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## Integrating refugee children into daily school life

In this document you will find contributions by the participants of the learning event [“The integration of newly arrived migrant pupils in daily school life”](#) on the European eTwinning platform.



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## The situation in ...

### Austria

According to reports there are 10,000 refugee students in schools in Austria, with some 2,000 in schools in Vienna. Most refugee students are being placed in existing classes with local children so that they can be quickly integrated. They receive frequent instruction in German language and cultural lessons a few hours a week. There have been suggestions to assign refugee learners into their own classes because they would be logistically easier to provide them with individualised learning. Others feel that they lose touch with the locals if they are not integrated within noone. Here is a report about one school in [Neuenkirchen](#) in Austria. *By Alicia Bankhofer*

### Greece

There are really many refugees in my country. They leave their country and via Turkey they try to come to Greece. They are not only families but also just underage children. Greece is a small country and we really try to help and support them....but as we all know many of the refugees die on their way to find a better and safer place to live. They want to leave Greece and go to the country they dream of. All they want is to leave our country and go to the land they dream of. Too many refugees for a country like Greece, indeed...Respect my likes, respect my rights and the world will be s bright. *By Aikaterini Mazneikou*

This big number of refugees in Greece proves that this country is the gate to Europe. The state and the Greek people do their best to host all these refugees, but the economical crisis in Greece does not leave many ways of support. There are schools where the children can continue their education, plus, in some cases, the state offers buses to take them there. Shelter, food, clothing and medical care are offered as well. To keep this going, there must be some help from other countries as well. The last weeks, the number of refugees has increased again. *By Stavroula Lada*

### Turkey

An estimated 4.9 million Syrians have left their homes to seek asylum abroad since the conflict started in 2011. By the end of 2017, Turkey was hosting 3 million refugees - mostly from Syria. There are lot of refugee camps but some of them try to live in the cities and try to survive in very hard conditions. There are many social and financial supports for them. Turkish president has announced that some Syrian and Iraqi refugees who pass a screening process will be granted Turkish citizenship. Turkey is the country which has the most refugees now according to researches. As a human they want to go back their home. They have missed the places where they were born. They want to live in their country with good reason. So countries should do whatever they can for stopping this brutal war. *By Bilge AKMAN*



During the 2011-2012 Syrian conflicts, people are suffering from food, fuel, unemployment and shelter. The Syrian people who escaped the violence of the conflicts took shelter in neighboring countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq.

As the conflicts become more prolonged and intensified, civilians have begun a continuing wave of migration to neighboring countries in large communities of 700-1000 people. The number of refugees is increasing every day.

Turkey has taken refuge in over 4 million civilian neighboring countries including Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Kurdistan Regional Government and Armenia, as well as over 3 million civilians in Syria. *By Gözde Pınar OBALI*

The Turkish government is trying to find ways how it will educate refugees, find jobs for them . But Turkey can not find solution to this humanitarian crisis alone. Because number of refugees is increasing day by day. *By Huriye Gündüz*

## Italy

The massive flow of sea entry in Europe continues in 2017, in particular towards Italy, which saw more than 24,000 migrants landed on their coasts in three months. Among the landings, 2,293 unmarried minors. This is the situation at 5 April: For our country this is a new increase, 30% more than the same period last year. Over 10,000 arrivals in March just completed. Altogether, more than 30,000 immigrants have arrived in Europe through the Mediterranean. Among recent arrivals migrants from Nigeria, Guinea and Bangladesh prevail, the latter in remarkable growth.

## Spain

Spain closed 2016 with only 5% in the reception of refugees, who are distributed by several cities around the country. Of the 198, 144 were of Sirian origin. This means that Spain is one of the countries with less refugees in Europe. But in 2017 Spain has to host the 95% of the refugees agreed by the European Union. There are a lot of initiatives and some small villages are prepared to host them but bureaucratic red tape always appears and then the government asks for patience.

