

UNINTEGRA PROJECT

# INTEGRATION GUIDE FOR REFUGEES

IN EUROPE





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# **Integration guide for refugees in Europe**



# Integration guide for refugees in Europe

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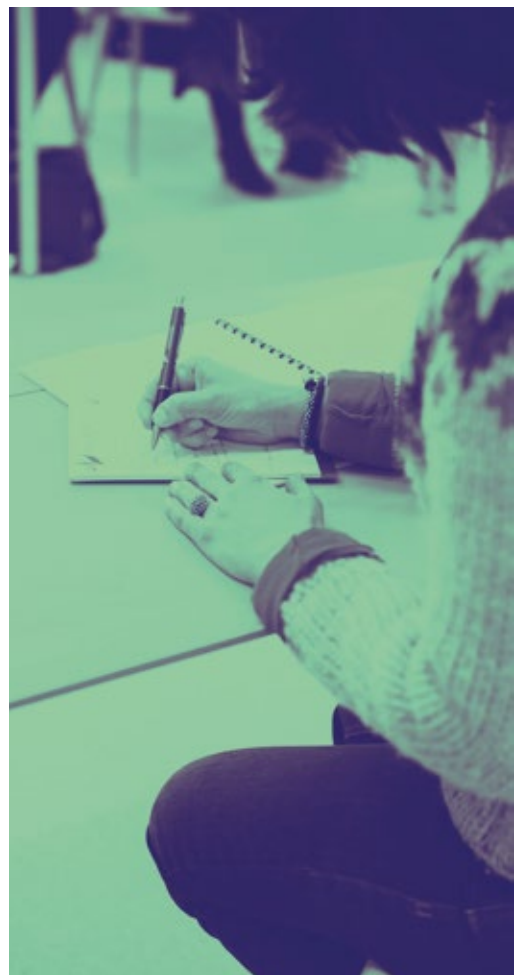
## 1. PRESENTATION

UNINTEGRA Project aims at contributing to an efficient management of the migration flows, giving response to the integration needs of third-country nationals in need of international protection at two levels: firstly, by directly working with new arrivals to address their needs of inclusion, in conjunction with fostering receptive attitudes in target communities, and secondly, by promoting inclusive regulatory frameworks in the hosting communities.

UNINTEGRA is co-ordinated by the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain), with the participation of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece), the University of Minho (Portugal), the Acsar Foundation (Spain), the Balmes University Foundation (Spain), and the Council of Santiago de Compostela. It is funded by the *Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund* (AMIF) of the European Commission.

This is a project consisting of 6 work packages: Development of a protocol for validating academic and credential competences of third-country nationals (WP1); raising awareness to the academic and local community and facilitating the integration of third-country nationals (WP2); pre-departure support for refugees in Greece in terms of emotional and psychological recovery, socio-educational activities for minors, young mothers and

women (WP3); App4Refs: free mobile phone application (WP4); providing training to personnel, allowing them to help third-country nationals who need international protection in local host communities (WP5); and an Integration Training Program (WP6).



Specifically, the objectives of WP2, where this Guide is framed, were:

- To encourage mutual identification and integration among third-country nationals and local host communities.
- To boost the active and welcoming role of the host society in order to ensure a high degree of integration of refugees or asylum seekers.
- To improve mutual knowledge by providing local and foreign communities with an adequate forum to get culturally closer.
- To promote integration research as a bidirectional process.

These objectives have been addressed from two perspectives: firstly, a Research project for integration and, secondly, the “Integration Week” which took place in Santiago de Compostela between June 12 and 21, 2019.

This Guide is precisely the result of the research project carried out in Greece, Portugal and Spain by the participating Universities.

This project is based on three basic assumptions: integration is a bidirectional socio-educational process, which involves both the people who come as refugees and those who receive them; therefore, the adoption as a model of this process, of the intercultural model; and thirdly, bringing refugee women at the core of the research work.

Given the above, we first analyse the integration of refugee families in Europe starting from a field work using the CIFRE questionnaire (n=442) to collect data and information, and then proceed with the Life Stories of the refugee women (n=11); and secondly, we study the attitudes of Europeans towards

refugees using the CAFARE questionnaire (n=430), by conducting semi-structured interviews with directors of educational establishments where children from third countries (n=23) are enrolled.

The developed research allows us to conclude the need to work on three priority fronts to achieve an effective integration of refugees:

1. The school can be a magnificent integration space for families and their children, hence the importance of parents knowing how the educational system of the host country works, the training opportunities, and the role played by the families in education (Guide of Integration in the Education System).
2. Refugees believe that one of the most important aspects for the future is their employment. Refugees should therefore know the labour market of the country in which they reside, as well as the tools, resources, and opportunities that favour their access to employment (Guide of Integration in Labour Market).
3. In order to favour their integration process, these families should have a social support network and need to be informed about the community services and mechanisms which they can use (Guide of Integration in Host Community).

## TERMINOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

**MIGRATION:** movement of a person or a group of people from one country to another (international migration) or within the territory of a State (internal

migration) for various reasons and for a long period of time (at least one year). The use of the term migrant person is generic and includes immigrant and emigrant, referring to a person who leaves a country to settle in another.

**REFUGEE:** in the refugee process, the main objective is the security of the physical integrity of a person, who does not have protection from the government of his country of origin.

**INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION:** it is granted to a person who lacks national protection by his country, and encompasses the status of asylum and subsidiary protection. It brings together the actions of the international community based on international law that aim to protect the fundamental rights of a specific group of people outside their country of origin.

**REFUGEE STATUS:** recognition by a Member State of a third-country national or stateless person as a refugee, in terms of the Geneva Convention. Any person who is outside their home country is recognized and cannot return to it because they have well-founded fears of being persecuted for different reasons.

**ASYLUM SEEKER:** that person who has submitted an asylum application and for which there is no definitive resolution of recognition of his refugee status and that he is awaiting resolution. It is a form of protection based on the principle of non-refoulement and that entails international or national recognition of refugee rights.

**SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION:** protection granted to a third-country national or stateless person who does not qualify for refugee status. However, there is a

well-founded risk of serious damage to the applicant if he returns to his country of origin or to the country of previous habitual residence.

**STATUS OF STATELESS:** it is that person who is not considered a national, according to its legislation, by any State. It also applies to people whose nationality is not established (art. 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954).

**DISPLACED:** it is the person who has been forced to leave their country or region of origin, or who has been evacuated in response to the call of international organizations, and it is not possible to return to their country because of the situation they are living.

**RESETTLEMENT:** process based on the need for international protection of a person and through a request to UNHCR, an applicant is transferred from a third country to another Member State. That is, transfer of a person from the country where he applied for asylum to another accepting host State. It is a lasting solution and a shared responsibility model.

**RELOCATION:** transfer of applicants for international protection to another Member State, in which they are granted similar protection, or where they will be examined.

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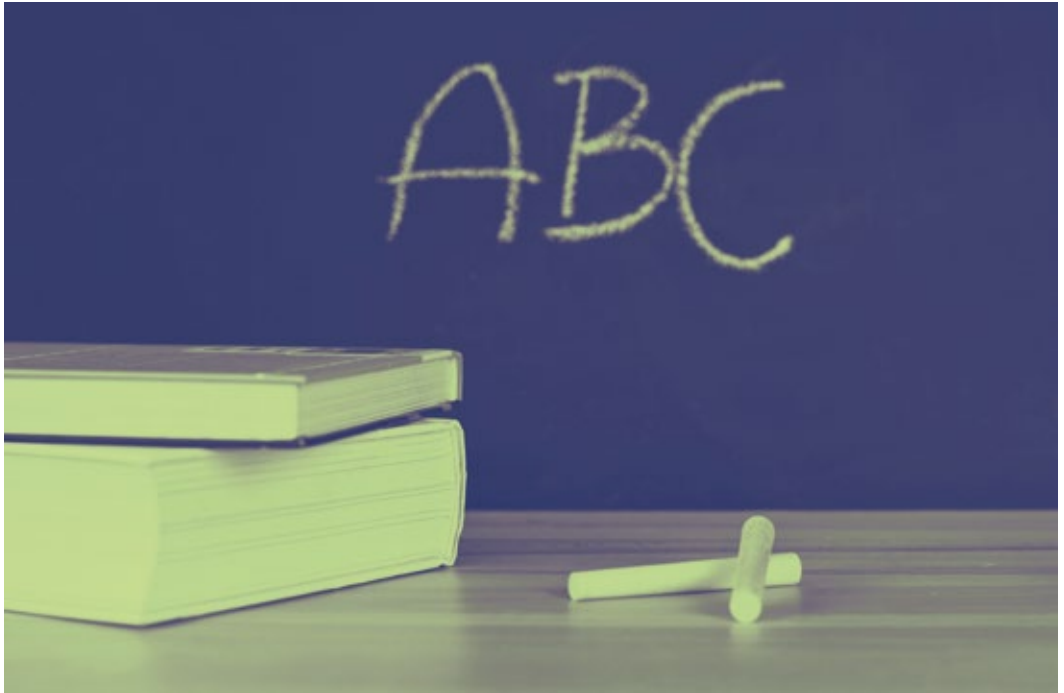
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**INTEGRATION GUIDE  
FOR REFUGEES**  
IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM





The Education Guide is part of the UNINTEGRA project which aims to efficiently contribute to the management of migratory movements caused by humanitarian crises. Moreover, its objectives include developing protocols and tools in order to adequately attend the needs of migrant people. The project is being carried out taking into account the different areas that affect the process of social integration of refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations, one of those areas being the European educational field.

This Guide has been drawn up having in mind the needs of refugees and their

children, but it is also understood as a working tool for those institutions, agencies and professionals that attend them.

## 2.1. JUSTIFICATION/NEEDS

The institutional educational is a potential tool for social and cultural inclusion. The knowledge of the structure and operation of the education system is the basic nucleus that allows the development of the personal strategies necessary to use this social field as a

facilitator of integration between refugee communities.

Precisely, the school integration of children from third countries has become one of the biggest challenges facing European education systems (Santos Rego and Lorenzo, 2009). Despite the interest and concern that this issue has caused, the strategies put in place in order to facilitate the incorporation of this student to the schools still do not achieve the desired results, even if the fundamental role of the school is stressed as vector of social and cultural integration of the children of emigrants and their families (OECD, 2018; OECD, 2019).

Thus, the school must ensure the exercise not only of the rights of participation of families in its operation, but also should favour the involvement of families in the education of their children, as it is one of the most effective ways of integration social, but also because of the positive effects that this generates in the school trajectory of children (Epstein et al., 2019; Lorenzo, Godás, Priegue, & Santos Rego, 2009; Santos Rego, Godás, Ferraces, & Lorenzo, 2016).

But the school must be the core on which a teacher training plan is also built, promoting teamwork, as well as the establishment of channels and contact mechanisms between professionals from different schools, to enable the creation of networks and the dissemination of good practices. We need to change the image of schools as institutions affected by the environment: the inclusion of families, the visibility and assessment of the culture of origin of each student, is a necessary strategy for a better intercultural education (Cernadas, Lorenzo, & Santos Rego, 2019).

