

Refugee inclusion in national education systems: A comparative case study of policy context,  
social cohesion, and responsibility-sharing in Lebanon and Turkey

Arianna Rose Pacifico

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
under the Executive Committee  
of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2023

© 2023

Arianna Rose Pacifico

All Rights Reserved

## **Abstract**

Refugee inclusion in national education systems: A comparative case study of policy context, social cohesion, and responsibility-sharing in Lebanon and Turkey

Arianna Rose Pacifico

Global forced displacement is on the rise with 32.5 million people currently living as refugees, about half of whom are school-aged children and youth. Within this context, refugee inclusion in host country education systems has emerged as a growing policy priority in an effort to improve education access and quality. However, there is limited research on the impacts of the policy shift and many challenges remain. Addressing this gap, this dissertation examines the internal and external influences on host country refugee education policy decisions, the ways refugee inclusion in national education systems interacts with social cohesion, and the role of the global aid system in facilitating the inclusion of refugees. Data for this comparative case study across Lebanon and Turkey are based on 47 semi-structured interviews with education actors engaged in the response to the Syrian crisis at the global, regional, national, and local levels to examine the assumptions, influences, processes, and practices of refugee inclusion in national education systems.

This dissertation is presented in three distinct papers. The first examines why policies of refugee inclusion were enacted, the timing of such reforms, and contextual reasons why reforms took the shape they did. Drawing on policy transfer scholarship, my findings reveal that some of the drivers to embrace global refugee policies include expectations for crisis resolution,

calculation of political and economic risks and benefits, and the operational realities of their education systems. The second paper questions the logic that policies of inclusion necessarily support social cohesion and sustainable peace in refugee-hosting contexts. I apply the '4Rs' framework of Redistribution, Recognition, Representation, and Reconciliation (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo & Smith, 2017) to analyze the ways that education interventions in support of refugee inclusion have contributed to social tension in Lebanon and Turkey while providing and important opportunity to address longstanding issues of marginalization and exclusion beyond refugees. The final paper builds on constructivist international relations theory to explore the relationship between the global refugee education policy agenda, the interests of donor states, and what that means for international responsibility-sharing, a foundational component of the refugee inclusion movement. I argue that there is a complex relationship between efforts to include refugees in national education systems and the national interests of donor countries including discouraging onward migration, promoting stability and social cohesion in neighboring regions, and reinforcing global hierarchies in the international system. Findings across the three papers contribute to theoretical and empirical debates around refugee education and humanitarian and development action. I conclude by pulling together themes that run through the dissertation and discussing theoretical and empirical contributions across the three papers.

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
Background	6
Global refugee education policy	6
Literature review	10
Education in emergencies	10
Refugee inclusion in national education systems	14
Refugee inclusion vs. integration	18
Context	20
Lebanon context	20
Lebanon education context	23
Turkey context	25
Turkey education context	27
Methods	30
Research design	30
Data collection	31
Data analysis	32
Researcher Positionality	33
Limitations	34
References	36
PAPER 1: REFUGEE INCLUSION IN NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF POLICY TRANSFER IN CRISIS CONTEXTS	45
Abstract	45
Introduction	45
Context	48
Conceptual framework: Policy Borrowing	50
Methods	55
Findings	56
Turkey education response	56
Phase I: Parallel system	57
Phase II: Institutionalization of EiE	59
Phase III: Integration into Turkish classrooms	61

Lebanon education response	65
Phase I: Integration by default	65
Phase II: Temporal segregation	67
Discussion	73
References	77
<b>PAPER 2: REFUGEE INCLUSION IN NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL COHESION IN LEBANON AND TURKEY</b>	<b>83</b>
Abstract	83
Introduction	83
Context	87
Conceptual framework: '4Rs' Framework	89
Methods	93
Findings	94
Redistribution: Education aid and access to national schools	95
Recognition: Language, teachers, and inclusion in society	100
Reconciliation: Addressing historic exclusion	105
Discussion	108
References	113
<b>PAPER 3: PROMOTING INCLUSION 'OVER THERE': THE GEOPOLITICS OF REFUGEE INCLUSION IN EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN LEBANON AND TURKEY</b>	<b>119</b>
Abstract	119
Introduction	120
Context	123
International responsibility-sharing	123
Externalization of migration management	125
Conceptual framework: Constructivism	128
Methods	133
Findings	134
Refugee inclusion and the externalization of migration management	134
Responsibility-sharing for refugee education in national systems	139
Discussion	145
References	149
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>155</b>
References	163

Appendix	164
Interview protocol	164

## Acknowledgments

It has been an incredible privilege to work under the mentorship of my advisor, Mary Mendenhall. She played a critical role in supporting me through my doctoral journey with unwavering support, flexibility, guidance, and encouragement. She is a constant source of inspiration as a brilliant scholar, passionate activist, and above all, a kind and wonderful human being. I continue to admire her courage to take on so many responsibilities and ability to manage it all with efficiency, grace, and humor.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to my second reader, Garnett Russell, who was always available and supportive of my work. I am grateful for her time, expertise and guidance which was critical in shaping my research. I am thankful to the other members of my committee, Gita Steiner-Khamsi, Jeff Henig, and Francine Menashy for lending their experiences, knowledge, and insights to my dissertation project.

I owe much to my colleagues and friends who supported me throughout this process. Their encouragement, feedback, and camaraderie have been invaluable. I have learned so much from my inspiring doctoral cohort Yesim Hanci, Samaya Mansour, Whitney Hough, Chris Henderson, and Kemi Richardson. A special thanks to Danni Falk for being my partner through this journey through uncountable hours of co-work, the generosity of your time and thoughtful feedback, and for keeping me laughing through difficult moments. And to Daniel Shephard and Erika Kessler for the company and motivation. Thanks to Rena Deitz for your careful review and important insights on my project. I am also so grateful for Dean Brooks and Jo Kelcey for generously sharing their knowledge, experience, time, and connections.



My research was generously funded through grants provided by the International Peace Research Association Foundation, the Columbia University AC4 Graduate Student Fellowship, the Teachers College Research Dissertation Fellowship and Dean's Grant for Student Research.

Finally, as a mother of two little ones there was no way I could have gotten even close to completing this PhD without the infinite hours of support from my mother, Vicky Sloat. Knowing my boys were receiving the best possible loving care allowed me the freedom to pursue this degree. My PhD journey also would not have happened without the love, support, and encouragement of my husband, Stefano Pacifico. Thank you for climbing this mountain with me. And to my boys, Leonardo and Alessandro, you are my motivation and I am so grateful to have you as my biggest cheerleaders.

# INTRODUCTION

Refugee children are five times *less* likely to attend school than host country children due to the scale of the global forced displacement crisis, discrimination, and lack of resources (Save the Children, 2018). In an effort to support refugee learners, there has been a radical shift in global policy from segregated schooling that prioritizes repatriation to the integration of refugees into national education systems (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). The rationale for this policy shift includes the protracted situations that refugees increasingly experience, the opportunity to strengthen host country education systems, and to create conditions conducive to conflict mitigation and prevention in ways that counter racism, xenophobia, and related intolerance against refugees and migrants (UNHCR, 2019). Given the increasingly protracted nature of conflict-induced displacement and increased global migration due to climate change and complex crises, my work seeks to understand how education systems accommodate refugee learners in accordance with the global policy shift toward inclusion of refugee students in national education systems.

While there is growing agreement among international organizations that including refugees in national education systems is the best policy option to expand educational access and quality for displaced children and youth, it is unclear how to establish truly inclusive education systems that achieve structural inclusion (focused on access to institutions and services) and relational inclusion (related to individual-level sense of belonging, connectedness, and group-level cohesion) (Strang & Ager, 2010) in ways that best serve refugee and host community learners in resource-constrained environments. At the early stages of this policy shift, this three-paper dissertation responds to a number of related gaps in the literature. First, there is limited research on the ways that host-country education systems enact and respond to global policy

imperatives surrounding the inclusion of refugee students (Adelman et al., 2019). Second, despite the assumption that this policy shift will support social cohesion and conflict mitigation (UNHCR, 2012), the extent to which this goal is realized is unknown. Finally, the movement towards refugee inclusion is premised on the promise of international responsibility-sharing, but what it means to share responsibility for refugee education, and the barriers to doing so in a global neoliberal context, remain unexplored.

The three papers in this dissertation approach the subject with three different lenses in order to focus on different actors, components of inclusion, and levels. Throughout the three papers, I question the assumptions explicit in the global movement to promote refugee inclusion in national systems and international organizations' (IOs) roles within it. Each lens also contributes to understanding the limitations and opportunities to meet the education rights and needs of refugee and host community learners through national education systems. My comparative case study is based on 47 semi-structured interviews conducted between November 2021 and January 2023 with a wide range of non-state actors engaged in the education response to the Syrian crisis at the global, regional, national and local levels in Lebanon and Turkey including those from foundations; INGOs; multilateral, bi-lateral and UN agencies.

Lebanon and Turkey provide a useful point of comparison as they both have received substantial international donor support for refugee education and both bear a significant burden of the Syrian crisis. Turkey is the largest refugee-hosting country in the world hosting over four million refugees and migrants including over 1.6 million children (Unicef, 2020). As a share of the population, however, Lebanon hosts the most refugees by far with one refugee for every seven nationals (UNHCR, 2020). Despite these similarities, they have divergent policy outcomes related to refugee inclusion (Shuayb, Crul & Lee, 2022). In Lebanon, for example, the majority

of Syrian students attend 'second shift' schools in the afternoon that almost exclusively serve refugee students and offer a reduced Lebanese curriculum, less instruction time, and taught by Lebanese teachers with reduced qualification standards (Crul et al., 2019; GEM, 2019). Instead in Turkey, Temporary Education Centers (TEC) which offered an adapted Syrian curriculum and employed Syrian educators were a significant part of their early response. However, in 2016, with support from the European Union (EU), Turkey gradually abolished these schools, requiring Syrian children and youth to enroll in public schools alongside their Turkish peers (Sarmini, Topçu & Scharbrodt, 2020).

Drawing on policy borrowing scholarship (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014), my first paper explores the way that the global policy frameworks that promote the inclusion of refugee education in national education systems are adopted and modified in refugee-hosting contexts. While recent scholarship has shed light on how global refugee policy is adapted and its influence at the school level (Adelman, 2018; Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Chopra, 2018), this paper focuses on the economic, social, and political reasons *why* reforms were enacted, the *timing* of such reforms, and contextual reasons *why* reforms took the shape they did from the perspective of non-state actors working at global, national, and local levels. In the cases of Lebanon and Turkey, these reasons include expectations for crisis resolution, calculation of political and economic risks and benefits, and the operational realities of their education systems. Understanding differences in the ways that host governments have responded to the global push for refugee integration can help better anticipate how global policies transfer due to local realities and may shed light on potential barriers and opportunities for supporting policies of integration. At the same time, understanding

how and why national policies were adopted in Lebanon and Turkey may help government actors develop long-term strategies to accommodate refugees at the onset of a crisis.

My second paper questions the assumption explicit in UN policy documents and frameworks that refugee inclusion in national education systems will strengthen social cohesion, counter racism, xenophobia, and related intolerance (UNHCR, 2019). I draw on the '4Rs' framework to analyze in what ways education interventions in support of refugee inclusion help or hinder social cohesion linking the analytical dimensions of Redistribution, Recognition, Representation, and Reconciliation (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo & Smith, 2017). My findings reveal the unintended consequences of the global push for refugee inclusion in Lebanon and Turkey. That is, refugee inclusion can contribute to tensions and resentment through the distribution of education aid or services to one group, through both the inclusion and the segregation of learners in schools, and through the disconnect between including learners in schools and not in society more broadly. However, my findings also reveal that policies of inclusion represent an important mechanism by which to discuss and address long standing issues of exclusion, beyond refugees, in hosting contexts. Understanding the unintended and long-term consequences of global policy decisions may inform future education efforts in ways that support the right to education and sustainable peace.

My third paper situates the policy shift towards refugee inclusion within the global context to explore the relationship between the global refugee education policy agenda, international commitments to share responsibility for refugees, and the geopolitics of migration. Building on constructivist international relations theory (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999; Finnemore, 1996; Price & Reus-Smit, 1998), I argue that while inclusion is framed in an apolitical and technocratic manner, it plays a role in a global system of regressive responsibility-sharing

including the externalization of migration policy, a strategy of countries in the Global North to prevent or deter the entry of asylum seekers. My findings point to some of the ways that this relationship interacts with the commitment of actors in the Global North to share responsibility for refugee inclusion in host education systems including the lack of adequate long-term financing, limiting of migration rights to seek asylum in third countries, and undermining of international aid actors and their human rights missions. By interrogating the mechanisms that influence the diffusion and realization of policies of inclusion at the global level, I raise questions about the role of international cooperation for refugee education in perpetuating global postcolonial power imbalances by contributing to a system that compels less developed countries to bear the bulk of refugee hosting responsibilities.

Together these three papers represent a contribution to the debates around global refugee education policy, refugee inclusion in host country education systems, and international humanitarian and development aid systems. My research also attempts to understand the political, social, and economic constraints and opportunities that influence host country education policy decisions. Greater understanding of the role that international actors and national policymakers play in interpreting and responding to global policy imperatives in support of refugee integration is critical to understanding the impact of this policy shift and upholding global commitments to education for all refugee learners and the building of sustainable peace.

The following section briefly situates this study within the academic discourse and conceptual discussions in the field of education in emergencies (EiE), which inform this study's understanding of refugee education and with which I have engaged throughout my dissertation study.

## **Background**

### **Global refugee education policy**

Refugee education has historically been addressed through “parallel” systems in which refugees accessed education in a UNHCR or partner-managed refugee camp setting or in a refugee community school run by a non-governmental organization (NGO) where they followed their country of origin’s curriculum and language of instruction (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2018; Waters & LeBlanc, 2005). These schools functioned as a stop-gap measure in response to emergencies but often did not provide a pathway to formal or accredited educational opportunities. The approach was an extension of the refugee system which was designed and organized to manage large movements of populations for short periods of time until permanent solutions could be found (Hynie, 2018). The reliance on parallel education was in line with the underlying assumption at the time that among the three "durable solutions" supported by UNHCR (voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement), voluntary repatriation was often the most feasible solution (Dryden-Peterson, 2016).<sup>1</sup>

This "parallel" approach to education shifted in 2012 when UNHCR's Education Strategy called for refugees to be integrated into host state education systems, representing an ambitious shift toward inclusion (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; UNHCR, 2012). The strategy advocated for children and youth to access all levels of formal and non-formal education under the same conditions as national students while strongly discouraging informal education that does not

---

<sup>1</sup> In 2021, only 429,300 refugees returned to their countries of origin highlighting the limitations of this assumption (UNHCR, 2022).

provide pathways for accredited education, as well as private education, which can weaken the ability of states to deliver public education (UNHCR, 2012).

This policy shift responded to a number of realities of contemporary displacement. First, given the protracted nature of conflict, it became apparent that for refugee children, education in exile may be their only opportunity to go to school and that these learners may be best served by programs that prepare them for life outside their country of origin.<sup>2</sup> Second, refugee schools were increasingly seen as unsustainable over the long term given the persistent shortfalls and unpredictability of humanitarian funding for education (UNESCO, 2017). Third, this policy shift responded to the reality that refugees are increasingly located in urban contexts, necessitating a transformation in the way that education services are delivered (Mendenhall, Russell & Bruckner, 2017). Fourth, including refugees in national systems offers the potential for international actors to strengthen host country education systems through ongoing efforts to improve education quality, support teachers, and develop infrastructure, thereby benefiting host communities and refugees alike (UNHCR, 2012). Finally, in recognition of the societal division and exclusion caused by segregated schooling, inclusion was envisioned not only as a means to improve individuals' future educational and employment prospects but to "create conditions conducive to conflict mitigation and prevention" in ways that counter racism, xenophobia, and related intolerance against refugees and migrants (UNHCR, 2019). These factors led to growing

---

<sup>2</sup> Over 80 percent of refugees remain displaced for over five years and about 20 percent remain displaced for over twenty years (Yoshikawa, Dryden-Peterson, Burde & Aber, 2022).



global agreement among international organizations (IOs) that including refugee children and youth in national education systems is the best approach to achieving the right to education.

Recent international commitments and new institutions have strengthened the movement towards education inclusion. For example, the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, which agreed to the Grand Bargain (IASC, 2016) and the New Way of Working (UN, 2016), intended to bring together humanitarian and development assistance and called for increased and more flexible funding, national ownership, and approaches that address both immediate and long-term education needs. This led to the launch of Education Cannot Wait (ECW), the first global fund dedicated to education in emergencies, which intended to generate additional funding for education and work across the humanitarian-development divide.<sup>3</sup>

The 2016 New York Declaration on Migrants and Refugees (UNGA, 2016), which agreed upon the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and laid the foundation for the Global Compact on Refugees<sup>4</sup> (GCR) (UNGA, 2018), committed to ensuring all refugee children have access to education a maximum of three months after arrival in a host country and that host country governments should be supported in facilitating education service delivery through external budgetary and technical support. The GCR is guided by the principle of national system inclusion, explicitly calling for host states "to expand and enhance the quality and inclusiveness of national education systems to facilitate access by refugee and host community

---

<sup>3</sup> The humanitarian-development divide refers to the lack of coordination between humanitarian aid efforts and long-term development initiatives that can result in fragmented approaches to addressing the needs of vulnerable populations.

<sup>4</sup> The GCR is an international agreement, informed by the CRRF and adopted by the UN General Assembly, which aims to make the responsibility for helping refugees worldwide more equitable and predictable and places enhanced responsibility-sharing at the heart of the international refugee protection agenda (UNHCR, 2019b).

children..." (p. 13). The CRRF envisions a future where refugees are not dependent on humanitarian assistance but can support themselves through access to national economic systems and are included in national development plans. Both documents emphasize host country sovereignty, the responsibility of the international community to provide technical and financial resources, and enhancement of refugee self-reliance including through education, human capital development, and building transferable skills. Aligning with the CRRF necessitated significant changes in the approach of some donor states including taking a longer-term perspective on displacement, focusing on livelihoods and economic inclusion, and willingness to work across host and refugee communities (UNHCR, 2018).

Despite the global and regional movements toward inclusion of refugees in host education systems, from the start the understanding of inclusion was debated and research has shown significant variation in the ways that inclusion is understood and enacted (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). Notwithstanding the conceptual and practical lack of clarity, the inclusion of refugees into national systems has been quickly and widely adopted as the standard global policy approach (Dryden-Peterson, 2020). Sarah Dryden-Peterson's research has documented the swift adoption of this approach for example through the increased use of national curriculum and national language of instruction of the host country to teach refugee learners (Dryden-Peterson, 2016) and well as closer formal relationships between UNHCR and government authorities enabling coordination around refugee access to national schools (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2018).<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that while the shift towards inclusion represented a significant change in global policy, refugees in many contexts had long been supported in attending national schools especially those located in urban environments.

More broadly, these changes have taken place within the global context of rising nationalism, exemplified by the rise of right-wing parties, the election of Donald Trump as US president, and the UK's decision to leave the European Union (EU). Populist leaders in resettlement countries in North America and Europe (e.g., Le Pen in France, Orban in Hungary, Wilders in the Netherlands, Trump in the USA) have supported nativist policies including increased border security, limiting legal immigration, and deporting illegal immigrants with the aim of preserving national identity and retaining a 'pure' ethnicity (Jakupec & Kelly, 2019). In terms of foreign aid, populist movements tend to promote nativism at the expense of cosmopolitanism, display skepticism towards aid work, and distrust toward aid receiving countries as well as the aid establishment (Jakupec & Kelly, 2019). A prominent example of this approach includes Trump's repeated attempts to cut substantial amounts of foreign aid, withdraw from several international treaties, rollbacks to refugee resettlement in the US, and disdain for multilateralism and international cooperation (Regilme, 2022). Another example is Boris Johnson's reduction of UK ODA from .7 to .5 percent of gross national income (GNI) (saving an estimated £4 billion) reflecting a political choice of prioritizing domestic needs ahead of international commitments (Devanny & Berry, 2022).

## **Literature review**

### **Education in emergencies**

The purpose of this section is to briefly situate this study within the academic discourse and conceptual discussions in the field of education in emergencies (EiE) that inform this study's understanding of refugee education and with which I will engage throughout my dissertation project. The academic sub-field of EiE emerged primarily out of practice, rather than research

and study, and has seen rapid growth in publications and presentations since 2005, indicating a growing institutionalization of the field within the broader scholarly community of comparative and international education (Lerch, 2017). Burde (2005) describes three conceptual approaches that shape the EiE field of practice: The development approach, humanitarian approach, and human rights approach.

The development approach views crises as hampering development potential and recognizes that education is a critical long-term social investment. The humanitarian approach views an emergency as a temporary set of circumstances for which education can provide immediate protection, function as a stop-gap measure, and prevent human rights violations. However, given the protracted nature of contemporary conflict and displacement, there is a movement within the humanitarian sector towards strengthening the "humanitarian-development nexus" (Mendenhall, 2019) and taking a longer-term approach to reducing people's needs and increasing their resilience. Finally, the human rights approach views crises as potential obstacles to the realization of the right to education and sees education as key to cultivating active citizenship and building peace. Burde (2005) notes that the set of conditions that these concepts reflect are not mutually exclusive and organizations have recognized the need to move away from the linear relief-to-development continuum necessitating more integrated approaches. The inclusion of refugees in national systems which requires long-term approaches from the start of a humanitarian crisis in order to expand the right to education requires a comprehensive perspective that considers all three dimensions.

Scholarship on refugee education tends to be situated within the broader category of EiE. While the human rights, protection, and development discourses have been critical in the promotion of refugee education in crisis contexts, Kelcey (2020), drawing on archival data on the

history of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), argues that these three approaches do not fully account for the political complexity of refugees' status as non-citizens. She argues that the norms of humanitarian aid promote a temporary and apolitical perspective on refugee crisis, that human rights perspectives overlook the fact that refugees are excluded from the social contract and therefore the rights of citizens, and that development approaches posit a teleological developmental trajectory for which the state remains the paradigmatic unit of analysis. As Dryden-Peterson (2016) notes, refugee education is uniquely both external and internal to the nation-state. On one hand, refugee education is steered by global influences and multilateral institutions and dependent on international financing, while on the other, the mechanisms and institutions of enforcement are circumscribed by nation-states (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Kelcey (2020) suggests that drawing from political theory to pay closer attention to refugees' individual human rights as well as their collective and political rights can overcome these shortcomings. The movement towards refugee inclusion in national education systems, where education services are dependent on the political will and capacity of host governments, in particular, necessitates an analytical approach that acknowledges education's connections with the political, economic, and social context.

In addition to refugee education, education and conflict is another primary area of research within the interdisciplinary sub-field of EiE. Broadly speaking, education and conflict research priorities have been categorized under two main headings: First, the provision of education services in conflict and protracted crises, and second, the role of education in fueling conflict and promoting peace (Pherali, 2019). The three papers in this dissertation span these two categories recognizing that the provision of education in refugee-hosting contexts requires consideration of technical and practical challenges but also political economy factors that impact education

service delivery. This study's focus on refugee inclusion in national education systems also necessitates a perspective that incorporates all vulnerable learners, including those within the host community situating this research across refugee education, education and conflict, and EiE bodies of literature.

This study contributes to the EiE literature in several ways. First, while migrant children's integration in host country education systems has been well-studied in developed countries (Basu, 2018; Böhlmark, 2008; Entorf & Lauk, 2008) little evidence exists on the inclusion of refugee children in low- or middle- income countries (Kirdar et al, 2021). Second, while there is emerging scholarship that deals with the multiple ways that global policy around inclusion is locally understood, adapted, and implemented (Adelman, 2018; Buckner, Spencer & Cha, 2018; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019), this work de-emphasizes the role of supranational forces in influencing migration policy and encouraging inclusive (or exclusive) policies toward migrants and refugees. My research aims to expand upon this analysis by incorporating the global systems, institutional structures, and political drivers that influence national policy adoption. Third, most literature on refugee education focuses on "what" questions to describe the extent to which education interventions work as opposed to "why" or "how" questions (Monaghan, 2019). My dissertation is centered on questions related to how global refugee policies are spread, why they are adapted, and how they interact with social cohesion.

The following section reviews literature related to the rationale and benefits of refugee inclusion in national systems and existing challenges and barriers.

## **Refugee inclusion in national education systems**

Integration of refugee learners into national systems affords access to already existing infrastructure which offers a number of related benefits. First, by using existing infrastructure and building economies of scale there are potential efficiency savings from eliminating parallel structures and using resources more effectively in a single system (UNESCO, 2020), not to mention the unsustainability of refugee-only schools given the scarcity and unpredictability of funding for refugee education (UNESCO, 2017). Second, this strategy can renew attention and investment in public education, providing the opportunity to strengthen host country systems and enhance non-state actor coordination with ministries of education (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2018). Third, utilizing existing infrastructure makes the system potentially faster to scale in an acute emergency, especially in urban areas with greater existing capacity. Fourth, beyond infrastructure, integrating into existing host systems includes access to national certification, host-country curriculum, and trained teachers which has the potential to provide access to higher quality education than in segregated systems (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2018).

Cerna (2019) argues that the successful integration of refugee learners has both individual and group benefits including improved academic outcomes, social emotional well-being as well as future labor market participation. Some evidence shows that inclusive education is associated with elements of social cohesion and the prevention of stigma, stereotyping, discrimination and alienation (UNESCO, 2020). Slee (2020) argues that inclusive education promotes inclusive societies, where people can live together and diversity is celebrated. Callens and Meuleman (2017) have found that more inclusive integration policies are associated with more positive

attitudes toward immigrants, due to the impact policies have on how immigrants are perceived (the converse can also be true as detailed in the following section). Beyond empirical arguments, UNESCO (2020) makes the case that inclusion is a moral imperative, an expression of justice, and a condition for achieving all the SDGs, particularly those related to building sustainable, equitable, and inclusive societies.

UNESCO estimates the gap to achieve full education inclusion by 2030 in conflict-affected countries is about US\$16 billion (Svenson, 2018). As methodologies and resulting estimates for refugee funding requirements vary, UNHCR and World Bank estimates that the cohort average cost of providing K-12 education in the countries where they reside is US\$4.44 billion and US\$5.11 billion annually (UNHCR & World Bank, 2021). However, since host governments are resistant to accept international financing only for refugees, most efforts also include support for vulnerable host community learners, raising the total estimated costs of refugee inclusion in the education system significantly.

Raising the finances necessary to support refugee education represents a significant barrier to achieving quality inclusive education, however, there are potential opportunities to raise much needed funding through the introduction of more private actors, although concerns have been raised regarding the tension between humanitarian objectives and profit-oriented motives (Menashy & Zakharia, 2017). Global funds focused on education like the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and the International Financing Facility for Education (IFFEd) also have the potential to fill critical financing gaps.

Despite the potential for including refugees in national school systems to expand education access and quality, there are a number of barriers that have been documented in the literature. Even when inclusive policies are in place, access to schooling can be limited when



national systems already struggle to meet existing needs or when refugees live in educationally marginalized areas of host countries (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). In addition to access, the quality of education is often a significant challenge in low-income countries that host the majority of the world's refugees (Yoshikawa, Dryden-Peterson, Burde & Aber, 2022). UNHCR's two-year progress assessment of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) notes significant gaps between policy outputs and service delivery where structural or economic barriers impede the realization of inclusive policy (UNHCR, 2018). A shortage of human resources, teachers and administrators, is perhaps the biggest impediment to refugee integration (Hamre, Morin & Ydesen, 2018). These challenges may lead to situations in which refugees are forced to integrate "down" into schools of lower quality with fellow marginalized populations, including nationally disenfranchised host communities (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019). This can also lead to resistance from host communities that feel that their learners are suffering as a result (Culbertson & Constant, 2015; Tumen, 2019). Despite these potential challenges, including refugees in national education systems presumes that the existing national system is worth replicating and expanding (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019).

The ability of refugees to access national schools is affected by factors faced by learners in all low-income contexts, such as early marriage and child labor which can prevent refugee children and youth from accessing educational institutions. These factors become more pervasive at the secondary level, where refugee enrollment rates plummet (Arik Akyüz, Aksoy, Madra & Polat, 2018). Kiwan (2019) finds that exclusion occurs along a range of intersectionalities beyond immigration status even in the contexts of inclusive policies including disability, socioeconomic status, gender, age, race, and sexual orientation. For example, refugees' lack of language skills can also represent a critical constraint standing in the way of integration of

refugees into national systems and may pressure parents to send their kids to non-state schools or remedial or catch-up classes to gain language skills (Arik Akyüz et al., 2018). Further, access to national systems may not be extended to all groups of refugees equally depending on their country of origin (Arik Akyüz et al., 2018).

Sociocultural integration, related to an individual-level sense of belonging and connectedness, may be elusive even when refugees have access to national education systems. While global policy can promote structural inclusion and access to education systems, being meaningfully connected to protection, belonging, and future opportunities within host countries may still be out of reach for refugees (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019). Sociocultural integration can be hampered through marginalization in classrooms due to social ostracism, racism, and prejudice towards refugees (Sidhu, Taylor, & Christie, 2011). The disconnect between the opportunities promised by being included in national education systems and learners' marginalization through lack of relational inclusion inside and outside schools can even be amplified by refugee education (Dryden-Peterson, 2020). Research in a refugee camp context found that structural integration, in the form of access to national schools, can exacerbate rather than mitigate, youth experiences of exclusion if not connected with protection, belonging, and future opportunities including employment post-graduation (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019).

A relevant example is shared by Maha Shuayb (2014) in the paradox facing Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. On one hand, they are forced to integrate by learning the Lebanese curriculum (albeit largely in separate UNRWA schools), while at the same time they are forced to the periphery of Lebanese society as a result of discriminatory laws and regulations that pose barriers to employment. In this way, although their education hypothetically prepares them for

the Lebanese job market and shared national identity, social, political, and economic realities prohibit refugee students from imagining themselves as part of a common national identity. In this way, despite increased access to national education systems, the ability for education to "contribute to the well-being of individual refugees, to their host countries, and to their conflict-affected countries of origin" is restricted without citizenship rights that would allow them to participate more fully in society (Dryden-Peterson, 2016, p. 279).

### **Refugee inclusion vs. integration**

The term integration has been used as a theoretical concept and operational principle in refugee studies since the mid-twentieth century (see, for example, Bernard, 1967; Maass, 1958; Portes, 1969) and is still widely used by key donors, policymakers, and practitioners. While there is no common definition in the literature, most definitions emphasize that integration is a dynamic two-way process that places demands on both refugees and host communities to adapt (UNHCR, 2014). Integration, therefore, carries the connotation that the separate parts do not lose their individuality while being incorporated into a larger whole (Kuhlman, 1990).

The concept has been criticized because of concerns that policymakers frequently use it to imply assimilation, wherein the beliefs and practices of the dominant group are privileged and minority groups only are expected to adapt (Phillimore, 2012). The term has also been criticized for focusing on narrow determinants and outcomes of integration and because of the concept's lack of clarity (Phillimore, 2012). Robinson (1998) notes that the concept of integration is "individualized, contested and contextual" and a word "used by many but understood differently by most" (p. 118). Despite the lack of precision around what integration means, it has been one of the most prominent ideas used in Western discussions on immigrants' adjustment and

settlement and remains the dominant concept in migration studies (Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore, 2018).

