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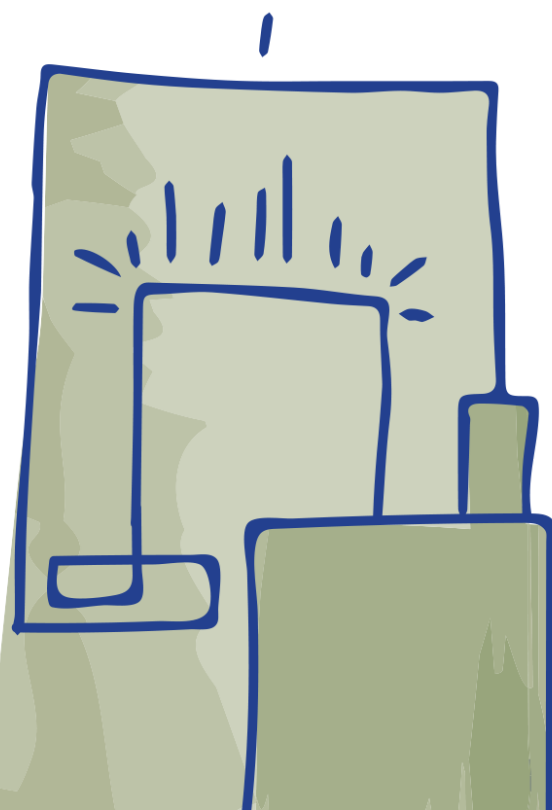
Action and Research Centre

Cities of Reciprocity

Strengthening Refugee
Education, using Athens
as a case study

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June 2017



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Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to the Educational Collaborative for International Schools (ECIS) for generously supporting this project. In particular we would like to thank Kevin Ruth for his support and engagement throughout. Special thanks also go to: Stavros Yiannouka, Dina Pasic and all of the team at the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE), Dr Gialamas and the staff who supported us at ACS (American Community School) Athens and Maria Nomikou at the British Council in Athens. We appreciate their involvement throughout the project and in particular during the Athens summit. We extend our thanks to all of the delegates who attended the Athens summit for their insightful contributions which have shaped this report. In addition, we are grateful to Esol Education for their commitment to social impact through international education, as evidenced by their financial support of this research project. Thanks also go to Maria Calafatis and Stavros Messinis for hosting us at The Cube in Athens and to Deyaa Orfali and Abdul Ghani from Hope School Skaramagas for sharing their valuable experience with us at the Athens summit. Thanks to ARC colleagues at the RSA for their contributions and editing of the report, in particular to Sherene Meir, Janet Hawken, Kenny McCarthy and Johnathan Schifferes. We would like to thank the design team at o5 Creative for their thoughtful approach to the illustration and layout of the accompanying pdf.

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Foreword

Transience is a key element in international education: programmes and systems have been built to welcome, integrate, and support students and families who leave behind one country in order to live, work, and study in another. Whether observed in pastoral programmes, mother tongue instruction, or a curricular focus that takes into account where students are in this particular place and time, international schools are deeply mindful of transience.

Is it not curious that we tend to think of such students and families as globally mobile, yet we rarely notice a second group of people who exhibit a similar characteristic of leaving behind one country in order to live in another? Displaced persons. A defining issue of our time, the displacement of people should draw our attention to the need for mindfulness around this notion of transience, when we consider educational opportunities for children.

As a champion for international schools, ECIS (the Educational Collaborative for International Schools) is pleased to share this report of our work with the RSA to highlight how international schools, the beneficiaries of transient populations, might serve as catalysts for change in the communities in which they are located, when it comes to welcoming, integrating, and supporting displaced families and students. It is part of our ethos, our heritage.

Kevin J Ruth, PhD FRSA
Executive Director, ECIS

Executive summary

The displacement of people is a defining issue of this century. We will need concerted, sustained action over many years to re-build the lives that have been shattered and communities that have been dispersed as a result of forced movement. After basic needs of food, shelter and healthcare, education is paramount. Education will allow refugee communities to progress and develop, and will begin to sow seeds of hope for the future.

The political will to respond to global displacement influences the degree to which refugee communities are helped and supported. This report reviews the current nature of global displacement and reflects on some of the key debates in this area. One of the most striking findings is the length of time that refugees will spend in limbo: often equivalent to a child's entire early education. Many children will face the prospect of uncertain, patchy education as a result of their displacement.

Our analysis draws on some of the pragmatic responses in this area. Refugee communities have much to offer, given the opportunity to contribute. An era of greater community cooperation and reciprocity between settled populations and newcomers could pave the way for a more productive and positive response to refugee integration in the future.

There are many challenges in providing and delivering education to displaced populations. Part 3 explores some of the barriers in this area, considering the obstacles faced by refugee students and families, and host school systems, as well as challenges presented by national policies.

However, there are also a series of developments that offer hope for the future. First is a resounding desire from a whole range of sectors – voluntary, public and private – to intervene and contribute something to alleviate the hardship and disruption that has been caused by displacement. Second is a huge upsurge in connectivity as a result of technological innovation. Third is the proliferation of collaborations and networks that can leverage support on a global scale.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach that a city should take to address the phenomenon of large-scale displacement. Each city has its own story with its own history, culture, degree of diversity and ability to cope with flux and change. The success of initiatives will depend on the local infrastructure and political, economic and social context. Many cities have commitment and goodwill from urban leaders to address local challenges. Our approach has been to look beyond the political framework to explore the local and community-led initiatives that exist. There are countless examples of city leaders coordinating services and networks of stakeholders among urban communities, often in the absence of a national response. The role of local government is key, but grassroots activists also play a fundamental role, bringing together volunteers, social entrepreneurs and education professionals to adapt to the changing demographics within their cities. It is often these networks and connections that create the greatest impact within communities hosting displaced people.

Our work has focused on Athens as a case study, a focal point for dealing with large numbers of refugees. The shifting context in Greece, and Athens in particular, and the breadth of education initiatives, shows how a city-wide approach can incorporate players from both within and beyond the education system to support and implement refugee education in unstable conditions.

Athens is a vibrant and resilient city that has absorbed many thousands of refugees in recent years. There are many challenges and the sheer number of refugees and the complexity of their needs can seem overwhelming. But there are many reasons to be hopeful. The city itself has tenacity and a newfound passion for innovation. Many people have been motivated to begin new enterprises and there is a burgeoning network of people who are active in supporting refugee communities. There are countless organisations and people working tirelessly to promote refugee education for children and their families, often operating beyond the scope of policymaking. These include:

- **Community Hubs:** convenors whose mission is to connect local citizens with one another.
- **Educators:** education providers, refugees themselves, charities and enterprises with the knowledge and experience to strengthen the educational capabilities of young refugees.
- **Global connectors:** networks and organisations who play a significant role in sharing ideas, disseminating good practice and promoting excellence in education across international jurisdictions.
- **Schools and Teachers:** academics, universities, policy institutes etc who can advise on approaches and strategies to learning, particularly in challenging circumstances.
- **Resource providers:** social entrepreneurs, charities and businesses who provide educational resources and technologies, exploring new and dynamic ways of sharing learning.
- **Active supporters:** activists, volunteers and the general public keen to do something to help and support others, ranging from financial assistance to voluntary engagement.

This typology serves to illustrate that there are many people and organisations (outside the political sphere) with a desire to support refugee communities and promote refugee education using whatever means they have at their disposal. This can include resources, time, financial assistance, venue use, expertise, technological support and advice. Correspondingly there are many services supporting refugee education that require the very thing that others are locally disposed to share.