## 2.2. OBJECTIVES

- Explain the basic structure and operation of the educational system of the host country in a simple way.
- Analyse the role that families play in the education of their children.
- Introduce the school as an integration space for families and their children.
- Facilitate the work of professionals who work directly with immigrants, especially refugees.

## 2.3. STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

It is essential to understand the structure of the education system in the country of residence, and specifically what is considered compulsory education in each of them.



### Spanish Education System

The Spanish education system is made up of general and specialist education system courses.

#### General Education System

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:** There are two cycles: for children from 0 to 3 and from 3 to 6 years of age (free of charge in centers supported by public funds).

**PRIMARY EDUCATION:** for students from 6 to 12 years of age. It is the first compulsory stage of the education system, comprising 6 academic years.

**COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION (CSE):** for students from 12 to 16 years of age. It consists of 2 cycles: the first is made up of three grades (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>), and the second of a single grade (4<sup>th</sup>). Upon completion, the Graduate Degree

in Compulsory Secondary Education is obtained, which allows access to post-compulsory Secondary Education (made up of Upper Secondary Education and Intermediate Vocational Training) or to the labour market.

Primary Education and CSE comprise, in total, ten years of free and compulsory schooling for all students.

**UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION:** for students from 16 to 18 years of age. These studies can be accessed after graduating CSE or the Intermediate Vocational Training. It is not compulsory, but it is necessary for access to higher education (higher vocational training or university studies).

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING:** is made up of the Basic, Intermediate and Higher Vocational Training cycles. All of them have a modular structure including theoretical and

practical contents that are adapted to the different professional fields.

- **Basic Vocational Training:** More info at <http://todofp.es/sobre-fp/informacion-general/sistema-educativo-fp/puedo-pasar.html>
- **Intermediate Vocational Training:** More info at <http://todofp.es/sobre-fp/informacion-general/sistema-educativo-fp/puedo-pasar.html>
- **Advanced Vocational Training:** More info at <http://todofp.es/sobre-fp/informacion-general/sistema-educativo-fp/puedo-pasar.html>

**UNIVERSITY EDUCATION:** Bachelor, Master and Doctorate degrees are offered.

**ADULT EDUCATION AND TRAINING (AET):** it is provided for people over 18 and, exceptionally, for people over 16 years of age. It allows acquiring, completing or





expanding general or specific knowledge, both for personal development and for professional training. The following stages are available:

- Basic Education, level 1 and 2
- Secondary Education
- Vocational Training

There is also the possibility of following a training program through the Internet. This is taught from the Aula Mentor program <[www.aulamentor.es](http://www.aulamentor.es)>

The training offer includes sociocultural training, introduction to computer science, literacy for immigrants or foreign languages.

**TRAINING OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS:** they are those who, permanently or at some specific time in their academic life, need certain support due to specific learning difficulties,

their high intellectual abilities, late incorporation into the education system or due to personal or particular school conditions.

#### **Specialist Education System courses**

**LANGUAGES:** to achieve the competences defined at levels A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages.

**ARTS:** they include elementary Music and Dance Education, Professional Artistic Education and Higher Artistic Education.

**SPORTS:** they are organized in intermediate- and higher-level training cycles.



#### **Greek Education System**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION:** this refers to children between the ages of 0 – 6 and is not compulsory. It is further

divided in daycare centres (ages 0-4) and kindergarten school (ages 4-6).

**PRIMARY EDUCATION:** 6-year compulsory education for students aged 6-12.

**COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION (JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL):** compulsory education for students aged 12-15, which consists of three academic years. In addition, evening compulsory secondary education schools exist as well as specialized schools such as, music/arts/experimental compulsory secondary education high schools.

**UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION (GENERAL HIGH SCHOOL):** for students aged 15-18 (both public and private). This type of education is not compulsory. Specialized general high schools, such as general evening high school and music/arts high schools also exist.

**VOCATIONAL EDUCATION:** for students aged 15-18, who wish to combine general education subjects together with specialized workplace subjects. In some

cases, such high schools may offer the opportunity of obtaining work experience through apprenticeships.

**HIGHER EDUCATION (UNIVERSITY EDUCATION):** for students aged 18 and above. Higher education institutions offer undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate degrees.

**SECOND CHANCE ADULT EDUCATION SCHOOLS:** classes are provided for students, who did not complete their education at an earlier age and who, wish to continue their education.

**LIFELONG LEARNING:** this type of education is offered to adults of all ages. A variety of courses in different fields of education are offered.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION:** students of all ages with special needs can continue their education in specialized education establishments.



### Portuguese Education System

The Portuguese educational system



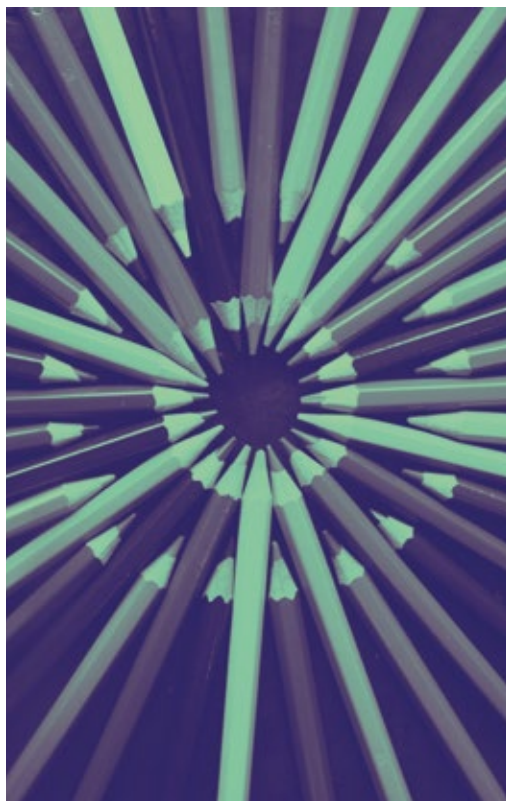
comprises three levels: basic, secondary and higher education. On the other hand, pre-school education is for children aged between three and the age of entering basic education and is universal for children from the age of five.

**BASIC EDUCATION** is universal, compulsory and free and comprises three sequential cycles, the 1<sup>st</sup> lasting four years, the 2<sup>nd</sup> lasting two years, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> lasting three years. At the end of each cycle, students take national evaluation exams for the subjects of Portuguese Language and Mathematics.

**SECONDARY EDUCATION** comprises a three-year cycle (corresponding to the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> years of schooling) and must be completed by school-aged young people, an obligation that ceases at the age of 18. The school network is organized in school clusters, which are made up of schools that offer all education levels from pre-school education to secondary education.

**HIGHER EDUCATION STRUCTURE** includes university and polytechnic education. University education is provided by public and private university institutions while polytechnic education is provided by public and private non-university institutions: *Licenciatura* (bachelor), *Mestrado* (Master), *Doutoramento* (PhD), *Cursos Técnicos Superiores Profissionais*.

The *Técnico Superior Profissional* diploma is awarded upon completion of a non-degree higher education cycle of studies entitled *curso Técnico Superior Profissional* (CTeSP). It corresponds to a short cycle of studies within the cycle of studies leading to the *licenciado* degree. The CTeSP are provided by polytechnic higher education institutions as well as polytechnic organic units integrated into universities.



## 2.4. PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOLING

Another important aspect of the education system in each country is to know the proper time for the registration procedures in schools.



Access to Compulsory education system courses in schools supported by public funds. The usual procedure takes the following steps:

- 1. Enrollment:** there is a deadline for submitting applications that depends on the Autonomous Community, but it is usually set between February and April.

**2. Submission of application for admission and, where appropriate, complaint.**

**3. Formalization of enrollment:** usually between mid-June and July (depending on the Autonomous Community and educational stage).

**Late incorporation:** when, due to coming from another country or to any other circumstance, the individuals to be schooled register outside the formal enrollment period, and they are admitted to the establishments where there are vacancies.



For refugees, who live in reception centres, refugee education coordinators are responsible for helping with school registration and with transportation to and from school. Refugee education coordinators will collect the document required for submission and enroll refugee children in schools (RefugeeInfo, 2019).

For refugees, who don't live in reception centres, the enrolment needs to be done through the family, i.e. the family is responsible for contacting a nearby school and registering their child.

A number of documents are needed in order for children to be enrolled in schools, such as health certificate and proof of vaccinations. However, in the case of refugee families, children can still be enrolled in schools even if they do not submit all necessary documents at the time of enrollment (RefugeeInfo, 2019).

Finally, refugee children can be enrolled in schools throughout the school year even if the deadline for enrollment has passed.



Education in Portugal is free and compulsory until the age of 18 when students complete the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Finding a school:** To find the most suitable school, parents should contact one of the schools in the area where they live or the *Direcção Regional de Educação* (Regional Education Authority) or private schools.

**Enrollment:** Children aged six by 15 September must be enrolled in their first school year in that calendar year. The final date for enrolment is normally 15 July. However, there is no final date for enrolment for pupils coming from a foreign school during the school year.

**Formalization of enrollment:** To enroll a child in a basic school, parents will need:

- The child's ID card, passport, or a certificate from the embassy of the country of the child's origin.
- A completed registration form with a passport photograph attached. Forms will be supplied by the school.





- Proof that the child has had all necessary vaccinations and eye/hearing tests, which can be done after registration at a Health Centre.

## 2.5 STUDY AIDS

The family should have information on the possibility of obtaining aid to alleviate the economic cost of schooling.



There are scholarships and aids they can apply for. They can be awarded by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, the Regional Ministry of Education, the local governments, and other public or private entities. The aid can be for studies, extracurricular activities, school meals, textbooks or mobility, among others.

The requirements for applying to these aids usually include the economic status of the family and/or the student's academic record. Information about the financial aids can usually be obtained in the respective schools.



Refugee and asylum-seeking students attend public schools that are free of charge. Apart from specific integration programmes that are offered in these schools, during regular school hours, some of these schools may also offer additional classes after normal school hours. In addition, the schools provide different school materials. These classes may be provided by NGOs and are free of charge for students. In addition, some of the NGOs that work with refugees, such as the NGOs Elix, offer snacks/meals to refugee students.

In addition, scholarships can be provided to refugees in order to help them attend college courses. Such scholarships may be provided by private institutions, European grants, the U.S. Embassy in Greece etc.



State-run schools are free of charge; private school tuition is refunded by the State in part or fully when state-run schools in the area are filled to capacity.

Financial assistance is available for vulnerable families.

In addition, Portugal offers a range of scholarships and grants mainly at higher education level through various agencies such as the Portuguese public agency *Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia* (FCT) that supports science, technology and innovation, in all scientific domains.

## 2.6. FUNCTIONING OF SCHOOLS

Information should be available on a series of fundamental aspects in order to understand how schools work in each country.



**Type of schools according to time schedules:** establishments that provide General Education may have a continuous school day (morning) or a split school day (morning and afternoon).

