary for continuing education in Bulgarian higher education institutions. However, the Bulgarian-language course is currently available only in the capital, Sofia (Voenkinova & Rashkova, 2016).

Refugees who apply for the acquisition of Bulgarian citizenship may also apply to the Committee for recognition of the degree of proficiency in Bulgarian language at the Ministry of Education and Science. Refugees who have been granted status have the right to acquire basic, secondary and vocational education under the conditions and in the order determined for the Bulgarian citizens.

With regard to unaccompanied minors and minor refugee applicants, the law states that they are entitled to free education up to completion of secondary education. The Refugee Agency is required to provide the teaching aids needed for the normal course of the learning process. After completing the mandatory Bulgarian language course, the children are directed to a school in the area of their place of residence. A committee of three teachers, including the headmaster of the school, assesses the children's knowledge of the different disciplines and determines the class in which they can be enrolled. However, the enrolment in school is not supported by specialized programs and additional funds, as studying the Bulgarian language is seen as the main (and only) element of the inclusion of refugee children in education. Other important aspects of the educational integration of children, as refresher courses in basic subjects, parental involvement in the education process, provision of study materials and supplies, and support on maintaining students' mother tongue can be provided by each individual institution on a voluntary basis. Furthermore, there is no systematic monitoring and data collection of school attendance and success of refugee children in the school system of Bulgaria, as only a general statistic on the number of foreign nationals, attending public schools is provided (Nonchev & Tagarov, 2012).

Several barriers prevent refugee children from taking full advantage of educational opportunities in Bulgarian schools. First of all, refugee students suffer from chronic lack of additional teaching aids and teaching materials that put them at a disadvantage in the learning process. Refugee families in Bulgaria receive modest financial assistance, which prevents them to adequately cover the costs of school materials for their children. Secondly, due to the lack of proficiency in the Bulgarian language, parents of refugee students are often unable to effectively communicate with the teachers of their children. For the same reason, teachers often cannot discuss with parents about difficulties or problems children experience at school (Pezerović & Milić Babić, 2016). Finally, teachers working with refugee students do not receive support for improving the communication with the refugee students who are not fluent in Bulgarian. This is also connected with a lack of special programmes in intercultural training education to work with traumatised children or to teach Bulgarian as a second language. As a consequence, the actual number of children attending school is very low (Nancheva, 2016). However, a

UNHCR report from 2019 states that as of the end of December 2018, school enrolment of refugee and migrant children was five times higher compared to the school year of 2016-2017, as a result of outreach programmes provided by the government and humanitarian agencies; 50 % out of 161 children accommodated in reception centres in December 2018 were enrolled in primary and secondary public schools, and a total of 212 were registered overall in the formal education system in the beginning of the school year 2018-2019.

Croatia

Croatia is located on an important transit route for refugees and migrants on their way towards desired destinations in western and northern Europe. The closing of the Hungarian border in 2015 significantly increased the influx of people entering Croatia. In 2015, a total of 560.000 refugees/migrants entered Croatia, mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq (MUP, 2018). Given that the majority of them were just passing through Croatia and continuing further north, the Croatian authorities were focused on providing basic humanitarian assistance, registering people and accommodating asylum seekers in acceptance centers.
Croatia has ratified the major international conventions concerning the basic human rights, rights of refugees, and the UN convention of the rights of children. Further, the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia guarantees the rights of free education, aligned with children's age and capacities. According to the law asylum seekers have the same rights as Croatian citizens, including the right of free primary and secondary education.
In 2017, there were about 60 children of asylum seekers attending primary education in Croatia (Hamersak, 2017). According to the research conducted for the Centre for Peace Studies (ibid), the key critical points concerning the integration of refugee children in the Croatian education system include:

- Inadequate testing regarding psycho-physical school readiness
- Lack of registration in schools of children without ID and other required documentation
- Delayed intensive and supplementary teaching
- Lack of local possibilities for transportation to and from school
- Insufficient support and professional development of teachers and psychological/pedagogical staff in schools.

Based on this research, the Centre provided a policy brief with a number of recommendations to policy and decision makers, on improving the integration process of refugee children in the Croatian education system.
Similarly, research done by Cuca (2017), which includes the voices of the refugee children attending schools, demonstrates that due to lack of Croatian language proficiency the refugee children are mainly passive while at school, and have difficulties to follow the teaching. They report that teachers do not pay sufficient attention to them; they are typically asked to draw during the class so that they do not disrupt the teaching. The children voiced that they would like to have more intensive language lessons which would enable them to follow instruction, participate in teaching, and socialise with peers. They also expressed the wish for more homework and more substantial tasks from teachers.
A bachelor thesis researching the right of the refugee children integrated in the education system in Croatia (Šeneta, 2019), concluded, in addition to the findings above (which the study confirmed), that one of the main barriers to the integration of refugee children in education is the lack of capacities of and support for teachers to differentiate the teaching and use individualised instruction which is aligned to the needs and capacities of the children. This study also pointed to differences in perspectives between teachers and teacher assistants (volunteers), concerning the reasons for the lack of effective integration of refugee children. While teachers attributed the problem to the lack of language competence of the children, the assistants emphasised the lack of adequate teaching strategies and adequate teacher support.
North Macedonia
Refugee children mostly arrived in North Macedonia through the so-called east Mediterranean route. Refugees and migrants entered North Macedonia from Greece and most of them tried to cross the border into Serbia (CSO Report, 2018) and then move further to Croatia, Romania or Hungary and continue within the EU. Among all the refugee children, those from Afghanistan and Iraq had the lowest level of education, and some of them have never attended school (UNHCR, 2019).

In North Macedonia there has been an increased focus on the need to integrate the refugee children living in transit centres in the regular public system of education. According to the Constitution of North Macedonia, primary education (children age 6-15) is mandatory and free of charge, and secondary education (age 15-18) is free of charge but not compulsory.

North Macedonia has ratified the Convention for the Right of Refugees from 1951, and the related Protocol from 1969, and has declared commitment to provide refugee children with equal rights and access to primary education in line with its own citizens. Further, North Macedonia has ratified the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child from 1989, which also guarantees the right to education of refugee children, on equal terms with Macedonian citizens. The Macedonian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs developed a number of approaches and procedures for educational activities in the acceptance and transition centres in 2016, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and with UNICEF as a main partner and donor.

According to PROCHILD's discussion paper prepared with the support of the Embassy of Netherlands in Serbia, in North Macedonia, in the period January – March 2016 there were a total of 34,329 registered minors in the country (one third of all the refugees) – of which 232 were unaccompanied minors. In 2016, North Macedonia followed the practices of the EU countries and restricted the entry to people defined as economic migrants. Since November 2015, Macedonian authorities allowed entry only to persons coming from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq, as they were considered to be refugees in need of international protection. Following the EU-Turkey Agreement on 7 March 2016, the safe passage via the Balkan-route for refugees was officially closed. Additionally, some of the educational programmes were terminated following a large deportation of the refugees in 2017.

According to Orovcanec-Arangelovik & Martinoska (2018), the total number of children involved in the programmes of informal education in the transition centres in North Macedonia in the period 2016-2017 were 49 (primary school) and 36 (preschool).

UNICEF reports that out of the 280 children in the transit centres in 2017, 207 children of age 6 and above participated in structured educational and recreational activities (UNICEF North Macedonia, 2019).

According to the information from the Centre for Integration of Refugees and Migrants, in the school year 2017-2018, a total 59 children were included in the regular school system for primary education, and 11 children were included in the regular secondary education schools (Orovcanec-Arandjelovic & Martinoska, 2018).

In the national strategy for integration 2008-2015, dialogue with local governance authorities is recommended with a view of identifying and analysing the existing educational models and approaches for refugee children, and suggesting specific solutions to problems. A more recent draft of the national strategy was developed for the period 2017-2027 based on the UNHCR education strategy 2012-2016. This strategy highlights education as a primary condition for successful integration of the refugee children. The strategy points to the main barriers to integrating refugee children in the regular public education: lack of Macedonian language proficiency, lack of subject proficiency, lack of assessment technologies to determine the grade levels of the children, limited possibilities for mentoring and support of both teachers and students. The strategy sets the acquisition of Macedonian language as a first priority, as well as deployment of diverse mentoring approaches and utilizing the existing capacities of the mainstream schools (Orovcanec-Arandjelovic & Martinoska, 2018).

The Ministry of Education assumed the responsibility to create teaching programmes for Macedonian as a forein language, to develop courses for inclusion and integration, to certify the programme providers, to organize teachers' professional development etc. There has been no evaluation or research following up, describing and/or assessing whether this political commitment resulted in specific practices.

Romania

Legally, refugee children have the same rights as Romanian nationals in terms of educational access. However, information on the actual profiles of refugee children in Romania and how legislation translates into educational practice is scarce. Reliable data on important aspects as the level of education refugee children acquired before arriving in Romania, or their health or mental conditions are not available (Bejan et al., 2017). As the Index of Integration of Immigrants in Romania (Coșciug & Racatau., 2018: 22) reports, in the 2015-2016 school year 316 beneficiaries of international protection and third-country nationals with legal residence were registered as students in Romanian schools. Of these, 10.76% were enrolled in the pre-school cycle, 31.02% in the primary cycle, 16.77% in the high school and 38.93% in high school. Only 2.58% of pupils belonging to those categories

were registered in vocational education in vocational education. Based on the data forwarded by the 27 county inspectorates, in the same school year 19 students were enrolled in the capacity examination and 16 in the baccalaureate exam. 78.9% of them got passing grade over 5 at the capacity examination, while 62.5% passed the baccalaureate exam.

According to Article 17, Law 122, refugee children have the right to free schooling and to benefit from the same treatment offered to all citizens (Parliament of Romania, 2006). When they arrive at reception centres, refugee children should also be registered under an integration programme, coordinated by the General Inspectorate for Immigration in cooperation with local NGOs (Zambeta et al., 2017). The programme includes an initial language training and cultural orientation on Romanian geography, history, the constitution, as well as Romanian culture and values, for a total of thirty-nine hours.

Access of refugee children to education is regulated by Article 18 of the same law 122 (Mèszáros, 2019). To facilitate inclusion in the national educational system, refugee children should be offered an introductory/preparatory Romanian language course, organized by the Ministry of Education and Research in collaboration with the Romanian Office for Immigration, usually within three months after the submission of the claim. The course provides four hours a week over one year. At the end of the year, refugee children can be enrolled in the Romanian education system in grades corresponding to their age. An evaluation board administered by the Ministry of Education and Research is set to examine the language level of the applicant after the course completion. The board decides on the appropriate academic level and school year the child should be enrolled in. The course is based on a Romanian textbook (Bako, 2009), which intends to provide the transition from a beginner to an upper intermediate level. Starting from basic knowledge of phonetics and spelling, it gradually leads to speaking, communicating and specialized reading of easy texts. The lessons are structured in the form of dialogues meant to facilitate students acquiring fluency. For the duration of the Romanian language course, refugee children may attend parallel didactic activities together with the Romanian children, even though this activity doesn't involve education credits. Refugee children can be enrolled in the secondary education system after an initial assessment, which is usually held at the beginning of the school year. Equivalence of education carried out in the country of origin must be proved by legal documents issued by educational institutions to be assessed by the Romanian Ministry of Education. In case these documents are missing, the student is required to take a language and math test.

Serbia

In Serbia, 74 % of the total number of the refugee children were reported to be travelling alone (Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub Data and Trends Analysis, Save the Children 2018). A majority of these children are male and older than 14 years old (15-17 years old) (UNICEF, 2016).

According to the UNHCR brief from 2019, 53% (413) of the 844 refugee and migrant school-age children, living in 16 government provided accommodation centres in Serbia, as of December 2018 were enrolled in primary and secondary schools; 83% of the primary school-age children were enrolled in 40 primary schools; 100% of the lower secondary school-age children were enrolled in 3 secondary schools; 12% of the upper-secondary school-age children were enrolled in 3 secondary schools.

Serbian government, in collaboration with international organizations and NGOs such as UNICEF and Save the Children, initiated many programmes and initiatives in this region to ensure the education of refugee children and to ensure that the education is performed in an inclusive manner, taking the refugee children's situation into account. This also entails an awareness of stress and trauma children may have experienced, alongside with the focus on the concrete classes the child should attend (Sirin & Rogers-Sirin, 2015, Spasić & Mihajlović, 2017).

Handbooks and professional guidance for teachers and other actors involved in teaching of refugee children were produced and distributed (Stanojkovic et al 2017; Spasić & Mihajlović, 2017).

