

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Chair Report

[Agenda A: Alleviating The Overburdened Refugee Systems In The EU and Ensuring The Successful Integration Of Into The Society]

Yonsei Model United Nations 2025

Chair: Yuna Song

Student Officer: Leah Kim

About the United Nations

The United Nations is the largest intergovernmental organisation that was founded in 1945 after World War II. Consisting of 193 member states, the United Nations endeavours to sustain international peace, security and cooperation, guided by the United Nations Charter.

A replacement for the League of Nations, the United Nations has been the centre of discussion and euphony for multilateral issues such as general disarmament, international security, multilateral cooperation, international economy, human rights affairs and sustainable development. The United Nations is operated under six major organs - The Secretariat, General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council and the International Court of Justice. The United Nations has also assigned other specialised agencies and rapporteurs in reach for international peace and security.

Sessions of committees pertaining to the United Nations carry arduous responsibilities of perpetuating peace and humanitarian rights. Delegates of member states thrive to represent their designated nation and to form an international consensus on a myriad of agendas.

Committee Introduction

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also known as the UN Refugee Agency, was established in 1950 by the General Assembly initially to help refugees who fled homes after World War II. Now, dedicating the global organisation to saving lives, the UNHCR takes action with a vision of a world where every person forced to flee can build a better future. The committee fulfils and achieves its purpose by providing needed support and care in 136 different countries. Just in 2023, the UNHCR has directly provided more than \$760 million in cash to 7.3 million people in over 110 countries. This cash has allowed them access to bedding, clothes, hygiene kits alongside energy and housing fees.

Aside from medical aid and necessities, it also aims to look over the psychological factors by monitoring various asylum centres to ensure that the refugees' human rights are being secured. The committee prioritises responding to emergencies, protecting human rights, and building futures for those displaced and neglected by their nation.

To ensure the sustainable lives of refugees, UNHCR assists people in officiating their status as refugees in host countries. After the entry they will be guided to various refugee systems such as asylums; in case of no vacancy, the committee will set up and help manage new camps to guarantee suitable shelters for each individual. This is done through the Refugee Status Determination (RSD), which is established in over 50 countries to operate the legal administrative system that determines where the refugees are from and where they are heading to.

Agenda Introduction

Agenda A: Alleviating The Overburdened Refugee Systems In The EU and Ensuring The Successful Integration Of Into The Society

Rising conflicts in recent years have contributed to the pressing number of refugees in the EU. The number of refugees is consistently increasing as 1.1 million asylum seekers were reported in 2023, an 18% increase relative to the year before. Consequently, there have been

compelling issues with refugee systems in the EU being overburdened. This situation is exacerbated by high influx of refugees and migrants, uneven distribution across the EU, limited capacity and resources.

An imbalance of refugees in a host country can create both economic challenges and opportunities. Initially, the influx often strains public resources, including healthcare, education, housing, and welfare services, as the government reallocates funds to accommodate the needs of refugees. In particular, low-income regions or countries with limited resources may find it difficult to manage the financial burden, especially if there is a sudden, large-scale migration. The job market can also be impacted, as refugees often compete for low-skilled jobs, potentially driving down wages or increasing unemployment for local workers, leading to social tensions. Additionally, the cost of integrating refugees, such as providing language education, vocational training, and social services, can further strain public finances. Such burdens of costs are exacerbated when the distribution of refugees is imbalanced, with only a few handful of countries being overburdened.

However, when managed efficiently, refugees present economic opportunities to their host countries in the long term. They contribute to the job market by filling in labor gaps, become additional participants to the local economy, and could lead to further innovation. When managed effectively, the refugee population can transition from being an economic burden to an asset for the host country's economic development.

Aside from economic matters, the social dynamics of accepting refugees within the host country should be considered as well. With the refugees being concentrated in only a few countries, local resistance against the establishment and expansion of refugee centres are limiting NGOs' and the governments' capabilities to increase the number of refugees. The overburdened refugee systems cannot be properly controlled, which leads to damaged public order. Especially with trends of xenophobia and racism in Balkan countries, a popular destination for refugees, further conflict between the host country's citizens and the refugee advocates could be accelerated.

Key Terms

Refugees

A social minority forced to flee their own country to seek safety in another country. They are unable to return to their home country in most cases because of their ethnicity, their beliefs, or violence and serious public disorder. There are 43.4 million refugees globally today and 1.1 million of them wish to return home once it is safe.

Asylum

A form of protection that allows refugees to remain in the host country instead of being removed or deported to a country where they fear persecution or harm. Asylum provides protection and shelter to those in need. When they apply for asylum, they have the right to be recognized as a refugee and receive legal protection and support such as shelters or social assimilation assistance programs.

Persecution

Systematic mistreatment from the authorities from the home country to those that are neglected due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or belonging to a particular social group in a nation. The UNHCR defines it as serious human rights violations, including a threat to life or freedom. These threats often include: imprisoning, torturing, and cleansing of the religion.

Integration

The ability of the refugees to assimilate into the society of the host country. It is important to ensure refugee integration through sufficient support and facilities to prevent neglect and secondary problems.

Migration

The movement of people from one country, locality, or place of residency to another location. Refugees change location due to various reasons and events regarding their home country, which is considered migration. Individuals don't necessarily have to be in danger to migrate.

Historical Background

World War II, involving the Holocaust by the Nazis and other regional wars, displaced millions of people including the Jews, Romans, or disabled individuals. This was the main starter of the massive refugee movement between the 1940s and the 1950s. After the war, large numbers of these refugees moved borders as European countries found their new borders. As the Germans were expelled from Eastern Europe, the Eastern Europeans started fleeing to communist regimes such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Slovenia.

Following WWII, there was the Cold War and the communist regimes throughout the 1950s to the 1980s. Due to the compelling political stances, large numbers of people fled authoritarian regimes in the Eastern Bloc to seek asylum in Western Europe that treated capitalism. The Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968 are prominent examples as they show the trail that led massive numbers of refugees to Europe. Both instances involve citizens of each country (Hungary and Czechoslovakia) trying to overthrow their communist governments. Both forces were repressed by their government, leading to many deaths and the waves of refugees fleeing Soviet repression.

Subsequently, the decolonization of African and Asian countries heavily contributed to refugee movements as well. For instance, after France's decolonization of many African countries, such as Algeria, Angola and Mozambique, the citizens of those nations could not become fully independent and followed the colonisers' paths resulting in refugees in France and neighbouring European countries.