### **School operating bodies:**

- 1. Unipersonal governing bodies:** Each member of the Management team:
  - **Director:** deals with the functions related to organization, management and representation of the school.
  - **Head of studies:** takes over the pedagogical competences of the management team.
  - **Secretary:** assumes administrative, academic and economic management and organization functions.
- 2. Collegiate government bodies:**
  - **Faculty:** they propose, analyze and evaluate the functioning of the school from the perspective of the organizational and pedagogical management.
  - **School Board:** is the participation body of the educational community.

It represents teachers and different bodies, families, students, Administration and Services Staff, as well as the local government.

### **3. Representation and participation bodies:**

- **Students' Parents' Association (AMPA):** seek the participation of families in the education of their children through cooperation and involvement in certain dimensions of school life.
- **Students' Association:** seek a more active integration in the School Community.

### **4. Planning, teaching coordination and guidance bodies:** most prominent among them are as follows:

- **Tutor:** attends to all aspects that have to do with students' maturation, guidance and learning. He/she is the mediator between the school and the family.
- **Guidance Department:** participates in the planning and development of educational actions to meet the needs or demands arising from the attention to student diversity. It also promotes communication and cooperation between the school and families.

**Students' assessment, qualification and documents:** in all the educational stages, there are three moments in the process of students' assessment:

- **Initial assessment:** it is carried out when students start a specific course, stage or when they are in particular academic situation. The precise attention measures that could be of curricular and/or organizational nature are specified.



- **Continuous assessment:** to observe the trajectory of each student over the course of the training process.
- **Final assessment:** in which it is verified whether the student has reached the established objectives.

**Student attendance at school:** daily and timely attendance of students to classes is mandatory.

Weekly class periods are Monday through Friday and academic courses take place between September and June.

Early Childhood, Primary and Compulsory Secondary Education students may leave the school facilities during the school day only if authorized by their parents or legal guardians, with the permission of the school's management, and always in the company of an adult.



- **School timetable and attendance:** the academic year in Greece starts in September and ends in June. Schools start at 8:15 a.m. and end

either at 1:15 p.m. or at 4:00 p.m. Children's attendance is monitored and up until compulsory secondary education, they are not allowed to leave the school facilities without authorization.

- **School governing body:** consists of: the school director, who is responsible for all administrative and academic/pedagogical issues that take place in the school; the deputy school director, who is the director's substitute for all of his/her responsibilities and assists him/her on daily matters; the school secretary, who is responsible for all administrative issues and the teachers' association that is responsible for the holistic development and education of students.
- **Parents' association:** all parents of students have the right to be members of the parents' association.



Their role is to discuss important school matters, such as school safety, take part in the school's decision-making process as well as organize activities and events.

- **Students' association:** the elected students act as the representatives of all students and help the students body become more involved in school matters.



The education is regulated by the State through the Ministry of Education. There is a system of public education and many private schools at all levels of education. Schooling hours and holidays in Portugal vary from region to region. State schools will have different hours and holidays to private schools and international and foreign schools follow the Portuguese school calendar.

**School shifts:** The school semester usually starts between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of September.

During the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of basic education, children are required to attend 25 hours of schooling per week. Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m., and there is a morning break and a lunch break. Some primary schools operate in shifts. If this is the case, you can choose the shift you would like your children to attend; mornings 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., or afternoons from 1:15 p.m. until 6:15 p.m.

At the age of ten, school days become longer: Cycles 2 and 3 of basic education share the same timetable as secondary education. School generally tends to start at around 8:45 a.m. and finishes at 4:45 p.m. Children are entitled to a lunch break of one hour and two 15-minute breaks in the morning and afternoon.

**Holidays in Portugal:** Christmas holidays last for just under two weeks: around 20<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> December. There is a two-day break to celebrate carnival and a ten-day Easter break. Summer holidays start around mid-June.

## 2.7. COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES THAT CAN BE PROVIDED BY SCHOOLS

The schools also offer other services.



**School meals:** In the schools where this service is provided to the families, they must pay its cost. There are grants to cover these expenses.

**Extracurricular activities:** they are activities carried out in the school, but outside school hours. Their cost must be paid by the families. There are grants to cover this type of activities.

**School transport:** it is a student transfer service to the facilities of the school. In public school that provide compulsory education is free.

**Extended schedule classrooms (morning and evening classrooms):** it is a service provided by some schools to solve the difficulties that some families face in reconciling work and school hours. There are grants to cover these expenses.

**Language immersion program:** it is a program in which foreign students attend Spanish language classes outside their reference group.



**Afternoon classes (DYEP classes):** these classes are provided in some public schools and take place in the afternoon after regular school hours. They are designed to help non-Greek children aged 4-15 to learn the Greek language and prepare for school. This can be especially helpful for children, who have either never been to school before or have not been in school for a long period of time.

**Specialised reception classes (“Zone of Educational Priorities” (ZEP) classes):** these classes are specifically designed to facilitate the integration of migrant children in the Greek education system and have been established by the Ministry of Education. These classes take place for a few hours every morning during the normal school timetable. They provide additional Greek language lessons and math and in some schools additional classes such as science and English may also be included in the curriculum of the reception classes. However, it should be noted that one of the main difficulties that arise regarding the integration of refugee students in the education system (both in ZEP/DYEP and regular classes), is





poor school attendance. Often, refugee students may stop attending classes at some point throughout the academic year without notifying the school. This may be due to moving to a different country with their family, being relocated to a different area and consequently having to change schools or low levels of motivation. As a result it can be challenging to monitor these children's school attendance as well as to obtain information about whether or not they have continued their studies.

**School meals:** in some public schools, meals or snacks may be provided to the children. Some of these meals are provided through public funds, whereas other meals may be provided through organisations that receive grants in order to provide school meals.

**Extracurricular activities:** such activities, (e.g. attending a theatre play/ visiting a museum etc.) may be organised by the school and take place after or during school hours.



Any students registered in the state school system between pre-school and

year 9, whose mother tongue is not Portuguese, are entitled to additional one-on-one language support outside their normal classes, should they need it.

At State-run schools, 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle students and kindergarten students get free mid-morning or mid-afternoon snacks.

## 2.8. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL

It is very important to support the family's collaboration with the school.



The relationship between family and school is a very important element in students' education. Communication helps families understand the processes that take place in the school and, in this way, they can contribute to supporting them.

Fluid communication also facilitates teachers' work when adjusting curricular and organizational measures.

Being aware of everything that takes place in the school is, for families, a right and a duty.

## 2.9. TEACHERS

### 2.9.1 REGULATIONS FOR REFUGEES

Teachers must be informed and trained to understand the situation of the refugees and their children, providing them with the basics of refugee law, as well as with the agencies involved in the asylum process.

#### UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (1948)

- Art. 14. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

Similarly, this document includes other rights that complete the overall picture of the situation of these people, such as:

- Art. 13.1. Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence.
- Art. 13.2. Everyone shall be free to leave any country, including his own. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.

Spain, Greece and Portugal signed this international treaty in 1966, committing themselves to comply with their opinions.

This implies that asylum seekers must have access to protection and to the application of fair and consistent procedures with their situation while their application is processed and settled.

#### THE GENEVA CONVENTION: THE STATUS OF REFUGEES, ARTICLE 1, DEFINES A REFUGEE

- A person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear,

is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

It also defines the responsibilities of the nations that guarantee this asylum and the rules that must be followed by those who embrace this figure.

**THE CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (2007):** the European Union recognizes the right of asylum as a fundamental right.



**THE SPANISH CONSTITUTION OF 1978:** also recognizes this right.

- Art.13.4: The law shall establish the terms under which citizens from other countries and stateless persons may enjoy the right to asylum in Spain.

This constitutional right is legally regulated through Law 12/2009, of October 30, regulating the right of asylum and subsidiary protection that incorporates the regulations deriving from the European Union.

#### Asylum application:

- In the offices authorized for this purpose, at border posts, airports and international ports.
- From a Foreigner Internment Center (CIE), which will transfer this request to the Asylum and Refuge Office.
- From the authorized police stations
- From the Immigration Offices.
- Directly from the Asylum and Refuge Office (OAR).
- Outside the Spanish territory: in Spanish embassies or consulates when the applicant is outside Spain,



and provided that he/she is in a country other than their current nationality.

**Temporary reception:**

- If the application is admitted, the person will have a temporary protection status (from 6 to 9 months).
- People can be located in government establishments or other facilities that are managed by non-profit, non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- During this period, asylum seekers receive different types of benefits, including schooling.

**Integration and autonomy:**

- Different organizations help people in the process of formation, training, job search etc. so that they could gradually grow into independence.



**According to the GREEK CONSTITUTION:**

all underaged refugee and migrant children that live in Greece are required to attend the minimum school duration as Greek children (law 3386/2005)

- All refugee and migrant children are entitled to enroll in the Greek public education system, even if they are not in possession of all the required documents at the time of enrolment (law 4251/2014 article 21, par. 8).

**Asylum application** (RefugeeInfo, 2019):

- Asylum-seekers on mainland Greece can contact the Asylum service in order to pre-register and get an appointment for Full registration. Once they attend their Full registration appointment, they

will be offered an asylum interview. After the interview, they should wait in order to obtain the decision regarding their status.

- Asylum-seekers on the Greek islands can request to apply for asylum during the Reception and Identification Procedure, which will pass on their request to the Asylum service. The Asylum service will register their asylum claim. They may be required to undertake an admissibility interview. If it is decided that their claim can be examined in Greece, they will be offered an asylum interview, which will then lead to the decision regarding their status.
- All asylum-seekers are entitled to the same education rights as Greek children.



### **Asylum Application:**

In Portugal, asylum seekers are granted the right to asylum according to the following:

1. Foreign nationals and stateless persons who are being persecuted or face a serious threat of persecution, as a result of their activities in the State of their nationality or their usual residence in favour of democracy, social and national liberties, peace among peoples, freedom and human rights are guaranteed the right to asylum (Asylum Law, 2014).
2. Foreign nationals or stateless persons who justifiably fear persecution by virtue of their race, religion, nationality, political opinions or being part of certain social group and cannot or, due to such a fear, do not

wish to return to the State of their nationality or usual residence, are also entitled to be granted asylum (Asylum Law, 2014).

Alternatively, when applicants do not satisfy the criteria of a refugee, which are based in 1951 Refugee Geneva Convention and 1967 Protocol that amended the Refugee convention and gave it a universal scope, other types of protection could be considered as follows:

- Subsidiary protection: Protection granted to a foreigner who is not a refugee within the meaning of the 1951 Geneva Convention, but is considered to be in need of international protection, since he/she cannot return to his country of origin where there is a situation of serious insecurity due to an armed conflict or systematic violation of fundamental rights – the so-called *de facto* refugees.
- Temporary protection: exceptional protection to ensure that, in the event of a massive influx of displaced persons from third countries who are unable to return to their country of origin, their legal status in the national territory for a maximum of 2 years. It is a mechanism that allows a group of displaced persons to enter and remain legally in the country.