The RSA is an example of a ‘global connector’ ie an organisation that is founded on a dynamic, global network of dedicated Fellows. Our wide circle of Fellows, 25,000 in the UK and 3,000 globally, has the potential to strengthen ties and foster collaboration. We see how the opportunity to connect and share ideas has led to support, co-ordinated action and innovation. We recognise that harnessing city networks can lead to positive social change, both locally and globally.

We make the following calls for change:

1. We need to move beyond the narrative of refugee 'crisis' to one of opportunity and cooperation.
2. We need to embrace technology to enable better responses to educate refugee young people.
3. Global connectors (including the RSA, and the many other bodies that convene networks of individuals and organisations) can support this, through networks which share and champion best practice with respect to refugee education.
4. Beyond the policy and political sphere there are many influential organisations at the city and neighbourhood level that could do more to support one another to achieve their aims and objectives. Collectively, a greater focus on connection and reciprocity would help to achieve this goal, making the most of grassroots support and the contributions of citizens and refugees themselves.

1. Introduction

This report explores how large-scale movement of displaced people impacts on the education of children. As well as providing an overview of displacement globally, we also explore how we can support refugee education by strengthening networks of reciprocity at the local, national and global levels. Collaborative networks of support and exchange play a hugely influential role in benefiting communities who have been displaced. Using Athens as a case study, we illustrate how acts of reciprocity can play a key part in supporting refugee education.

The report is structured as follows:

- Part 2 provides a contextual overview to set the scene and review trends in worldwide displacement. It also reflects on the significance and role of urban environments, as well as the challenges that exist in these settings for providing education for refugees.
- Part 3 sets out an overview of current, existing educational provision for refugee communities. It expands on the specific challenges and barriers that refugee communities experience in accessing and delivering education.
- Part 4 focuses on the situation in Greece since it has received large inflows of migrants. We summarise Greece's response to the influx of refugee communities and consider the incoming changes to the Greek education system.
- Part 5 reflects on some key examples of good practice within Athens (as well as on the national and global stage), and we look at the ways in which these connections can be enhanced through strengthening ties and opening up further avenues for reciprocal exchange.

Finally we conclude by exploring ways in which we can all play a more active role in supporting refugee education. Our examples illustrate that support does not just mean financial assistance. The connections we can make, the voluntary support we can offer, the space we can provide, and many other forms of assistance, both from near and afar, can all play a role in bolstering education provision for refugee communities. This is an area that is ripe for investment and innovation. We suggest to a range of stakeholders how they might be best able to give, as well as the ways in which they can communicate what they need in return.

2. A review of the global context and debates on worldwide displacement

2.1 Defining and measuring global displacement

The number of globally displaced people is higher than it has ever been, bringing unprecedented challenges to receiving countries. The conflict in Syria is the biggest driver of displacement. But ongoing violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, abuses in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere, leads people to look for new lives in other places.¹ The nature of displacement is challenging to define and measure. Every displacement situation has its own socio-economic and political context, as well as varying levels of informal and formal support offered by the host country.

It is difficult to make generalised assertions about displacement, given that frameworks for tracking refugees vary and often do not reflect the complete picture. While some countries facilitate the physical entry of displaced people, they may not facilitate employment or education. This decision is often fueled by a short-term approach to displacement. The immediate needs of refugees are prioritised. However the growing reality is that displacement is often more complicated, deep rooted and longer term. Data from 1978–2014 suggests that less than one in 40 refugee crises are resolved within three years. More than 80 percent of refugee crises last for 10 years or more and two in five last 20 years or more.² Refugees face many challenges to working legally, and humanitarian aid, in the long term, is often unsustainable.³

1. BBC (2016) *Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts*, BBC News. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34131911>

2. Crawford, N., Cosgrave, J., Haysom, S. and Walicki, N. (2015) *Protracted displacement: uncertain paths to self-reliance in exile*, Overseas Development Institute, pp.1-10. Available at: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9851.pdf>

3. Ibid. p.32.

The Global Data picture

- There are currently 63.4 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, 21.3 million of whom are under the age of 18. This is four times the number estimated in 2007.
- 86 percent of refugees live in a country that neighbours their conflict-affected country of origin.
- 10 countries – which account for just 2.5 percent of the global economy – host more than half the world's refugees, with Pakistan, Iran and Ethiopia being the top three hosting countries.
- The UK has accepted approximately 8,000 Syrians since 2011, while neighbouring Jordan – with a population almost 10 times smaller than the UK and an economy 80 times smaller – hosts over 656,000 Syrian refugees.

Sources: UNHCR (2017) *Figures at a Glance*, Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html>; Amnesty International (2016) *Tackling the global refugee crisis: From shirking to sharing responsibility*, Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol40/4905/2016/en/>; Crawford, N., Cosgrave, J., Haysom, S. and Walicki, N. (2015) *op cit*, pp.1-10.

2.2 Considering the urban context

Cities are often the first point of arrival for refugees. 59 percent of all refugees are now living in urban settings, a proportion that is increasing annually.⁴ Cities tend to be multicultural, accustomed to transience and can offer more opportunities for work.⁵ A displaced person may have an existing connection already living in an urban area that can help them build social networks as well as opportunities for employment.⁶ Additionally, while international⁷ and national governments can be slow and out of sync with the needs of refugees, larger cities can be more responsive and willing to accommodate, as well as allowing refugees to live anonymously and independently within their city of arrival.

While cities share these characteristics, they need to find their own unique means to interact with displaced people coming into the area. Every city has a unique identity shaped by its history, geography, politics, demographics and culture. Refugees are more visible when living in camps – both in their locality and in their depiction within mainstream media. However, within a city context a refugee runs the risk of being rendered invisible, particularly as urban refugees are more likely to be dispersed

4. Ibid. p.1.

5. Eurocities (2016) *Social affairs refugee reception and integration in cities*, European Commission. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/urban-agenda>

6. IDMC (2016) *Leaving No One Behind: Internal displacement and the New Urban Agenda*, IDMC. Available at: <http://www.goodpractices.urban-refugees.org/internal-displacement-and-the-new-urban-agenda-2/>

7. For Amnesty International, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Summit on 19 September 2016 was a failure (see Amnesty International (2016) *Tackling the global refugee crisis: From shirking to sharing responsibility*, Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol40/4905/2016/en/>). Whilst there was a general consensus for collective action, there was no discussion of a specific global plan which has now been deferred until 2018. This as well as removing the only tangible target - to resettle 10% of refugees annually - is out of sync with the urgency of the situation and absolves countries who are already unresponsive to the deepening crisis.

over a large geographical areas. While the offer of anonymity may be an attractive possibility for some, especially those fearing deportation, living on the fringes of society can mean patchy access to basic services.

Displaced people are more susceptible to working in low paid and exploitative jobs within the informal and shadow economy. Landlords, knowing that many refugees would be reluctant to complain to local authorities, often charge above market rates for rent. Urban refugees are more likely to experience abuse such as beatings, illegal detention and confiscation of documentation by the police. Women in particular risk experiencing verbal, physical and sexual abuse.⁸

Traditionally, displacement has been seen through a humanitarian lens. However, less data and analysis has been invested in considering the economic advantages of integrating displaced populations and developing sustainable opportunities to benefit both refugees and the wider community.⁹ Refugees often require help and support when migrating into urban areas in the first instance, but many will bring skills and experiences that can make a positive economic contribution to the city, as well as cultural and social.