With the increasing number of refugees and yet the lack of systemic programs to assimilate them, the 2015 European Refugee Crisis where Europe experienced one of its largest refugee crises erupted. The rising conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Eritrea, alongside the economic migration from North Africa from poverty led to the arrival of over a million refugees. The bordering nations were overwhelmed, which led to immense pressure on the EU to reform its asylum policies such as the Dublin Regulation.

Status Quo

The social impact of an imbalance of refugees is a pressing issue for many host countries today. The rapid influx often leads to overcrowding in schools and healthcare facilities, straining systems already under pressure. Social tensions can rise as locals may see refugees as competitors for jobs and public resources, leading to xenophobia and discrimination. Insufficient integration policies make it harder for refugees to assimilate, while language barriers and cultural differences contribute to social isolation. Security concerns, though often unfounded, also fuel negative perceptions. Refugees migrate to Europe as it is socially recognized as safe and accepting. However, the reason why there is an imbalance is not because certain countries are reluctant to accept refugees. It is because the refugees are entering through the closest borders being Balkan countries. This creates a problem as millions of refugees apply for asylum and request for documents to move to other countries. As there are too many refugees to go through, they are stuck at the first destination leading to constantly overburdened asylums and worsened conditions. Recognizing this, developed countries such as France and Germany try to show support and provide help through financial capital in the host countries and the home countries.

The Dublin Regulation And The Imbalance of Refugees

Majority of the refugees seeking habitats in Europe flee from Syria, Afghanistan, and North Africa. Especially after the 2015 refugee crisis that brought millions of refugees from the Middle East, continued migration patterns from similar regions resulted. Furthermore, there is uneven distribution of refugees across the EU as frontline countries bear the burden the most. Countries near the Middle East such as Greece, Italy, and Hungary are often the targets of new arrivals to the EU, and the Dublin Regulation worsens this situation. The regulation establishes that the refugees cannot leave the country they entered without their asylum requests being processed: as the bordering countries are overloaded with the documents, they cannot move the refugees out no matter their situation. This is the reason why countries away from European borders such as Germany, Switzerland and Netherlands have less refugees than South-Eastern European countries. The fact that the Western countries have larger and wealthier capacities makes the imbalance more tragic. While the developed countries possess sufficient assets and capital to take in the refugees, refugees are unable to reach the borders to access the aid. The investment in such locations often don't reach the potential they could have provided. On the

other hand, the overcrowding in the European border countries' asylums worsen the already suffering conditions.

Overcrowding In Refugee Centres

The overcrowding in the refugee centres, especially in bordering countries, are operating way beyond their capacity; camps designed for just a few thousands of people are now in unsanitary and unsafe conditions due to the overpopulated systems. In Greece Moria refugee camp, there were several reported incidents of sexual violence along with constant clashes and riots amongst the refugees. This has resulted in worsened the refugee's traumatic responses. The facilities include 72 people per functioning toilet and 84 people per functioning shower, showing the unsanitary state caused by overcrowding in the asylums. Furthermore, the funds being provided to these countries are far insufficient to ensure the management of the heavy number of refugees. This is because the EU financial institutions lacked capacity and willingness to serve refugees. Despite the immense amounts of aid nearing \$96 billion only in 2024, the UNHCR states that only 55% of the funds required are being fulfilled. This has been exacerbated by the imbalance of preference in funding for different groups of refugees. When Ukrainian refugees started flooding into Europe from the war, the EU spent approximately 17 billion Euros to lower fees and simplified onboarding processes for them while other groups did not get the same treatment. Because they spent more on certain demographic groups, negligence on certain refugee groups occurs, resulting in overcrowding of refugee centres as they don't receive sufficient funding to establish adequate refugee centres or other forms of alleviation methods.

Ongoing Conflicts and Increasing Number of Refugees

The overburdened refugee crisis is exacerbated by the increase of ongoing conflicts such as the Ukraine War leading to constant problems with refugees in the EU. After the spike of refugees in 2015, Europe did not have as many refugees applying for asylum for a few years. However, the Russian invasion has created one of the largest refugee flows in recent history with over 5 million Ukrainians fleeing to EU countries, mainly the Czech Republic, Poland, and Austria. One dominant factor of such destinations is because of their shared history and identity, so they feel more fitted in the new country. Moreover, the EU migration policies were welcoming to the Ukrainian refugees, making it easier to enter the borders.

As a result, there was approximately a 63% increase compared to the year before. With this sudden and rather unexpected influx, this resulted in issues with providing shelter, creating job opportunities, and handling the social strain. As most refugees were women and children that left their male family members back in Ukraine, emotional issues were a crucial factor that made their integration into the society more difficult.

Aside from conventional forms of conflicts, there is a new form of refugees called climate refugees that wish to depart due to suffocating environmental factors. A significant example of this is the desertification in sub-Saharan Africa scaring and displacing people from the threatening environment and pushing them toward Europe. Even in 2022, there were over 36 million refugees fleeing their home countries due to climate crisis and natural disasters.

Past Actions by Nations and Organisations

Turkey

The EU-Turkey Deal, also known as the EU-Turkey Statement, aimed to distribute the burden of refugees by redirecting refugees to other EU countries as well. One of the traditional routes for refugees in MENA regions, especially from Syria, was to arrive in Greece. This imbalance, along with the problem of undocumented migration, resulted in the overburdened refugee system in Greece. As such, as of March 20, 2016, all irregular migrants in Greece were to be relocated to Turkey as part of a coordinated migration plan between the EU and Turkey. Under this agreement, for each refugee admitted to Turkey, another refugee would be accepted in another EU country.. This would ultimately reduce the number of refugees in the overburdened asylums in Turkey and lead to improved distribution of them in the EU.

Scandinavian countries

Countries like Norway and Denmark have participated in increasing humanitarian aid to the conflict zones where refugees are fleeing from. For instance, they provided medical supplies, food packages, and shelter for internally displaced persons and refugees in Syria. Furthermore, following the Taliban's takeover, Norway and Denmark increased funding for healthcare, education and food security in Afghanistan. Such funding would resolve the fundamental problems that lead to migration, leading to a reduction of the number of refugees in Europe. As

the crowding number of refugees was worsening the conditions in the already overburdened Balkan nations, Sweden hoped to reduce the number in the asylums through this aid.

Additionally, measures that assure the proper integration of refugees into society are being made as well. For instance, Sweden provides a language program called Swedish for Immigrants(SFI) courses that provide free language lessons so that the refugees can overcome the language barrier and better adapt to the local society. Some municipalities pair this program with vocational training so that they can enter the workforce rapidly and build their own life. Norway also has a robust integration program including the “Introduction Programs” for newly arrived refugees. Through this program, the refugees receive a combination of language training, vocational training, and cultural orientation for two years that prepare them for autonomous employment that would ensure their sustainable livelihood in their new environments.

