



SUPPORTING UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY PATHWAY FOR REFUGEE-MIGRANTS

Accessing Higher Education in Europe: Challenges for Refugee Students and Strategies to Overcome Them

Mariana Arjona Soberón
Lena Reuter
Antonia Chibuzor

General Background

around 65.6 million people are forcibly displaced...

10 million stateless people

3.2 million asylum seekers

In 2015, the recognition rate in EU countries is 52 per cent:

out of 1,323,465 claims...

593,140 decisions were made

only 308,433 refugees were granted asylum.

General Background



Source: World Economic Forum

General Background

Primary education

only **50 per cent** of refugee children have access to primary education, in contrast to a global average of 90 per cent

Secondary education

the gap becomes wider: just **22 per cent** of refugee adolescents attend secondary school compared to a global average of 84 per cent

Tertiary education

At the higher education level, we observe that **one per cent** of refugees attend university when 34 per cent of youth around the world do so.

General Background

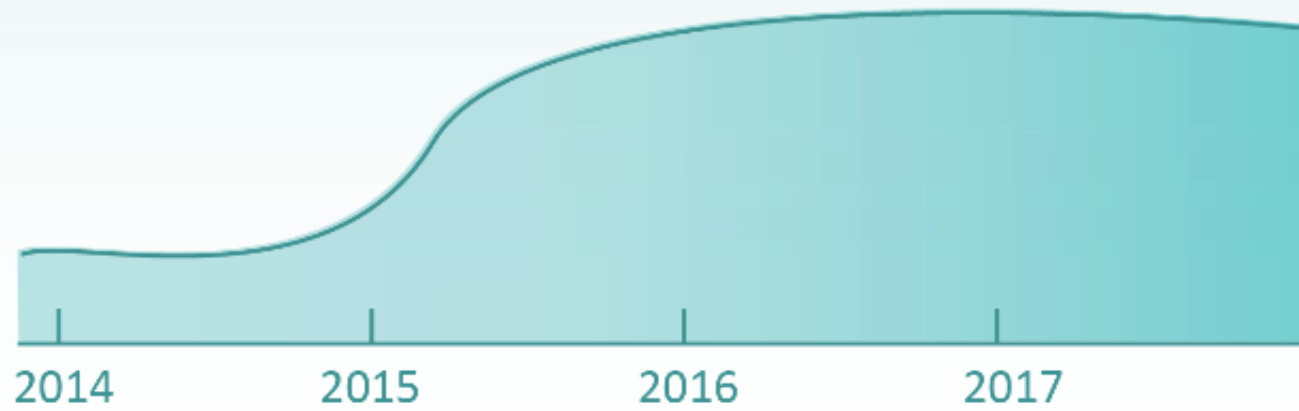




Geographic Profile: Universities



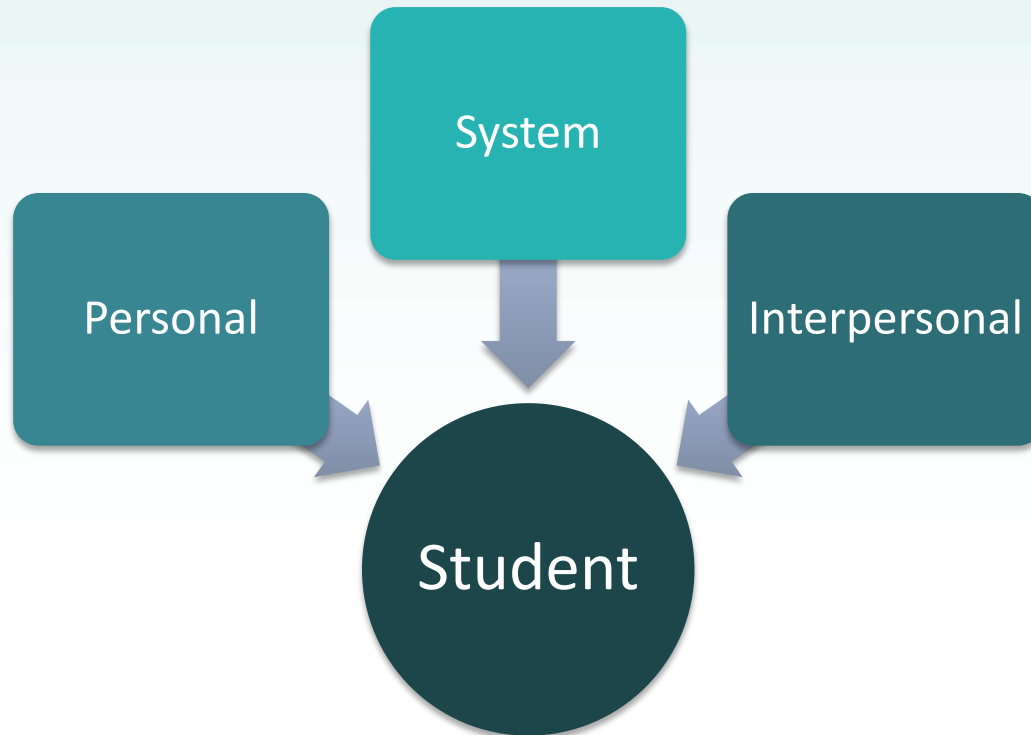
Geographic Profile: Students



Contact Timeline: University-Refugee

Challenges and Best Practices

PERSPECTIVE



Challenges and Best Practices

FRAMEWORK

SITUATION

CHALLENGES

BEST PRACTICES

IMPACT

Transition Into Adulthood

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

Suddenly Adult

Best Practices:

- Comprehensive “all encompassing” Advising
- Psychosocially Sensitive Advising
- Staff Training
- Human Perspective

Shifting Support Structures

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

“In Syria, we as students new from support centers, we students who kept to focus on our studies as life and we only rely on you.”

