

INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERS

GLOBAL  
CONNECTORS

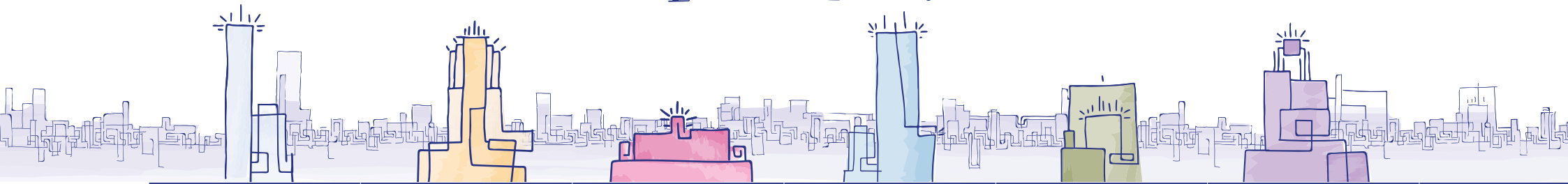
SCHOOLS &  
TEACHERS

RESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

# CITIES OF RECIPROCALITY

Supporting refugee education in Athens



INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERS

GLOBAL  
CONNECTORS

SCHOOLS &  
TEACHERS

RESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

**This PDF is an accompaniment to the RSA report:  
Cities of Reciprocity: How networks of exchange can support refugee education.**

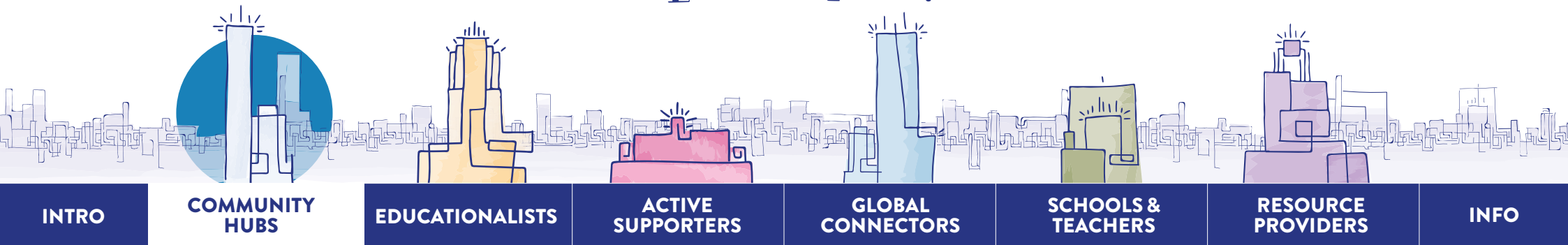
We believe there is vast potential for innovative solutions to strengthen and foster connections within and between cities that are seeking ways to educate refugees.

The examples set out here are just some of the many ways in which organisations and individuals are stepping up with innovative solutions and creative support for delivering refugee education, and working with one another to create lasting change.

The strength that comes from our networks and relationships can be used to powerful effect, particularly as advances in technology bring us ‘virtually’ closer, and more widely connected to one another, than ever before.

We encourage efforts to foster the connections and links between these organisations, and many others, particularly in seeking out ways to generate reciprocal networks and opportunities to exchange resources, support and services.

We hope that this will provide inspiration for Athens, as well as other cities, to leverage the power of city connections and foster acts of reciprocity in order to provide improved education for displaced children and their families in the future.



## COMMUNITY HUBS

Every city has dynamic hubs that are embedded in communities and play a vital role in galvanising action and connecting local people. These include settings such as libraries and social clubs as well as innovation and business hubs that connect activists and entrepreneurs. Their roles in city spaces are crucial because they are trusted and highly valued by the people who use them. City hubs play an important role in providing refugee education – they connect people who are interested in supporting refugees, they provide meeting points, they can offer language services and foster innovation in education provision.

### THE CUBE, ATHENS

The Cube is an innovative city hub set up by two Greek entrepreneurs, Maria Calafatis and Stavros Messinis. It is a co-working space that hosts new business start-ups and fosters innovation and connections between entrepreneurs in the city. The Cube has set up a ‘Self Organised Learning Environment’ (SOLE) for young refugees who have been refused entry at local schools.

“Most of these children have been out of school for over a year and some have never been to school. We facilitate learning for children ages 6 - 16 in their own language and with content sensitive to their cultural and historical background. After running a 5-week pilot project, we now operate in camps in and around Athens.” SOLE Athens coordinator.