Germany

Germany is a popular destination for refugees, but due to geological reasons, it is often not the initial destination. Recognizing this, Germany has provided substantial funding to the UNHCR and the World Food Programme so that they can reach out to the refugees in farther countries. Additionally, they opened up borders to over one million refugees during the 2015 refugee crisis. This was significant as other countries were closing borders at this time, which allowed for an even distribution of refugees. This had a bigger impact of relieving the pressure of overcrowded refugees in Greece and Italy.

Aside from primary support, Germany has also provided reintegration assistance to refugees that voluntarily return to their home countries such as covering travel costs and offering financial packages that aim to support them rebuild their lives in their own communities.

France and the United Kingdom

To assist refugees’ safe hospitality, France has implemented the “Housing First” initiative, which prioritises their habitat over any other urgent factors. It provides financial support and housing vouchers along with job counselling and health services that allows for a smoother integration into the host country. Similarly, the United Kingdom has developed a Community Sponsorship Scheme that allows local communities to take on responsibility for

resettling refugees. The sponsors support them finding houses, so that they can settle well into the country.

Stances of Major Countries and NGOs

European Union (EU)

The European Union holds a relatively multifaceted stance and role for the integration of refugees. The EU seeks to find a balance between humanitarian needs for asylums and challenges that may arise from the overwhelming number of refugees in the EU. Members of the EU have shown different responses to the issue at hand. For instance, while nations such as Germany and Sweden have shown more support for accepting refugees, nations such as Hungary and Poland have shown more resistance towards the idea of accepting asylum seekers in a large portion. Although there are varying perspectives within the EU, it is true that the EU has historically participated in the drafting and enforcement of various treaties and agreements. Recently, the EU has mainly shown more active participation in revising policies that have been enacted in the past, such as the Dublin Regulation. However, due to the wide array of different perspectives and circumstances that exist within the EU specifically regarding issues including refugee quotas and division of responsibilities between nations, the EU has not been able to make a collective or unanimous effort towards the issue of the overburdened refugee systems in the EU.

United States

Although the United States is not directly a part of the European Union, its current role in the refugee system is one of the most influential amongst nations. As one of the largest countries that refugees have relied on for resettlement in the past, the US has a history of supporting refugees and asylum seekers, especially those that resulted from wars and national conflicts. The US made various efforts to alleviate the overburdened refugee system under the Biden Administration, making progress in increasing the refugee admissions caps as well as providing support for vulnerable groups to resettle in the US.

Germany

As a direct stakeholder in the agenda of alleviating the overburdened refugee systems in the EU, Germany holds a crucial role in the refugee crisis at hand. Germany has been an integral part of the EU when making decisions and actions about refugees, making direct contributions during policy making procedures. From the EU that holds a multifaceted stance, Germany is a nation that is more open to refugees and has shown effort to accept more refugees in the past. Historically, Germany has accepted more than a million refugees, particularly from wartime nations such as Syria, Afghanistan, or Iraq. Germany values humanitarian responsibility, as shown through its provisions of services including housing, healthcare, and education for the accepted refugees.

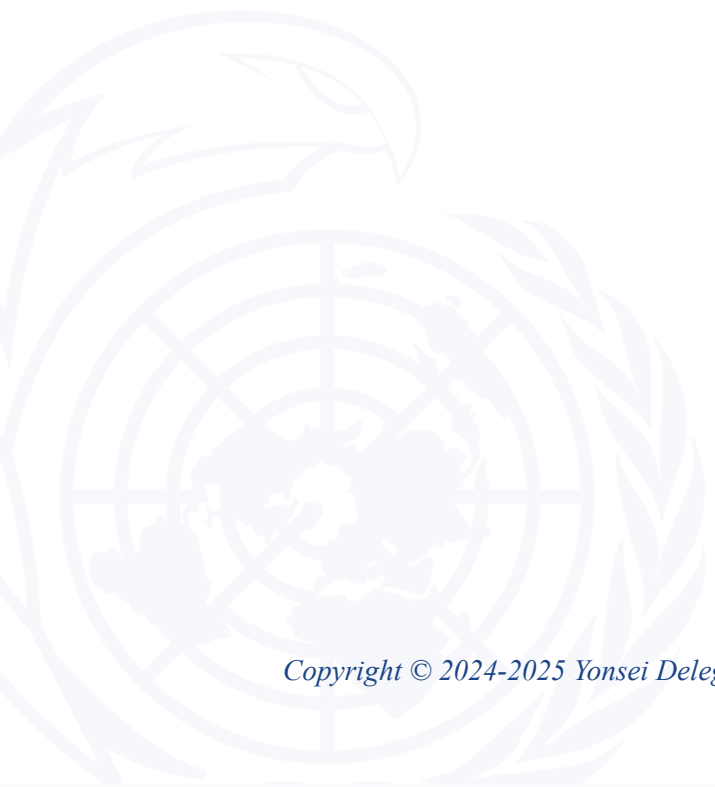
France

France, as another country that is a direct stakeholder, is a part of the EU and takes the stance of supporting refugees. Similarly to Germany, France has also shown the upholding of humanitarian responsibilities, providing their refugees with access to various services including healthcare and education. However, France has also faced challenges and struggles in maintaining the stability of the refugee system, failing to successfully integrate refugees into society, particularly in urban areas. As a nation that has historically shown support for refugees, France is one of the countries in the EU that shows a willingness for the EU to act in cooperation and come to a negotiated agreement.

United Kingdom

Although not a part of the EU, similarly to the US, the United Kingdom, as a nation with abundant resources available, takes a crucial role in the alleviation of the overburdened refugee system in the EU. The UK, compared to other More Economically Developed Nations (MEDCs), has historically shown less enthusiasm on accepting refugees and immigrants. Recently, the UK even tightened its asylum system and limited the number of refugees to accept, putting its national border security as a priority. The UK does generally show support for refugee resettlement programs, but has noticeably harsher policies on such issues compared to policies from other nations that are supportive of refugee resettlement such as Germany or Sweden. The Brexit incident has also cast a large impact on the UK's stance on receiving refugees,

complicating existing policies with the formation of new laws such as the Nationality and Borders Act that has limited refugee rights.



