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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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