“They are keen to learn and bored out of their minds. We saw the challenge and thought why not start something where we can provide an education?”

COMMUNITY HUB  
ORGANISER ATHENS



INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

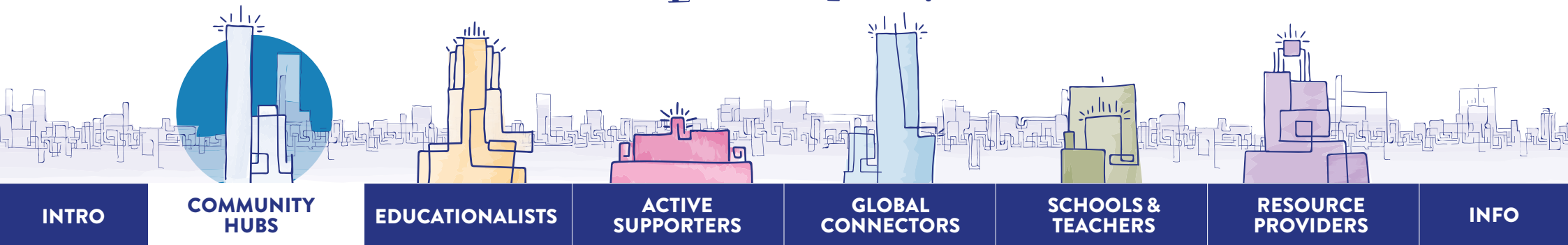
These community hubs, and many more like them, offer local, targeted support for refugee communities. They have much to offer:

- Community hubs often have premises that can be used for convening community meetings and could be used as teaching environments;
- They can offer opportunities for refugee communities and educators to have access to free WIFI and computers;
- Networks of people are a source of power and citywide hubs tend to be great connectors of people using technology and social media to great effect.

Are you connected with a community hub?

Could your hub support refugee education?

Can you offer time, resources, ideas or action?



## COMMUNITY HUBS

**But these sorts of community hubs need help and assistance to continue their work, particularly in the following areas:**

- Community hubs require funds and investment to continue their work. Support for innovative education projects through crowdsourcing funding is beneficial;
- Offers of time (volunteering) and resources (i.e. technology) are well received;
- Opportunities to twin young people and students and foster cross-cultural understanding are welcomed;
- Creative and artistic contributions, voluntary work and support can further the psycho-social support on offer.

**How could you or your organisation support community hubs to carry out their work?**

**Could you provide funding to promote educational initiatives or support innovative technology projects?**

INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

## EDUCATIONALISTS

Academics, policy and research institutes and other education professionals play an important role in steering the course of curriculum development and advising on the education provision that is most appropriate and needed by refugees in host countries. Education experts can advise on all aspects of education. Basic skills and how to deliver them are undoubtedly essential, but there are other areas of educational development that are also necessary to ensure that children are able to learn and develop socially and creatively, as well as acquiring technical knowledge.

### THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION - UNESCO

In light of expert advice, UNESCO has encouraged mother tongue instruction in primary education since 1953 and now UNESCO highlights the advantages of mother tongue education right from the start: children are more likely to succeed in school, parents are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's learning and children in multilingual education tend to develop better thinking skills compared to their monolingual peers.

Source: [www.globalpartnership.org/blog/children-learn-better-their-mother-tongue/](http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/children-learn-better-their-mother-tongue/) >

“Psycho-social support is important too. You can't do well in education unless you're OK internally.”

COMMUNITY HUB  
ORGANISER ATHENS



INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

## EDUCATIONALISTS

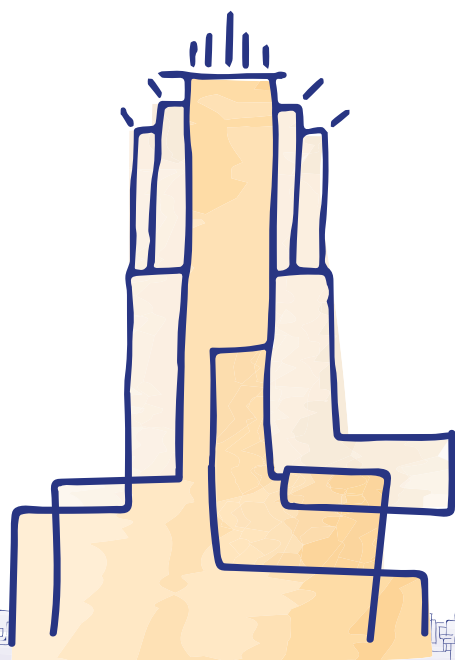
**Education experts are able to provide the following:**

- Distance learning opportunities for refugee educators;
- Evidence-based analysis that will help to inform co-ordinated education strategies;
- Coherent approach to curriculums across a broad region to allow refugees moving within Europe to maintain a degree of consistency as to the recognition of their achievements.