Possible Solutions

Strengthening and reinforcing past treaties and agreements

Especially when considering issues such as refugees and asylum seekers, it is important to consider the varying perspectives and circumstances of nations when coming up with solutions to alleviate overburdened refugee systems on a global scale. Therefore, it is crucial to review past agreements and treaties that have already been signed by nations to use solutions that have already been confirmed and agreed upon by many states. Furthermore, considering the rapidly changing landscape of situations in nations including geopolitical tensions, warfare, as well as humanitarian difficulties, it is important to consider newly emerging circumstances when reinforcing past treaties in order to come up with more effective and all encompassing solutions. For instance, reforming the Dublin Regulation could alleviate the burden that is currently placed on frontline countries by ensuring a fairer distribution of asylum seekers across member states in the EU. Adding more timely content to this treaty would further benefit nations by addressing the issue at hand in a more timely and effective manner.

Improving integration programs

One major issue amongst nations is that although the refugee system typically exists, integration programs are relatively lacking or ineffective. In order to ensure that refugees are not only accepted but also successfully integrated into society, successful integration programs are required for nations to enforce. Some aspects of integration programs that nations should thoroughly consider and develop include language training, education, cultural orientation, and support for finding jobs. In order to have an effective integration program, countries must consider national circumstances in various fields including the job market to ensure that their policies are specifically catered to support refugees that may face struggles related to the national circumstances of such nations. The improvement of integration programs can also eventually contribute to significantly alleviate the issue of overburdened refugee systems in the EU as integrating refugees can reduce long term dependency on state resources, enhance the labour market and fill any job holes, promote social acceptance and cohesion, as well as reduce public resistance.

Improvement and enforcement of regional cooperation

One of the main problems that must be addressed in Agenda A is the lack of cooperation and coordination between members of the EU. Various countries have differing perspectives due to their respective reasons and circumstances, and although it is right to respect these decisions, in situations where there is an unfair and inefficient allocation of resources between member states of the EU, it is also important to consider the benefits that regional cooperation can bring, especially during policy making and law making procedures. A wide array of solutions are in the scope of regional cooperation, including the decision of allocating a proper and necessary amount of resources for different nations, changing the refugee cap of nations based on varying circumstances, and discussing the responsibilities of each nation when receiving refugees. Currently, an integral issue of the cooperation system is that there is a lack of consistent burden sharing as well as a lack of transparency between relevant member nations. The lack of consistency and transparency makes it difficult for nations to always abide by agreements made due to the lack of trust and assurance that other nations will also take responsibility. Therefore, it is necessary to target and strengthen the transparency measures between nations to ensure that cooperation becomes more feasible.

Establishing a centralised refugee resettlement fund

Currently, the amount of funds and budget used by frontline countries are much more significant compared to others, making the accountability of nations unbalanced. To prevent an unbalanced system, a centralised refugee resettlement fund system for the European Union could ensure the minimization of disproportionate effects on nations. By collecting a pool of resources from all members of the EU based on the GDP per capita and HDI rankings of such nations, it is possible to develop a method that will be able to prevent overburdening frontline countries with relatively lower economic stability to bear the entire fund for the refugees of their nations. However, as such systems would require a significant amount of trust and transparency between member states, there should be third party organisations and clear guidelines involved in the process of establishing a centralised refugee resettlement fund.

Raising accurate awareness and spreading information

Raising awareness, although typical at first glance, can take a crucial role as an integral solution to the agenda at hand. Through the spread of accurate information, citizens may be more

motivated and educated to participate in various campaigns, increasing citizen funds and support. Furthermore, on a national scale, as nations may make decisions that provide aid to refugees, in order to receive support from the public regarding the notion of being in support of refugees, it is important to convince citizens through spreading enough awareness about the issue at hand to the point where citizens are well aware that it is necessary to provide support for the refugees.

Questions To Consider

- What measures or actions can the EU take to ensure that there is a fair and equal distribution of responsibilities for nations in the EU to accept refugees?
- What can potentially be the role of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and intergovernmental organisations in the process of managing refugee arrivals?
- Should nations have the right to refuse refugee resettlement based on national concerns, and if so, what concerns are considered reasonable?
- How can the EU utilise geopolitical relations to prevent an overburdening of refugee systems within the EU?
- What means can be taken to address public concerns and oppositions on refugee resettlement in nations with rising anti-immigrant narratives?
- How can financial support be distributed and allocated in a fair manner for all relevant nations to prevent the overburdening of refugees?
- How are Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) going to contribute to the discussion on refugees, and what are some ways that LEDCs can provide support for improving the refugee systems in the EU?
- Should refugees be given the right to work as soon as they are settled in a host country, or should there be a waiting period before they are able to work?
- How can nations utilise refugees as a solution to issues in the job market, and what procedures and steps would nations have to follow in order to do so?
- Do nations want refugees to be fully integrated into their society, and if so, how can existing programs go through revision to ensure that refugees are able to become active and successful members of the nations' society?

Bibliography

“Refugees.” *Ushmm.org*, 2024, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/refugees.

Riegert, Bernd. “EU Refugee Plight Could Worsen in 2023 without Policy Change.”

Dw.com, Deutsche Welle, 2 Jan. 2023,

www.dw.com/en/eu-refugee-plight-could-worsen-in-2023-without-policy-change/a-64250979.

“Well-Being and Basic Needs.” *Global Focus*, 2024,

reporting.unhcr.org/global-report-2023/outcome-areas/well-being-and-basic-needs#:~:text=To%20meet%20basic%20needs%2C%20including,to%20flee%20from%20their%20homes.

“Respond to Emergencies | UNHCR.” *UNHCR*, 2024,

www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/respond-emergencies.

“Persecution.” *Migration and Home Affairs*, 2023,

[home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary/glossary/persecution_en#:~:text=Definition\(s\),of%20a%20particular%20social%20group](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary/glossary/persecution_en#:~:text=Definition(s),of%20a%20particular%20social%20group).

“Asylum Applications - Annual Statistics - Statistics Explained.” *Europa.eu*, 2024,

ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Asylum_statistics&oldid=558844.

“Ukrainian Refugee Crisis: The Current Situation [EN/CS] - Ukraine.” *ReliefWeb*, 25 Jan.

2024, reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukrainian-refugee-crisis-current-situation-encs.

“Europe.” *World Migration Report*, 2024,

worldmigrationreport.iom.int/what-we-do/world-migration-report-2024-chapter-3/europe.

“What We Do | UNHCR.” *UNHCR*, 2024,

www.unhcr.org/what-we-do#:~:text=UNHCR%20works%20to%20protect%20refugees,education%2C%20work%20and%20health%20care.

“Refugees | UNHCR.” *UNHCR*, 2023,

www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-protect/refugees#:~:text=Refugees%20are%20people%20forced%20to,violence%20or%20serious%20public%20disorder.

