

# SOLIDARITY

Advancing the Role of Education in Fostering  
Migrant and Refugee Inclusion in Europe

BOOKLET



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The booklet has been supported for publication as a part of the KAICIID's platform Network for Dialogue microgrant scheme. The views, opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in the case studies are strictly those of the authors – Arigatou International and SYNYPARXIS.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of this booklet would not have been possible without the important contributions of the 192 participants who were part of the dialogues that took place as part of the project Solidarity: An Ethical Imperative for Advancing the Role of Education in Migrant and Refugee Inclusion in Europe. Their interest in and passion for transforming education to support refugee, migrant, and host communities to learn to live together was not only an inspiration for writing this booklet but also a source of knowledge and practical experiences.

We are particularly thankful to all the panellists and moderators for their insights and contributions during the webinars.

We thank Mr Murtaza Qalandri (SYNYPARXIS), Ms Dora Katsamori (European Wergeland Centre), Ms Malin Ljunggren Elisson (UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office), Ms Marilena Pelonero (Scholas Occurrentes Network), Mr Joussuf Fane (Scholas Occurrentes Network), Ms Athanasia Kotsiatou (SYNYPARXIS), Ms Neelam Fida (Islamic Relief Worldwide), Ms Efi Kallou (SYNYPARXIS), Mr Karel Jungheim (Kerk in Actie), Mr Barry van Driel (International Association for Intercultural Education – IAIE), Dr Angeliki Aroni (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greece), Dr Panagiotis Foukas (Public School Educator, Greece),

and Ms Maria Lucia Uribe, Director of Arigatou International Geneva.

We appreciate the support of Dr Aleksandra Djuric Milovanovic (KAICIID Dialogue Centre), Ms Athanasia Rapti (SYNYPARXIS), and Ms Laura Davison (Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies – INEE) in acting as moderators during these three webinars.

We are grateful for the Network 4 Dialogue (N4D) of the KAICIID Dialogue Centre for their support and co-sponsorship of this project through the N4D Microgrant programme. We are especially thankful to Dr Aleksandra Djuric Milovanovic and Mr Johannes Langer for their support in this process.

Lastly, we would like to express our gratitude to our colleagues from SYNYPARXIS and Arigatou International, the two partner organizations who implemented the project: Ms Despoina Georgiadou and Ms Danijela Popovic from SYNYPARXIS and Ms Maria Lucia Uribe, Mr Suchith Abeyewickreme, Ms Reetta Delas Näsi, Ms Emiko Naka, Ms Vera Leal, and Ms Paula Ananias from Arigatou International, who were all actively involved in the Solidarity project and the development of this booklet.

## INTRODUCTION



The increasing number of conflicts, climate change, and political, financial, and health crises has led to insecurity and hardship in many people's lives, which in turn has intensified challenges in many societies and increased the number of migrants and refugees. While the COVID-19 pandemic has also prompted solidarity between people of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, it has simultaneously exacerbated tensions between migrant, refugee, and host communities in Europe. Hate speech, stigmatization, incitement to discrimination, and xenophobia have increased during the pandemic<sup>1</sup>, building on an existing and generalized culture of mistrust.

Educational spaces often inherit these tensions, and the pandemic

largely disrupted access to education, particularly for migrant and refugee children. There is a risk that specific needs for inclusive education addressing migrant, refugee, and host community dynamics are being sidelined. An urgent and continuous response is needed to uphold children's right to quality education that is inclusive and to ensure migrants and refugees are not left behind.

Positive transformations in the relationships between migrant, refugee, and host communities can happen when the narrative and consequent stereotypes that frame migrants and refugees through deficit-based thinking are challenged. This thinking sees migrants and refugees as a burden, rather than as contributors

<sup>1</sup> European Network Against Racism. (2020). Evidence of the impact of Covid-19 on racialised communities exposes need to address persistent inequalities and racism.

<https://www.enar-eu.org/Evidence-of-the-impact-of-Covid-19-on-racialised-communities-exposes-need-to>

to the well-being of societies. Through an asset-based approach and inclusive education that values differences, host communities can begin to appreciate the many skills, talents, and the extraordinary resilience that migrant and refugee children bring and the many ways in which both host, migrant, and refugee communities can learn from one another and build bridges of trust, understanding, respect, and solidarity with each other.

This booklet aims to contribute to creating a new narrative of inclusion through education that moves away from the perception of a one-way relationship—whereby migrants and refugees have to integrate into the host community—towards creating a reciprocal process of learning that increases the possibilities of harmoniously living together in plural societies. Inclusive education plays a critical role in this process.

This booklet builds on the reflections and recommendations collected in a series of three webinars that were organized in 2021 for educators working with children across Europe<sup>2</sup>. The webinars aimed to create dialogue and awareness and build capacity in the transformative role that education can play in enabling children from migrant, refugee, and host communities to learn to live together in solidarity. The ultimate purpose was to encourage ways to initiate transformative

change in these relationships through education and to advocate for inclusive educational policies, programmes, and practices that promote learning to live together in Europe.

## Objectives

- Reflect on the dynamics and main challenges affecting migrant, refugee, and host communities in Europe
- Create awareness on the transformative role of education to foster learning to live together
- Identify recommendations for psychosocial support needed to ensure the social, emotional, and spiritual well-being of children and the creation of conducive learning environments
- Empower educators to use intercultural and interfaith learning through transformative pedagogical approaches that promote children's well-being, social transformation, and capacity to learn to live together
- Identify recommendations for educators, schools, organizations working with migrants and refugees, and policymakers

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<sup>2</sup> The series of webinars were conducted in the framework of Solidarity: An Ethical Imperative for Advancing the Role of Education in Migrant and Refugee Inclusion in Europe in 2021, as a collaboration between Arigatou International and SYNYPARXIS. The Solidarity project was co-funded by the Network for Dialogue (N4D) micro-grant and the KAICIID Dialogue Centre.



## Content of this booklet

The first chapter looks at the relationships and dynamics between migrant, refugee, and host communities in Europe, as well as the challenges and opportunities to promote inclusive educational practices.

The second chapter discusses the crucial role of education in promoting learning to live together among migrant, refugee, and host communities. It explores a framework for education that consists of five elements: ethics education as a transformative pedagogical approach, psychosocial support of children, a whole school and community approach, child-led initiatives, and the training of educators both in formal and non-formal settings.

Chapters three and four highlight the practical implications of inclusive education for educators, both from formal and non-formal education institutions, as well as policymakers.

## Who is this booklet for?

- Educators in formal and non-formal education settings working with migrants and refugees
- Policymakers who would like to learn about successful practices and the best ways to address issues of inclusion between migrants, refugees, and host communities through education
- All those who are interested in finding ways to support inclusive education either through research, advocacy, or informal programmes.

