

- Committee:** The Economic and Social Council
- Issue:** Setting a Framework For Promoting Social and Economic Inclusion of Refugees
- Student Officer:** Amina El Aawar (ECOSOC President)

I. Introduction

The question of the social and economic inclusion of refugees is a crucial issue that is affecting the economic, social, and political situation globally. There are currently more than 21.3 million refugees worldwide, mostly comprising of Palestinian, Syrian, and Sub-Saharan refugees.¹ The refugees are affecting the host countries through stretching their economic resources.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), **economic inclusion** is that everyone has the right to work and governments are obliged to take progressive measures to safeguard this right, and that non-citizens who are lawfully present in a State (whom in this case are refugees) are entitled to treatment equal to that enjoyed by citizens in the realm of employment and work. Meanwhile, **social inclusion**, according to the World Bank is “The process of improving the terms for individuals and groups to take part in society, and the process of improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society.” The inclusion of refugees through economic and social policies is crucial for the welfare of refugees. The 1951 Refugee Convention outlines the country's legal obligations in regards of those displaced along with their right. Furthermore, it sets a definition for the term 'refugee,' which has been agreed upon by 145 countries. This convention acts as the basis of the UN.² based on the work of the refugee convention. However, most refugees are not met with their basic rights (according to their rights defined by the UN Refugee Agency) once they enter host nations, due to the overflow of refugees and the inability of the host country to admit or cater to these numbers. Furthermore, refugees from Palestine and Burma (Myanmar), for example, face the problem of lacking any citizenship or identification documents, thus, hindering any inclusion in the hosting community.

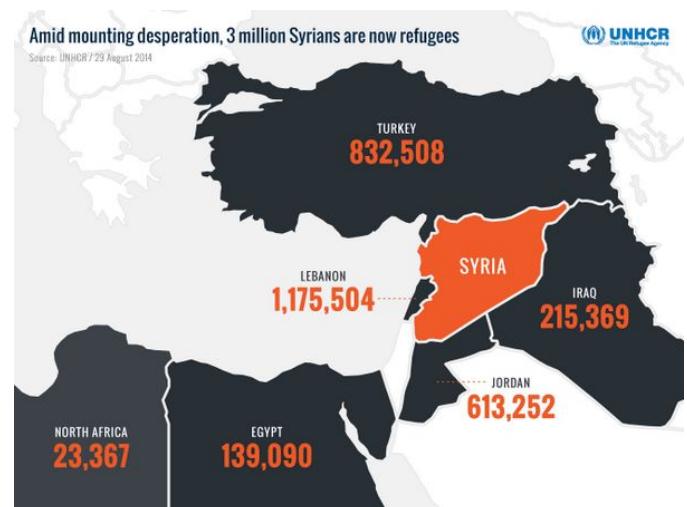


Figure 1- The resettlement of Syrian Refugees

Chester, Penelope. "Hundreds of Thousands of Syrian Refugees Need to Be Resettled." *UN Dispatch*, 21 Sept. 2015, www.undispatch.com/100k-resettlement-spots-syrian-refugees-falls-short/.

¹ "Listing of Most Important 15 Statistics on Refugees." *The Borgen Project*, 14 June 2017, borgenproject.org/15-statistics-on-refugees/.

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "The 1951 Refugee Convention." UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html.

II. Involved Countries and Organizations

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

“We want to ensure that refugee rights are upheld everywhere and that they have access to shelter, food, and health care. This must continue. But we also want to create opportunities for education and livelihoods. This is what refugees want desperately.”³ – Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, also known as the UN Refugee Agency, is a United Nations global program created in order to help and protect refugees, by guaranteeing them their basic rights and physical security. The UNHCR was created in 1950 after the Second World War, focusing mainly on helping Europeans who fled or have lost their homes. “We prompt inclusion as a fundamental aspect of our work,” said Filippo Grandi. The UNHCR has created a strategic directions plan starting from 2017 until 2021 to cope with the ongoing refugee crisis, tackling five main points: 1) Protect, 2) Response, 3) Include, 4) Empower 5) Solve. Actions will be put under these five main points by working closely with states who are important in providing protection and enabling solutions to problems facing the refugees, and by “putting people first.” The UNHCR focuses on putting these people as the main priority, with their continuous field presence, which currently includes 450 offices in 128 countries, and by striving to make sure that their perspectives and priorities are heard.⁴

Syria

“Syria is the biggest humanitarian and refugee crisis of our time, a continuing cause of suffering for millions which should be garnering a groundswell of support around the world,”⁵ said Filippo Grandi, UNHCR.

An estimate of 5 million Syrians have fled their homes since 2011: 3 million refugees in Turkey, 1 million in Lebanon, 660,000 in Jordan, 242,000 in Iraq and 122,000 in Egypt. Considering that Lebanon and Jordan are bordering countries with Syria, and one of the most accepting countries for refugees.