“Europe | UNHCR.” *UNHCR*, 2023, www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/where-we-work/europe.

Samar, Kamuran. “Europe Sees Refugee and Asylum Seeker Numbers Go Up, Data

Shows.” *Euronews*, Euronews.com, 4 Sept. 2024,

www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/09/04/number-of-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-in-europe-keeps-rising-data-shows#:~:text=Syrians%20and%20Afghans%20continue%20to,by%20the%20end%20of%202023.

“Refugees from Ukraine in the EU.” *Consilium*, 2024,

www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/ukraine-refugees-eu/#:~:text=In%20March%202022%2C%20the%20EU,asylum%20systems%20of%20EU%20countries.

“Ukrainian Refugee Crisis: The Current Situation [EN/CS] - Ukraine.” *ReliefWeb*, 25 Jan.

2024, reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukrainian-refugee-crisis-current-situation-encs.

“Europe.” *Global Focus*, 2021, reporting.unhcr.org/operational/regions/europe.

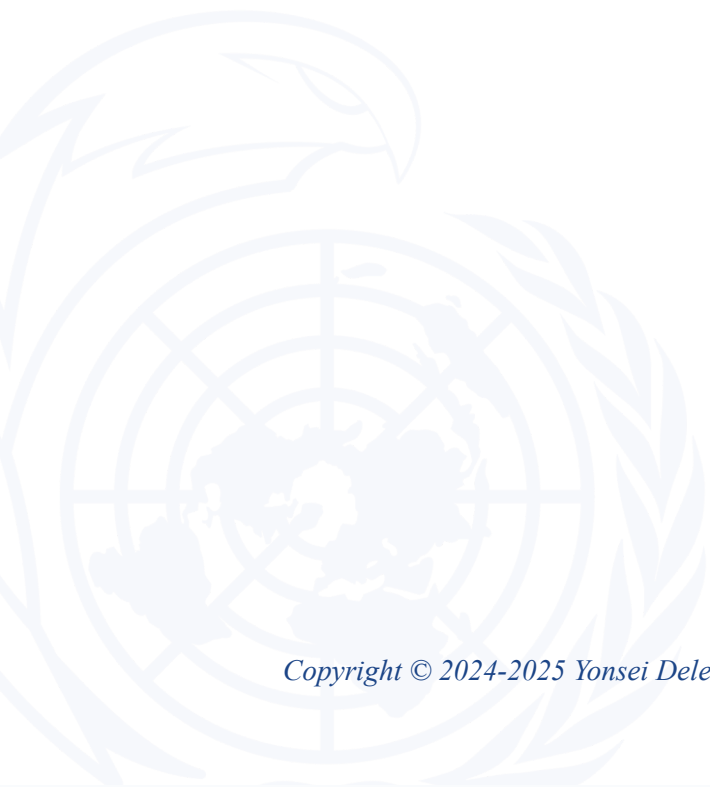
“Protecting Refugees in Europe and Beyond: Can the EU Rise to the Challenge? |

UNHCR.” *UNHCR*, 2016,

www.unhcr.org/publications/protecting-refugees-europe-and-beyond-can-eu-rise-challenge.

“Confinement, Violence and Chaos: How a European Refugee Camp Is Traumatizing People on Lesbos | MSF.” *Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) International*, 2018, www.msf.org/confinement-violence-and-chaos-how-european-refugee-camp-traumatizing-people-lesbos.

Zhang, Ting. “Often Shut out of the Financial System, Refugees and Other Migrants Face Economic Integration Challenges.” *Migrationpolicy.org*, 4 Dec. 2023, www.migrationpolicy.org/article/refugees-migrants-financial-inclusion.



United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Chair Report

[Agenda B: Outlining Guidelines On Refugee Educations In Host Countries For Equal
Opportunities and Quality Treatment]

Yonsei Model United Nations 2025

Chair: Yuna Song

Student Officer: Leah Kim

About the United Nations

The United Nations is the largest intergovernmental organisation that was founded in 1945 after World War II. Consisting of 193 member states, the United Nations endeavours to sustain international peace, security and cooperation, guided by the United Nations Charter.

A replacement for the League of Nations, the United Nations has been the centre of discussion and euphony for multilateral issues such as general disarmament, international security, multilateral cooperation, international economy, human rights affairs and sustainable development. The United Nations is operated under six major organs - The Secretariat, General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council and the International Court of Justice. The United Nations has also assigned other specialised agencies and rapporteurs in reach for international peace and security.

Sessions of committees pertaining to the United Nations carry arduous responsibilities of perpetuating peace and humanitarian rights. Delegates of member states thrive to represent their designated nation and to form an international consensus on a myriad of agendas.

Committee Introduction

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also known as the UN Refugee Agency, was established in 1950 by the General Assembly initially to help refugees who fled homes after World War II. Now, dedicating the global organisation to saving lives, the UNHCR takes action with a vision of a world where every person forced to flee can build a better future. The committee fulfils and achieves its purpose by providing needed support and care in 136 different countries. Just in 2023, the UNHCR has directly provided more than \$760 million in cash to 7.3 million people in over 110 countries. This cash has allowed them access to bedding, clothes, hygiene kits alongside energy and housing fees.

Aside from medical aid and necessities, it also aims to look over the psychological factors by monitoring various asylum centres to ensure that the refugees' human rights are being secured. The committee prioritises responding to emergencies, protecting human rights, and building futures for those displaced and neglected by their nation.

To ensure the sustainable lives of refugees, UNHCR assists people in officiating their status as refugees in host countries. After the entry they will be guided to various refugee systems such as asylums; in case of no vacancy, the committee will set up and help manage new camps to guarantee suitable shelters for each individual. This is done through the Refugee Status Determination (RSD), which is established in over 50 countries to operate the legal administrative system that determines where the refugees are from and where they are heading to.

Agenda Introduction

Agenda B: Outlining Guidelines On Refugee Educations In Host Countries For Equal Opportunities and Quality Treatment

There are many refugees starting a new life in their host countries after their departure from dangerous environments. They try to integrate themselves into the new culture as best as possible by sending their children to school, applying for jobs, and engaging themselves in social

activities. However, many individuals struggle with various factors that play into everyday life education including: language barriers, interrupted education, limited access to schools, overcrowded and underfunded schools, discrimination, limited support for mental health, financial barriers, and lack of recognition of their prior knowledge.

The education of refugee children is significant in that it provides the building foundation for the growth and assimilation of youth into their new surroundings. Many countries consider education as a crucial element in ensuring individuals' growth and development in society. As refugees cannot be neglected as contributors to the host countries, it is important to advocate for their quality education as well. Therefore, it is extremely important to address these challenges by using targeted programs such as language support, trauma-informed teaching, and initiatives to ensure that the refugees are accessing equal opportunities regarding quality education. NGOs need to work to improve refugee education so that the overall social welfare loss can be minimised.