## MIGRANT, REFUGEE, AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE



### Dynamics and Relationships

Socio-political polarization; the fear of perceived negative social, economic, and cultural impacts; and contested narratives around migration can make relationships among migrant, refugee, and host communities difficult. These dynamics have an impact on how future relationships between these communities are shaped and can further deepen community tensions.

It is observed that even when there is a slow pattern of migration, and while some migrants and refugees develop positive and more open relationships with the local community, others at times react to their marginalization by

slowly isolating themselves<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, within the host community, there will be members who are willing to welcome migrants and refugees and build mutually supportive relationships with them, as well as other members who isolate themselves from these communities.

The inclusion of migrants and refugees in a new country and community must be a well-managed process looking to create positive experiences for everyone involved with a focus on social cohesion, building trust, and enhancing the abilities of the different communities to learn to live together. One aspect of such an approach is to create increased opportunities for interactions among

3 Paolillo, R., & Jager, W. (2020). Simulating Acculturation Dynamics Between Migrants and Locals in Relation to Network Formation. *Social Science Computer Review*, 38(4), 365–386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439318821678>





the different communities and the other is to work towards making these interactions positive experiences based on dialogue and mutual respect<sup>4</sup>.

When not managed well, the strained relationships continue to feed the narratives of exclusion and fear of the other, increasing isolation and the fragmentation of societies. Social stigma against groups of society is often developed from generalized negative perceptions of the other and exacerbated by misinformation, fake news, and the politization of migrants and refugee issues. Over time, these perceptions recirculate and develop into negative stereotypes, biases, and

prejudices among communities and have an impact on their sense of solidarity with one another. Social stigma can drive migrants and refugees to isolate themselves to avoid discrimination, prevent them from reaching out for help when needed, and discourage them from actively engaging in society and interacting with other groups.

Evidence shows that migrants are disproportionately affected by unfavourable outcomes in terms of education, employment, and access to basic services such as healthcare and decent housing<sup>5</sup>, which in turn lead to their marginalization and frustration. Children and young people comprise

4 Orton, A. (2012). Building Migrants' Belonging Through Positive Interactions: A Guide for Policy-Makers and Practitioners. Connecting Recognition, Participation and Empowerment to Improve Social Cohesion. Council of Europe. <https://www.coe.int/t/democracy/migration/Source/migration/EnglishMigrantBelongingWeb.pdf>

5 European Union. (2016). EU Youth Report 2015. [https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/youth-report-2015\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/youth-report-2015_en.pdf)

the vast majority of refugees across the world and, therefore, attention to their social, emotional, and educational needs is critical for their inclusion in host communities.

Children growing up in an environment of polarization and distrust can find it difficult to learn to live together without fear, biases, and prejudice. Such environments can also create negative school and educational experiences that can have repercussions across generations. The formation of children's personal and social identities might be impacted in negative ways, affecting their sense of belonging, awareness of interconnectedness with others, and the sense of purpose and meaning in their lives. If left unaddressed, this can lead to the development of extreme and violent ideologies, hate speech, discrimination, and xenophobia.

Historical and current narratives around colonialism, slavery, race, religion, gender, conflicts, violent extremism, and geopolitics can bring additional layers to the relationships between migrant, refugee, and host communities.

The colonial legacy and the narratives around colonialization contribute to how migrant, refugee, and host communities perceive each other and the dynamics of their relationships. Addressing the past and acknowledging the impact that European colonialism has had in the development of former colonies is critical to the formulation of immigration policies that challenge

assimilation approaches and that support the inclusion of migrants and refugees and the protection and affirmation of their rights in the host community.

Narratives related to gender also constitute an important aspect of tension between communities, particularly involving the role of women and gender norms and relations. Gendered cultural practices such as early marriage, genital mutilation, or even dress styles can contribute to these tensions and lead to mistrust between the communities.

A comprehensive approach to transforming the relationships between migrant, refugee, and host communities is important when looking at both short-term and long-term needs. Addressing some of these dynamics require a shift in policies and the creation of positive interactions between communities that will allow them to build networks of mutually supportive relationships with each other, contributing to building empathy, mutual respect, and dialogue between diverse individuals and groups<sup>6</sup>.

Education that considers these dynamics and needs can support the creation of new narratives that foster inclusion, ethical responsibility with one another, and solidarity. Inclusive education can play a critical role in serving as a social equalizer but also as a transformative force to promote social cohesion.

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6 Orton, 2012.



## Migrant and Refugee Children in the Education System

The education of migrant and refugee children faces many challenges across Europe, challenges that hinder a child's intrinsic motivation to learn and engage with others, ultimately risking leaving migrant and refugee children behind in education. In Europe, migrant and refugee students have a higher risk of early school leaving and being left out of education or employment<sup>7</sup>. Studies show that many refugee children are victims of discrimination and diverse forms of bullying in schools in host countries, such as teasing, social exclusion, physical violence, unfair treatment, racial insults, and intellectual

belittling<sup>8</sup>. While the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of the existing challenges, it has also shown the critical role that educational policies and programmes have in addressing them.

Political rhetoric in each country affects the perceptions the local community has towards migrants and refugees. State policies in Europe can, at times, be contradictory to European values and spirit. Solidarity, multiculturalism, and embracing diversity are core values that are not always implemented in practice. These values are critical for creating truly inclusive environments for interaction, mutual learning, and social cohesion.

7 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2019). UNHCR, UNICEF AND IOM urge European states to boost education for refugee and migrant children. UNHCR. [https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/71202?utm\\_source=&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=https%3a%2f%2fdata2.unhcr.org%2fen%2fdocuments%2fdownload%2f71202&utm\\_campaign=#\\_ga=2.99623645.2126681674.1628170714-1491265362.1628170714](https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/71202?utm_source=&utm_medium=email&utm_content=https%3a%2f%2fdata2.unhcr.org%2fen%2fdocuments%2fdownload%2f71202&utm_campaign=#_ga=2.99623645.2126681674.1628170714-1491265362.1628170714)

8 Cerna, L. (2019). Refugee Education: Integration Models and Practices in OECD Countries. OECD Publishing. p. 26.

**‘Some people were happy to learn about my culture but some were not happy to hear about it—some made fun of me. I wasn’t really brave at that time not to feel ashamed about my culture.’**

*– Murtaza, Interpreter/Cultural Mediator from Afghanistan living in Greece*

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>9</sup> and the Global Compact on Refugees<sup>10</sup> provide important frameworks through which UN Member States commit to promoting inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for all, improving access to education for refugee children, and sharing responsibility towards improving the situation of refugees around the world.

Access to quality education is crucial to the self-reliance of refugees. It is also central to the development of the communities that have welcomed them and to the prosperity of their own countries once conditions are in place that allow them to return home<sup>11</sup>.