**Are you an expert in education delivery?**

**Could you offer support or advice to refugee educators?**

**Can you or your organisation help to promote quality in education provision, as well as access?**



INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

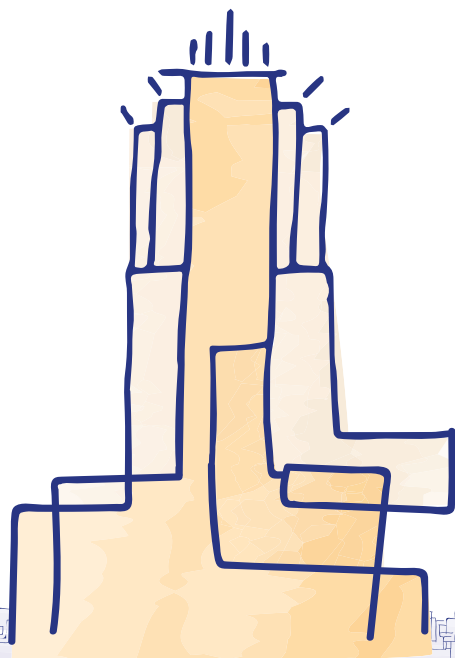
## EDUCATIONALISTS

In return they require the following to maximise their impact:

- Greater recognition and acknowledgement from funders and collaborative bodies of the importance of funding and promoting quality education provision (as well as access);
- Opportunities to collaborate with global connectors and convenors give a platform for their analysis and research into refugee education;
- Opportunities to share analysis into educational strategies into publications and other global news outlets that will reach educators and their networks.

**Are you in a position to support education experts?**

**Can you provide a platform for sharing analysis and findings?**





INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

## ACTIVE SUPPORTERS

“We have been buying fresh fruit and veg, and dry foods, from local Greek sellers in Thessaloniki, to bag up and distribute to residents of the camps around the city. This model allows people to cook for themselves and supports the Greek economy, helping to build relationships between actors.”

HELP REFUGEES

As awareness of the refugee crisis has rippled throughout the world there has been an upsurge in people and organisations keen to support refugees and the local actors that are assisting them. The desire to act and provide support is powerful, but needs to be co-ordinated and directed in order to have the most benefit. The people who fit this category are broad and wide-ranging. On the one hand, it can be members of the public, but it also covers the funders and investors who want to ensure that their money is wisely spent in ways that it will have significant reach and impact.

### MICROSOFT & ‘HACK THE CAMP’ - ATHENS

Microsoft supports The Impact Hub’s ‘Hack The Camp’ a hackathon seeking solutions to the challenges that refugees face today. Microsoft supports the initiative by contributing to the monetary prizes, offering technological and entrepreneurial mentoring services to the teams, as well as software and devices and helping to promote the success of the initiative. Programmers, designers, social entrepreneurs, humanitarian workers, educators, artists and other interested professionals are invited to propose sustainable and scalable solutions for and with refugees and migrants in Greece.

Source: [athens.impacthub.net/en/event/hack-the-camp-hackathon-on-refugee-integration-challenges/](https://athens.impacthub.net/en/event/hack-the-camp-hackathon-on-refugee-integration-challenges/) >

INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

## ACTIVE SUPPORTERS

Resource providers play a crucial role in supporting refugee education, particularly where available learning materials are scarce. They can offer the following:

- Harnessing creativity and fostering environments that produce innovative educational materials;
- Sharing ideas amongst one another and bringing creativity into the education process, such as using comics, music, theatre, dance and drama as ways of educating young people.

**Does your organisation produce innovative educational resources, materials or educational technology?**

**How could you connect with education professionals to offer your services or share your product with refugee communities?**

**What do you need to be able to make this happen?**

INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

## ACTIVE SUPPORTERS

Resource providers need a range of support and assistance to be able to continue to carry out their work:

- Competitions and hacks provide conducive environments to generating new technology ideas;
- Funding and support for innovations in technology that allow education resources to be produced and distributed are essential.