Beginning in 2016, and following the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), UNHCR shifted from using the term ‘integration’ to ‘inclusion’ when describing the process of bringing together refugees and nationals within national education systems (Dryden-Peterson, 2020). Kelcey and Chatila (2020) argue UNHCR made the shift from 'integration' in the 2012 Education Strategy to the term 'inclusion' because host states were concerned that integration implied a long-term commitment or resettlement of refugees within their borders. This rhetorical shift may also indicate an expansion of the concept of integration. The term "inclusive education" has long been used in humanitarian and development spheres to refer to education for learners with disabilities. The Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) differentiates between the definition of ‘inclusive education’ and ‘inclusion’ drawing from the 1960 UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education, which states:

Inclusion emphasizes equity in access and participation and responds positively to the individual needs and competencies of all people. Across all sectors and the wider community, it actively works to ensure that every person, irrespective of gender, language, ability, religion, nationality, or other characteristics, is supported to meaningfully participate alongside his/her peers. (UNESCO, 1960)

Similarly, the 2020 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, *Inclusion in Education: All Means All*, uses the foundation of the disability framework to conceptualize inclusion while incorporating all vulnerabilities, including migration and citizenship status. The 2020 GEM Report defines inclusion as "a process consisting of actions and practices that embrace diversity and build a sense of belonging, rooted in the belief that every person has value and potential and should be respected" (UNESCO, 2020, p. 419). Notably, by incorporating a "sense of belonging," this definition expands the concept beyond structural inclusion, which is focused on

access to institutions and services, to relational inclusion, which is a sociocultural process related to individual-level development of a sense of belonging, connectedness, and group-level cohesion (Strang & Ager, 2010).

Despite the incorporation of relational aspects of integration in some global documents, according to Dryden-Peterson (2020), the term 'inclusion' in global and national policies most often refers to elements of structural integration such as access to national schools, using the national curriculum, and access to certification. However, like the concept of integration, there is no single generally accepted definition of the term inclusion, and a contested term that lacks a tight conceptual focus may have contributed to ambivalence and confused practices (Slee, 2018).

Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019) find significant variation in the ways in which inclusion was implemented across fourteen refugee-hosting nation-states reflecting differences in the purposes that actors at the global, national, and local levels ascribed to refugees' education. I draw on Dryden-Peterson et al.'s (2018) definition of inclusion as "the active and dynamic process of coming together of refugees and nationals in schools" (p. 10). Since the concept of inclusion has long been incorporated into theory building and academic literature related to the concept of integration, my study draws on scholarship on refugee integration keeping in mind the critical elements of both structural inclusion and relational inclusion.

## **Context**

### **Lebanon context**

From the start of the civil war in Syria in 2011, Lebanon has taken in an estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees along with hosting 270,000 Palestinian refugees, and more than 15,000 refugees of other nationalities accounting for over 25 percent of their population—the highest concentration per capita of refugees in the world (European Commission, 2021). Syria and

Lebanon have a long and complicated history of strained political, economic, and social relations dating long before the official creation of the two nation-states in the mid-1940s (Traboulsi, 2007). During the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) Syrian troops formally occupied Lebanon, stationing military troops in Lebanon to act as the "guardian" of postwar transition (Fakhoury, 2017). Syrian troops fully withdrew only in 2005 in the face of popular protest demanding their exit (Safa, 2006).

Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention and neither employs a legal definition of refugees nor a legal framework that regulates their presence and status. It instead uses a 2003 Memorandum of Understanding with UNHCR which confirms that Lebanon is not an asylum country but engages in a "policy of cooperation" with the UN agency. As such, from the start of the Syrian refugee inflow into Lebanon, the government refers to Syrians as "guests" and not refugees.<sup>6</sup> In May 2015, the Ministry of Social Affairs required UNHCR to suspend the registration of refugees in an effort to reduce the number of refugees and force Syrians who wanted to reside in Lebanon to do so as economic migrants (Janmyr, 2018). Despite ceasing to officially accept refugees, Syrians, fleeing violence and instability, continued to cross the border into Lebanon illegally, remaining in the country with limited access to basic services, employment opportunities and UNHCR registration sites (Aranki & Kalis, 2014).

The government has a policy of non-encampment of refugees, allowing refugees to seek private housing within Lebanese communities. However, it has been argued that the policy is not motivated by inclusion but has been enacted for economic reasons (Turner, 2015) and has

---

<sup>6</sup> This paper uses the term "refugee" to broadly define displaced Syrians and members of other nationalities and stateless persons who fled their country of origin and sought refuge elsewhere. It does not refer to their official legal status that is described in the 1951 Refugee Convention (UN, 1951).

contributed to precarious living conditions including the establishment of 1,900 informal settlements (Fakhoury, 2017). Policymakers have pointed to the long-standing Palestinian camps and fears over the potential militarization of camps as rationale for the rejection of formal refugee camps (Turner, 2015). Palestine refugees fleeing the Palestine wars of 1948 and 1967 were placed in refugee camps and the majority still reside there under the protection of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), which has the mandate to provide relief, protection, and human development services, including education. Palestine refugees in Lebanon experience significant social, economic, and political marginalization. For example, they are prohibited from owning real estate, working in certain professions, and have limited access to the justice system (Kelcey, 2020).

The conflict in Syria has significantly impacted Lebanon's social and economic growth, increased levels of poverty and overall humanitarian needs, as well as exacerbated pre-existing development constraints in the country (GoL & UN, 2019). Lebanon now faces multiple compounding crises. The COVID-19 pandemic which has worsened pre-existing economic instability and political fragility has led to a precarious socio-economic situation (GoL & UN, 2021). The devastating impact of the Beirut Port explosions in August 2020 reignited widespread protests for political and institutional reforms to increase transparency and improve governance. Finally, Lebanon is facing a financial and economic crisis that the World Bank estimates to rank in the top three most severe episodes globally since the mid-1800s (World Bank, 2021). The Lebanese Lira has lost an estimated 90 percent of its value making a teacher's salary now worth between 1 and 2 USD an hour and resulting in teacher strikes, primarily affecting second-shift schools which cater to predominantly refugee learners (Save the Children, 2021). At the end of 2021, 61 percent of the population reported challenges in accessing food and basic needs (World

Bank, 2022). The economic crisis and pandemic-related restrictions have accelerated job losses among refugees and currently an estimated 89 percent of refugees in Lebanon are living below the extreme poverty line (UNHCR, 2021b).

### **Lebanon education context**

The majority of school-aged Lebanese children are educated in private schools, with only about 30 percent of Lebanese children in public schools, a group that is more economically vulnerable than those in private schools (GoL & UN, 2015). When Syrian refugees began entering Lebanon in 2011, there were no policies in place to support their education and education for refugees was generally provided by international and national NGOs (DFID, 2017). At this time, refugees were also permitted to enroll in public schools alongside Lebanese students (Adelman, 2018). However, as the influx of refugees grew, public schools became unable to accommodate rapidly increasing numbers of students. As an early step to increase access, in 2013 the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), with financial support from donors opened 90 second shifts in public schools where second shifts accommodated refugee learners for afternoon sessions (DFID, 2017). Second shifts were made available for grades K-9, completion of which is compulsory in Lebanon (MEHE, 2014).

The MEHE committed to set a roadmap to meet the immediate and longer-term education needs of refugees and vulnerable Lebanese children. In close collaboration with international partners the MEHE launched the 2014-2017 Reaching All Children with Education (RACE I) program with the overall objective to "ensure that vulnerable school-aged children (3-18 years), affected by the Syria crisis, are able to access quality formal and non-formal learning opportunities in safe and protective environments" (MEHE, 2014, p. 2). RACE I was framed around three main pillars: expanding access, improving quality, and strengthening the capacity of



the national system. One of the three key strategies of the plan was to increase access to public education through the expansion of a second shift system through which Lebanese children were to study most subjects in English or French during morning sessions while Syrian children were to be taught in Arabic in the afternoon. Specifically, the program aimed to increase spaces for 30,000 learners (age 6-14) to enter the morning shifts and open spots for 170,000 learners to enter second shift public schools (MEHE, 2014).

In 2016, Lebanon adopted a five-year RACE II (2017-2021) plan with the goal of enrolling 440,000 Syrian children in formal education by 2020 (MEHE, 2016). RACE II programming is more ambitious than RACE I with a larger budget (US\$2.1 billion) and language in the RACE II framework shifted from specific support of refugee students to general support of Lebanese public education (Adelman, 2018). Efforts related to increasing access include a multi-year national back-to-school campaign, subsidizing education-related costs, and the rehabilitation and construction of schools. The main outputs related to increasing quality of education services include teacher training, the development and implementation of school improvement plans at the school level, as well as academic monitoring visits. Finally, related to improving the education system overall includes improved education data management, improved curricula, professionalized teaching services, and strengthened education sector management and coordination (MEHE, 2016).

Despite efforts to support refugee learners, the estimated 488,000 school-aged Syrian refugee children in Lebanon (3-18 years) add significant pressure on the already overstretched education system (UNHCR, n.d.-b, GoL & UN, 2019). Efforts to increase enrollment largely rely on second shift schools. During the 2019-2020 school year 148,912 Syrian learners were enrolled in second-shift schools while 43,979 were enrolled in the morning shift (CERD, 2020).

However, in 2020 only 67 percent of primary school-aged Syrian refugees were in school (GoL & UN, 2021). This number fell to 53 percent in 2021 (GEM, 2021) as the public education system was further stretched due to the deteriorating economic situation and the COVID-19 pandemic which have taken a heavy toll on learning (UNHCR, 2021b). The Beirut Port explosion further contributed to the vulnerability of learners by damaging schools, non-formal education (NFE) centers, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions and universities (UNHCR, 2021b).

Barriers to access include children aging out of school, cost of education materials, and the cost of transportation to school (Vasyr, 2021). Access at the secondary level has increased significantly in recent years but still only 29 percent of Syrian refugees ages 15-17 are enrolled in school risking the loss of a generation of skilled professionals (GoL & UN, 2021). Most high school and university age refugees have discontinued their studies due to bureaucratic barriers and high tuition fees (Chopra, 2020; Yahya, 2018). For those in school, concerns have been raised about the lower quality of education in the second shift including shortened instructional time, lack of teacher training and support, as well as concerns about social cohesion caused by isolating Syrian students in second shifts (Adelman, 2018; Yahya et al., 2018).

## **Turkey context**

Turkey is host to the world's largest refugee population since 2014, currently hosting 3.6 million Syrian refugees under temporary protection and close to 320,000 refugees and asylum seekers of other nationalities including from Afghanistan, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, and other countries (UNHCR, 2021). This includes over one million school-aged children. While Turkey has established 'temporary accommodation centers' about 98 percent of Syrians live outside these camps in close contact with Turkish nationals (UNHCR, 2021). The influx of

Syrian refugees has changed the demographic makeup of many regions, causing different reactions from sympathy to exclusion (Koser Akcapar & Simsek, 2018).

Turkey is a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 protocol, however it has maintained the 'geographical limitation' to the 1951 Convention, which ascribes refugee and asylum seeker status and rights to individuals who became refugees as a result of events occurring in Europe. Therefore, as Turkey is not obligated to grant refugee status to asylum seekers coming from outside Europe, prior to 2014 Syrians in Turkey were given the status of 'guest', which ensured no forced return and no limit of duration of stay in Turkey. However, this status also denied social rights and left asylum seekers in a sort of limbo (Baban et al., 2017). In 2014, Turkey adopted a new regulation granting "temporary protection" (TP) status to foreigners who “have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection" (Ineli-Ceger, 2017, p. 557). This new migration status grants 'conditional refugee status' and access to basic social services including protection, health, education, and mental health supports (Seyidov, 2019). The 2014 law also established the Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM) as the main entity in charge of policymaking and proceedings for all foreigners in Turkey.

The Turkish economy recovered quickly from the COVID-19 pandemic but high commodity prices have led to a surge in inflation, a sharp rise in energy prices, and depreciation of the lira putting those living in Turkey under significant financial strain (OECD, 2023). On February 6, 2023, two major earthquakes hit Turkey and Syria, causing severe destruction rendering millions homeless, and representing the European region's worst natural disaster in terms of death toll in over a century. The devastating humanitarian crisis has added pressure to

the country's social and economic fabric causing trauma and stress and unprecedented public health needs (Kurt, Uygun, Aker & Acarturk, 2023).

### **Turkey education context**

The Turkish education system is the largest public sector serving over 25 million students and is highly centralized (McCarthy, 2018). Private schools make up less than 10 percent of primary and 20 percent of secondary schools in the country. Private schools must use curricula developed by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and individual school administrators have little authority to make decisions to meet different local needs (McCarthy, 2018).

Starting in 2011, Syrians were welcomed as "temporary guests" and education provision at this time was perceived as an important basic humanitarian response; however, there was no intention of integrating Syrian learners into the Turkish national school system in the first years of the conflict (Arik Akyüz, Aksoy, Madra & Polat, 2018; McCarthy, 2018). UN agencies supported by civil society organizations and in coordination with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) set up temporary education centers (TECs), which used Syrian volunteer teachers and Arabic language instruction primarily located in camps. However, given the ever-increasing numbers of refugees outside of camps, gaps in education access continued to grow. By 2013, 60 percent of primary school-aged children living in camps and only 14 percent of primary school-aged children outside of camps attended schools (UNHCR, 2013).

International actors such as UNHCR called for urgent attention to the high percentage of out-of-school children and youth, especially in urban areas, warning of a "lost generation" (UNHCR, 2013). Responding to this challenge, the MoNE expanded TECs by opening second shifts in public schools and no longer requiring Syrian students to have residence permits in

order to enroll. The government also required TECs to be accredited and closed centers that did not follow the MoNE approved curriculum and legal regulations.

Efforts to integrate Syrian refugees accelerated after the 2016 EU-Turkey Refugee agreement. The deal agreed that asylum seekers attempting to enter Greece or ‘irregular migrants’ would be returned to Turkey and Turkish authorities would take steps to prevent new migratory routes from opening. In exchange, the EU agreed to resettle Syrian refugees on a one-to-one basis, pay Turkey six billion euros in aid, reduce visa restrictions for Turkish citizens and re-energize negotiations regarding Turkey's accession to the EU (Terry, 2021). As it became increasingly evident that the Syrian crisis would be long-lasting, the MoNE, in-line with a national shift in policy towards long-term development and refugee integration, began viewing TECs as transitional schools which could prepare Syrian learners to enter Turkish public schools with their host country peers (Arik Akyüz et al., 2018).

In 2016 the MoNE declared that all Syrian children would be integrated into Turkish public schools and announced plans to gradually close down TECs by 2020. This led to a significant jump in Syrian student enrollment in Turkish public schools from 80,000 in 2016 to 170,000 in 2017 (McCarthy, 2018). However, the complete policy transition was anticipated to be gradual in order to give time to develop adequate infrastructure (e.g., classrooms and buildings), build Turkish language skills in TECs, as well as to address a variety of socioeconomic and cultural factors (e.g. early marriage and child labor) that pose barriers to education (Arik Akyüz et al., 2018). In 2016, 80 percent of Syrians preferred to study in TECs, presumably due to the language of instruction (Arabic) and curriculum (Syrian) used, yet the MoNE prohibited new registrations in TEC preschools, as well as 1st, 5th and 9th grades to transition away from these schools (Gümüş, Kurnaz, Eşici & Gümüş, 2020; Mamei et al., 2019).

Connected to the consolidation of refugee education under the MoNE, the government began to more strictly regulate NGO educational activities starting in 2017, denying permission to local and INGO actors that previously worked with refugee learners (Arik Akyüz et al., 2018). As of the 2019-2020 school year, TECs were closed and nearly all students had transferred from TECs to public schools (Dayioğlu, Kirdar & Koç, 2021).

Turkey now hosts a total of 1.7 million Syrian refugee children and has made significant progress in school enrollment of Syrian children from 230,000 (69,000 girls) in 2014-2015 to 774,257 (379,432 girls) in 2020-2021 (Unicef, 2021). Despite notable efforts to absorb refugees in its public education system, over 400,000 school-aged refugees were still out of school in 2021 and do not have access to education opportunities (Unicef, 2021b). Barriers to access include cost, extended periods of being out of school, gender bias against girls in addition to protection risks such as psychosocial distress, child labor, and child marriage (Unicef, 2021b). Syrian children also report discrimination, mocking, and bullying at school (HRW, 2015) and teachers report that Turkish families teach their children not to be friends with children from 'other' groups (UNESCO, 2021). Finally, because the language of instruction is only Turkish, language problems faced by Syrian students in Turkey result in high rates of absenteeism and dropout (Eren & Çavuşoğlu, 2021). Concerns have also been raised about quality and equity for both refugee and host community learners as many of the most disadvantaged areas of the country prior to the refugee influx host the highest percentage of refugees (McCarthy, 2018). Already strained public education services in these areas have been further stressed by the influx of refugees (HRW, 2015).

## **Methods**

### **Research design**

This study employs a comparative case study method (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016) using Lebanon and Turkey as the two country cases. Examining multiple cases allows researchers to understand the similarities and differences between the cases in a way that is considered robust and reliable (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Yin (2017) explains that comparative case studies can be used to either “(a) predict similar results (a literal replication), or (b) predict contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons (a theoretical replication)” (p. 55). In my research, comparison across countries allows me to better understand how particular facets of the context and policy environment across countries have resulted in different (or similar) policy processes and outcomes in response to refugee influx.

In understanding how global forces contribute to the reception, translation, and borrowing of double shifting at the national level, this study also involves a multilevel or vertical analysis. Bartlett and Vavrus (2016) argue that vertical axis within the comparative case method are particularly relevant for the study of policy as they can: (1) enable understanding of how actors respond similarly and differently to state or federal mandates; (2) allow for tracing the supranational processes by which actors come into relationships with one another and work to achieve particular policy aims and; (3) they can illuminate the influence of international actors on national policy. By employing a vertical analysis, my research will shed light on the complex interactions, relationships and movement between global and national policymaking in response to refugee influx.

## **Data collection**

This study draws on semi-structured interviews (n=47) with a wide range of actors engaged in the education response to the Syrian crisis at the global, regional, national and local levels including those from foundations, NGOs, INGOs (including representatives from regional initiatives), multilateral, bi-lateral and UN agencies. Over half the sample can be categorized as senior level professionals with titles such as Head/Chief of Education, Director of Education, Senior Education Specialist or Senior Education Advisor. The rest of the sample are mid-level professionals including Education Technical Advisors, Education Officers, and Education Advisors. All individuals were engaged in this work since the start of the Syria crisis in 2011. Participants that changed position or organizational affiliation are referred to in the data by the position and type of organization that they represented at the time. While participants in general were very supportive in connecting me with colleagues that could speak to my research questions, this was more the case in larger organizations probably because they have larger education teams, which is why UN and multilateral organizations make up such a large percent of my sample.

All interviews were conducted between November 2021 and January 2023 virtually via Zoom in English. Interview participants were identified through purposive sampling. I conducted initial exploratory outreach through conversations with five EiE practitioners followed up by online research to identify the profiles of relevant organizations and education actors that would be best placed to speak to my research questions. Interviews were focused on how organizational actors interpret the concept, purpose, institutional motivations behind, barriers, policy processes, and key components of refugee inclusion in national education systems.



**Table 1: Description of participant sample (n=47)**

	Lebanon	Turkey	Regional/ Global	Total
NGO	2	2	0	4
INGO	3	2	1	6
UN	5	7	6	18
Multilateral	3	6	6	15
Bi-lateral	0	1	2	3
Academic	0	1	0	1

## **Data analysis**

Interviews were audio recorded via Zoom with permission from participants. For participants that preferred not to be recorded, notes taken during the interview were coded instead of the transcriptions. Following each interview, I drafted a short memo highlighting participants' main ideas, what I learned, what was surprising and how these ideas connected with analytic categories and themes. The interviews were transcribed and coded in NVivo using a standardized coding process whereby codes were developed in an iterative manner of developing, defining, and refining codes (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). The emic codes drawn from my interview memos formed the basis of my codebook allowing me to use categories that my informants used (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). These codes included categories such as social cohesion, language of instruction, and transition period. Etic codes drawn from the literature review and theoretical framework included categories such as international responsibility-sharing, structural power, and externalization. Analytical memos were developed for each sub-code in order to organize the data and identify linkages within and across the country cases. My codebook was organized by nine themes: Policy background, context, barriers and opportunities, relationships, inclusion assumptions, challenges in supporting refugee

inclusion, organizational approach to inclusion, components of inclusion, and international aid and inclusion.

## **Researcher Positionality**

Researcher positionality can influence what a researcher has chosen to investigate, research participants, and the research context and processes (Malterud, 2001; Grix, 2019). I adopt a reflexive approach which acknowledges that a researcher's social, historical, and political experiences shape their work and that instead of trying to eliminate their effect, researchers should acknowledge and disclose their influence on the research process (Holmes, 2020).

In my former role as a coordinator at the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), I participated in EiE advocacy, policy, standards setting, and capacity development initiatives and established relationships with a wide range of EiE actors over six years. These experiences both sparked my interest in how global refugee education policy is developed and disseminated as well as facilitated my initial outreach to research participants. Fifteen of the 47 participants in this study I knew, or had worked with, through INEE. These pre-existing relationships may have impacted these participants availability to take an interview, openness in discussing potentially sensitive topics, and willingness to connect me with other potential participants. In this way, I approached this research project as an insider with 'lived familiarity' with and a priori knowledge of the group being researched (EiE practitioners). Throughout my research project I reflected on the potential disadvantages this status brings including being overly sympathetic to the humanitarian/development aid culture, potentially being bound by custom or code constricting the ability to raise provocative questions, and assuming I possess more insider knowledge than I actually do (Holmes, 2020).

At the same time, as a North American white woman, I was also an outsider in the contexts of Lebanon and Turkey which bears its own potential advantages and disadvantages. For example, advantages may include that ‘obvious’ information may not be explained to someone considered an insider, outsiders may have greater detachment to study a context without bias, and respondents may be more willing to reveal sensitive information to someone who they may not have future contact with. On the other hand, my outsider status limited my contextual knowledge, my professional network in Lebanon and Turkey, and, importantly, limited my ability to communicate with research participants in Arabic and Turkish, which is discussed further in the limitation section below. In this way, throughout this research project I was simultaneously an insider and an outsider which as Herod (1999) notes is a status that can change over time and depends on who a researcher happens to be speaking with. Finally, I made efforts to regularly recognize and reflect on the inherent privilege of my identity as a white American woman studying at a prestigious university in the United States to identify the biases, values, and experiences I brought to this research project.

## **Limitations**

A number of limitations are connected to my outsider status as a North American researcher based in the United States. First, as a non-Arabic or Turkish speaker my research was conducted in English. The value of language in constructing and describing our social world has been well acknowledged (Barrett 1992, Duranti et al., 2003, in Temple & Young, 2004). I was prepared to conduct interviews with support from a translator but given the fact that all of my key informants had adequate or strong English skills this was not necessary. However, I

acknowledge that only including education actors with working English in my sample is a significant limitation of this study.

Another limitation is that my sample does not include government officials from either country. Although non-governmental actors were the focus for this study, understanding the perspectives of government officials related to the topics discussed in this dissertation is an important area for future research. Including refugee and host community learners and members of the school community was also outside the scope of this study but represent critical voices in

I began data collection in 2021, a year heavily affected by disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic. Although I had planned to conduct research in-person and secured funding to do so, disruptions from the pandemic and COVID-19 protocols made conducting research in person problematic. All interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom which can represent a barrier to a more organic personal connection. However, given the characteristics of individuals in my sample (adult professionals very comfortable with the technology), I found Zoom to be a highly suitable platform for collecting my qualitative interview data. Eight of the 47 participants preferred not to be recorded, I took detailed notes during those interviews.

Finally, it is important to note that it is impossible to speak uniformly about the inclusion of refugees or the impact on host communities. There are widely different experiences even within the same country based on location, and intersectional vulnerabilities including socioeconomic status, disability status, gender, language abilities, and legal status. My findings represent the experiences of the individuals in my sample but are not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of all perspectives or experiences related to refugee inclusion.

## References

- Adelman, E. (2018). *Challenges of integration, obligation and identity: Exploring the experiences of teachers working to educate Syrian refugee children in Lebanon* [Doctoral Dissertation].
- Adelman, E., Chopra, V., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2019). Including and educating Syrian refugees in national education systems – The case of Lebanon. *Global Education Monitoring Report*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Apple, M. W. (2013). *Knowledge, power, and education: The selected works of Michael W. Apple*. Routledge.
- Aranki, D., & Kalis, O. (2014). Limited legal status for refugees from Syria in Lebanon. *Forced Migration Review*, 47.
- Akyüz, A. B.M., Aksoy, D., Madra, A., & Polat, E. (2018). Evolution of national policy in Turkey on integration of Syrian children into the national education system. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (*Background paper for Global Education Monitoring Report*. 2019).
- Baban, F., Ilcan, S., & Rygiel, K. (2017). Syrian refugees in Turkey: Pathways to precarity, differential inclusion, and negotiated citizenship rights. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 43(1), 41–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2016.1192996>
- Barrett, M. (1992). Words and things: Materialism and method in contemporary feminist analysis. In M. Barrett & A. Phillips (Eds.), *Destabilizing theory: Contemporary feminist debates* (pp. 201–219). Stanford University Press.
- Bartlett, L., & Vavrus, F. (2016). *Rethinking case study research: A comparative approach*. Routledge.
- Basu, S. (2018). Age-of-arrival effects on the education of immigrant children: A sibling study. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 39(3), 474–493. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-018-9569-4>
- Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers. *Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544–556. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2008.1573>
- Bellino, M. J., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2019). Inclusion and exclusion within a policy of national integration: Refugee education in Kenya’s Kakuma Refugee Camp. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 40(2), 222–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2018.1523707>
- Bernard, W. S. (1967). The integration of immigrants in the United States. *International Migration Digest*, 1(2), 23–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019791836700100202>

- Böhlmark, A. (2008). Age at immigration and school performance: A siblings analysis using Swedish register data. *Labour Economics*, 15(6), 1366–1387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2007.12.004>
- Buckner, E., Spencer, D., & Cha, J. (2018). Between policy and practice: The education of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 31(4), 444–465.
- Burde, D. (2005). *Education in crisis situations: Mapping the field*. United States Agency for International Development.
- Bush, K. D., & Saltarelli, D. (2000). *The two faces of education in ethnic conflict: Towards a peacebuilding education for children*. Unicef Innocenti Research Centre.
- Callens, M. S., & Meuleman, B. (2017). Do integration policies relate to economic and cultural threat perceptions? A comparative study in Europe. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 58(5), 367–391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715216665437>
- Center for Research and Development (CERD). (2021). Statistical Bulletin 2019-2020. CERD. <https://www.crdp.org/statistics-bulletin/2020-2019-النشرة-الإحصائية>
- Cerna, L. (2019). *Refugee education: Integration models and practices in OECD countries* [OECD working paper]. [https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/refugee-education\\_a3251a00-en](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/refugee-education_a3251a00-en)
- Chopra, V. (2018). *Learning to belong, belonging to learn: Syrian refugee youths' pursuits of education, membership and stability in Lebanon* [Doctoral Dissertation].
- Chopra, V. (2020). 'We're not a bank providing support': Street-level bureaucrats and Syrian refugee youth navigating tensions in higher education scholarship programs in Lebanon. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 77, 102216. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102216>
- Culbertson, S., & Constant, L. (2015). *Education of Syrian refugee children: Managing the crisis in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan*. RAND Corporation.
- Dayioğlu, M., Kirdar, M. G., & Koç, İ. (2021). *The making of a lost generation: Child labor among Syrian refugees in Turkey*.
- Department for International Development (DFID). (2017). Evidence Brief 4: Quality and learning. DFID. <https://www.dai.com/uploads/Theme%204%20-%20Quality%20and%20learning%2008.01.18.pdf>. London.
- Devanny, J., & Berry, P. A. (2022). The Conservative Party and DFID: Party statecraft and development policy since 1997. *Contemporary British History*, 36(1), 86–123. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13619462.2021.1969232>
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2011). *Refugee education: A global review*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2011b). Refugee children aspiring toward the future. In K. Mundy & S. Dryden-Peterson (Eds.), *Educating children in conflict zones* (pp. 85–99). Teacher's College Press.
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2016). Refugee education in countries of first asylum: Breaking open the black box of pre-resettlement experiences. *Theory and Research in Education*, 14(2), 131–148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878515622703>.
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2016). Refugee education: The crossroads of globalization. *Educational Researcher*, 45(9), 473–482. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X16683398>
- Dryden-Peterson, S., Adelman, E., Alvarado, S., Anderson, K., Bellino, M., Brooks, R., . . . Suzuki, E. (2018). Integration of education for refugees in national systems. Background paper prepared for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: *Migration, education, and displacement*. UNESCO. Global Education Monitoring Report.
- Dryden-Peterson, S., Adelman, E., Bellino, M. J., & Chopra, V. (2019). The purposes of refugee education: Policy and practice of including refugees in national education systems. *Sociology of Education*, 92(4), 346–366. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040719863054>
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2020). Civic education and the education of refugees. *Intercultural Education*, 31(5), 592–606. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2020.1794203>
- Duranti, A., Ahearn, L., Cook Gumperz, J., Gumperz, J., Darnell, R., Hymes, D., Duranti, A., & Duranti, A. (2003). Language as culture in US anthropology: Three paradigms. *Current Anthropology*, 44(3), 323–347. <https://doi.org/10.1086/368118>
- Entorf, H., & Lauk, M. (2008). Peer effects, social multipliers and migrants at school: An international comparison. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. OECD. Untapped Skills: Realizing the Potential of Immigrant Students. OECD, 34(4), 633–654. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830801961639>
- Eren, A., & Çavuşoğlu, Ç. (2021). Stigmatisation and othering: The case of Syrian students in Turkish schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2021.1900422>
- Fakhoury, T. (2017). Governance strategies and refugee response: Lebanon in the face of Syrian displacement. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 49(4), 681–700. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743817000654>
- Global education monitoring report (GEM). (2021). *Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia – Inclusion and education: All means all*. <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1528857/FULLTEXT01.pdf>. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2021.
- Government of Lebanon, & United Nations (GoL & UN). (2019). *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–2020 (2019 Update)*. <https://www.lcrp.gov.lb>

- GoL and UN. (2021), *2021 Update of the Lebanon crisis response plan – (LCRP 2017–2021). 12 March 2021*. United Nations.
- Grix, J. (2018). *The foundations of research*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Grzymala-Kazłowska, A., & Phillimore, J. (2018). Introduction: Rethinking integration. New perspectives on adaptation and settlement in the era of super-diversity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(2), 179–196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1341706>
- Gümüş, E., Kurnaz, Z., Eşici, H., & Gümüş, S. (2020). Current conditions and issues at Temporary Education Centres (TECs) for Syrian child refugees in Turkey. *Multicultural Education Review*, 12(2), 53–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2005615X.2020.1756083>
- Hamre, B., Morin, A., & Ydesen, C. (Eds.). (2018). *Testing and inclusive schooling: International challenges and opportunities*. Routledge.
- Herod, Andrew. “Reflections on Interviewing Foreign Elites: Praxis, Positionality, Validity and the cult of the Insider.” *Geoforum*, vol. 30, 1999, pp. 313-327.
- Holmes, A. G. D. (2020). Researcher Positionality--A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research--A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), 1-10.
- Hynie, M. (2018). Refugee integration: Research and policy. *Peace and Conflict*, 24(3), 265–276. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000326>
- Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2015, November). When I picture my future, I see nothing. *Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Turkey*. (No. 978–1-6231–32934).
- Ineli-Ciger, M. (2017). Protecting Syrians in Turkey: A legal analysis. *International Journal of Refugee Law*, 29(4), 555–579. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ijrl/eex042>
- Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC). (2016). The grand bargain: A shared commitment to better serve people in need. [https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/grand\\_bargain\\_final\\_22\\_may\\_final-2.pdf](https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/grand_bargain_final_22_may_final-2.pdf)
- Janmyr, M. (2018). UNHCR and the Syrian refugee response: Negotiating status and registration in Lebanon. *International Journal of Human Rights*, 22(3), 393–419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2017.1371140>
- Jakupec, V., & Kelly, M. (2019). *Foreign aid in the age of populism: Political economy analysis from Washington to Beijing*. Routledge.
- Kelcey, J. (2020). *Schooling the stateless. A history of the UNRWA education program for Palestine refugees* ([Doctoral Dissertation]. New York University).



