



## The S.U.C.RE-Survey on Refugee Scholars

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# What to expect

- I. The S.U.C.RE.-project and the analysis of the situation of refugee academics in Europe
  1. General overview  
(Johannes Müller, University of Cologne)
  2. Institutions and Scholars  
(Marinus Kool, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
  3. Scholars and Hosts  
(Johannes Müller, University of Cologne)
  4. First practical consequences  
(Heike Berner, University of Cologne)

# S.U.C.R.E.

Supporting University Community pathways for REfugees-migrants

- **S.U.C.R.E.** is an ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership Project of Aristoteles University Thessaloniki (lead), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and University of Cologne
- **S.U.C.R.E.** focuses on the response of universities to the academic needs of refugee / migrant students and scholars and on the development of training modules addressed to volunteers working with refugees.
- Thessaloniki: Psycho-social, health and legal support (Training Modules)
- Cologne/Amsterdam: Support for refugee students in HE institutions
- Amsterdam/Cologne: **Support for refugee scholars in HE institutions**



# Supporting Refugee Academics at Higher Education Institutions in Europe – Aims, Tools and Experiences –

- Original objective:  
Best-practice hosting guide
- Change of focus, given the overlap with other EU-funded projects:  
Report on *Chances and challenges of integration of Refugee Scholars with particular attention on career paths and career development*
- Three Surveys
  - a) Institutional perspective
  - b) Scholar perspective
  - c) Host perspective
- Combination of quantitative survey and qualitative follow-up interviews (ongoing)

## Questionnaire for Scientific Hosts of Refugee Scholars

Please note: We define "refugee scholars" as academically trained persons who had to leave their country involuntarily to escape harassment or war, regardless of their current immigration status in their host country.



This questionnaire is part of an EU-funded capacity building project focusing on support for refugee academics. The questionnaire has three goals:

- to investigate the impact of flight and forced emigration on academic careers and scientific choices
- to understand the situation of displaced scholars and their problems in relaunching their scientific careers in a new environment
- to identify typical problems and eventually best practices of support provided by academic hosts/scientific mentors

This survey is and remains **anonymous**. We ask you to reveal several details, which could compromise anonymity – and it is **up to you to skip questions you don't want to answer**. We will in any case not use or share your data for any other purpose than this particular study and we will refer to answers only generically, not individually (except with explicit permission).

As this is the first survey of its kind, we would very much appreciate your collaboration, thus contributing to improve support and integration of threatened scholars and promoting the fate of scholars at risk in Europe.

### Information on you

Discipline

Academic status

Have you hosted refugee scholars before?

- Yes  No



# Our interests/leading questions

Statistics. Facts. Figures.

Institutional perspective

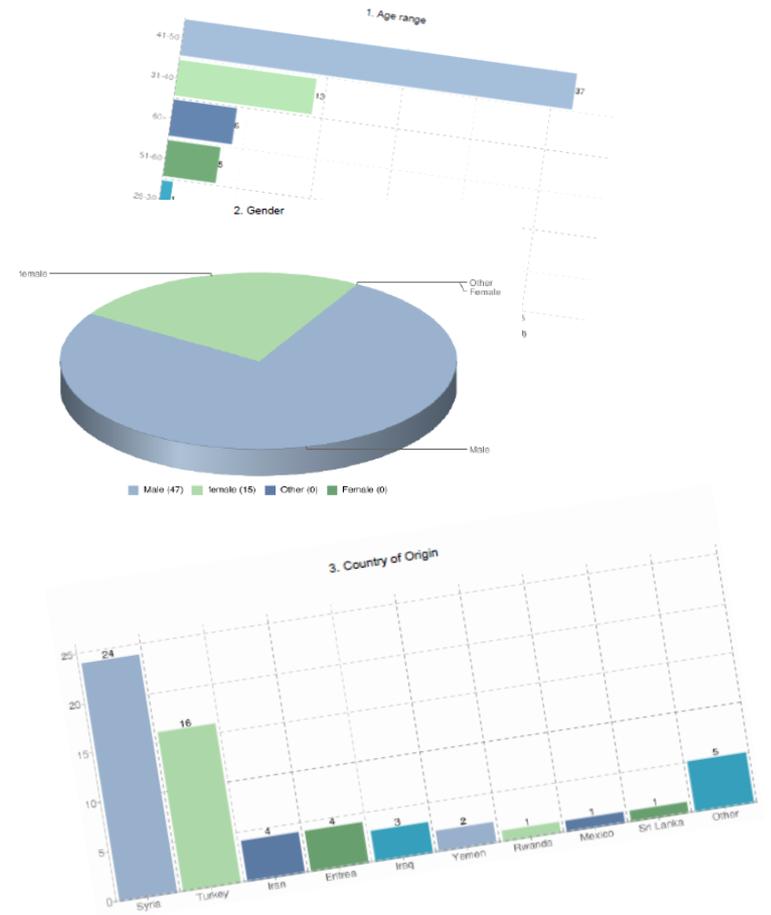
- Service/support offers
- Motivations
- Funding opportunities
- Best practices