Various challenges remain in the efforts to promote quality and inclusive education. Although governments have made commitments through the ratification of the Convention on

the Rights of the Child<sup>12</sup> and through national policies to provide quality education for all, many are not always prepared to receive and develop inclusive education systems. Ensuring the right to education requires States to take measures to include migrant and refugee children in national education systems without discrimination. It also requires teachers and schools to have the capacity and support to provide an inclusive environment. Often, many schools lack funding and infrastructure, and teachers might have limited knowledge and competences to deliver education that helps promote inclusion for migrant and refugee children.

The following are some of the challenges and opportunities that have been identified at the government and policy level as well as in educational settings and for educators to foster a culture of inclusion through education.

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9 United Nations. (n.d.). Take action for the sustainable development goals. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

10 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (n.d.). The global compact on refugees. UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>

11 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2019). Global Refugee Forum Fact Sheet. UNHCR <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/sites/default/files/2020-05/GRF%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Education.pdf>

12 Art. 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child underlines the obligations of States to provide quality education: ‘States parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: (...) (c) The development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own; and (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.’

## GOVERNMENT AND POLICY LEVEL

### CHALLENGES:

- There are insufficient policies to guarantee access to education and provide education that is inclusive of migrants and refugees;
- There are long waiting periods in pre-reception centres, which often lead to disruptions in children's education;
- Non-inclusive urban planning leads to the formation of only migrant and refugee inhabited areas separated from the host community;
- Migrants' and refugees' living environments, in small and crowded apartments, are often counterproductive for schoolwork and learning;
- After receiving permanent status, migrants and refugees are typically moved to another location, interrupting school and newly built relationships;
- Placing migrant and refugee children in underperforming schools and non-mixed groups risks putting them further behind in school performance and relationship-building with the host community children;
- Lack of spaces for cross-cultural encounters hinders the formation of connections between different groups;
- Not enough attention is paid to the holistic well-being of migrant, refugee, and host community children.

### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Finding ways to support capacity building of social workers and educators, potentially having a profound impact on fostering learning to live together among migrant, refugee, and host communities
- Strengthening cooperation with and seeking support from civil society and faith-based organizations
- Encouraging awareness-raising and communication at governmental levels that help promote a better understanding of migrants' and refugees' context and challenges and the importance of inclusive education to counter xenophobia and prejudice, as well as foster learning to live together
- Strengthening the cooperation between non-formal and formal education



## EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

### CHALLENGES:

- Dominant school practices and curricula are often based on the values, norms, and experiences of the native population, leading to the formation of subtle biases that value the majority culture, giving less importance to the cultures of migrants and refugees;
- Faith and beliefs are often ignored in intercultural education, which are important aspects of identity formation for many migrant and refugee children;
- The social and emotional development of children, such as learning to empathize with those who are different, is often left out of current educational practices;
- The lack of language skills tends to place migrant and refugee children behind in education from the onset, affecting their intrinsic motivation to learn and their school performance;
- Migrants and refugees often lack access to digital tools and online education, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Many migrant and refugee children have been through traumatic experiences, affecting their holistic well-being, ability to engage with new people, and school performance.

### OPPORTUNITIES:

- Finding innovative ways to provide additional support for migrant and refugee children to learn the new language, e.g., by peer-to-peer learning
- Collaborating with civil society and faith-based organizations to offer psychosocial support to children who have experienced trauma, addressing their holistic needs
- Involving religious leaders as cultural mediators to promote changing views and bringing communities together
- Developing mentoring programmes and peer-to-peer support systems for educators to share experiences and strengthen competences to integrate inclusive practices for learning to live together through educational activities



# EDUCATORS

## CHALLENGES:

- There is a lack of motivation, which is bolstered by inadequate monetary compensation, weak support structure, and high workload;
- Educators face tremendous expectations, demands, and pressure to deliver quality education and adapt to changes;
- Educators are susceptible to subtle biases that stem from larger cultural stereotypes of the 'other';
- There is limited teacher training in pedagogical tools, skills, and competences on multiculturalism and diversity, and insufficient background information about refugees' and migrants' contexts;
- Only a limited number of teachers come from a migrant or refugee background;
- Educators lack of time and resources to attend training or organize activities after official working hours.

## OPPORTUNITIES:

- Helping children feel at ease in the classroom; promoting multiculturalism and appreciation for different cultures, religious and spiritual beliefs, and traditions through stories, the arts, and theatre; allowing the use of native languages; and actively using participatory learning methods to foster dialogue in the classroom
- Promoting and opening up opportunities for new perspectives and connections between migrants, refugees, and the host community through organizing activities that involve them
- Embracing diversity in the classroom, encouraging experience sharing, and nurturing a sense of belonging for migrant and refugee children through intercultural learning and activities around festivals, sports, and food traditions
- Developing networks of educators for peer-support and self-learning through a community of practice.

**'As a refugee and migrant, you need to be prepared to accept the traditions of the host country, its language, ways of living, and to try to make friends. This helped me feel that I belong to the country and motivated me to learn the local language.'**

*– Murtaza, Interpreter/Cultural Mediator from Afghanistan living in Greece*



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Is the process of letting go of one's cultural identity and integrating into the main culture something that must happen? Can there be an alternative way of learning to live together and appreciating one another's differences? What is the difference between the approaches for integration and inclusion?
  2. What challenges can you identify in your context that have a negative impact on fostering learning to live together among migrant, refugee, and host communities?
  3. What solutions can you think of? What do you think is important in addressing some of these challenges? How can educators and policymakers help overcome these challenges?
  4. How about the community, local religious leaders, and civil society organizations, what can they do to foster positive relationships between the different communities?
-

## THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN FOSTERING LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER



Education is not neutral. It can either promote social cohesion and positive transformations or exacerbate inequalities, foster negative perceptions of the other, and create the foundation for violence and division in societies. Inclusive education can contribute to countering stereotypes and fear of the other by creating spaces to learn **with** the other and not only **about** the other and by developing positive relationships among children. Education has the potential to empower children from different backgrounds to work together towards common goals and promote learning to live together among migrant, refugee, and host communities in Europe.

Migrant and refugee children arrive in the host countries uprooted from what gave them a sense of normalcy. They are often victims of violence and affected by

anxiety and distress. Some of the most important aspects for these children to be able to thrive and for their well-being to be strengthened relate not only to their physical need for safety but also to their social, emotional, and spiritual needs. These include the need to develop a sense of belonging and feeling connected to others, as well as developing a sense of self in connection to one's ethnicity, religion, and family. It also includes the need to learn to cope with the separation, loss, and trauma caused by the journeys they have gone through and the need to feel safe, welcomed, and accepted and that, despite the many challenges, there is meaning and purpose in their lives.

Inclusive and quality education for migrants, refugees, and host communities creates opportunities in the classroom to learn about the cultural richness that



**'I came to Italy five years ago from Mali through a very difficult journey, without knowing Italian or English, only French. The school provided me spaces to learn the local language through friendship and projects where I had the chance to participate.'**

*– Joussuf, a refugee from Mali living in Italy*

each student brings and to recognize differences as strengths rather than as weaknesses. Schools should be spaces where students can feel valued for who they are and where they do not have to hide their identities to be accepted.

