



HIGHER EDUCATION SUPPORTING
REFUGEES IN EUROPE



GOOD PRACTICE
CATALOGUE
IN WELCOMING REFUGEES
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

To consult the full catalogue, please visit:
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About inHERE

inHERE is a 2-years project co-funded with the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. It aims at facilitating integration and access of refugees in European HEIs.

Overall goal

In the current refugee challenge in Europe, the social dimension of Higher Education (HE) is concerned with providing opportunities for refugees to participate in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). inHERE strengthens knowledge sharing, peer-support and academic partnership to facilitate integration and access of refugees in European higher education institutions.

The inHERE Consortium

UNIMED- Mediterranean Universities Union, Italy (coordinator)

Sapienza University, Italy

University of Barcelona, Spain

Campus France, France

EUA- European University Association, Belgium

UNHCR- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (associate partner)

Website: www.inHEREproject.eu



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INTRODUCTION

The inHERE Good Practice Catalogue (GPC) is the product of an in-depth analysis of almost 300 initiatives from 32 countries of higher education institutions and organisations committed to welcoming **refugees**¹ that have participated in **EUA's Refugees Welcome Map Campaign**² up until early 2017.

As is the case for the **Map**³ itself, the aim of the GPC is to serve the academic communities in Europe and beyond as a source of information and inspiration, and to enable exchange and collaboration between interested stakeholders. While it focuses on refugee students and researchers, it should also foster a broader discussion and include higher education institutions' strategies, their third mission and their approaches to diversity management.

Cases for the GPC have been selected on the basis of a set of criteria, focusing on actual or potential high impact with regard to the integration of refugees into study and social life. While institutions were asked to indicate the number of (future) students and researchers reached, more important than quantity was the potential for transferability and upscaling in other higher education systems and university contexts.

Evidence based

- Based on the needs of hosted refugee populations, their interests, demand and expectations in higher education.
- Rooted in the local or national context, in terms of e.g. migration, integration, and/or higher education policies.

Practice tested

- Building upon the adaptation of practices or activities previously established in the higher education institution, e.g. for other groups of non-traditional learners, or as part of internationalisation.
- Yet, in many cases containing innovative elements specifically developed for refugee students and researchers.

¹ In the inHERE project – unless specified otherwise – the term refugee is used for all migrants having fled their country, or being displaced within their country or across borders.

² <http://www.eua.be/activities-services/eua-campaigns/refugees-welcome-map>

³ <http://refugeeswelcomemap.eua.be/map>

<p>Sustainable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Set up in a sustainable fashion, in terms of funding models and long-term planning. – Having the potential to be replicated and broadened in scale.
<p>Collaborative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developed or implemented with other institutions, local or regional actors, such as NGOs, municipalities, reception centres, etc. – Involving the hosted refugee population in the development and implementation of the initiative.
<p>Strategic and linked to the university mission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Linked to, or being underpinned by the university mission, its strategic goals and its understanding of the institution as a societal actor. – Developed as part of an overarching strategy for higher education inclusion, specifically for refugees, or generally for disadvantaged groups, considering a wide range of aspects from outreach and recruitment, to services and learning and teaching practices for retention and study success.
<p>Transferable</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Potential to be up-scaled or transferred to other higher education institutions or organisations linked to tertiary education, in terms of cost of implementation, national policy contexts, institutional realities and different groups of disadvantaged learners.

The initiatives analysed in the GPC are examples, but by no means an inventory of the measures undertaken to include refugees in European higher education. This is even more so as the Refugees Welcome Map is not the result of a systematic mapping, but represents voluntary submissions of institutions and organisations via a short questionnaire.

The cases have been arranged under 11 topical categories. Each case has several category tags, the first one being that under which it has been selected. The descriptions of the initiatives are based on the text submitted to the Refugees Welcome Map, plus a set of follow-up questions to the participants.



RECOGNITION

The legal basis for the recognition of degrees of third country nationals in Europe is the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), based on which signatory countries establish various instruments and structures for the recognition of foreign qualifications and/or study periods abroad.

The LRC's Article VII states that "Each Party shall take all feasible and reasonable steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation fulfil the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programmes or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications obtained in one of the parties cannot be proven through documentary evidence."

However, a 2016 [report](#)⁴ of the LRC Committee monitoring the implementation of the convention found that in 35 out of 50 countries surveyed, this article was not formally implemented – neither through national level regulations, nor through recognition bodies or agencies at national level.

In most systems, higher education institutions are autonomous enough to make their own decision on the recognition for access to their own study programmes, and in some cases, have come up with flexible solutions to also consider the level of education in the absence of documentation. Due to the influx of refugees in the past years, in some systems, universities have also become drivers of policy change, collaborating with ministries or recognition networks and agencies in order to revise procedures, to enhance regulations and to fast-track recognition both as a means of access to higher education as well as to the labour market. Building on procedures previously developed for other types of learners, some universities have adapted their recognition services to specifically target refugees. In addition, the examples selected for this category include innovative approaches fostered by the recognition agencies themselves. In its [Renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education](#)⁵ (2017), the European Commission has made the explicit commitment to support the upscaling and transfer of good practices such as these.