The factor that is the most detrimental to not only the older generation but the younger generation as well is the language barriers in the host countries. Due to the lack of proficient education, refugee children are unlikely to speak either English or the host country's language. This acts as an additional obstacle to their already new and unfamiliar surroundings. Consequently, even if they do receive education, they would be unable to understand nor adapt. Another critical issue is inconsistent education. Aside from learning a new language, refugee children, especially of certain ages, would have to catch up on years of knowledge in a short time to follow the conventional educational timeline. Furthermore, it is unlikely that the students will get recognition for the education they obtained in their home country. Accordingly, they will be put in lower grades, exacerbating problems of social tensions and peer pressure, hindering their adaptation in a new chapter of their lives.

Key Terms

Welfare loss

Welfare loss refers to the decline in overall social welfare when refugees are excluded from proper education systems. Refugees not receiving sufficient education is a major welfare loss in the host country's economy and society. This is because the refugees are a part of the population

and are not producing the maximum output they could. This is a crucial problem that needs to be solved if the government wants to maintain a healthy social relationship with all stakeholders.

Quality education

Also indicated in Sustainable Development Goal 4, it means building and improving schools and education facilities to provide safe, nonviolent, and inclusive environments for children globally. This includes the need to ensure refugee children get equal opportunities to explore and enhance their future with the education system.

Equity

Equity is the concept of providing fairness and justice according to the needs of each individual by recognizing the difference of personal circumstances. It is important to ensure that the refugee children are getting equitable access to education as the children of the host countries.

Digital learning

Digital learning allows for access to education anywhere at any time through various digital mediums. This can be extremely useful for refugee children during their document processing phase to reduce gaps in their educational timeline. As technology is constantly evolving, it is important to use it in positive sectors such as education.

Holistic development

The social, emotional, physical, mental, and intellectual growth of a person. Specifically for children, it means focusing not only on their academic achievements but also their own personal growth, such as emotional or social skills. This is especially important considering the emotional vulnerability of refugee children, and the role of education in their recovery process.

Historical Background

There are 36.4 million refugees worldwide and 75% of them are hosted in low-middle income countries. 40% of these refugees include children (below 18) and youth refugees (aged 18 to 24) who represent 13.31% of the whole population. The overwhelming proportions urges the UN to question the affairs regarding education for refugees.

This can be largely attributed to their displacement that results in gaps in their education. For instance, the Syrian civil war, still ongoing to this day, has led to 2.1 million Syrian children being out of school; some students missed up to five years of schooling due to fleeing and processing documents. Furthermore, the lack of funding exacerbates this problem as only 2% of humanitarian aid was used toward education for refugee children in 2021. Moreover, over 400,000 Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh have had limited or no access to formal education due to the lack of funding. Such insufficient funding left many host countries unable to build schools or provide quality education for refugees.

Gender inequality also plays a role in the lack of access to education, as girls are expected to take on domestic tasks rather than go to school. This is resulted from the refugee families not acquiring enough income sources, forcing children to earn for their income. Because these children did not have the chance to receive basic education, they are completely unable to reach higher levels of education. As a result, they will have less opportunities to get employed in the future, to integrate into society. This will perpetuate the vicious cycles of poverty and heavy dependency on external support, which is unsustainable for both the refugees or the government.

Some children, even when able, are discouraged from attending school due to the discrimination and bullying against themselves. For instance, in the UK, there had been 60,177 bullying incidents reported in the span of 5 years against minority children including refugees. The bullying comes in forms of name calling, cyberbullying, and in the worst case, violence. Most of the time, the reason for the hatred resonates purely from the victim's identity and beliefs. It is extremely detrimental for children to experience such discrimination in a place where they are supposed to feel safe. Consequently, refugee children already with emotional challenges from losing their home country get hurt to the second degree and express revulsion towards going to school.

Status Quo

Low enrollment

According to the UNHCR, as of 2022, only 68% of refugee children have been enrolled in primary education, showing a relatively lower rate than the global average of over 90% for non-refugee children. This leads to the lower rate of 37% of refugee adolescents being enrolled into secondary education and only 6% of them achieving tertiary education such as college or university. It is significant that they have severely limited access to education due to documents and mobility issues. Moreover, many are discouraged from enrolling due to personal costs, gender inequality, and trauma.

Limited access

The most fundamental problem is that refugee children have limited access to schools. They have to go through immense amounts of bureaucracies and often don't have the sufficient documents such as birth certificates or prior school records to prove their identity. Additionally, the surging amounts of refugees in some countries lead to lack of space in educational facilities. These schools are also often underfunded, reducing the quality of education for both local and refugee children. This can result in conflict with the government and local stakeholders as it is far from prioritising the domestic population, creating secondary problems for refugee assimilation.

Personal costs

Sometimes, it can be a problem from the refugee side as they don't have enough money to fund their child to go to school. Despite most education systems being free, there are various extra costs that go into sending a child to school such as transportation, stationeries, uniforms, etc. Also, not having enough money will mean less access to extracurricular activities. This is mainly because the governments of host countries do not recognize the severely weak financial status of refugees. In the US, the refugees receive a one-time payment of \$900 when they finalise their documentation. Yet, this is still too little to support their life and they have many other financial priorities to cover other than buying school supplies for children. Accordingly, some Scandinavian countries have been willing to provide such supplies to refugee children.

Gender Disparities

There have also been reports showing the gender disparities in refugees' access to education. It is evident that women face discrimination in the labour market universally. However, the situation is worse for refugee women as they are overrepresented in the informal employment market, which is statistically proven by 38.5% of them having worked in the informal economy in Turkey from the age of 18 to 59. This is not only because there is low demand for them in the labour market, but also because there are less barriers to entry in the informal economy. The refugee women do not need to have confirmed documentation and the employers do not need to pay taxes on them, making it more accessible for both parties. The striking problem with this is that quality working conditions are not promised and that they are more prone to danger than women working in the formal sector. Moreover, it is significant that their economic activity cannot be accounted for in any statistics. It is also socially recognized that the gender disparities in the refugees' home countries are detrimental. For example, the employment rate of women in their home countries is 11.7% in Arab states from which refugees often occur, marking the lowest in the world. As they are not used to working in their home country, they are not more likely to start working in host countries. The UNHCR reveals that unlocking the potential of refugee women's potential can boost the global GDP by \$1.4 trillion annually.