Scholars' perspective

- Needs and expectations
  - With view to research/academia
  - With view to personal/family life
- Perceptions/reflections on career path
  - With view to research activity
  - With view to career development

Hosts' perspective

- Motivations
- Expectations vs. experiences
- Support received from institution
- Support provided to scholar
- Career development awareness/prognosis with view to scholar



# Host institutions: Survey 1 (mid 2017)

- Sixty (60) responses with 48 HEIs in 10 different countries
- HEIs host 87 scholars *plus* some 50 scholars in preceding years
- Family situation:
  - 47% with family members
  - 39% with children
  - majority under 12



# HEIs: support that scholars need

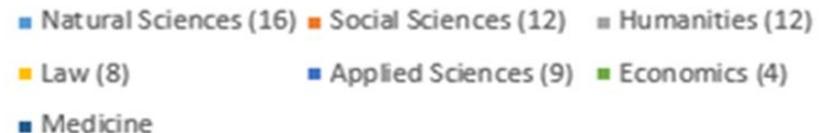
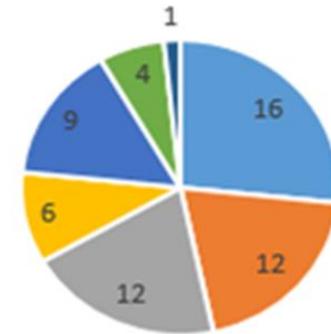
Mentoring  
Language training  
Supporting family members  
Administrative support  
Psychological consultancy  
Financing coordinator  
Welcoming  
Intercultural training  
Advice career development

# Scholars: Survey 2 (late 2017)

Responses from 62 scholars:

- 25% under 40 years
- 24% female scholars
- two-thirds from Syria and Turkey
- 89% are PhD holders

Responses from Survey 2  
overlap greatly with Survey 1



# What scholars say: needs for general and HEI support

- Advice on career development & academic guidance
- *I got everything I wished for; I would like to pay taxes to the state*
- Legal status, visa, work & residence permits
- Language ... *usually I need more time than my colleagues who write in their mother language*
- Academic language (writing) skills
- Support for family integration
- More guidance to start new research
- *I would like to teach*

# What scholars say: job perspectives

- Two years for being hosted for the 1<sup>st</sup> time is absolute minimum
- Longer work contracts are needed: “*What is next after the 2 years scholarship?*”
- Not enough up-to-date in my field
- Lacking skills for private sector
- Age
- Lack of stability in a volatile situation

# What scholars say: issues in personal & family life

discrimination insecurity  
integration  
self-esteem isolation stress  
xenophobia loneliness  
perspectives  
adjusting detachment  
accommodation  
language  
family

## What scholars say

### *On a positive note*

- I hope that the war will end quickly in .... and that calm will return, that I will go home and actively participate in the reconstruction of my country
- During these four years, with my writings and interviews, I have forced the .... government to rethink on environmental degrading policies. This is the position I and the environment in ... owe to SAR.
- I would like to thank all participating international offices of the universities, who very avidly help the refugees.
- Thanks for asking our views and we would like to get the final results of this survey.