### **The right to education:**

Education is perceived as a tool for facilitating integration across society and ought not to be underestimated. That is, it is vital to the process of receiving and integrating people into new environments. According to the Asylum

Act, asylum-seeking children have the right to public education under equal conditions as Portuguese children and third-country nationals who do not have Portuguese as their mother tongue. The Ministry in charge of education retains sole responsibility to ensure the right of children to education. Accordingly,

refugees, asylum seekers and seekers of subsidiary and temporary protection, including children and minors up to the age of 18, have the right and opportunity to access the public educational system in Portugal (SEF, Law of Asylum, article 53) just like national citizens and migrants.

## 2.9.2. RESOURCES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Teachers should be informed and trained for better management of the teaching processes. These are just a few examples by country. [Consulted on October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019].

### International organizations, institutions, associations

- [INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION](http://www.iom.int) <www.iom.int>
- [UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATOR OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS](http://www.unocha.org) <www.unocha.org>
- [UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER](http://www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/LocalGovernmentsForHR.aspx) <www.ohchr.org/SP/NewsEvents/Pages/LocalGovernmentsForHR.aspx>
- [THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS](http://www.icrc.org/es) <www.icrc.org/es>



### Spanish organizations, institutions and associations

- [IMMIGRATION PORTAL](http://extranjeros.mitramiss.gob.es/es/ProteccionAsilo/index.html) <http://extranjeros.mitramiss.gob.es/es/ProteccionAsilo/index.html>
- [ACNUR SPAIN](http://www.acnur.org/es-es/el-asilo-en-espana.html) <www.acnur.org/es-es/el-asilo-en-espana.html>
- [CEPAIM](http://cepaim.org) <http://cepaim.org>
- [CEAR \(COMISIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE AYUDA AL REFUGIADO - SPANISH REFUGEE ASSISTANCE COMMISSION\)](http://www.cear.es) <www.cear.es>
- [THE SPANISH RED CROSS](http://www2.cruzroja.es) <www2.cruzroja.es>
- [ACCEM](http://www.accem.es) <www.accem.es>
- [PROVIVIENDA ASSOCIATION](http://www.provivienda.org) <www.provivienda.org>
- [DIVERSIDADES ASSOCIATION](http://diversidades.org) <diversidades.org>
- [RONSEL FOUNDATION](https://fundacionronsel.org) <https://fundacionronsel.org>
- [ACOGUE NETWORK](http://www.redacoge.org/es) <www.redacoge.org/es>

### Teaching guides and materials

- *Asylum and refuge. Educational resource guide for teachers.* <www.cear.es/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/CEAR\_GUIA-DIDACTICA\_web.pdf>
- *Guide for teachers.* <www.contravientoymarea.org/teachersupervision/es/pdf/LH\_ALL\_ES.pdf>
- *Resource guide on refugees for adolescents.* <www.diphuelva.es/export/sites/dph/cooperacion/.galleries/documentos/GUIA\_DE\_RECURSOS\_OK.pdf>
- ACNUR Guides. <https://eachur.org/es/guias-acnur-comite-espanol>
- Awareness Materials. <www.cear.es/sensibilizacion>
- Resource Guide. <https://aragonsolidario.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Recursos\_Refugiados\_2016-04.pdf>

- CSE Guide. <[www.mensajerosdelapaz.eu/mediapool/95/954333/data/Quiero\\_irme\\_a\\_casa.pdf](http://www.mensajerosdelapaz.eu/mediapool/95/954333/data/Quiero_irme_a_casa.pdf)>
- *Guide for Primary Education*. <[www.educatolerancia.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/materiales\\_didacticos\\_ddhh\\_guia\\_primaria.pdf](http://www.educatolerancia.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/materiales_didacticos_ddhh_guia_primaria.pdf)>
- *Kilometers of Solidarity. Guide for different educational stages*. <[www.savethechildren.es/sites/default/files/imce/docs/guiadidactica\\_km2018\\_cas\\_web.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.es/sites/default/files/imce/docs/guiadidactica_km2018_cas_web.pdf)>



### Greek organizations, institutions and associations

- **ELIX**: Greek NGOs that aims to promote non-formal education. <[www.elix.org.gr/en](http://www.elix.org.gr/en)>
- **ASYLUM SERVICE** <<http://asylo.gov.gr>>
- **UNHCR GREECE** <[www.unhcr.org/gr](http://www.unhcr.org/gr)>
- **MINISTRY OF MIGRATION POLICY** <[www.immigration.gov.gr](http://www.immigration.gov.gr)>
- **FRONTEX** <<https://frontex.europa.eu/search-results/?q=greece&p=2>>
- *Multi-country Partnership to enhance the Education of Refugee and Asylum seeking youth in Europe – PERAE. Refugee Education in Greece*. <[www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Refugee-Education-Asylum-Greece-final-1.pdf](http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Refugee-Education-Asylum-Greece-final-1.pdf)>

### Teaching guides and materials

- *Multilingual Guide for Education in Greece*. <[www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2017/Mazi\\_poliglosos\\_odigos\\_gia\\_tin\\_ekpaideusi\\_stin\\_ellada.pdf](http://www.minedu.gov.gr/publications/docs2017/Mazi_poliglosos_odigos_gia_tin_ekpaideusi_stin_ellada.pdf)>
- *The Task of Educating Refugees*. <<https://cutt.ly/9em7zbc>>
- *Parents' Basic Guide to Greek Schools*. <[www.refugee.info/greece/education--greece/parents-guide-to-greek-schools?language=en](http://www.refugee.info/greece/education--greece/parents-guide-to-greek-schools?language=en)>



### Portuguese organizations, institutions and associations

- **THE PORTUGUESE IMMIGRATION AND BORDERS SERVICE (SEF)** <[www.sef.pt/en/Pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.sef.pt/en/Pages/homepage.aspx)>
- **HIGH COMMISSION FOR MIGRATION** <[www.acm.gov.pt](http://www.acm.gov.pt)>
- **THE JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE** <[www.jrsportugal.pt/en/home](http://www.jrsportugal.pt/en/home)>
- **THE PORTUGUESE RED CROSS** <[www.cruzvermelha.pt](http://www.cruzvermelha.pt)>
- **GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR SYRIAN STUDENTS** <[www.globalplatformforsyrianstudents.org](http://www.globalplatformforsyrianstudents.org)>

### Teaching guides and materials

- InHere Project to Support Refugees' Education. <[www.inhereproject.eu/homepage](http://www.inhereproject.eu/homepage)>
- PPTonline: Portuguese for Everyone Course. <<https://pptonline.acm.gov.pt>>
- High Commission for Migration: Kit for Refugees. <[www.acm.gov.pt/kitrefugiados](http://www.acm.gov.pt/kitrefugiados)>
- Unhcr Materials for Teaching Portuguese to Refugees. <[www.acnur.org/portugues](http://www.acnur.org/portugues)>
- International Bureau of Education: Inclusive Education. <[www.ibe.unesco.org/en/resources?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=International+ICE+natrap+Portugal+1&field\\_region=All&field\\_countries%5B%5D=215&f%5B0%5D=&field\\_program=&field\\_services=&op=Apply](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/resources?search_api_views_fulltext=International+ICE+natrap+Portugal+1&field_region=All&field_countries%5B%5D=215&f%5B0%5D=&field_program=&field_services=&op=Apply)>
- Refugee Guides. <[www.refugiados.net/cid\\_virtual\\_bkup/integra/guia\\_ig.html#EDUCATION](http://www.refugiados.net/cid_virtual_bkup/integra/guia_ig.html#EDUCATION)>, <[www.cidadevirtual.pt/cpr/integra/gr\\_pt.html](http://www.cidadevirtual.pt/cpr/integra/gr_pt.html)>

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**-3-**

**INTEGRATION GUIDE  
FOR REFUGEES**  
IN THE LABOUR MARKET





The Guide for integrating refugees in the European labour market is part of the UNINTEGRA project, which aims to efficiently contribute to the management of migratory movements caused by humanitarian crises. Moreover, its objectives include developing protocols and tools in order to adequately attend the needs of migrant people. The project is being carried out taking into account the different areas that affect the process of social integration of refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations, one of those areas being the European labour market.

### 3.1. JUSTIFICATION/NEEDS

Since 2015, approximately 1.3 million refugees/asylum seekers have left their countries due to various reasons and have arrived in countries of the European Union (EU) searching for a better life (Eurostat, 2016).

Results from quantitative data collection gathered through the UNINTEGRA research project in Greece, Portugal and Spain showed that refugees believe that the most important variables for integration are training, work and stability.



Issues regarding employment can directly impact refugees' psychological well-being and lack of employment can cause great unhappiness to refugees (UNHCR, 2013). It has been argued that in some cases, employment can act as a reflection of the extent to which refugees have been integrated in the host society (UNHCR, 2013). It is important to note that refugees may have vast prior work experience as well as skills and previous training that could be valuable for the host country and could help the refugees further enhance their skills (Muller & Beckers, 2018). However, numerous challenges, lead to a variety of obstacles that delay or even obstruct their integration in the labour market of the host society. It has been found that refugees are more likely to find employment that is not in line with their previous training and/or skills (Muller, & Beckers, 2018). Moreover, when refugees are employed in the host country they are

more likely to be offered lower wages than natives (International Monetary Fund – IMF, 2016). Studies have shown that on average at least five years are needed in order for refugees to be integrated in the labour market (OECD, 2016a).

Nevertheless, studies have highlighted the importance of early access to employment for refugees, as being unemployed for long periods of time while waiting for the asylum procedures to take place may have detrimental effects on their well-being (Muller & Beckers, 2018). It has been shown that the difficulties in employment may diminish as refugees' length of stay in the host country increases, especially if they learn the local language. Therefore, it can be concluded that facilitating the integration of refugees in the labour market of countries of the EU is of great importance and could be beneficial both for the refugees as well as for the host country.

## 3.2. OBJECTIVES

- Highlighting the most important aspects of labour market integration.
- Discussing the variables that can greatly enhance or hinder the integration process in the labour market.
- Providing recommendations in order to suggest ways in which national institutions can help refugees find employment in the host country.

## 3.3. INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES IN THE LABOUR MARKET: ISSUES REGARDING REFUGEES

It has been estimated that across the countries of the EU, 15 years will be needed in order for 70% of refugees to be integrated in the labour market (European Commission, 2017). In each country, there are various factors that can affect the integration of refugees in the labour market. Although some common European policies exist, each country imposes different legal restrictions and regulations to employment, different durations of asylum procedures, different procedures for recognition of qualifications, etc. (European Commission, 2017).

Furthermore, other factors that are specific to the refugees, such as level of education, possession of documentation, previous work experience etc. can also have a direct effect on the likelihood of finding employment in each country.



In Spain, asylum seekers have the right to access the labour market after 6 months of submitting the application. In order to improve the opportunities for success in

this labour market, it is recommended: to improve the linguistic conditions, to carry out the process of homologation of studies and to update the skills training. There are organizations such as the Spanish Commission for Refugee Assistance (CEAR), which offer training and employment services, establishing individualized job placement itineraries for participants.