Since 2017, there has been a conscious effort to include children living in reception centres into regular schools in the proximity of the reception centres in Serbia. According to the law, asylum seeking children are to be enrolled in regular education (Jovanovic, 2019). The goal is to include asylum seeker children into regular classrooms even though they come from different cultural backgrounds and do not speak Serbian. Around 700 migrant children have started formal education in Serbia since 2017, of which 130 started schooling in 12 elementary schools in Belgrade (Lažetić & Jovanović, 2018; UNHCR, 2017).

The refugee children are enrolled and dispersed in separate classes, so each class only has a few refugees. All classes are conducted in Serbian, and in some places interpreters are used, as well as teaching aids such as signs and pictures. When possible the native language of the refugee children is also used. The refugee children do not always attend all the classes. Separate lessons are organized for them, with a view of improving their

proficiency in Serbian. NGOs and volunteers help arrange daily transportation of the refugee children from reception centres to schools and back.

In the period 2013-2015 most of the educational activities of refugee children (as well as migrant and asylum seekers) had been within non-formal education. NGOs and other organizations organized educational activities in reception centres. The educational activities included learning foreign languages, creative, psycho-social and psycho-educational workshops aimed at the development of life skills, coping strategies and resilience. Same organizations and NGOs were at some occasions providing assistance to caregivers and/or parents to enroll children in regular schools. In the first half of 2015, for example, about 30 children were enrolled in the formal education in Serbia (Kozma, 2018). The schools however, were not well equipped to deal with these students, and faced a number of barriers, the main being lack of Serbian language skills.

In the period 2016-2017 there was a more systematic effort to include refugee children in the regular education. Similar to North Macedonia, UNICEF is the main partner and donor of Serbia, together with the Centre for educational politics and the Ministry of education, science and technology (Kozma, 2018). The Ministry established a task force to advise on these matters, with representatives from national, international NGOs and other organizations. In May 2017, a total of 101 children were included in regular schools in a few municipalities.

In the period 2017-2018, the Ministry developed guidelines for including refugee and migrant children in educational institutions in Serbia, and introduced a mentoring system with external consultants to support schools that enrolled refugee children. The guidelines emphasize the importance of intensive Serbian language education, additional subject teaching, as well as socialisation and stress management programmes. The importance of extracurricular activities with the support of peers is also highlighted. At the beginning of the school year 2017/18, 447 children are enrolled in 37 primary schools, and 71 in secondary schools. In September 2018, the Ministry, in collaboration with UNHCR began including children at the age of 6 in preschool institutions (40 children).

Teachers' guidebook for working with refugee and migrant children within the formal system of education in Serbia was published in December 2017, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Centre for Educational Politics. In addition, a number of projects were initiated in schools, to support teachers and schools in working with refugee children, identifying and documenting good practices. From this year (2018/19) the Ministry provides professional development courses for teachers working with refugee children, in collaboration with the NGOs and international organizations such as UNHCR. A donation scheme had been introduced for schools to apply for resources for teaching materials, textbooks or free lunch for refugee children (Kozma, 2018).

According to Jovanovic (2019) who has been doing ethnographic work in three schools in Serbia, the schools she has been looking at, adopted a so called add-on integrative approach. This means that the curriculum of the class is not changed but there are added elements to it to accommodate the refugee children's language skills and other needs. As a starting point, the content of the classes and the curriculum are the same as for the Serbian children, but extra classes are arranged for refugee children.

Studies show that language is one of the biggest challenges for the children enrolled in the regular classes (Jovanovic, 2019). The children are normally assessed in their language. Besides language and prior knowledge, cultural norms and ways of doing school can be a challenge as many refugee children come from backgrounds where they have not had a chance to attend school or where the school teachers are more authoritative and where teaching is conducted in a different manner.

Another obstacle noted in the studies from this region is the local parents' and communities' reaction to the presence of the refugees in the schools. There is resistance, discrimination and anxiety from the local population (Lažetić & Jovanović, 2018). Unstable and poor living circumstances in regard to socio-economic and legal status of the refugee families are also mentioned as a barrier in children's integration into schools. This also has to be considered in combination with the psycho-social pressures and trauma many children have experienced such as war, crises and other serious situations in their home countries but also experienced on their journey to Europe. There is a large number of children enrolled who drop out either because the family moves on their journey or because of the above mentioned challenges (Jankovic, 2017).

Turkey

Migration and refugee education seems to be a relatively new topics in the Turkish context. As mentioned above, movements of people have been mainly discussed in the frame of internal migration within the regions of Turkey. Issuing no official refugee status made Turkey an unattractive destination for refugees; the country was only used as a transition point during the journey to other countries. Providing education for the refugees was not a service that Turkey had to consider prior to the crisis in Syria. Hence, refugee education has emerged as a new necessity to plan at the state level also as a new academic topic to research. In the research and policy context in Turkey, the terms refugee education and immigrant education are often used interchangeably. The strategies and approaches to refugee education are considered to belong to the area of migration and immigrant education in the country. An example can be the focus given to the definition of migration or refugee in policy documents as well as in research.

Refugee education and research about refugee education in Turkey are areas where the peculiar position of Turkey in the Syria crisis is visible. As one of the first host countries for Syrians and all others affected by the conflict in Syria, Turkey had to take over a huge responsibility. The abruptness of the conflict and the high number of refugees created a challenging situation for educational facilities and educational planning as it was in several other services.

Refugee education in Turkey has multiple responsibilities and targets in correlation with fluctuations in the conflict. Refugee education started firstly in refugee camps schools. The assumption that the conflict was temporary and the refugees were there temporarily, limited the educational efforts to the camp schools. The provision of education in the refugee camps was mainly administered by local municipalities, NGOs or the camp residents themselves. Education was not offered in a frame of national or state level planning or regulations. Hence, in the early stages of the refugee crisis, the education of the refugee children in Turkey did not attract the attention of public discussion or research.

With the expansion of the conflict and the extension of the crisis, education arose as an issue that should be tackled at the state level through policies and regulations. However, at that time, the focus on the role of Turkey as a transition and waiting zone influenced the planning of the refugee education. The education of the refugee children in a more systematic way began in temporary education centres that were designed for children affected by the Syria conflict (Emin, 2016). Located in nearby areas to refugee settlements, these centres offered education in Arabic language. The research done about temporary education centres indicates that the urge behind these centres was providing education as a social service to children who are at risk. The statements of the policymakers and practitioners, media and the research mainly described refugee education in these centres as a response to emergency education and the fulfilment of human rights. Refugee education took over the responsibility of offering discontinued education for Syrian and Iraqi children and providing them with the required skills to build their countries in the future. Limited teaching in Turkish, the implementation of Arabic curriculum and calling these centres ‘temporary’ were some of the practices that indicate the lack of intention for integration of the refugee children in the education system of Turkey.

The refugee education aimed at offering a stable and safe environment for children who were traumatized and at risk. The education acted as a platform for safety and the feeling of security for the refugee children. With changes in the influx of refugees, and the prolongation of the conflicts, the role of the education for the refugee children changed (Coskun & Emin, 2018). This included curricular adaptations, structural adaptations, administrative adaptations as well as adaptations in professional development of teachers.

Although the refugee population in the country is drastically higher in big cities, the government attempts to distribute the refugees over several cities in Turkey. Some of these cities are small and relatively monocultural. The research concerning refugee education practices from these small cities show that refugee education is a topic that is tackled at the local level. The collaboration between schools, local NGOs and municipalities, as well as efforts to include the parents, show that the education of the refugee children is not only a national but also a local concern. This attitude points to an increased acceptance of the refugee population as a part of the local community and the country.

Over time, the focus on temporariness and the belief that the crisis is to end soon faded gradually. The language that the research, as well as policymakers, use, has changed and the refugee education started to serve a new aim. Refugee education adopted new strategies. Integration in the host country, social inclusion through education, and building the future of Turkey, overtook the understanding that refugee education is a social service to people at risk. The potential benefits of a well-planned refugee education for both Turkey and the

refugees became one of the main discussion points. The research, academic institutions, and political authorities increased the attention given to the education of refugee children.
The gradual closing of the temporary education centres and shifting education from these centres to Turkish state schools are two important indicators that show the change in the attitude to refugee education in Turkey. Refugee education, with this move, stopped being a service to educate refugee children for their future lives in their countries post-war. Integrating refugee children into state schools and supporting them with Turkish language classes can be considered as the initial practices of integration and inclusion of refugee children in the Turkish society. However, in the ninth year of the Syria crisis, the discussion of permanence or temporariness of refugees in Turkey is still a contested debate. The recent political changes in the region and the increasing number of refugees returning to their home countries challenge the educational efforts. The feeling of temporariness affects not only the refugees but also the teaching staff. Research, conducted with teachers in the border cities, points to the instability in the region and its impact on education (Subasi, 2019).
The literature also points to the challenges that the education of refugee children poses. Problems, issues, challenges, barriers or hurdles are terms that are used very common in the literature concerning refugee education. The majority of the studies addressing teachers and school administrators' perspectives focus on the challenges in the schools (Gümüsten, 2017). The language barrier, cultural differences, marginalization, poverty and other challenges are outlined in the findings. This depicts a picture where refugee education is discussed mainly from a negative perspective. The studies engaging with the perspectives of the refugee children typically provide suggestions for policymakers and practitioners.
The education of refugee children is implemented mainly in schools but is not limited to schools. Several international, national and local NGOs work together with local authorities and try to support refugee children along with their families. The efforts of refugee education, hence, do not target only refugee children but also their families. Examples of this are info days and other events that require participation of the children together with their parents.

5.2 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The countries in southeast Europe included in this chapter have different policies and regulations and consequently, meet different challenges and opportunities concerning the integration of refugee children in education, depending on their socio-political and economic situation, as well as general capacity within the education and other relevant sectors in the society.
There are a few challenges that are common to the countries addressed in this chapter, including:

- Lack of reliable data regarding children's age and educational background, eventual learning difficulties or other diagnoses or issues that may have an impact on their learning and integration in education.
- Difficulties relating to lack of competences of refugee children in the language in which the local education is conducted. Linked with this is the challenge of organizing fast, intensive and efficient language courses, or teaching in the languages of the refugee children.
- Insufficient capacities of the teachers and school staff to integrate the refugee children academically and socially. In addition to the language, teachers and school staff lack competences in cultural sensitivity, sensitivity to emotional, social and cognitive challenges that the refugee children may face following their traumatic experiences in the country of origin, on the journey of in their life in unstable conditions.
- Lack of appropriate facilities, teaching materials, flexibility of the curriculum and assessment technologies.
- General lack of resources and political will, beyond rhetoric.
- Negative attitudes, prejudice and resistance towards refugees among the general population.
- The temporal nature of the transit - in all the countries, the intention of both the refugees and the authorities, is for the refugees to stay in the respective countries for as short time as possible. This results in prioritizing humanitarian help while education is neglected.

Some challenges are specific to Turkey, due to the huge influx of refugees coming into the country, the historical relationships between Turkey and the countries of origin of refugees, the political tensions between Turkey and the EU, to mention but a few.
The specific challenges of Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania are linked to their EU membership as well as to internal economic and socio-political issues. They are relatively new members of the EU, so the legislation and structures are not fully aligned; at the same time they are bound to the EU standards, expectations and other types of pressure. Although members of the EU, these are countries where refugees do not intend to remain but only pass through towards more affluent EU countries, which contributes to lack of systematic efforts of integration in the education system.
Bosnia and Herzegovina is quite unique as it is a post-war federation created as a part of the peace-making process in the 1990s with the help of the international community. It consists of 10 cantons divided along ethnic lines, characterized by mutual distrust and tension, and by general inefficiency of the administration, including the education sector. All this is in the context of economic hardship.
North Macedonia is an impoverished and politically unstable country, with a number of internal issues which hinder the integration of the refugee children in education, but also political conflict with Greece over the name of the country. Both
Similarly, Serbia is experiencing economic problems, and an additional political conflict over Kosovo following the breakup of Yugoslavia..
In these countries, the number of refugees coming in exceeded the countries' capacity and resources to cope.
Additionally, as mentioned above, some of the countries in this part of Europe are on the so-called Balkan route, which has been heavily used during the refugee crisis in Europe in the period 2015-2016. Data-analysis of refugee and migration flow throughout the Balkan region showed that children make up one third of this flow and that many of the children are unaccompanied (Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub Data and Trends Analysis, Save the Children 2018, also see Bejan, Curpan & Amza, 2017). A report by Amnesty International from 2015 stated that the Balkan route was not safe (Amnesty International, 2015). This was especially the case at North Macedonia's border with Greece, and at Serbia's border with North Macedonia, where it was reported that people were ill-treated in the attempt of the authorities to prevent a large influx of entries in the country.
Despite the challenges, some opportunities were identified in the literature for all of the countries too. These include:

- Almost all the countries had ratified the key international resolutions and conventions concerning the rights of refugees in general and refugee children in particular.
- Each country seems to have a clear legal framework, policies and strategies concerning refugees and education of refugee children. Upon getting refugee status, the refugee children in all the countries are guaranteed the right to free education along with the other citizens.
- The countries did their best to accommodate basic needs of refugees, including children, on arrival. For example in the years 2015-2016 where the refugee crisis was at its peak, both North Macedonia and Serbia arranged transit centers where the refugees could rest, get food and be transited to the next border stop (Kilibarda, 2019).
- There is a visible increase over time in the numbers of refugee children who are integrated in the national education systems in all the countries. For example, since 2015 refugee children have gradually been integrated in state schools and benefitted from estra language courses in Turkey and the authorities started closing the temporary schools for refugee children.
- In most of the countries, there is visible support by UNICEF, UNHCR, and a number of international and national NGOs and civic organizations that collaborate with national and local authorities to help, and in some cases organize education activities and integration of the refugee children in education.