In the south of Spain where I (Josefa Martín) live and teach, schools have a language specialist called ATAL (Languages Classes Temporary for linguistic adaptation) who teaches students coming from 44 different countries-among them coming from Africa and East countries but not war refugees until now. I found there are some organizations supporting refugees in Spain like **CEAR** <https://www.cear.es/> If you go to this webpage there is an infographics which shows the path or process the refugees go through in Spain since they arrive. <https://www.cear.es/persona-refugiada/informacion-util/>

Refugees are accepted up to 9 months for the most vulnerable cases( primera acogida) taken care of in NGOs or govern housing while their legal situation is solved.The next six months CEAR helps and supports them find an employment and integrate themselves in



their new country/city. Finally they start the independent phase. Málaga is a hot spot as it is all the south coast in Spain because a lot of migrants who flee from hunger unemployment and complicated political situations risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean sea from Argelia, etc.

This is the CEAR map <https://www.pear.es/contacta/>

This is the [executive summary of the situation of refugees in Spain and Europe](#)

## Croatia

There isn't many refugees in my country. We have several institutions that take care for immigrants and refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan. At this moment in Shelter for asylum seekers "Porin" there are 500 persons, in the same Shelters called "Kutina" there are 80 persons. Also we have very active institutions like Croatian Red Cross, UNICEF CROATIA, Center for peace study, Initiative "Welcome", Associations "Are You Serious", Volunteer Centers across the country. *By Mirta Mihaljević, Croatia*

## Finland

Since 2000, Finland has received 1,500–6,000 asylum seekers each year, aside from 2015, in which a record number of asylum seekers, 32,476, arrived. In recent years, the refugee quota has been 750, with the exception of 2014 and 2015, when the quota was increased due to the war in Syria.

An asylum seeker is a person who seeks asylum and the right to reside in a foreign nation. A refugee is someone who has been granted asylum in one state or another. A person may receive refugee status if they arrive in Finland based on a proposal by the UNHCR with respect to Finland's refugee quota. Asylum seekers become refugees if they are granted asylum. Source: <http://intermin.fi/en/migration/refugees-and-asylum-seeker>

## Lithuania

I have checked that there are only 45 refugees in Lithuania today. Most of the refugees arrived from Syria and Afghanistan. We are prepared to accept refugees immediately, but there are no refugees in Italy or Greece who agreed to resettle in Lithuania. It seems to me that refugees know about Sweden, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, which either have generous social security or have been actively attracting immigrants. We don't have any refugees in our district or our school. I think most people in my town are afraid of refugees. People are scared by terrorist attacks in Europe. I am so sorry to say that, but it's true. That's why I'm attending this LE. I want to tell my students and their parents that there is no aggression from refugees. We all are human being and we all MUST take care of each other. I always remember the history of Lithuania. During the World War II lots of Lithuanian people ran away to Europe or the USA. It was the only way to escape from Russian occupation. I think it's the same. *By Laima Kurauskiene, Lithuania.*



## Refugee learners in our classrooms – what now?

The ideal learning environment for refugee learners is welcoming, safe and supportive so that every pupil's individual needs are taken into account. Learning is supported by a peaceful and friendly working atmosphere and a calm, peaceful mood. Motivation of pupils is strengthened by working methods that support feelings of being part of a group, e.g. drama and other forms of artistic expression. (Finland)

### How do you counter negative statements?

We must be more conscious of the situation of the refugees. They are people who are running away of their countries for a civil war as in Syria where their lives are in danger. Sometimes we don't remember our past as in Spain where we had a civil war in 1936 and many Spaniards ran away to other countries. This has happened and could happen, so we must be solidary. We as teachers can do a lot for refugee children giving them psychological emotional support and the educational tools to integrate them in our society to have a better future.

We, as Greeks had to leave our country in the past and go to other countries, mostly in Germany and Australia. So, I am very aware of the situation here. There are many obstacles and difficulties. These children are completely lost, they can't speak Greek and everything is new for them. Our duty as teachers is to accept them and help them accept and trust us too. Everybody can do something but together we can do everything. *Aikaterini Mazneikou*

As a teacher we can do a lot of things for refugee children giving them psychological and pedagogical support. The main key to integrate the immigrants and refugees in daily school life is Emotional Intelligence. My colleagues and me provide them that through workshops (drama methods-A. Boalo-The theater of oppressed, school events (says of open doors-for whole families), extracurricular activities-debate group, drama, small writers-on paper they can express their feelings, fears,..