A study undertaken by the Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University (RSC)¹⁰ in Uganda has begun to explore how refugees can succeed when they are given basic socio-economic freedoms and are able to contribute to the national economy. Empowered refugees help host societies and create local opportunities; 21 percent of refugees in Kampala run a business that employs at least one other person, 40 percent of which are Ugandan nationals.¹¹

2.3 Smarter cities and smarter integration

The conditions for success of refugees include basic services, educational infrastructure and employment opportunities. Prior levels of education and existing social networks also matter. Somali refugees in the urban areas of Kenya, for example, have integrated due to their strong social and economic networks as well as language skills.¹²

The reality is that many displaced people will not return home. Ongoing political instability and violence may prohibit them from doing so, and over time refugees may seek to avoid the disruption of return. The complex nature of displacement means that while many refugees struggle, others are able to succeed. Mainstream narratives surrounding refugees and displacement often do not give room for the refugee that thrives. The RSC and others seek to explore how to empower refugees, rather than pushing them to the margins. Their research acknowledges the skills, talents and aspirations of refugees who are able to make valuable contributions – if given the freedom to do so.

Historically, humanitarian approaches to displacement have been framed around a ‘care and maintenance’ model which operates on the assumption that displacement is temporary and short term. Funding is

8. International Rescue Committee (2012) *International Rescue Committee Urban Refugees*, From Harm to Home. Available at <https://www.rescue-uk.org/sites/default/files/document/986/201112urbanrefsfeforechoadvocacyevento.pdf> pp.1-3.

9. University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre (2016) *Helping people to help themselves: the importance of refugee self-reliance*, Available at: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/news/helping-people-to-help-themselves-the-importance-of-refugee-self-reliance>

10. See University of Oxford Refugee Study Centre: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/>

11. University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre (2016) op cit.

12. Crawford, N., Cosgrave, J., Haysom, S. and Walicki, N. (2015) op cit, pp. 21-32.

City of Vienna Coordination Centre

The city of Vienna has become a transit city for many asylum seekers making their way to Germany. In July 2015, the city administration set up a coordination centre for refugees, managed by the city administration. It serves as a central information point and maintains close contact with the Austrian train company, the police, several NGOs, such as Caritas and the Red Cross, and groups of volunteers.

In cooperation with the Vienna Social Fund, the city has also created a mobile app, available across all platforms, a website, and a telephone hotline to keep the public informed about developments. The website informs citizens about what services, partner NGOs, and agencies are doing and what they need. It also provides information about volunteering and ways to provide other assistance.

Source: Eurocities, *Cities welcome refugees: Vienna*

therefore centred on the most basic of needs; that of nutrition, shelter and health.¹³ While the ‘care and maintenance’ model undoubtedly has merit and is more reactive to the immediate needs of a refugee, a more evolved approach builds on this whilst acknowledging the ongoing realities of displacement; working with the existing skills of the displaced as well as with their ambition and their decisions. This ‘de facto integration’ model advocates for more open access to economic opportunities and social spaces within host communities and small-scale interventions that foster deeper self-reliance and agency among refugees. It gives refugees a relationship to their locality, enabling them to interact more meaningfully on a local level, economically and psychosocially.¹⁴

The notion of displaced communities having more open access and integrating within urban contexts highlight questions about how cities can collaborate and connect in smarter and more inclusive ways. Often, within a city, businesses, charities, systems, public bodies and people operate in silos, with almost no connection or collaboration. However the strength of a city is in its interconnectivity and the ways in which it can be reactive to ever shifting social and economic contexts. New forms of collaboration allow different actors to leverage each other’s strengths to grow together as a symbiotic network within a city.¹⁵ The example above is an example of a collaborative, city-wide approach to refugee reception.

For societies that are increasingly encountering more complex and wicked¹⁶ problems, new and reinforced skills for collaboration are needed. For Professor Richard Sennett, this cooperation requires new forms of civic rituals that make us more skilful in living with, and for, others.¹⁷ Refugee education is one of the world’s most pressing needs.

13. Ibid. p.18.

14. Ibid. pp.18-22.

15. Newman, D. (2016) *Smart Cities May Turn Competition Into Collaboration*, Forbes. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielnewman/2016/11/25/smart-cities-may-turn-competition-into-collaboration/2/#441d06a7550a>

16. A “wicked problem” is a phrase favoured by policymakers to describe an issue that is not only complex but highly contested and unpredictable. See Taylor, M. (2015) *The Urgent Challenge of Housing*, RSA. Available at: <https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/rsa-comment/2015/08/housing-observer-article>

17. Sennett, R. (2013) *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*, London: Penguin.

3. The state of educational provision for refugees

3.1 The importance of educational provision for refugees

Educational provision is a basic need for displaced people, especially children. However it is often treated as a secondary priority; often seen as a development issue rather than humanitarian. Accordingly, funding is more readily distributed in the context of natural disasters and conflict; education currently constitutes just 2 percent of humanitarian aid funding. Despite the fact that education is stated as a high priority by conflict-affected children and parents,¹⁸ traditionally, refugee education does not feature in national development plans or in education sector planning.¹⁹

The educational journey of a child refugee is far from a linear experience; they are very likely to spend their formative educational years as a refugee. Within this time they will also experience potential difficulties enrolling into school, as well as the uncertainty of where they and their family can legally stay, all of which will compound ad hoc access to education. We need to develop systems that provide a good level of education beyond a refugee's basic survival. Learning opportunities need to be both informative and rehabilitative, fulfilling economic, social and psychological needs for young refugee students learning both inside and outside of the classroom.

A good level of education for a child is considered by both UNESCO and World Bank as one of the surest investments for improved lifetime economic achievement.²⁰ Research shows that quality education can reduce child marriage, child labour, exploitative and dangerous work, and teenage pregnancy. Also as you might expect, it can give students the opportunity to build their own networks, mentors and skills for self-reliance, as well as fostering critical thinking and teamwork.²¹

3 million Syrian children are currently out of school, putting them at risk of exploitation.²² For Syrian refugee girls especially, lack of access to

18. Nicolai, S. and Hine, S. (2015) *Investment for education in emergencies*, Overseas Development Institute. Available at: <https://www.odi.org/publications/9278-investment-education-emergencies>

19. UNHCR (2016) *Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis*, UNHCR. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/57d9d01do>

20. Ibid. p.37.

21. Ibid.

22. Save the Children (2015) *The Cost of War*, Available at: <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/cost-war>

education is contributing to sexual exploitation and harassment, domestic violence and a significant rise in early forced marriages.²³ The situation poses a significant risk for the future stability of Syria, both financially and in terms of conflict resolution, but there is little data accounting for the economic and human capital costs.²⁴

Key statistics on refugee education

- Access to education for refugee children and young people tends to decline from primary school onwards:
 - Only 50 percent of refugee children have access to primary education, compared with a global level of more than 90 percent.
 - Worldwide, 84 percent of non-refugee adolescents attend lower secondary school, but only 22 percent of refugee adolescents have that same opportunity.
 - At higher education level, just one percent of refugees attend university, compared to 34 percent globally.
- For countries with the largest refugee populations, access to secondary education for refugees is rare: in Pakistan, 5 percent of secondary-age refugee adolescents attend school; in Cameroon only 6 percent; in Ethiopia, the figure is 9 percent, while in Turkey, host to 2.7 million registered Syrian refugees, it is 13 percent.