**Is your organisation in a position to set up hacks or competitions to encourage resource providers to come up with innovative ways of sharing educational resources for refugee children?**

**Could you provide funding or support for innovative technological responses?**

**How could your support empower refugee communities to help themselves to learn and educate their children?**

INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

## GLOBAL CONNECTORS

There is an on-going strengthening resolve within the international community to do more to respond to the educational needs of refugee children. Much of the international focus has been on the practical difficulties of delivering education (particularly around access issues and availability of teachers) but there has been less of a focus on the quality of education provision. Global connectors have a role to play in sharing good practice from one city to another and supporting new, innovative approaches to tackling the practical, as well as substantive, needs of refugee education at the city level.

### THE WORLD INNOVATIONSUMMIT FOR EDUCATION (WISE) AWARD

WISE is an international platform for creative thinking, debate and purposeful action around education. WISE promotes innovation and building the future of education through collaboration. The WISE community is a network of education stakeholders – from students to decision-makers – from about 200 countries. The WISE Award provides an opportunity for innovative projects to seek funding and support from the WISE network. Ideas Box, run by Libraries Without Borders was a 2016 award winner. The programme provides access to education for communities who have experienced forced displacement using a mobile learning space.

Source: [www.wise-qatar.org/ideas-box-france](http://www.wise-qatar.org/ideas-box-france) >

“We need to think about all the ways we can leverage our networks and connections to further efforts at refugee education.”

ATHENS SUMMIT  
DELEGATE & GLOBAL  
CONNECTOR



## GLOBAL CONNECTORS

**Global connectors offer a valuable bridging role:**

- They have an ability to galvanise others and foster connected responses, such as a particular focus for partner organisations (i.e. pledges to offer resources or a day of volunteering etc.);
- Openness to new ideas, innovation and forums for sharing new ideas amongst partners, fellows and network bodies.

**As a global connector, what more can you do to leverage your global connections?**

**Could you encourage forums with your networks to share offers of support and ideas for supporting refugee education?**

**How could you use social media to spread the message among your wide network?**





## GLOBAL CONNECTORS

In return, global connectors require:

- Commitment from their networks to engage and share their ideas;
- A willingness from existing members to grow their networks;
- Funding to progress and develop influential projects with broad, global reach.

**Global connectors occupy a privileged position because of the power of their extensive relationships and networks.**

**If you are part of a global network, could you encourage your partners to do more to support refugee education?**

**How could you collectively galvanise efforts?**



INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

## SCHOOLS & TEACHERS

“We were doing nothing at Pireaus, and the children were bored so we decided to teach them conversational English in our tents. It was so well received that the demand for lessons grew and we saw it become our duty, our responsibility.”

TEACHER HOPE SCHOOL SKARAMAGAS

Cities have networks of educators who play the lead role in shaping and delivering education services. Most cities have a wide range of education provision ranging from public to private, part-time to full-time and education provision targeted at all ages. In their own ways many of these practitioners can play a role in supporting and furthering citywide refugee education.

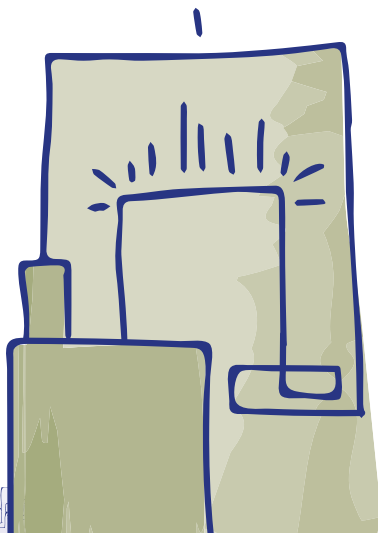
### HOPE SCHOOL - SKARAMAGAS CAMP

Hope School was set up by a group of young professionals living in Skaramagas refugee camp who wanted to provide the young children living in the camp with an education. They now have over 600 children in attendance at the school, operating out of shipping containers within the camp. Hope school teaches a range of subjects including Arabic, English, maths, art and sport.

Source: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/HopeSchoolatskaramagas/> >

### ACS ATHENS AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL ATHENS

ACS Athens (the American Community School) is running a Learning Incubator which is supporting 26 unaccompanied refugee children based in Athens. The children receive bi-weekly counselling and tuition in English, Greek, Art, Mathematics and Athletic Activities.



INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

## SCHOOLS & TEACHERS

Existing schools and education providers can play a significant role in supporting refugee education. These are some of the ways that education providers can play a role in supporting refugee education:

- Some teachers are willing to share teaching materials and ideas using open source technology;
- International schools may be in a position to provide instruction space/workshops/education provision for refugee students, including teaching in English (and potentially in other languages);
- Schools can play a role in building empathy and citizenship amongst students and the wider school community to foster acceptance, integration and a sense of normality for refugee students;
- Time-shares are an innovative way of tackling classroom shortages.