⁴ http://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Monitoring_the_Implementation_of_the_Lisbon_Recognition_Convention_2016.pdf

⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2017%3A247%3AFIN>



ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

In the [Yerevan Communiqué \(2015\)](#)⁶, ministers agreed that “Making our systems more inclusive is an essential aim for the EHEA as our populations become more and more diversified, also due to immigration and demographic changes.”

At the European level, Article 27 (2) of the [2011 EU directive](#)⁷ on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection (...) states that “Member States shall allow adults granted international protection access to the general education system, further training or retraining, under the same conditions as third country nationals [who are] legally resident.”

Granting equitable and wide access to higher education involves more than providing tuition-free degrees, and a multitude of diverse policy tools and institutional measures exist for non-traditional or disadvantaged learners. In addition to scholarships and financial support, measures may target refugees via outreach activities, and also beyond recruitment to provide general information to the potential refugee students about the higher education system and its opportunities, consulting them through mentoring programmes and helping them navigate through the application procedures. The latter measures are the focus of this section, whereby initiatives take a holistic approach to foster access via outreach, providing needs-based information and support.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR REFUGEE STUDENTS

Linked to the previous section on access to higher education, financial support for refugee students and researchers may include scholarship programmes, fee waivers, support for living costs and cost of study, free accommodation in university facilities, etc.

Many of the initiatives in the EUA’s Refugees Welcome Map strive to offer some financial support to refugee students and/or researchers, often from their core university budgets. Financial support at national level – where this is already in place in a few member states – or even at European level could help to sustain and broaden these measures.

As of 2015, refugees have been an explicit priority group of the Erasmus+

⁶ https://media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/70/7/YerevanCommuniqueFinal_613707.pdf

⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011L0095&rid=1>

programme, yet so far not as direct beneficiaries (except through the OLS online language learning licences). In its recommendations on the future of the Erasmus+ programme, EUA suggests to set up a specific support action for refugee students in Europe, including full-time scholarship support (**Recommendation 8**⁸).

The following initiatives mostly offer financial support as part of a broader set of activities and, in some cases, have come up with innovative approaches to raise funds for refugees.



LANGUAGE AND BRIDGING COURSES

Fluency in the domestic language and the language of instruction are a precondition for both success in study and social life. A language level of B2, or even C1, is usually an admission requirement set at the system or institutional level. Even programmes offered fully in the English language often require a basic command of the domestic language.

In addition, many institutions provide bridging courses to ensure that students fulfil other formal requirements, in particular in the degrees leading to regulated professions, or to allow the student to gain additional credits, which may be lacking due to the different degree structures, for instance when entering a Master's programme. Bridging courses are also often offered to help students become acquainted with different academic traditions, academic writing, research approaches, etc.

More than half of the initiatives in the EUA's Refugees Welcome Map offer some form of language training, often combined with other bridging and integration courses (see section on integration). The initiatives that are presented here take a holistic and flexible approach and often target formally recognised refugees as well as asylum seekers.



INTEGRATION MEASURES

The European Union recognises the important role of education for the integration of third country nationals, and therefore includes this as one of the key policy priorities in its **2016 Action Plan**⁹.

⁸ <http://www.eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/erasmus-recommendations.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf

Beyond providing access to higher education, bridging courses and language training, which in themselves have an important integration value, universities also offer a wide range of other integration activities. These are usually part of a broader initiative, and may include cultural exchanges and activities, mentoring or buddy systems between domestic and refugee students and researchers, joint research projects and publications, and classes in the local culture, human rights and advocacy for refugees.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFUGEE RESEARCHERS AND ACADEMIC STAFF

In EUA's Refugees Welcome Map, many institutions that welcome refugee researchers and/or academic staff had already indicated to do so in their previously established collaboration with SAR (Scholars at Risk) or CARA (Council for At-Risk Academics).

Recently, several new projects have been developed in addition to established structures of academic refuge, for instance (further) developing **toolkits and guidelines**¹⁰ for welcoming refugee researchers on campus. At the European level, EURAXESS has launched a **specific platform**¹¹ for refugee scientists, with employment opportunities, internships and a mentoring service.

Initiatives included in this section aim at bringing together European and refugee researchers, to help them to build a local network, exchange on research practices and European research funding structures, and to collaborate on projects.



ONLINE LEARNING FOR REFUGEES

The concept of providing access for non-traditional learners via e-learning is not new. For refugees, several initiatives have been developed such as online based language learning, short courses with or without certificate, as well as full degrees via MOOCs (massive open online courses). The **MOOCs4Inclusion**¹² study, commissioned by the European Commission and the Directorate General Joint Research Centre (DG JRC), provides a comprehensive overview of the international e-learning offer for refugees, and analyses its efficiency. From the viewpoint of refugee learners, blended approaches seem to work best.

¹⁰ <https://www.uio.no/english/about/global/globally-engaged/academic-refuge/>

¹¹ <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/science4refugees>

¹² <http://moocs4inclusion.org/>

This aspect is also reflected in the initiatives selected for the GPC in this category. They either blend online and face-to-face provision, or offer online learning as one of the features of a broader initiative for refugees.