Impacts of Refugee Education

"Education can be life-saving," stated the UNHCR as it has various individual and social benefits. For instance, education lowers the likelihood of adolescent pregnancy, early marriage, and loss of identity. Other than the refinements for girls, refugee boys that spend more time in the education system will refrain from risky behaviour, automatically discouraging them from acting with violence and experiencing victimisation. Overall, education grants greater access to the labour market and allows the refugees to earn a living in their new home. They will be able to contribute to the economy and learn how to manage their banking properly to preserve their life. It can also help them become more powerful and independent individuals if they happen to go back to their home countries. This will allow them to maintain a sustainable life and support themselves and their families.

Past Actions by Nations and Organisations

Canada

Canada provides a program for refugees called The Student Refugee Program, which combines private sponsorship with access to post-secondary education such as universities for refugee youth. The students are sponsored for one year with basic financial and social support like healthcare and living costs. This has led to a longstanding agreement with immigration and Canadian citizenship of refugees that allows refugees to study in Canada as permanent residents. The program is managed by World University Service of Canada (WUSC) who identifies refugee students that need resettlement and gives them permission to relocate their education within the program's universities to ensure that all students are feeling comfortable and productive in the education system. Furthermore, they also put emphasis on youth-to-youth sponsorship, which allows young Canadians to contribute to sponsoring refugee students. Aside from the quality of education itself, Canada also makes sure that the refugees are feeling safe and healthy in the environment. To contribute to this, they have a 14-week program of Trauma-informed Education-support program where the refugees struggling to fit into the society can be open about their life and rebuild an identity to live their new life.

Germany

Germany's efforts to integrate refugee students into its education system exemplified a comprehensive approach to fostering inclusivity and addressing the specific needs of displaced populations. Language acquisition programs, including preparatory courses and specialised classes, were prioritised to overcome linguistic barriers and enable refugee students to fully participate in the national curriculum. Schools were equipped to provide culturally sensitive environments, supported by trained educators and peer networks, fostering mutual understanding and social cohesion. Beyond primary and secondary education, Germany expanded access to higher education and vocational training through scholarships such as the Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative (DAFI), as well as apprenticeships tailored to the labour market. These initiatives, facilitated by partnerships among government entities, educational institutions, and NGOs, demonstrated Germany's commitment to ensuring that refugee education contributed to personal empowerment, social integration, and economic development. The model

underscored how investments in refugee education not only addressed immediate challenges but also fostered long-term benefits for both refugees and host communities. Aside from this, they are reaching out to those outside their country. For instance, they recently signed agreements with the United Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees through the KfW Development Bank that they will provide 28 million Euros for the education of refugees from Palestine. Moreover, Germany is considered one of the most flexible donors for the UNHCR as their financial contributions are reaching 88 million Euros to this day. It is significant that Germany makes impactful influences for the education of refugees all over the world.

France

France considers language barriers an extreme obstacle to successful integration. Therefore, they provide “reception classes” to teach the refugees French before entering their new classes. The French government highlights the concept of “égalité”, meaning equality when structuring the education system for the refugees. After younger levels of education, the refugees in France are provided with integration programs such as Singa, which is a citizen movement that offers opportunities to explore business ideas and learn suitable skills. This allows the refugees to successfully integrate and contribute to their new society, reaching 42% of refugees settling into employment. Yet, they still end up in jobs that are below their skill level due to discrimination.

15by30 Roadmap

The UNHCR currently has established a program called “15by30 Roadmap”, which sets a goal to raise global refugee enrollments into higher education, meaning college or universities, to 15% by 2030. As of 2022, there is 7% enrollment, which only represents 262,664 out of the millions of refugees. UNHCR aims to increase the statistics by eliminating policy barriers, increasing access to education, creating a pipeline, and capitalising on completion. One significant method they are emphasising is the national enrollment where the refugee youth enrollment into higher education is heavily supported by the host country as they have limited education mobility, lack of finance, and desires to stay close to their family. It is also remarkable that 70% of the enrollment is done in the host country. Therefore, it is definitely effective in the sense of consistently increasing the rates.

Stances of Major Countries and NGOs

United States of America

The US puts emphasis on refugees receiving the equal level of education as their citizens. They promote education for all as it is considered the most effective way to help refugees successfully integrate into the society and ultimately contribute to the society. To ensure this, public schools are required to allow enrollment of any children regardless of their status regarding immigration. Additionally, most schools provide English as a second language, ESL, programs for the children not yet fully capable of English.

United Kingdom

The UK is eager to provide access to education for all refugee children to attend mainstream schools in their host areas. They also promise that they will be treated the same as British citizens in terms of funding along with being eligible for studies at colleges and universities. They also prioritise high quality education. Some schools have even reported that the presence of refugee children enriches the learning experience as they come from diverse backgrounds with different experiences. Yet, they recognise that these children have difficulties with lack of support and poor mental health. Accordingly, the UK has institutions such as Refugee Education UK (REUK) and Student Action for Refugees (STAR) that help refugees access education and lead them to further education.

Turkey

Turkey plays an important role as they have the most refugees coming from the Middle Eastern countries. Accordingly, they have started prioritising the inclusion of refugees into their national education system. Yet, they are trying to minimise the education lost during the migration, Turkey is offering the Syrian curriculum in Arabic through public schools and temporary education centres for the refugees from Syria. This has successfully led to over 1 million refugees being educated in the TECs and 600,000 in public schools. Turkey is now focusing on the refugees' continued participation even in higher education.

Sweden

Sweden is another country extremely fond and positive of refugee education, putting emphasis on the quality. They aim to provide the most suitable education to all children. Therefore, when the refugee children first attend school, the school gives them levelled assessments to determine which class they would be most suited to. The difficulty and the duration of the education differs according to their results. To guarantee quality education, Sweden does not only provide free education but also provides schoolbooks and other necessary materials free of charge. This allows for even a wider access to education for the refugees.

Possible Solutions

There is a lot being done to support the education of refugees all over the world. However, it is statistically evident that over 30% of refugees are still not enrolled in school, creating a lag in their education. To reduce this number, there are several sectors to target.

First, instead of relying on temporary education facilities, the refugees should be put into stable national education systems. If the immediate integration is not possible, the process should be as gradual as possible through transitional programs to ensure that the education is continuous with no gaps in between. These transitional programs can include language acquisition programs, adoption of the refugee's original education in the host country's language, etc. The integration will lower the risk of social isolation and provide consistent education.