In Greece, asylum seekers, who have formally submitted an application, are entitled to work. However, in reality, the unemployment rate of refugees in Greece is large and of those, who are employed, they are more likely to be offered jobs that require low skills (UNESCO, 2018). Also, refugees in Greece often undergo long bureaucratic procedures that prolong the period of unemployment and can face additional difficulties, such as not being able to open a bank account. Despite the difficulties that exist, there are successful stories of integration of refugees in the labour market in Greece.

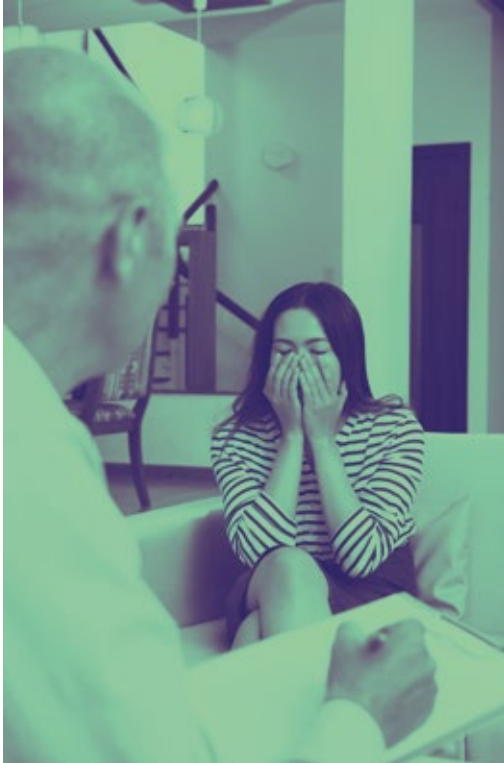


In Portugal, it has been reported that refugee women's opportunities may differ according to their responsiveness and preparedness for work or training due to family responsibilities or cultural issues. Third country working women do not see themselves as European nationals, assuming that they are not paid fairly for the work they do in comparison with the work of their native neighbours of the host community.

### 3.3.1. REFUGEES' PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

#### 3.3.1.1. AGE

It has been argued that age could act as an obstacle to integration in the labour



market. Specifically, refugees, who are over 45-50 years old, may find difficulties “starting over” and changing a career path at this age (UNHCR, 2013). Furthermore, they may find it difficult to attend classes, e.g. language classes of the host country if they have not attended any other kind of classes in a long time. Similarly, younger refugees, may be faced with other age-related difficulties, such as not having finished their studies, not having had the opportunity to receive some kind of vocational training etc.

**Recommendations:**

- Organisations working with refugees, could benefit from offer career advice that is tailored to the different needs of each age group (OECD & UNHCR, 2018).

- High schools and Vocational high schools with refugee students could help them by offering career guidance.
- Circular short-term internships could help younger refugees at the beginning of their career, develop their skills and identify their talents.
- Organisations working with refugees could consider offering language classes or other training classes specifically for certain age groups, e.g. 50-60 years old.

### 3.3.1.2. MENTAL HEALTH

Due to the difficulties that accompany migration, refugees are at a higher risk of facing mental health disorders. Specifically, they are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and psychosis (Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). If such issues regarding their mental health are left untreated, they could lead to difficulties with finding and/or maintaining employment. Therefore, it is essential that refugees undergo proper mental health assessments, are given a diagnosis (if appropriate) and are referred to specialists in order for them to receive the appropriate treatment. This highlights the importance that should be placed on screening for mental health disorders by public and private health care services that come into contact with refugees upon their arrival. However, it should also be noted that refugees’ mental health can also be influenced by the fact that they may be unemployed (UNHCR, 2013) or in the cases of those refugees that are employed, stress levels can increase due to working in a foreign country, where the cultural context is different from what they may have been

used to in their country of origin (Doki, Sasahara, & Matsuzaki, 2018). Therefore, the relationship between employment and mental health could be described as a two-way relationship, which can lead to the development of a vicious cycle.

In addition, in some cases refugees do not seek professional support and even if it is offered to them they may not attend their appointments (UNHCR, 2013). This may be due to fear of being stigmatized, not knowing where to seek help from, not knowing that they are suffering from a mental health disorder and not trusting the professionals in the host country.

**Recommendations:**

- It is therefore important that refugees are offered psychological support not only before finding a job but also throughout their employment.
- Private and public health care services should screen refugees for mental health difficulties upon their arrival to the host country.

- Providing information about mental health disorders and psychological support in the refugees' native language in specific places, such as in NGOs, hospitals and other organizations that come into contact with refugees.

### 3.3.1.3. ISSUES REGARDING HOUSING, RELOCATION AND ABILITY TO BE MOBILE

Another issue that arises is that refugees may often be relocated within a country. This may be due to them being relocated through housing schemes, where they may be relocated in a different area – in some cases far away from their previous location. In such cases, this would raise difficulties in their ability to be mobile and to continue their employment, as in many instances they do not have a driving license or may not be able to use public transportation, if their previous job is located far from their new location. In addition, some of





the refugees aspire to continue their trip within Europe finding refuge in other countries, something that builds a mentality of impermanence, which is an internal obstacle to their integration in their current host society. Specifically, this could affect their levels of motivation to find employment in their current country and could also affect the employer's likelihood of hiring them.

**Recommendations:**

- Short-term employment contracts could be beneficial for refugees aiming to move to another country.
- Organisations working with refugees should try to match refugees with employers that are located close to the area, where they live.
- If refugees are part of a housing scheme and are likely to be relocated, organisations could help them find employment that would require transferable skills that could easily be adapted to employment opportunities if they need to be relocated, e.g. working as interpreters or tailors, which is something that would not be

affected by their relocation as compared to working as fisher-men, which would not be useful if they were relocated to an area that is not close to the sea.

#### 3.3.1.4. CHILDCARE SUPPORT

Refugee parents are often unable to engage in employment due to them having young children and not having someone to take care of their children while they are not at home. This is especially problematic for single-parent families (UNHCR, 2013).

**Recommendations:**

- Organisations working with refugees could provide them with options regarding childcare support in the area, where they live.
- Matching refugees with employers that offer childcare services – if applicable.

#### 3.3.2. LANGUAGE

Language is considered to be a key element in facilitating or hindering the integration of refugees in a new country. If refugees do not speak/read/write in the language of the host community, this could

become a great obstacle that could prevent them from finding employment. It has been found that even standard processes that take place when hiring someone new, such as filling in forms, can be difficult if the employee does not understand the language (UNHCR, 2013). In addition, employers may be reluctant to hire people, who do not speak the local language out of fear of not being able to adequately communicate with them. Indeed, studies have shown that learning the local language has direct effects on one's likelihood of finding employment. In any case, the relationship between language and employment seems to be bi-directional as studies have shown that being employed also improves one's ability of learning the local language (UNHCR, 2013). Nevertheless, language requirements may be more lenient for some more technical jobs that require specific skills, such as agricultural work, sewing, fishing etc.

**Recommendations:**

- Organisations working with refugees should provide free of charge language courses. If it is not possible for the organization themselves to offer the classes, they should help refugees come into contact with other organisations that offer language classes.
- Refugees could be offered language classes that are tailored to the needs of a specific employment, i.e. specific vocabulary that would be useful to them in specific vacancies (Eurocities, 2017).
- Organisations working with refugees could partner with employers, who are interested in hiring refugees and could offer internships that

include work experience as well as simultaneous language classes (Eurocities, 2017).

### 3.3.3. PREVIOUS SKILLS

#### 3.3.3.1. ISSUES REGARDING RECOGNITION OF PREVIOUS QUALIFICATIONS

Another important factor that can have a great effect on employment is recognition of previous qualifications from the refugees' country of origin. The fact that refugees may not have documents validating their previous qualifications together with the fact that it may be difficult to contact the institutions, from where the qualifications were obtained can act as a limitation from the employer's



perspective. It has been reported that employers do not often accept informal documents of previous qualifications (UNHCR, 2013). Furthermore, each country may have processes in place that aim to recognize previous qualifications, however, these processes can be long lasting, thus increasing the duration of unemployment. Additionally, it has been argued that in some cases even when refugees have completed full university degrees in their country of origin (e.g. in law/medicine etc.) they may face discrimination as their degrees may not be considered as being of the same level as those obtained from the host country (UNHCR, 2013).

**Recommendations:**

- The development of a common European framework for the recognition of the qualifications of the refugees and for the academic and professional evaluation of their learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, competences) would be very beneficial (European Council on refugees and exiles – ECRE, 1999).

- Initiatives, such as the European Qualification Passport for refugees (EQPR) (Council of Europe, 2017) should be systematized. In addition, the UNINTEGRA project has proposed a protocol of validation of academic competences and credentials of refugees in order to help raise awareness in the host society and facilitate the integration process. Specifically, this protocol aims to integrate the various existing initiatives regarding validation of previous qualifications. This would include the development of a network of European and third-country universities and agencies, the development of a single online platform for the recognition of academic and professional qualifications of refugees and a reference procedure that improves existing initiatives regarding recognition of previous qualifications.
- If refugees' previous qualifications obtained in the host country they



should be offered additional courses, such as “refresher” courses (ECRE, 1999).

- Organisations working with refugees should help them undertake all appropriate procedures for recognition of qualifications in order to direct them in the most appropriate path.

### 3.3.3.2. ADULT EDUCATION/ LIFE-LONG EDUCATION/ VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Similar to the difficulties that arise with the recognition of previous qualifications, refugees may also face challenges with regards to previous work experience. Specifically, it has been argued that in some cases employers prefer their employees to have previous experience of working in the host country and not only previous work experience from their country of origin. When a person has just arrived to a new country it is not possible for him/her to already have work experience in that country. As a result, refugees may be required to attend re-training or re-qualifying courses in order to gain additional knowledge regarding employment in the host country. However, although this could be beneficial for them in the future it could also postpone their ability to find employment in the present, which is known to be a priority for refugees (UNHCR, 2013). In addition, employers have also mentioned that they would like to be able to contact past employers of refugees in their country of origin, something that in most cases is impossible.

Furthermore, it may be the case that even if refugees have past work experience

in a specific field, they may be required to familiarize with the way that that field operates in the host country (OECD & UNHCR, 2018). For this reason, employers should provide such information to refugees.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Employers should offer refugee employees the opportunity to gain experience by providing short apprenticeships, where they can be trained (OECD & UNHCR, 2018).
- Organisations working with refugees could provide additional vocational training programmes tailored to specific fields. If this is not possible they should help them come into contact with such programmes, offered by other organisations.
- Organisations and employers could cooperate with universities or other education institutions that offer vocational training schemes in order to enable refugees to attend training course.