5.3. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES

Croatia

In 2017, the Centre for children, young people and families 'Modus', developed information materials for teachers, school staff and school principals concerning refugee children in schools. The material was financially supported by the Ministry of science and education of Croatia. The material provides general information about the refugee crisis from 2015, the international and national situation of the refugee flux and the definition of the main terms used in the public discourse. It also features the challenges in the everyday lives of refugee children and psycho-social difficulties they may experience. Further, it portrays the legal framework of Croatia concerning the rights of the refugees and asylum seekers, with a specific focus on the right to education of children. Finally, specific suggestions and recommendations are provided for schools about: (a) preparation of other students and their parents for the arrival of refugee children in school, including information about different geographies, language, culture etc. The main recommendation is to focus on the promotion of multicultural understanding; (b) supporting refugee children in the classroom, focus on social relations, academic skills and future perspectives; (c)intersectoral collaboration of the school with other authorities and professionals from other related sectors working with refugees; (d) guidelines for using simultaneous translation when communicating with refugee children and their parents or guardians. The material provides a very specific, brief and clear 'action plan' defining the different phases and different responsibilities of the school staff.

North Macedonia

A number of NGOs were involved in the provision of educational activities in the transit centres during 2016 and 2017, including the period when the "Balkan route" was closed. UNICEF provided pedagogical materials and organized professional development of the teaching staff. The educational activities were accompanied with creative workshops and sports activities for the children. For example, in October 2016, a group of children from one of the transit centres was granted permission to go out of the centre and visit a ZOO in the city of Skopje, as a part of organized educational activities. This was the first time children were afforded an opportunity to go out of the transit centre.

UNICEF also initiated a specific programme for adolescents, where the focus was not only traditional learning, but also development of life skills, resilience and empowerment. The education has primarily taken place in the centres but there was also a possibility of following mainstream classes with peers in regular schools. Teachers of English and German languages were mobilized from the local schools. The teaching in Macedonian language, natural sciences and citizenship education was conducted by pedagogical staff of the SOS Children Village, while the IT and computer lessons were provided by a private certified company (UNICEF North Macedonia, 2019). Translators to Arabic and Farsi were provided and some resources provided by the Ministry of Education of Syria were also used.

Serbia

In Serbia, a model was introduced in which eminent teachers and external Ministry associates (mentors) work together in teams, with a view to share their expertise and support schools in different regions to integrate refugee children in inclusive ways (Spasić & Mihajlović, 2017). The focus is on professional development of teachers, particularly in terms of teaching Serbian as a foreign language, but also on inclusion issues. Spasić and Mihajlović (ibid) state that in the school year 2017/18 around 750 teachers and school staff have been included in various forms of advanced professional development programmes building their capacity for adequate work with refugee children in schools.

Turkey

Refugee education was a new notion and discussion within the education context in Turkey. Therefore, it required professional development of teachers and school staff, both pedagogically and administratively. This was offered at local and national levels. Regular professional development for teachers concerning migration,

international protection, and psychological support as well as training for the school administrators about the legal framework, policy implementation, and integration were established (Gökce & Acar, 2018). Another newly established practice is reaching out to identify and activate refugee children who were out of school for a long time (Tüzün, 2017). Compensation classes with the help of teachers trained specifically for this purpose are offered in schools. Further, schools are supported with additional human and material resources such as teachers, administrators, translators, as well as computers, software or more classrooms. Finally, refugee families are supported with free transportation to school in several cities and disadvantaged neighbourhoods and free school materials.

5.4. SUMMARY

This chapter presented an overview of the literature pertaining to education of refugee children in the following countries of southeast Europe: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Bulgaria, Croatia, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Turkey. Although the literature is scarce, the chapter has outlined the different socio-political and economic conditions influencing the development of effective and inclusive education practices for refugee children. Based on the available literature, we outlined the key challenges and opportunities and provided a few examples of positive practices.

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6. RE APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES IN WESTERN EUROPE

6.1. THE FRAMEWORK OF RE IN WESTERN EUROPE

Introduction

Whilst 'western Europe' is a fairly loose term, this chapter of the report will examine Belgium, France, Monaco, Netherlands, UK and the crown territories. Divided into three sections, this chapter outlines and reviews literature about Refugee Education [RE] in these countries. The first section of the chapter introduces both the educational systems in Western Europe and the distinct systems for including refugee children. The second section of the chapter examines challenges and opportunities for RE in Western Europe. This sections focuses directly on the following four challenges: first, protracted procedures for claiming asylum and exclusion from schooling; second, hostile attitudes; third, underfunding, the absence of effective mechanisms of support, and the improvised living standards of refugees; and, finally, separated schooling systems. This section of the chapter also considers opportunities for RE in Western Europe, and attends directly both to educational practices that succeed in synthesising whole child and whole school approaches to RE, and to effective partnerships formed between schools and external agencies to support RE. The third and final section of the chapter presents five examples of good practice in RE in Western Europe.

Country	*Country Population*	*Asylum-seekers arriving in 2018*	*Number of people granted protection in 2018*	*Refugees resettled in 2018*	*Top 5 countries of origin among asylum-seekers arriving in 2018*	*Recognition rate for protection status in 2018**
Belgium	11,570,762	23443	8706+ 1777*		Syria Palestine Afghanistan Iraq Guinea	18.1% + 10.6%
France	65,195,835	119,190	20,940		Afghanistan, Albania, Georgia, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire	
Ireland	4,907,940	3,673	683 + 200 *		Albania Georgia Syria Zimbabwe Nigeria	23%+6.73%
Monaco	39,092	25	NA		NA	NA
Netherlands	17,114,542	20,353	1,760		Syria, Iran, Turkey, Eritrea, Algeria	
United Kingdom	67,694,205	37,453	7,636 1,292		Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Albania, Eritrea	30.4%+5.1%
Crown Territories						

**The two figures indicate refugee status and subsidiary protection*

Table 4. Statistics relating to number of refugees according to countries (source: https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country)

Given the varying sizes and political character of the countries listed in the table above, there is no homogenous approach to refugee and asylum seeker policies, nor those of their education policies. However, all countries in this group, guarantee the same educational experiences as national children; indeed, education is compulsory for all school age children. Each of the school systems are substantially different to one another; consequently, these differences can impact the learners (either positively or negatively) at varying points in the educational lives of refugee and asylum seekers. Significantly, as Crul and Schneider, 2012; Crul et al., 2012 suggest in their comparison of European nations, students can have very different educational outcomes depending on which educational system they are part of. Therefore, differences in the educational systems and institutional arrangements play an important role in the educational journeys and outcomes for children from refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds (Koehler et al, 2019).

Alongside the structural differences in the general education systems, further differences arise according to the question of segregation or immersion for refugee and asylum seeker children. Some systems outlined below (for example, the Dutch and occasionally Belgium systems), may have special classes for newly arrived children who can be segregated from mainstream classes for up to two years. Other systems, such as the UK take an immersive approach from the outset. Each system has its relative merits and challenges; however, Koehler et al (2019) suggest that segregation should only occur for a limited period of time to enable the benefits of socialisation which occur from an immersive approach.

The Netherlands (like Germany) has a differentiated system of secondary education with both vocational and academic tracks. Whilst Koehler et al (2019) suggested that comprehensive systems had better outcomes for children (especially when compared to systems where it was difficult to change between the tracks), students entering the system later may benefit from a vocational approach to training, especially if there is a possibility to enter higher education later. Whilst most systems in western Europe last for a similar length of time, Koehler et al (2019) also found that the longer the time spent in education (and the longer the length of the educational system), the better the chances of employment and social integration. In the Netherlands, Children below 12 go to elementary school either at the school either near or within the initial reception centres. Children between the age of 12 and 18 are first taught in an international class. When their level of Dutch is considered to be sufficient, they enrol in the suitable education programme (Aida, 2018N).

Belgium and the UK display similar structural policies surrounding the both the asylum policies and educational policies. Whilst the laws and policies surrounding the acceptance and relocation of refugees are set by the central government, educational policies (including those relating to refugees) are devolved to the regional governments and assemblies. In the UK, this is devolved to the nation states of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In Belgium, education is devolved according to the governments of the three national languages: Flemish, French or Germany.

In the UK, Education is compulsory for children from 5 to 18. This includes children seeking asylum, who attend mainstream schools local to where they live under the same conditions, formally, as other children in their area. However, poverty may affect their access to education, especially in the instance of families who have had their asylum application refused. In these cases, the family is unlikely to be able to afford school meals, but they are not entitled to free school meals or other benefits. Unlike other areas of western Europe, for example Belgium, there are rarely preparatory classes to facilitate access to education for children who are seeking asylum (Aida, 2018UK).

In Belgium, Schooling is mandatory for all children between 6 and 18 in Belgium, irrespective of their residence status. Specific classes are organised for children of newly arrived migrants and asylum seekers in both the Flemish and French speaking systems. Children attending these classes are later integrated in regular classes once they are considered ready for it (AIDA, 2018BE, p83). Whilst all children are entitled to an education, some difficulties still persist with access. The capacity of some local schools is not always sufficient to provide for all asylum-seeking children. Also, transfers of families to another reception centre or to an "open return place" after having received a negative decision might entail a move to another part of the country which can be linguistically different. This can have a negative impact on the continuity in education for the children (Ida, 2018 BE, p84)

In France, the law dictates that all children need to attend compulsory education between the ages of 6 and 16 years old, although there is no specific provision of the Education Code for the case of children of asylum seekers. If the children seem to have a sufficient command of the French language, the evaluation and admission is process is overseen by a state Counselling and Information Centre, which is for the educational guidance of

all students. If the children are not French-speaking or do not have a sufficient command of writing the language, their evaluations fall under the competency of the Academic Centre for Education of Newcomers and Travellers Children (CASNAV). The test results will enable teachers to integrate the child within the dedicated schemes e.g. training in French adapted to non-native speakers or initiation classes (Aida, 2018FR).
In Ireland, Asylum-seeking children can attend local national primary and secondary schools on the same basis as Irish children. This has been made an express right under the Reception Conditions Regulations. Under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 education in Ireland is compulsory for all children from the age 6 to 16 years old. The education is provided through the regular school system and parents of children living in reception centres can apply for financial assistance towards the purchase of school uniforms. There is also a specific programme for unaccompanied or separated minors called the Refugee access programme. This provides English language tuition, support and advice for navigating the education system, as well as social integration initiatives (Aida, 2018IE).
Education in Monaco is mandatory for all children from 6 to 16 years of age and children can attend nursery school from the age of three; state education is free. There are seven State-run nursery and primary schools, a collège (secondary school for children aged 11-15), a general and technological lycée (for pupils aged 15 to 18) and a vocational lycée. All the State schools and private schools under contract are approved as French educational establishments abroad. Lessons are taught in French and some schools have a French as a Foreign Language section 'which can help non-French-speaking pupils to integrate'. English is taught to all pupils in the state system from the age of three. (Service public du gouvernement Princier, 2019, online).
In very few of the countries listed above, is any data collection attempted for this group of pupils. In France, a proxy of French as a second language is used to collect and monitor data in this area. This is also true of the UK where data is collected on pupils with English as an additional language. In the Netherlands, data is specifically collected on asylum-seeker children (EUAFR, 2011). Consequently, very little is known about the specific progress of these learners and therefore, further necessary support to improve the educational provision.

