

PLA 3 FROM PLAR-U-PAGS

Refugees in regard to inclusion and diversity

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Background refugee integration in higher education

- 26 million refugees worldwide (2019), 10% in Europe
- “[...] education and training is the foundation for successful participation in society and one of the most powerful tools for building more inclusive societies” (European Commission, 2020)
- Worldwide, only 6% of refugees have access to higher education (UNHCR)
- Since 2015 - university support initiatives for refugees and migrants in a refugee(-like) situation
- Diversity and inclusion high on HEIs agendas



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Refugees in regard to inclusion and diversity

European higher education institutions' strategic commitment to the inclusion of refugees

- Most diversity/inclusion strategies describe the institution's actions in the field of diversity, equity, non-discrimination and inclusion in terms of **institutional values**
- Values are expressed differently
 - broad, "catch-all" strategy (main type)
 - non-discrimination focus
 - equity focus
- Mostly indirectly - dimension of religion and/or ethnic background
- Very few with an explicit reference to the target group of refugees, or migrants in a refugee(-like) situation
- Definition challenge - strategies:
 - Strategic level - legal barriers, cannot target refugees explicitly
 - Programme level – mostly full refugee or asylum seeker status required



STRATEGY OR POLICY

Strategy or policy on diversity, equality and inclusion



EXPLICIT LINK TO REFUGEE(-LIKE)

Diversity, equality and/or inclusion strategy with explicit link to migrants in refugee(-like) situation.

What specific efforts are European higher education institutions making to include refugees?

Types of support measures

Language courses

Bridging courses

Adapted admissions processes

Legal support

Fee waivers and scholarships

Counselling

Mentoring and coaching

Career guidance

Guest student programmes

Integration events

Collaboration with NGOs working with refugees

Research on migration

Who is involved in providing this support?

- Diversity/inclusion offices
- Internal task forces, working groups and committees
- Refugee help desk
- Admissions office
- International office
- Student social services
- Human resources office
- Working group of all higher education institutions in the region
- + Various actors across the institutions e.g. language centres, social services, psychological support services, student residence centres, as well as study and tuition services, staff and students of specific faculties, such as psychology or law

Challenges faced by refugee students and host institutions

What needs to be improved?

Despite such efforts, there are small numbers of refugees entering higher education in European HEIs and many of those who do enter are dropping out. Why?

- Students
 - Trauma & inability to concentrate
 - Inadequate support – financial and academic
 - Caring responsibilities
 - Bureaucracy and visa issues
- Institutions
 - Limited institutional funding, high reliance on volunteers
 - Lack of collaboration with local or national government
 - Lack of leadership support
 - Identification of migrants with a refugee(-like) background for support
 - Lack of monitoring the impact of strategies/initiatives for migrants with a refugee(-like) background

Thank you for your attention

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