Documentation is also a major factor to tackle in solving the problem with low enrollment of refugees in education. Most governments demand for official documents such as birth certificates, sometimes even semi-permanent residency for them to apply for school. Many refugees do not have access to these either because they left it in their home country or are waiting for them to be processed, which takes a long time due to various delays. Moreover, they rarely have passports nor are likely to obtain them in their new country. Consequently, they cannot enrol into education, causing low rates of enrollment of refugees. Accordingly, host countries could lower the barriers to entry into getting these documents by possibly forming agreements with the refugees' home countries to provide birth certificates and family documents. This will require more investment into the registration sector of processing refugees as they will have to fully finance the refugees that don't have money to pay for the service.

The mobility issue of refugees is another important factor to consider. Most of the times when refugees reach the borders of the country, they cannot access education right away. In some cases, refugee children may have to work to support their family, hindering them from being in school full-time. However, with the technology improving, it is easier to provide these children with education wherever they are. Online learning is an adaptive and flexible form of education that can also advocate for children who don't have enough money to attend schools. While online learning remains to be one of the most accessible ways for education, to achieve this, delegates must also tackle the problem of digital access in poverty areas or conflict zones as well.

Furthermore, it would be important to give realistically effective education rather than only adhere to traditional modes of lessons. This is especially true for refugee children as they have an inherent disadvantage in the labour market. For the successful integration of refugee children into society as the future generation, their skill sets must match those of the developed society. This would mean that education systems should incorporate vocational and skill-based education as well. For example, considering the increasing emphasis on the IT industry in the job market, educational systems for refugee children should include lessons regarding such for children to cultivate necessary capabilities, ultimately contributing to building a sustainable society and creating a positive cycle. 50 to 90 percent of adolescent refugees show symptoms of PTSD while 40% show symptoms of major depression. This is severely contrasting to the native-born US citizens with approximately 9% experiencing depression and 5% being diagnosed with PTSD. Therefore, reassuring mental health and trauma support programs in school must also be a crucial part of the education programs. The high rates of mental illness among them hinders their education as they are less likely to be understood by their peers or teachers. While many schools already have this, some students may feel reluctant from seeking help because they are afraid due to peer pressure, which is exacerbated by the innately negative perceptions against refugees. To prevent this problem, education on a healthy perception of social minorities, not only limited to refugees, is imperative. This would not only mend negative social perceptions about refugees but on other social minorities as well, which would contribute to building a sustainable society for the future.

Questions to Consider

- What is the most urgent problem to solve regarding refugee education?

- What is more important: the facilities of education or the psychological state of refugees in the system?
- Which countries should be the most responsible for resolving the problem?
- Is it more efficient to improve the education system in the home countries or the host countries?
- How can countries with low levels of refugee numbers support refugee education?
- How exactly should quality education be defined?
- What are the sectors of the economy or occupation that are the most suitable for refugees regarding their education path?
- How can we ensure that the education system in host countries is suitable for refugee children?
- Should adults also be subject to education in the host countries?

Bibliography

- “15by30 Roadmap: Expanding Higher Education, Skills and Self-Reliance for Refugees | UNHCR.” *UNHCR*, 2024,
www.unhcr.org/media/15by30-roadmap-expanding-higher-education-skills-and-self-reliance-refugees.
- “Child Displacement and Refugees - UNICEF DATA.” *UNICEF DATA*, 16 Sept. 2024,
data.unicef.org/topic/child-migration-and-displacement/displacement/.
- “Children and Young People Who Are Refugees.” *Anti-Bullying Alliance*, 2022,
anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/at-risk-groups/children-and-young-people-who-are-refugees.
- Dodd, Vikram. “Children Whitening Skin to Avoid Racial Hate Crime, Charity Finds.” *The Guardian*, The Guardian, 29 May 2019,
www.theguardian.com/society/2019/may/30/children-whitening-skin-to-avoid-racial-hate-charity-finds.
- Refugee, UN. “UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency | UNHCR.” *UNHCR*, 2023,
www.unhcr.org/.
- “Children and Young People Who Are Refugees.” *Anti-Bullying Alliance*, 2022,
anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/at-risk-groups/children-and-young-people-who-are-refugees.
- “Racist and Faith Targeted Bullying: Prevalence.” *Anti-Bullying Alliance*, 2022,
anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/at-risk-groups/racist-and-faith-targeted-bullying/racist-and-0.

“What to Know about Refugee Education and Why It Matters.” *Unrefugees.org*, 2023,
www.unrefugees.org/news/what-to-know-about-refugee-education-and-why-it-matters/.

Nations, United. “Refugee Education in Crisis: More than Half of the World’s School-Age Refugee Children Do Not Get an Education | United Nations.” *United Nations*, 2024,
www.un.org/en/academic-impact/refugee-education-crisis-more-half-worlds-school-age-refugee-children-do-not-get#:~:text=Many%20refugees%20are%20barred%20from,45%2045%2033%2063%2022.

“Germany.” *Global Focus*, 2021, reporting.unhcr.org/donors/germany.

Swace Digital. “Comparative Assessment : Turkish Curriculum and Syrian Curriculum in Temporary Education Centres | Save the Children’s Resource Centre.” *Save the Children’s Resource Centre*, 2016,
resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/comparative-assessment-turkish-curriculum-and-syrian-curriculum-temporary-education-centres/#:~:text=Refugee%20children%20are%20entitled%20to,version%20of%20the%20Syrian%20curriculum.

“Oliver.” *Migrationsverket.se*, 9 Apr. 2024,
www.migrationsverket.se/Privatpersoner/Skydd-och-asyl-i-Sverige/Resettlement/Resettlement-english/Resettlement/Introduction-to-the-Swedish-society.html#:~:text=Most%20young%20people%20who%20are,help%20and%20support%20at%20school.&text=The%20following%20is%20useful%20information,school%20is%20free%20of%20charge.

France. “France | the Human Safety Net.” *The Human Safety Net*, 2024,

www.thehumansafetynet.org/programmes/for-refugee/France-For-Refugees.

“Closing the Gap: Zooming in on Refugee Women on Equal Pay Day | UNHCR Blog.”

Unhcr.org, 2024,

www.unhcr.org/blogs/closing-the-gap-zooming-in-on-refugee-women-on-equal-pay-day/#:~:text=These%20hurdles%2C%20along%20with%20additional,disparities%20compared%20to%20national%20women.

“Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination in the Arab States.” *International Labour*

Organization, 28 Jan. 2024,

www.ilo.org/regions-and-countries/ilo-arab-states/areas-work/gender-equality-and-non-discrimination-arab-states/#:~:text=Despite%20progress%2C%20the%20Arab%20region,incl%20for%20people%20with%20disabilities.