- Kelcey, J., & Chatila, S. (2020). Increasing inclusion or furthering fragmentation? How the global strategy to include refugees in national education systems has been implemented in Lebanon. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 36(2), 9–19. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40713>
- Kiwan, D. (2021). Inclusion and citizenship: Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 25(2), 283–297.
- Koser Akcapar, S., & Simsek, D. (2018). The politics of Syrian refugees in Turkey: A question of inclusion and exclusion through citizenship. *Social Inclusion*, 6(1), 176–187. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v6i1.1323>
- Kuhlman, T. (1990). *The economic integration of refugees in developing countries*. (Serie Research Memoranda; No. 1990-35). Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- Kurt, G., Uygun, E., Aker, A. T., & Acarturk, C. (2023). Addressing the mental health needs of those affected by the earthquakes in Türkiye. *The Lancet Psychiatry*.
- Lerch, J. C. (2017). *Beyond survival: The rise of education in emergencies as global field and profession* ([Doctoral Dissertation]. Stanford University).
- Levinson, B. (2011). Introduction: Exploring critical social theories and education. In B. Levinson et al. (Eds.), *Beyond critique: Exploring critical social theories and education* (pp. 1–24). Paradigm Publications.
- Maass, E. (1958). Integration and name changing among Jewish refugees from Central Europe in the United States. *Names*, 6(3), 129–171. <https://doi.org/10.1179/nam.1958.6.3.129>
- Malterud, K. (2001). Qualitative research: standards, challenges, and guidelines. *The lancet*, 358(9280), 483–488.
- Mamei, M., Cilasun, S. M., Lippi, M., Pancotto, F., & Tümen, S. (2019). Improve education opportunities for better integration of Syrian refugees in Turkey. *Guide to mobile data analytics in refugee scenarios: The 'Data for Refugees Challenge' Study*, 381–402.
- McCarthy, A. T. (2018). Politics of refugee education: Educational administration of the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 50(3), 223–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2018.1440541>
- Menashy, F., & Zakharia, Z. (2017). *Investing in the crisis: Private participation in the education of Syrian refugees* (pp. 1–40). Education International.
- Menashy, F. (2018). Multi-stakeholder aid to education: Power in the context of partnership. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 16(1), 13–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2017.1356702>

- Menashy, F. (2019). *International aid to education: Power dynamics in an era of partnership*. Teacher's College Press.
- Mendenhall, M., Russell, S. G., & Bruckner, E. (2017). *Urban refugee education: Strengthening policies and practices for access, quality, and inclusion*. Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Mendenhall, M. (2019) Navigating the humanitarian-development nexus in forced displacement contexts. *UNICEF Education Think Piece Series*, 89.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed). Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis*. SAGE.
- Ministry of Education and higher education (MEHE). (2014). *Reaching all children with education in Lebanon*. Ministry of Education and Higher Education Press.
- MEHE. (2016). *Reaching all children with education: RACE, II* (2017–21). Ministry of Education and Higher Education Press.
- Novelli, M., Cardozo, M. L., & Smith, A. (2015). *A theoretical framework for analysing the contribution of education to sustainable peacebuilding: 4 Rs in conflict-affected contexts*. University of Amsterdam.
- Phillimore, J. (2012). Implementing integration in the UK: Lessons for integration theory, policy and practice. *Policy and Politics*, 40(4), 525–545.  
<https://doi.org/10.1332/030557312X643795>
- OECD. (2023). OECD Economic Surveys: Türkiye Executive Summary. OECD.  
<https://www.oecd.org/economy/turkiye-economic-snapshot/>
- Portes, A. (1969). Dilemmas of a golden exile: Integration of Cuban refugee families in Milwaukee. *American Sociological Review*, 34(4), 505–518.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2091960>
- Regilme, S. S. (2022). United States foreign aid and multilateralism under the Trump presidency. *New Global Studies*, 0. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ngs-2021-0030>
- Safa, O. (2006). Lebanon springs forward. *Journal of Democracy*, 17(1), 22–37.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2006.0016>
- Save the Children. (2021). Lebanon education in crisis: Raising the alarm.  
<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Lebanon%20Education%20crisis%20spotlight.pdf>

- Seyidov, I. (2019). On social integration process with refugees in Turkey: How can NGOs be more effective? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1–15.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2019.1673955>
- Shuayb, M. (2014). The art of inclusive exclusions: Educating the Palestinian refugee students in Lebanon. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 33(2), 20–37. <https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdu002>
- Sidhu, R., Taylor, S., & Christie, P. (2011). Schooling and refugees: Engaging with the complex trajectories of globalisation. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 1(2), 92–103.  
<https://doi.org/10.2304/gsch.2011.1.2.92>
- Slee, R. (2018). *Inclusion and education: Defining the scope of inclusive education. 2020 global education monitoring report think piece*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Strang, A., & Ager, A. (2010). Refugee integration: Emerging trends and remaining agendas. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 23(4), 589–607. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feq046>
- Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2012). Understanding policy borrowing and lending. *World yearbook of education*, 3–17.
- Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2014). Cross-national policy borrowing: Understanding reception and translation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 34(2), 153–167.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2013.875649>
- Svenson, N. A. (2018). Refugee education: Conceptualizing inclusion amid conflict and crisis. In *Testing and inclusive schooling (1st ed., pp. 152-169)*. Routledge.
- Terry, K. (2021). Five years on: A frayed and controversial but enduring blueprint.  
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/eu-turkey-deal-five-years-on>. European Union. Migration Policy Institute.
- Traboulsi, F. (2007). *A modern history of Lebanon* p. 121. Pluto Press.
- Tumen, S. (2019). Refugees and “native flight” from public to private schools. *Economics Letters*, 181, 154–159. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2019.05.030>
- Turner, L. (2015). Explaining the (non-)encampment of Syrian refugees: Security, class and the labour market in Lebanon and Jordan. *Mediterranean Politics*, 20(3), 386–404.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2015.1078125>
- United Nations (UN). (2016). Transcending humanitarian-development divides- Changing people’s lives: From Delivering Aid to ending need.  
[http://agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/WHS%20Commitment%20to%20action%20-%20transcending%20humanitarian-development%20divides\\_0.pdf](http://agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/WHS%20Commitment%20to%20action%20-%20transcending%20humanitarian-development%20divides_0.pdf)

- United Nations Children's Fund. (2021). UNICEF education, education case study Turkey. [https://www.unicef.org/media/102111/file/Inclusion%20of%20Syrian%20refugee%20children%20into%20the%20national%20education%20system%20\(Turkey\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/102111/file/Inclusion%20of%20Syrian%20refugee%20children%20into%20the%20national%20education%20system%20(Turkey).pdf)
- United Nations Children's Fund. (2021b). *UNICEF Turkey, humanitarian situation report No. 44*. <https://www.unicef.org/media/115311/file/Turkey-Humanitarian-SitRep-31-December-2021.pdf>. United Nations Children's Fund Turkey.
- United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO). (December 14, 1960). Convention Against Discrimination in Education. Doc CPG.61/VI.11y/AFSR.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2017). *Global education monitoring report 2017/18: Accountability in Education: Meeting our Commitments*.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2020). *Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all*.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2021). *Global education monitoring report 2021/2: Non-state actors in education: Who chooses? Who loses?*
- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). (2016). New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016, A/RES/71/1, Retrieved October 3, 2016. <http://bit.ly/UN-NewYorkDeclaration-2016>
- United Nations General Assembly. (2018). *The global compact on refugees, 17 December 2018*. United Nations.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (n.d.). Lebanon operational context. <https://reporting.unhcr.org/lebanon>
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (n.d-b). Education. <https://www.unhcr.org/lb/education>. United Nations High Commission for Refugees Lebanon.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2012). *Education strategy* (pp. 2012–2016).
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2013). Retrieved December 2013. <https://reliefweb.int/report/turkey/2014-syria-regional-response-plan-turkey>, 2014 Syrian Regional Response Plan: Turkey
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2014). The integration of refugees: A discussion paper. Retrieved July 2014. [https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/02/integration\\_discussion\\_paper\\_July\\_2014\\_EN.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/02/integration_discussion_paper_July_2014_EN.pdf)
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2018). *Two year progress assessment of the CRRF approach*. United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2019). Refugee education. *A strategy for refugee inclusion*. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/education/5d651da88d7/education-2030-strategy-refugee-education.html>, 2030.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2021). InterAgency – Education sector end of year 2020 dashboard. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/86017>. United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2021b). Global trends- forced displacement in 2020. <https://www.unhcr.org/60b638e37/unhcr-global-trends-2020>. United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2022). *Global trends- force displacement in 2021*. United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2023). Refugee data finder. <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees, United Nations Children’s Fund, & World Food Program (2021). *VASyR 2020 vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon*. United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
- Waters, T., & LeBlanc, K. (2005). Refugees and education: Mass public schooling without a nation-state. *Comparative Education Review*, 49(2), 129–147. <https://doi.org/10.1086/428102>
- World Bank, & United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2021). *The global cost of inclusive refugee education*. World Bank.
- Yahya, M., Kassir, J., & El-Hariri, K. (2018). *Unheard voices: What Syrian refugees need to return home*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. Sage Publications.
- Yoshikawa, H., Dryden-Peterson, S., Burde, D., & Aber, J. L. (2022). Education for refugee and displaced children. In M. Suárez-Orozco & C. Suárez-Orozco (Eds.), *Education: A global compact for a time of crisis* (pp. 97–117). Columbia University Press.
- Zetter, R. (2021). Theorizing the refugee humanitarian-development nexus: A political-economy analysis. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34(2), 1766–1786. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez070>

# **PAPER 1: REFUGEE INCLUSION IN NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF POLICY TRANSFER IN CRISIS CONTEXTS**

## **Abstract**

This study explores the way that the global policy frameworks that promote the inclusion of refugee education in national education systems are adopted and modified in refugee-hosting contexts. Building on scholarship that is interested in how global refugee policy is adapted and its impact at the school level, my research focuses on the economic, social and political reasons *why* reforms were enacted, the *timing* of such reforms and contextual reasons *why* reforms took the shape they did. Drawing on policy borrowing research, this qualitative comparative case study in Lebanon and Turkey draws on semi-structured interviews (n=47) to argue that policies to include refugees in national education systems are influenced by a number of contextual realities including: Expectations for crisis resolution; political, economic and social cost/benefit analysis; and the operational realities of the education system. Greater understanding of the role that national policy environments play in shaping global education in emergencies policies is critical to understanding the impact of the global shift towards refugee inclusion in education systems and for upholding global commitments to education for both refugee and host community learners.

## **Introduction**

Over the past decade, the global forced displacement crisis has accelerated in scale and complexity reaching an estimated 89.3 million people displaced in 2021 due to conflict, violence, persecution and human rights abuses (UNHCR, 2022). Children account for 41 percent of all forcibly displaced people and UNHCR estimates that between 2018 and 2021, 1.5 million

children were born into refugee status (UNHCR, 2022). As a result of discrimination, exclusion, and lack of resources, refugee children are five times less likely to attend school than host country children (Save the Children, 2018). In an effort to support refugee learners, there has been a radical shift in global policy from segregated schooling that prioritizes repatriation (Waters & LeBlanc, 2005) to the integration of refugees into national education systems (Dryden-Peterson, Adelman, Bellino & Chopra, 2019). The rationale for this policy shift includes the increasingly protracted and urban nature of contemporary displacement, the opportunity to strengthen host country education systems, and to support conflict mitigation and prevention in ways that counter racism, xenophobia, and related intolerance against refugees and migrants (UNHCR, 2019).

While global policies such as the Global Compact for Refugees (UNGA, 2018) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) Refugee Education 2030 Strategy point to the imperative of integration as the “best policy option for refugees, displaced and stateless children and youth and their hosting communities” (UNHCR, 2019, p. 6), integration is framed broadly within these policies with considerable room for interpretation. Research has shown that concepts related to refugee integration are debated and considered theoretically and practically imprecise (Strang & Ager, 2010) as well as there being a wide range of variation in the way integration has been defined and enacted (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Unutulmaz, 2019). These studies highlight the reality that reforms under the label of refugee inclusion can in practice look vastly different. For example, levels of refugee inclusion can range from complete exclusion (no access to national education systems), to partial inclusion (learners follow the national curriculum but are geographically or temporally separated from host-community learners), to full access to government schools (where refugee and host-

community students learn together in the same spaces) (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). At the early stages of this global policy shift there is limited research on when, why, and how host-country education systems enact and respond to global policy imperatives surrounding the inclusion of refugee students (Adelman et al., 2019). Many questions remain related to the identification of key determinants of variation in policy responses related to refugee inclusion in education systems.

Through a comparative case study in Lebanon and Turkey, my research addresses this gap by asking: *How does the national policy context in refugee-hosting states influence the reception and translation of global policies that promote refugee inclusion in national education systems?* Within policy borrowing literature, reception refers to the political, economic, and cultural reasons that account for the attractiveness of a reform from elsewhere, while translation captures the act of local adaptation modification or reframing of an imported reform (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). This approach centers my comparative study on local variations in Lebanon and Turkey and how these local realities adapt global models of refugee policy. According to Steiner-Khamsi (2012), the local policy context “provides clues for understanding why a borrowed reform resonates, what policy issue it pretends to resolve, and which policy actors it managed to mobilize in support of reform” (p. 5). Understanding differences in the ways that governments have responded to the global push to refugee integration may help better anticipate how global EiE policies will be adapted in refugee-hosting contexts and may shed light on potential barriers and opportunities for supporting the inclusion of refugees in national systems.

This research endeavors to address a gap across two areas of scholarship. First, despite the rapid adoption of inclusion as a policy approach in the field of education in emergencies, there is little research on refugee inclusion in national education systems (Dryden-Peterson,



2020; Adelman et al., 2019). Second, the well-established body of scholarly literature on education policy borrowing provides an analytical lens for understanding the processes through which global education policy is pushed, changed, resisted, and indigenized (Steiner-Khamsi, 2016). Within this second area of scholarship education in crises contexts has been largely understudied (Rappleye & Paulson, 2007).<sup>7</sup>

This paper proceeds as follows. First, I provide an overview of the contexts in Lebanon and Turkey. Second, I frame the study within policy borrowing scholarship. Third, I outline my research methods. Fourth, my findings detail the social, economic, and political motivations for the reception and translation of policies of refugee inclusion in Turkey and then in Lebanon. The paper concludes by arguing that policies aimed at including refugees in national education systems are influenced by expectations for crisis resolution, calculation of political, economic and social risks, and the operational realities of providing education to displaced refugee populations.

## **Context**

Lebanon and Turkey provide a useful point of comparison as they both bear a significant burden of the Syrian crisis, have both received substantial international donor support for refugee education, yet have divergent policy outcomes related to refugee inclusion (Crul et al., 2019) and struggle to provide access to education. Turkey is the largest refugee-hosting country in the world hosting 3.8 million refugees and migrants, 15 percent of all people displaced across borders globally (UNHCR, 2022). As a share of the population, however, Lebanon hosts the most refugees by far with one refugee for every eight nationals (UNHCR, 2022). With 41

---

<sup>7</sup> Notable exceptions include (Kelcey & Chatila, 2020) and (Adelman, 2020).

percent of the refugee populations of school age (UNHCR, 2022), both countries faced unprecedented strains to provide education services.

Prior to the Syria crisis 70 percent of students in Lebanon attended private schools. This meant that the public school system had to triple its capacity to absorb the 500,000 Syrian children and youth as there were only 200,000 enrolled learners prior to the refugee influx (Shuayb, Crul & Lee, 2022). In Turkey, the education system which serves 13.5 million students had to expand to accommodate over 1 million additional Syrian refugee children (Shuayb, Crul & Lee, 2022). In spite of significant efforts, in Lebanon over half of school aged refugee children (ages 6-17) are out of school, 30 percent of whom have never been to school, and only 11% of youth (15-24) were enrolled in education (Vasyr, 2021). In Turkey about 25 percent of school-aged refugee children, 422,867 (192,474 girls) are out of school (Unicef, 2021).

In both Turkey and Lebanon, the presence of refugees at the start of the crisis was considered temporary. At this time, Lebanon did not set up refugee camps and instead refugees lived in host communities and were initially permitted to enroll in public schools alongside Lebanese students (Adelman, 2018). Differently in Turkey, in the early years of the crisis they set up a parallel education system through Temporary Education Centers (TEC) which offered an adapted Syrian curriculum and employed Syrian educators. However, in 2016 Turkey, with support from the European Union, committed to a policy to gradually abolish these schools, requiring Syrian children and youth to enroll in Turkish public schools alongside their Turkish peers (Sarmini, Topçu & Scharbrodt, 2020). The TECs were finally all closed in 2019 and nearly all students transferred from TECs to public schools (Dayioğlu, Kirdar & Koç, 2021). In 2014 Lebanon began opening second shift schools for Syrian refugees, limiting their access to first shift classrooms. Currently, 70 percent of non-Lebanese students attend ‘second shift’ schools in

the afternoon that are exclusively for refugee students and offer a reduced Lebanese curriculum, 50 percent less instruction time, and taught by Lebanese teachers with reduced qualification standards (Abdul-Hamid & Yassine, 2020; Crul et al., 2019; GEM, 2019; Shuayb, Crul & Lee, 2022).

### **Conceptual framework: Policy Borrowing**

Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the tensions between normative international policies and frameworks that assert the right to education for all refugees, and the national institutions, grounded in their own politics and national realities, that implement these policies. For example, scholars have been interested in the multiple ways that global policy around inclusion is locally understood, adapted, and implemented (See, for example Adelman, 2018; Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019).

Dryden-Peterson et al.'s (2019) study on the shift in refugee education policy towards integration focuses on the processes of policy and practice “vernacularization,” that is, the ways ideas “land in very different ways in different places” (Levitt & Merry, 2009; p. 445). This approach illuminates how global education policy is differentially adapted in the national context based on actors’ understandings of refugees’ futures and how this vision may enable or constrain opportunities for inclusion. Each nation state within their study adopted a contextualized model of inclusion based on prevailing visions of refugees’ futures (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). They found that which model is selected strongly impacts learners’ experiences of quality education ranging from complete exclusion (no access to national education systems), to partial inclusion (learners follow the national curriculum but are geographically or temporally separated from host-community learners), to full access to government schools (where refugee and host-community students learn together in the same spaces) based on prevailing visions of refugees’

futures (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). This approach is sociocultural, focusing on understanding how the purposes of refugee education are understood, articulated and enacted by global, national, and school-based social actors in socially constructed contexts (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019). By locating sources of variation within decision-making at multiple scales this model emphasizes individual experiences and perceptions in contextualizing models of inclusion. My research aims to expand upon this analysis by incorporating greater emphasis on the national policy context, institutional structures, and political drivers that also influence policy translation and reception.

Other scholars, similarly interested in the way that global refugee education policy travels and is adapted, have given more weight to political drivers, legislative initiatives, and institutional arrangements. For example, similarly to Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019), Unutulmaz (2019) finds that education policy related to integration and exclusion, in this case in Turkey, is shaped by the perception of the future of Syrians in Turkey. However, instead of conceptualizing this difference through a sociocultural lens focused on how the purposes of refugee education are understood, articulated and enacted, he emphasizes the evolving political vision for Syrian refugees, concluding that “education policies are both manifestations of the transformation of the political vision and instruments to drive and control this transformation” (Unutulmaz, 2019, p. 245).

Unutulmaz (2019) notes that at the onset of the Syrian crisis, the *laissez-faire* attitude toward community-based education (Arabic, NGO-led, and outside the scope of the Turkish system) was shaped by a vision of temporariness of the crisis. In making what he calls a “radical” transformation towards inclusion, Unutulmaz (2019) emphasizes drivers including shifts in refugee legal status, national and local security concerns on the part of government

officials, and larger strategic political vision for the future of Turkey given the relationship between education and the prospects of integrating Syrians socially, culturally, and economically into society. In order to understand how global policy imperatives were enacted at the national level, Unutulmaz's political economic orientation emphasizes the political and economic motivations, legal frameworks, and policy processes affecting education policy around refugee inclusion. However, this analysis does not consider the influence of international actors and the ways in which they affect these motivations, frameworks, and policy processes.

Kelsey Norman (2019) argues that host states may be pressured by international actors to develop inclusive refugee policies as a result of international politics or perceived diplomatic or economic gains (e.g. international shaming, the EU accession process) but without investing the resources to make long-term integration, or the implementation of inclusive policies, feasible. She further argues that in addition to liberal and repressive strategies, which lead to inclusive or exclusive refugee policies respectively, there is a third strategy, that of indifference-as-policy. Indifference here refers not to policy failure but strategic indirect action where a state defers to international organizations and civil society actors to provide basic services to migrants and refugees (Norman, 2019). Norman concludes that states should not necessarily be dismissed as unable to deliver inclusive refugee policy outputs, but rather they should be seen as strategic actors that, when it comes to migration policy decisions, may be willing to deploy state resources when the incentives to do so are in place.

Scholarship attentive to connecting structural and relational processes of integration differentiates between having access to educational institutions and services and experiencing inclusion through inclusive identities and connectedness (See, for example, Chopra, 2018; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2018; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019).

Bellino and Dryden-Peterson (2019) study how the policy priority to integrate refugees within national systems is experienced and understood by youth in Kenya's spatially segregated refugee camp. They find that while the policy shift toward integration has expanded access to public schooling, relational integration may be absent and the ways that inclusion is experienced in schools may shape opportunities and limitations on sociocultural integration in their host country. In this way, "inclusion" in the schools in a refugee camp, which are registered and recognized by the Ministry of Education and so deemed "national schools" do not provide opportunities for relational integration, with very few exceptions of host community kids accessing refugee schools, though never in any significant numbers. By demonstrating the critical gaps between structural and relational integration, this model stresses the idea that feelings of belonging are not individualized but are connected to structural constraints (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019) and that policies designed to include refugees should promote and be assessed by the extent to which they enable both forms of integration.

A few recent studies have drawn on policy transfer literature to examine refugee inclusion as a borrowed global reform. Policy transfer is an overarching label that refers to the "process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions, etc. in one time and/or place is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangement and institutions in another time and/or place" (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p. 344). Kelcey and Chatila (2020) study inclusion at the micro level in Lebanon examining how teachers and school principals understand and enact global refugee policies finding that inclusion has been enacted in ways that reproduce education inequities. Adelman (2020) studies how global strategies for refugee education are interpreted, translated, and experienced at the school level and how these policies address the challenges faced by teachers and school leaders in Lebanon. She finds there

is a disconnect in priorities and implementation around education quality and integration between the global, national and local levels. She further argues that policies flow from the top down, with little opportunity for local actors to influence global or national frameworks (Adelman, 2020). These studies are interested in how the global push towards refugee inclusion is adapted at the national level and how these policies are then realized at the school level.

My research builds on this scholarship with an emphasis on policy *reception* and *translation*. Policy reception refers to the circumstances under which authorities in Lebanon and Turkey were open to the inclusion of refugees in their education systems. Policy translation focuses on *why* policies of refugee inclusion in education were adapted, modified or reframed as they were (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). This approach highlights the reality that reforms are not necessarily borrowed for rational reasons or because they are considered to be best practices, but rather they are also influenced by political or economic reasons (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). This framework allows for the examination of the agency, process, impact, and timing of policies of inclusion as borrowed policies. This approach supports the consideration of the ‘socio-logic’ which acknowledges the political, economic, and social rationales for policy borrowing. This approach is drawn from the work of sociologist Niklas Luhmann who argued for a “perspective privileging spheres of communication, defined and demarcated by boundaries drawn between an internal sphere (system) of meaning and order and a wider *environment* of infinite complexity” (Luhmann, 1990 in Rappleye, 2012). According to Luhmann, the ways in which the internal sphere reduces the complexity of the wider environment both reflect the distinctive identity of the system, but the act of selection and filtering, also reproduces its own distinctiveness. This is what Schriewer (2003) calls the ‘socio-logic’ of the home system. Within this analysis, policy attraction and ‘borrowing’ serve to either reinforce the distinctiveness of the

“home system” or elements of it. This study applies this concept of home system within the context of significant strain, upheaval, and demographic change in the home system that massive refugee influx effects. This framework supports the examination of the contextual factors that influence the inclusion of refugees in national systems as a borrowed policy across Lebanon and Turkey, two countries responding to the same crisis, at the same time, in the same global refugee education policy context.

## **Methods**

In order to understand how national policy contexts in refugee-hosting states influences the reception and translation of refugee inclusion in national education systems this study employs a comparative case study method (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016) using a horizontal (between Turkey and Lebanon), vertical (global to national refugee policy) analysis. I conducted semi-structured interviews (n=47) with a wide range of actors engaged in the education response to the Syrian crisis at the regional and global level (n=15) including those from multilateral, bilateral and UN agencies. I also conducted 32 semi-structured interviews with national and sub-national policy actors in Lebanon (n=13) and in Turkey (n=19). This included UN representatives, INGO actors, national and local NGO representatives. Interviews were focused on how actors interpret the concept, purpose, and key components of refugee inclusion in national education systems. I also asked about their experiences in global and national education policy processes. All interviews were conducted between November 2021 and January 2023 virtually via Zoom in English.

Interviews were recorded with permission from participants and transcribed and coded in Nvivo using a standardized coding process whereby codes developed in an iterative manner of developing, defining, and refining codes (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Etic codes were



drawn from the literature review and theoretical framework. These central categories included ways of capturing context (e.g., historical, social, economic, education, and legal context) and conceptualizing policy processes (e.g., global policy background, national policy background, policy influence, and policy responses) while codes and sub-codes refined and elaborated each concept. I also used emic codes as they emerge from my interviews allowing me to use categories that my informants used (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

There are limitations to my research project. First, given this paper's focus on policy processes, not having any policy makers included in my sample represents a significant limitation. Despite a range of efforts, I was unable to interview ministry officials due to limited access and barriers getting official permission. Second, this research was conducted in English, while many MONE and MEHE documents are available in English, access to sources as well as local news sources and other resources that would shed light on the national environment were limited.

## **Findings**

### **Turkey education response**

The following section details three distinct policy phases of the education response in Turkey from largely non-governmental supported parallel TECs for refugees, to the institutionalization of these centers under MoNE control and supervision, to a comprehensive transition to integrate refugees into Turkish classrooms. My data shows a number of reasons for the timing of the opening to reception of reforms including expectations for crisis resolution, opportunity for political and financial gain, national security concerns, and social cohesion risks. I find that the translation of the reforms was influenced by the size and strength of the education

system, Turkey's vision for identity and nation building, and the operational realities of the education system.

### **Phase I: Parallel system**

Turkey's policy predating the Syria crisis was that non-Turkish residents could enroll in the national school system. However, in the first years of the crisis, from 2011-2016, the inclusion of refugees into mainstream Turkish classrooms was widely rejected as a policy response. Instead, the MoNE allowed the setting up of parallel "Syrian schools" by NGOs, philanthropic and religious entities as an "exception" to the historical national approach to education that aims to solidify national unity through a centralized curriculum and emphasis on Turkishness and the Turkish language (McCarthy, 2018). Respondents shared a number of reasons for the unattractiveness of the continuation of refugee inclusion in Turkish schools in light of realities of the Syria crisis.

All respondents agreed that in the early days of the crisis the education policy decisions were based on the assumption shared among refugees, host communities, and policymakers that the Syrian Civil War would last only a few months and repatriation to Syria was imminent. As well, given the scale of the crisis and expectations for crisis resolution, the response was led by Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority with an initial focus on a camp-based response until late 2014. In addition, Turkish language represented a significant barrier for most learners and since the inclusion of refugees would represent a significant burden on already strained classrooms and buildings, especially in urban areas, Turkish authorities took a hands-off approach allowing recent arrivals to continue learning the Syrian curriculum, in their home language, with Syrian volunteer teachers. From 2011-2013 TEC were largely organized and run by non-state actors with limited oversight from the MoNE.

When I asked a national NGO representative why the MoNE did not engage more proactively from 2011-2013 they shared it was because of:

Politics! Politics! Totally politics! Because [Ministry of Education officials] were expecting the Assad regime to fall down...soon. Honestly, I have anecdotal reflection. During this period we were working with the Ministry of Education... You know, we were really really good relationship with the Ministry of Education, during this period as well... So I just was saying to them, 'you know education is essential. You should do something.' He and the team, even undersecretary, said to me, 'Don't worry, it will be ended soon.' (NGO, Turkey)

A few respondents suggested that Turkey's close political affiliation with the Syrian opposition may have also played into policy decisions to ensure swift repatriation. From the start of the crisis, the Turkish government fully supported the Syrian opposition, recognizing the then-Syrian National Council as the representative of the Syrian people, and jointly calling for the end of the Assad regime (Kirişci, 2014). Turkey was also hosting the opposition government in exile who were engaged in education planning with MoNE and saw the establishment of Syrian schools as part of their preparedness to govern, so for a time, some TECs used the Syrian opposition curriculum. In fact, Turkish language was not initially prioritized as it was seen as potentially deterring the voluntary repatriation of Syrian families (McCarthy, 2018). In this way, TECs were seen as a pragmatic temporary measure to keep non-Turkish learners connected with schooling while allowing the possibility of quickly transitioning back to their home country education in line with political alliances and assumptions.

Respondents also explained that TECs, separate from mainstream Turkish classrooms, were politically expedient because the act of allowing Arabic language to be spoken at public schools would represent an opening for the longstanding grievances of the Turkish Kurdish population and other minorities who have long pushed for their own language use in schools.

In Turkey we have lots of minority [groups] speaking different languages, which is actually forbidden to speak in any Turkish school. So that was somewhat of a

political problem. So therefore, we were trying to actually regulate, together with the ministry. Because we had the language barrier, different from Lebanon, it was very hard to right away, integrate all the children into the Turkish national system. (UN, Turkey)

Granting language rights to Syrian refugees was seen as a very delicate political issue that could be mitigated through the exceptional nature of parallel and temporary TECs.

Finally, many respondents spoke of the highly centralized nature of the Turkish government and MoNE specifically. The hierarchical culture within the government meant that education decisions throughout the crisis were taken by individual political leaders. Discussing TECs and the government's lack of action, one NGO representative explained:

The government has a high hierarchy. I mean minister, and under Secretary, top management should set up the program. And then, for this type of politics issues, should be approved by the president Erdogan. So there isn't any flexibility, or two way communication in the ministries. (INGO, Turkey)

Since Turkey's highly effective Disaster and Emergency Management Authority had leadership over the humanitarian response and, at this time, there was no institutional location for EiE in the government, some respondents suggested that this may have limited the ability of education actors to shape the early response.

## **Phase II: Institutionalization of EiE**

From 2011 until 2013, TECs “were largely unregulated, operated outside the national system and had very limited quality assurance and standardization of certification at the end of grades 9 and 12” (UNESCO, 2018, p. 62). However, between 2013 and 2016 Turkey made a significant policy shift towards regulating and standardizing the TECs under MoNE supervision. TECs were required to have protocols with the Provincial Directorates and started using a standardized Arabic curriculum designed by the Ministry of Education of the Syrian Interim Government and modified by the Turkish MEHE (Akyuz et al., 2018).