**Inclusive education that promotes learning to live together must go beyond supporting integration in its limited view of expecting only the migrant and refugee communities to change to fit into the host community. It requires a more reciprocal approach to inclusion.**

Schools have an important role as safe spaces for children to learn and interact, to come together and create connections between children and parents from migrant, refugee, and host communities. The educational environment, its connection with the community, and the opportunities created in the classrooms and other learning spaces can help develop friendships and solidarity with

one another, contributing to children's sense of belonging, meaning, and purpose.

Educators are at the centre of fostering learning to live together in schools, with an important role in creating safe learning environments for dialogue and sharing. Educators can promote inclusion in the classroom by encouraging interactions and reflection, challenging stereotypes and prejudices, and creating opportunities for children to take initiative in addressing common challenges in their communities.



## CASE STUDY: LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER BY ARIGATOU INTERNATIONAL

Learning to Live Together: An Intercultural and Interfaith Programme for Ethics Education (2008) was implemented with students in Athens, Greece from 2011 to 2016. Children participating in the programme came from 13 countries from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Teachers were trained to use a transformative pedagogy, customized to the children's needs and contexts that support dialogue and collaborative learning.

The programme was adapted to be used within the context of cooperative sports and games, focusing on inclusion. It helped strengthen children's self-esteem and empowerment and promoted mutual understanding and respect by challenging gender, cultural, and religious stereotypes.

The assessment demonstrated significant improvement in children's relationships with others, a decrease in the number of bullying cases, and stronger social cohesion both in the classroom and on the playground. Children expressed: 'We like how it is here in the school and we wish it could be the same outside.'

For more information on the Learning to Live Together programme see <https://ethicseducationforchildren.org/en/what-we-do/learning-to-live-together>



# Framework for Education to Foster Learning to Live Together

The following framework for education that fosters learning to live together among migrant, refugee, and host communities proposes a model to holistically address inclusion needs and create the foundation and conditions for more inclusive learning environments. The framework includes five elements that are mutually reinforcing and at the same time can be implemented independently, contributing to creating the foundation for inclusive education.

## Ethics Education: A Transformative Pedagogical Approach

Education must respond to ethical demands in societies and foster in

children the awareness of the ethical dimension of our interactions and relationships with others. This ethical demand leads us to respond to the situations that affect others, not because of sympathy, but because of the simple fact that we hold the lives of others in our hands and we are all interconnected.

Ethics education fosters common values, critical thinking, and collaboration between children of diverse backgrounds. It provides spaces for cultivating interconnectedness across religious, ethnic, and cultural divides, creating spaces for dialogue, challenging stereotypes and prejudices, and moving from fear of the other to trust and collaboration<sup>13</sup>. Field studies demonstrate that there is a direct link



Image: A framework for education that fosters learning to live together among migrant, refugee, and host communities

13 Arigatou International – Ethics Education for Children.(n.d.). Ethics Education Framework.<https://ethicseducationforchildren.org/en/what-we-do/ethics-education-framework>



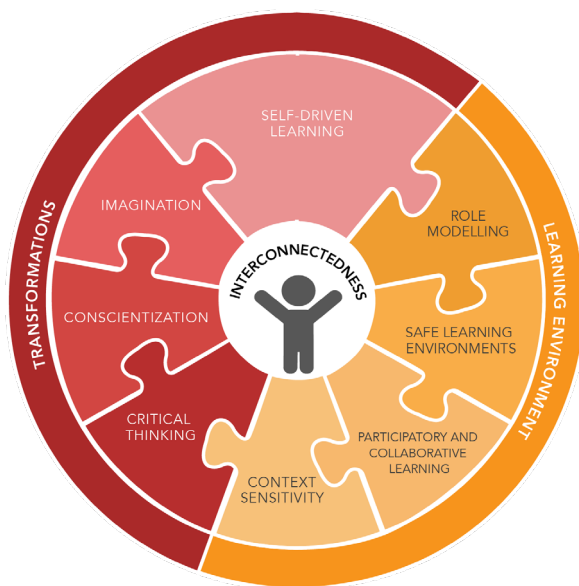


Image: The Elements of the Ethics Education Transformative Pedagogical Approach – Arigatou International (2016)

between children’s school success and values-based education that nurtures competences in children to learn to live together<sup>14</sup>.

Ethics education fosters children’s capacity to develop individual and collective responsibilities and to empathize and develop respectful relationships with others. It empowers them to learn to make ethical decisions and equips them to reconcile differences and work together towards a common good.

Ethics education, through its transformative pedagogical approach, helps educators develop learning opportunities and practices that allow

ethical reflections among learners which foster, above all, interconnectedness, and that lead to critical thinking and the development of imagination, critical consciousness, and self-driven learning. This transformative pedagogical approach requires the development of safe learning environments, the use of participatory and collaborative learning methods, sensitivity to the context where the programmes take place, and educators who are aware of the influence of their actions, behaviours, and attitudes on children and strive to become role models.

The practice of ethics education in classrooms supports the inclusion of

<sup>14</sup> Lovat, T., Dally, K., Clement, N., & Toomey, R. (2011). Values Pedagogy and Teacher Education: Re-conceiving the Foundations. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(7). <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2011v36n7.3>

Ethics education promotes developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and nurturing ethical values in children for them to learn to live together among people of different cultures and beliefs.

migrants and refugees by empowering children to create collective actions together to transform their communities, the narrative of exclusion, and the negative perceptions of the 'other'.

## The Learning Environment

Educators need to create a **learning environment** that is welcoming and enables the active, inclusive, and genuine participation of children. Such learning environments need to be safe for all children sensitive to the context, encouraging participatory and collaborative learning, and supported by role modelling.

In a **safe learning environment**, children feel encouraged to be themselves, to share and express their feelings, thoughts, traditions, and beliefs. Safe learning environments create the ground for connecting with one another, allowing children to learn without fear of judgment, to be who they are, and to express their culture and beliefs freely.

How can safe learning environments be fostered?

- By creating a physical space that meets children's need for safety
- By providing a common ground for sharing and for trusting one another

- By creating opportunities for children to be who they are without fear of being judged

The creation of a safe learning environment requires the educator to:

- Establish horizontal relations, to be vulnerable in order to encourage children's openness and genuine, meaningful interactions
- Ensure that the participants' ideas, opinions, and suggestions are taken into consideration in building knowledge together, thus making them feel valued and recognized
- Ensure that sub-groups and cliques that may exist do not exclude and discriminate others, by creating diverse learning opportunities that support forming positive relationships.