Introducing systems for including refugee children in western Europe

The International Protection Act 2015 provides the legal framework that underpins the asylum claim process. Under this Act a refugee is defined as someone, 'who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside his or her country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it'.
In Ireland, there were 105 children aged from 0 to 4 years old living in Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres in March 2018, whilst 162 in this age group had been resettled in the community (Ní Raghallaigh, Smith and Scholtz, 2019:51). The Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement Programme provides sixty weeks of childcare support for families with children in this age range (Ní Raghallaigh, Smith and Scholtz, 2019).
In 2018, there were 23,215 child applications for asylum in France (Asylum in Europe, 2019a). The legislation that underpins the asylum seeking process is the *Code de l'entrée et du séjour des étrangers et du droit d'asile (The code of entry and residence of foreigners and for the right to asylum)* (Ceseda). This legislation outlines the definition of a refugee to be in accordance with the definition of the United Nations General Assembly 1950 or which is in line with the definition of Article 1 of the Geneva Convention 1951 relating to the Status of Refugees (Legifrance, 2019). In 2017, there were 591 asylum claims made by unaccompanied children (Asylum in Europe, 2019b). The Office Français de Protection des Réfugiés et Apatrides (French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons) (OFPRA) (2019) outlines that unaccompanied children must present themselves at the préfecture (the office of the representative of the state in different regions of France) in the same way that any person seeking asylum must. Children are expected to be in compulsory education between the ages of 6 and 16 (Asylum in Europe, 2019c). Primary aged children apply for a school place at the town hall while applications for secondary places are directly to the setting (Asylum in Europe, 2019c). The Centre académique pour la scolarisation des élèves allophones nouvellement arrives (EANA) et des enfants issus de familles itinérantes et de voyageurs (The Academic Centre for Education of Newcomers and Traveller

Children) (CASNAV) becomes involved when a child's spoken and/or written French requires the support of French language classes.
Given Belgium's modest size (11,570,762), the country is not often associated with high volumes of migrants, nor asylum seekers (CIA World Fact Book, 2018). Yet over the last three decades Belgium has become a permanent country of settlement for many different types of migrants (Petrovic, 2012). On the whole, Petrovic (2018) regards the migration, asylum, and integration policies as 'responsive in nature, reacting to circumstance', rather than pursuing a long-term vision. It is only in recent years that policymakers have started to develop new policies and legislation in a more consistent way (Petrovic, 2012).
In 2018, Belgium received 23000 claims for asylum; only 42% of these claims were accepted. Refugees from Syria were the largest group (UNHCR, 2018, p21), closely followed by Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq (Aida, 2018BE, 8). Children formed a significant group within these statistics as 30% of asylum seekers in 2018 were in this category. group.
Belgium, like some other European countries, is significantly impacted by the regional identification of distinct languages. There are three official languages: French, Flemish and German. Each has their own school system and procedures – consequently where known, this is highlighted in the discussion. In the current federal state of Belgium, asylum procedures and immigration law are federal authorities, while on the other hand, integration and education policies are decentralized are regulated by the three communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking) (Ravn, Nouwen, Clycq, Timmerman, 2018, 4).
In Belgium, education is organised in various networks. Education and training organised by the government is called *official education.* Education and training organised by a private person or organisation is known as *free education* (Government-aided private education). In the French Community, there are three educational networks:

- *Public education* is the official education organised by the French Community. It is subject to respect the philosophical and religious views of all parents;
- *Government-aided public education* run by the municipal or provincial authorities;
- *Government-aided private education* is organised by a private person or organisation. The network consists primarily of catholic schools. Next to denominational schools it includes schools not linked to a religion, e.g. alternative schools (on the basis of the ideas of Freinet, Montessori or Steiner) which apply specific teaching methods. (Eurydice, 2019)

The French-speaking region has an education system closely aligned to the French academic norms which is distinct from the other parts of Belgium. School is compulsory from age 6 to 18 with the first 6 years of this in primary school that culminates in a *certificat d'etudes de base*. There are 4 kinds of secondary schools: general, technical, vocational and artistic. In all three cases, the education programs unfold through 3, two-year phases called 1st, 2nd and 3rd degrees (Scholaro, 2019).
As with the French speaking system, the education system of the German-speaking Community also distinguishes three school networks:

- *The Community Education System (GUW)* is the official education system organised and financed by the German-speaking Community.
- *The Officially Subsidized Education System (OSUW)* is organized by the municipalities and financed by the German-speaking Community.
- *The Free Subsidized Education system* is the system of schools organized by private school boards and financed by the community (mainly "Catholic" schools).

The Parliament of the German-speaking Community lays down the legal framework for all three school networks. In the two networks, which are only financed by the German-speaking Community, the school authorities enjoy a large degree of autonomy, particularly with regard to teaching and evaluation methods (Eurydice, 2019b). All children from a refugee or asylum seeker background in German-speaking Belgium are entitled to access education. Among those categories of children, only those pupils new to the education system in the German-speaking Community have been subject to special support measures as part of their education (EACEA, 2011).
For Flemish speaking Belgium, the system largely mirrors the German and French systems with three distinct approaches to funding and organisation. *Nonetheless, there are a number of minor differences.* Whilst nursery

education is not mandatory in Flanders, it is strongly recommended. A child's engagement with nursery education can have a bearing on enrolment in elementary education. In case the child has not attended any nursery education, the council of teachers of elementary schools decides whether the child is capable of enrolling in their elementary school or whether the child needs to attend one year of nursery education. Compulsory education starts in the school year in which the child turns 6 and ends at 18 years. For those children in Flanders, when they turn 15 or 16 years old they may choose to enter part-time education for which there is minimum of 28 hours a week of learning and working. (Ravn, Nouwen, Clycq, Timmerman, 2018).
Within Flanders Belgium, the arrival of migrants to the education system is divided into three distinct phases. For each of the following phases, different sources of support and approaches to education are offered (Ravn et al, 2018):

- Phase 1: First arrival (0-2 months in Belgium)
- Phase 2: 'Reception' education (2-12 months in Belgium)
- Phase 3: Transition to mainstream secondary education (more than 12 months in Belgium).

In Belgium, a dedicated top-level body coordinates social integration and refugee related policies at national level. Their mandate is usually to facilitate the social integration of people from migrant backgrounds (Eurydice, 2018, 59). There are different ways in which schools or local authorities can apply for extra funding for integrating migrants (Eurydice, 2018, 62). For example, in the German-speaking Community, in addition to the general allocation of funding from the top-level, schools can apply for additional resources in relation to the number of students from migrant backgrounds. They may be awarded additional teaching hours to run preparatory classes or courses for students from migrant backgrounds (Eurydice, 2018, 62)
In the United Kingdom, children who are seeking asylum are able to make a claim in their own right whether or not they are accompanied (The Home Office, 2019a). A child is deemed to be an individual who is under 18 years (The Home Office, 2019a). The Immigration Rules (Home Office, 2019b) state that 'an unaccompanied asylum seeking child is a person who:

- is under 18 years of age when the asylum application is submitted.
- is applying for asylum in their own right; and
- is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who in law or by custom has responsibility to do so.

Children who are unaccompanied are placed in care by the Local Authority (The Home Office, 2019a). In England, an unaccompanied asylum seeking child are entitled to the same support that a child who is looked after by a Local Authority (DfE, 2018). There is a requirement for children in care to be placed in an educational setting within twenty days of being taken into care and the setting should be graded either 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted (DfE, 2018).
In 2016, the Netherlands 20,800 of 28,900 asylum applications in 2016 (a 72% approval rate), twice the approval rate of the UK (Hawkins, 2017, 16). In its 2018 report on the Netherlands, the Asylum Information Database note all children, including those seeking asylum, have a right to education (AIDA, 2018N). In the Netherlands, responsibility for securing education for refugee children falls to the municipality where they are located (AIDA, 2018N). Dutch schools receive funding from the government 'to provide this specialised education', and 'they can request for an additional financial compensation' (AIDA, 2018N, 96). However, there is no such provision for pre-school refugee children (Crul, 2017). When they enter into Dutch schools, Refugee children are enrolled into 'an immersion class for one year, although for some children, depending on their second language progress, this can be extended to two years' (Crul, 2017, 6).
Monaco is the second smallest state in the world (with only 30,581 citizens) (Principality of Monaco, 2019, online); consequently, the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in this state are also small. From the statistics available, the number of people being granted refuge has decreased from 36 people in 2011 to 25 in 2018. The sharpest decrease came in between 2016 and 2017. In 2010, Monaco signed a framework cooperation agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, enabling the Monegasque Authorities to maintain regular contact with the UNHCR, take part in field visits in the various countries in which joint action is undertaken and provide financial support for programmes to help the most vulnerable populations (Gouvernement Monaco, 2019a; 2019c)

In 2016 the Principality of Monaco, in association with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), welcomed a family of Syrian refugees. The family were Christian, one of the populations most under threat in Syria. They were housed in an apartment that was made available by the principality of Monaco. The Principality aims to enable the family to become 'independent and integrated into their new environment'. However, when the Monaco minister for foreign affairs, Serge Telle, was asked if they would accept any more, he replied, "No, because our part is very symbolic." However, he went on to clarify that in reality, this depended on the global situation of refugees. (Gouvernement Monaco, 2016, online).

Whilst the educational system in Monaco 'strives for excellence', the Prince's Government purports to be 'pursuing an ambitious social policy'. However, it is unclear what this entails. One of the objectives of this policy is to 'help overcome the difficulties that some young people experience and offer them the means to enter working life by a suitable route'. (Gouvernement Monaco, 2019b, online) Despite this gesture, there appears to be very little information about inclusive practices and how migrants (forced or otherwise) are specifically supported within this system.

6.2 AN OVERVIEW OF RE IN WESTERN EUROPE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

6.2.1 CHALLENGES

Protracted procedures for claiming asylum and exclusion from schooling

In the Republic of Ireland, the International Protection Office (IPO) processes the claims for asylum. In 2018, 840 claims for asylum were for children. There were no unaccompanied asylum-seeking children during 2018 (Asylum in Europe, 2019d). Children who are unaccompanied are cared for by Tusla, the Republic's Child and Family Agency. The Social Work Team for Separated Children Seeking Asylum (SWTSCSA) oversees the support that is provided for this group of children (Ní Raghallaigh, Smith and Scholtz, 2019). MacGregor (2019) describes how the Irish government is being criticised for its failure to meet its refugee resettlement target.

On arrival in the Republic of Ireland, people admitted under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP) are accommodated in one of four Emergency Reception and Orientation Centres (EROCs) (Ní Raghallaigh, Smith and Scholtz, 2019). The original plan was that those admitted to the EROCs would stay there for twelve weeks but this is often longer due to a shortage of housing. Children receive 'reception/transition education' while they are there (Ní Raghallaigh, Smith and Scholtz, 2019, 44) with a view to transferring the children to mainstream education. They concluded that, 'ensuring young refugees reach their academic potential requires not just appropriate assessment tools but also appropriate resources to meet identified language and learning needs' (Ní Raghallaigh, Smith and Scholtz, 2019:46).

In the UK, children must be placed in schools while their applications for asylum are processed. However, this 'is not easy due to frequent relocation, lack of an address, overpopulated geographical urban areas and oversubscribed schools' (Kakos and Sharma-Brymer, 2018, 8). Once in schools, a Personal Education Plan is instigated for refugee children (DfE, 2018). This is a plan that outlines what needs to happen for a child to reach their educational goals and improve their life chances (DfE, 2018). Children who are accompanied are expected to access education through the admissions process of their Local Authority (UNICEF, 2018a).

In terms of children accessing early years support, NALDIC (2019) outlines how refugee families in the UK may not realise that their child is eligible for early years support, as this may level of education may not have existed in their country of origin. However, providing a welcome in early years' settings can support a family's inclusion in the community (NALDIC, 2019). In Wales, Cardiff council's cabinet member for education, Sarah Merry observes:

> The Home Office is responsible for initial accommodation centres, including the one in Cardiff. Their contracted provider … is given targets to keep the time people spend in initial accommodation to a

> minimum. *There is no legal requirement for local authorities to provide education for children waiting for dispersal from initial accommodation by the Home Office* … (emphasis added, Merry cited in Taylor, 2016)

A report, published by the UK's House of Lords (2016a, p. 48), outlines the consequences of protracted asylum proceedings upon children thus:

> The unaccompanied migrant children that we met underlined that this was a key cause of stress and anxiety, which in many cases led to them losing motivation to pursue educational goals or social activities.

Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway (2007, 303) also examine the psychological consequences of protracted displacement, noting that it 'can undermine people's sense of their own identity, their sense of self-worth, as well as their trust in themselves, thereby impairing, at least to some degree, their capacities for self-determination'. Access to information is also a 'challenge … in the UK, [given] the absence of a coordinated system to provide relevant information to newly arrived refugees' (Koehler, 2017, 9). The significance of these psychological consequences needs to considered alongside the significance of trauma (Avery, 2017; Bajaj and Suresh, 2018; Block *et al*., 2014; Burnett and Peel, 2001; Due, Riggs and Augoustinos, 2016; Gormez *et al*., 2017; Macdonald, 2017; Richardson with MacEwen and Naylor, 2018; Rumsey *et al*., 2018).

UNICEF (2018) found that a welcoming ethos smoothed the admission process in the UK. However, UNICEF's (2018a) interviews with eighty-six young people who were either refugees or asylum seekers found that there were significant delays for children accessing education (except for the children who were part of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)). UNICEF (2018a) identified a number of barriers to accessing education. These include waiting lists for schools, convoluted online application processes that are hard for families to navigate and the reduction in the number of specialist support workers employed by Local Authorities. Where children have special educational needs and/or disabilities the wait is often longer (UNICEF, 2018). Accommodation moves, mental health needs and age assessments might also delay school admissions (UNICEF, 2018).

As in the UK, a significant barrier to integration and effective schooling for refugee children in the Netherlands is their experience of protracted displacement. Writing over 10 years ago, Smets and Saskia tan (2008, 327) concluded that 'Asylum seekers have a start in the Netherlands that is quite different to that of other newcomers', since the 'daily lives of asylum seekers are largely determined by the demands and the restrictions that are imposed on them as part of the asylum procedure'. The procedure for claiming asylum takes years and has the consequence of diminishing autonomy and limiting opportunities for social and educational advancement (Ghorashi, 2005; Smets and Saskia tan, 2008; van Heelsum, 2017).

Tudjman et al. (2016, 12) also observe that in the Netherlands, 'the lack of places at regular reception facilities and the creation of temporary locations' means that the number of times refugee children have to move location within the Netherlands 'has increased sharply since 2015', with a majority of these children moving some seven or eight times and a minority moving up to eleven times. 'This is because,' Tudjman et al. (2016, 12) conclude, 'in many cases, these children were placed in emergency reception centres'. Writing in 2019, de Hoon, Vink and Schmeets (12) also note that 'becoming a Dutch citizen is generally associated with long-term settlement in the Netherlands'. It is not simply the length of the application for asylum that is difficult, the process itself is arduous. Hence van Heelsum's (2017, 2143) observation: 'Dutch bureaucracy is endless and for every step, from electricity and water to health insurance and registering one's children at a school, forms need to be filled in'. Indeed, such is the frequency with which refugee children are moved from one location to another, 'municipalities are often not prepared for new arrivals and lack appropriate facilities and staff' (Koehler, 2017, 17). This in turn diminishes the quality of refugee education within these municipalities (Koehler, 2017).

In Belgium, while the different regions have implemented a structured and planned approach to language and cultural 'integration', there can still be complications when refugee families attempt to engage with existing services, since they may not have knowledge of them, there are waiting lists, costs and administrative procedures that can leave them feeling lost (Ahad and Benton, 2018; Migration policy institute, 2018). Access to education for child beneficiaries in Belgium is equal to that of child asylum-seekers. This means that children immediately have the right to go to school and are obliged to receive schooling from 6 years old until their 18th birthday. Children have to be enrolled in a school within 60 days, following their registration on the Aliens Register. Classes with adapted course packages and teaching methods, the so-called "bridging classes" (in the

French-speaking Community schools) and "reception classes" (in the Flemish Community schools), are organised for children of newly arrived migrants, a category which includes children of beneficiaries of international protection. Those children are later integrated in regular classes once they are considered ready for it. (Aida, 2018BE, 124)

Hostile attitudes

A significant challenge facing refugees in the Netherlands, in common with countries throughout Europe, is the persistence of hostile attitudes to persons deemed strangers, outsiders and aliens. Ladd, Fiske and Ruijs (2010, 15) note:

> Despite the fact that immigrant children are not currently increasing as a share of the student population in the big cities, they are increasingly becoming the focus of political attention … [The] extreme views of Geert Wilders have allowed other more moderate politicians to take stronger positions on policies towards immigrants than previously had been possible.

Integration is also a challenge within the Netherlands. Indeed: 'Typical disadvantaged immigrant children have relatively few native Dutch speaking schoolmates, a situation that could make it difficult for them to develop their Dutch language skills' (Ladd, Fiske and Ruijs, 2010, 21).
Surveying the approaches to refugee education in the UK in 2008, observes the following broad pattern:

> Over the past five decades the British government has offered a raft of education policies ... It moved from promoting assimilation and integration in the 1960s and 1970s, to a multicultural model and ideas of antiracism in the 1980s. At present (for the moment anyway) it has settled on ideas of an 'inclusive' education. (Reynolds, 2008, 2)

This pattern should be set within the wider political atmosphere in the UK. Madziva and Thondhlana (2017, 942) note that 'the UK, have been reluctant to engage with the transnational project of coordinating access and settlement, even before the UK's vote to exit the EU', before concluding that 'the UK has traditionally adopted an attitude of hostility rather than hospitality when it comes to admitting refugees'. Writing in 2000, Candappa observes a 'disparity between the UN Convention [on the Rights of the Child] and UK legislation' in relation to refugee children, which 'leaves a group of very vulnerable children in our society without adequate support', before concluding: 'There is a pressing need for the Government to consider the needs of refugee children, and fulfil their obligations to them, as a state party to the UN Convention' (2000, 269). What was true of the UK policy in 2000 remains true. Indeed, Madziva and Thondhlana (2017, 943) record that the UK government has faced criticism for failing to fully commit to the Dubs amendment to the Immigration Act 2016, and to therefore, 'take in more of the most vulnerable child refugees in Europe'. Instead, by adopting selection criteria that is 'extremely restrictive' the UK is 'unlikely to offer a substantial solution to the plight of massive numbers of vulnerable children in Europe' (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017, 943). Significantly, the UK granted 9,900 of 31,100 asylum applications in 2016 (a 31.8% approval rate), while Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Spain and, Sweden were more than twice as likely as the UK to approve applications (Hawkins, 2017, 16).
The wider political and social atmosphere in the UK came into sharp focus when the UK held a referendum on whether or not it should remain within the European Union. In a survey of 2,000 people commissioned by the *Independent* newspaper and conducted by ORB found that in preparing to vote in the UK European Referendum, a third of people' believed that mass immigration was 'a far more important factor than the effect on the economy' (Mortimer, 2016). In a letter published in Guardian newspaper, Mike Stein (2016), Emeritus Professor of Social Policy, writes that 'post-Brexit,' refugee children 'are being used as symbolic currency for "Let's get back control of our borders", a war cry of the vote leave campaign'. He notes, also: 'Child refugees … are being used as a deterrent to further migration, in the same way as paupers admitted to workhouses under the poor law were used to deter dependency on the state'.
In the UK, the Border Force or immigration officials assess a young person's age initially. While the law states the Home Office should only dispute an individual's age if they look as though they are much older than 18

years of age (House of Lords, 2016b), the pressure to establish that one is under 18 years old can be an acute cause of psychological unease (see here Passarlay, 2015).

Pinson and Arnot (2010, 261) observe: 'Media and political discourses in Britain have, on occasion, constructed asylum-seekers and refugees as potential criminals and welfare scroungers that pose a threat to the social cohesion of British society'. What this means for refugee children and their families is that they can find themselves "defined 'as 'other'" and thus, "immediately locates them as the 'problem'" (Strang and Ager 2010, 593). Such 'negative perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers', informed by 'a nation's existing stereotypes and prejudices' can result in the 'isolation and exclusion of new arrivals' (MacDonald 2017, 1183). Significantly, such perceptions can impact upon the self-conceptions of refugees (White 2017) and can increase their mistrust in officials, including teachers (Kohli, 2006; Mackenzie, McDowell and Pittaway 2007).

Within the British Isles, there are three Crown Dependencies: Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. The Crown Dependencies self-govern as they are not part of the United Kingdom (House of Commons Library, 2019). The Channel Islands comprise of two bailiwicks: Guernsey and Jersey. Each bailiwick has its own judicial and fiscal autonomy. Neither bailiwick is part of the European Union (Channel Islands Brussels Office, 2019a). The Bailiwick of Guernsey consists of the islands of Guernsey, Alderney, Sark, Herm, Jethou, Brecqhou and Lihou (States of Guernsey, 2019). The parliament for Guernsey is called the 'States of Deliberation' (Channel Islands Brussels Office, 2019a). Within this Bailiwick there are three jurisdictions (Guernsey, Alderney and Sark) (Ministry of Justice, 2018). In February 2016, the States announced that it was unable to take part in the United Kingdom's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme (States of Guernsey, 2016). At the time, the States Chief Minister, Jonathan Le Tocq, described the Council's decision by saying, 'there's certainly a lot of Islamophobia and negativity around. It would be difficult for us to ensure that [refugees] would find the sorts of security and stability here in Guernsey as in other parts of the UK' (Broomfield, 2016: [online]).

Underfunding, the absence of effective mechanisms of support, and the improvised living standards of refugees

A significant barrier to the creation of effective refugee education in the UK has been austerity and its consequences. Thus, Madziva and Thondhlana (2017, 959) point to the difficulties inherent in satisfying 'the need for the UK education system to improve on resource allocation in the context of the current austerity policies'. Indeed, refugees within 'the United Kingdom they face the effects of poverty, dependence, and lack of cohesive social support' (Burnett and Peel, 2001, 544). This negative impact of these factors upon 'both physical and mental health' have serious educational consequences, too.

Within the British Isles, the Bailiwick of Jersey's parliament is the 'States of Jersey' (Channel Islands Brussels Office, 2019b). In 2015, the States' Chief Minister, Ian Gorst, explained that Jersey does not have a protocol for asylum seekers although it is a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the New York Protocol. He stated, 'As we do not have processes in place to hear asylum claims, anyone eligible to claim asylum who reaches Jersey would be referred to the UK Home Office, where their claim could be processed' (States of Jersey, 2015: [online]). In 2019, the Chief Minister explained that the poor state of Children's Services and mental health services on the island would mean that there was not the capacity to meet the needs of children seeking sanctuary (Bailiwick Express, 2019).

There are no children who are seeking asylum being educated in The Channel Islands. However, Hautlieu School, Jersey, have hosted a talk by Lord Dubs about his own experiences of forced migration (Jersey Evening Post, 2019). Some schools in the Channel Islands learn about global citizenship and children's rights through the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools framework (Morrison, 2018; Le, 2019). The charity *Jersey Cares: Refugee Aid Group* is calling on the States to reconsider their position with regard to welcoming unaccompanied asylum seeking children (Bailiwick Express, 2019). Guernsey is bound by the European Union's immigration laws but the States were able to opt out of the Syrian Resettlement Scheme (Broomfield, 2016). The charity *Bridge2* is campaigning to persuade the States to welcome a small number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (Guernsey Press, 2019).

The Isle of Man is also a bailiwick and Crown Dependency (Ministry of Justice, 2018). The Council of Ministers governs the island. In 2017 a petition called for the island to take up to twenty-five Syrian refugees but this was denied and the Chief Minister responded by pledging to provide humanitarian aid instead (BBC, 2018a). There is a large degree of flexibility for the schools to teach about issues around forced migration with the Essentials for Learning Curriculum (IOM DESC, 2019). The Department of Education, Sport and Culture

work with the One World Centre (IOM) who organise a charity challenge for Year 12 (16 and 17-year-old students). Each group of sixth form students choose a charity which often include those related to refugees and asylum seekers (One World Charity Challenge, 2019).