Source: UNHCR (2016)

3.2 Challenges and obstacles to accessing mainstream education

The hyper visibility of refugees within a camp means that there is opportunity, though sometimes slim, for access to some educational provision. The risk, particularly in urban areas, is the invisibility of refugees, which can further exacerbate how a young person has access to education. This is particularly the case where there are fewer levels of accountability and expectation for refugee young people; refugees' educational access and attainment are rarely tracked through national monitoring systems, meaning that refugee children and youth are not only disadvantaged, but their educational needs and achievements remain largely invisible.²⁵ Despite increasing awareness over the importance of refugee education, in countries where determined efforts have been made to get more refugee children into school, enrolment cannot keep up with increased displacement.

Reasons for these obstacles are deep rooted and complex and come from several perspectives:

23. Crawford, N., Cosgrave, J., Haysom, S. and Walicki, N. (2015) *op cit*, p. 37.

24. Nicolai, S. and Hine, S. (2015) *op cit*.

25. *Ibid*.

For refugee students and families

The pressures of providing family income: Many refugees cannot work legally, so everyone in the family, including children, may have to take the irregular, low-paid work they can find.²⁶ Paid employment is particularly valued over education for young men who may be considered the ‘bread-winners’ of the family.²⁷ It can often be a difficult decision for a family to sacrifice additional income to put their child in school. Also, more practically, displaced families are unlikely to have the money for school fees or other costs including clothes and shoes. It may also be quite some distance from their home to the school which raises security concerns for the family.

Difficulty meeting the requirements for school registration: Certification for enrolment, especially birth certificates and written records of previous enrolment, are often required by schools. Given that many families may have had to leave their homes abruptly or unexpectedly, many may not be able to provide this. There are no systems to share information and track enrolment, progress, and certification between countries and communities.

Adapting to a new curriculum(s): A refugee young person will have to adapt to a new curriculum that may be very different from the one they were previously accustomed to and taught in a language they don’t speak. Often refugees move country more than once, which further compounds the disruption.²⁸

Maximum age limit: In primary and secondary education, there may also often be a maximum age limit, particularly if students are expected to study with other students. A refugee person whose secondary education has been temporarily disrupted and delayed may find it impossible to go back and complete it if they exceed the age limit.

Language acquisition and retention: A refugee child will have to grapple with the competing demands of the language of place and their mother tongue. While research demonstrates that children learn better in their mother tongue,²⁹ most students will not have that luxury within a mainstream setting. Wherever possible, educators from within refugee communities themselves play an important role in preserving mother tongue languages for children in refugee education settings.

26. Solis, L. (2016) *Why refugee education is a problem – and six solutions*, World Economic Forum. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/05/why-refugee-education-is-a-problem-and-six-solutions/>

27. University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre (2014) *Ensuring quality education for young refugees from Syria (12-25 Years)*, RSC. Available at: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/other/rr-syria-youth-education-2014.pdf>

28. Ibid.

29. See: Global Partnership for Education (2014) <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/children-learn-better-their-mother-tongue>, British Council (2015) <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/why-schools-should-teach-young-learners-home-language>, and UNESCO (n.d.) <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/languages-in-education/> for influential research demonstrating why children do better at school with mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual approaches to education.

Mainstream depictions of refugees: Children can also face discrimination where they are perceived by schools as ‘a problem’ which can have an influence on the way students are treated in schools by other students and teachers. This may also be a deterrent to the student and family from pursuing mainstream education.

For school systems

Lack of capacity: High inflows of newcomers bring serious challenges for education bodies and can influence the likelihood of achieving learning outcomes. Schools can struggle to accommodate children from other learning systems, with different languages, and abilities.

Ethiopia has a well-established accelerated education programme (known as Alternative Basic Education, or ABE) which was developed by the education ministry in 1997, originally for rural communities but later extended to other parts of the country. The ABE programme targets children aged 11-14 and uses a condensed version of the Ethiopian curriculum, shortening the time of schooling and allowing an easy transition into formal primary school. The programme has been used in refugee camps in Ethiopia for the past 15 years and more than 12,800 overage refugee children were enrolled in 2016.

Source: UNHCR, *Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis*, September 2016

Double shifts: Schools with high numbers of refugees and limited infrastructure are trying to integrate students into their education systems through extending the opening hours of schools. In 2016, for example, 160 of Lebanon’s 1,350 public schools started to have both a morning shift - primarily, but not exclusively for Lebanese children taught in English and French - and an afternoon shift for Syrian refugee children. While this can sometimes prove effective, this can also exacerbate the polarisation of local and refugee communities and can lead to refugee parents feeling their children’s education is seen as less important.³⁰ Another means of resolving issues around school capacity has been to ‘timeshare’ school buildings with exiled Syrian teachers providing education to their communities in host country facilities.³¹ These teachers are unpaid volunteers who are taking children off the streets, preventing many from becoming child labourers or even beggars.

Teachers do not feel qualified or supported: In host countries, teachers often feel isolated and ill-equipped to react to tensions and conflicts within the classroom, as well as offer the psychological support so often needed. Trauma can have a huge effect on children’s behaviour and capacity to learn, but is often something teachers are not qualified to handle.³²

30. Dryden-Peterson, S. and Adelman, E. (2016) *Inside Syrian refugee schools: Making room for refugees in second shifts*, Brookings. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2016/02/17/inside-syrian-refugee-schools-making-room-for-refugees-in-second-shifts/>

31. Brown, G. (2014) A brilliant scheme for making sure Syria’s child refugees get an education, *The Guardian*, 24 January. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/24/syria-child-refugees-school-education-gordon-brown>

32. Dryden-Peterson, S. and Adelman, E. (2016) op cit.

Nationally

Legal and/or administrative barriers: The inclusion of refugees is well established in countries such as Cameroon, Chad, Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon, Rwanda and Uganda. The quality of educational provision is already generally weak and in need of upscale and improvement; finding school places, trained teachers and learning materials for tens or even hundreds of thousands of newcomers, who often do not speak the language and have missed out on an average of three to four years of schooling.³³

3.3 Making educational connections through technology

Advances in technology and social media have provided many refugees with a lifeline to keep in touch with loved ones. For example, WhatsApp has been used by Syrian refugees who have been able to share tips, warnings and pleas for help with others along their journey.³⁴

Technology is also transforming possibilities for learning, connecting fellow educators and learners. Universities around the world are increasingly putting lectures and other material online to be viewed before a student arrives for lessons. Other institutions are facilitating courses that allow students from different countries and backgrounds, including refugee camps, to study together.

Education technologies play a key role across and between localities. Initiatives such as mobile and online classrooms and open education resources can be shared and used to formulate a city or region-wide approach.³⁵ Online technologies can also be used to facilitate training opportunities for teachers and to foster locally developed solutions for educational and pedagogical reform. The cost of devices to access online opportunities has fallen drastically.

Measures of assessment and approaches to standardise accreditation are areas that could benefit from a citywide, or indeed region-wide, approach. International schools are in a position to advise and support in this area given the global appeal of education programmes such as the international baccalaureate. Other programmes such as Cities of Learning (see box) incorporate approaches such as the ‘open badge’ scheme to mark skills acquired.

Devices also facilitate home learning, which can fit around family and domestic obligations. Moreover there are websites that can help with language learning, as well as offer educational games, online libraries and lesson plans.³⁶ Distance learning opportunities can also provide a welcome source of support, as the example from the British Council demonstrates.