As a teacher we have a task to provide, for every child, especially for refugee children, classrooms/schools a better place where they can feel protected and welcome.  
*Mirta Mihaljević, Croatia*

We should try to give them better conditions and try to control their financial and social conditions. It will be done more seriously. Our country try to do the best but the huge numbers of refugees make it hard. *Bilge AKMAN, Turkey*



## Fighting stereotypes

*"I think, therefore I am." ( R. Descartes)*

We can fight against stereotypes learning through emotions, different cultures (tradition, customs, literature, history,...), but above all of this, through our unique experience (listen to the kids). *Mirta Mihaljević*

It's very important to fight against refugee stereotypes. Many people think that they come to steal, skill, etc. They are humans and the only thing they want is to live.

TURKEY: We must avoid stereotypes. We must help them. Because this can happen to any of us one day. We should empathize with them so we can understand them better. We should also tell our native students about their conditions and teach them how to be kindly to them.

We are all humans for sure but I am afraid some stereotypes cannot be avoided...They didn't come here to kill or steal but some of them may do so in order to survive. We must fight against all odds and we must win. I definitely hope so. It's cool to be different, everybody is unique. Different is nice and nobody is weak. *Aikaterini Mazneikou*

We have had Syrian students at our school for 3-4 years. These students were forced to leave their countries. This is a great trauma for the children. And in another country, another language is spoken, a different culture is causing these students to get scared. As teachers, we must first save these students from their fears. We must make them speak to other students. Because they do not want to communicate with anyone as long as the new language is for them. They just want to communicate with syrian students like himself. Which in turn leads them to close in. They do not even feel sad and talk unless they read and write. So we must tell them that we are aware of the situation they are in. We must feel that we are with them. We must work in cooperation with guide teachers. We should help them get psychological support. In short, we should help them to be happy first. We must be in contact with their parents. We must help them with the challenges they are experiencing. As soon as possible we will be able to conduct speaking exercises that will direct them to courses for language learning. We need to talk to class members by asking short questions. First we have to develop self-confidence. The rest will come by itself.

*Gözde Pınar OBALI, Turkey*

## Breaking down language and cultural barriers

When pupils and teachers from different from varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds come together, it is important to get to know each other's cultures, customs as well as communal practices. We have to support our pupils to learn together across the boundaries of languages, cultures, religions and beliefs. (Finland)



## Helping teachers to help refugee learners

Language & cultural barriers we can break through music, dance, food.

*Mirta Mihaljević*

Take into account the diversity in your class to make the most of it and to enrich everyone with the different languages, culture, food, traditions.

*Murièle, France*

Each one has to respect the culture of the other. The barriers can be broken as long as there is respect to the culture of both sides.

*Stavroula Lada*

Integrating the refugee students into activities make them more confident and happy.

*Bilge AKMAN, Turkey*

## Useful links, strategies and tools

<https://espanolparainmigrantes.wordpress.com/>

<https://youtu.be/-F-4CnngHew> (What is a Refugee? For Kids ) Mirta Mihaljević

(Suggestions from Finland)

Useful handbooks for working with refugee pupils

[A teacher's guide to working with students from refugee and displaced backgrounds](#),

QPASTT, Australia 2001 (updated 2007)

[Students from refugee & displaced backgrounds - a handbook for schools](#) QPASTT,

Australia 2001 (updated 2007)

[Refugee Handbook for Schools](#), ESOL Team, Ministry of Education, Australia 2003 (revised edition 2014)

[Relearning to Teach - Advice to teachers new to teaching children from refugee and](#)

[asylum-seeking families](#) Department for Education and Skills

eTwinning project: "[The swallow is a refugee or an immigrant?](#)" 2016-17 (Stavroula Lada)

This is short link of my learning designer Museum <https://v.gd/1IKKft>

Great video: My name is Khan <https://youtu.be/JEpqz33vKus>

New York Times on Integration and Refugees <http://bit.ly/refinterviews>



Practical experience on identifying a facing similar challenges, and how to establish informal connections with them in order to share resources and expertise and support each other after the course by Identifying local partners working with newly arrived migrants who can help to better understand their situation. *Sladjana Djokic*

#### Italy

Our experience at school is: including migrant children in a creative curriculum choosing topics to reflect children's culture and experiences. This can build confidence while offering valuable learning opportunities for other classmates. We use pictures books,online dictionary and resources from web. Drama, art and music are ideal activities ,all children can work together and share same language.