Children can dialogue, challenge their views, develop new ideas, and broaden their perspective on the diversity of the world and others through **participatory and collaborative learning**. For participatory and collaborative learning to happen, it is important to use inclusive practices and diversity-embracing methodologies and techniques, and to have respect for each participant's way of learning and interacting. Participatory and collaborative learning can be promoted by creating spaces for

play, using case studies to encourage dialogue, sharing stories, and engaging children in problem-solving.

The learning environment needs to be **context-sensitive**, with awareness of the issues affecting the children, the community, and the majority-minority dynamics in the group. The educator must be particularly aware of the children's backgrounds and especially of migrant and refugee children's contexts that might be new to the educator. The educator should ensure the materials are sensitive to diversity and do not portray a particular bias for or against one group or the other, or display narratives of segregation or discrimination. In mixed-classes of migrant, refugee, and host community children, the educator must consider: Who are the children attending the class? What are their specific needs? What do they bring to the classroom? In bringing the diverse context of these

children into the learning experience, the children will have opportunities to develop mutual understanding, empathy, and solidarity with one another.

Educators are encouraged to become **role models**, embodying what they are trying to transmit and, by doing so, inspiring and motivating children to reflect and discover themselves in relation to others amid diversity and contradictions. Educators are encouraged to also model vulnerabilities, showing the learners that no one has all the answers but knowledge can be built together, moving away from vertical to horizontal relationships between the educator and learner. Role models are not meant to be perfect but should be engaged in an ongoing process of reflecting on the ethical implications of their behaviour to become better persons in relation to themselves, others, nature, and society.



## Transformations in Children

Through the implementation of ethics education, certain transformations begin to happen in children. They become empowered to understand themselves, critically reflecting on their social contexts and learning to make well-grounded decisions considering the needs of others. Children start imagining possibilities and alternatives to the existing narratives of distrust and fear of the other and taking responsibility for their own learning.

**Critical thinking** and learning to think about the consequences of one's actions is the first transformation. Critical thinking goes beyond the capacity to argue against or in favour of a belief or idea, as it requires the capacity to be open to multiple narratives, to understand others' arguments, to find alternatives, and to challenge one's own views and perspectives. Critical thinking is a central aspect of fostering learning to live together among migrant, refugee, and host communities, as it enables children to reflect on the different narratives they have heard and how their decisions affect themselves and others and allows them to comprehend the world independently. Critical thinking helps children better understand the tendency towards biases, stereotypes, and misperceptions, and the consequent need to go beyond the surface of an issue.

**Critical consciousness** comes from the realization of one's privileges—or lack thereof. It can happen through discussions and reflections about the social reality and one's place within it,

followed by actions to help transform that reality from one's sphere of influence, starting with oneself. Critical consciousness is an active process of helping children understand their role in society by transforming power relations and vertical relationships.

How can critical consciousness be fostered?

- By creating opportunities for interaction between migrant, refugee, and host communities that help build mutual understanding and empathy
- By offering opportunities for migrant, refugee, and host community children to work together and find ways to transform situations within their sphere of influence
- By challenging preconceived ideas and the privileges people have or lack
- By fostering the power to change oneself and inspire change in others
- By providing spaces to reflect on and identify the causes of violence, injustices, and discrimination
- By developing a sense of solidarity with others by providing children with opportunities to reflect on their experiences, the situations around them, and the world, and by reflecting on their impact on society and individuals

**Imagination** is the capacity to envision different possibilities, new relationships, connections, and realities. Imagination



can support children as they consider ethical and non-violent alternatives to address problems they face, transform conflicts into peaceful realities, and aspire to learn to live together. Nurturing children's imagination can also promote their spirituality, their connections with themselves, with others, and with nature.

The ethics education transformative pedagogical approach is based on **self-driven learning**, whereby learning is not imposed on children, but rather needs to be internalized by them. This happens by providing children with the space to imagine possibilities of a different world and society around them. Self-driven learning means that children are allowed to choose and be in charge of their learning, driven by their curiosity and intrinsic motivation

to learn. Children must be free to explore, engage, stop, think, discuss, and ask questions, whatever they might be.

Ultimately, the ethics education transformative pedagogical approach aims to provide the opportunity for children from migrant, refugee, and host communities to take individual and **collective actions** to achieve common goals, build on their strengths, and appreciate the diversity around them. Such collective actions allow children to strengthen positive relationships, whereby instead of seeing each other as strangers, competitors, or threats, they start seeing each other as companions on a shared journey.

Supporting collective action helps develop a collective identity and gives

children across socio-cultural divides opportunities to strengthen intercultural and interfaith understanding. Over time, children become more able to engage with each other and to identify and respond to the ethical challenges they encounter. Collective actions support migrant, refugee, and host communities in learning to live together by developing mutual understanding, challenging exclusivist narratives, and building trust.

How can collective actions be fostered?

- By creating space for children from migrant, refugee, and host communities to envision new realities in terms of how their

communities can learn to live together and find ways to bring them to fruition in their sphere of influence

- By allowing children to come up with their own solutions and take ownership of the related processes and outcomes
- By encouraging and allocating resources for children to take action collectively, enhancing their awareness of common humanity and shared responsibilities and developing their individual and collective identities with respect for differences



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In school environments, how can we promote inclusive education? How about in the larger community? Which actors could we work with in our community to create opportunities for intercultural activities and help migrant, refugee, and host communities work together?
  2. How can the ethics education approach help us create conducive learning environments and empower children from different backgrounds to work together and become agents of change in their communities? What are the opportunities to integrate ethics education in educational spaces in your context?
-



## Supporting the Mental Health and Psychosocial Well-being of Children

Mental health and psychosocial support is one of the main paths to achieve the resilience and well-being of children by responding to and addressing people's interconnected social, mental, and psychological needs in an integrated manner.

In educational settings, special attention needs to be paid to the mental and psychosocial needs of migrant and refugee children, many of whom have gone through traumatic experiences that affect not only their emotional well-being but the development of social relationships and school performance.

During emergencies, people with severe mental disorders (psychosis, bipolar disorder, severe forms of depression, or posttraumatic stress) or intellectual disabilities are at heightened risk if they experience neglect, abandonment, homelessness, sexual or domestic abuse, social stigma, or are excluded from humanitarian assistance, education, livelihood opportunities, healthcare, a nationality, or other services<sup>15</sup>.

In supporting migrant and refugee children, it is important to apply context sensitivity and understanding of the cultural, political, and economic context of their country of origin and individual needs and backgrounds.

Educators, social workers, policymakers, and civil society organizations need to

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) refers to any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being or prevent or treat mental disorders. MHPSS interventions can strengthen family and community support systems and promote the positive coping mechanisms of affected individuals and their families.

MHPSS is closely related to human rights, as it contributes to facilitating access to employment, education, procedures for recognition of qualifications, social welfare, healthcare, and accommodation.