Best Practices:

- Structured Buddy Programs
- Long-term Advising

Information Barriers

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

*Finding the **right** kind of information*

Ethnocentric Perspective

Best Practices:

- Inclusive Informative Website
- Make Use of Community Resources
- Talk to and LISTEN to Refugee Students
- Comprehensive Information About the Educational System

Non-Recognition of “foreign” Education

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

“The main challenges are clearly the language, and the official documents needed for admission. They are often missing.”

Best Practices:

- Inclusive Informative Website
- Make Use of Community Resources
- Talk to and LISTEN to Refugee Students
- Comprehensive Information About the Educational System

Linguistic Barriers

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

*The **key challenge** in the educational journey of refugee students.*

“I don’t want to study for this (language) exam my whole life.”

Best Practices:

- Language Courses
- Translated Information
- Multi-lingual Advisors

Financial Barriers

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

“Based on our experience, many students faced difficulties to follow courses mainly because they were still struggling with their personal material condition”

Best Practices:

- Comprehensive Information About Funding Opportunities
- Creative Funds

Lack of Administrative Harmonization

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

“Based on our experience, many students faced difficulties to follow courses mainly because they were still struggling with their personal material condition”

Best Practices:

- Transparency is the Best Policy
- Create Clear Communication Channels
- Grow Your Network

Intercultural Gap

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

“Culture provides diverse ways of interpreting the environment and the world, as well as relating to other peoples. To recognize that other people see the world differently is one thing. To view their interpretations as less perfect than our own is another.”- F. Jandt, 2013

Best Practices:

- Intercultural Communication Trainings
- Feedback Sessions
- Auditing Classes

Social Discrimination

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

Intersectional discrimination

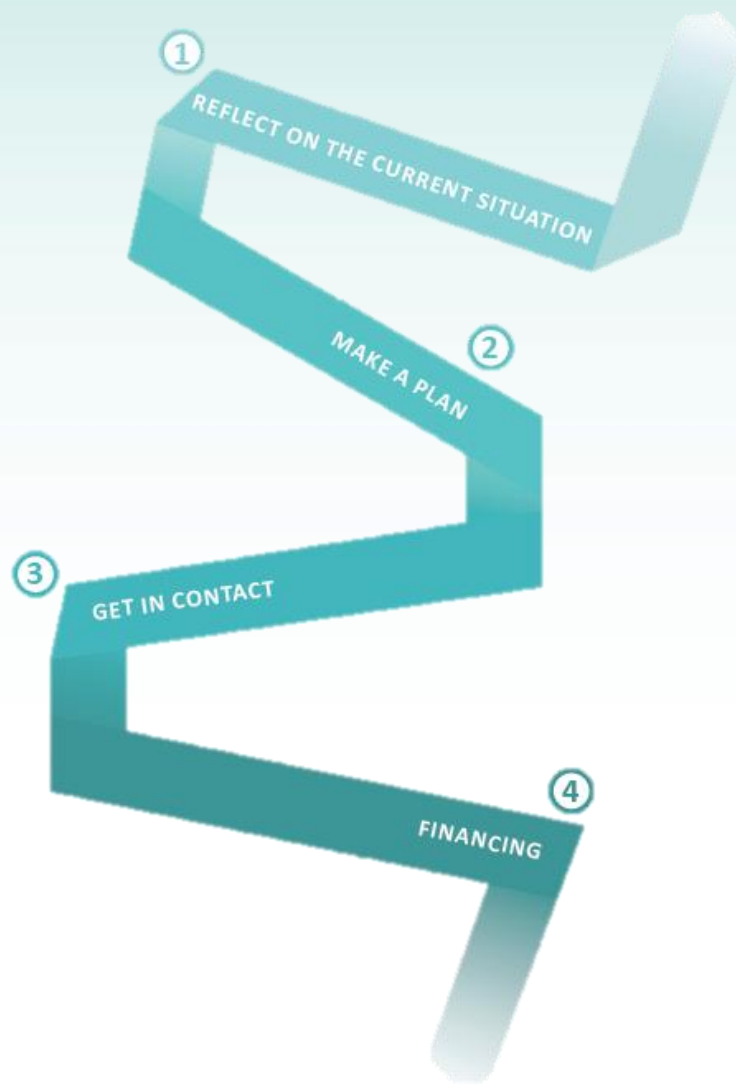
“on the basis of “race” and ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, gender expression and identity, political belief and socio-economic status”

Best Practices:

- Openness and Acknowledgement
- Staff Training

Roadmap for Improvement

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE



Advice from Around Europe

“Have

 “Ask the refu

 person(s) th

 information

lawy

 “Be prepared for several revisions of your

 initial research/education/implementation

 plan because the conditions of the

 target-population are extremely fluid

 and unforeseen cultural, linguistic and

 administrative barriers constantly appear.

 Also, base your actions on diverse teams

 of experts with different disciplinary and

 cultural backgrounds”

all

 as 1-2 contact

 ll necessary

te).”

Conclusion

Thank you!