In 2018, Lord Alfred Dubs, asked a written question to Parliament to ask what discussion had taken place with the Crown Territories 'about the possibility that they will take part in receiving (1) unaccompanied child refugees in Europe, and (2) refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey under existing schemes for refugee families' (Hansard, 2018: [online]). Lord Dubs, a former child refugee and the creator of the 'Dubs Scheme' (a resettlement structure for unaccompanied child asylum seekers), has called upon the Crown Dependencies to accept refugees (BBC, 2018b). Speaking to the BBC he stated, 'I have a sense that there is support in the Crown Dependencies – certainly in the Isle of Man there's quite a lot of support. It is a matter of sharing responsibility. I think, small as the territories are, Jersey and Guernsey are able to provide a bit of support. They are quite wealthy, they have the resources, and I think in the spirit of international co-operation they could do a little bit to help take some of the refugees – either children or families' (Jersey Evening Post, 2018 [online]).

Hagan (2019) explains that learning French facilitates better integration of asylum seekers and refugees. However, access to formal language teaching in France cannot take place until refugee status is granted. Hagan (2019) describes the School Bus Project that teaches migrants around the Calais area in a double decker bus. The School Bus Project enables children and young people to access education while they are living in the illegal camps (School Bus Project, 2019), as the children in these settlements are denied access to education in local schools (Bodon and Votteler, 2017).

Exclusions in schooling systems

Across Europe, there are a number of different approaches to assessing children have recently arrived in the country. Given the precarious routes to their destinations, it is rare that children will have a comprehensive set of school reports and this is compounded by the many and varied school systems which they have arrived from. The Belgian– Flemish and French Communities, do not prescribe or recommend how the school grade of newcomers should be determined (European Commission, 2018, 75). However, when this does occur, the main approach in Belgium in the French Community is to test both language and cognitive skills (European Commission, 2018, p82). These assessments are partly used to determine the school level and grade and partly for diagnosing learning support. Finally, in the German-speaking Community, next to age, the most important criterion when enrolling newly arrived migrants is the level of competences in the language of the host country. In this area, newly arrived migrant children can only be enrolled in mainstream schools if their competences in the German language is above level A2 of Common European Framework. Those with lower levels can attend preparatory classes where mixed-age groups are organised by ISCED level. (Eurydice, 2018, p80)

Within the Flemish Community in Belgium, in primary education, children are placed in mainstream classes for all lessons. Schools can, however, decide to place newly arrived migrant students with insufficient skills in the host country language into language immersion classes for a maximum period of one year (Eurydice, 2018, 82). In the French and Flemish Communities – secondary level students within the reception period or students with inadequate skills in the language of instruction students are typically enrolled in these classes and they spend their whole school day in a separate provision (European Commission, 2018, 84). The French Community is the only system to set a minimum period of language instruction (one week) and all others set a maximum.

Whilst the benefits of bridging or reception classes have been outlined for those newly arrived pupils with insufficient language skills, Koehler et al. (2019) remark on the limitations of this approach, particularly from a social and curriculum perspective. For many children, they explain, who are in immersive approaches to education, they are able to progress in the native language and develop social relationships quicker. They are also falling behind in the curriculum which they are not accessing, whilst they attend bridging classes.

Difficulties arise across the Belgium system for those young people who are over compulsory school age but have yet to complete compulsory education. These young people do not have the same rights as their native-born peers to participate in compensatory education. In Belgium (Flemish Community) because participation in vocationally-oriented compensatory programmes that include work-based learning at a company requires a residence permit, irregular migrants over compulsory school age cannot enrol, although they are allowed to complete a programme if they enrolled earlier in Belgium (Flemish Community), (Eurydice, 2018, p14)

Given that the migration and refugee policies operate on a national level, families can be moved from one reception centre, 'open return place' (for those whose claims have been rejected), or area for one language, and find themselves placed in an area which is linguistically different. This can have a negative impact on the continuity in education for the children (Aida, 2018BE). A legal case in 2014 in Charleroi, Belgium, found that the transfer of a family to the family centre of the Holsbeek open would result in a violation of the right to education since it would force the children to change from a French speaking school to a Dutch speaking one (Aida, 2018BE, 84).

Koehler (2017) identifies that children within secondary educational systems in nearly all EU countries are organised into differentiated streams in accordance with prescribed ability levels. Of the European countries it is Germany that divides children into distinct schooling tracks at the earliest age (ten years old), followed closely by the Netherlands, Greece and Belgium (Flanders), where children are separated into distinct schooling streams from the age of twelve (Koehler, 2017). This organisation results in a distinct set of challenges for refugee children, especially for those children that are too old to prepare for and take the entry examinations for enrolment onto an academic secondary schooling track (Crul, 2017; Koehler, 2017). Consequently, as Crul (2017, 5) observes: 'Many of the young refugees that started late in the Dutch educational system find themselves in a low-level vocational track, finishing it when they are around eighteen years old'. Crul et al. (2017, 15) even conclude that 'it is especially refugee children entering the Netherlands around or after age twelve who are getting crushed between the tracking wheels of the Dutch school system'.

In Belgium (Flemish Community), Spain and Switzerland, it is widely acknowledged in top-level policy documents that students from migrant backgrounds are overrepresented among early school leavers (European Commission, 2018, 55). As reported in the PISA study of 2015, the difference in the proportion of low achievers between migrant students and native-born students is quite large. In science, the difference in PISA scores is between 25 and 33 percentage points in Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Belgium, Greece, Austria and Slovenia (European Commission, 2018, 38)

In Belgium (Flanders) there the quality of support for refugee students varies (Koehler et al 2019). The Belgium (German-speaking Community) report that teaching staff have not been trained to work with the linguistically and culturally diverse newcomers that have recently arrived in their countries, some teachers express the concern that they lack the knowledge and skills to manage diversity in classrooms, and there is a shortage of appropriate adapted teaching materials (European Commission, 2018, 55). Indeed, the integration process of newly arrived minor newcomers in Flanders can be deeply problematic, and some of the difficulties experiences relate directly to structural features of the Flemish education system (Sterckx, 2006). Young newcomers are, after their initial schooling in reception classes, largely overrepresented in vocational education tracks (i.e. full-time school-based and part-time work-based vocational education) (Sterckx, 2006). Furthermore, there is a large socioethnic gap in school performances between migrant students and their native peers (Danhier et al., 2014; Jacobs et al., 2009).

6.2.2 OPPORTUNITIES

Synthesising whole child with whole school approaches to RE

In the UK researchers, including Rutter (2006), Ferfolja and Vickers (2010) and Taylor and Ravinder (2012), have urged against the reductionist attitudes towards, and perceptions of, refugee students. Pinson and Arnot (2007, 403) have thus argued that 'further deconstruction of … trauma discourses is needed, not least since they imply the further pathologising and victimisation of young asylum-seekers, over and above immigration and dispersal policies'. Due, Riggs and Augoustinos (2016, 1287) note that 'it is important to consider the broader social context of schools in addition to the learning experiences of students with migrant or refugee backgrounds'. This dilemma between attending to the difficulties experienced by refugee students, including those that lead to trauma, while avoiding reductionism in educational practice, is a major issue within the UK system and beyond. Therefore, Arnot and Pinson (2005, 60) write:

> One of the major tensions found at all levels of the educational system that is associated with this particular group of vulnerable pupils is whether to make the presence and needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils visible or whether to treat all pupils as equal without any special targeted policy and provision.

Pinson and Arnot (2010, 262) contend that to answer this tension is to advance an 'child-centred holistic approach' to the education of refugee children. This approach allows educators and other professionals to attend to the individual needs of these children while at the same time identifying opportunities for effective whole-school practices. This also entails managing the expectations of parents as they engage with a new educational system. Thus, Madziva and Thondhlana (2017, 957) note:

> Syrian refugee parents had high expectations of their children's educational achievements despite their crippling challenges. For example, parents with older children expected their children to be placed in schools or colleges on the basis of the level attained before coming to the UK ... In this regard, parents' expectations of their children's schooling appear to clash with those of the teachers and/or UK school system.

Examples of this approach in the UK include Oxfordshire County Council's befriending/mentoring scheme, which is facilitated by the Refugee Support Network. Children are matched with a mentor who will support them with a variety of aspects of their education (Oxfordshire County Council, 2019). Mentoring is for young people from the age of 14-25 (Refugee Support Network, 2019). Bunar (2019) identifies the use of mentors as one way of overcoming educational barriers to inclusion. Rodríguez-Izquierdo and Darmody (2019) have expressed the concern that teachers in the Republic of Ireland are not ready to meet the language needs of migrant children and young people. They state, "teachers need to be trained not to perceive migrant children only as children 'who lack a language' (deficit perspective) but see them as 'plurilingual students' or 'new speakers' who ought to be the model of reference for all students in the twenty-first century" (Rodríguez-Izquierdo and Darmody, 2019, 52).

In Ireland, one of the recommendations of Ní Raghallaigh, Smith and Scholtz's (2019) *Safe Haven* report was to revisit the content of initial teacher education, 'in relation to the specific needs of refugee children – including trauma-sensitive training and the impact of their experiences on their education and learning; equality, diversity and anti-racism training; and how best to support their learning of EAL' (Ní Raghallaigh, Smith and Scholtz, 2019:74).

In the UK, this means that while RE is firmly situated in 'the wider education policy,' nevertheless, 'the UK system encourages schools to ensure that class teachers are well equipped to support children whose first language is not English' (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017, 954). What this points to is the significance of 'an inclusive whole school vision and values framework that supports the recognition and valuing of refugee student difference' (Keddie 2012, 1298). Arnot, Pinson and Candappa (2009, 262) hold such responses to be crucial; they write:

> Given UK immigration policy, teachers represent the front line of a compassionate society both in terms of showing compassion, creating the conditions for compassion to flourish within the school, and offering the ASR [asylum-seeking and refugee] child the chance by their actions to gain confidence, self-esteem and a sense of agency in taking control of their future world.

UNICEF (2018a) have identified two schemes that provided intensive teaching in English, Maths and the use of technology along with day-to-day life skills to support living in England. One is the Croydon Virtual School comprises interim provision for fifteen hours a week on the site of a secondary school for up to twenty-five young people while they are awaiting a school place (UNICEF, 2018b). Bunar (2019:5) describes this arrangement as a 'separate site' model. The advantages of this model might be the opportunity for children to be educated alongside peers who speak the same language whereas the disadvantages might be that this type of setting segregates children from native speakers (Bunar, 2019).

The Department for Education and Skills has a Social Inclusion Unit. Within this there is a Migrant Integration Strategy (DES, 2019). Ní Raghallaigh, Smith and Scholtz (2019, 20) outline the important part that schools play in the process of resettlement, 'schools also serve an important social function by providing spaces to build friendships and to gain access to the support of competent adults'. They describe how settings can provide a

sense of belonging and routine whilst acknowledging the challenge of language barriers and possible trauma. They also stress the importance of involving the families of the children and young people in their education while being aware that often the children fulfil the role of the translator for their parents.
The Netherlands has promoted whole-school, intercultural education programmes for over 40 years (Driessen, 2000). Intercultural education in the Netherlands has three central aspects, all of which contain opportunities for enhancing refugee education:

- first, overcoming prejudices
- second, more positively, on advancing knowledge of differing cultures, values and customs
- and, third, promoting self-esteem, along with respect for the self and the other. (Driessen, 2000)

However, the success of intercultural education is rather intermittent, resting on 'the attitude and efforts of a small number of individual teachers' and only thriving in 'schools attended by considerable numbers of immigrant children' (Driessen, 2000, 63).
While some schools in the Netherland operate a 'strategy of assessing the prior education and social and family conditions of each child, together with the parents or caretaker, and design an individual learning schedule' (Cerna, 2019, 37), there is also an emphasis on bringing together an individualised with a whole school approach to the education of refugee children. The state-funded NGO Pharos programme in the Netherlands, has run for over 25 years in secondary schools to support social and emotion well-being of refugee and asylum-seeking children. In this programme:

> The goal is to give attention to the difficulties refugee children face, strengthen peer support systems for refugee children by offering opportunities to share their histories and experiences with other children, foster teacher support for refugee children and strengthen [their] coping ability and resilience … (Cerna, 2019, 48)

This programme operates at the level of the classroom, where "The refugee lesson" turns attention to the experiences of refugee children (Cerna, 2019). It also works at the level of the whole school, where the "Refugee youth at school" component of the programme provides training for teaching working with refugee children (Cerna, 2019). Finally, the "Welcome to school" component of the programme provides some 21 lessons for refugee children, utilising the arts, to facilitate peer-support and to enhance the well-being of these children (Cerna, 2019). Moreover, in some schools in the Netherlands, refugee children are paired with a Dutch child along with a member of the school's staff to guide and mentor them (Crul, 2017, Koehler, 2017).
Schools working in partnership with other agencies