### 3.3.4. OBTAINING IMPORTANT INFORMATION THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKS AND INSTITUTIONAL NETWORKS

It is often challenging for refugees that are new in a country to become aware of important information regarding employment vacancies and training opportunities. On top of that sometimes refugees may be confused with regards to which source of information is trustworthy and which source is more updated (OECD & UNHCR, 2018). One source of information could be received through social networks. However, if refugees are not already connected to a network of people in the new country this may not be an option



for them – at least at the beginning. A second source of information could be through institutional networks, i.e. organisations that work with refugees, such as NGOs. Having contact with NGOs and other organisations can help refugees obtain important information regarding employment. In addition, NGOs can help refugees broaden their social networks by urging them to participate in various activities provided by the organisation or by helping them come into contact with other organisations. Nevertheless, studies have confirmed that lack of networks can indeed act as an obstacle to integration in the labour market. This can be especially true for single mothers, who without social

networks are unable to find childcare support, which in turn can act as an even greater barrier to finding employment.

In addition, it has been found that when refugees start building social networks, they may start to gain information about job vacancies but these vacancies are more likely to be less competitive with low wages (UNHCR, 2013).

**Recommendations:**

- Organisations should be able to provide information regarding employment to all refugees as well as to inform refugees about which sources of information are trustworthy and where they should look for information.
- Organisations could suggest applications, such as Apps4Refs, which proposes reliable organisations, e.g. NGOs that refugees could contact and could also suggest valid websites that include updated information regarding employment and job vacancies.
- Organisations working with refugees should help them become aware of formal procedures that could be helpful with regards to finding employment, such as registration in employment agencies. If needed, organisations should help refugees register in such agencies in order to increase their likelihood of finding employment.
- Organisations should facilitate refugees to expand their social networks by helping them join activities that interest them.
- It has been argued that volunteering could help both expand one's social network as well as ease integration

in the labour market by acting as a stepping stone towards later being hired by that employer (UNHCR, 2013). Therefore, organisations could urge refugees to engage in voluntary work – at least at the beginning.

### 3.3.5. PREPARATION AND HELP

#### 3.3.5.1. CREATING/ENHANCING CVS

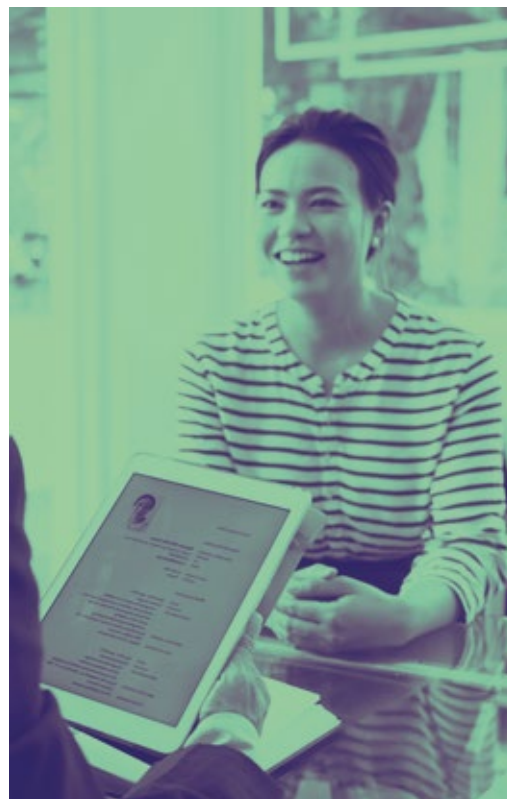
It may often be the case that refugees do not have any documents with them when arriving to the host country. Such documents could also include the lack of having a cv. Cvs can be essential in applying to jobs and refugees may face difficulties when trying to create their cv from scratch in a new country. First of all, they may not know how to write in the local language or in English and therefore they require assistance in doing so. In addition, they may have never written a cv before, e.g. in the case of young adults, who are searching for jobs for the first time.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Organisations working with refugees should provide specific assistance tailored to help them create and/or enhance their cv.
- Cvs can also include other activities that refugees have engaged in, such as activities in the community, memberships in groups and voluntary work (OECD & UNHCR, 2018).
- Cvs should be written in the local language.

#### 3.3.5.2. BOOSTING INTERVIEW SKILLS

Once refugees have come into contact with potential employers and have been offered an interview, it is important that they receive help preparing for it. This could be especially helpful for refugees,



who have never attended a job interview in the past, e.g. young adults, who are now starting to work for the first time and could also be helpful for all refugees in general as they may need to be informed about cultural differences that could exist between their country of origin and the host country in terms of the labour market. In addition, language can affect the interview process if for example the refugee does not speak the local language and needs to attend the interview with an interpreter.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Organisations working with refugees should help them prepare for interviews by providing information about the interview process and also



by allowing them to practice through role-play exercises.

- Practice with an interpreter and/or cultural mediator could also be useful, as it would familiarize refugees with the process and could help them feel more comfortable.

### 3.3.5.3. PREPARING REFUGEES TO BECOME FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT

One of the factors that suggest that refugees have been successfully integrated in the host country is financial independence (Schick et al., 2016). Finding employment has direct implications for refugees' lives in the new country and their ability to become autonomous and self-sufficient (UNHCR, 2019a). However, becoming financially independent does not happen from one day to another and refugees could benefit from continuous support before finding employment as well as throughout employment in order to address any challenges regarding their financial independence.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Organisations could provide financial and legal counseling to refugees – applicable to each person's needs.
- Organisations could offer training courses, such as finance management, household savings etc. (Mousa, 2019).

### 3.3.6. A STORY OF SUCCESS - REFUGEE'S PERSPECTIVE

Below is an example of a successful case of integration of refugees in the labour market in Greece from the refugee's perspective provided by UNHCR (2019b). Specifically, the case refers to a refugee family from Iraq, who lives on the island of Kos. Although it is considered to be extremely difficult for asylum-seekers to find employment in Greece, the family was able to find work only three months after their arrival on the island at a technical company. The refugee father, who worked as a civil engineer in his country of origin, stated that his number one priority was to find a job, as he wanted to be able to

be independent, as he did not want to rely on external support in order to be able to provide for his family. The refugee father approached the owner of the company and told the owner that he can do everything that is needed, which led to the owner hiring him. He is now able to provide for his family and to rent his own apartment. The owner has now agreed to hire his wife as well and their daughter is preparing to start school in the next academic year.

### 3.4. INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES IN THE LABOUR MARKET: ISSUES REGARDING EMPLOYERS

Integration of refugees in the labour market: Issues regarding employers

It has been argued that employers play a central role in the integration of refugees in the labour market, as it is through them that refugees can find employment. For

this reason, the European Commission (2017) highlights the importance of including employers in the integration policies through provision of information, legal certainty, maintaining employers' motivation to hire refugees and matching employers' needs to refugees' skills.



In Spain, opportunities to find a job increase as the job seeker masters the language and demonstrates skills and competences demanded by employers. In this sense, the Employment Offices of the different autonomous communities offer training courses for the unemployed to which the refugee population over 16 would have access. Other non-governmental organizations also offer training courses and actions aimed at the labour insertion of refugees. The coordination of various actions is inserted in the *Red Ariadna* program, which is a space for cooperation between social entities, NGOs and the State Administration and the European Social Fund.





In Greece, some initiatives have been put in place in order to support both employers and refugees in order to facilitate the integration in the labour market. For example, the “ergossimo”, which is a special method of payment has been established for cases where the employee is not entitled to the usual provision of employment, e.g. in the case of migrants (SIRIUS, 2019). Also, all refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to obtain a Social Security number (AMKA) and a tax registration number (AFM), which are needed in order for them to be able to legally work in Greece and get insurance and access to health care (Refugee Info, 2019). Organisations working with refugees in Greece, e.g. the UNHCR through the ESTIA programme, often help refugees obtain both numbers (UNHCR, 2019c). In addition, the use of the European Qualification Passport for Refugees (Council of Europe, 2018) can

help organisations working with refugees identify their skills and qualifications and match them to employers.



In Portugal, providing training as well as introducing refugees to the job centres, recruiters and job search platforms, including the online platform <[www.refujobs.acm.gov.pt/en](http://www.refujobs.acm.gov.pt/en)>, are crucial. They may introduce accessible job opportunities to the refugees. Besides, vocational courses are important for refugees to adapt their skills to the qualification needs in Portugal. Many European countries, including Portugal, are still reluctant in integration due to the risk of losing jobs and social welfare to the refugees. It is necessary to promote the economic integration of refugees (Aiyar et al., 2016).

### 3.4.1. EDUCATING THE HOST SOCIETY – FIGHTING PREJUDICE

Refugees can often be perceived as a stigmatized group. The host society



(including employers) may often be inadequately informed regarding refugees' rights. If employers are prejudiced against hiring refugees, this would not allow them to neither include refugees in their staff nor to welcome them positively in the work environment. In some cases employers may not be aware of their bias towards refugees but their actions may still be in line with their bias (OECD & UNHCR, 2018). Negative portrayal of refugees in the media can also add to building such stereotypes about refugees. However, such misconceptions do not allow employers to recognize their skills, talents and abilities. This could therefore affect their decision to hire a refugee. It is of great importance that the host society is educated regarding this issue. This would help raise awareness in the host country and fight prejudice, thus positively affecting refugees' integration in the labour market and in the society as a whole.

**Recommendations:**

- All work environments should implement an equal opportunity policy and no tolerance towards and kind of discrimination in the work environment should be accepted (OECD & UNHCR, 2018).
- People working in organizations, such as NGOs, that have come into contact with refugees could provide references regarding their interactions with the refugees (OECD & UNHCR, 2018).
- Organisations working with refugees, such as NGOs, can help educate the host society and fight prejudice against refugees through educational activities that would be open to the participation of members of the host society, e.g. in schools, job fairs etc.
- Employers could implement limited – time contracts, where refugees could work for a specific period of time (e.g. 6 months) in order for both

the refugee and the employer to familiarize with each other and to then decide if they want to continue working together (OECD & UNHCR, 2018).

### 3.4.2. EDUCATING THE EMPLOYER

It may be the case that employers are not entirely aware of exactly what each residence status of migrants means, e.g. asylum seeker, refugee, international protection, etc. (OECD & UNHCR, 2018). As a result they may not be aware of the respective rights that accompany each status, the time needed for asylum procedures to take place and whether permits need to be renewed etc. Consequently employers may be reluctant to hire people, who have not received the status of refugees. Furthermore, due to them not having hired refugees in the past

they may be concerned of any extra work that they may think needs to be done in order to hire them, such as extra paper work (OECD & UNHCR, 2018). All of the above refer to employers not being adequately informed about refugees' legal rights and the procedures that need to be put in place in order to hire them.