This shift away from a non-governmental led education response addressed a number of contextual realities including the rise of ISIS and escalation of fighting in Syria which led to a significant new influx of refugees (Oztig, 2022). In 2013 there were 224,655 Syrian refugees under temporary protection. By 2014 this number ballooned to 1,519,286 (Akyuz et al., 2018). This influx reflected the increasingly complex entrenchment of the conflict and undeniable reality that timely resolution was unlikely. This context also presented challenges to the reliance on costly refugee camps isolated from many economic opportunities that refugees began seeking in cities and agricultural areas.

A few respondents mentioned that the diversity of actors engaged in education activities, in addition to the varied quality and lack of oversight also raised national security concerns. As one UN representative shared:

...by the end of 2014 the government started to see this massive proliferation of Syrian schools and anybody with money and goodwill could set up a school. Increasingly, there [were] also concerns about the ideology that could be taught in those schools, depending on which groups set them up, and those... ideologies could destabilize Turkey. (UN, Turkey)

In addition, it became clear that lack of coordination was causing controversy, logistical bottlenecks and barriers around learner certification. As another UN representative explained:

So in 2014, for example, you had the Syrian interim government exams and the Libyan exams being used. And some certification [had] been given... when it was the interim government and authority, but no government or no State recognized. And giving a certificate, but this certificate actually had no legitimacy. The Turkish authorities accepted it for entry into university, but it became a point of contention. (UN, Turkey)

In summary, respondents shared that some of the reasons that Turkey chose to standardize TECs and take over their regulation and management were due to the shift in expectations about the crisis resolution, national security concerns given the diversity of actors engaged and challenges in oversight, as well as growing recognition for the need to standardize

certification to facilitate pathways to higher education. Despite keeping refugees in their own schools, this transition to MoNE management and authority over refugee education represents a shift towards a longer-term commitment to refugee education in the Turkish system.

### **Phase III: Integration into Turkish classrooms**

In 2016 the MoNE declared that all Syrian children would be integrated into Turkish public schools and announced plans to gradually close down the TECs by 2020. The changing receptivity to inclusion as a policy approach was due to two main factors. First, confirming existing literature (Akyuz et al., 2018), respondents shared that this policy shift stemmed from the realization that the Syrian refugees were not going back to Syria in the foreseeable future and the government started to consider them as long-term or permanent residents. In line with this shift, MEHE began to view the TECs as a transitional school designed to prepare refugees with the language and curricular content necessary to eventually attend Turkish public schools with their Turkish peers. This shift aligned with the reality that refugee camps were both expensive and refugees were increasingly located in cities and local communities.

Second, also in 2016, the European Union entered into the landmark EU-Turkey Deal which emphasizes education as a priority sector, the main focus being the integration of Syrian learners in national schools. As part of the deal Turkey committed to “adopt and implement policies, legislation and programmes facilitating for Syrians under temporary protection to have access, for the duration of their stay in Turkey, to public services including education for pupils...” (EU, 2015, p. 2). Most of activities that the Turkish government pursued related to the inclusion of Syrian children into public schools was implemented as part of the Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids to the Turkish Education System (PIKTES) project financed by the EU and implemented by the EU’s Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT). Activities included

Turkish language courses, catch-up classes, early childhood education, transportation and, importantly, a conditional cash transfer program for education that mirrored a program available for vulnerable Turkish children. The EU additionally financed the construction of 215 schools across Turkey.

The EU-Turkey deal and financing from the European Commission were prerequisites to Turkey's strategy to integrate refugees into Turkish schools. Respondents closely link Turkey's willingness to robustly integrate refugees into public schools to the potential advantage of the (now-stalled) EU accession negotiations, as an elevation of Turkey's soft power, and ability to fundraise huge amounts to build the strength and resilience of Turkey's education system.

Erdogan wants to show to the world that Turkey is a Muslim country that, what the Arabs have not done, he has done it... He uses the 1.3 million with Europe and say, if you don't give me the money, I open the borders and they will come to you because it blocks basically, the refugees here in Turkey. Because it is the gateway to Europe, to Greece, and Germany, and to France, to Italy, and so on... definitely this has had an impact on the why. (UN, Turkey)

In addition to being a rational decision to provide for long-term education services some respondents hypothesized that conservative leadership may have seen the Syrian population who are overwhelmingly conservative, religious, and sympathetic to President Erdoğan's AKP party as influencing the reception of Syrian refugees.

Respondents clearly felt that the shift in expectations for the resolution of the conflict in Syria along with the incentivization from the EU were key motivators in the shift away from the parallel TECs for refugees and the opening up to the reception of inclusion as a policy approach. Respondents also shared a number of arguments for policy translation, that is, why MoNE took the approach to prepare refugees through a multi-year process and then integrate refugees in mainstream classrooms with Turkish students.

First, many respondents discussing refugee education in Turkey first acknowledged the existing robustness of the system and the fact that Turkey's capacities, in this way, were an outlier from the majority of refugee-hosting countries with weaker institutions and fewer resources. One respondent shared:

I mean part of the PIKTES was also on system strengthening, even if we also have to admit that the Ministry of National Education in Turkey was in a very good shape and for sure in better shape than many ministries that we see in typical emergency settings... An immense infrastructure, an academic system that was working quite well. (Multilateral, Turkey)

Welcoming nearly one million refugees into any education system represents a significant strain and requires considerable expansion, however the strength of existing infrastructure and capacity of the education system represented an opportunity for Turkey to commit to the gradual inclusion of refugees without risking system failure and the accompanying political risk.

Others explained that the long history of considering the Turkish population as a homogenous population by the Ministry of Education, discounting differences for example in the Kurdish population or Arab Turkish population is part of a broader monolingual and monocultural vision for Turkey. As one academic in Turkey shares, "The school ethos is very nationalistic... the Turkish national education system is based upon single language, single religion" (Academic, Turkey). Minority students are not allowed to speak their own languages in school, even during recess times. A number of respondents pointed to the integration of refugees as part of a process to ensure a unified national Turkish identity. One UN representative working at the national level explains, pointing to the difference between integration and inclusion in Turkey:

I would say this is more of an integration, I think, than inclusion. So, the system is the Turkish system, the language is the Turkish language, you have to come to it



basically... So you can still see that this is Turkey, you need to recognize that, and you know Turkey is giving you the opportunity to continue your studies but the sense of inclusion— what is mine can reach also you, it's not there. For instance, we pushed for long, for you know mother tongue maintenance, Arabic. From the government there was a 'No, you can't.' So that's where I see the difference and that's where I think the word inclusion in Turkey also doesn't exist, they talk about integration... This is our society, these are our values, this is our system, you can benefit by integrating into our system so... The inclusion part, it's missing. And it's a fact. Chapeau for what they've done, but... inclusion, the full inclusion in Turkis' society, it remains for me a question. (UN, Turkey)

A Turkish education researcher reiterated this point, stressing the difference between MONE's rhetorical use of multilingual and multicultural values in global and national policy documents and the realities in the classroom:

The teachers and government officials, they use double discourse. I mean they had a deal with the European Union and international agencies are partners of the ministry. You know they've worked together so ministry officials seem to take this position, inclusive education, but when we look on the field, they follow their own nationalism path. That's what I mean when you look at probably the reports, the international reports, they will say that Turkey has initiated inclusive education projects. Okay. But I mean the reports, you know, doesn't tell you the truth... I mean there are several research that indicate the monocultural approach or you know these pedagogical approaches, you know, do not work. But if the intention is to assimilate, if the intention is for you to know how to integrate not include... But that's how the Ministry of Education uses that. Integrates into a body... a well-established body. So if this is the intention—that the intention. So the research says something, but it doesn't overlap with the policymakers and the policy development. (Academic, Turkey)

Despite progressive values implied in government documents, respondents felt that integrating refugees into Turkish classrooms and preparing them to be Turkish citizens is aligned with Turkey's monolingual and monocultural vision for identity and nation building. In this way, the closing of parallel TECs and integration with Turkish peers was a fundamental step in order for Turkey to realize its long-term vision for the 'Turkification' of refugees.

This section has shared respondents' analysis that the reception of global refugee policies in Turkey was influenced by the shift in expectations in how the conflict would play out and

consideration of opportunities through the EU-Turkey Deal. Policy translation was influenced by the existing capacity of the system and the assimilationist vision for Turkish identity and nation building.

## **Lebanon education response**

The following section describes phases of Lebanon's education response and the shift from the absence of a comprehensive refugee policy response to the development of the RACE program and the expansion of access to the public education system through double shift schools. I find the timing of this reform responded to coordinated international policy advocacy, the initiative of individual leaders, expectations for crisis resolution, and opportunity for economic gains. I find that the translation of reforms related to a number of contextual factors including social cohesion risks, political risk calculations, education sector capacity, policy advocacy and the strategic leveraging of international funds.

### **Phase I: Integration by default**

When Syrian refugees began entering Lebanon in 2011, there were no policies in place to support their education and education for refugees was generally provided by international and national NGOs (DFID, 2017). At this time, refugees were also permitted to enroll in public schools alongside Lebanese students (Adelman, 2018). A few respondents mentioned one of the challenges related to refugee integration into public schools in the early years of the crisis was the lack of strong governance structures and institutional capacity. Many respondents remarked that given the significance of private and semi-private schools in Lebanon the public sector has been historically underfunded and a lower political priority. As one UN representative involved in the development of the RACE program explained,

But one has to keep in mind that in Lebanon there was no education policy as such. There was no education sectoral plan. So it was also difficult to support integration of refugees into a system, when the system doesn't really exist as a public system. It existed, of course but the main issues, the main political sensitivities were on the private side of the education system, because this is where most of the children went and where the money was. (UN, Lebanon)

In addition, to the general weak and divided government, respondents shared that the lack of human resources and institutional authority dedicated to the education refugee response was another reason for the initial limited response:

Before [the RACE] program management unit that was catering for the whole response for the Syrian refugees' education, it was me and some people, I mean not appointed—the other people were the regular employees of the government who were doing an extra job to take care of the refugee education. So these people were working to cater for all the programs and to follow up on the problems before RACE was in place and the PMU (Program Management Unit) was created. (UN, Lebanon)

Some respondents also suggested that the historical experience of hosting Palestinian refugees who are largely educated in the parallel UNRWA system made the ministry resistant to considering “temporary” parallel solutions. As one UN representative shared, “I mean, we have the experience as well... about Palestinian refugees who came here for few days and stayed here for 60 years.” This aligns with research finding that Lebanon's experience with Palestinian refugees supported the case against building camps to house Syrian refugees and granting Syrians fleeing the war refugee status (El Hariri, 2020). Unlike in Turkey, access to the public system was facilitated by refugees sharing the same language at the primary level. However, math and science are taught in English or French which does represent a significant language barrier for Syrian learners at the secondary level (Shuayb, Hammoud, Al-Samhoury & Durgham, 2020).

In this way, the initial inclusion of refugees into national systems was not necessarily a strategic and wholesale reception of the global refugee policy, but rather a less disruptive way to

accommodate limited refugees without setting up costly and potentially long-term parallel systems.

## **Phase II: Temporal segregation**

In response to this refugee response gap, Unicef led an effort to coordinate a more robust and intentional effort to support the education sector which culminated in the 2014-2017 RACE I program. Multiple respondents explained that this effort to develop a coordinated vision and strategy for refugees was initiated and directed by international organizations, “At the beginning, clearly, the influence was coming from the international community. There wasn’t a strong leadership by the ministry” (UN, Lebanon). In fact, multiple respondents mentioned that getting MEHE “on board” or MEHE “buy-in” was one of the key objectives of the RACE I process. The program document was drafted by Unicef with input from other UN agencies and MEHE but individuals involved in this process point to both the policy’s shortfalls as well as its value and urgency.

But then the first version of RACE was really done, you know on Saturday afternoon trying just to push things up, putting an excel table trying to compute costs. It wasn’t really strategic. It was just a way to at least have something that would look like a plan that would give some ideas, and that everyone would agree with—and mostly government. So it was far from being perfect, but, at the time, it was better than nothing and absolutely needed. (UN, Lebanon)

Initially, it was intended to be a Global Partnership for Education (GPE) initiative, but ultimately the GPE board made the decision that Lebanon was not eligible for funding. When a new Minister of Education was appointed, he took the existing document, named it RACE and began fundraising with UN and EU support (UN, Lebanon).

The RACE I program had the overall objective to “ensure that vulnerable school-aged children (3-18 years), affected by the Syria crisis, are able to access quality formal and non-

formal learning opportunities in safe and protective environments” (MEHE, 2014, pg. 2). One of the three key strategies of the plan was to increase access to public education through the expansion of a second shift system wherein Lebanese children were to study most subjects in English or French during morning sessions while Syrian children were to be taught in Arabic in the afternoon. Therefore, the morning shift is majority Lebanese and the afternoon shift is almost exclusively non-Lebanese (Kelcey & Chatila, 2020) as 75 percent of enrolled Syrian children attend second shifts with the remainder attending morning shifts (Shuayb & Hammoud, 2021).

According to respondents there were a number of factors that led to the decision to separate Syrian learners into the second shift. Most obviously, the increased demand for education was drastic. In early 2013, there were 259,000 Syrian refugees registered in Lebanon, by September of 2014 the number had increased to over 1.1 million refugees (UNHCR, 2022). At the time, 70 percent of Lebanese learners attended private schools and the public sector was historically underfunded and already under strain. Therefore, the massive influx represented an incredible burden on an already struggling public education system, further compromising the ability of the country to address the educational needs of its most vulnerable populations. Respondents also shared the growing recognition that the conflict would not resolve in the near term and that Lebanon needed a longer-term strategy to accommodate the refugee learners.

Lebanese families both preferred to study in the morning and were resistant to the significant demographic shift. As a Lebanese NGO leader explained, "Unfortunately the action was fast and very clear to everybody that if a number of children with refugee backgrounds come in the class, parents might withdraw their child. So that's also to keep the public sector operating for its constituents, you need that to find a different solution which was second shifts" (NGO, Lebanon). One respondent who worked closely in setting up the second shift schools in Lebanon

explained that one reason, beyond the sheer lack of spaces in morning shifts, that Syrian and Lebanese children were separated was to avoid negative social cohesion outcomes:

A lot of Lebanese wouldn't want their children to be with Syrian refugees because of racism, because of history, because some of these children are living in tented settlements that are informal, and they can catch diseases like lice, and you know, scabies. Things like these. So first the parents started wanting to pull out their children from the public schools. Second, the directors of the schools which were renovated or who bought new furniture, they were saying that the Syrian children were breaking everything, et cetera, which might be sometimes true, because these children are coming from a trauma. You know what I mean. So a lot happened, and a lot of disputes between the kids. And yes, they were breaking things, Lebanese were breaking things, too, but so everyone was complaining. And this is when UNHCR created the second shift. (UN, Lebanon)

Another related factor contributing to the separation of refugees into different shifts is connected to the political risks associated with more robust integration. A senior Lebanese UN official explained:

I can understand the government perspective of not integrating Lebanese and Syrians. And because of the history between Lebanon and Syria, and the country is like divided in two between supporters of Syrian refugees and supporters of—not supporters or hate—there is this hate relationship with the Syrians because of, you know, the history. So additionally, the refugees, many of them, or a lot of them, might be perceived as against the regime, and there is a part of the country who is with the regime. So you see the dynamic. Very complicated how you feel towards this refugee. (UN, Lebanon)

A number of respondents stressed that full inclusion into the public education system represents a full inclusion into Lebanese society which “the country is not ready to do” (UN, regional). As another UN representative expressed:

No one wants to commit to, you know, admit defeat and say, people are going home and all people aren't going home, they're staying here, and that then creates domestic political pressures which we've seen in Lebanon over the past nine months, and the government finally coming out a few months ago and saying, we aren't taking people back. So very difficult for governments that are already struggling with existing school populations. (UN, regional)

Despite the likelihood of the long-term nature of this crisis, it is politically expedient for the government to consider the refugee crisis as a temporary problem that would require no commitment to long-term policies with significant societal ramifications. In this case, double-shift schools which are largely segregated require fewer significant long-term infrastructure or systemic changes that could be more politically fraught.

Another reason cited by respondents for the adoption of the RACE priorities was strong global policy advocacy. The policy of double shifting public schools in response to the Syria crisis was strongly promoted by the Rt Hon Gordon Brown, former British Prime Minister and UN Special Envoy for Global Education, who published numerous Op-ed pieces in 2013-2014 expounding the imperative to expand educational access in the Middle East, calling for the international community to step up to adequately fund viable initiatives and promoting double-shifting as the clear policy option to expand access. He wrote in *The Guardian* that the "timeshare concept" where Syrian students use Lebanese school buildings in the afternoon is a "revolutionary idea" and "brilliant scheme for making sure Syria's child refugees get an education" (Brown, 2014). Lebanon in fact had a long history of second shift schools, during the Lebanese civil war there were dual shift schools due to destruction of school infrastructure based on language (English or French). Nevertheless, Brown's level of influence at the highest levels of Lebanese politics can be seen in the Op-ed published in collaboration with the then sitting Prime Minister of Lebanon Najib Azmi Mikati which stated, "The brilliance of the [double-shift] idea is that it can be operational within weeks. Instead of having to build new camp schools for refugees, exiled Syrian children will use existing Lebanese schools on this two-shift system" (Brown & Mikati, 2014).

The RACE strategy provided the opportunity for the MEHE to raise significant funds. A number of respondents point to the unsustainably high costing strategy for the second shift. As a UN representative in Lebanon shared, "[The cost per child] was \$600 for the second shift... First of all, it's very expensive. It doesn't cost that much to educate a child in public education. So, a lot of money could have remained in schools, you know, or we could have used the money to do something else" (UN, Lebanon). One bi-lateral donor representative shared their supposition that RACE was a fundraising effort, "And I mean the RACE program, yes, it was great for individuals. But as a donor, I mean they presented us per student cost, and it was enormous. So in the end, the RACE program was an income generating activity for the Ministry of Education, and nothing was really changed" (Bi-lateral, global). Some respondents felt that the motivations to develop the RACE programs eclipsed evidence-based reforms. When I asked one UN representative who led a study of the RACE program to what extent research and evidence informed the policy process she responded, "Oh—NO research [laughs]. We'd like to think that but that was NOT a driver. I mean, the review [of RACE] that I wrote was essentially an evidence-based review and it had all these recommendations, none of which were taken into account. They were uninterested, they were interested in getting the money" (UN, Global). A more comprehensive evidence-based reform may have addressed structural issues plaguing the education system or greater emphasis on quality as opposed to access (Brun & Shuayb, 2020).

Another respondent shared that, in addition to the reasons above, separating refugees in the second shift is a strategic way for the Lebanese government to hedge the risk of international funders pulling out, leaving the complete education system, dependent on outside funds, in crisis. "So you have to also imagine a country where for every three locals you have one refugee. So the [education] demand is huge, the stability issue is at risk, the cost, I mean, integrating children



into the mainstream means the international donors could pull out any time. And they can, and they will, and they did” (NGO, Lebanon). This national NGO leader points, for example, to the UK's reduction of ODA from .07 percent of their Gross National Income (GNI) in 2020 to .05 percent in 2021 leading to a reduction in aid to Lebanon from DFID from UK£ 120 million in 2020 to UK£ 58 in 2021 (OCHA, 2023). Reductions in ODA hit bi-lateral funding particularly hard as significant proportions of aid budgets are pledged to multilateral or UN agencies in multi-year commitments.

In addition, a handful of respondents shared that isolating refugees in second shifts allowed the government a critical bargaining chip in aid negotiations with the threat of not running the second shift and the ensuing instability and onward migration as a way to leverage international financing for Lebanon. In fact, second shifts have faced delayed openings multiple times due to lack of funds since the schools opened (HRW, 2021; UNHCR, 2019b). As simply put by one UN national staff member, “The money of the EU was running late and they were like "no we're not opening the school year for the Syrians in the second shifts." (UN, Lebanon).

Finally, respondents cited the overall stresses on the education system given multiple and compounding crises in Lebanon representing a significant barrier to political will to address education for the non-Lebanese population. One Lebanese UN representative explained:

"The national education sector budget doesn't even cater for Lebanese. It never had in the previous years, let alone the economic crisis now, and everything. So it's impossible. You're talking about a country that is on the ground, you're talking about a country that is not a third world country, we're a fourth world country now. So it's impossible. Besides, is there a will in the government to cater for refugees? Why? Who catered for us? You know what I mean?" (UN, Lebanon)

In addition to compounding crisis and low political will, others expressed the barriers to more holistic reform as general governance challenges including the frequent transition of government

staff, poor handover between incoming and outgoing civil servants, long periods of no active government, and preexisting weaknesses in the system.

## **Discussion**

Lebanon and Turkey's experiences point to some of the drivers to embrace global refugee policies of inclusion (reception), as well as the timing of reforms, and the form that these policies take (translation). In the cases of Lebanon and Turkey these factors include expectations for crisis resolution, calculation of political and economic risks and benefits, and the operational realities of their education systems.

In both Lebanon and Turkey, expectations of how the refugee crisis would resolve strongly informed early education policy decision making as well as the timing of opening up to policies of inclusion. Despite the fact that Turkey and Lebanon made quite different education policy choices at the beginning of the crisis (largely NGO-led camp-based parallel structure in Turkey vs. access to public schools in Lebanon with significant NGO support) the assumption that repatriation was imminent drove both these decisions as well as the opening of operating space for aid actors. This finding confirms recent research (see Unutulmaz, 2019; Brugha et al., 2021). Optimistic outlooks for crisis resolution and the policy position that refugees are a temporary problem was politically expedient in both Lebanon and Turkey despite the widespread evidence of the increasingly protracted nature of contemporary conflict. The political motivation to view a refugee crisis as time bound and therefore requiring temporary measures is in tension with the foundational objectives of global policies around refugee inclusion which views inclusion as a commitment to long-term sustainable education opportunities for refugees and may occur in other refugee-hosting contexts. A few years into the conflict when it became increasingly indisputable that Syrian refugees would not be returning home in the foreseeable

future, Turkey and Lebanon opened up to global EiE reforms around refugee inclusion in their education systems, albeit in very different forms.

Factors that attracted reforms, or the reception of policies of refugee inclusion in Turkey, included geopolitical advantages negotiated through the EU-Turkey Deal, the opportunity to strengthen their education system through significant international investment, desire to control education content and quality, and the reality that integration in the national system is a cost-effective way to meet the long-term education needs of learners in Turkey. Similarly in Lebanon, inclusion reforms became attractive given the possibility of significant fundraising for the education sector, the related opportunity to strengthen the struggling public sector, strong international policy advocacy, and the realization that inaction would impede the possibility to meet the education needs of their own population. Understanding what motivates education reforms is not only of theoretical concern, but reflects governments' understanding of the problem, impacts the formulation of solutions, and the implementation and sustainability of these policies.

My findings show how policy decisions related to the form refugee inclusion reforms take, or policy translation, were considered in Turkey and Lebanon in light of potential political, social, and economic risks and rewards. For example, in Turkey, this included risks of exacerbating grievances from historically marginalized communities through granting of special language rights to refugees, security concerns related to a wide range of actors engaged in loosely regulated TECs, and the ability to promote social Turkish values, language and identity through education. In Lebanon, respondents shared that policy translation was influenced by the weighing of social cohesion risks, past experiences of refugee hosting, and strategic positioning in terms of international financing. Naturally, existing education system realities undergirded all

policy decisions related to the externalization, reception, and translation of refugee education policy decisions. Operational realities include education sector capacity, location of refugees (e.g., camps vs. urban areas), language barriers, resource availability, governance structures, and development capacity.

While much remains to be understood about the ways that host-country governments respond to global policy imperatives around the inclusion of refugees, recent scholarship has illuminated how policies of refugee inclusion differ (Cerna, 2019; Dryden-Peterson et al., 2018), how they are enacted at the national level (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019; Kelcey & Chatila, 2020). This study instead focuses on the national policy context shedding light on the economic, social and political reasons *why* reforms were enacted, the *timing* of such reforms and contextual reasons *why* reforms took the shape they did in Lebanon and Turkey. This study represents a contribution to policy transfer literature as host governments make different political, economic, and social considerations for refugee-related education policies as refugees fall outside of the social contract and, despite the long-term visions for refugee inclusion, their status is often seen as temporary. Further, host governments have to navigate potential pushback from constituents, additional economic burdens and international financing opportunities, as well as potential social cohesion concerns. Importantly, although some UN agencies mentioned evaluations and processes to elevate the voices of refugees in education response discussions, no respondents suggested that the interests of refugees were a significant deciding factor in the outlined policy processes.

This study offers a practical contribution as well to the field of EiE which is in "demand for short (often external) consultancies, quick wins, tight turn-arounds, and the use or production of check-lists and procedures which standardise approaches across contexts, time and space"

(Couch, 2022, p. 1009) greater understanding of the ways in which national policy environments translate and receive global EiE policy and the impact on expected policy goals is valuable in order to support interventions that are rooted in context, do no harm, and support the education rights and needs of refugee and host communities.

## References

- Adelman, E. (2018). *Challenges of integration, obligation and identity: Exploring the experiences of teachers working to educate Syrian refugee children in Lebanon* [Doctoral Dissertation].
- Adelman, E., Chopra, V., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2019). Including and educating Syrian refugees in national education systems – The case of Lebanon. *Global Education Monitoring Report*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Akyuz, A., Aksoy, D., Aysel, M., & Ertugrul, P. (2018). *Evolution of national policy in Turkey on integration of Syrian children into the national education system*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Aranki, D., & Kalis, O. (2014). Limited legal status for refugees from Syria in Lebanon. *Forced Migration Review*, 47, 17–18.
- Bartlett, L., & Vavrus, F. (2016). *Rethinking case study research: A comparative approach*. Routledge.
- Bellino, M. J., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2019). Inclusion and exclusion within a policy of national integration: Refugee education in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 40(2), 222–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2018.1523707>
- Berger-Schmitt, R. (2000). *Social cohesion as an aspect of the quality of societies: Concept and measurement*, 14. ZUMA.
- Brown, G. (2014, January 24). A brilliant scheme for making sure Syria's child refugees get an education. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/24/syria-child-refugees-school-education-gordon-brown>
- Brown, G., & Mikati, N. (2014, February 6). Help! An urgent plea for Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. *HuffPost*. [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/gordon-brown/syria-refugee-children-lebanon\\_b\\_4739529.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/gordon-brown/syria-refugee-children-lebanon_b_4739529.html)
- Brugha, M., Hollow, D., Pacitto, J., Gladwell, C., Dhillon, P., & Ashlee, A. (2021). *Turkey: A case history of education provision for refugees from 2011 to 2019*. Jigsaw Consult.
- Brun, C., & Shuayb, M. (2020). Exceptional and futureless humanitarian education of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Prospects for shifting the lens. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 36(2), 20–30. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40717>
- Cerna, L. (2019). *Refugee education: Integration models and practices in OECD countries*.

- Chopra, V. (2018). *Learning to belong, belonging to learn: Syrian refugee youths' pursuits of education, membership and stability in Lebanon* ([Doctoral Dissertation]. Harvard University).
- Chopra, V. (2020). 'We're not a bank providing support': Street-level bureaucrats and Syrian refugee youth navigating tensions in higher education scholarship programs in Lebanon. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 77, 102216. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102216>
- Couch, D. (2022). Critical realism and education policy analysis in conflicts and crises: Towards conceptual methodologies. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 52(6), 998–1014. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2020.1848519>
- Crul, M., Lelie, F., Biner, Ö., Bunar, N., Keskiner, E., Kokkali, I., . . . & Shuayb, M. (2019). How the different policies and school systems affect the inclusion of Syrian refugee children in Sweden, Germany, Greece, Lebanon and Turkey. *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(1), 1–20.
- Dayioğlu, M., Kirdar, M. G., & Koç, İ. (2021). *The making of a lost generation: Child labor among Syrian refugees in Turkey*.
- Department for International Development (DFID). (2017). Evidence Brief 4: Quality and learning. <https://www.dai.com/uploads/Theme%204%20-%20Quality%20and%20learning%2008.01.18.pdf>. DFID.
- Dolowitz, D., & Marsh, D. (1996). Who learns what from whom: A review of the policy transfer literature. *Political Studies*, 44(2), 343–357. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1996.tb00334.x>
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2016). Refugee education: The crossroads of globalization. *Educational Researcher*, 45(9), 473–482. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X16683398>
- Dryden-Peterson, S., Adelman, E., Alvarado, S., Anderson, K., Bellino, M., Brooks, R., . . . Suzuki, E. (2018). Integration of education for refugees in national systems. Background paper prepared for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: *Migration, education, and displacement*. UNESCO. Global Education Monitoring Report.
- Dryden-Peterson, S., Adelman, E., Bellino, M. J., & Chopra, V. (2019). The purposes of refugee education: Policy and practice of including refugees in national education systems. *Sociology of Education*, 92(4), 346–366. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040719863054>
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2020). Civic education and the education of refugees. *Intercultural Education*, 31(5), 592–606. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2020.1794203>
- El Hariri, K. (2020). Analysing the evolution of Lebanon's Syrian refugee policy: The role of foreign policy. *Syrian Crisis, Syrian Refugees*, 65–82.

- European Union, & European Commission. (2015). EU–Turkey joint action plan. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/sv/MEMO\\_15\\_5860](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/sv/MEMO_15_5860)
- Fraser, N. (1995). Recognition or redistribution? A critical reading of Iris Young’s Justice and the Politics of Difference. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 3(2), 166–180. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9760.1995.tb00033.x>
- Gümüş, E., Kurnaz, Z., Eşici, H., & Gümüş, S. (2020). Current conditions and issues at Temporary Education Centres (TECs) for Syrian child refugees in Turkey. *Multicultural Education Review*, 12(2), 53–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2005615X.2020.1756083>
- Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2021). <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/11/lebanon-planning-lapses-endanger-school-year>. Planning Lapses Endanger School Year.
- İçduygu, A. (2015). Syrian refugees in Turkey. *The long road ahead*. Transatlantic Council on Migration. Transatlantic Council on Migration, Migration Policy Institute.
- Janmyr, M. (2018). UNHCR and the Syrian refugee response: Negotiating status and registration in Lebanon. *International Journal of Human Rights*, 22(3), 393–419. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2017.1371140>
- Kelcey, J., & Chatila, S. (2020). Increasing inclusion or furthering fragmentation? How the global strategy to include refugees in national education systems has been implemented in Lebanon. *Refuge: Canada’s Journal on Refugees*, 36(2), 9–19. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.40713>
- Kınıklıoğlu, S. (2020). *Syrian refugees in Turkey: Changing attitudes and fortunes*.
- Kirişci, K. (2014). Syrian refugees and Turkey’s challenges: Going beyond hospitality (pp. 1–46). *Washington, DC: Brookings*.
- Levitt, P., & Merry, S. (2009). Vernacularization on the ground: Local uses of global women’s rights in Peru, China, India and the United States. *Global Networks*, 9(4), 441–461. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2009.00263.x>
- Luhmann, N. (1990). *Essays on self-reference*. Columbia University Press.
- McCarthy, A. T. (2018). Politics of refugee education: Educational administration of the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 50(3), 223–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2018.1440541>
- Ministry of Education and higher education (MEHE). (2014). *Reaching all children with education in Lebanon*. Ministry of Education and Higher Education Press.
- Mendenhall, M., Russell, S. G., & Bruckner, E. (2017). *Urban refugee education: Strengthening policies and practices for access, quality, and inclusion*.



- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed). Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis*. SAGE.
- Norman, K. P. (2019). Inclusion, exclusion or indifference? Redefining migrant and refugee host state engagement options in Mediterranean “transit” countries. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 45(1), 42–60. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1482201>
- Oztig, L. I. (2022). Refugee flows, foreign policy, and safe haven nexus in Turkey. *Third World Quarterly*, 43(3), 684–702. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.2009335>
- Rappleye, J. (2012). Educational policy transfer in an era of globalization: Theory—History—Comparison. Comparative Studies Series, Volume 23. Peter Lang GmbH, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften. Eschborner Landstraße 42-50, D-60489. Frankfurt am Main.
- Rappleye, J., & Paulson, J. (2007). Educational transfer in situations affected by conflict: Towards a common research endeavour. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 2(3), 252–271. <https://doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2007.2.3.252>
- Saraçoğlu, C., & Bélanger, D. (2019). Loss and xenophobia in the city: Contextualizing anti-Syrian sentiments in Izmir, Turkey. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 53(4), 363–383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2019.1615779>
- Sarmini, I., Topçu, E., & Scharbrodt, O. (2020). Integrating Syrian refugee children in Turkey: The role of Turkish language skills (A case study in Gaziantep). *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 1, 100007. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2020.100007>
- Save the Children. (2018). Time to act: A costed plan to deliver quality education to every last refugee child. [https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13479/pdf/time\\_to\\_act\\_report\\_online.pdf](https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13479/pdf/time_to_act_report_online.pdf)
- Schriewer, J. (2003). Globalisation in education: Process and discourse. *Policy Futures in Education*, 1(2), 271–283. <https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2003.1.2.6>
- Shuayb, M., Hammoud, M., Al-Samhoury, O., & Durgham, N. (2020). *Invisible barriers. Jusoor*.
- Shuayb, M., & Hammoud, M. (2021). The protracted reality of Syrian children in Lebanon: Why go to school with no prospects? [Op-Ed.] *Centre for Lebanese Studies*. <https://lebanesestudies.com/publications/the-protracted-reality-of-syrian-children-in-lebanon-why-go-to-school-with-no-prospects/>
- Shuayb, M., Crul, M., & Lee, F. (2022). The consequences of education in emergency for Syrian refugee children in Turkey and Lebanon. In M. Suárez-Orozco & C. Suárez-Orozco (Eds.), *Education: A global compact for a time of crisis* (pp. 97–117). New York Chichester. Columbia University Press.

- Strang, A., & Ager, A. (2010). Refugee integration: Emerging trends and remaining agendas. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 23(4), 589–607. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feq046>
- Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2012). Understanding policy borrowing and lending. *World yearbook of education*, 3–17.
- Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2014). Cross-national policy borrowing: Understanding reception and translation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 34(2), 153–167. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2013.875649>
- Steiner-Khamsi, G. (2016). New directions in policy borrowing research. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 17(3), 381–390. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-016-9442-9>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2018). Migration displacement and education: Building Bridges, not walls, 2018. Accessed <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000266069>.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2016). *Evaluation of UNESCO's role in education in emergencies and protracted crises*. Accessed <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246279>.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2018). *Global education monitoring report, 2019: Migration, displacement and education: Building bridges, not walls*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- UN General Assembly (UNGA). (October 3, 2016). New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016, A/RES/71/1. <http://bit.ly/UN-NewYorkDeclaration-2016>
- United Nations General Assembly. (December 17, 2018). *The global compact on refugees*. United Nations.
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (n.d.). Operational data portal, refugee situations. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria/location/71>
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2017). *Left behind: Refugee education in crisis*. United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2019). Refugee education. *A strategy for refugee inclusion*. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/education/5d651da88d7/education-2030-strategy-refugee-education.html>, 2030.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2019b). Public schools for non-Lebanese children to open on Monday. <https://www.unhcr.org/lb/12315-public-schools-for-non-lebanese-children-to-open-on-monday.html>

United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2022). *Global trends- force displacement in 2021*. United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2023). Lebanon. *Financial Tracking Service*. Retrieved <https://fts.unocha.org>

Unutulmaz, K. O. (2019). Turkey's education policies towards Syrian refugees: A macro-level analysis. *International Migration*, 57(2), 235–252. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12476>

Waters, T., & LeBlanc, K. (2005). Refugees and education: Mass public schooling without a nation-state. *Comparative Education Review*, 49(2), 129–147. <https://doi.org/10.1086/428102>

World Bank, & United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2021). *The global cost of inclusive refugee education*. World Bank.

# **PAPER 2: REFUGEE INCLUSION IN NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL COHESION IN LEBANON AND TURKEY**

## **Abstract**

This comparative case study analyzes the relationship between efforts to include refugees in national education systems and social cohesion in Lebanon and Turkey. I apply the '4Rs' analytical framework which is rooted in social justice and sustainable peacebuilding perspectives to explore how refugee education interventions in Lebanon and Turkey have connected with and diverged from the dimensions of recognition, redistribution, representation, and reconciliation (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo & Smith, 2017). Drawing on interviews (n=47) with education actors working at the global, national, and local levels, my findings question the logic that interventions to support refugee inclusion in national education systems necessarily contribute positively to social cohesion outcomes. Instead, non-state actors perceive the ways policies of inclusion have exacerbated tensions through the inequitable distribution of education aid, the ways that refugees are integrated in schools, and through the disconnect between inclusion in school and inclusion in society more broadly. I also find that the refugee inclusion agenda represents a valuable opportunity to address long standing exclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups beyond refugees. This research contributes to scholarship on social justice and education through the application of the 4Rs framework in refugee-hosting contexts raising questions about the responsibilities and limitations of social justice through policies of inclusion.

## **Introduction**

Due to conflict, persecution, and natural disasters the number of people forcibly displaced worldwide increased to 89.3 million in 2021 (UNHCR, 2022). Historically, UNHCR promoted

parallel education systems for refugee learners, focused on home country curriculum, language, and accreditation in preparation for their assumed repatriation (Waters & LeBlanc, 2005). In the context of increasingly protracted displacement, refugee education policy priorities have shifted. In the decade since UNHCR's 2012 Education Strategy called for 'national integration,' there has been a growing international effort to include refugees in host state education systems as part of a broader trend to include refugees in host-state societies. The education policy shift assumes a number of related benefits including access to higher quality, more protective, sustainable, and cost-effective education (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019).

In recognition of the societal division and exclusion caused by the provision of schooling through parallel systems, there is also a widespread assumption that refugee inclusion will strengthen social cohesion, conflict mitigation, and peacebuilding (UNHCR, 2019a). UNHCR's education strategy, *Refugee Education 2030*, claims that "Inclusion can create conditions conducive to conflict mitigation and prevention" in ways that support the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework goal to counter racism, xenophobia, and related intolerance against refugees and migrants (UNHCR, 2019, p.11). Audrey Azoulay, Director General of UNESCO underscored this point in her statement of support for the UNHCR strategy writing, "We are committed to deploying our normative and technical expertise in ensuring the full inclusion of refugee populations in education systems. This is a condition for fostering social cohesion, sustainable development and peace" (UNHCR, 2019, pg. 55). A separate UNHCR report further claims that "When refugees and the children of the host community learn side by side, investment in a shared system will create long-lasting improvements for the community and ease tensions over the extra strain on local resources" (UNHCR, 2017, p. 23). Implicit in this

language is an assumption that policies of inclusion, albeit ill-defined with significant variation in implementation, will necessarily support social cohesion and peacebuilding processes.

There is limited empirical evidence confirming that including refugees in public schools is associated with elements of social cohesion such as the prevention of stigma, stereotyping, discrimination, and alienation (UNESCO, 2020). Slee (2020) finds that inclusive education promotes inclusive societies, where people can live together and diversity is celebrated. However, these findings are drawn primarily from research on learners with disabilities and extrapolated to all vulnerable children including refugees and therefore not focused on refugee-hosting contexts specifically. Drawing on interviews with 72 Syrian children, Kuçuksuleymanoglu (2018) find that language learning supported positive social relationships between refugee and host-community learners in Turkey, however this study focused on non-formal education program through a public school.

Burde et al. (2022), in an evidence synthesis on refugee inclusion in national education systems which considered 194 education interventions from 22 countries, found eight interventions focused on peacebuilding and social cohesion. They found that the majority of studies on the relationship between refugee inclusion and peacebuilding evaluated individual-level outcomes (e.g., positive changes in soft-skills, attitudes and behaviors towards outgroup members) as opposed to peacebuilding objectives beyond the individual level and only two of the eight programs were connected to formal schooling. Thus, evidence supporting the positive impact of refugee inclusion in education systems on social cohesion is limited.

Instead, recent evidence shows that the relationships between refugee inclusion in host community education systems and social cohesion is complex with potential negative results. For example, through a qualitative analysis of the policy environment and the education experiences

of refugees in Lebanon, Kelcey and Chatila (2020) found that inclusion policies have led to exclusion for refugee learners through expulsion or inability to register for schools as local actors have to prioritize the use of inadequate education resources. In Kenya, national integration policies have led to refugee learners integrating 'down' into spaces occupied by marginalized nationals reflecting the status quo of legal restrictions on refugee rights and limiting the ability of refugees to achieve social connection or sense of belonging in their host country (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019). Scholars also have found that models of inclusion that separate host community and national schools through separate morning and afternoon shifts, or 'temporal separation', have limited the development of peer relationships and resulted in curricular and language policies that restrict refugee learners' ability to feel represented in the classroom (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2018.)

This study contributes to this area of research by shedding light on the relationship between education action in support of refugee inclusion and social cohesion inside and outside of schools with particular attention to the role of non-state actors and the impact of refugee inclusion on host communities. I draw on the '4Rs' analytical framework, rooted in social justice and peacebuilding scholarship, which posits that inequalities and injustice (including with the education system) are important for understanding the drivers of conflict and that addressing inequalities are necessary for the realization of sustainable peace (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo & Smith, 2019). Through a comparative case study in Lebanon and Turkey (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016), my research explores both the potential and limitations for policies of inclusion to contribute to social cohesion, asking: *How do non-state actors perceive the influence of refugee inclusion in national education systems on social cohesion in Lebanon and Turkey?*

My findings reveal unintended and adverse consequences of the global push for refugee inclusion in national education systems. That is, refugee inclusion approaches can contribute to tensions and resentment through the distribution of education aid or services to one group, through the integration of learners in host community schools, and through the disconnect between including learners in schools and exclusion in society more broadly. However, my findings also reveal that policies of inclusion represent an important mechanism by which to discuss and address long-standing issues of exclusion of marginalized populations, beyond refugees in hosting contexts.

This research contributes to debates around the inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems as well as scholarship related to the complex relationship between education, social cohesion, and peace. There is limited research on the mechanisms through which refugee inclusion in national systems contributes to—or weakens—social cohesion despite social cohesion being a widely cited rationale for the policy shift. This research also represents a contribution to the scholarship on social justice and education through the application of the 4Rs framework in refugee-hosting contexts, which is important as there can be different actors, responsibilities, and limitations for upholding social justice for refugees as opposed to citizens. While there is no framework for what successful refugee inclusion looks like to-date, my findings underscore the imperative that policies and programmatic approaches consider potential drivers of social tension and the expansion of social justice in order to meet the expectation that policies of inclusion will support social cohesion.

## **Context**

Lebanon hosts the largest per capita refugee population in the world where 1 in 8 people is a refugee (UNHCR, 2022). At the same time, Lebanon is experiencing a multilayered



economic and financial crisis among the worst globally since the mid-nineteenth century (World Bank, 2021) which has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak and the Beirut Port explosion in 2020. At the end of 2021, 61 percent of the population reported challenges in accessing food and basic needs (World Bank, 2022). Almost the entire Syrian refugee population has entered a situation of severe economic vulnerability. In 2021, 88 percent of Syrian refugee households were still below the Survival Minimum Expenditure basket (SMEB), the absolute minimum needed to cover lifesaving needs (Vasyr, 2022).

The considerable resource burdens and high levels of refugee migration have led to social tension, political conflict, and right-wing political backlash (Ma, 2020). Tensions are also exacerbated by the fact that unlike in Jordan and Turkey where the populations are predominantly Sunni like Syrians, Lebanon has a particularly delicate balance of religious identities (Culbertson & Constant, 2015). The resentment many Lebanese feel toward the large numbers of new students has also been well documented (Akar & van Ommering, 2018; Culbertson & Constant, 2015; HRW 2016). Historically, 70 percent of students in Lebanon go to private schools but as parents can no longer afford private education for their children, more and more Lebanese learners are entering public school. From 2019-2021 and estimated 100,000 to 120,000 students moved out of private schools into the public sector, placing additional strain on the already weak infrastructure (HRW, 2021).

Turkey is currently hosting 3.8 million refugees, by far the largest population worldwide (UNHCR, 2021). Turkish policies towards Syrians were initially very welcoming (İçduygu, 2015) and Turkish society displayed a high level of support and sympathy (Zihnioğlu & Dalkiran, 2022). However, over the years negative public perception toward refugees in Turkey has grown as well as the concerns Turkish citizens have about the future of their country in

relation to the burdens of hosting so many refugees (Kınıklıoğlu, 2020; Saraçoğlu & Bélanger, 2019). The percentage of Turkish citizens demanding that refugees be returned has expanded from less than 49 percent in 2017 to 82 percent in 2021 indicating a significant decrease in social acceptance and solidarity (Erdoğan, 2017). Refugees' presence has become politicized in light of rising nationalism, the upcoming national elections in 2023, and the worst economic downturn in over a decade (Kirişci, 2023). In this context, refugee learners experience prejudice, discrimination and are bullied in school due to their refugee status (Gönültaş & Mulvey, 2022; Yılmaz & Cikli Uytun, 2020). The devastating earthquake to hit Turkey in February 2023 has aggravated tensions further and there are reports of increased anti-refugee sentiment in the country and online (Gebeily, Kucukgocmen, & Chacar, 2023).

Within the context of multilayered compounding crises in both Lebanon and Turkey, resource scarcity, high numbers of refugees, and the politicization of migration, it is important to question assumptions related to the relationship between education policy and refugee integration and to consider the ways related education approaches may impact social cohesion.

### **Conceptual framework: '4Rs' Framework**

Bush and Saltarelli's seminal work *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict* (2000) was the first to recognize that education, especially in contexts of conflict and crisis, has the capacity to support social cohesion and peacebuilding processes but can also do harm and exacerbate the drivers of conflict. Subsequently, other practitioners and scholars pointed to the role of education in mitigating fragility and contributing to state stabilization (Kirk, 2007), promoting tolerance and intolerance (Bryan & Vavrus, 2005), contributing to social cohesion (Heyneman, 2003) and conversely, intergroup violence (Omoeva & Buckner, 2015). The recognition that education interventions have the capacity to do harm was a critical realization in

light of broader humanitarian adoption of the "do no harm" principle, which recognized the capacity of aid to exacerbate drivers of conflict and violence (Anderson, 1999).

There are many definitions of social cohesion and a range of frameworks that elaborate its dimensions (see for example Colletta & Cullen, 2000; Jenson, 1998); however, Berger-Schmitt (2000) finds that most incorporate two general dimensions. The first concerns reduction of disparities, inequalities, and social exclusion, and the second the strengthening of social relationships, interactions, and ties (Berger-Schmitt, 2000). These two dimensions are particularly relevant in refugee-hosting contexts which are often characterized by fragile political and economic institutions and social challenges related to their own experiences of conflict and division (Hathaway, 2016).

Nancy Fraser argues that designing an education reform that promotes social cohesion must restructure underlying generative frameworks through "transformative remedies" that correct outcomes by changing underlying political or economic structures for everyone as opposed to "affirmative remedies" that correct outcomes but do not change structural frameworks or the status quo (Fraser, 1995). Novelli, Lopes Cardozo, and Smith (2017) build on Nancy Fraser's scholarship that is rooted in social justice approaches to develop the '4Rs' framework, adding a postcolonial reconciliation component to explore the "legacies of conflict" in relation to education (p. 17).

The theoretical framework contends that a sustainable approach to peacebuilding emphasizes social development, including education, and addresses the underlying causes of conflict, such as political, economic, and sociocultural inequality (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo & Smith, 2017). This paper draws on the '4Rs' framework to support the analysis of education in

promoting peace, social cohesion, and development linking the analytical dimensions of the following '4Rs' (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo & Smith, 2017).

- **Redistribution** focuses on non-discrimination and equitable education access, resources and outcomes especially for marginalized populations.
- **Recognition** concerns respect for—and affirmation of—diversity and identities in education structures, processes, and content with attention to language policies, religious and cultural identities and civic education.
- **Representation** relates to the extent of stakeholder participation in the education system in governance and decision making at all levels.
- **Reconciliation** involves the role of education in addressing historical and current economic, political, and cultural injustices.

As the 4Rs address access to services and recognition of diversity and identities, this framework incorporates both components of inclusion as theorized by Strang and Ager (2010). Structural inclusion, focused on access to institutions and services, and relational inclusion, related to individual-level sense of belonging, connectedness, and group-level cohesion (Strang & Ager, 2010).

This framework is grounded in well-established peacebuilding theory regarding the imperative to promote 'positive peace' which requires not only the absence of violence (or 'negative peace') but the establishment of social justice and the attitudes, institutions and structures that sustain peaceful societies (Galtung, 1969; Lederach, 1995). The framework draws on the notion of “transformative remedies” (Fraser, 2008) which requires the restructuring of the underlying mechanisms of injustices and addressing the deeply rooted causes of structural injustice (Galtung, 1976). However, these approaches are challenged in refugee contexts which

are defined by structural inequalities including lack of civil and political rights afforded to citizens. Refugees' status as noncitizens means not only the inability to activate citizenship rights, but they often lack the mechanisms and institutions to enforce rights (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). In this way, refugees' status "both within and outside of nation-states" (Dryden-Peterson, 2016) complicates matters of social justice for refugees, including obligations and responsibilities to achieving social justice.

Young (2006) argues that, historically, obligations for upholding social justice have presupposed the nation-state as the sole duty bearer, however, processes of globalization shift notions of obligation and responsibility for social justice. The case of refugee inclusion in national systems, where learners' cross national boundaries, international and multilateral agencies hold significant power, and the agenda is undergirded by the principle of international responsibility-sharing, aligns with Fraser's (2006) hypothesis that the territorial nation-state is no longer the appropriate unit for thinking about issues of justice. Fraser (2006) proposes a different frame to change the boundaries away from state-territorial principles to an 'all-affected principle' wherein "all those affected by a given social structure or institution have moral standing as subjects of justice in relation to it." In this view, what turns a collection of people into fellow subjects of justice is a common structural or institutional framework which sets the ground rules that govern their social interaction (Fraser, 2006). However, in refugee contexts where structural inequalities are legally-based, existing within an international order which privileges citizenship, a more flexible frame to achieve socio-political obligations between refugees remains aspirational.

I apply the 4Rs framework as a conceptual tool to understand both the potential and the limitations of policies of refugee inclusion in national education systems to support social justice

and social cohesion inside and outside of schools. This study represents a contribution to the literature on education, conflict, and peace through the application of a social justice lens and the 4Rs in refugee-hosting contexts highlighting the tension between the 4Rs and social cohesion and raising questions about the opportunities and limitations of social justice for refugees through education in national systems.

## **Methods**

In order to explore the relationship between refugee inclusion in national education systems in contributing to social cohesion, this study employed a comparative case study method (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016) using a horizontal (between Turkey and Lebanon) and vertical (global to national refugee policy) analysis. I conducted semi-structured interviews (n=47) with educationalists engaged in the education response to the Syrian crisis at the global level (n=15) including those from multilateral, bilateral, and UN agencies. I also conducted semi-structured interviews with national and sub-national aid actors in Lebanon (n=13) and in Turkey (n=19). This included UN representatives, INGO actors, national, and local NGO representatives. Interviews were focused on how participants approached inclusion, social cohesion, and peacebuilding within their work, how education policies impact social cohesion, and how their approaches to education and social cohesion changed over time. All interviews were conducted between November 2021 and January 2023 virtually via Zoom in English.

Interviews were recorded with permission from participants and transcribed and coded in NVivo using a standardized coding process whereby codes developed in an iterative manner of developing, defining, and refining codes (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Etic codes were drawn from the literature review and theoretical framework. These central categories included ways of categorizing the relationships between education and conflict (e.g. conflict sensitive

education, social cohesion, inequity) while codes and sub-codes refined and elaborated each concept. I also used categories that my informants used (emic codes) as they emerged from my interviews (e.g., resentment, bullying, decreasing quality of education) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

There are a number of limitations related to this study. First, this study is not a comprehensive analysis of all components of the 4Rs but instead uses the framework as an analytical model to understand the empirical findings. A complete analysis of each dimension would require a more comprehensive research design including a wider range of education stakeholders. Second, the relationship between education and conflict are complex and messy with many interests and contextual factors at play. In this way, this paper does not make any causal claims on the impact of education interventions on social cohesion but rather explores the experiences and perspectives of non-state actors engaged in this work. This study does not draw on first-hand experiences of learners, teachers, administrators and other members of the community which would be necessary to more fully understand how education interacts with social cohesion and social justice. This study also does not focus on discrete social cohesion activities but rather on how education interventions aimed at expanding access and quality of education help or hinder social cohesion.

## **Findings**

My findings focus on the ways that non-state actors understand the impact of education action around the inclusion of refugees in national host education systems on social cohesion through the three Rs of redistribution, recognition, and reconciliation. Participants shared, first, that the redistributive effects of policies of inclusion in some cases elevated tensions between host and refugee communities. Second, I found that lack of recognition both inside and outside

of schools limits social justice aspirations with implications for social cohesion. Third, refugee inclusion in national systems was also seen as an important potential opening to address longstanding issues of exclusion. Representation, or meaningful stakeholder participation in policymaking, did not come up in my data, which I revisit the discussion.

### **Redistribution: Education aid and access to national schools**

The ‘R’ of redistribution represents the need to redistribute resources in order to address the problem of exclusion and marginalization (Fraser, 2009). The following section highlights the importance of international organizations to appreciate the vulnerabilities of host communities and to address the impact of refugee influx on marginalized host communities. My findings also suggest that in refugee-hosting contexts, there can be a tension between reduction of education inequalities and the strengthening of social relationships between refugee and host communities when host communities feel their education services are being negatively impacted.

Participants in both Lebanon and Turkey explained that the provision of goods and education services to refugees to support their integration into public schools created resentment in the host community and tensions between the host community and refugee learners. Many explained with the caveat, "while it seems obvious now," shifting to support all vulnerable learners has been a critical lesson learned by the international community in the Syrian response in both Lebanon and Turkey. Participants in Lebanon clearly connect the provision of education aid to refugees to undermining social cohesion:

At the beginning of the crisis, Unicef and UNHCR were funding Syrian refugees in schools without the Lebanese. They were giving them books, they were giving them bags, whereas the Lebanese people who are the most vulnerable in the country [received nothing]... So of course, the children will beat a Syrian child who has a bag, a fancy bag for them, because they have plastic bags, the Lebanese. So we created more hatred at the beginning... The government doesn't trust NGOs, doesn't trust UN agencies because of this. (UN, Lebanon)



Similarly in Turkey, at the beginning of the crisis, aid for education was earmarked for Syrian refugees and so aid actors delivered goods and services (e.g. school supplies, transportation, and support classes) to Syrian learners only. A UN official based in Turkey explained:

Turkish parents would be upset saying, 'we are a very poor community, we opened our hearts, our doors, our wallets to the Syrian refugees and we don't even get a school kit, this is not okay'. (UN, Turkey)

Many aid actors engaged in the region shifted their approaches from interventions focused on nationality and international protection status in the early years of the crisis to a vulnerability approach to support for all vulnerable populations including host community members. For example, the EU-supported program, *Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids into the Education System* (PIKTES I), focused on Syrian refugees while the current iteration of the project (PIKTES+) expanded its approach to include all vulnerable learners. Even the name of the program was changed from "promoting Syrian integration" to "promoting inclusive education in Turkey". The current Lebanese Five-Year General Education Plan (5YP) similarly has shifted its language to focus on vulnerable learners in Lebanon regardless of nationality (MEHE, 2021).

There were also challenges in expanding service delivery to identify and reach vulnerable host community learners, which emphasized the importance of how aid is perceived by the community. One participant noted, "Supply issues, perception, visibility, all that is really important" (UN, Turkey). Participants stressed that it must be clear that aid is not benefitting one group but the whole education system and therefore supportive of all learners. Another participant further noted the importance, not only of ensuring that vulnerable host community members are included, but the perception and visibility of that work in order to reduce tensions, "[Refugees] mustn't be *seen* to be having extra... How it is communicated is very important... because otherwise [host community] parents will be resentful. (UN, Lebanon).

Negative perceptions of aid towards refugees are also a concern of host country governments who do not want to differentiate by nationality or report on indicators for migrant learners. A multilateral representative in Turkey explained that although they wanted to disaggregate data by nationality the Turkish government insisted that they not collect data or report on indicators by nationality to deemphasize the aid given to refugees. Given the strained national climate, a UN representative in Turkey explained that "Any public spending that is going for the refugees is triggering social tension immediately." In this way, participants agreed that the distribution of aid, even if redistributive, can weaken social relationships between host and refugee communities at least in the short-term.

#### *Access to the national education system*

Participants in both Lebanon and Turkey shared that that the integration of refugee learners in the public system has contributed to social tensions through the host community perception (or reality) of decreased quality of education, pressures on school facilities, and shifting perceptions of the identity of schools.

Participants across both contexts shared that education quality in the face of refugee influx was a critical concern for host community parents. In Turkey, one participant explained, "There's a fear from host communities sometimes that the education for their children is being watered down... [that] then widens social tensions and resentment" (UN, Turkey). Participants cited concerns from parents as well as headmasters that school performance and national school rankings would be negatively impacted due to refugee learners being academically behind their Turkish peers because of language differences, time spent out of school, and coming from a different curricular background. Similarly in Lebanon, a Lebanese NGO representative shared:

[Most Lebanese] think it's better if [refugees] are segregated because they say that if the Syrian population is with their children in the same class it's going to affect

the quality of the classroom and then the class will have to slow down the pace, they have to teach differently so that that the Syrian community can understand it better, especially the foreign languages, because we teach science and math and English or French depending on the area. (NGO, Lebanon)

Relatedly, a multilateral representative in Turkey shared that pressure on school facilities caused tensions in the community. They explained that their agency started providing funding for additional cleaning staff and materials in Turkish schools because the higher population in schools were prompting anti-refugee complaints from the parents that the bathrooms and other school facilities were dirty. In their estimation, it was critical to support school maintenance and WASH facilities as they directly relate to quality of the school environment and therefore social cohesion in and around schools.

Another theme that arose in both Lebanon and Turkey was that in some, mostly poorer areas, the percentage of refugees in public schools was greater than the number of host community learners shifting the perception of identity of the schools. “So you get these schools that were in poor areas, some of them will have more refugees than Turks. So it’s kind of like the Turkish school became a Syrian school” (UN, Turkey). A handful of participants shared that the combination of the perception of decreased quality of education and feelings of their school becoming a “Syrian school” led to some families, with the means to do so, to change schools. “And Turkish parents say, ‘the quality of education is decreased, this [is bad] for Turks, this is not okay.’ So for wealthier or able Turkish parents, some have pulled their kids out of their local school and sent them somewhere else, where there are fewer Syrians. Which is not great, so there are major social cohesion issues” (UN, Turkey).

One participant who worked closely in setting up the second shift schools in Lebanon explained that one reason, beyond the sheer lack of spaces in morning shifts, that Syrian and Lebanese children were separated was due to social cohesion issues.

A lot of Lebanese wouldn't want their children to be with Syrian refugees because of racism, because of history, because some of these children are living in tented settlements that are informal, and they can catch diseases like lice, and you know, scabies... So first the parents started wanting to pull out their children from the public schools.... They were saying that the Syrian children were breaking everything, et cetera, which might be sometimes true, because these children are coming from a trauma... a lot happened, and a lot of disputes between the kids. And yes, they were breaking things, Lebanese were breaking things, too, but so everyone was complaining. And this is when UNHCR created the second shift. (UN, Lebanon)

The section above shows that the inclusion of refugees in schools has the potential to impact cohesion through the perception (or reality) of decreased quality of education, pressures on school facilities, and shifting of the identity of the schools. These components may also play a role in school bullying.

Participants across Lebanon and Turkey mentioned bullying as one of the biggest in-school social cohesion concerns however noting that there was a lot of differences across schools and not a lot of data or transparency on this issue at the national level:

Historically, some people may have had resentment against Syrians, and this was obviously coming into play, but to an extent that we didn't really know you, you had lots of feedback reported, but to what extent [bullying] was rampant, to what extent it was harsh, it was difficult to know. (UN, Lebanon)

Similarly in Turkey one participant shared, "It's very difficult to monitor and track... But we received a lot of reports through the education working group of bullying, harassment, and discrimination at the school level" (UN, Turkey).

Multiple participants in Turkey and Lebanon mentioned that bullying and discrimination not only by students but by teachers and school leaders in public schools has weakened social cohesion and contributed to school dropout:

Because we see that including Syrian refugee children in the public school systems should lead to better social cohesion in Lebanon. I think this helped in a way, but also sometimes it hindered this from happening, because we witnessed discriminatory actions from teachers towards those children, and this led many to

drop out. This was very clear in many schools, in many instances. That's why we know for a fact that many of those children dropped out because of discriminatory behaviors inside of the schools and outside of the schools on their way to the school. So it became almost normal in many schools to have a bunch of children waiting for the time, at 2pm for Syrian refugee children to arrive to schools and then just harass them. (INGO, Lebanon)

Similarly, in Turkey a INGO national staff member explained:

But their behaviors, sometimes the school principals' behaviors it really makes the situation quite difficult, and we are able to see the impact because many children at secondary school level—they are leaving schools.... And this is majorly because of bullying by teachers or peer bullying... So it is a big issue. (INGO, Turkey)

While providing more equitable access to refugees represents a critical redistributive action, the findings in this section highlight this does not necessarily lead to reconciliation or strengthened social cohesion. Instead, refugee integration in public schools in Lebanon and Turkey contributed to concerns around the decreased quality of schools, pressures on school facilities, and shifting perceptions of the identity of schools all with implications for social cohesion inside and outside of schools. These findings highlight the tension between redistribution (in the form of more equitable access to education) and reconciliation (in the form of weakened, not strengthened, social relationships). This tension recognizes the challenges diversity and integration can present, especially in contexts of social change and scarcity of resources when integrating refugees into host country education systems.

### **Recognition: Language, teachers, and inclusion in society**

In Turkey, participants shared that language issues, even after ten years of the Syria crisis, represents a significant barrier to integration and social cohesion. First, participants highlighted the communication challenges families face in accessing social services, participating in Turkish society, and supporting their children's learning and relationships. Second, while Arabic is taught as a foreign language and in religious 'Imam Hatip' schools,

participants shared that the monolingual education system represents a loss of language and culture as well as presenting a potential barrier to eventual return, "Children don't know how to read and write Arabic so how are they going to read any of the signs? How are they going to work and read simple things?... it's a huge disadvantage" (multilateral, Turkey). Another participant noted the disconnect between political rhetoric promoting refugee return and the lack of preparation for refugees to enable this return:

They're not allowed to study Arabic...in state schools. And some... political parties, say that Nationalist Party say that 'yeah, we are going to send them back to Syria.' I think it's a very political issue ... and no one can voice these contradictions...in this political context. (Academic, Turkey)

In this way, policies of inclusion support assimilation and the adoption to the culture and language of the host society as opposed to more of a two-way process in support of a pluralistic cohesive society.