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (n.d.). Emergency Handbook - Mental health and psychosocial support. UNHCR. <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/251117/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support>.

be closely aware of the aspects that have an impact on migrant and refugee children's holistic well-being. In the holistic understanding of children's well-being, it is not only the psychological aspects that are important but also the mental and social aspects, in which inclusion plays an important role.

How can the holistic well-being of migrant and refugee children be fostered?

<sup>15</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (n.d.). Emergency Handbook - Mental health and psychosocial support. UNHCR. <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/251117/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support>.

- By ensuring stable and long-term mental health and psychosocial support and early intervention
- By adapting trauma-informed care approaches to different experiences when appropriate
- By recognizing the social aspect of children's holistic well-being and supporting this by promoting positive interactions and joint actions with different groups of the society
- By working together as a community to help children feel welcomed and included
- By referring to the appropriate specialists that can provide adequate mental health and psychosocial support
- By creating safe learning environments for children to share and learn together
- By promoting communication and dialogue
- By supporting children who have faced adversities in building their resilience in the new environment
- By integrating MHPSS in formal, non-formal, and informal educational activities, such as sports and literacy classes that can strengthen the development of coping mechanisms and support avoidance of stigma that stand-alone interventions may cause
- By ensuring that MHPSS interventions are age and gender appropriate and accessible for all groups
- By involving children and young people in designing psychosocial support interventions
- By establishing consistency in children's lives and creating trust with children and their families

When arriving in a host country, migrants and refugees suffer the breakdown or disruption of traditional community support systems or structures, such as extended family or informal social networks, which normally act as a system that fosters resilience and social, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Children often face uncertainty and worry over family members and their future while coping with the transition to a new culture and social reality. To support migrant and refugee children in this transition, it is important that the connection with their own culture and traditions is recognized and that they are given the opportunity to have frequent contact with members of their family elsewhere in Europe and in their country of origin. Children should be kept informed about what is happening to their families and the process they are going through, as well as be encouraged to keep using their native language while learning a new one.



## CASE STUDY: SYNYPARXIS, ECUMENICAL REFUGEE PROGRAMME IN GREECE

The following case study highlights the experience of SYNYPARXIS Ecumenical Refugee Programme in providing psychosocial support in Greece.

Ahmed, a 17-year-old boy from Syria arrived to the Shelter for Unaccompanied Minors of SYNYPARXIS at Thessaloniki with a difficult journey behind him. He had fled the war in Syria to Turkey, working in Istanbul for 6 months on the fields and selling paper towels at the local markets. Homelessness pushed him to try to reach Europe, and he eventually arrived to Greece exhausted, hungry and afraid. Placed in the SYNYPARXIS Shelter for Unaccompanied Minors in Northern Greece, Ahmed was distant, staying in bed all day. The professionals of the Shelter formed an Individual Action Plan to support Ahmed in an integrated manner.

A social worker and a lawyer of the Shelter assisted Ahmed to submit his request for asylum in Greece and prepared him for his interview at the Regional Asylum office. He was immediately included in Greek language classes held in the Shelter by specialized educators who also enrolled him in the local public school. Simultaneously, Ahmed was supported by the social workers and psychologists through regular sessions that helped him set goals and overcome his fears and anxiety for the future. Ahmed began to show remarkable progress in learning Greek and expressing himself, while his social skills and self-esteem were improving significantly.

Ahmed described his experience followingly:

"I feel grateful to be here. My dreams are getting real day by day. Both the staff and the children are nice to me, always helping me and supporting me. The lawyer deals with my legal issues, as I strongly wish to get asylum in Greece and stay here. The teachers help me learn the language faster and so far they tell me that I am a very good student and I will soon be able to communicate in Greek perfectly. This makes me so happy and motivates me to try harder. The social workers always care about my clothes, my health and any problem I might have in the house. I feel safe and supported. There are also psychologists, to whom I can speak when I feel sad or disappointed for some reason. All of them care about me and they are like a second family for me. I will never forget them in my life."

While creating safe educational spaces and offering support to migrant and refugee children who have gone through traumatic experiences, it is also important to be aware of the roles and limitations of each profession. Educators are not expected to be psychologists, and there should be complementarity and collaboration between different sectors and enough qualified specialists available to offer targeted professional support for the migrant and refugee children who need it.

Faith plays a critical role for many individuals and communities in strengthening their well-being and recovery. Faith-based organizations and religious communities can, therefore, provide support and complementary faith-sensitive psychosocial approaches to individuals, groups, and communities.

It is important to recognize that the host community is also confronted by a new situation when migrants and refugees arrive to their living environment and might need support in dealing with their emotions, such as anxiety and fear. MHPSS is also about easing the experience of fear and preventing possible acts of violence, discrimination, and hostility; it can help the host community discuss their fears, be heard, and have the opportunity to change their perceptions.

How can the host community be supported?

- By recognizing their grievances and fears and offering them understanding
- By giving the host community the opportunity to share their fears, anxieties, and worries through listening to them and organizing spaces for discussion
- By extending the invitation for mental health and psychosocial support to host communities
- By bringing the community together through different activities and events and creating opportunities for cultural exchange to foster mutual understanding.



## **GUIDE: A FAITH-SENSITIVE APPROACH IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

**(The Lutheran World Federation and Islamic Relief Worldwide)**

A faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian response: Guidance on mental health and psychosocial programming (2018) has been developed by the Lutheran World Federation and Islamic Relief Worldwide to provide practical support to those involved in planning humanitarian programming who seek to be more sensitive to the faith perspectives and resources of the communities in which they are working. It focuses particularly on the programming area of mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), but in a manner that seeks to provide pointers for more faith-sensitive humanitarian programming overall. The guidance relates both to the spiritual nurture of individuals, families, and communities and to the engagement of local faith communities and religious leaders during humanitarian emergencies.

The guidance has been drafted to strengthen psychosocial support by securing more effective engagement with the faith resources of individuals and communities. However, while religion can be a powerful source of coping and resilience, it may also be used to promote harmful practices or undermine humanitarian programming efforts. The guidance, therefore, seeks to guide humanitarian actors in weighing strategies of local faith engagement in a manner fully mindful of the 'do no harm' imperative. This involves developing a deeper contextual understanding of the role of religion and religious actors in a humanitarian setting.

Source: The Lutheran World Federation and Islamic Relief Worldwide. (2018). A faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian response: Guidance on mental health and psychosocial programming. LWF and IRW: Geneva and Birmingham.

[https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/faith-sensitive\\_humanitarian\\_response\\_2018.pdf](https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/faith-sensitive_humanitarian_response_2018.pdf)



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. In school environments, what is the role of mental health and psychosocial support in helping build positive relationships and promoting inclusion? What are the current challenges in your context? How can they be addressed? Who needs to be involved?
2. How can the ethics education transformative pedagogical approach help migrant, refugee, and host communities deal with trauma and fear of one another, as well as foster positive relationships and socio-emotional aspects of their well-being and relationships with one another?