#### **Recommendation:**

- Organizations working with refugees should inform potential employers about rights associated to each residence status (OECD, & UNHCR, 2018). This could be done by creating a short leaflet with all the necessary information that could be distributed to all potential employers.
- Employers in collaboration with organisations, e.g. NGOs, could initially offer non-binding short-term



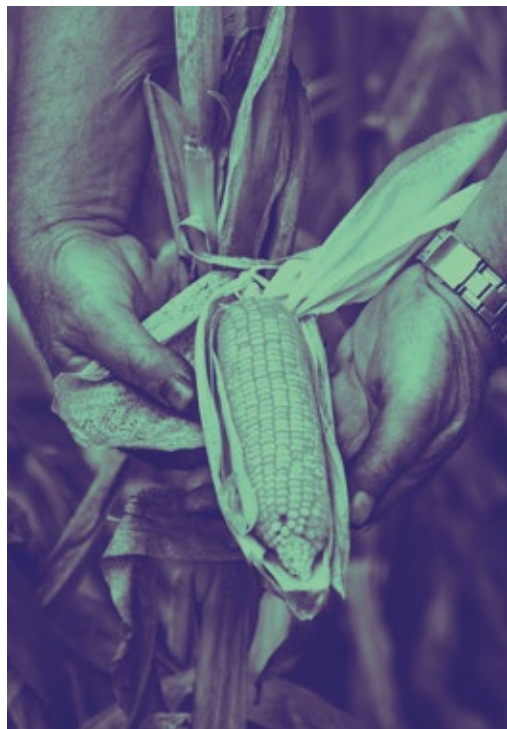
apprenticeships, which could act as a transition period.

### 3.4.3. MATCHING EMPLOYERS' NEEDS TO REFUGEES' SKILLS

Another common issue that arises regarding integration of refugees in the labour market is that refugees are often offered jobs that require fewer skills than they possess (Muller & Beckers, 2018). This results in lower wages, greater likelihood of them remaining unemployed and has negative effects on the economy (OECD 2016b; Muller & Beckers, 2018). It has been argued that one way to overcome this barrier is to identify employers that are looking to hire people with specific skills, i.e. matching refugees' specific skills with the employers' specific needs (OECD & UNHCR, 2018).

#### Recommendations:

- Employers should be able to obtain information about the refugees' skills. It has been suggested by the OECD and the UNHCR (2018) that this can be successfully achieved through job fairs.
- Online programmes, such as the German programme *Jobs4refugees* can help match refugees to specific jobs (OECD & UNHCR, 2018). This could be applied to the different employment opportunities of each country by developing respective programmes tailored to each country's needs.
- Organizations that work with refugees could help them become aware of employers, who are generally more likely to hire employees with similar skills as the ones they possess (OECD & UNHCR, 2018).



### 3.4.4. A STORY OF SUCCESS - EMPLOYER'S PERSPECTIVE

Below is an example of a successful case of integration of refugees in the labour market in Greece from the employer's perspective provided by the Athens-Macedonian News Agency through DailyThess (2017). Specifically, an NGOs in Thessaloniki called NAOMI has offered refugees from Syria, Iran, Palestine and Africa the opportunity to work as tailors in their sewing lab. Their aim was to help these people, who are going to be staying in Greece to start relying on themselves by providing them with a job. Refugees are trained in different types of sewing and learn how to convert clothes. Importantly, some of the refugees that were hired by the NGOs used to work as tailors in their country of origin, therefore providing an

example of how refugees' skills matched employer's needs. One of the employers of NAOMI mentioned that: "we want to offer jobs to these people, who have applied for asylum in Greece and help them gradually become integrated".

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**INTEGRATION GUIDE  
FOR REFUGEES**  
IN THE HOST COMMUNITIES





The Community Guide is part of the UNINTEGRA project which aims to efficiently contribute to the management of migratory movements caused by humanitarian crises. Moreover, its objectives include developing protocols and tools in order to adequately attend the needs of migrant people. The project is being carried out taking into account the different areas that affect the process of social integration of refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations, one of those areas being the European hosting communities.

#### **4.1. JUSTIFICATION/NEEDS**

The increased number of refugees relocating to and resettling in Europe has given rise to several challenges for the European countries since 2015. Therefore, hot political and public debates have been trending. Political and economic concerns have apparently set the ground for polarized stances on hospitality and solidarity versus hostility and exclusion (De Haene, Neumann, and Pataki, 2018) with the far right and populism gaining



power. However, the refugee convention 1951 and its subsequent protocols (Weis and Cambridge University, 1995) along with the European conventions for refugee protection (e.g., The Dublin Regulation) have guaranteed the rights of refugees to non-discrimination, non-penalisation and non-refoulement. Local integration, (voluntary) repatriation, or resettlement are the top three durable solutions for refugees (Pressé and Thomson, 2008). This guide focuses specifically on the integration of refugees into the European host communities. It seeks to contribute to the integration policies targeting refugees in Europe.

Integration of refugees in the country of asylum is vital for those who may not be able to return to country of origin for a long time. The term integration has several definitions, policies and implementation procedures. Although integration definition is not consensual, integration is a two-way process between hosts and refugees. Ager and Strang (2008) suggest a conceptual framework for integration that allows for the analysis of policy outcomes. Hence, integration is one of the key permanent and safe solutions for refugee families and individuals (Goodwin-Gill, 2014). Led by the United Nations Higher Commissioner

for Refugees (UNHCR), the international community also considers voluntary repatriation to the country of origin and resettlement to a third country as durable solutions to a refugee's plight (Pressé and Thomson, 2008). This study focuses on the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the European countries, mainly providing a general guide to their (local) integration into the host communities without delving into the specificities of each country. Consequently, integration has several core domains, such as housing, health, employment and education (Ager and Strang, 2008). What are the recommended guidelines for successful integration of refugees into the European communities?

## 4.2. OBJECTIVES

- Explain the existing infrastructure for integration on the host country in a simple way.
- Analyse the role of existing stakeholders such as NGOs, Municipalities, educational institutions, etc...
- Propose some guidelines for the integration of refugees.

### 4.3. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR INTEGRATION

Integration of refugees into host communities needs joint efforts from various partners in the European societies. There are crucial roles that constitute proper infrastructure for integration and inclusion. The cooperation between stakeholders, namely NGOs, local hosting institutions, municipalities, government and educational institutions, is indispensable.



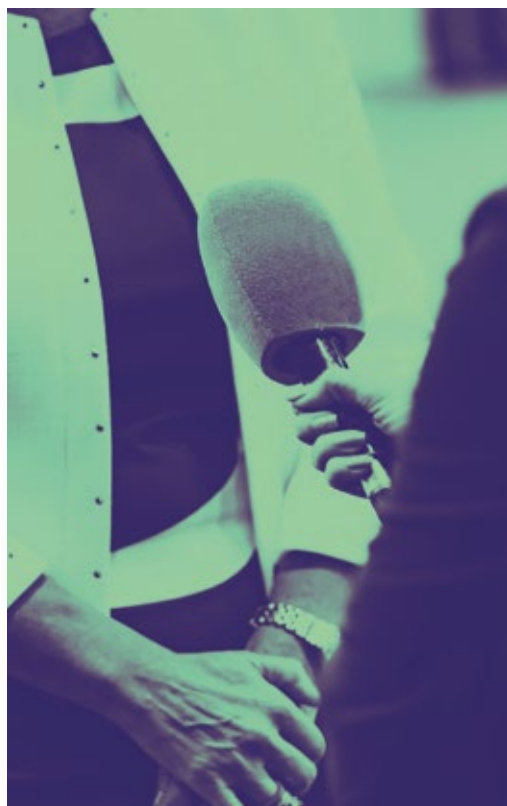
Spain has the International Protection Reception System that is formed by the Refugee Reception Centers (CAR) and various non-profit entities. These institutions manage and develop projects and resources to facilitate the social integration of the group they serve. The Reception System is constituted by different itineraries of preparation for autonomy that contemplate the assessment of the needs of the plaintiffs. This translates into the perception of different benefits depending on the specific situation of each person.



In Greece, different stakeholders, collaborate in order to facilitate the integration of refugees in the host community. For example, one of the accommodation schemes (as well as financial aid programme) that is available for asylum seekers and refugees in Greece is provided through the cooperation of NGOs, local authorities and the Greek government. Additionally, the City of Athens created an initiative called the Athens Coordination Centre for Migrant and Refugee issues (ACCMR), which aims

to facilitate the integration of refugees living in Athens through the collaboration of municipalities, NGOs, international organisations as well as migrant/refugee community groups <[www.accmr.gr/en/the-athens-coordination-center.html](http://www.accmr.gr/en/the-athens-coordination-center.html)>. Furthermore, the Greek Strategy for integration of the Ministry of Migration Policy aims to facilitate the integration of 10.000 refugees within one year through its strategy for integration (European Commission, 2018).

Schools also welcome refugee children and enhance the integration process through reception classes and other integration activities. Educational institutions often collaborate with external institutions, e.g. NGOs in order to address



refugees' needs such as health issues and communication with refugee families. Finally, another example of a collaboration between different stakeholders is provided by a project that was implemented by the NGOs: Antigone, the Greek Council for Refugees and the Smile of the Child, funded by the German federal office – *Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe*. The project's goal was to decrease the number of refugees and asylum seekers that were in danger by offering safe housing, legal and psychosocial support as well as specialised treatment (Antigone, 2019).



Under the administration of the Portuguese Government, the primary

integration such as housing, aid and reception services are provided through a network of hosting entities. The infrastructure for integration in Portugal includes social entities, NGOs, schools and public entities (mainly social security). The Portuguese Refugee Platform, for instance, is an umbrella comprising around 93 organisations hosting around 40% of refugees, asylum seekers and persons under subsidiary protection.

#### 4.3.1. ROLE OF NGOS

Prior to refugees' journey to Europe, non-governmental organisations have a role in the assistance and temporary integration of refugees into the refugee



camps through humanitarian aid, dissemination of values and principles, and educational interventions, such as the case of Turkey and Greece. In the camps, there are efforts to prepare them for resettlement or relocation to a new country. One of the programs in Greece provides: (1) accommodation services in equipped apartments; (2) an amount of money to meet the basic needs of each family; and (3) psychosocial support.

#### 4.3.2. ROLE OF LOCAL HOSTING INSTITUTIONS

Local hosting institutions, which could be NGOs or social entities, in the receiving countries support refugees in their housing, health and education. They embrace refugee families until they are able to adapt to the new context European societies, in this case. Therefore, during their hosting contract, host entities follow up refugee families and coach them to be independent. They introduce families to the new society and involve them in the public systems. Therefore, refugees would be able to enrol in the employment centre for job opportunities. They may register in the social security to acquire social and economic support. Hosting institutions also introduce refugees to the public healthcare system, where they are often exempt from payments for healthcare services owing to their situation.

#### 4.3.3. MUNICIPALITY ROLE

Municipalities have a role to play in the local integration of refugees in the host countries. They may provide training courses and improve the communication between refugees and hosts through cultural activities.



#### 4.3.4. GOVERNMENT ROLE

Governments may promote downstream integration of refugees through the ministries of education, health and interior affairs. As policy-makers, governments are invited to issue inclusive policies that ensure equality between all types of migrants. That is, special policies for refugees are rarely issued. Given the bureaucratic systems in Europe, governments should facilitate the access of refugees into social, educational and economic system of the country. As governments provide equal opportunities for refugees and citizens, the long process of integration would be on the right track.