33. UNHCR (2016) op cit.

34. Manjoo, F. (2016) Technology For Millions of Immigrants, a Common Language: WhatsApp, *The New York Times*, 21 December. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/21/technology/for-millions-of-immigrants-a-common-language-whatsapp.html?_r=2

35. See, for example, the multi-country Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) project which provides locally made teaching materials made available through the internet and traditional print resources: Denny, K. (2015) *Open Education Resources: Making locally made teaching materials available to refugee teachers*, Open Ideo. Available at: <https://challenges.openideo.com/challenge/refugee-education/research/open-education-resources>.

36. UNHCR (2016) op cit, p.34.

The City of Learning Model

The City of Learning model is a framework where a city adopts a culture of learning in collaboration with schools, colleges, libraries, museums, and workplaces, as well as youth and community organisations. Learners of all ages access opportunities through digital technologies, which guide them to relevant learning opportunities in the city and online. Progress can be tracked in a variety of ways, including through open digital badges (an online and shareable recognition of learning). The aim is to engage all in learning, most particularly those for whom traditional forms of learning are proving to be disengaging.

The idea for this initiative takes its roots from the pilot project, Chicago City of Learning (CCOL) which is the first effort of its kind to take place in a major city in the United States. The project joins together learning opportunities for young people in a way that allows them to tailor, pursue, and develop their interests individually. Through CCOL young people can explore the city's rich resources and find out what they can learn, make, do, and ultimately become.

You can learn more about the RSA's pilots on Cities of Learning in the UK at www.thersa.org

The British Council and the UK's Open University distance learning programme for refugee teachers

The British Council is seeking to bridge both access and quality as a route to tertiary education through the EU-funded Language and Academic Skills and E-learning Resources (LASER) programme, targeting Syrians and host communities aged 18-25 in Jordan and Lebanon.

The three-year project is providing 3,100 disadvantaged young people with the necessary language and academic skills to meet the entry standards of tertiary education institutions, as well as providing accredited higher education distance learning online through the UK's Open University. The British Council is also providing funds to help Syrian scholars access English language qualifications with the Council for At Risk Academics (CARA), which provides temporary sanctuary in UK universities and research placements.

Youssef, a 25-year-old teacher from Aleppo now living in Jordan, completed the initial pilot phase of LASER in March 2015. Since then he has set up his own informal English teaching project for refugee children with 12 other volunteers, reaching over 600 students in 14 locations in communities in Amman.

Source: British Council (2016) Beyond aid: educating Syria's refugees. Available: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/policy-insight-research/insight/beyond-aid-educating-Syrias-refugees>

These approaches can benefit refugees, but there are limitations to e-learning. Students, particularly younger students, need more hands-on guidance. In fact, the younger the student, (or for those with minimal access to prior education), the more face-to-face guided learning will be necessary for effective learning outcomes, particularly when learning basic skills. Also, while e-learning can be useful, if it does offer certification, students will continue to face the same obstacles of exclusion within mainstream settings. Further, whilst online learning can provide some social networks for a student, it cannot help foster social and interpersonal skills, language acquisition, or support for trauma and psychosocial needs in the same way face-to-face interactions can provide.

Online learning therefore, is often effective in conjunction with guided, face-to-face interaction, helped by support from family and other educational practitioners issuing accreditation. Examples of this arguably demonstrate some of the most innovative and forward-thinking responses to education and displacement as well as collective and smart responsibility in action:

- In Kenya, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania, UNHCR is working with the Vodafone Foundation, equipping existing classrooms with Instant Classroom kits that provide localised digital content, tablets, projectors and audio systems, powered by solar batteries and using satellite or mobile networks.
- Teachers for Teachers enables refugees working as teachers to communicate with experienced educators worldwide using mobile phones, helping them deal with problems related to classroom management such as teaching to classes of 80 children or more. TIGER (These Inspiring Girls Enjoy Reading) is a community-led mentoring scheme for adolescent girls in Jordan that encourages them to stay in school.³⁷

37. Ibid, p.35.

4. Spotlight on Greece: An Overview

Our research and engagement has focused on Greece, with the particular focus of Athens as a case study. As a capital city, Athens is a focal point for interacting with the on-going influx of refugees. The shifting context in Greece, and Athens in particular, and the breadth of education initiatives, provides an opportunity to consider how a city-wide approach can incorporate players from within and beyond the education system to support and implement refugee education in unstable conditions.

4.1. Greece's response to high inflows of refugees

Thousands of refugees have arrived in Greece in recent years. The country has seen significant arrivals of refugees from Syria, but also from Afghanistan and Iraq.³⁸ Prior to the closure of the northern borders in March 2016, many refugees arrived in Greece as a point of entry into Europe, intending to apply for asylum in mainly Germany or Sweden due to more promising employment and educational opportunities, support systems and existing family and social networks.³⁹ Record numbers of displaced people coming into Greece in 2015 led to a limited amount of resources, such as food and water, medicine and shelter, which official Greek reception centres could offer. As a result there were, and continue to be, increasing concerns that unaccompanied minors and women, especially, are more likely exposed to trafficking, sexual exploitation and physical abuse, particularly in Lesbos, Chios, Kos and Athens.⁴⁰

In 2015, Greece also became the centre of the narrative of the 'refugee crisis' within the mainstream media, in response to images of the deaths of refugees drowning in their attempts to reach Greece. The death of Syrian toddler Aylan Kurdi became symbolic of the tragedies concerning displacement and the need for collaborative humanitarian effort. Consequently, there was unprecedented level of support and funding from international NGOs, the EU (including the EU humanitarian response unit, which until this point was previously reserved for countries outside the EU), and the UNHCR. An estimated \$803m has come into Greece since 2015, which includes all funds allocated or spent, all significant

38. BBC (2016) *Migrant crisis: Greek islands see rising numbers in camps*, BBC News. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-37099332>

39. Save the Children (2015) *Multi-sector Needs Assessment of Migrants and Refugees in Greece*, Available at: www.barnaheill.is/media/PDF/Greece_Assessment_Report.pdf

40. Save the Children (2017) *Refugee and Migrant Children at Risk of Exploitation in Greece*, Available at: <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/2015-08/refugee-and-migrant-children-risk-exploitation-greece>

bilateral funding and major sources of private donations.⁴¹ However, this has not been without its ethical challenges and complications; the Greek government were unable to absorb significant amounts of these funds, due to the majority being distributed, via the European Commission, towards emergency assistance through international agencies and NGOs.⁴²

While the additional support for established groups already working in Greece has been welcomed, it has also been destabilising, with instances of experienced staff working for local initiatives being poached by bigger NGOs coming into the area. For Lora Pappa, the head of Metadrasi,⁴³ an organisation that trains interpreters and cares for unaccompanied minors, the sudden influx of funds has led to refugees being viewed as commodities where short-term responses to the situation have been prioritised. She also posits that while it became a priority for international organisations to show a presence in Greece, it was a challenge to spend the funding constructively.⁴⁴

Data picture: Refugees in Greece

- Greece received a total number of 173,450 sea arrivals in 2016, (out of which 42 percent were men, 21 percent women and 37 percent children).
- The majority of arrivals by sea in Greece in 2016 have been nationals of Syria (47 percent) Afghanistan (24 percent) and Iraq (15 percent).
- In 2017, a total of 3,369 sea arrivals have been recorded up until 19 March. Syrian nationals continue to be the largest group of newly arrived people (40 percent).
- The northern border restrictions in March 2016 have led to about 50,000 persons stranded in Greece.
- The Asylum Service registered 51,091 asylum applications in 2016, a fourfold increase from 2015 figures.
- In the third quarter of 2016, Greece had the second highest rate of asylum seekers per capita, after Germany.