# Involuntary international careers

## Scholars-at-Risk

- did not choose an international career
- arrive often unprepared in their host country
- do have very different academic traditions and scientific backgrounds
- may lack even basic knowledge about their new scientific environment and academic culture
- may not have done research with view to international competitiveness
- did not necessarily need to publish in English or any other than their native language before
- are unaware of academic career pathways and alternative employment options

# What scholars say

- I feel unable to give my experience to the University.
- We are constantly obligated to prove your scientific abilities.
- I am suffering from a lack of research publications and I realise not to be enough up to date in my field.
- ...lost my library in Syria...
- I have to write not in my mother language, but in English or in german language - that means I need more time than others.
- I have to accept an obligatory change in study area.
- High expectations of the supervisor from us and forgetting that we are stressed and we keep thinking of our family members who are still in conflict zones in our home country.
- How to deal with institutional discrimination and privileges given to native Europeans and challenges of competing with norms that are already set to benefit the European staff ?

## Academic Hosts and their perspective (Survey 3, Spring 2018)

- 72% are senior chair holders or Heads of Institute; only 18% are women; one third knew the scholar before.
- 82% state to have acted out of moral obligation.
- However, scholars are often compared with and treated like any other international (guest-)scholar.
- The particular situation of a refugee background is usually acknowledged, but only partially taken into account.
- Hosts often seem equally overwhelmed as the scholars themselves – a reciprocal cultural shock.
- Hosts feel left alone with the responsibility for a sustainable career of the scholars (especially if they prove unfit for academic careers).

# What hosts say

- The scholar fits only partly into our research group, perhaps mainly because of language problems. The English language was poor at the early stage of the visit. Another problem were the different traditions in our countries with view to how to carry out research.”
- It is hard to learn every method etc. that we are doing and even more to learn the German working customs and habits.
- The main challenge is helping somebody with difficulties in our society, which I never encountered. And helping somebody with far more urgent problems than the scientific ones I have.
- More guidance regarding the professional career development would be needed for the scholar.
- It is time demanding and we are overloaded with work.
- More sustainable support and more advice on the main challenges would be needed to fully support the scholar
- A professional career counselling and a dual-career perspective and coaching for refugee partners would be a great plus.

# Conclusions

- Scholars need better orientation with view to their new academic environment and culture, scientific traditions and landscape, job options and career paths.
- Hosts need better preparation with view to the needs and necessities of the scholars.
- Scholars need particular career developing services tailored to their needs.
- Hosts need guidelines and assistance with developing professional perspectives for the scholars .
- Scholars need and deserve sustainable job opportunities, which academia alone cannot always provide.

# Activities resulting from the questionnaires

## Aspects targeted at University of Cologne (UoC)

- general support (Welcome Center)
- support for academic hosts
- career development / mentoring
- family life / social integration

# Career Development Mentoring Program for SAR at UoC

## **Outcome:**

Questionnaires (and workshop with our scholars) show:

language, academic system, alternatives to an academic career, (self-)positioning as a scholar, and many more things need to be addressed

## **At University of Cologne:**

Mentoring program for scholars at risk (in co-operation with neighboring universities)

# SAR-Mentoring - Overview

**The program matches mentees – scholars at risk – to experienced mentors**

**Enables participants to receive an orientation in the German scientific environment and in Germany in general**

**Mentees gain support in their career planning and in implementing their decisions, learn further qualification based on need and strengthen certain skills**

**Mentees are able to extend their personal and scientific networks through the mentors' contacts**

# SAR-Mentoring – Four Modules



# Family Support for Scholars at Risk at the University of Cologne

## **Outcome:**

- “involuntary international scholars“
- special needs of refugee/threatened scholars
- high levels of stress for scholars, because family is isolated
- wish for more family support

## **At University of Cologne:**

- Welcome Center helps with housing, visa, insurance, etc.
- but: needs of refugee/threatened scholars exceed the support that can be offered
  
- since February 2018: new project for family support

# Family Support for Scholars at Risk at the University of Cologne

## Objectives

- help families overcome language barriers and escape isolation
- connect families and enable social contacts
- get to know the city and solve everyday problems

## Activities

- support with language courses, child care, doctors, ...
- visit interesting places and initiatives in the city
- sports and cultural activities
- consultation and home visits

## Challenges

- language barriers
- scarce leisure time of scholars
- far distances / transportation

# Thank you very much for your attention!

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