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### Community Engagement

Schools have a central role to play in the local community as a space not just for teaching and learning but for the community to come together, to socialize, and to create connections with one another through a holistic **whole school and community approach** to education.

By building a whole school and community approach, schools can create safe and democratic learning environments for students that allow them to feel welcomed and engaged while also supporting quality education. In this approach, learning is not limited to the classrooms but extends to the whole school, the culture, and the realities of the community. A whole school and community approach involves school directors, parents, teachers, and the local community in the process. It looks at the needs of

children and helps create respectful relationships between migrant, refugee, and host communities.

A whole school and community approach requires strengthened collaboration at the community level with civil organizations, sports clubs, unions, faith communities, teachers, parents, and children. By involving the community in learning opportunities in schools, children expand their views of the 'other', engage in dialogue while practicing empathic listening, learn from diverse cultures, and build their resilience by forming respectful and meaningful relationships with others and developing a sense of purpose. Migrant, refugee, and host communities need to be more engaged in what happens in the school, as too often schools are seen as separate entities from the communities where they are located.



Local churches, mosques, temples, and other faith communities can play an important role in supporting children, acting as cultural mediators between the schools and the families. Non-formal educational initiatives by civil society organizations can complement the learning experiences at the school level and develop a dynamic partnership to support the transformative learning experiences of children.

Engagement through a whole school and community approach becomes a mutually beneficial partnership between the community, the school, and the children. It may start with a focus on the educational needs of children and evolve into providing spaces for children to develop projects involving the community whereby they engage in dialogue, exploration, mutual learning, and discovery.

A whole school and community approach can have a snowball effect when it comes to challenging the fear of bringing religious identities into the classroom and the stereotypes and prejudices regarding the culture and religion of the other. Involving the community, parents, and family members in dialogues about diversity can help enhance mutual understanding and respect and ultimately contribute to building trust between different groups. If managed well, this can bring larger transformations to the relationships between migrant, refugee, and host communities in society.





## CASE STUDY: WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH (GREECE, EUROPEAN WERGELAND CENTRE)

Through the Schools for All project in Greece, school directors and teachers are trained to create safe and inclusive schools and classrooms where refugees are welcomed into a learning environment that aims to provide quality education to all. The training aims to equip school directors and teachers with the tools, competence, and confidence to manage controversy and deal with issues concerning intolerance, discrimination, racism, and hate speech in school and the local community.

Throughout the school year, school teams of school heads, teachers, and parents' representatives are trained and mentored by experienced trainers. The whole school is involved in school activities and workshops. The schools develop action plans that are focused on creating different opportunities to involve migrant, refugee, and host children in the community. Altogether 42 national trainers and experts support 18 schools actively involved in the project. It is expected that more schools will become involved within the school year 2021–2022.

Source: The European Wergeland Centre. Schools for All – Integration of Refugee Children in Greek Schools. <https://theewc.org/projects/integration-of-refugee-children-in-greek-schools/> (accessed on 10 August 2021)



## Child-led Initiatives

Many activities in educational settings are developed and planned **for** migrant and refugee children, rather than **with** them or fully **led** by them. Even organizing child-led projects for migrants and refugees often comes with the perception of working for the other, not with the other. Envisioning children at the centre of planning and running projects together, and therefore empowering children as active agents of change, can bring true transformations in the relationships between migrant, refugee, and host communities.

When educational projects are developed by children working in solidarity with one another, inclusion becomes part of the process, moving from integration approaches in which children from migrant and refugee communities are brought to receive information, observe, or be observed, to working together for a common cause.

Building on the pedagogical approach to collective action, when provided with the space to come up with their own solutions to the challenges they see with learning to live together among migrant, refugee, and host communities, children can lead initiatives that transform their communities. These can include projects and campaigns that tackle hate speech and discrimination and promote learning to live together through different cultural activities, sports, social media platforms, and many other innovative approaches.

Creating opportunities for children to develop their own initiatives allows their voices to be heard, influences matters that concern them, and contributes to the child's right to participation, as a general principle that also supports the realization of all other rights. Articles 12, 13, 14, 15, and 17 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child affirm children's rights to freedom of expression; to association; to thought, conscience, and religion; to privacy; and to information, which are pre-conditions for their participation.

Supporting children's initiatives to promote mutual understanding and respect among migrant, refugee, and host communities and, most importantly, taking them seriously, are critical aspects for promoting, upholding, and affirming children's rights.

The new narratives that the children create together are a way of having an impact on their parents and the communities at large.



## CASE STUDY:

### CHILD-LED ACTION: AN INITIATIVE FOR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Students from both host communities and refugee backgrounds attending the 2nd High School of Chalkida in Greece lead an initiative on “Intangible Cultural Heritage” to highlight the richness of different cultures, building mutual understanding, and promoting a shared responsibility towards the environment in the local community.

As part of their initiative, the students organized various events in the community. On the occasion of the World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue (21st March 2021), the students together with children from the Ritsona Refugee Camp presented poems they had written based on the work of Greek and Afghan poets. The students were of Greek, Albanian, Pakistani, Romanian, Afghan, Syrian, Iraqi and Palestinian origins.

Another activity the students led together was a #TrashHack campaign focused on raising awareness about the overuse of plastic. Through online polls and video messages, the students called on people to reduce the use of plastics.

The students also collaborated with their peers from schools in Germany, France, Italy, Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Hungary. They co-created a digital blog where they collected, recorded and presented different stories, myths, fairy tales, traditional recipes, customs and traditions from their cultural backgrounds to promote intercultural understanding.

The children were supported by the coordinators of the programs, their teachers and the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPNet), whose goal is to build peace through international collaborations in Education, Science and Culture. The Association of Parents and Guardians as well as the local community were sensitized about the children’s initiative and their international engagement.

Source: <https://eviaportal.gr/2o-gymnasio-chalkidas-symmetechei-apo-scholiko-etos-2020-2021-diktyo-syndedemenon-scholeion-unesco/>



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What opportunities are there to promote child-led initiatives in your context? Are there programmes that already support such initiatives?
2. What kind of challenges might the children face in leading such initiatives? How can we support them?
3. How can we ensure the different stakeholders acknowledge and appreciate children's leadership and relate to them through horizontal relationships and in the spirit of partnership?

### Training of Educators

Educators, including teachers from formal education and facilitators of non-formal and informal learning programmes, are central to fostering learning to live together among migrant, refugee, and host communities. Educators can promote non-violent communication skills, help children from different communities to engage in meaningful dialogues, and build bridges between people of different cultures and religious traditions. Educators must be willing to work with the needs of migrant, refugee, and host community children and willing to learn from them, their culture, and their religion.

Growing diversity in classrooms and in society demands educators to be more

sensitive towards the specific needs of different children and develop an awareness of how to support children to positively relate to one other.