Sources: Clayton, J. and Holland, H., and Tim Gaynor (ed) (2015) Over one million sea arrivals reach Europe in 2015, UNHCR. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/afr/news/latest/2015/12/5683d0b56/million-sea-arrivals-reach-europe-2015.html>; Asylum information Database

41. Howden, D. and Fotiadis, A. (2017) *The Refugee Archipelago: The Inside Story of What Went Wrong in Greece*, News Deeply: Refugees Deeply. Available at: <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/articles/2017/03/06/the-refugee-archipelago-the-inside-story-of-what-went-wrong-in-greece>

42. Ibid.

43. See METAdrasi (Action for migration and development): <http://metadrasi.org/en/home/>

44. Howden, D. and Fotiadis, A. (2017) Where did the money go? How Greece fumbled the refugee crisis, *The Guardian*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/09/how-greece-fumbled-refugee-crisis>

4.2. Closure of Greece's northern borders: A continued state of limbo

The closure of Greece's northern borders in March 2016 has led to a series of contradictory responses. For many refugees, this has led to a state of limbo and further uncertainty, whilst others are coming to the realisation that staying and making an asylum claim in Greece could be their best route to stability. A number of measures to provide temporary accommodation have been implemented to address the pressing needs created after the imposition of border restrictions. However, the majority have been camps and have been widely criticised for their often inadequate standards and lack of security. Moreover, contrary to intra-EU agreements to relocate refugees, of the 160,000 refugees intended to have been relocated around the EU by October 2016, about 5 percent, or 8,000 people, had been relocated.⁴⁵

4.3 Educational provision for refugees in Greece

Of the 27,000 children stranded in Greece, at least 18,000 are thought to be of school age.⁴⁶ The uncertainty surrounding integration in Greece in light of the closed northern borders mirrors the varying responses as to how refugees view educational provision in the country. Many refugees, especially those living in temporary camps, still view Greece as a transit country and so feel that accessing services such as formalised schooling would imply that they were willing to settle permanently. On the other hand many parents are worried about their children's education and so are keener to integrate and access the educational opportunities that are provided.⁴⁷ As it stands, the average refugee child has been out of school for a year and a half, though this is likely to increase to three to four years for refugee children from Syria.⁴⁸

Refugee educational provision has not been an initial priority for the Greek government, particularly in light of its ongoing struggles to provide basic services to refugees. The Greek government, however, has begun to make plans for the medium to long term. From October 2016, the ministry of education began to implement a strategy to enrol thousands of refugee children in Greek schools, as part of a pilot programme. In the first instance, from the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, approximately 1,500 children have started to attend 20 schools every day in the afternoon, after classes for Greek children end.⁴⁹ Refugee children are taught separately from Greek students in "reception classes" taking place for four hours a day, focusing on Greek and English, mathematics and IT.⁵⁰

45. Riegert, B. (2016) Greece left alone in the refugee crisis, Deutsche Welle. Available at: <http://www.dw.com/en/greece-left-alone-in-the-refugee-crisis/a-36699740>

46. Weise, Z. (2016) Refugee children get little education in Europe, Politico. Available at: <http://www.politico.eu/article/refugee-children-education-europe-volunteers-greece-migrant-camp/>

47. See: BBC Media Action (2016) *Voices of Refugees: Information and Communication Needs of Refugees in Greece and Germany*, BBC.

48. Save the Children (2016) *Child Refugees in Greece have been out of school for an average of one and a half years*, Available at: <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/2016-05/child-refugees-greece-out-school-15-years>

49. Voa News (2016) *Refugee Children Begin Attending Greek Schools*, Available at: <http://www.voanews.com/a/refugee-children-begin-attending-greek-schools/3544676.html>

50. Weise, Z. (2016) op cit.

This is occurring against the backdrop of a fragile economy and significant cuts to school budgets. Some Greek nationals have treated the scheme with hostility;⁵¹ for example, a parents' association of Filippiada complained about the plan, voicing fears about diseases and arguing that their children would be unable to "coexist with migrant children". A parents' association in Oresteiada, like Filippiada a town on the northern mainland, threatened a sit-in protest if children from camps were admitted into their school.⁵²

This programme marks a shift in priorities from the Greek government. However, both registration and relocation programmes are moving slowly and there is a growing realisation that the tens of thousands of asylum seekers will remain in Greece for some time. As a result there are a significant number of refugee pupils still out of education. In response to this gap, there are multiple informal education programmes and initiatives emerging, led by refugee groups, corporate companies, the voluntary sector and international volunteers in Greece.⁵³

51. BBC (2016) Refugee children in Greece face protest on first day of school, *BBC News*. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-37613318>

52. Weise, Z. (2016) op cit.

53. See, for example, this free school set up by entrepreneurs in Athens: <http://greece.greekreporter.com/2016/05/05/greek-entrepreneur-couple-starts-first-free-refugee-school-in-athens-video/> and this intercultural school initiative: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/athens-multicultural-primary-school_us_572261cbe4bob49df6aabo49

5. A case study of refugee education in Athens

5.1 An introduction to Athens as a case study

Athens is a vibrant and resilient city that has absorbed many thousands of refugees in recent years. The city has tenacity and a newfound passion for innovation. Many local residents have been motivated to begin new enterprises and there is a burgeoning network of people who are active in supporting refugee communities. Despite this, there are many challenges. The sheer number of refugees and the complexity of their needs can seem overwhelming.

The political and economic context is complex and we are not in a position to comment extensively on political strategies in Athens, Greece, or the region more broadly. But, Athens is home to countless examples of good practice, and generous pledges and offers of support. This analysis helps to demonstrate that efforts to link these offers of support to requirements and needs in return is crucial in responding to the educational needs of refugee communities.

There is vast potential for innovative solutions to strengthen and foster connections within and between cities that are seeking ways to educate refugees. We hope that our analysis will serve two purposes. First, by providing a real and practical opportunity to connect up individuals and

The data that informs this chapter stems from a range of sources:

- A detailed desk-based research phase that has reviewed current literature and reporting on the impacts of displacement on individuals and receiving cities, including case studies of good practice from all over the world.
- A primary phase of research that comprised discussions and engagement with individuals working in education and/or with refugee communities in Athens.
- An active learning phase that brought together a range of stakeholders from across Athens, as well as globally, at a summit to investigate response strategies and actions to address the educational needs of refugee children.
- On-going engagement and discussions with key stakeholders in Athens, and globally, to review and strengthen our findings.

organisations keen to support one another in pursuit of education for refugee children in Athens. Second, as an inspiration for other cities to leverage the power of city connections and foster acts of reciprocity in order to provide education for displaced children and their families in the future.

5.2 Key players within the city of Athens

5.2.1 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 like-minded activists and entrepreneurs. Their roles in city spaces are crucial because they tend to be trusted and highly valued by the people who use them.

City hubs often play an important role in supporting refugee education – they connect people who are interested in supporting refugees, they provide valuable meeting points, they offer additional or supplementary language services and foster innovation in education provision and delivery. Innovative start-ups often weave artistic and creative approaches into their work, such as that of the Impact Hub, described below. The importance of creativity in education was aptly summarised by one of the delegates at our refugee education summit in Athens who stated: “The arts work as the glue to connect us all.”