**Are you a teacher/education professional? What support could you offer to refugee children?**

**What could your school pledge?**

**Your support can be practical, but also emotional, i.e. fostering acceptance and understanding among your students about forced migration.**



INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

## SCHOOLS & TEACHERS

**These are some of the areas where education providers need support and assistance to be able to be more effective in facilitating refugee education:**

- Willingness from older refugees and students to act as mentors to others;
- Transportation, particularly as refugee communities may be situated further away from education settings and there are challenges for young people in crossing cities;
- Materials, resources and technological equipment, particularly in the mother tongue of refugee children;
- Time-share advice and cross-country learning as to how to implement these sorts of innovative schemes.

**Would you be willing to act as a mentor?**

**Could your organisation or establishment assist with providing transportation to assist refugees who are travelling to be educated elsewhere?**

**What educational resources could you offer to share exchange?**

INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

## RESOURCE PROVIDERS

Innovations in technology and communication have catalysed a proliferation of educational resources, as well as ways of accessing educational material. The ability to share resources online and to open source data and materials presents opportunities for displaced communities to engage in distance learning and for teachers to make use of digital resources online. Innovative educational materials and approaches are beginning to emerge which can offer alternative means of educating displaced young people. Creative resources such as music initiatives can capture interest and offer alternative ways to access educational material.

“Local support is the most important. A good idea will only stay an idea if you don’t have the official support and trust of the main partners in the country where the project happens.”

ANIS BARNAT  
EL SISTEMA GREECE

### TECHFUGEES - ATHENS

Techfugees is a social enterprise mobilising the international tech community to respond to the refugee situation. Techfugees organises conferences, workshops and hackathons around the world in an effort to supply a pool of tech solutions and tech talent to NGOs working with refugees, and refugees themselves. Today there are now over 15,000 members of Techfugees, demonstrating a huge desire amongst the tech community to get involved with this issue.

Techfugees has created an online database of refugee education initiatives:

<https://techfugees.com/news/new-research-helps-education-innovators-create-initiatives-to-help-refugees/> >

INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

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INTRO

COMMUNITY  
HUBS

EDUCATIONALISTS

ACTIVE  
SUPPORTERSGLOBAL  
CONNECTORSSCHOOLS &  
TEACHERSRESOURCE  
PROVIDERS

INFO

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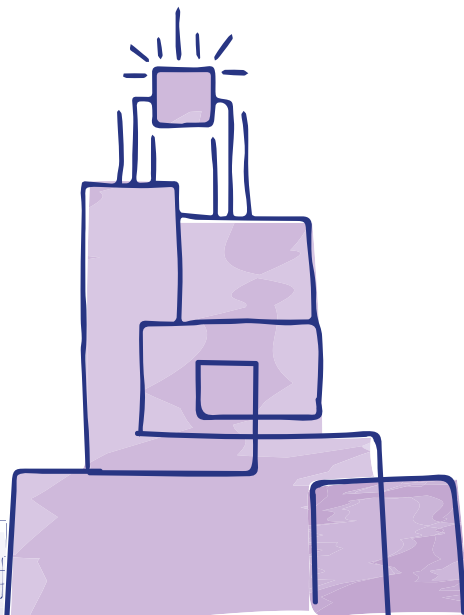
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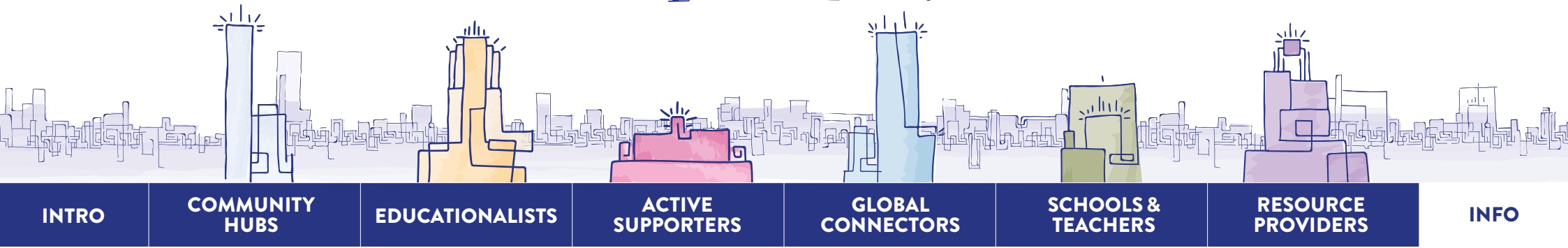
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