Other education inputs that support national systems, like the hiring of refugee teachers for public schools similarly have the potential to exacerbate tensions:

Imagine then if you are a certified teacher— a Turkish teacher—that you worked really, really hard to get all of your academics, you went through all of the recruitment process and you're still waiting for your chance to be assigned to a public school. And then you have, on the other hand, a refugee teacher, that does not have the same qualifications as you, that most likely also does not have the certificates, the same, because a lot of them fled and didn't take any documentation with them as well. And just because they speak the language, they get to be assigned in the public system as public servant. I think that's already calling for social tension without... it being even the intention. So that's why it was a very - it is actually- a very sensitive topic here in Turkey. (UN, Turkey)

There was a wide degree of variation in my findings on what the role of refugee teachers in Lebanon and Turkey should look like from providing pathways to certification equivalency to teach in host community schools to much more limited and temporary support for refugee learners. However, there was strong agreement that refugee teachers represent critical capacity to

support learner well-being, outreach to refugee learners, to foster positive relationships in schools and communities, support learner transition and retention into school in a new context. However, participants also acknowledged that in a context of competition for scarce teaching positions in both Lebanon and Turkey it was challenging to find politically workable solutions that utilized their skills without exacerbating social cohesion.

The findings in this section point to the tension between refugees achieving more equitable access to education through the national system in the context of limited recognition of their language and lack of teacher representation in their education space.

#### *Inclusion in school vs. inclusion in society*

In both Turkey and Lebanon, participants described policies to include refugees in the national education system as embedded in a larger context of refugee exclusion in society more broadly. In particular, participants articulated that political discourse and refugees' legal status influences social cohesion in and around schools.

A common theme that emerged in data from Lebanon and Turkey is the clear disconnect between policies that provide access to the national education system and the political discourse beyond education, which is hostile to refugees, encourages return, and thereby impedes the connection between education and learners' futures in the host country. One Lebanese UN representative shares the difficult position of Syrian learners having access to education but not belonging within the broader society:

I think it is the national strategies that are beyond education.... Because inclusion *in* education means inclusion of these people into their societies, and this is not what Lebanon, for example, is ready to do. And actually, they were encouraging return when return was not deemed safe or dignified but UNHCR... Because it was... not real integration of the Syrian children... This is in the modalities, in the discourse, in the opportunities that instill fear for Syrian children and in the large political discourse. Syrians are not welcome, and they are expected to return as soon as possible. (UN, Lebanon)

One participant explained that anti-refugee sentiment is growing as part of mainstream political discourse which supports the normalization of anti-refugee sentiment in politics and Turkish society. "I mean he [the head of Victory political party] is really racist... this party is the first one, the *only* issue for this party is refugees. So it spreads open hate speech on TV and social media" (Academic, Turkey). Participants mentioned in both contexts that anti-refugee rhetoric is a barrier to feelings of inclusion in the education system and within the community more broadly. In Turkey, despite openness towards inclusion at the local level participants described that at meetings with high-ranking Ministry officials that they discussed integration of learners into schools but were not interested in working to support inclusion into society more broadly (multilateral, Turkey). In fact, in Turkey one participant shared that the government did not want to use the term integration but preferred the term "social harmonization" which is more palatable for voters as integration implies a more permanent condition (multilateral, Turkey). In Turkey, referring to the broader political environment, one participant explained that going to school in a context of overt tension impacts feelings of belonging inside and outside of school, "Refugees [are] becoming more and more a political issue, so the underlying constant barriers... do not allow children, adolescents to feel part of society and part of an educational system" (Bilateral, Turkey).

In Lebanon, a multilateral representative explained that the broader political motivation to promote refugee return presents a barrier even in practical education issues like including them in data collection systems:

In Lebanon, there was NO acceptance of the idea to keep [Syrian] refugees in Lebanon... we will not include them in them for example, the records... they don't want them to be permanent.... they will be ... temporary and then they have to leave. (Multilateral, Lebanon)



Political discourse is connected to the broader policy landscape which impacts refugees and their ability to attend and feel part of the school environment. Connected to the limited political will to include refugees in society, participants shared that refugees' temporary legal status in Turkey instilled feelings of impermanence and is a barrier for refugees to feeling part of the national community. A Turkish national UN staffer connected the impermanence of refugees' legal status as a barrier to feelings of belonging and subsequently a lack of commitment to engage in education:

Unfortunately, the temporary nature of their status in Turkey, not [having] full refugee rights is also not helping them feel they should adapt to the circumstances. Although they are intending to stay, they fear—because of the temporary nature of their legal status—that they will not stay in the long run. So then this brings on the difficult process of convincing both sides—also the Turkish school administration side—whether the two communities should integrate in the long run or not. I think this is the biggest challenge in Turkey that this population does not have proper legal status because they are temporary. We need to find ways to convince the families that they will still need their education regardless of their status. (UN, Turkey)

Connected to refugees' legal status, refugees' ability to access civil documentation represents an additional barrier to structural and relational inclusion as well as social cohesion in Lebanon. One participant explained that lack of civil documentation represented a barrier to education access, traveling freely, and feeling included in the community:

If you can imagine your seven-year-old... goes to ALP, you as a parent put them on a bus, and you can't even pass the checkpoint to go fetch them in case something happens because you yourself will be detained... It's not just education policy. It's also... policy of whether or not people have civil documentation... that causes different challenges and concerns for parents and their children to access school. Civil documentation...is quite important to look and seeing difference explicitly. I felt in some communities... could increase tension. (INGO, Lebanon)

Similarly in Turkey, participants explained that education access issues were often beyond the scope of the MONE such as issues related to identification and the inability to officially change your address for school enrollment in provinces that are closed to non-Turkish registration

(multilateral, Turkey). The disconnect between access to education and inclusion in society more broadly is significant in both Lebanon and Turkey underscoring the reality that education policy is part of a broader system which can limit refugees' access to education, inhibit their ability to feel part of a society, and impact social cohesion.

### **Reconciliation: Addressing historic exclusion**

Participants in both Lebanon and Turkey shared that the inclusion of refugees into public schools represented an important opportunity to address inclusion in society of other excluded and marginalized groups beyond refugees. A Turkish scholar shared that:

Talking about inclusive education is an opportunity.... So it adds to not only Syrian refugees, but it adds to... disabled groups... or disabled activities, also involved in the discussion. So Kurdish minority is also involved in the discussion. So other minorities. I think this huge challenge creates a space of discussion or opens up a space of discussion to develop some strategies for the social question etc. (Academic, Turkey)

For some participants, the movement around integrating refugees into schools and accompanying debates around inclusion, differences, multilingualism, and multiculturalism represents an opening for the democratization of education and longstanding social cohesion issues.

In Lebanon, one participant shared that ongoing discussions about refugee inclusion raise the issue on the education agenda more broadly:

The inclusion topic is something to really work on in Lebanon. And here I'm talking about like generally inclusion, not only for Syrian refugee children, but for any profile. So this is something new for us, for the country. And we need to do a lot, still need to do a lot when it comes to inclusion. (INGO, Lebanon)

Another participant who supports education advocacy and policy at the regional level, explained that interventions that target refugee inclusion generally benefit all vulnerable groups.

"We need to be looking at inclusiveness and also not singling out refugee children versus the

host community children that at times are more impacted than those that are receiving support. So it's also to contribute to that whole social cohesion aspect" (UN, Regional).

This sentiment was confirmed by participants in Lebanon and Turkey who shared that catch-up classes, remedial support or alternative pathways to formal education programs initially designed for refugees provided support for host community students who had missed school, needed additional support, and learners with disabilities. As one UN representative shared their surprise in seeing host community members taking advantage of education services designed for refugees:

I even saw one Turkish student in an ALP (Accelerated Learning Program) class in Gaziantep. I said to him, 'what are you doing here?!' He said, 'You know, I have a hearing disability, my local public Turkish school it's too fast for me- I can't learn, my mom heard about this program, and here I am. And I'm learning much better because I get more attention.' (UN, Turkey)

A UN representative in Lebanon similarly shared that the implementation of additional education pathways and opportunities meant not only that Syrian learners could catch up and be supported in the formal education system but also Lebanese students as well. In this way, education interventions in support of inclusion in the national education system can benefit and strengthen the system for all learners.

For participants, teachers also represent critical agents of change toward social cohesion in integrated schools. Participants talked about potential for the skills teachers have developed through professional development opportunities and experiences in the classroom with refugee learners to benefit all learners. New skills mentioned included the integration of social and emotional learning, intercultural skills, pedagogies to support multilingual classrooms, and capacities to foster positive attitudes towards diversity inside and outside schools. While participants recognized the potential of teachers as agents of positive change, concerns about

teacher motivation were also raised. A Turkish psychologist working on teacher professional development for social cohesion and bullying in schools shared:

Mostly, especially young teachers and young caregivers they are really interested in all the content all the seminars, they are interested. They are coming and they are asking a lot of questions... Because they see that is a real need for their children. But sometimes they don't care actually. They don't want to come. For example, for teachers, they say... they say 'we tried a lot, but you couldn't change anything.' (NGO, Turkey)

In Lebanon, participants were clear that the economic crisis represents a significant barrier for teachers to be able to realize their teaching potential and address issues around inclusion and social cohesion. One participant shared, "I mean if you are at a level where you don't even have teachers showing up at school. I mean what kind of inclusiveness are we talking about right? I mean at this point it's about just the basics. Hoping that the teachers are coming to school on a daily basis. That they are able to concentrate on their teaching" (Multilateral, Lebanon). Supporting social cohesion from a holistic perspective requires the recognition of the layers of challenges teachers face and the support they need as well.

Integrating refugees in national education systems and the resulting conversations about language, culture, religion and inclusion represents an important opening for reconciliation and the reexamination of social norms around inclusion and exclusion of minority or vulnerable groups in ways that strengthen social cohesion. In addition, projects and programs aimed at supporting refugees' access to the public system have the potential to strengthen the education system by offering multiple pathways and education support for all learners that need it. Finally, the skills that teachers learn to accommodate refugee learners in their classrooms similarly have the potential to improve learning, inclusion, and social cohesion for all learners.

## Discussion

The 4Rs framework posits that education has the potential to transform societies and strengthen social cohesion towards the realization of sustainable peacebuilding through redistribution, recognition, representation, and reconciliation (Lopes Cardozo, 2022). The following discussion applies the 4Rs, as the authors suggest, “as a starting point” to analyze the economic, cultural, political, and social dimensions of education services aimed at refugee inclusion and the ways that they interact with social cohesion in Lebanon and Turkey (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo & Smith, 2019).

**Redistribution** refers to equitable access to education services, distribution of education resources, and education outcomes. In the context of Lebanon, international investment in the historically underfunded public education system which serves the most marginalized host community learners may represent a progressive redistribution of resources to improve quality of services for those that need it most, albeit raising questions about sustainability and donor dependency. However, at the same time, the massive influx of refugee learners into the small and already overburdened public system, puts pressure on the schools and host community learners that are the most vulnerable, representing a regressive distribution of resources. This dilemma highlights the challenge in approaching policies of inclusion to avoid that refugees integrate 'down' into marginalized communities (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2019) but also that refugee education policy approaches do not negatively impact vulnerable host community learners.

This 4Rs framework assumes that equitable access to services supports sustainable peace within a population. However, in contexts of refugee influx that strain already struggling communities, the distribution of resources to vulnerable refugee learners has the potential to provoke resentment from vulnerable host community learners and strain social relationships

between groups. My findings show that this can occur for example through the distribution of education supplies and services to one group, pressures on school facilities to accommodate increasing numbers of learners, or through the perception (or reality) of decreased quality of education. This finding confirms existing literature that finds resistance from host communities that feel that their learners are suffering as a result of refugees accessing public schools (Culbertson & Constant, 2015). Education reforms in support of refugee inclusion must acknowledge the challenges that diversity and integration can present to ensure context-based approaches that support social cohesion, the reduction of prejudice, and positive intergroup relations.

My findings suggest that in order for inclusive education interventions to support social cohesion they must include all learners regardless of nationality or refugee status in ways that are perceived to strengthen the national system for all learners and benefit the host community including teachers and other education personnel. Including vulnerable host community learners in education interventions has significant implications for humanitarian and development approaches to refugee education and budgets.

**Recognition** entails respect and affirmation of diverse identities, languages, cultures and religions as means to sustainable and just peace (Novelli, Lopes Cardozo & Smith, 2019). My findings suggest that in Lebanon and Turkey, curricula and language policies in refugee-hosting contexts support the adoption to the culture and language of the host society. This is especially relevant in Turkey where there is a single language of instruction different from refugees' native language. This confirms scholarship that finds contemporary language policies support assimilationist monolingual citizenship (Li & Sah, 2019). In this way, the refugee inclusion agenda is in the middle of competing global values and policy priorities. On one hand the global

push for refugee inclusion in national education systems puts refugees in a position to adapt to local language and curriculum. At the same time, there is a growing recognition of refugees' right to preserve their cultural identities and importance of use of mother tongue in education (UNESCO, 2020). This tension has implications for social cohesion, as Berry and Taban (2021) argue that policies of assimilation undermine social cohesion in host states by "elevating the host society's threat perception and not requiring its adaptation." In this way, policies of inclusion can enable the assimilationist tendencies of host states in contrast to the values ensconced under the 'R' of recognition that contends sustainable peacebuilding is dependent on respecting difference, recognition of cultural diversity through curriculum, and language of instruction policies. This finding identifies a tension between redistribution, as refugee access to host country education systems, and recognition, as assimilationist monolingual citizenship predominate globally.

Findings from Lebanon and Turkey also show a disconnect between access to national education systems and inclusion in society more broadly where anti-refugee political discourse, temporary legal status, limited labor rights and challenges to accessing civil documentation presents barriers to education access and social cohesion. This finding confirms scholarship that acknowledges schools alone cannot create inclusive societies as they function as part of a broader political and social environment that support or limit possibilities of belonging (Dryden-Peterson et al. 2018). Instead, policies of refugee inclusion in education necessitate a holistic approach acknowledging that social cohesion requires addressing social systems beyond one policy or one sector to consider the transformation and relationships within the entire system. This includes addressing labor rights, enabling legal status, unrestricted movement within a country, and access to civil documentation. However, unless there is a strong political

commitment to address the power structures that undergird the status quo of political, economic, and social inequity, transformative policies will remain elusive.

**Reconciliation** addresses historic and contemporary injustices as well as developing vertical (between government and population) and horizontal (across groups) relationships of trust. Participants across both contexts recognized the inclusion agenda led to an elevation and legitimization of concepts of inclusion representing a valuable opportunity to reexamine and challenge longstanding social justice issues including the exclusion of other minority groups for example in language of instruction, curriculum, representation in the teaching profession. However, importantly while the language of inclusion provoked critical reflection participants did not suggest that these conversations had led to any tangible progress on social justice concerns.

**Representation** refers to the extent to which policy reforms involve stakeholder participation in design and decision making at multiple levels. Within my research I did not find meaningful opportunities for local engagement in administration and education management within refugee communities. In Turkey, participants pointed to the strong centralized government bureaucracy and lamented growing constraints on civil society. In Lebanon, respondents expressed frustration with sectarian politics, lack of trust in government, and failing government institutions. Recent scholarship has found that in conflict-affected contexts, lack of representation for teachers and youth in decision-making processes can increase their risk for involvement in violence (Novelli et al., 2016). Representation presents a special challenge in refugee-hosting contexts as non-citizens are not afforded the same access to citizenship, electoral, civil and political rights. Fraser calls for transformative politics at multiple scales—global, national, local—using the slogan “No redistribution or recognition without



representation” (2008, p. 282) which calls for progressive political restructuring. This is a valuable lens for addressing different dimensions of injustice, but for refugees, limited ability to engage in civic and political life represents a fundamental structural hurdle.

In conclusion, this study questions the assumption that including refugees in national education systems necessarily strengthens social cohesion, contributing to debates around the inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems as well as scholarship related to the complex relationship between education, social cohesion, and peace. This research also represents a contribution to the scholarship on social justice and education through the application of the 4Rs framework in refugee-hosting contexts.

## References

- Adelman, E., Chopra, V., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2019). Including and educating Syrian refugees in national education systems – The case of Lebanon. *Global Education Monitoring Report*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Akar, B., & van Ommering, E. (2018). An emerging framework for providing education to Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. In *Syrian Refugee Children in the Middle East. and Europe*, (59–72). Routledge.
- Anderson, M. B. (1999). *Do no harm: How aid can support peace—Or war*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Bartlett, L., & Vavrus, F. (2016). Rethinking case study research: A comparative approach. *Routledge*.
- Bellino, M. J., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2019). Inclusion and exclusion within a policy of national integration: Refugee education in Kenya’s Kakuma Refugee Camp *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 40(2), 222–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2018.1523707>
- Berger-Schmitt, R. (2000). *Social cohesion as an aspect of the quality of societies: Concept and measurement*, 14. ZUMA.
- Berry, S. E., & Taban, I. (2021). The right of minority-refugees to preserve their cultural identity: An intersectional analysis. *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*, 39(3), 198–219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/092405192111033419>
- Bryan, A., & Vavrus, F. (2005). The promise and peril of education: The teaching of in/tolerance in an era of globalisation. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 3(2), 183–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767720500167033>
- Burde, D., Coombes, A., de Hoop, T., Guven, O., Okhidoi, O., Ring, H., Rothbard, V., & Holla, C. (2022). Forced displacement and education: Building the evidence for what works. World Bank.
- Bush, K. D., & Saltarelli, D. (2000). *The two faces of education in ethnic conflict: Towards a peacebuilding education for children*.
- Callens, M. S., & Meuleman, B. (2017). Do integration policies relate to economic and cultural threat perceptions? A comparative study in Europe. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 58(5), 367–391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715216665437>
- Colletta, N. J., & Cullen, M. L. Violent conflict and the transformation of social capital: Lessons from Cambodia, Rwanda, Guatemala, and Somalia, 795. *World Bank Publications*. (2000).
- Culbertson, S., & Constant, L. (2015). *Education of Syrian refugee children*. Rand Corporation.

- De Coning, C. (2016). From peacebuilding to sustaining peace: Implications of complexity for resilience and sustainability. *Resilience*, 4(3), 166–181.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21693293.2016.1153773>
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2016). Refugee education: The crossroads of globalization. *Educational Researcher*, 45(9), 473-482.
- Dryden-Peterson, S., Adelman, E., Alvarado, S., Anderson, K., Bellino, M., Brooks, R., . . . Suzuki, E. (2018). Integration of education for refugees in national systems. Background paper prepared for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: *Migration, education, and displacement*. UNESCO. Global Education Monitoring Report.
- Erdoğan, M. M. (2017). Syrians-barometer. *A framework for achieving social cohesion with Syrians in Turkey*.
- Fraser, N. (1995). Recognition or redistribution? A critical reading of Iris Young's Justice and the Politics of Difference. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 3(2), 166–180.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9760.1995.tb00033.x>
- Fraser, N. (2006). Reframing justice in a globalizing world. In *Nationalism and Global Solidarities* (pp. 178-196). Routledge.
- Fraser, N. (2008). Abnormal justice. *Critical inquiry*, 34(3), 393-422.
- Fraser, N. (2009). *Scales of justice: Reimagining political space in a globalizing world* (Vol. 31). Columbia University Press.
- Fraser, N. (2020). From redistribution to recognition?: Dilemmas of justice in a 'post-socialist' age. In *The new social theory reader* (pp. 188–196). Routledge.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600301>
- Gebeily, M., Kucukgocmen, A., & Chacar, H. (2023). Earthquake fans anti-Syrian sentiment in Turkey amid desperate conditions. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/earthquake-fans-anti-syrian-sentiment-turkey-amid-desperate-conditions-2023-02-13/>. Reuters.
- Gönültaş, S., & Mulvey, K. L. (2023). Do adolescents intervene in intergroup bias-based bullying? Bystander judgments and responses to intergroup bias-based bullying of refugees. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 33(1), 4–23.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12752>
- Hathaway, J. C. (2016). A global solution to a global refugee crisis. *European Papers-à Journal on Law and Integration*, 2016(1), 93–99.

- Heyneman, S. P. (2003). Education, social cohesion, and the future role of international organizations. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 78(3), 25–38.  
[https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327930PJE7803\\_03](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327930PJE7803_03)
- Heyneman, S. P. (2003b). Education and social cohesion. *Encyclopedia of education*, 6, 2242–2250.
- Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2021). Lebanon: Planning lapses endanger school year.  
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/11/lebanon-planning-lapses-endanger-school-year>.  
 Human Rights Watch.
- İçduygu, A. (2015). *Syrian refugees in Turkey: The long road ahead*. Migration Policy Institute.
- Jenson, J. (1998). *Mapping social cohesion: The state of Canadian research* (pp. 109–128).  
 Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- Kelcey, J., & Chatila, S. (2020). Increasing inclusion or expanding exclusion? How the global strategy to include refugees in national education systems has been implemented in Lebanon. *Refuge*, 0229–5113, 36(2).
- Kınıklıoğlu, S. (2020). *Syrian refugees in Turkey: Changing attitudes and fortunes*.
- Kirişci, K. (2023). *After the earthquake: Refugees must be included in Turkey's reconstruction*.  
 Brookings.
- Kirk, J. (2007). Education and fragile states. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 5(2), 181–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767720701425776>
- Kuçuksuleymanoğlu, R. (2018). Integration of Syrian refugees and Turkish students by non-formal education activities. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 7(3), 244–252.
- Lederach, J. P. (1995). Conflict transformation in protracted internal conflicts: The case for a comprehensive framework. *Conflict Transformation*, 201–222.
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. United States Institute of Peace.
- Li, G., & Sah, P. K. (2019). Immigrant and refugee language policies, programs, and practices in an era of change: Promises, contradictions, and possibilities. In *Routledge international handbook of migration studies* (pp. 325–338). Routledge.
- Ma, H. Y. R. (2019). The changing attitudes towards Syrian refugees in Lebanon. *Leviathan*, 10(1).
- McCandless, E. (2020). Resilient social contracts and peace: Towards a needed reconceptualization. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 14(1), 1–21.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2019.1682925>

- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis*. Sage.
- Ministry of Education and higher Education (MEHE). (2021). *Lebanon five-year General Education Plan 2021–2025*. Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
- Novelli, M., Cardozo, M. L., & Smith, A. (2015). *A theoretical framework for analysing the contribution of education to sustainable peacebuilding: 4 Rs in conflict-affected contexts*. University of Amsterdam.
- Novelli, M., Daoust, G., Selby, J., Valiente, O., Scandurra, R., Deng Kuol, L., & Salter, E. (2016). Exploring the linkages between education sector governance, inequity, conflict, and peacebuilding in South Sudan. [http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/61951/1/\\_smbhome.uscs.susx.ac.uk\\_dm50\\_Desktop\\_file.pdf](http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/id/eprint/61951/1/_smbhome.uscs.susx.ac.uk_dm50_Desktop_file.pdf). United Nations Children's Fund.
- Novelli, M., & Sayed, Y. (2016). Teachers as agents of sustainable peace, social cohesion and development: Theory, practice and evidence. *Education As Change*, 20(3), 15–37. <https://doi.org/10.17159/1947-9417/2016/1486>
- Novelli, M., Lopes Cardozo, M. T., & Smith, A. (2017). The 4 Rs framework: Analyzing education's contribution to sustainable peacebuilding with social justice in conflict-affected contexts. *Journal on Education in Emergencies*, 3(1).
- Novelli, M., Lopes Cardozo, M., & Smith, A. (2019). The '4 Rs' as a tool for critical policy analysis of the education sector in conflict affected states. *Education and Conflict Review*, 2, 70-75.
- Omoeva, C., & Buckner, E. (2015, April). *Does horizontal education inequality lead to violent conflict? A global analysis*. FHI360 Global Data Center.
- Paulson, J. (Ed.). (2011, May). *Education, conflict and development*. Symposium Books Ltd.
- Saraçoğlu, C., & Bélanger, D. (2019). Loss and xenophobia in the city: Contextualizing anti-Syrian sentiments in Izmir, Turkey. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 53(4), 363–383. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0031322X.2019.1615779>
- Shackle, S. (2017). How the Lebanese school system is segregating refugees. IRIN. <https://www.irinnews.org/feature/2017/06/27/how-lebanese-school-system-segregating-refugees>
- Shuayb, M. (2016). Education for social cohesion attempts in Lebanon: Reflections on the 1994 and 2010 education reforms. *Education As Change*, 20(3), 225–242. <https://doi.org/10.17159/1947-9417/2016/1531>

- Slee, R. (2020). *Defining the scope of inclusive education. Background paper for Global Education Monitoring Report 2020*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Tawil, S., & Harley, A. (2004). Education and identity-based conflict: Assessing curriculum policy for social and civic reconstruction. *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, 9.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2020). *Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2020b). Mother tongue and early childhood care and education: Synergies and challenges. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374419>. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2017). Left Behind: Refugee education in crisis. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/left-behind-refugee-education-crisis>. United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2019). Refugee education. *A strategy for refugee inclusion*. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/education/5d651da88d7/education-2030-strategy-refugee-education.html>, 2030.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees. (2022). *Global trends report 2021*. <https://www.unhcr.org/62a9d1494/global-trends-report-2021>. United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
- Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Vasyr). (2022). *Vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon 2021*. United Nations High Commission for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, WFP.
- World, B. (2018). *Pathways for peace: Inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict*. World Bank.
- World, B. (2021). Lebanon Economic monitor: Lebanon Sinking to the Top 3. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/394741622469174252/pdf/Lebanon-Economic-Monitor-Lebanon-Sinking-to-the-Top-3.pdf>. World Bank.
- World, B. (2022). Lebanon macro poverty outlook. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/0aad08f40c2fdc3d62e5531925452384-0280012022/original/9-mpo-sm22-lebanon-lbn-kcm5.pdf>. World Bank.
- Yahya, M., Kassir, J., & El-Hariri, K. (2018). *Unheard voices: What Syrian refugees need to return home*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

- Yilmaz, R., & Cikili Uytun, M. (2020). What do we know about bullying in Syrian adolescent refugees? A cross sectional study from Turkey: (bullying in Syrian adolescent refugees). *Psychiatric Quarterly*, *91*(4), 1395–1406. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11126-020-09776-9>
- Young, I. M. (2006) Responsibility and global justice: A social connection model, Social Philosophy and Policy Foundation, pp. 102-130.
- Zihnioğlu, Ö., & Dalkıran, M. (2022). From social capital to social cohesion: Syrian refugees in Turkey and the role of NGOs as intermediaries. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *48*(11), 2455–2472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2022.2047908>

# **PAPER 3: PROMOTING INCLUSION ‘OVER THERE’: THE GEOPOLITICS OF REFUGEE INCLUSION IN EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN LEBANON AND TURKEY**

## **Abstract**

The overwhelming majority of the world’s 32.5 million refugees, 85 percent, are hosted in developing and neighboring countries in crises, often for many years as protracted conflicts and crises prevent returns (UNHCR, 2021; UNHCR, 2023). This reality has fueled considerations about how to relieve the disproportionate pressure on over-stretched refugee-hosting states. The concept of "burden sharing" or "responsibility sharing" underpins the international refugee regime including the recent global policy shift to include refugees in national education systems. Drawing on 47 semi-structured interviews with educationalists working on refugee education at the global, regional, and national levels in Lebanon and Turkey, I situate the diffusion of inclusion as a refugee education policy norm within the neoliberal global environment. Applying constructivist international relations theory, I argue that while inclusion is framed in an apolitical technocratic manner, it is embedded in a global system of regressive responsibility-sharing models including the externalization of migration policy, a strategy of countries in the Global North to prevent or deter the entry of asylum seekers. My findings point to some of the ways that this relationship interacts with the commitment of actors in the Global North to share responsibility for refugee inclusion in host education systems including the instability of adequate long-term financing, limiting of migration rights to seek asylum in third countries, and perpetuating postcolonial power asymmetries.



## Introduction

In 2021, 89.3 million individuals worldwide were living in displacement due to persecution, conflict, violence and human rights abuses continuing a decade-long trend of rising forced displacement (UNHCR, 2022). Eighty-five percent of refugees find exile in states that neighbor their conflict-affected country of origin (UNHCR, 2021), most of which are characterized by fragile political and economic institutions and overstretched education systems (Hathaway, 2016). This reality has fueled considerations about how to relieve the disproportionate pressure on over-stretched refugee-hosting states. The concept of "burden sharing" or "responsibility-sharing" underpins the international refugee regime, in fact it was a theme in the preamble of the 1951 Refugee Convention and has since been reiterated many times by UNHCR and the UN General Assembly (Martin et al., 2019). However, scholars have argued that no strong norm of refugee burden-sharing currently exists in international law or practice and that even its most energetic exponents view it "more as a moral aspiration than as a legally binding duty on all sides" (Schuck, 1997, p. 272). Similarly, Dowd and McAdam (2017) argue that a mechanism to systematically, equitably, and predictably allocate responsibilities between States has still not been agreed.

Within this context, there has been a global movement to define and strengthen responsibility-sharing agreements including through the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The GCR is an international agreement, informed by the CRRF and adopted by the UN General Assembly, which aims to make the responsibility for helping refugees worldwide more equitable and predictable and places enhanced responsibility-sharing at the heart of the international refugee protection agenda. In line with the promotion of stable solutions for refugees so that they can become more self-

reliant, these frameworks also advocate for policies that facilitate the inclusion of refugees into national development plans as well as in labor markets, healthcare and education systems (UNHCR, 2019b). In this way, these responsibility-sharing frameworks represent key global policy approaches in the growing movement to include refugees in national education systems. Thus, there is a close and conditional relationship between refugee inclusion in education systems and international responsibility-sharing.

Despite the GCRs strong emphasis on responsibility-sharing, a 2021 evaluation of the GCR calls into question "the political will of the international community to ensure better and more predictable responses" and finds that it remains "unclear whether the GCR has supported increased and more predictable funding for refugees, host communities and host countries." (DRC, IRC & NRC, 2021). Limited responsibility-sharing is occurring a global context of increased externalization of migration management which transfers responsibility for migration control onto countries of transit, effectively shifting responsibility away from destination countries. The extent to which international actors meet their obligations to support refugee-hosting states is particularly relevant in Turkey and Lebanon as Turkey hosts the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers worldwide for the eighth consecutive year at 4 million including 3.8 million Syrian refugees (UNHCR, 2022b) while Lebanon hosts the largest number of refugees per capita where one in every eight people is a refugee (UNHCR, 2022).

While EiE scholarship has been interested in the extent to which education programs and policies "work" this study takes a step back to question how they are connected to the interests of donor states and what that means for international responsibility-sharing. I consider the close yet under-examined relationship between the diffusion of refugee inclusion as a policy norm, donor states political agendas, and responsibility-sharing for refugee education, asking: *What is the*

*relationship between the global refugee education inclusion agenda and the externalization of migration management?* To do so, I draw on constructivist international relations (IR) scholarship (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999; Finnemore, 1996; Price & Reus-Smit, 1998) which supports the exploration of how power asymmetries in the global aid system impact refugee education policy and international responsibility-sharing for refugee education. In my analysis of how IOs exercise power I incorporate the concept of “coloniality” which refers to the persistence of formations from colonialism in postcolonial global paradigms and power (Quijano & Ennis, 2000).

I find that despite the disconnect between the political drivers of donor governments (e.g. discouraging onward migration) and the human rights missions of education aid actors they converge in support of refugee inclusion in education systems. In this way, IOs are working in concert with donor state power to diffuse the refugee education policy norm in ways that potentially perpetuate global power inequities. Further, I find the tensions between political and human rights drivers present a number of barriers to responsibility-sharing for refugee education through long-term, predictable international financing with implications for education access, quality, and system strengthening in Lebanon and Turkey.