For schools committed to welcoming refugee students, there are a range of sources of support. The United Nations Refugee Agency in Ireland (2019) has a resource pack that is aimed at 12-15 year olds. It can be used as part of designed for the teaching of Civic, Social and Political Education (UNCHR, 2019). The Irish Refugee Council (2019a) have written a guide for people seeking asylum and for refugees that outlines the Further and Higher Education system in Ireland. The Irish Refugee Council (2019b) also provides workshops for schools when requested where possible.
Several European countries have succeeded in establishing partnerships and operating with multiple local and NGO actors to address the needs of the asylum seeker population. This is evident in the use of multi-agency reception centres in the three regions of Belgium – nonetheless each region has taken a slightly different approach and their relationship with the federal authorities has different levels of cooperation.
Within the Flanders and Brussels-Capital regions, the public early childhood and care agency set up centres to provide a full range of services for families with children. The agency co-operates with the Belgian Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Fedasil) and the Red Cross, which manage the reception centres (Park, Katsiaficas and McHugh, 2018, p179). In this situation, consulting offices have been set up in reception centres, where young children are vaccinated and hearing tested, and where their growth and early development are monitored (Ahad and Benton, 2018; Migration policy institute, 2018).
Whilst positive multi-agency working rearrangements are evident, reception centres which also provide information, advice and guidance on the education system and the schooling opportunities available were found to be least advocated for (Eurydice (2018, 75). Nonetheless, steps have been taken in some regions of Belgium. For example, Koehler et al (2018) highlight that some schools organise 'network days' within reception

education; these events aim to connect students, parents, principals, teachers and follow-up coaches. In the German-speaking Community of Belgium, previous reception arrangements and the number of places for newly arrived migrant students in schools near reception centres became inadequate due to the high number of new arrivals. However, the problem stimulated a debate which led to a system-wide policy response: besides the schools in the proximity of reception centres, all schools now need to provide places and support for new arrivals (Eurydice, 2018, 55).

Whilst not specific to children and young people who have experienced forced migration, an important institutional element of Flemish education is pupil guidance centres which are known as (CLB). In Flanders, there are 72 CLBs across the three different educational networks. The government finances the CLBs which belong to the education of the Flemish community and subsidizes the CLBs which belong to subsidized public education and subsidized private education. Pupil guidance centres are able to work across networks and support schools which belong to another educational network. The pupil guidance centres have the task to contribute to, and enhance, the well-being of students. Parents, teachers, pupils and school boards can turn to a pupil guidance centre for guidance, information or advice. The services provided by the centres are free and are focussed on the following four domains: Learning and studying; School career; Preventive health care and Socio-emotional development (Eurydice, 2018). These centres provide an essential service for all stakeholders, including those who have experienced forced migration and would provide an excellent model for other systems to replicate. Nevertheless, despite these example of excellent practice across Belgium, Koehler et al (2018) conclude that young refugees and their families feel insufficiently informed about the education systems. This is especially true for the stages of transition from reception to mainstream education and between different school types.

Working with *Citizens UK*, a national community organising charity, NASUWT, the Teachers' Union in the UK, has developed a Refugee Welcome Schools programme, which brings recognition to schools:

> that have made a commitment to welcome refugees in their institution and community, educate all their students and staff about the importance of refugee protection over the course of a year … While this is not an official accreditation, the initiative has been led by teachers who become "refugee welcome champions" … (Cerna, 2019, 44-45)

Also in the UK, *The Children's Society* (2019) have created a Refugee Toolkit to support educational settings to develop a whole school approach to refugee education. Many of the suggestions are around addressing the setting's approach, for example: 'Schools should develop good practice for inclusivity, actively promote equality of opportunity and ensure that newly arrived pupils and families do not experience additional barriers that will impact on their progress and well-being' (The Children's Society, 2019: online). Amnesty International UK (2018) provides a range of resources for schools to support learners to understand what it might mean to be an asylum seeker or refugee. This includes an online course *Human Rights: The Rights of Refugees*. The National Education Union has a site that includes the publication Welcoming refugee children to your school (NEU, undated). The Schools of Sanctuary (2019) framework enables schools to demonstrate their commitment to be a school that learns about what it might be like to be seeking sanctuary, to embed this into policy and practice and to commit to share the setting's work with other educational establishments.

In Monaco, where the number of refugees and asylum seekers, there is charitable activity which is funded internally and occurring externally. For example, iConnect Monaco connects generous donors living in Monaco to people in need around the world to bring assistance to the 'underprivileged, disadvantaged and deprived, for the purpose of bringing lasting change in their lives'. The focus of this organisation is particular on children and youth.' (iConnect, 2019) iConnect Monaco has been reaching out and providing emergency aid to the refugee communities in Turkey (iConnect, 2019). Little is evidence has yet been gathered to ascertain the educational impact of these projects.

In France, RE is sometimes provided in mainstream schools, but it may also be provided in Reception Centres. An example of this is at Ivry-sur-Seine, near Paris (RFI, 2018: [online]): 'Since May 2017 children aged between six and 18 also get schooled in what is a unique project in France. On any day of the week around 60 children can be found at their wooden desks in four purpose built classrooms adorned with drawings and posters of leading French figures. They learn to speak the French language but above all how to be pupils in preparation for entering mainstream school should their families settle here'. Paris City Hall, the charity Emmaüs Solidarité, and the Ministry of Education, are working together with a budget of 3.2 million euros a year for five years to maintain this centre (RFI, 2018).

Feeling a sense of belonging and language connection

School belonging, that is, being accepted and valued by peers and teachers, and having friends is of key importance for adolescents to feel well at school and to be able to thrive (Allen & Kern, 2017). The sense of belonging may increase students' self-confidence and academic motivation and decrease school related anxiety (Goodenow, 1993). The largest index differences in students' sense of school belonging can be observed in Belgium (Flemish Community), where those who speak the language of instruction feel significantly better than those who do not (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018, 40).
When first language is used as a criterion, the aim is generally to determine whether the child's first language is the language of the host country or the language of instruction. Some countries tend to focus on competences in the host language rather than immigration information in their education policies. For instance, while Dutch language competence is the only criteria used for education policy development in Belgium (Flemish Community), data on nationality, country of birth and language(s) spoken at home are collected for research purposes – the results of which, ultimately, contribute to policy monitoring and advice Belgium – Flemish Community, (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2018, 52)

6.3. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES ON RE DEVELOPED IN WESTERN EUROPE

Schools of Sanctuary – welcoming and including forced migrants

A School of Sanctuary is an educational setting that has promised to welcome everyone to their community, including those who are seeking sanctuary. The concept behind this is that the School of Sanctuary is an inclusive safe space. A School of Sanctuary is also committed to support the whole community of the school and the wider community learn about and understand what it might mean to be seeking sanctuary. Teaching is based on the principles of equality and social justice.
The programme began in Yorkshire, England, and there are now Schools of Sanctuary across the United Kingdom. The resources can be used across all educational settings. Being a School of Sanctuary does not require many resources. The pre-requisite for this to be sustainable is for a committed team of people in school to have time to drive this forward and embed the good practice throughout the curriculum.
The framework for self-evaluation for schools allows each setting to consider the way in which they welcome people into their community. The application to become a School of Sanctuary is available here: https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/resources/. The framework is organised around three processes: *learn*, *embed* and *share*.
The status of being a School of Sanctuary demonstrates to the community a commitment to learn about what it might mean to be a person who is seeking sanctuary. Schools need to show that staff have received training about issues around refugees and asylum seekers as well as migration. The curriculum should include opportunities for children and young people to learn about forced migration across all age ranges. The school also has to provide evidence of how it embeds the concepts of welcome and inclusion. In doing so, there should be links to the School Development Plan. Schools are also expected to commit to marking Refugee Week in some way. Pupil voice lies at the heart of this work and there is an expectation that students will lead on activities associated with this topic.
In order to share the work of the school, the setting must sign a Charter, publicise its activities and link in with the Schools of Sanctuary stream. Through gaining this recognition, schools are demonstrating a commitment to be a place of welcome and inclusion.
The Schools of Sanctuary work is overseen by a national group. Within this group are regional co-ordinators. The Schools of Sanctuary is a 'stream' of the City of Sanctuary organisation. The other streams include:

- Arts
- Faiths
- Health

- Gardens
- Maternity and
- Universities

https://cityofsanctuary.org/streams-and-group-activities/

Ireland has a partner organisation: Places of Sanctuary https://ireland.cityofsanctuary.org/

There is a growing network of Schools of Sanctuary providing a greater public awareness of the role that schools have in welcoming people who are seeking sanctuary. This framework would be entirely transferable to other countries across Europe.

The Boat – learning about forced migration

This resource at the centre of this project is an illustrated children's book entitled *The Boat*. Written by Andrew Melrose, Professor of Children's Writing at the University of Winchester, and illustrated by Stephanie Morris, the book aims to support children with considering the topic of immigration. The project is funded by the Arts Council. The illustrated story book is accompanied by a set of teaching resources and an animated story book. Jonathan Rooke, Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Winchester, has worked with local schools to pilot the resources.
The teaching resource pack is aimed at children aged 7 - 11. Using the story as a stimulus, the pack has activities that enables children to engage with what it might mean to be seeking refuge. It is hoped that the materials support with the development of empathy, questioning and creativity. This project has enabled story to be linked to a range of ideas, and shared, to promote social justice whilst simultaneously educating children and supporting them to engage with thinking.
One of the initial central themes of *The Boat* was to introduce children to and acknowledge those named as, 'boat people', revealing them as simply people searching for a better life. In bringing these issues to a wider audience, the boat communicates the notion of immigrants or people searching for a better life, as deserving objects of compassion as well as understanding forced migrants as subjects of human rights.
During the academic year 2018-2019, the project worked with 400+ Hampshire schools on 'The Next Page'. The story has an open-ended last page, so pupils at these schools were asked to write the next chapter in the book. Andrew Melrose's May 2019 article https://www.axonjournal.com.au/issue-vol-9-no-1-may-2019/boat highlights some of the issues encountered in creating the project. All resources, a text edition and an animated version of *The Boat Story* are freely available via the project website: http://the-immigration-boat-story.com./

Refugee education in undergraduate initial teacher education

The undergraduate primary education programme at the University of Winchester is a three or four-year course which prepares and qualifies students to teach in the primary age phase (5 – 11 years). The course is underpinned by core values relating to the UN rights respecting education where children's rights are at the forefront of the work. In each year of study there are approximately 250 students.
All students have the opportunity to explore the area of refugee education in two key modules wherein one taught session focuses on this topic:

- *Curriculum English* – students become familiar with a range of picture-book texts which explore this topic. The students plan a unit of work for English (focussing on English learning outcomes) that could be taught in schools focusing on the book, *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan. This is a wordless picture book which could be used in any language.

- *Current issues* – Students explore the history and current situation of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. They become familiar with key terms and consider how this issue can be explored in primary

schools. Students are exposed to a range of resources from key organisations. They also have an opportunity to plan further activities on a choice of texts, including:

The Journey – Francesca Sana
Refugee Boy – Benjamin Zephania
My name is not Refugee – Kate Milner
The Silence Seeker – Ben Morley
Azzi in between – Sarah Garland
The Colour of Home – Mary Hoffman
Further books can be found at: https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/b/books-about-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-younger-children/

Optional module, The University of Winchester, UK: Children seeking Sanctuary

Students enrolled on the teacher training programme at the University of Winchester are offered the opportunity to undertake a module with 24 hours of taught input and 76 hours of independent study focusing on 'Children seeking sanctuary'. This has previously been run in the final year of study, although going forward this will be available to those in their first year of study.
The option module involves developing a critical understanding of approaches to teaching and learning that support educators to teach children about the inclusion of children who are labelled as 'refugees and asylum seekers'.
Through planning materials to use in schools, students explore the implementation of school-based programmes that develop children's thinking about inclusion of sanctuary-seekers. Alongside taught sessions, students are supported to design a lesson that will be taught in a setting. This session will then be self-evaluated and a presentation to critically analyse the work that has been planned and implemented.