The Cube, Athens

The Cube is an innovative city hub in Athina, Athens. It was 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 space itself is used for workshops and events. The Cube has also 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?”
Maria Calafatis

The SOLE concept has been supported and backed by Microsoft, TED Talks and Newcastle University.

Source: Deutsche Welle (DW). Available at: <http://www.dw.com/en/greek-tech-hub-gives-refugee-kids-a-chance-to-learn/a-19295574>

Several examples of the sorts of community hubs that are providing valuable support to refugee young people are set out in the case studies, below.

The concept of a Self Organised Learning Environment (SOLE) run by a community hub, as set out above, is by no means a substitute for an education that covers basic educational skills and creates a solid grounding in literacy, numeracy and other necessary areas. But, in the absence of such education being available for many refugee children within the city, the SOLE environment is an alternative way to conquer boredom and provide opportunities for young refugees to broaden their minds, work together to tackle challenges, enhance their language skills, gain in confidence and develop IT proficiency. Many community hubs, in different city neighbourhoods, are working to address similar challenges.

Impact Hub, Athens

The Impact Hub is a collaborative network that operates locally within Athens and is part of a global network of Impact Hubs.

From social inclusion and social integration to environment and fair trade, the Impact Hub Athens is engaging expertise from its worldwide presence and creating a net of intercultural, high impact community that acts locally and internationally.

The Impact Hub Athens is playing a key role in supporting and hosting new initiatives to support refugees in Athens, some of which include:

Solomon magazine – a magazine written by refugees, immigrants, and Greek citizens. The magazine reports on various aspects of the refugee crises, including integration into Greek society. “Language is the first step on the path of social integration,” according to Nonna Daigorodova, who wrote an article entitled *No Barriers for Those Who Dare* in *Solomon* magazine’s first Issue.

StartupBoat – a think tank to generate ideas to make it easier for refugees to access information in order to settle in their new home countries or travel to another. @startup_boat

Source: Impact Hub Athens ‘Impact Hubs Worldwide Respond to the Refugee Crisis’ <http://athens.impacthub.net/impact-hubs-worldwide-respond-to-the-refugee-crisis/>

5.2.2 Education practitioners

Every city has a wide network of education practitioners who play a 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 (some directly, some indirectly) in supporting and furthering city-wide refugee education.

Key players in Athens consist of the vast network of education professionals across the city, as well as a growing body of charitable groups and entrepreneurs who are seeking to provide additional or complementary education support. This ranges from education policy specialists, education resource providers, education managers/directors, to schoolteachers, support assistants and administrators, student educators, education entrepreneurs, volunteers and support workers etc.

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.

“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.”

Source: Facebook - Hope-School Skaramagas Refugee Camp. Available at: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/HopeSchoolatskaramagas/>

The views and experiences of refugee educators should be at the heart of efforts to improve refugee education. Their understanding and perspective is paramount. Two of the teachers at Hope School attended the Athens refugee education summit and their insights and reflections were invaluable. They were able to guide our understanding of their situation, and that of the children they teach, and in turn they received offers of resources, connections and assistance from international schools, the international school collaborative networks and other summit delegates. The case study of Hope School demonstrates the resourcefulness and resilience of refugee communities to respond to their circumstances, as well as the willingness and commitment of other actors to reach out and support one another.

International schools in Athens

International schools in Athens are demonstrating a willingness to support refugee education within the city. One example is that of ACS Athens (also known as American Community Schools of Athens).

ACS Athens began with a pilot project supporting four unaccompanied refugee children at the school who receive bi-weekly counselling and additional educational support. The school has recently expanded the programme to support 36 unaccompanied refugee children with their education. The programme includes a range of educational and counselling support. The whole school community has got behind the programme and students at the school are playing an active role in spearheading the initiative. The school is exploring ways to increase its support and influence, particularly by collaborating with The Cube and Hope School (see above).

International schools are renowned for their global outlook and are in many ways uniquely well-placed to respond to the needs of refugees, specialising as they do, in educating the children of migrants. Their efforts to support refugee education are welcomed, and efforts to expand programmes in order to reach significantly larger numbers of pupils would be hugely beneficial. Accepting students within the school is one avenue, but offers of teaching materials, voluntary work and use of premises are all beneficial too.

5.2.3 Active supporters

As awareness of global displacement 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 the people who feel a desire to do something to support refugee children and their families – often members of the general public - but it can also stretch to the corporations, companies, funders and investors who want to ensure that their money is wisely spent in ways that it will have the most significant reach and impact. Structured processes like hackathons can accelerate and create new connections.

Microsoft and ‘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. Migrant and refugee populations are also invited to participate in the process, voice their concerns, and share their knowledge and expertise. Creative Associates International from the US and International Alert from the UK are the main facilitators of Hack the Camp, and serve on the judging panel.

Source: Impact Hub Athens ‘Hack the Camp – Hackathon on Refugee and Integration Challenges’, Available at: <http://athens.impacthub.net/en/event/hack-the-camp-hackathon-on-refugee-integration-challenges/>

Help Refugees

Help Refugees has a growing bank of dedicated volunteers supporting vulnerable, young migrants in Athens. One volunteer explains how Help Refugees is playing a role in Athens:

“Bigger organisations have to go through so many layers of bureaucracy and don’t want to annoy the government by distributing in so-called illegal sites like squats and unofficial camps. Smaller groups like Help Refugees are not scared to get involved; they have a very direct, practical way of dealing with problems.”

In the past year, Help Refugees has also helped to set up and fund two centres for refugees in central Athens. The Orange House accommodates up to 26 women and children, getting them away from the squats into safe shelter. During the day, volunteers provide a crèche, welcoming dozens of small children who live in the squats; they also run English, Greek and German classes.

Source: Gentleman, A. (2016) Help Refugees : a lifeline for teenagers living in seedy Athens squats, *The Guardian*, 16 December, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/dec/16/help-refugees-charity-central-athens-vulnerable-young-people>

5.2.4 Global connectors

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

There is an on-going strengthening resolve within the international community to do more to respond to the educational needs of refugee children. UNICEF has put education at the heart of its strategy to support Syrian refugee children. Much of the international focus has been on addressing practical difficulties in delivering education (particularly around access issues and availability of teachers); there has been less of a focus on the quality of education provision.⁵⁴

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. Organisations such as WISE (the World Innovation Summit for Education) are playing a significant role, as demonstrated in the case study below.

The World Innovation Summit 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 funds innovative projects like Ideas Box, run by Libraries Without Borders, which provides a mobile learning space for displaced people.

Source: WISE initiative, <http://www.wise-qatar.org/ideas-box-france>

Global connectors (much in the same ways as community hubs, but on a global level) tend to have huge networks and connections. They are well placed to share good practice and catalyse collaboration.

The RSA is another example of a global connector. Our role connecting networks of RSA Fellows from all over the world puts us in a strong position to support cross-fertilisation of ideas and initiatives, encourage the sharing of ideas and approaches and promote innovative solutions.

5.2.5 Education experts

The role of education experts to guide and advise on the best course of educational action for displaced children is crucial. 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

⁵⁴. British Council (2015) *Beyond Aid: Educating Syria's refugees*, Available at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/organisation/policy-insight-research/insight/beyond-aid-educating-syrias-refugees>

host countries.