The following section provides context for this study on responsibility-sharing and the externalization of migration management. I then review constructivist IR scholarship to frame this study conceptually. I subsequently outline my research design and methods. My findings are divided into two sections. The first key finding explores the relationship between political and technical motivations and constraints around policies of inclusion. The second key finding explores limitations related to actors in the Global North in sharing responsibility for refugee education in Lebanon and Turkey.

## **Context**

### **International responsibility-sharing**

There has been a recent movement to define and strengthen global commitments to shared responsibility including through the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). In 2018, 181 UN member states committed through the GCR to equitably share the responsibility for refugee protection through a "framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing" (UNHCR, 2019d). Its four key objectives are to: a) reduce pressure on host countries; b) enhance refugee self-reliance; c) expand access to third country solutions; and d) support conditions in countries of origin to facilitate safe and dignified return (UN, n.d.). This movement calls for a longer-term perspective that plans for solutions from the beginning of a crisis (UNHCR, 2019b). It is important to note, however, that the GCR is a non-binding document, dependent on voluntary funding, and does not commit states to undertake specific action to ensure compliance.

At the heart of both the CRRF and the GCR is the concept that refugees should be included in hosting communities from the beginning of their exile. This includes inclusion in development plans as well as in labor markets, healthcare and education systems (UNHCR, 2019b). In this way, there is a close and conditional relationship between refugee inclusion in education systems and international responsibility-sharing.

Financial support for refugees is a foundational component of responsibility-sharing and while humanitarian and development funding for EiE has increased over the last decade, the increase has not kept pace with increasing demands leaving a massive funding gap (Damian & Thierry, 2022). Education received only 22 percent of UN-led humanitarian appeals in 2021, far less than other sectors (Damian & Thierry, 2022). In Lebanon, international aid to education has

fallen since 2018 and with Lebanon's economic crisis, international financing for education is more critical. Similarly in Turkey humanitarian aid contributions fell from US\$ 1.28 billion in 2018 to US\$ 777.2 million in 2020 (OCHA, 2023) however, Turkey represents a much stronger economy, is considered an emerging donor, and is a net exporter of foreign aid with significant development investment from the EU.

Given global challenges to share responsibility for refugees, over the last few years there have been several concrete responsibility-sharing arrangements that have been developed, translating the concept from an idea to practice (Linos & Chachko, 2022). Martin et al. (2019) elaborate several areas of responsibility-sharing including addressing the underlying causes of displacement, efforts to promote durable solutions including resettlement to third countries, initiatives to enhance protection, financial support for refugees, IDPs and host communities, and technical assistance and training. However, not all responsibility-sharing frameworks meet the objective of reducing the strain on host countries.

Linos and Chachko (2022) distinguish between progressive models that shift responsibilities to more affluent, institutionally competent, and safer countries and regressive models that do the opposite and instead constitute 'responsibility dumping' (p. 106). The responsibility dumping mechanism transfers responsibility for protection seekers to countries that are less wealthy, have weaker institutions and are not as safe without adequate compensatory measures (Linos & Chachko, 2022). In some cases, the burden has shifted from national authorities to international organizations, particularly UNHCR (Suhrke, 1998).

Global frameworks such as the CRRF and the GCR promote predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing as essential, recognizing that "a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation" (UNHCR, n.d.). Refugee inclusion in

national education systems has been promoted in these frameworks aligned with the movement towards social inclusion and longer-term sustainable solutions. While education is held as a meaningful component of international cooperation, there is no framework that articulates what it means to share responsibility for refugee education and little research on the role of education cooperation within the framework of responsibility-sharing. Further, the disconnect between IOs emphasis on responsibility-sharing as an essential requirement for refugee inclusion in education systems and the global trend toward the externalization of migration management remains unexplored.

### **Externalization of migration management**

The shifting responsibility for migration control onto countries of origin and transit (Hyndman & Mountz, 2008; Van Liempt et al., 2017) and the externalization of migration policies (Bialasiewicz, 2012; Lahav & Guiraudon, 2000) has become a widespread—and controversial— policy approach especially in Europe and North America. Externalization of migration management describes state actions to prevent migrants, including asylum seekers, from entering destination countries, making them “legally inadmissible without individually considering the merits of their protection claims” (Frelick, Kysel & Podkul, 2016, p. 193). Such actions can be unilateral, bilateral, or multilateral as well as enlist private or UN actors in a range of strategies including legal-administrative methods such as externalized asylum processing (compelling migrants to submit asylum claims before they reach their final destination) and law enforcement measures like offshore interdiction (intercepting boats suspected of carrying offshore migrants) and offshore detention in facilities located in transit countries (Zaiotti, 2016). These policies are often framed as both a national security imperative and a protective

humanitarian response as opposed to an effort to control and limit migration (Frelick, Kysel & Podkul, 2016).

A prominent example is the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan or 'Deal' signed in March 2016 which outlines three main objectives: "reducing both the number of persons arriving irregularly to the EU and the loss of life in the Aegean whilst providing safe and legal routes to the EU for those in need" (EC, 2017, p. 4). The deal stipulates the controversial so-called '1:1 scheme' that for every Syrian Turkey admits from the Greek Islands, the EU agreed to take back one Syrian from Turkey (Poon, 2016). This arrangement has been criticized for a number of reasons: For violating international law (Poon, 2016); undermining the EU's human rights commitments (Lavenex, 2018); and "allowing a tradeoff of human beings [that] objectifies migrants [and] essentializ[es] their identities in relation to arbitrary access criteria[,] and [further] divides them into subjects deserving to come to Europe and unwanted bodies to be returned to Turkey" (Casaglia & Pacciardi, 2022). In this way, despite being used as a blueprint for ongoing EU responsibility-sharing negotiations, it has been widely argued that the deal constitutes a responsibility dumping arrangement (AI, 2014; McEwen, 2017; Van Liempt, 2017).

Connected to the economic and political motivations that motivate the externalization of migration management, Tekin (2022) argues that the EU-Turkey deal also represents a drawing of borders around Europe "between the realm of order, civilisation, rationality, peace and wealth, and the realm of disorder, backwardness, chaos, aggression and poverty" (p. 10). Postcolonial scholars may point to how formations of colonialism persist in economic and social power hierarchies today (Christian, 2019), evolving from overt subjugation to imposing policies in national economies and social sectors (Wilson, 2017). Further, the racial order constructed

during the colonial era is reflected in power relations today including in development and global education (Allweiss, 2021).

Education in particular plays an important role in the EU-Turkey Deal. Based on the deal, the EU and Turkey agreed to set up the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT) to coordinate and manage the six billion euros made available under the EU budget and additional contributions from Member States (EU, 2015b). Education has been a priority area for the FRIT which has allocated more than €1.5 billion to education projects including €545 million for educational infrastructure (EC, 2022). There are three education-related projects with budgets over €100 million: Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids into Turkish Education System I (PIKTES) (€300 million), PIKTES II (€400 million) and Education for All in Times of Crisis II (€255 million).

While the EU-Turkey deal is a high-profile example, the EU's strategy of the externalization of migration management is also evident in Lebanon. The Syria crisis has been a game changer in EU-Lebanon relations as it became a critical refugee-hosting state. Scholars have argued that the EU has sought to co-opt Lebanese authorities as partners in border management (Tholens, 2016), to regulate migration through deals such as the EU-Lebanon 2016 Compact that discourages onward migration (Fakhoury, Fine, Muftuler-Bac & Tsourapas, 2021), and develop a myriad of regional and bilateral tools to attempt to boost the state's ability to host refugees (Fakhoury, 2020). As illustrated above, education plays a significant and under-examined role in the externalization of migration management linked to postcolonial power relations. In order to understand the relationships between the global refugee education inclusion agenda, the externalization of migration management, and international responsibility-sharing I



draw on constructivist IR scholarship to define how IOs exercise power in refugee education efforts.

### **Conceptual framework: Constructivism**

In the 1990s a group of scholars emerged who challenged established international relations (IR) paradigms, claiming that states are historically constructed actors, and that normative and ideational structures are as important as material factors in the world polity (Finnemore, 1996; Price & Reus-Smit, 1998). In IR, constructivism is an approach to social analysis that deals with the role of human consciousness in social life and focuses on the role of ideas, norms, knowledge, and culture in politics (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001). These non-material factors had been virtually ignored by neorealist and neoliberal theories (Lapid & Kratochwil, 1996). Constructivist IR scholarship has been particularly motivated around issues related to the local effects of global norms, how state identity shapes politics and actions, as well as the mechanisms and processes of social construction including through international organizations and international law (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001).

Within the constructivist framework, international organizations (IOs) can become autonomous sites of authority, independent from their creators (often governmental actors) due to power gained from the legitimacy of the rational-legal authority they embody (i.e., the impersonal legalities, procedures and rules of the organization) and control over technical expertise and information (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999). Both sources of authority make IOs powerful precisely by presenting them as technocratic, neutral, and depoliticized (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999). Within Barnett and Finnemore's (1999) framework, IOs exercise power through three main sources: The classification and organization of knowledge, the "fixing of meanings," and the diffusion of norms.

The classification and organization of knowledge refers to the ways that IOs can shift objects' very definition and identities. For example, in the case of refugee education, the classification of individuals as IDPs, refugees, temporary guests, or migrants is bound up with power as these definitions create legal, political, and discursive categories that shape the perceptions of these individuals and directly affect them (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999). Refugee inclusion in national education systems has been supported by IOs grounding the policy in global values such as human rights and anti-discrimination which provides a license to support these policies in an authoritative and legitimate manner. For example, UNHCR's 2012 Education Strategy cites a number of global policy frameworks that have shaped their strategy including the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, SDG 16 on "inclusive societies", and SDG 4 which calls for collective action to ensure "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UNHCR, 2012, p. 7). The 2020 GEM report enumerates the laws and policies that have formed a foundation for education inclusion, linking contemporary efforts to established norms and declarations that protect human rights, education rights, and the rights of persons with disabilities. This framing of refugee inclusion in national systems as an expansion of the definition of inclusive education beyond learners with disabilities to include all learners, regardless of background, ability or identity (including citizenship status) presents refugee inclusion as neutral and apolitical, well grounded in established international norms and legal frameworks, and tied to concepts of progress, development, and social justice.

The second way that IOs exercise power is through the "fixing of meanings," that is, the naming or labeling of the social context which establishes the parameters and boundaries of acceptable action (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999). A prominent example is the institutionalization of the discourse of development, created in large part by IOs which consequently determined

what development is, what actors are considered important, and who is the object of development (Escobar, 2012). In the case of refugee education policy, the emergence of the concept of inclusion represents a significant shift in how education intervention in humanitarian and development spaces is conceptualized and bounded. For example, the policy approach necessitates a focus on national education systems which is consequently less focused on country of origin (e.g., country of origin curriculum, language, structure, etc.), is closely connected with host country structures, and requires a shift towards a long-term development-led approach for education provision, as opposed to a short-term or humanitarian approach. A constructivist perspective might point to the empowerment within this landscape of ministries of education through whom IOs must work to broker national policy changes, as well as large development donors (who now have access to humanitarian spaces) over smaller organizations or those with shorter-term humanitarian objectives. It may also imply a shift of responsibility for refugee education from global to national actors.

Third, having established rules and norms, IOs exercise power through the diffusion of norms (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999). Despite the relatively recent shift in global education policy with the 2012 UNHCR education strategy, refugee inclusion has been quickly and widely adopted as the standard global policy approach (Dryden-Peterson, 2020). Spreading and enforcing global values and norms is often an explicit mission of IOs and carried out through advocacy, research, standard setting, and policy influence. Refugee-hosting states are targets for norm diffusion by IOs. The fact that 83 percent of the world's refugees are hosted in low- and middle- income countries and just four percent of refugees in need of resettlement were offered a place in a third countries in 2021 (UNHCR, 2022) reflects asymmetries between the inclusive

agenda, or norm, pushed by IOs in the Global South and Global North domestic policy priorities.

The success of norm diffusion depends not only on persuasion. Instead, rhetoric must be supported by power. Barnett and Finnemore (1999) explain that a fundamental feature of value diffusion is connected to how IOs work in tandem to “channel and shape states' exercise of power” (p. 713). In this way, structural power, which concerns how actors are positioned socially within a structure and how this position determines interests and capacities is used to support norm diffusion (Barnett & Duvall, 2005). Structural power is historically constituted and can be perpetuated in international development through colonial legacies, maintenance of past aid relationships, and reinforced through the preservation of economic roles, international financing structures, and actor positions within the hierarchical aid architecture (Menashy, 2019). In this way, IOs sources of authority in the diffusion of norms is closely connected with the concept of coloniality or the long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism (Maldonado-Torres, 2007).

Menashy (2019) argues that due to longstanding power asymmetries in structural power, recent efforts to promote more participatory aid systems and increase country ownership in education such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW) have instead reproduced traditional international development power dynamics and solidified the power of actors from the Global North. GPE and ECW, as key partners in the development and enactment of refugee education policy as well as the implementation of the 2030 agenda, are also closely connected to the global roll out of the policy shift toward refugee inclusion. Despite notable efforts to elevate Southern voices within these partnerships, the historically constituted roles of the World Bank and Unicef, as the hosts and grant agents of GPE

and ECW respectively, are perpetuated within policy and program activities related to refugee education including through wealth, administrative roles, and logistical constraints (Menashy, 2019).

Finally, constructivist scholars have identified that IOs exercise productive power wherein they legitimate particular forms of knowledge and shape whose knowledge matters, which actors are legitimated and allowed into policymaking spaces (Barnett & Duvall, 2005). An example of productive power can be seen in the coalition assembled by former UK Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown, which had an outsized role in the formulation of RACE I, the education policy aimed at addressing the Syrian refugee influx in Lebanon. The introduction of the RACE I program states:

As part of the overall call for an increase in funding for education in emergencies, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education [Rt Hon Gordon Brown] convened a focused meeting on the impact of the Syrian crisis on the Lebanese education system, informed by the Education without Borders report [commissioned by A World at School] from the Overseas Development Institute (ODI)" (MEHE, 2014, p 2).

The document goes on to state that it was through related follow-up meetings that the RACE I program was developed. In this case, it is relevant to note that policy recommendations within the highly influential *Education without Borders* report were published by the UK-based overseas development institute (ODI) and not justified based on empirical evidence or existing literature but were based on a "short field visit" and informed by "a large number of individuals" (Watkins, 2013). These anonymous individuals' knowledge, voices, and experiences, elevated based on the decisions of the author and coalition organizer, can be seen as an example of productive power of an IO with direct linkages to refugee education policy outputs. ODI – UK based

This section explored how constructivist scholarship can help distinguish the mechanisms through which IOs use power to support the global policy shifts to include refugees in national education systems. Namely through the classification and organization of knowledge, the “fixing of meanings,” the diffusion of norms, and use of productive power. In my analysis, I connect these mechanisms of power with the concept of coloniality acknowledging that sources of IO authority and power are intimately bound with postcolonial power structures.

This paper draws on these concepts to understand the use of power by international actors in the relationships between refugee inclusion in national education systems, donor state politics, and responsibility-sharing.

## **Methods**

In order to investigate the relationship between the global refugee education inclusion agenda and the geopolitics of migration, this study employs a comparative case study method (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016) using a horizontal (between Turkey and Lebanon), vertical (global to national refugee policy) analysis. I conducted semi-structured interviews (n=47) with educationalists engaged in the education response to the Syrian crisis at the global level (n=15) including those from multilateral, bilateral and UN agencies. I also conducted 32 semi-structured interviews with national and sub-national aid actors in Lebanon (n=13) and in Turkey (n=19). This included UN representatives, INGO actors, national and local NGO representatives. Interviews were focused on the drivers of education aid, mechanisms to support the spread of global refugee policy, and the meaning of international responsibility-sharing as well as the barriers and opportunities for equitable sharing arrangements. All interviews were conducted between November 2021 and January 2023 virtually via Zoom in English.

Interviews were recorded with permission from participants and transcribed and coded in NVivo using a standardized coding process whereby codes developed in an iterative manner of developing, defining, and refining codes (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014). Etic codes were drawn from the literature review and theoretical framework. These central categories included ways of categorizing international aid motivations and actions (e.g., structural power, geopolitics of migration, international responsibility-sharing) and conceptualizing the international aid system (e.g., global aid architecture, humanitarian-development nexus) while codes and sub-codes refined and elaborated each concept. I also used emic codes as they emerge from my interviews allowing me to use categories that my informants use (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

## **Findings**

The first key finding explores the role that the global refugee education inclusion agenda plays in the externalization of migration management despite the disconnect between the motivations of IOs and donors in the Global North in supporting this agenda. The second section extends this analysis highlighting barriers to meeting the underlying commitment to international responsibility-sharing including shifting donor priorities, differences in long-term interests between donors and host governments, and donor country political swings.

### **Refugee inclusion and the externalization of migration management**

The following section explores the disconnect between the drivers of political decisions around foreign aid (e.g., geopolitical and national security interests) and the motivation of technical education aid (e.g., human rights, the right to education) in both Lebanon and Turkey. In particular, respondents pointed to the role of aid, and financing for refugee education in host country education systems specifically, as a tool to limit the flows of refugees into Europe. A top

representative at a multilateral in Lebanon explained clearly, "If you look at many of the bilaterals, I mean it's about self-serving interest, right? Because of course it's about supporting refugees and providing them with [education] opportunities in Lebanon, but also because they want to avoid that they come to Europe, right? So it's all self-serving" (Multilateral, Lebanon).

Reducing migration flows is not a new motivation for foreign aid, nor is it exclusive to Syrian refugees. In Lebanon, one UN education official explains that the threat of onward migration has been a longstanding agency argument to prevent funding and programming cuts. "I mean a big argument for [our agency] always, because it has a lot of money... But the argument always ... when they're trying to say anything about 'cut the services' it's actually that—'well hang on, where do you think these people will go? Because they'll be heading to your shores.' Yeah, so it's always one that was played by the Commissioner Generals" (UN, Lebanon).

An educationalist working within a European bi-lateral aid agency confirmed that for her team, the argument to invest in education in the Middle East so that refugees will not migrate to Europe is the argument used by the humanitarian agency to raise money from their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they explain:

And Europe is very much, we don't want to have mega migrants. So, when you have to discourse, which we actually use also within [our bilateral agency] and with our Minister of Foreign Affairs is to say, 'hey, invest in education where they are so that they don't come to [our country]'... I think for other probably European donors as well, it is an argument to invest actually more in education in refugee receiving countries. (Bilateral, global)

This respondent went on to connect the efficacy of this argument with growing populist, nativist and anti-immigrant politics in Europe. They suggest, however, that donor governments' political interests in this case are in alignment with, and support, education rights and needs of refugee learners given the ability to raise funds for education:



The tendency in Europe is very, very right wing, and that's the discourse of populist governments all over Europe. And it works, I mean, for education, we used exactly that argument, and it helped us to, for example, launch education programs in Lebanon and in Jordan. So, the flip side is, it's kind of a good thing for at least kids in these countries. (Bilateral, Global)

An education actor based in Turkey working within a multilateral donor agency reiterated this point, adding that the outsourcing of European refugee hosting responsibility is connected with racism and anti-Muslim sentiment under the dog whistle of protecting the European way of life.

It's still a Turkey and Middle East problem for many people... And the whole reason we're here [in Turkey] is that we can support refugees in a much cheaper country. And our euro can go a lot further and the Muslims stay in the Muslim country. That's a reality, you know. (Multilateral, Turkey)

Another respondent, who represents a large multilateral institution pointed to the "schizophrenic" disconnect between the motivations for education aid at the political level and the motivation at the technical level.

For the Syrian crisis in particular, [a] big motive for the European policymakers has been preventing Syrians from migrating into Europe... [So part] of the funding that we receive is either motivated from a risk mitigation mentality, you know 'let's not let this escalate to the point where it becomes our problem'. And part of it is... responding to the pressure that is coming from civil society that are asking these governments... to step in and provide support for these young girls and boys who have aspirations and talent and can be a positive contribution to a better and prosperous future for their people. And there is a bit of schizophrenia between these two things. (Multilateral, Lebanon)

Here again the respondent implies that despite the disconnect between political and human rights motivations, both approaches converge in alignment around supporting refugee inclusion in national education systems. In this way, donors' motivation to mitigate risk at home enables humanitarian and development action through increased funding.

An EiE lead at a global multilateral agency shared a related discrepancy between foreign and domestic policy related to refugee inclusion: "It's very sad watching European reactions to

any of the refugee crises in the [Middle East] and how European donors they love to talk a big talk about inclusion in countries that are far away... but when it concerns their own region they're not very interested, I mean, it has led to all kinds of really awful political compromises... like what happened in Turkey" (Multilateral, Global). Multiple respondents noted the hypocrisy between actors in the Global North promoting an agenda of refugee inclusion in refugee-hosting states while domestically, anti-refugee politics are ascendant.

In Turkey, respondents pointed to the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan as a clear manifestation of the deflection of responsibility of Europe, one of the wealthiest continents in the world, to Turkey, a country already strained by hosting millions of refugees. A UN representative recalled relationships between onward migration and aid being a negotiation point, "Because all of a sudden main donors didn't want to have refugees on their soil, so they sent money so that we could keep them in host countries in Lebanon, and Jordan, in Iraq... It must have been 2015 and all of a sudden there was a huge flow of money in Turkey because they said, 'well if you want us to keep Syrian refugees in Turkey, you need to pay for this.' And that's what European donors did" (UN, Regional).

While some respondents pointed to the political benefits and motivations of donor countries, others pointed to the mutual political benefits of the EU-Deal and the potential benefits of refugee-related negotiations for both sides. Referring to the opportunity to raise significant funds for the education system and renewing EU accession talks, a UN representative based in Turkey shared, "Because, of course, the EU to keep Syrians out of Europe basically paid millions and millions and millions of dollars to the Turkish Government to keep Syrians within its borders. And the Turkish Government is very good at playing chess frankly speaking, because they benefited" (UN, Turkey). Multiple respondents depicted refugees as victims of the political

“game” between the Global North and refugee-hosting countries trying to instrumentalize their position to extract economic gains and minimize the negative impacts of refugees, “I mean the facility (FRIT) was something, first and foremost, political, it was an agreement between the Commission and between Turkey, which was highly political. The refugees are unfortunately one element of the game between these two blocks... EU and Turkey” (Multilateral, Turkey).

The erosion of rights of migration explicit to the EU-Turkey deal has implications for education even beyond the lives of learners and hosting communities. One respondent shared that in their education work, the discounting of universal standards and migration rights within the EU-Turkey deal undermines their ability to defend international actors and the human rights position within their education work with Turkish policymakers and teachers. With frustration and disappointment, they shared:

We were defending a position—the universal human rights position—on the basis of the perspective that the European Union or international agencies have developed, right? I mean the Court of Human Rights, international conventions etc. Now the position the international agencies are taking conflicts with this international human rights perspective. Like this deal. Keep them in Turkey, so do not allow them to move across the border. So that is really disappointing and that really disempowers us in the field, you know, in the face of ministry, or other teachers, you know, to defend the human rights perspective. (Academic, Turkey)

In this way, they argue that the public perception that the EU is paying to keep refugees in Turkey and IOs are complicit in this effort, erodes the perception of the human rights enterprise as neutral and apolitical while also impairing the legitimacy of international humanitarian and development organizations.

The section above explores the relationship between IOs actions in support of refugee inclusion in national education systems and the global context of reduction of mobility and the externalization of migration management in contexts like Lebanon and Turkey. We see here an example of IOs norm diffusion working in tandem with—and being supported by—state power.

Despite the gap between donor governments' political interests and IOs discourse around refugee education there is a convergence in the support of inclusion of refugees in national systems. This section shows the uncomfortable reality that despite the framing of refugee education policies around inclusion as apolitical, they are situated within a global context of competing political agendas and strategies.

The following section explores how respondents understand the role of international aid actors in sharing responsibility for refugees in national education systems in refugee host contexts. Respondents mentioned a number of ways that international actors can share responsibility for refugee and host community education. This includes enhancing protection systems, technical assistance and capacity building, and addressing the underlying causes of displacement. However, the following section focuses primarily on financial support for refugees due to this theme's prominence in my data.

### **Responsibility-sharing for refugee education in national systems**

Unsurprisingly, long-term, predictable, and adequate financial support for refugee-hosting education systems was seen by participants as foundational international support for the inclusion of refugees in national education systems with an emphasis on supporting all vulnerable learners regardless of their nationality or protection status. One multilateral representative based in Lebanon shared that from their organization's perspective, countries like Lebanon and Turkey cannot be left to foot the education bill, ever, for as long as they are accommodating refugees in their public schools:

We always differentiate between what the government can afford and we assume that there needs to be outside sources for funding. So, for sustainability, it is not to be left for government to take care of it. It will not work and will never work. So, the international community has to take action, so it is because, you know it's limited, you know, there is no fiscal space for a country like Lebanon or for a

country like Turkey, in order to accommodate millions... there needs to be external support from outside in order to sustain it. (Multilateral, Lebanon)

Another respondent linked the commitment to long-term financial support to the inevitable disasters that could occur should financial support be drastically reduced both at the individual level and connected to onward migration into Europe. In their estimation, given the need to provide long-term support through the public system is the more cost-effective and streamlined way to do so, as opposed to parallel mechanisms. Discussing Turkey, they explain:

I don't hear within [our multilateral institution] policy any appetite to start removing these long-term supports that are in... if they didn't keep those kids in school, that would be [a] catastrophe, not just for the Syrian kids themselves, but for... the neighborhood region... Humanitarian finance is always going to be a drop in the ocean compared to what's needed. But the more we can transition it into that long-term development support the better. (Multilateral, Regional)

This shift toward long-term development coordination is in line with some of the motivations for the global movement away from unsustainable temporary humanitarian responses towards development cooperation for refugee education. As one UN actor engaged in policy action around the UN's promotion of refugee inclusion in national education systems.

From inside the education unit at [UN agency], the motivation was there's this perception that refugees are in a temporary situation. And what we're seeing in the data is that it's not... what happens is that when there's attention on an emergency... there's a peak of [funding for] about 18 months after... and then it drops significantly and... the international partners leave. And [our UN agency] is left trying to generate financing to support education and it can't... And so the question for [UN agency] was, "OK, so the money [for our UN agency for] the humanitarian response isn't enough. So therefore it must be a development response. (UN, Global)

Despite the widespread agreement among participants that refugee-hosting countries should be supported with predictable, adequate and long-term financing, representatives from other bi-lateral and multilateral donors acknowledge that there is a difference in long-term interests between donor and refugee-hosting countries where donors are looking towards

potential “exits” and the transfer of refugee expenses onto national budgets. One multilateral donor representative in Turkey explained that their institution approaches education financing focused on “long term sustainability” meaning the increasing transfer of refugee costs onto the national sector budget while MONE makes clear that from their perspective that education support for refugees will go on as long as there is funding from external sources (Multilateral, Turkey). These participants highlight the divide between the global push to inclusion predicated on the understanding that refugee crises are protracted while the underlying limitations of donor countries to commit to longer term support remains unchanged.

In Turkey, respondents point to the strong institutional capacity of their education system and economy (despite the recent downturn) as evidence that if the political will was there, they could take on greater responsibility for expenses for non-Turks. Another multilateral representative in Turkey highlights the tension between donors’ long-term commitment while simultaneously seeking an exit strategy:

But currently on paper or even in meetings we don’t see such a commitment. The Turkish side sees this as something that could continue only with the support of the EU and international donors. [The EU] even sees it as their responsibility. I mean, EU also sees it in fact- we say this in our speeches that we are sharing the responsibility... together with Turkey. However, the projects have an end in terms of duration and have a limit in terms of budget so this is also a challenge we are facing. There is no exit strategy yet although we want it. (Multilateral, Turkey)

Despite the commitment of donors from the Global North to support the enormous strain on Turkey and Lebanon's education system these contexts serve as examples that refugee inclusion in national education systems is not immune to reductions in international financing. Actors in both countries spoke of ‘donor fatigue’ due to shifting donor priorities (including Covid and support for the Ukraine crisis), reduction in ODA from Northern donors, and the

global economic downturn which has led to recent reductions in aid. A UN representative in Lebanon explains:

We cannot keep fundraising forever, there is donor fatigue already. We saw a lot of programs, formal educational programs such as the ALP (Accelerated Learning Program) closed for example. There is no more interest to fund... There is donor fatigue, there is the Ukraine crisis, there is now the economic crisis in Lebanon, there is the cholera, there is the COVID, there is [the] Beirut port explosion. So, I don't think, to be very honest with you, I don't see how we can continue supporting... But unfortunately, all the systems still remain and still rely heavily on donors. And to keep refugees in schools, you have to give them money. If there is no money, there are no refugees in schools. And the problem today is not only having refugees in schools, today, you might not have Lebanese in schools if you don't have external donation. (UN, Lebanon)

Donors make the connection between reductions in aid and the ability for refugees to be included in national education systems. One multilateral education in emergencies lead shared:

If cuts to education aid, bilateral education aid keep happening, that's definitely going to negatively affect the inclusion agenda just because... national systems are going to be even more and more stretched. And seeing how with COVID, we directed so much of public spending towards health... so that also put education budgets at risk. And so that's certainly not helping the inclusion agenda, either. (Multilateral, Global)

In Lebanon, a few multilateral representatives also pointed to the IMF's reform program for Lebanon which aims to rebuild the economy and strengthen governance and transparency (IMF, 2022) as a short-term impediment to international financing. A multilateral representative based in Lebanon explains:

I think the situation in Lebanon is particularly dire, because, first of all [the] government doesn't have the resources, secondly there's very little support from partners moving forward because they want to have at least reform program with the IMF before there's any more programs moving forward. So that means we are little bit in a tough situation where, even if you wanted to do more, we cannot. And that's kind of a hard message, right? To give to... [the] government because the development outcomes are reversing, they are worsening and worsening, and yet we are not able to support them because of the unique circumstances in Lebanon for now. So, it's quite a challenging situation. (Multilateral, Lebanon)

Unfortunately, progress in implementing the IMF reforms in Lebanon has remained very slow (Shalal et al., 2022) with consequences for Lebanon's ability to receive an IMF supported financing program as well as other multilateral financing. A UN representative in Lebanon reflected on the short-term financing challenge as well as the need for institutional reforms to ensure that financing is transparent and efficiently managed:

You know the IMF puts a strategy of reforms in place, and a lot of issues are there and nothing is being done. And that's why we couldn't get the money. We need total reforms of the system. We're one of the most corrupt countries... [Any financing] will go away like it came if we don't have a solid financial system, if we don't have strong government institutions. So, there is a lot that needs to be done in parallel to the funding. Don't just keep funding if you don't do reforms. And we're trying this with the Ministry of Education. But the Ministry of Education is one ministry in the country. (UN, Lebanon)

Another barrier respondents mentioned to being able to trust and plan for adequate long-term financing is connected to recent leadership swings in democratic donor countries towards more populist and nativist leadership. One UN representative, based in the UK working at the global level pointed to the UK's reduction in ODA from .07 percent of their Gross National Income (GNI) in 2020 to .05 percent in 2021 which led to a reduction in UK aid to Lebanon from US\$ 69.8 million in 2019 to US\$ 30 million in 2021 (OCHA, 2023). They expressed frustration saying:

When the financing doesn't support longer term approaches to these things, and the donor that was pushing most vocally for these things, and was arguably the most influential development donor and here I'm talking about the UK over the past thirty years, then pull the rug out from underneath all these people, and cut financing overnight by 70 percent. So not only was the skepticism and suspicion and concerns from governments but it actually came to pass that the donor who was banging on about long-term financing and system building, et cetera, was the one that couldn't live up to its promises. So I think there is a fear... of, are we sure that they're in it for the long run? (UN, Regional)

This vulnerability to the fluctuations in international support was also felt by multiple respondents at the country level. One Lebanese NGO leader expressed frustration at the inability



to depend on international support, "So you have to also imagine a country where for every three locals you have one refugee. So, the demand is huge, the stability issue is at risk, the cost, I mean, integrating children into the mainstream means the international donors could pull out any time. And they can, and they will, and they did." In this way, there is an added vulnerability to the system if education systems are unable to cover costs without guaranteed international financing. A UN staff member in Lebanon reiterated this sentiment and the consequences of reductions in external financing explaining:

If [education donors] pull back there is a vulnerability, because everything will fall now, because today the donors are giving incentives to teachers on top of their salaries, and it's the donors who are paying the second shift teachers' salaries. So, if the donors pull out, there is no second shift anymore. There are no refugees in schools anymore, and there is no more incentives, and the children, the Lebanese children, who are not today paying the registration fees which are minimal, but a lot of them cannot afford. And you know, other things for Lebanese children, they will not get it anymore. So, it will become more vulnerable. (UN, Lebanon)

One global bi-lateral representative shared that part of the challenge in supporting a longer-term education vision is the institutions funding cycles that stifle the ability to plan, "You can't really develop a long-term plan, because you get your funding cycles are three or five years and they're really based on deliverables so it's really hard to set out like a long-term vision that, then you can commit to funding" (Bi-lateral, Global).