STRATEGIC APPROACHES

Few of the initiatives in EUA's Refugees Welcome Map have been underpinned by the institutional mission or strategic planning right from the beginning. Most initiatives have been commenced *ad hoc*, through bottom-up approaches, by highly committed students and staff members. In the meantime, a number of institutions have developed strategies, and respectively linked their engagement for refugees to existing strategies for social inclusion.

Key issues for students from refugee backgrounds as well as for those from other disadvantaged groups, are access and retention. Research suggests that migrants – including second or third generation – face higher access barriers and are more likely to drop out. With a view to integrating refugees into higher education, and to foster their retention and study success, the initiatives selected for this GPC category use strategic planning to cover a full range of activities, from outreach and admissions to services for retention, at times also including considerations on the revision of learning and teaching practices. This could be framed as overarching diversity management, and while focused on the needs of the target group of refugees, these approaches could in the long run also be beneficial to other groups of non-traditional learners.



EMPLOYABILITY

Employability is one of the key themes of European higher education, discussed at the level of the EU (e.g. in [ET 2020¹³](#), [2011 Modernisation Agenda¹⁴](#)) and in the Bologna Process. Diverse concepts exist to define the term.

According to the Bologna Process it is 'the ability to gain initial meaningful employment, or to become self-employed, to maintain employment, and to be able to move around within the labour market'.

In this context, the role of higher education is 'to equip students with the knowledge, skills and competences that they need in the workplace and that employers require;

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework_en

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/policy/modernisation_en.pdf

and to ensure that people have more opportunities to maintain or renew those skills and attributes throughout their working lives' (...) ([Bologna Implementation Report 2015¹⁵](#), p. 182).

For instance, higher education institutions might provide access to internships, and in addition, specifically for refugee students, information on the structure of the national labour market, interview training and mentoring with particular emphasis on the cultural context and differences.



HUMANITARIAN WORK

Early initiatives undertaken by universities did not specifically target refugee students and researchers, but provided humanitarian aid to refugees in general: *ad hoc* shelter to newly arrived refugees, charitable activities such as volunteering, food and clothes collections, fundraisers, legal information, advice and advocacy work. In the meantime and in some countries, this has been taken over by other institutions. The cases selected for this GPC category show several initiatives that have been continued, also due to their geographical location in countries where refugees first arrived.



COLLABORATION

Initially only a small number of initiatives in EUA's Refugees Welcome Map explicitly stated that they are working together with other institutions, NGOs, municipalities, etc. Yet a year after the launch of the Map, a clear trend towards collaboration has emerged – be it through projects co-funded by national or European sources, or on their own initiative – universities are increasingly working together to share experiences and expertise, upscale their work, and increase impact.

The 2017 analysis carried out for the GPC showed that by now, most institutions are collaborating in one way or another. Enhancing peer-learning and upscaling is also at the core of the inHERE project: by building on the good practices of the GPC, it will roll out a series of staff training courses on specific aspects of integrating refugees into higher education.

¹⁵ https://media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/73/3/2015_Implementation_report_20.05.2015_613733.pdf



GOOD PRACTICES

GOOD PRACTICES	Recognition	Access to higher education	Financial support for refugee students	Language and bridging courses	Integration measures	Opportunities for refugee researchers and academic staff	Online learning for refugees	Strategic approaches	Employability	Humanitarian work	Collaboration
Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities & Freie Universität Berlin (DE)		✓		✓		✓			✓		
Bielefeld University (DE)		✓		✓							✓
C.A.P. - Centre for lifelong learning at University of Bari (IT)	✓		✓								✓
Central European University (HU)		✓		✓	✓						✓
Complutense University of Madrid (ES)			✓	✓				✓		✓	
Démocratie & Entralide en Syrie, Ghosn Zeitoun (FR)			✓	✓							✓
Ghent University (BE)	✓				✓						✓
Harokopio University of Athens (GR) & Study in Greece NGO		✓					✓			✓	
Kiron Open Higher Education gUG (DE)		✓					✓				
LCC International University (LT)		✓	✓	✓	✓						

GOOD PRACTICES	Recognition	Access to higher education	Financial support for refugee students	Language and bridging courses	Integration measures	Opportunities for refugee researchers and academic staff	Online learning for refugees	Strategic approaches	Employability	Humanitarian work	Collaboration
University of Jyväskylä (FI)		✓									✓
University of Poitiers (FR)			✓	✓							✓
University of Porto & Global Platform 4 Syrian Students (PT)			✓								✓
University of the Aegean (EL)				✓						✓	
University West (SE)				✓				✓	✓		✓
ZSI – Zentrum für Soziale Innovation / Centre for Social Innovation (CH)						✓			✓		
Zukunftsmacher gUG (DE)				✓	✓		✓				



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Good Practice Catalogue



Recognition



Access to higher education



Financial support for refugee students



Language and bridging courses



Integration measures



Employment opportunities for refugee researchers and academic staff



Online learning for refugees



Strategic approaches



Employability



Humanitarian work



Collaboration

PARTNERS



(coordinator)



(associate partner)

Learn more and participate at:

www.inhereproject.eu