The professional development of educator's competences is critical as this will enhance their capacity to foster positive relationships between migrant, refugee, and host communities and contribute to their inclusion. Developing competences is an ongoing process and a part of lifelong learning and reflective practice. Competences are not something one either has or does not have but something that is built, strengthened, and improved over time.

The Council of Europe's publication *Competences for Democratic Culture*<sup>16</sup> provides a model and a comprehensive

<sup>16</sup> COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE: Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies. (2016). Council of Europe. <https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc0c>

list of the competences which enable a child and individual to participate effectively and appropriately in a culture of democracy, such as valuing human dignity and human rights.

There are some additional competences for teachers and educators working with migrant, refugee, and host community children that can support the creation of quality, inclusive, and empowering learning environments that foster solidarity and respect for one another.

## Knowledge

- Different religions and cultures
- Diversity and multiculturalism
- The specific contexts of the learners
- Social narratives around refugee and migrant inclusion
- Pedagogical approaches, methodologies, and techniques for diverse groups

## Pedagogical Skills

- Creating safe learning environments
- Facilitating dialogue and building trust
- Encouraging reflections, critical thinking, and transformations
- Empowering children to take collaborative actions
- Ability to resolve conflicts amicably

## Attitudes

- Embracing the diversity in the classroom and society
- Openness to address issues of discrimination and inclusion
- Awareness of one's subtle biases and prejudices
- Empathy towards those with different experiences than yourself
- Role-modelling without fear of being authentic and at times vulnerable

Image: Suggested Competences for Educators and Inclusive Education



It is important to make the necessary investments to support the training of educators so that they can gain such competences and meet the needs of the changing reality in our societies. Educators need opportunities to understand these dynamics, learn new approaches, reflect on their own attitudes, and be inspired to contribute to the transformation in their communities. The capacity development of educators can also be further strengthened by creating peer-to-peer learning and sharing opportunities that can develop into communities of practice among educators interested in these issues. Mentoring programmes between educators from migrant, refugee, and host communities can also provide opportunities for the practical development of competences.

The role of teachers and educators in promoting learning to live together extends far beyond the classroom to the community and society. Empowering children to co-create actions together promotes social cohesion and solidarity. The teacher's role is important in facilitating access to quality education, supporting the inclusion of migrants and refugees through intercultural and interfaith dialogue, and fostering positive interactions and relationships between migrant, refugee, and host communities.

Teachers are not always equipped to work with refugee and migrant students and may lack the required cultural



and religious understanding and specialized pedagogical approaches to prevent stigmatization and bullying while fostering dialogue and trust building. Policymakers across Europe should invest in the development of these pedagogical and dialogical skills of teachers through formal training, peer-supported capacity-building, partnership-building, and community engagement<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Supporting teachers in the use of interreligious and intercultural dialogue in inclusive education for refugees and migrants. Network for Dialogue. (n.d.). <https://network4dialogue.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/N4D-PolicyBriefs-01-Education-Final.pdf>



## CASE STUDY:

# A TEACHER'S ROLE IN FOSTERING INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

(ITALY, ISTITUTO COMPRENSIVO M. L. KING,  
PIETRO LEONE COMPLEX)

At Istituto Comprensivo M. L. King of the Pietro Leone complex in Italy, the education for migrants, refugees, and host communities is seen as creating opportunities in the classroom to learn about the cultural richness that each student brings. Through this approach, the teachers have an important role in creating an environment where children feel and are welcomed in the classroom, as well as spaces where they can learn from one another. Language acquisition is supported by peer tutoring, and before the COVID-19 pandemic the school organized reception activities through the 'Reception Laboratory' for new students from migrant and refugee backgrounds.



Teachers have taken an active role in fostering a safe learning environment and creating opportunities for interaction and dialogue between the migrant, refugee, and host community children. Together, they organized a baking celebration, 'Cake for Solidarity', to support friendship and cultural exchange through food, a multicultural football match, and joint cultural celebrations.

The children from migrant, refugee, and host communities participated in volunteer work in the community through food collections and collecting school material for those in need. The approach of Istituto Comprensivo M. L. King has led to the development of friendships between children of various cultures and has proved successful in supporting the inclusion of migrants and refugees.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of experiences can help educators gain more insight into the backgrounds of the children they work with?
  2. How can educators be supported to enhance reflective practice approaches that promote ongoing learning and growth?
  3. What kind of opportunities are available for educators in your context for enhancing competences related to refugee and migrant questions, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, and ethics education?
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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS



- Build a positive school and educational culture that is welcoming of everyone, inclusive, and upholds the dignity of all persons by building safe learning environments and facilitating reciprocal learning;
- Integrate ethics education that helps children understand themselves, their relationships with others, and the dynamics in the wider society through dialogue with one another. These opportunities should permeate between the formal, non-formal (extra-curricular), and informal curricula;
- Integrate approaches for mental health and psychosocial support and establish connections with other stakeholders, as necessary;
- Support child-led initiatives focused on creating spaces for refugee, migrant, and host communities to learn to live together;
- Empower educators with competences and pedagogical approaches and tools to provide intercultural and interfaith learning, as well as with the resources required to facilitate transformative learning experiences;
- Engage the whole school and the broader community as equal partners, co-educators, and beneficiaries in supporting children and their initiatives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS



The Policy Brief entitled *Supporting Teachers in the Use of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Inclusive Education for Refugees and Migrants*, developed by the Network for Dialogue, provides important recommendations for policy makers. In addition to those, the following five recommendations provide a framework to ensure that education contributes to foster inclusive communities among migrants, refugees and local communities.

- Include refugees and migrants in national education systems;
- Develop training opportunities for teachers on ethics education transformative pedagogical approaches that can enhance their ability to develop learning experiences that are empowering for children;
- Promote the involvement and participation of host communities in programmes addressing migrants and refugees to ensure inclusion and the development of trust and solidarity;
- Support psychosocial support for all stakeholders through multi-sectoral approaches;
- Recognize and support child-led initiatives that contribute to helping migrant, refugee, and host communities to learn to live together.





Recommendations for policymakers to support teachers' competences and inclusive education:

- Include mainstream intercultural and interreligious dialogue and learning in the existing educational curriculum;
- Provide all teachers with intercultural and interreligious skills as an approach to ensure inclusive education;
- Engage families of refugee and migrant students in school activities as equal partners, co-educators, and beneficiaries;
- Enable cooperation with (migrant-led or refugee-led) civil society organizations working with refugee and migrant students;
- Integrate values and approaches of inclusive education horizontally in all teacher training curricula;
- Create fast-track qualification and accreditation programmes for teachers with migrant or refugee backgrounds;
- Support increased diversity in the training profession by helping representatives of different ethnic groups become teachers.

Source: Supporting teachers in the use of interreligious and intercultural dialogue in inclusive education for refugees and migrants. Network for Dialogue. <https://network4dialogue.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/N4D-PolicyBriefs-01-Education-Final.pdf>



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