Our strategies: peer education, cooperative learning, CLIL methodology.

As teachers we attend national courses for integration and inclusion of Roma ,Sinti and Walkers children and their families.

*Maria Franciosa*

Next week we are starting a new experience in our classes: students are expected to write a story about migrations. They will be guided by a comic illustrator and they will collect stories from relatives (in our school the 40 % of families have foreign origins). All subjects are involved, so that each student can bring their own contribute. By the end of May we will open an exhibition of the works and I hope it will be possible to show some of them to the other participants to this Learning Event. *Daniele Burrini*

#### Bulgaria

We'd like to integrate the children of refugees via project - based learning at school. Our aim is to start a project next year & educate pupils through the Art. We see that the language barrier is so important so the main task will be how to support good English & how to improve languages skills of our friends from Syria, Iraq & migrants' countries. Here's our suggestion regarding to it. We can start with 'peaceful' activities:

<https://www.thinking.com/scene/857657753932398593>

Thank you! :)

#### Turkey

There are many Syrians in our country. They flee from war and take refuge in my country.The condition of some of them is very bad. They miss their country. They live in crowded houses. They all working.They just want to create a new life for themselves. They are having difficulty communicating. It becomes more difficult when they can't speak turkish at their home.They can contact with us as soon as possible. *Nilay KIYMACI*

Students and teachers do not know how to communicate with Syrian students and how to behave. There are problems between Turkish and Syrian students and perception problems



are experienced. Syrian students have language and language problems in their classes. There are also children who have to work and have been abandoned. *ALİ MURAT ÇİVİ*

There are more refugees in our country than in other European countries. The most important reason for this is the fact that Turkey and Syria are neighbor countries. The refugees who came to my country were placed in refugee camps. But many refugees go to different cities in Turkey and choose to live with their own means. The dream of many refugees can go to Europe through Turkey. To this end, many refugees are trying to go to Europe from illegal ways. I hope the war is over, people live in peace. My greatest desire is for people to live in love and peace. *ERHAN BELEN*

Despite the fact that Turkey is the main country of Syrian refugees live, they keep coming every day in an increasingly way. At first, they were living at refugee camps but then their number made it impossible. Now, they're everywhere and in every hood of Turkey, living as neighbours to Turkish people. We live with them in our daily life together; at schools, at hospitals, at parks... Therefore, if we want peace at home, we should make peace at schools, at hospital, at parks. *MUSTAFA GÖK*

Romania

There is a refugee camp near Baia Mare, our city. They try to integrate in our community by finding jobs, going to school and learning our language. We want to make them feel as comfortable as possible in our regions because we know that they left their families, friends and dreams behind, and fled the wars. *Adriana Gergeli*

The refugee students in Romania benefit from the same free educational system as the Romanian students. We have a program introduced in schools by the Romanian government since 2002 named "Croissant and milk". The beneficiaries of the program are children in kindergartens and general schools. The beneficiaries' average is over two million children annually. During each school day, students get a corn and a carton of milk to eat. The refugee students that enrolled in our schools benefit from the same program, getting free food each day. *Antoaneta Boje, Romania*

The Romanian education system provides the refugee students a safe space in which they learn to express themselves, receive emotional support and guidance, but also gain practical skills to get ready for school. Some of the teachers who have refugee students in their classes use the songs they've created for various activities and therapeutic stories to solve the issues of discrimination. *Ramona Dabija, Romania*

The Ministry of Education in our country provides services to refugee children and tries to bring them to mass schools, thus avoiding discrimination on ethnic or religious grounds. So we try to treat them as our owns, both the part of the language - the learning of the Romanian language - and the other part of their preparation for integration. *Doina Dumitrascu, Romania*



I think that we should help the immigrant and refugee students to enroll to public schools without any segregation on ethnic or religious criteria. *Camelia Dale, Romania*

I think that we could help the refugee children integrate into daily school life by taking advantage of the eTwinning and Erasmus + projects. There are a lot of eTwinning and Erasmus + projects based on immigrant and refugee integration problems. By the help of these kinds of projects I think that we could get our students become more conscious about these people's problems and they could empathize with them easier and help them integrate easier. *Laura Nagy, Romania*

*Thanks to all the contributors for your inputs, ideas and inspiration!*

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