Another UN representative noted importantly that lack of clarity and differences in the ways that inclusion is conceptualized and implemented has implications for the types of support and quantity of funding required from the international community. Refugee inclusion requires a wide range of potential supports, including for host community members (e.g. language classes, catch-up classes, ALPs or other pathways to formal education, supports for out of school learners). "I think just overall advocacy about what it means, what does inclusive education mean? And what does it cost, because I think everybody agrees education needs to be inclusive,

and then, when you get down to the nitty gritty. In terms of what it actually costs it becomes more problematic” (UN, Regional). In this way, lack of conceptual and practical clarity on the components of refugee inclusion and what it costs is a potential barrier to sustained coordinated funding.

A few respondents shared that support for refugee education must be seen holistically, through all phases of emergency response, and build towards system resilience for all learners as opposed to a narrower support for refugee learners. As one multilateral representative shared:

And it's better early warning systems, it's better triggering finance to go to early warning systems, it's better system strengthening overall, better resilience of the systems. It's just such a complex response that's needed that I think that the kind of over simplistic, kind of the North needs to pay the South is not going to be an effective narrative. (Multilateral, regional)

Given the limited fiscal space for education, respondents called for education financing to be strategic, build towards sustainable system strengthening, be put towards education sector preparedness, and support all vulnerable learners.

In summary, despite IOs diffusing the norm of inclusion in tandem with state power, there are barriers to being able to meet the underlying commitment to international responsibility-sharing including shifting donor priorities, differences in long-term interests, and donor country political swings. If international actors are unable to meet host community financing needs this runs the risk not only of reduction in education access and quality but of destabilizing education systems with potentially significant consequences on access, learning, and protection for all learners.

## **Discussion**

The shift in global refugee education policy towards inclusion in national systems represents an exercise of IOs power through the "fixing of meanings," in this case expanding the

boundaries of EiE interventions from shorter-term humanitarian approaches to longer-term development-led approaches closely connected with host country structures and development actors. My findings demonstrate that despite the emergence of inclusion of refugees into national systems as a norm and rights-based model of "good" behavior being pushed by IOs, examining the policy shift within the global context complicates the understanding of the policy as neutral and apolitical. Instead, there is a complex relationship between efforts to include refugees in national education systems and the national interests of donor countries including discouraging onward migration, promoting stability and social cohesion in neighboring regions, and reinforcing global hierarchies in the international system by ensuring middle- or lower-income countries bear the most significant burdens of the refugee crisis. In this way, IOs are working in concert with donor state power to diffuse the refugee education policy norm in ways that potentially perpetuate coloniality.

In spite of the uncomfortable relationship between the expansion of education rights in refugee-hosting countries and the disempowerment of claims to wider mobility, respondents did not portray the refugee inclusion movement as a tool for the co-option of humanitarian action in pursuit of political interests. Instead, the two motivations are seen in alignment, converging as an important fundraising mechanism to expand the right to education where refugees reside. That is, the political imperative to reduce onward migration can be leveraged to raise funds from governments in the Global North for refugee education as lack of access to education is understood to be a key driver of onward migration (Ahrens & King, 2023; Edwards, 2016). This raises important questions, such as: What does it mean for the international education community to exist within these multiple and contrasting value systems? Is international education cooperation part of a system of normalizing the norm-breaking (or law-breaking) practices

around the externalization of migration management? How does humanitarian and development education assistance address or perpetuate global postcolonial economic and social power imbalances?

Despite the normative shift towards refugee inclusion in national education systems, the policy is in its early stages of diffusion and lacks a coherent model. While education responses must be rooted in context and cannot be standardized, given the ambiguity of recently enacted global policies around refugee inclusion and the associated range of forms that these policies have taken (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2018), it is important to interrogate the mechanisms that influence the diffusion and realization of policies of inclusion.

Beyond the reduction of rights of migration, situating support for refugee inclusion in national education systems within a global context highlights additional barriers for actors in the Global North to meet their commitment to responsibility-sharing. Barriers to the responsibility to provide long-term, adequate, and predictable education financing including differences in long-term interests between donor and refugee-hosting countries, short-term outcome-based funding cycles, and swings in democratic donor country leadership that leave host education systems vulnerable to the fluctuations in international support. Sharing responsibility for national education systems hosting refugees requires the development of mechanisms that can overcome these systemic issues in a way that supports the refugee inclusion agenda holistically, through all phases of emergency response, and builds towards system resilience for all learners.

This paper contributes to the emerging body of literature on the inclusion of refugees in national education systems. This literature has predominantly focused on how policies of inclusion are implemented and what works to facilitate inclusion. This study expands this perspective by situating the movement to include refugees in host-community education systems

within the broader global context that considers the global political, economic, and social drivers including the externalization of migration management. This paper argues this broader frame is necessary to understand the complexities of the global spread of the inclusion agenda, its potential impact on migration rights, and the limitations of responsibility-sharing.

Despite the critical importance of responsibility-sharing as the cornerstone of global policies related to refugee inclusion, little research has been done to explore what responsibility-sharing for national education systems in refugee-hosting contexts entails and what barriers exist achieving such responsibility-sharing. By drawing on constructivist IR scholarship and the concept of coloniality this paper addresses this gap with implications for how to meet the long-term education rights and needs for refugee and host community learners.

## References

- Ahrens, J., & King, R. (2023). *Onward Migration and Multi-Sited Transnationalism: Complex Trajectories, Practices and Ties* (p. 239). Springer Nature.
- Al-Hroub, A. (2022). Gifted education in Lebanon: re-examining the role of educational and learning capitals. *Cogent Education*, 9(1), 2073644.
- Allweiss, A. (2021). “Too Dangerous to Help”: White Supremacy, Coloniality, and Maya Youth. *Comparative Education Review*, 65(2), 207-226.
- Amnesty International (AI). (2014). *Struggling to Survive: Refugees from Syria in Turkey*. London: AI.
- Barnett, M. N., & Finnemore, M. (1999). The politics, power, and pathologies of international organizations. *International organization*, 53(4), 699-732.
- Barnett, M., & Duvall, R. (2005). Power in international politics. *International organization*, 59(1), 39-75.
- Bartlett, L., & Vavrus, F. (2016). *Rethinking case study research: A comparative approach*. Taylor & Francis.
- Bellino, M. J., & Dryden-Peterson, S. (2019). Inclusion and exclusion within a policy of national integration: refugee education in Kenya’s Kakuma Refugee Camp. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 40(2), 222-238.
- Bialasiewicz, L. (2012). Off-shoring and out-sourcing the borders of Europe: Libya and EU border work in the Mediterranean. *Geopolitics*, 17(4), 843-866.
- Casaglia, A., & Pacciardi, A. (2022). A close look at the EU–Turkey deal: The language of border externalisation. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 40(8), 1659-1676.
- Christian, M. (2019). A global critical race and racism framework: Racial entanglements and deep and malleable whiteness. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 5(2), 169-185.
- Damian, L. & Thierry, M. (2022). Education in Emergencies Financing in the Wake of COVID-19: Time to Reinvest to Meet Growing Needs. *Geneva Global Hub for Education in Emergencies*.
- Danish Refugee Council (DRC), International Rescue Committee (IRC) & Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). (2021). *The Global Compact on Refugees Three Years On: Navigating barriers and maximising incentives in support of refugees and host countries*. Retrieved <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/6324/ircdrcnrcjointreportv4final.pdf>

- Dowd, R., & McAdam, J. (2017). International cooperation and responsibility-sharing to protect refugees: what, why and how?. *International & Comparative Law Quarterly*, 66(4), 863-892.
- Dryden-Peterson, S., Adelman, E., Alvarado, S., Anderson, K., Bellino, M., Brooks, R.,...Suzuki, E. (2018). Integration of Education for Refugees in National Systems. Background paper prepared for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: Migration, Education, and Displacement. Paris: UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report.
- Dryden-Peterson, S. (2020). Civic education and the education of refugees. *Intercultural Education*, 31(5), 592-606.
- Edwards, A. (2015). Seven factors behind movement of Syrian refugees to Europe. Press briefing, UNCHR spokesperson Adrian Edwards, 25 September, Palais des Nations, Geneva. <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/briefing/2015/9/560523f26/seven-factors-behind-movement-syrian-refugees-europe.html>
- EC (European Commission). (2017). "EU-Turkey Statement One Year On." *European Commission*, March 17, 2017. Retrieved [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2017-03/eu\\_turkey\\_statement\\_17032017\\_en.pdf](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2017-03/eu_turkey_statement_17032017_en.pdf)
- EC. (2022). Sixth Annual Report on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey. European Commission. Retrieved [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/COM\\_2022\\_243\\_1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v3.pdf](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/COM_2022_243_1_EN_ACT_part1_v3.pdf)
- Education Finance Watch (EFW). (2022). Education Finance Watch 2022. UNESCO-GEM, UNESCO-IIEP, World Bank. Retrieved <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/e52f55322528903b27f1b7e61238e416-0200022022/related/EFW-2022-Jul1.pdf>
- Escobar, A. (2011). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World* (Vol. 1). Princeton University Press.
- Casaglia, A., & Pacciardi, A. (2022). A close look at the EU–Turkey deal: The language of border externalisation. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 23996544221100149.
- Fakhoury, T. (2020) Refugee Governance in Crisis: The Case of the EU-Lebanon Compact, *MAGYC working paper*.
- Fakhoury, T., Fine, S., Muftuler-Bac, M. & Tsourapas, G. (2021). European externalization policies and a migration crisis imaginary: The cases of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. *MAGC Working Paper*.
- Fine, S., & Muftuler-Bac, M. (2021). European externalization policies and a migration crisis imaginary: the cases of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. *feedback*, 2, 30.

- Finnemore, Martha. (1996). "Norms, culture, and world politics: insights from sociology's institutionalism." *International organization* 50.2 (1996): 325-347.
- Finnemore, M., & Sikkink, K. (2001). Taking stock: the constructivist research program in international relations and comparative politics. *Annual review of political science*, 4(1), 391-416.
- Frelick, B., Kysel, I. M., & Podkul, J. (2016). The impact of externalization of migration controls on the rights of asylum seekers and other migrants. *Journal on Migration and Human Security*, 4(4), 190-220.
- Guiraudon, V., & Lahav, G. (2000). A reappraisal of the state sovereignty debate: The case of migration control. *Comparative political studies*, 33(2), 163-195.
- Gürkan, S., Coman, R. (2021). The EU–Turkey deal in the 2015 ‘refugee crisis’: when intergovernmentalism cast a shadow on the EU’s normative power. *Acta Politica*, 56(2), 276-305.
- Hathaway, J. C. (2016). A global solution to a global refugee crisis. *European Papers-A Journal on Law and Integration*, 2016(1), 93-99.
- Hyndman, J., & Mountz, A. (2008). Another brick in the wall? Neo-Refoulement and the externalization of asylum by Australia and Europe. *Government and Opposition*, 43(2), 249-269.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). (2022). Rapid Assessment: The impact of the conflict in Ukraine as a crisis multiplier in the Middle East and North Africa. *IFRC MENA Regional delegation*. Retrieved [https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/impact-ukraine-conflict-mena-EN\\_1.pdf](https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/impact-ukraine-conflict-mena-EN_1.pdf)
- International Monetary Fund (IMF). (2022). IMF reaches staff-level agreement on economic policies with Lebanon for a four year extended fund facility. [Press release no. 22/108] Retrieved <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/04/07/pr22108-imf-reaches-agreement-on-economic-policies-with-lebanon-for-a-four-year-fund-facility>
- İşleyen, B. (2018). Turkey’s governance of irregular migration at European Union borders: Emerging geographies of care and control. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 36(5), 849-866.
- Lapid, Y., & Kratochwil, F. (1996). Revisiting the “National”: Toward an Identity Agenda in Neorealism. *The return of culture and identity in IR theory*, 105-26.
- Lavenex, S. (2018). ‘Failing forward’ towards which Europe? Organized hypocrisy in the common European asylum system. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(5), 1195-1212.



- Linós, K., & Chachko, E. (2022). Refugee Responsibility Sharing or Responsibility Dumping?. *California Law Review*.
- Maldonado-Torres, N. (2007). On the coloniality of being: Contributions to the development of a concept. *Cultural studies*, 21(2-3), 240-270.
- Martin, S. F., Davis, R., Benton, G., & Waliány, Z. (2019). International responsibility-sharing for refugees: Perspectives from the MENA region. *Geopolitics, History and International Relations*, 11(1), 59-91.
- McEwen, M. (2017). Refugee resettlement in crisis: The failure of the EU-turkey deal and the case of burden-sharing. *Swarthmore International Relations Journal*, 1(2), 20-32.
- Menashy, F. (2019). *International aid to education: Power dynamics in an era of partnership*. Teachers College Press.
- Menashy, F., & Zakharia, Z. (2022). White Ignorance in Global Education. *Harvard Educational Review*, 92(4), 461-485.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation* (Fourth edition). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis*. Sage.
- Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). (2014). Reaching all children with education in Lebanon. Lebanon: Ministry of Education and Higher Education.
- Poon, J. (2016). EU-Turkey Deal: Violation of, or consistency with, international law? *European Papers-A Journal on Law and Integration*, 2016(3), 1195-1203.
- Price, R., & Reus-Smit, C. (1998). Dangerous liaisons? Critical international theory and constructivism. *European journal of international relations*, 4(3), 259-294.
- Quijano, A., & Ennis, M. (2000). Nepentla: Views from the South. *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America*, 1(3), 533-580.
- Schuck, P. H. (1997). Refugee burden-sharing: a modest proposal. *Yale J. Int'l L.*, 22, 243.
- Schuck, P. H. (2014). Refugee Burden-Sharing: A Modest Proposal Fifteen Years Later? *Yale J. Int'l L.*, 22, 243. Yale Law & Economics Research Paper No. 506.
- Shalal, A., Mourad, M., Lewis, A., & Gebeily, M. (2022). Lebanon's progress in implementing reforms remains very slow - IMF. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/lebanons-progress-implementing-reforms-remains-very-slow-imf-2022-09-21/>

- Shuayb, M. & Hammoud, M. (2021). The protracted reality of Syrian children in Lebanon: Why go to school with no prospects? *Centre for Lebanese Studies*.
- Shuayb, M., Crul, M. & Lee, F. (2022) The consequences of education in emergency for Syrian refugee children in Turkey and Lebanon. In Suárez-Orozco, M. & Suárez-Orozco, C. (Eds.), *Education: A Global Compact for a Time of Crisis*. (pp. 97-117). New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press.
- Suhrke, A. (1998). Burden-sharing during refugee emergencies: The logic of collective versus national action. *Journal of refugee studies*, 11(4), 396-415.
- Tekin, B. Ç. (2022). Bordering through othering: On strategic ambiguity in the making of the EU-Turkey refugee deal. *Political Geography*, 98, 102735.
- Tholens, S. (2016, June). Security Cooperation or Engineering the European Borderlands? Promoting EU Integrated Border Management in Lebanon. In *British International Studies Association Annual Conference, Edinburgh* (pp. 15-17).
- United Nations (UN). (2018). *The Global Compact on Refugees*. United Nations. Retrieved <https://www.unhcr.org/5c658aed4>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2012). Education Strategy 2012-2016. UNHCR.
- UNHCR. (2019). Education - End of Year 2018 Dashboard. UNHCR. Retrieved <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/68431.pdf>
- UNHCR. (2019b). Outcomes of the global refugee forum. UNHCR. Retrieved <https://www.unhcr.org/5ecd458c4.pdf>
- UNHCR. (2019c). Refugee Education 2030, A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion. Retrieved from: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/education/5d651da88d7/education-2030-strategy-refugee-education.html>
- UNHCR. (2019d). *The Global Compact on Refugees*. UNHCR. Retrieved <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/the-global-compact-on-refugees.html>
- UNHCR. (2020). Education - End of Year 2019 Dashboard. UNHCR. Retrieved <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/24aad1b9-eea4-3f76-9f56-c92ea1ef04a4/Lebanon%20-%20Education%20-%20End%20of%20Year%202019%20Dashboard.pdf>
- UNHCR. (2021). *UNHCR warns against “exporting” asylum, calls for responsibility sharing for refugees, not burden shifting*. UNHCR. Retrieved <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2021/5/60a2751813/unhcr-warns-against-exporting-asylum-calls-responsibility-sharing-refugees.html>

- UNHCR. (2022). Global Trends Report 2021. UNHCR. Retrieved <https://www.unhcr.org/62a9d1494/global-trends-report-2021>
- UNHCR. (2022b). *Türkiye Fact Sheet*. UNHCR. Retrieved <https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/3438>
- UNHCR. (2023). Refugee Data Finder. Retrieved <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>
- United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2023). Lebanon. *Financial Tracking Service*. Retrieved <https://fts.unocha.org>
- Van Liempt, I. C., Alpes, M. J., Hassan, S., Tunaboğlu, S., Ulusoy, O., & Zoomers, E. B. (2017). Evidence based assessment of migration deals: The case of the EU Turkey Statement.
- Watkins, K. (2016). No lost generation: Holding to the promise of education for all Syrian refugees. Retrieved [https://b3cdn.net/awas/304cdd77bee3dc886c\\_9zm6bswbi.pdf](https://b3cdn.net/awas/304cdd77bee3dc886c_9zm6bswbi.pdf)
- Wilson, K. (2017). Re-centring 'race' in development: Population policies and global capital accumulation in the era of the SDGs. *Globalizations*, 14(3), 432-449.
- Zaiotti, R. (2016). *Externalizing Migration Management: Europe, North America and the spread of remote control practices*. Routledge.

## CONCLUSION

In the face of unprecedented and increasing global forced displacement, the shift away from parallel systems for refugees towards the inclusion of refugees in national education systems is an attempt to advance global values and goals including the right to education and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education. However, many challenges remain as close to half of all refugee children—48 percent—remain out of school and for those in school, barriers remain to learning, protection, and wellbeing (UNHCR, 2022). Despite inclusion as a decade old and growing policy priority, there is limited research on the extent to which the promises of refugee inclusion as a policy approach are being achieved. The three papers of this dissertation examine the complexities of refugee inclusion policies and practices through an analysis of the education response to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon and Turkey. The findings demonstrate the tensions, contradictions, and opportunities in realizing education rights for refugee and host community learners through policies of inclusion.

Cross-cutting findings from this study challenge a number of widely cited assumptions regarding the potential of refugee inclusion to address the failures of parallel education systems for refugees, especially as they relate to social cohesion, system strengthening, and financial sustainability. First, the shift towards inclusion of refugees in national education systems responded to the reality that parallel systems for refugees exacerbate social division and the exclusion of refugees. However, I find the reality in Lebanon and Turkey to be more complex with refugee education service delivery within national systems at times exacerbating intergroup tensions through the provision of aid to one group and the disconnect between access to education and inclusion in society more broadly (at least in the short-term and as understood by non-state actors).

Second, parallel systems prevent aid from contributing to national development and system strengthening. Although investments in Lebanon in a number of areas (e.g. teacher training, data and EMIS systems, school rehabilitation) contributed positively to the education sector, promises that heavy investment would strengthen the education system remain largely unfulfilled. This points to the reality that international action and financing through governments does not necessarily build robust institutional capacity in the face of poor governance, weak institutions, and political barriers.

Finally, parallel systems are also financially unsustainable given the scarcity and unpredictability of financing for refugee education (UNESCO, 2017). However, in Turkey it remains unlikely that refugee costs will be transferred to host country education budgets, and in donor-dependent Lebanon, it is unclear whether education donors will manage to provide adequate long-term financing. In this way, findings across this dissertation question some of the assumptions explicit in the movement toward refugee inclusion and support the reconsideration of policies of inclusion in ways that meet the important outcomes to strengthen public education systems, build social cohesion, and support financial sustainability. More research is needed to unpack and understand the potential and limitations for refugee inclusion so that the aspirations of refugee inclusion in national systems can be realized and/or alternatives can be considered.

Another theme threaded through this study's findings is the tension between political objectives and educational objectives as they relate to refugee inclusion in host country education systems. Unlike the parallel approach to refugee education which centered international aid actors, policies of inclusion are dependent on the political will and institutional capacity of host governments to coordinate, adopt, and implement appropriate policies. However, national education systems have long been used as key instruments of nation-building

and to forge national identities, cultures, and languages. This can represent a significant barrier when these visions do not include refugees in the two-way process envisioned in definitions of integration that places demands on both refugees and host communities to adapt (UNHCR, 2014). In Turkey, for example, there is little interest from the government to reenvision Turkish education to recognize its multilingual and multicultural population. In this way, lack of political will can represent a barrier to relational integration (i.e., related to individual-level sense of belonging and connectedness), but political priorities can also represent barriers to structural integration (i.e., related to access and services). For example, the reality that it was politically advantageous in Turkey to approach the refugee influx as a temporary and time-bound humanitarian crisis resulted in years of parallel TECs and presented barriers to long-term planning and action from the onset of a crisis which refugee inclusion in education system requires.

In addition to political will, refugee inclusion is dependent on the institutional capacity of governments to coordinate, develop, and implement reforms around refugee inclusion. Findings from this dissertation highlight the challenges faced in Lebanon and Turkey. In Lebanon, the multiple and compounding crises have led to the deprioritization of anything but meeting the most basic educational needs. Future research is needed to understand how to realize refugee inclusion in national education systems in contexts where institutional systems and structures, even beyond ministries of education, restrict education system development. In Turkey, despite a robust and centralized MONE, it took years for them to take on more robust leadership in the refugee response, culminating in the development of the Department of Migration and Emergency Education specifically tasked with the coordination of education provision for refugees. This underscores that education research and interventions must not only consider the

delivery of services but how refugee education implementation becomes an institutional function of government to ensure adequate institutional structure and values. This is especially critical in the first stages of a crisis when large numbers of aid actors and international financing overwhelm government emergency response and coordination capacity. As well, this finding speaks to the need to reenvision how international aid actors and structures can support host governments to lead education responses in an acute response, a function that humanitarian actors, with short-term budgets and focus on measurable outputs, are not designed to do.

This study makes several contributions to the EiE literature. Despite the growing global policy priority of including refugees in national education systems, there is limited research questioning the underlying assumptions explicit in global policy frameworks and strategies. One explanation for why policies of inclusion might not achieve desired outcomes (e.g., as related to social cohesion, system strengthening, and financial sustainability) relates to the way policies are adapted in refugee-hosting contexts. Through the application of policy borrowing theory, my study sheds light on the processes by which refugee-hosting states receive and translate global refugee education policies. This also represents a contribution to policy borrowing literature as policymakers must weigh different considerations for education services for non-citizens who are excluded from the social contract. For example, they must contend with potential political pushback from constituents, lack of fiscal space to support additional learners, and social instability through rapid demographic changes. My findings show that factors that influenced decision making in Turkey and Lebanon were expectations for the resolution of the refugee influx, the operational realities of providing education to displaced refugee populations, the calculation of political, economic, and social risks and how these risks were mitigated by international support and deal making.

The role of international financing and political benefits (e.g., Turkey's renewed talks of accession to the EU as part of the EU-Turkey deal) connect these findings on the national policy context to the role of IOs and donor governments in supporting the global refugee inclusion agenda. That is, international incentives to include refugees shift the political and economic calculation of host government and potentially their willingness to integrate refugees in their schools. Drawing on both policy borrowing theory and constructivism helps to illuminate the complex processes through which educational policies are formed and implemented across different scales.

By positioning the global policy movement towards the inclusion of refugees within the global neoliberal context and its relationship with the externalization of migration management, this study considers the influence of international actors and donor governments in supporting reception and the global spread of policies of inclusion. This represents a contribution to the EiE literature as studies on refugee inclusion are largely focused on the extent to which education interventions work and what they look like at the local level. Instead, through a macro-level analysis, I argue that the externalization of migration management represents a driver for the rapid dissemination of this policy raising critical questions on the role of humanitarian and development aid action in potentially perpetuating global postcolonial economic power imbalances by compelling less developed countries to bear the bulk of refugee-hosting responsibilities.

Another theme threaded through my three papers is that the struggles presented in meeting objectives around inclusion and social cohesion often fall outside the boundaries of education policy or policy spaces more generally. For example, negative attitudes towards refugees, economic challenges (e.g., labor rights, lack of economic opportunities), and



bureaucratic difficulties (e.g., issues with registration, civil documentation) all are closely related to a refugee's ability to participate in the national education system. This points to the reality that meaningful inclusion requires a socio-ecological perspective and multi-sector approach that addresses the interactive effects of individual and environmental factors that supports the inclusion of refugee learners and their families in society. Future research that is attentive to the complex interplay between learners, communities, and the national context is needed to better understand the barriers and opportunities to achieving inclusion. As well, a greater understanding is needed for how non-education sector policies impact refugees' educational experiences in national systems (e.g., freedom to work, freedom to move freely).

The findings from my dissertation also emphasize the lack of a coherent model for refugee inclusion. Inclusion is understood differently across and within organizations and different types of stakeholders arguably existing as an empty label that can be applied to a wide range of education responses. Dryden-Peterson et al.'s (2018) identification of three models of inclusion (shared space, geographically separate space, and temporally separate space) provides a valuable building block for the elaboration of models of inclusion. The development of a common framework can include both the structural components needed for inclusion (e.g., pathways to formal education, accelerated education, language courses, phased vs immediate transition, retention support, data issues, certification) as well as relational components (e.g., curriculum, language, engagement with parents and communities) and connections to the community and policy levels. Models can also distinguish roles and responsibilities for the wide range of government, civil society and UN actors needed to support access, learning, protection and well-being. As in all education interventions, models of inclusion must be rooted in the context and contextualized by all stakeholders, centering the voices of refugee and host

community learners and teachers in a particular context. My study points to the need to also consider: How national political, economic, and social factors may present barriers or opportunities to inclusion; how interventions may contribute to—or exacerbate—social cohesion; and how macro-pressures relate to education interventions to ensure they are aligned with the expansion of all rights for refugee and host-community learners and global commitments to share responsibility for refugee inclusion.

My study also points to the need to interrogate what it means to share responsibility for refugee education in national education systems across all areas of responsibility-sharing including addressing the underlying causes of displacement, efforts to promote durable solutions including resettlement to third countries, initiatives to enhance protection, financial support for refugees, IDPs and host communities, and technical assistance and training (Martin et al., 2019). Incentivizing host governments should meet the need for adequate, long-term, flexible, and predictable financing and live up to commitments outlined in the GCR. Efforts should represent a robust sharing of responsibility not a means to mitigate the economic, political and social pressures of refugee influx in the global north.

With global forced displacement on the rise, the low- and middle- income countries that are hosting 74 percent of the world's refugees are being faced with a considerable task. This dissertation contributes to debates around global refugee education policy, and refugee inclusion in host country education systems, and international humanitarian and development systems. My research attempts to understand the political, social, and economic limitations and opportunities that influence education policy decisions across global and national scales. Greater understanding of the role that international actors and national policymakers play in interpreting and responding to global policy imperatives in support of refugee integration is critical to

understanding the impact of this policy shift, upholding global commitments to education for all,  
and building sustainable peace.

## References

- Dryden-Peterson, S., Adelman, E., Alvarado, S., Anderson, K., Bellino, M., Brooks, R., . . . Suzuki, E. (2018). Integration of education for refugees in national systems. Background paper prepared for the Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: *Migration, education, and displacement*. UNESCO. Global Education Monitoring Report.
- Martin, S. F., Davis, R., Benton, G., & Waliandy, Z. (2019). International responsibility-sharing for refugees: Perspectives from the MENA region. *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations*, 11(1), 59–91. <https://doi.org/10.22381/GHIR11120193>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2017). *Global education monitoring report 2017/18: Accountability in Education: Meeting our Commitments*.
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). (2014). The integration of refugees: A discussion paper. Retrieved July 2014. [https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/02/integration\\_discussion\\_paper\\_July\\_2014\\_EN.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/02/integration_discussion_paper_July_2014_EN.pdf)
- UNHCR. (2021). Staying the course: The challenges facing refugee education. UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/publications/education/612f85d64/unhcr-education-report-2021-staying-course-challenges-facing-refugee-education.html>.
- UNHCR. (2022). All inclusive: The campaign for refugee education. UNHCR. Retrieved <https://www.unhcr.org/us/media/unhcr-education-report-2022-all-inclusive-campaign-refugee-education>

## Appendix

### Interview protocol

1. Background: Can you briefly describe your role at [x organization] and the work that you have done/are doing related to refugee education in [Lebanon/Turkey]?
2. I would like to ask you about the global EiE policy shift around 2012 when UNHCR's Education Strategy called for refugees to be integrated into host state education systems, representing a shift away from parallel systems for refugees and toward inclusion in national education systems.
  - a. Has this shift affected the ways that you or [your organization] has approached education work [in Lebanon/Turkey]? In what ways?
  - b. From your perspective, how would you describe [your organization's] current approach to supporting refugee inclusion in the national education system?
3. One of the rationales for the inclusion of refugees into national education systems is to support sustainable sector system strengthening for host and refugee learners.
  1. To what extent do you see this goal being realized in [Lebanon/Turkey]? Why or why not?
4. What do you see as some of the biggest barriers for refugee inclusion in education in [Lebanon/Turkey] and what do you see as some of the opportunities?
5. How does [your organization] consider how policies of inclusion impact social cohesion and/or peacebuilding in [Lebanon/Turkey]? How?
  1. What do you see as the biggest barriers to social cohesion in [Lebanon/Turkey] and what do you see as the role of public schools in mitigating/exacerbating tensions?
6. How does [x organization] think about and plan for the long-term financial sustainability of supporting refugee learners in the national education system in [Lebanon/Turkey]?
7. Frameworks that promote inclusion in education emphasize ideas of international responsibility-sharing (like the Global Compact on Refugees). Beyond the provision of funding and the provision of resettlement opportunities, what do you see as the responsibilities of actors in the Global North to support refugee education in national education systems?
8. What have you learned from the refugee crisis in [Lebanon/Turkey] (particularly around transitioning large groups of refugees into national education systems) that could help prepare for future refugee crises?

9. What do you think National Governments can do in preparation for future crises (in order to prepare education systems for refugee influx)?
10. Before we conclude this interview, is there something about your experience related to refugee education or refugee inclusion that we have not had a chance to discuss? Or anything else that you would like to share?