Education experts can also advise on all aspects of education. Basic skills and how to deliver them are essential, but there are other areas that are also necessary to ensure that children are able to learn and develop.

“Psycho-social support is important too. You can’t do well in education unless you’re ok internally.” Education professional at Athens Summit

Refugees Deeply – Education Expert round up

Refugees Deeply has compiled a list of some of the most influential education experts working and writing on refugee education issues. They range from senior academics to policy advisors and are all playing a crucial role in advising and steering strategies and approaches in refugee education globally.

Notably, this list features a number of refugees themselves, as well as other global professionals. Learning from refugees themselves is crucial in order to share their personal lived experience.

Source: News Deeply, Refugees Deeply '10 Experts to Watch on Refugee Education', <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/articles/2016/11/22/10-experts-to-watch-on-refugee-education>

5.2.6 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.

Creative educational materials and approaches are beginning to emerge which can offer alternative means of educating displaced young people. Other examples include the comics library in Athens, an initiative to use comics as educational materials, and El Sistema,⁵⁵ an organisation that incorporates music resources into education delivery.

Techfugees, Athens

Techfugees is a social enterprise mobilising the international tech community to respond to the refugee situation, with chapters in 25 countries including Athens, Greece. 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/>

55. See El Sistema Greece: <http://elsistemagreece.com/>

There are many examples of initiatives and organisations that are producing imaginative and creative resources to be used as educational tools at city scale. An open source mapping tool or a directory of resources, detailing what these organisations are willing to share or provide would be of use to education providers in cities with large refugee populations.

6. Conclusion

The displacement of people and their communities disrupts networks and connections in a brutal, chaotic way. Families and friends are separated, and progression in education and training is stalled for countless young people. A key step in restoring stability will be to find ways to foster links, re-establish connections and grow new networks. This is absolutely paramount in the education sector. Aligned to this is the sharing of good practice within and between cities.

While national governments, including in Greece, are making strides forward to start integrating young people into mainstream schooling, many national governments are struggling to achieve this. The dynamism of actors at play within a city is one of the many points of attraction for those who come to live in cities. It is therefore crucial that a multiplicity of actors of different disciplines, who feel called to respond, work together and collaborate so as to offer networks of support to refugee young people, aiding their learning outcomes.

While ad hoc education offered is often a valuable response to a lack of educational provision offered more widely, it does also mean that when a young person moves to another country, their achievements and competencies are not always recognised. The formalisation of assessment and credentials in a way that is recognised from one region to another is also significant. Developing a means of accreditation is critical. An international baccalaureate could provide a global curriculum in a specific number of languages for those in transience.

Global educators need to reflect on and discuss what it truly means to provide education for a displaced young person, often likely to be displaced for the duration of their formative educational years. And not only within their formal education and attainment of basic skills, but also in being discerning critical thinkers ready to tackle the complex issues of the 21st century. Many young refugees want to return and rebuild their home countries.

We make the following calls for change:

We need to move beyond the narrative of ‘crisis’ to one of opportunity and cooperation.

Overall, there needs to be a shift in narrative and attitude when considering large-scale and long-term global displacement. The term ‘refugee crisis’ is a common phrase we are all familiar with. And while ‘crisis’ can at times be an apt descriptor of the difficulties and tensions of displacement, it is a narrative that lacks the pragmatism and innovation that can also be found in these situations. We look to academics, practitioners, thought leaders, social entrepreneurs and, of course, refugees themselves,

to diversify this narrative and include ways in which integration can reinforce the pre-existing skills and ambitions of refugees who are ready to contribute to their new localities.

There are many innovative examples that demonstrate how resourceful and pragmatic people can be, even in times of flux and uncertainty. The example of Hope School in Skaramagas refugee camp outside Athens is proof of the resourcefulness of individuals to respond to the needs of children and create a school, which can provide educational provision for hundreds of young people. Likewise, initiatives that time-share buildings in Lebanon demonstrate, that even when space is scarce, schools can still exist and provide support for large numbers of children. These, and many more examples, demonstrate that we need to move beyond global displacement as a purely humanitarian issue, and seek ways to link and cooperate with refugee communities within our global economy.

We need to embrace technology to enable better responses to educate refugee young people.

Technological advances offer some hope for tackling the enormous challenge of providing refugee education for large numbers of young people. The development of online educational resources, and the availability of mobile learning spaces and web platforms for teaching, offer new opportunities for education practitioners supporting refugee populations. These areas require concerted investment and support to increase their broad reach and influence.

Approaches to displacement have traditionally operated on a short-term basis. This has, in turn, influenced the ways in which funding streams, particularly in camps, have been distributed with particular priority on short-term needs. Strategies for both the integration of refugees in an urban context and the educational provision should begin to reflect the long-term realities of displacement. Investment in long-term technological education solutions is one key area to focus on.

Global connectors (including the RSA, and the many other bodies that convene networks of individuals and organisations) can support this, through networks which share and champion best practice with respect to refugee education.

There are many influential examples of good practice in refugee education from all over the world. This report has touched on a range of these, globally and more specifically in Athens, but there is a role for global connectors to play in sharing examples of good practice and promoting these among their networks. Opportunities like the WISE Award, to reward innovative initiatives, and Save the Children's 'Promising Practices' research, are important developments that will help to build up and evaluate these examples.⁵⁶

⁵⁶. See: Promising Practices in Refugee Education (n.d.) *Sourcing, documenting and promoting innovative practices in refugee education*, Available at: <https://www.promisingpractices.online/>

International schools networks should continue to play a significant role here. These global networks of schools can play a crucial part in sharing and disseminating good practice examples, both of their members who are supporting refugee education, but also that of influential education examples more broadly.

Beyond the policy and political sphere, there are many influential organisations at the city and neighbourhood level that could do more to support one another to achieve their aims and objectives. Collectively, a greater focus on connection and reciprocity would help to achieve this goal, making the most of grassroots support and the contributions of citizens and refugees themselves.

There are many ways in which organisations, grassroots initiatives and individuals within cities are stepping up to offer innovative solutions and creative support for delivering refugee education; Athens is no exception. We encourage efforts to foster connections and networks, particularly in seeking out ways to generate reciprocal opportunities to exchange resources, support and services. For example, community hubs often have premises that can be used and shared for community meetings and could be used as teaching environments. The initiatives growing out of Impact Hub are an example of the sorts of new and creative ideas that can emerge through creating a dynamic space for people to work in and share ideas.

Central to developing reciprocal networks is reflection on the questions ‘*what do I need?*’ and ‘*what can I offer?*’ as a way to both map contribution as well as areas that require support. It is rare that one charity, institution, or school can solve wicked problems alone, and in host nations it is essential to consider what resources and assets we can all contribute, share, trade and support one another with. Athens presents an example that demonstrates just how significant these connections are and how much can come from leveraging our connections.

Reciprocity is the basis for a responsive network built on the strengths and connections of the city. A dynamic, reciprocal approach to problem solving also allows all of us, ranging from those in a more privileged position to those with much less, to consider how we can leverage our contribution and our relationships. In taking this approach, we can all consider what we can offer, as well as what we might need in return, to support and promote the provision of refugee education, now and in the future.

The RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) believes that everyone should have the freedom and power to turn their ideas into reality – we call this the Power to Create. Through our ideas, research and 28,000-strong Fellowship, we seek to realise a society where creative power is distributed, where concentrations of power are confronted, and where creative values are nurtured.



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ISBN 978-1-911532-00-2