#### 4.3.5. ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Educational institutions' role is key for the integration of students and families into the society. Curricular and

extracurricular activities may provide a medium for students' inclusion. Besides, schools play a role in involving local parents and immigrant/refugee parents in the education and intercultural interaction of children thus contributing to the overall integration of refugees into the host communities across Europe. Indeed, the educational dimension is a realistic and humanitarian approach to social integration. In addition, research, training and partnerships carried out by higher education institutes may mobilise new policies on the local, regional and continental levels. For instance, the European Commission partnership with a consortium of universities, namely UMinho, USC, and NKUA, for research on refugees and asylum seekers illustrate such contribution –such as the present UNINTEGRA project funded by EU *Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund* in partnership with leading universities.

#### 4.4. RECOMMENDED APPROACHES TO INTEGRATION

There are many perspectives and levels to study integration. The level of policymakers is important to foster a fertile ground for dialogue, empowerment, inclusion and socioeconomic integration. The community level is also substantial as it is the effective field to target in order to prepare individuals, whether hosts or refugees, for integration focusing on its benefits and the historic contributions of immigrants and refugees to their communities. There are prominent examples of successful integration of refugees and immigrants across European countries. Thus, mutual knowledge across communities and recognition of contributions are vital.



The first action to channel an integration process is that of information. It is necessary





that people working in public administration are informed of refugee status, their needs and interests. In the same way it must happen in other organizations of the third sector. It is also necessary that these agents have the necessary knowledge about the regulations applicable to the case, and about the programs and actions in which these people can be framed to manage their situation. Spaces and forums should be enabled to make visible the real situation of refugees in each receiving community, so that mutual knowledge facilitates the integration process. Different action projects must be developed differentiating areas of incidence (educational, health, labour ...). These projects will respond to the basic needs of refugees.



In Greece, local rural and urban stakeholders collaborate with each other in order to support refugees and aid their integration in the Greek community. The maintenance and encouragement of such a collaborative approach is essential in facilitating the integration of refugees in Greece. An example of such a collaboration is the Emergency Support To Integration & Accommodation (ESTIA) programme, which aims to provide asylum seekers in Greece with accommodation, cash and support services. The programme is created by the UNHCR, it is funded by the European Commission and it is carried out by the UNHCR in cooperation with the Greek Ministry of Migration Policy, Greek

municipalities and numerous Greek NGOs (UNHCR, 2019).



The integration of refugees has been a priority for the Portuguese Government, in an ongoing effort involving public and private entities, which has been recognized by the UN, the International Migration Organization, the European Union and the Council of Europe. Portuguese migratory policies have recently been recognized by the UN, with the awarding of the Public Service Award to the National Centers for Supporting the Integration of Migrants of the High Commissioner for Migration.

This priority has been translated into active participation in the European effort to welcome refugees through Portugal's support for the European Commission's proposals for a common European asylum policy based on the principles of responsibility and solidarity, respect for dignity of the human person and in combating trafficking in human beings.

#### 4.4.1. NEW INTEGRATION POLICY

In theory, there is a range of definitions for integration from mutual accommodation to social inclusion among others. In practice, many European countries are involved in the refugees' resettlement and relocation programs to receive refugees on their territories. However, integration is a complex process especially following the exacerbation of conflicts and an increasing influx of refugees and immigrants into Europe. Therefore, new policies on integration focusing on satisfying the needs of refugees and hosts, providing equal access to education, jobs and social services as well as ensuring security and protection of values of refugees and host communities.

Many European countries adopt a mainstreamed approach with generic measures to attain positive outcomes from integration. That is, generic policy instruments include articles on refugee integration such as language training, existing health services, and access to existing housing stock. There are serious attempts among European countries to approach refugees integrally and not treat them as a separate category/group (Scholten et al., 2017). However, approaches to new policies need to introduce innovation, as most regional policies of integration were experimental or ad-hoc and did not comply with national policies of each country or vice versa (Scholten et al., 2017). New policies may integrate the following perspectives: (1) Local level is a driver to innovation along with the focus on health; (2) Parallel approach of migration and integration instead of the current serial approaches, where integration already starts during admission so as to avoid losing time (see Engbersen et al., 2015); (3) Integral approaches of health and refugee integration; And (4) prioritising labour integration such as competency integration in Norway, Denmark and Austria and coordination of services, such as the *Dutch Task Force Work and Integration of Refugees*.

#### 4.4.2. INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND TRAINING COURSE

The inclusion of 'the other' in ourselves is an important starting point for a refugee or host toward each other for intercultural dialogue (Vieira, Marques, Gomes, & Vieira, 2017). Training to spread awareness and cultural exchange between both communities is key for integration. For instance, the



establishment of refugee support platforms could be the hub that interconnects host entities, communities and individuals.

#### **4.4.3. MUTUAL KNOWLEDGE AND REMOVAL OF STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICES**

Knowing the other, accepting and respecting it can facilitate the elimination of stereotypes and address prejudices. Both communities should discuss stereotypes and respect the specificities of their cultures.

#### **4.4.4. TARGET LEVELS OF INTEGRATION**

Integration must be addressed comprehensively, that is, at different

levels and with various stakeholders. Addressing these levels horizontally or vertically is not enough. First, at the national level it is important that, from public policies, laws and regulations be drafted to achieve successful integration. Second, the middle level is important as municipalities can help educate attitudes towards integration. Third, local initiatives at the community and neighborhood level could bring people closer together. Finally, educational institutions are an equally important environment to be able to develop, through sports, excursions or other extracurricular activities, spaces that help students (and families) interact and get to know each other.



#### 4.5. GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION

The integration of refugees in the European countries may be supported by many stakeholders such as municipalities, refugee support platforms, hosting organisations, social services and employment centres.



In order to guarantee the success of social integration, it is essential that the local administration (closest to the people) is actively involved in this process. In Spain there is a Network of Refugee Reception Municipalities that is part of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP). This network will try, through the application of a protocol, to provide refugee people with a dignified life and ensure their citizen integration according to individual and family need.



In order for the integration of refugees in the Greek host community to be successful, the collaboration of national and international stakeholders is needed, i.e. NGOs, municipalities, the Greek government, institutions from the public and private sector and other national as well as international organisations. All stakeholders need to follow the policies and guidelines that are in place for the integration of refugees. Furthermore, ongoing research activities can help evaluate and ameliorate the existing guidelines.



Motivation, cooperation and responsiveness are crucial for implementing the guidelines for a successful integration in Portugal. Several stakeholders are involved in the process, such as NGOs and Municipalities, with a strong support of the Portuguese

Government who has determined the participation of the country in several relocation actions promoted by the European Union and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Research projects and the evaluation of past relocation actions are fundamental to the creation of new actions/programmes/guidelines in the country.

Based on the UNINTEGRA research, recent literature, and analysis, we present an outline of guidelines for integration of refugees under several categories as follows:

#### 4.5.1. PUBLIC SERVICES

- Facilitating public procedures such as social support for children, health insurance and legal services is essential. Upon reception of refugees, hosting entities should organise orientation workshops about such procedures. The use of tailored mobile applications for refugee services such as APP4REFS by UNINTEGRA project <<https://app4refs.org/#CategoriesGridPage:info>> in Greece could be vital as a guide for refugees to the entities for legal assistance, official services, humanitarian organisations, emergency and healthcare services among other important information.
- Getting to know how the healthcare system functions and how to access it is indispensable for refugees.

#### 4.5.2. LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

- Learning the language is fundamental for refugees' integration. European countries provide free courses through the ministry of education, schools and NGOs. Linguistic proficiency does not



only empower refugees to develop new skills but may also break the ice and improve their wellbeing and economic sufficiency.

- Host countries should provide access to education and recognition and equivalence of qualifications. They ought to support refugee children's education in order to avoid their burnout. That is, burnout may exacerbate their socioeconomic situation and deteriorate their future. For instance, UNINTEGRA research with directors of the schools recommends increasing the budget of public schools for them to extend support for refugee and third-country national students as well as students from certain ethnic minorities, such as gypsies.
- Schools, private or public, can present a suitable space for the integration of



families and their children, hence the importance of parents knowing how the educational system of the host country works and the role played by families in education.

- Social contacts with peers in school enhance integration. Interaction with schoolmates and teachers help children form a frame of reference about the new society (Paat, 2013).

#### 4.5.3. TRAINING

- Training is important for refugees as it helps bridge the gaps and refrain citizens from demoralising the skills of refugees.
- Providing vocational courses may help European employers to get the best out of working refugees/immigrants.

#### 4.5.4. SOCIAL VALUES

- The hosting communities should foster multiculturalism and diversity for an effective integration, e.g. Canada provides one of the best experiences in this regard.
- Host countries should promote tolerance, reconciliation and mutual understanding to support integration into the local communities.
- The rights of refugee and host communities should not be conflicting i.e. the dissemination of equality and respect are necessary.
- Families have to provide children with a foundation for learning how to fit into a new society (Wimelius, Eriksson, Isaksson, & Ghazinour, 2017). That is, family cohesion is advocated, as it is

influential for children's integration (Paat, 2013) especially in terms of parental involvement in education, guidance and upbringing of their children.

- Support for refugees should take place in the beginning to the extent that allows them to be self-independent. Helicopter parenting, monitoring and over-care for refugees are not recommended as they may cause overreliance.

#### 4.5.5. EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

- Ngos' interventions for behavioural influence are crucial.
- Refugee companion programmes could be handy – such as the case of Norway. Refugee families may consult a national guide about many aspects of life in the hosting society, which may enhance their relations with the hosts.
- Initiatives that encourage mutual accommodation, such as sport events, could be beneficial.

#### 4.5.6. RESEARCH

- Academic research on management should move from closed organisational research to cover challenges related to vulnerable people and social causes.
- Audience research is important for future European policies and interventions with the aims of integration into host communities.
- Involving target audience (hosts & refugees) in the decision-making, planning and design of interventions (Cf. Kheireddine, 2018) and policies. Practical initiatives are recommended, knowing closely the vision of community leaders,

refugees and the receiving community.

- Using behaviour-influencing approach, surveying target groups and pilot-testing measures with them before drafting policies of integration is advocated.

#### 4.5.7. AWARENESS

Awareness about other cultures is key for dispelling stereotypes. When we know a person, we stop taking stereotypical stances about foreigners of refugees.

Awareness could take the following steps:

- Disseminate knowledge about refugees' life through dialogue and roleplaying techniques. A role-play, such as youth on the run, explaining the journey of refugees to young hosts to break myths, create respect and promote (neutral) tolerance is recommended.
- Encourage participation in the society (Cf. Sorgen, 2015)
- Address social reluctance and exclusion through exchanging visits between refugees and hosts. Refugees should participate in local events to get to know citizens.
- Tackle segregation through a multicultural approach. Consequently, successful integration is more likely to take place if there is an explicit support for diversity and multiculturalism in the host community (Paat, 2013).
- Promote humanitarian values and principles through Higher education institutions' consortia, European Commission's mandate, NGOs work, sports, and children summer camps.

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**UNINTEGRA** Project aims at contributing to an efficient management of the migration flows, giving response to the integration needs of third-country nationals in need of international protection at two levels: firstly, by directly working with new arrivals to address their needs of inclusion, in conjunction with fostering receptive attitudes in target communities, and secondly, by promoting inclusive regulatory frameworks in the hosting communities.

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University leading full and stepwise approach to the integration of refugees



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