The module covers:

- Why, who and where are people seeking sanctuary?
- The UK policy perspective on children seeking sanctuary.
- Children's literature focusing on refugees and asylum seekers
- Visits from organisation who work directly with refugees and asylum seekers e.g. The red cross, Rural refugee network, Cities of sanctuary, Southampton and Winchester visitors service
- Media discourse analysis
- Practical visits to schools to work with children to explore this concept
- Consideration of assimilation, integration and inclusion
- Exploration of key theorists in this area

The objectives of all of this teaching are to:

- To prepare student teachers to understand the specific needs of children who have experienced forced migration.
- To enable student teachers to support children's understanding of why forced migration may occur.
- To enable student teachers to develop an inclusive approach towards children from all walks of life, including those who may have a forced migration background.

The right to seek a safe place to live

The UNHCR (2019) has produced a set of educational materials *Teaching about refugees* to enable primary and secondary children and young people to understand some of the complexities around the topic of forced migration. They are available here: https://www.unhcr.org/uk/teaching-about-refugees.html. The resources are aimed at children and young people from the age of six to eighteen. The materials explore the language used to described people who are forced to leave their homes, the places that forced migrants travel from and to and

the ways in which they are supported. Included in this suite of materials is an app, *My life as a refugee*, that allows the user to consider the choices that might be made on a journey of forced migration (UNHCR, 2019). Amnesty International (2018) have also published a pack entitled *Seeking Safety* for primary aged pupils that 'focuses on asylum, approaching the issue from global and UK perspectives: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/activity-pack-seeking-safety. It encourages students to draw parallels with their own lives. Many of the activities build on an empathetic understanding of situations to develop knowledge and skills for approaching the subject of asylum' (Amnesty International, 2018:[online]). This pack allows children to consider well-known people who have claimed asylum in addition to thinking about Amira's story of her journey from the Sudan to the UK. There is also an emphasis on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and an activity that encourages children to rank which rights they consider to be the most important. UNICEF's (2016) In search of safety pack provides a contextual information about the 'refugee crisis' and clear guidance about handling sensitive issues (UNICEF, 2016:25) https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/teaching-resources/refugee-crisis-europe/.

The Open School Doors project - parental engagement

This Erasmus project involved partners from Austria, Germany, Greece and the United Kingdom to consider the ways in which schools might engage with families who are newly arrived as a result of forced migration and to develop resources to facilitate closer home-school working: http://openschooldoors.westgate.gr/. The project supports educators to explore the different ways in which families engage with schools and to consider the social and cultural issues that may cause barriers to full participation. Digital literacy is also examined. The project supports the educational setting with a self-evaluation tool that identifies the ways in which families might be supported.

Integrating unaccompanied asylum seeking young people

The Integration of Young Refugees within UK Communities Project is a pilot project led by *Education4Diversity* https://education4diversity.co.uk/. This project has been run at a secondary school in Gravesend whereby eight to twelve young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers join the students of the school on a Wednesday afternoon for sport and art activities. This work is set against a background of diversity training for all the staff in the school and mentoring training for the students.

SUMMARY

It has been the central aim of this chapter to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature pertaining to RE in Western Europe. In presenting this literature, the chapter has outlined significant political, social and economic challenges for development of effective and inclusive education practices for refugees. Countering this account of the difficulties that mitigate against RE in Western Europe, the chapter elucidates several opportunities for developing positive practices Indeed, the final section of the chapter illustrates how these opportunities have formed the basis for the development of concrete and substantive educational practices in RE.

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FABIO DOVIGO

CONCLUSIONS

Following the large inflows of refugees in 2015, more than a million migrants applied for asylum in European countries. Many of those countries have experienced previous waves of refugees in the past, even though not of this magnitude. This emergency situation had a profound impact on the public opinion and, as a consequence, at a political and policy level in the European Union. New questions emerged concerning the economic, health, social and educational aspects of dealing with an unprecedented influx of displaced persons, which in turn lead to a revitalization of the debate from research in this area. In recent years, many publications and reports have been developed, aiming to offer explanations regarding the nature of this phenomenon, and sometimes suggestions for dealing with the manifold dilemmas it involves (European Commission, 2015; INEE, 2010: UNHCR, 2018; UNICEF, UNHCR & IOM, 2019). Even though research investments in Europe have recently shifted towards other new urgent topics, most of the problems raised by forced immigration are still in place, waiting for effective answers.

The purpose of this report is to take stock of the knowledge currently available in Europe about the refugee children education. This focus excludes some important areas related to the same subject, as higher and lifelong education, or recognition of prior learning and qualifications of adult refugees. However, it helps to achieve a deeper understanding of the existing literature on refugee children education in Europe, by shedding light on many questions that have rarely been the subject of systematic review so far.

This goal implies dealing with various conceptual and methodological challenges. First of all, literature employs a panoply of expressions to define people that flee from troubled countries to Europe: refugees, asylum-seekers, forced migrants or humanitarian migrants. Attached to each term are various implications not only with regard to status recognition, but also the political and cultural perspective adopted to look at the refugees' condition. Careful language choices mirrors the struggle of many researchers to avoid labelling individuals that have a widespread range of national, cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds the way governments currently do, treating refugees as mere bureaucratic files. However, whereas using different terms helps make us aware of the essential diversity of refugee identities and conditions, it risks overshadowing the commonalities they have in terms of needs and aspirations. This is especially true for refugee children and education. Every country in Europe recognises the right of minors to access education, regardless of their condition. No matter how important, discussions on their legal status are thus subordinated to the obligation of providing them with timely and equitable education opportunities. Consequently, even though linguistic variety still defies research activity – including literature review - that deals with a blurred and dynamic subject, it should not prevent us from identifying the real question surrounding refugee children education in Europe, that is the large gap between declarations of rights and actual implementation of policies that affects many European countries nowadays.

Another specific challenge is the lack of systematic information concerning refugee children education. As Cerna (2019: 8) emphasises "detailed surveys and research projects focusing on immigrant children are not yet available for refugee children separately, at least in a comparative way. […] Existing research lists a number of important factors for the integration of refugee children, but there is still limited evidence on what policies and practices work for the integration of refugee children." On the one hand, we miss data about the number of children that attend school in Europe, their age, nationality, where they are located, and so on. Most governments are unable to provide exact figures on this regard, because of nebulous legal procedures, shortage of administrative staff, and absent or inadequate databases. However, technical issues often divert attention from the real point that counting children would directly imply an obligation to provide for them as required by the law: out of sight, out of mind. On the other hand, the number of European research centres, and sometimes even individual researchers, working on this topic is very limited, and in some countries simply non-existent. Investments in research that were ensured by European Union, governments and private foundations as an immediate reaction to the migrants outbreak in 2015 have rapidly faded away since the question has become endemic (instead of epidemic). The recent surge of nationalism in Europe, which thrives on the

"refugee menace" ghosts, actually demonstrates how the political visibility of the topic is inversely proportional to the visibility of scientific information available. As Taylor and Sidhu (2012: 42) note, "the discursive invisibility of refugees in policy and research has worked against their cultural, social and economic integration." Insufficient investigation on refugee children is reflected in the fragmented educational strategies in Europe, especially in those countries in which the nationalistic fear dictates the policy agenda.

An additional challenger is that research on refugee children is frequently subsumed in the wide areas of migration or intercultural studies, even though it is clear that they cannot be simply considered just another variation on these themes. For many refugee students, above all the unaccompanied ones, the condition of displacement is often combined with demanding past and present experiences, which make it especially difficult to adapt to the requests from the new environment. Compared to other migrant children, refugee children needs are particularly complex, as they can encompass trauma, displacement and high mobility, changes in familial relationships, poverty and poor housing, health problems, anxiety (as a result of the asylum process and the uncertainty of their future), as well as harassment and bullying (Arnot & Pinson, 2005; Hamilton & Moore, 2004). Moreover, in terms of education they face specific challenges concerning the level of previous education (often limited or minimal), school enrolment and access, the obligation to adjust to a new education system, the need to integrate in the school culture and learn a new language.

In spite of these enormous obstacles, school is regarded as a pivotal sanctuary for refugee children. In many European countries, due to resources shortage, social and psychological help to forced migrants is absent or minimal. Even in the frequent case schools cannot access dedicated funding for integrating refugee students, they are often the only place where stable support can be provided. Although school cannot be considered as a panacea for all problems, scientific literature commonly emphasises that education is an important protective factor for refugee children. Getting access to education and the related academic achievement greatly helps refugee children to experience a sense of safety and stability, as well as to feel competent and empowered. By taking part in formal education in a caring environment, refugee students can effectively "improve self-esteem, promote social inclusion, develop an individual's resilience and potential, build on strengths and skills and create pathways for future success in terms of employment and further education" (Block et al., 2014; Hayward, 2017).

While our literature review confirms the shared opinion that school plays a pivotal role in promoting refugee children wellbeing, inclusion and life planning, there still are many open questions concerning the way systematic strategies can be designed and implemented to ensure effective educational inclusion of refugee students. Schools can act as an open hub to support and value refugee students' contribution. But they can conversely contribute to replicate and strengthen disparities related to cultural capital and background, gender, ability or language (Bourdieu, 2000). In this sense we can differentiate between educational institutions in Europe that assume an assimilationist approach based on the integration of refugee children into existing practices, and schools that adopt an inclusive perspective, in which refugee students are seen as an opportunity to sustain a continuous process of development of the school ethos and culture. The former attitude tends to employ well-established administrative, diagnostic and educational categories, which bring about a profile of refugee children in terms of individual problems that have to be fixed (Pinson et al., 2010). As our report shows, many European schools and teachers follow a course of action that concentrates on specific issues related to refugee students, especially the need of overcoming traumatic experiences or acquiring the language of the host country. However, while the provision of specific clinical or linguistic support is undoubtedly critical, it tends to foster a partial view of refugee students, focused on deficits to the detriment of potentials. On the contrary, the inclusive perspective offers a more nuanced and balanced profile of refugee children as complex subjects, based on a "whole child" interpretation of pupils education rather than on the conventional ability ranking and special educational needs frame. This interpretation helps recognise the important role resilience plays in the refugee children's ability to cope with the new environment and thrive despite the apparently insurmountable challenges they are faced with (Dovigo, 2018).

This in turn helps broaden our understanding of the way some educational services in Europe and beyond are able to ensure the school success of refugee pupils through a mix of formal and informal learning practices (Pastoor, 2017; Kaukko & Wilkinson, 2018). Good practices described in this report highlight that successful ability to work with refugee children entails widening the focus beyond achieving better school performance on literacy, numeracy, and standard content. It provides an opportunity to reconsider the curriculum objectives and structure, as a way of improving access, equity and quality of education for all (INEE, 2010). Our examples also confirm that teachers play a key role in offering "practical 'here and now' assistance and general emotional support to make the present bearable, and give a sense of future before tackling past issues" (Hek, 2005: 21).

Accordingly, the implementation of effective support programmes requires teachers not only to further develop their professional skills, but also to strengthen their sense of agency by expanding their ideas on what is appropriate teaching and learning strategies (Naidoo, 2015; Rose, 2019).

In this regard, the findings from our report support the holistic intervention approach outlined by other researchers (Hek, 2005; Pinson & Arnot, 2010; Pugh et al., 2012; Rutter, 2006;). Distancing from the remedial intervention models that build on a linear, simplistic conception of school organisational processes and structures and, more generally, of student education, the holistic approach aims to understand and promote schools as educational places that help improve "participation, communication, relationships, friendships, belonging and learning about oneself and others" (Matthews 2008, 42). This approach is often coupled with whole school reform initiatives that conceive the institutional culture, structure, and curriculum as dimensions of a continuous improvement process to be developed in partnership with the school community. Examples from the countries examined in the report show that establishing partnerships with local agencies and families is paramount to build a sense of stable cooperation, which enables schools to perform as an active hub and promote refugee children wellbeing and educational success as a part of a comprehensive effort to foster participation and learning of all students. This entails dealing with manifold challenges concerning the definition of roles and responsibilities, the buy-in and take-up of school staff, the management of conflicting agendas and the creation of systematic communication channels with stakeholders.

Tackling these challenges requires not only a strong and distributed leadership from the educational organisations, but also a clear understanding of the multiple ways the future of refugee children can be conceived (Dreyden-Peterson et al., 2019). Possible scenarios encompass: a condition of missed inclusion, when refugees' future is imagined as taking place elsewhere; a pragmatic stance, stemming from realisation that the immediate circumstances entail some kind of temporary arrangement for inclusion, as the only workable option; and finally a situation that acknowledges exile as a long-term condition, in which inclusion becomes a way of creating futures through the development of quality education and a sense of belonging. Which one of these paths Europe will take in the near future depends on many factors, but certainly our commitment to bring about education as a basic right and opportunity for refugee children will play a pivotal role in this sense.

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