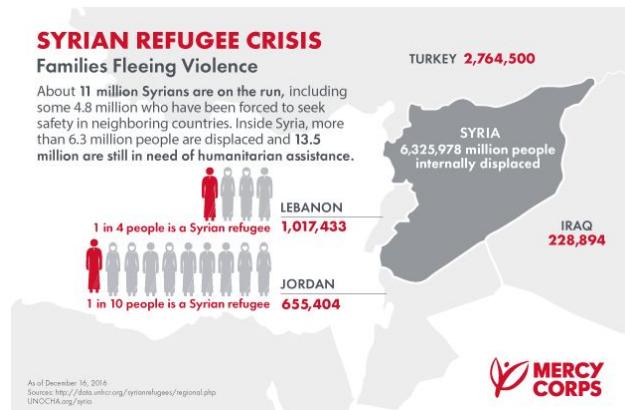


Figure 2- Syrian Refugees Crisis

“Quick Facts: What You Need to Know about the Syria Crisis.” Mercy Corps, 31 Oct. 2017, www.mercycorps.org/articles/iraq-jordan-lebanon-syria-turkey/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-syria-crisis.

³“11 Humanitarian Quotes to #ShareHumanity.” United Nations Foundation 11 Humanitarian Quotes to ShareHumanity Comments, 13 May 2016, unfoundationblog.org/11-humanitarian-quotes-to-sharehumanity/.

⁴United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. “UNHCR’s Strategic Directions 2017-2021.” UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/excom/announce/5894558d4/unhcrs-strategic-directions-2017-2021.html.

⁵United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. “Syria Emergency.” UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html.

Syrians started fleeing their homes when anti-government demonstrations began in March of 2011; demonstration which were no longer peaceful after the government's violent crackdown, after which armed opposition groups began fighting back. Division "between secular and religious fighters, and between ethnic groups, continue to complicate the politics of the conflict." Six years after an estimate of 470,000 people were killed and bombs destroying cities and violating human rights.

Turkey

Turkey hosts the largest community of refugees from Syria. "Turkey's Syrian refugees population was more than 1.7 million according to the United Nations estimate, and approximately about 45% of the total refugees residing in Turkey."⁶ Turkey's economy is expanding up to 3-4% based on the Paris-based Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development which is a "unique forum where the governments of 34 democracies with market economies work with each other, as well as with more than 70 non-member economies to promote economic growth, prosperity, and sustainable development".⁷ Economists at the World Bank mentioned that "The Turkish government has spent nearly 5.37 billion euros since the refugees first began arriving, entirely funded through its own fiscal resources. While this is undoubtedly a lot of money, there is no indication that this spending has jeopardized the country's fiscal sustainability."⁸ "Turkey's annual G.D.P. is about eight hundred billion dollars. At about one and a half billion dollars a year, the cost of resettling the Syrian refugees has been less than 0.2 per cent of the G.D.P." Turkey also accepts the largest amounts of refugees due to its agreement with the EU, which grants Turkey 3 million Euros from the EU, in order to assist the refugees seeking asylum in Turkey, and it also grants visa-free access for Turkish citizens to EU countries. Furthermore, Turkey is in fact failing to protect refugees under international law and that there were "restricted rights and little-to-no-state support"⁹ for immigrant workers and their families.

III. Focused Overview of the Issue

The social and economic inclusion of refugees is one of the major issues refugees face as they arrive to different host countries. Alice Beste from the UN University, the academic and research arm of the United Nations, states, "Although refugees have legal authorization to work in Europe, many are not able to exercise this right in practice as they face a number of barriers to

⁶ Zeldin, Wendy. *Refugee Law and Policy: Turkey*, 1 Mar. 2016, www.loc.gov/law/help/refugee-law/turkey.php.

⁷ Cassidy, John. "The Economics of Syrian Refugees." *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 19 June 2017, www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/the-economics-of-syrian-refugees.

⁸Cassidy, John. "The Economics of Syrian Refugees." *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 19 June 2017, www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/the-economics-of-syrian-refugees.

⁹Zeldin, Wendy. *Refugee Law and Policy: Turkey*, 1 Mar. 2016, www.loc.gov/law/help/refugee-law/turkey.php.

enter the workforce. Many arrive without professional documentation and few have work references or knowledge of the host labor market. Those that do have professional documentation usually have to undergo lengthy, expensive and bureaucratic procedures for the recognition of their qualifications.¹⁰ Furthermore, many discrimination incidents take place towards refugees due to their ethnicity, religion, or origin.

Social Inclusion

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights promoted in one research paper on Refugees' inclusion that, "EU Member States should include in their national integration policies specific reference to the fundamental rights that apply to everyone living in the European Union, including the right to equal treatment and non-discrimination. In parallel, they should increase their efforts to raise awareness about fundamental rights and the EU's values and principles among both the host society and migrants."¹¹

One of the major problems is that refugees are not always legally given the rights of social inclusion, as Integration is a two-way process that requires mutual effort by the citizens of a country and the immigrants. For integration to occur, it requires an equal and long term effort by each and every immigrant and citizen.

Immigrants have to learn to adapt to the rules, responsibilities, and rights of their new residence. Along with that, the receiving society should put an effort in creating political, economic and social opportunities for the immigrants; for example, offering jobs and political rights. Based on that, member states are encouraged to involve both residents and immigrants in the integration process.

Most refugees are not provided with sufficient educational facilities nor medical facilities in the camps, especially in the Middle East.

In the case of Jordan, it has taken in over half a million Syrian refugees since 2011. By 2013, 187,675 school-aged Syrian refugees were registered in Jordan, only 83,232¹² of

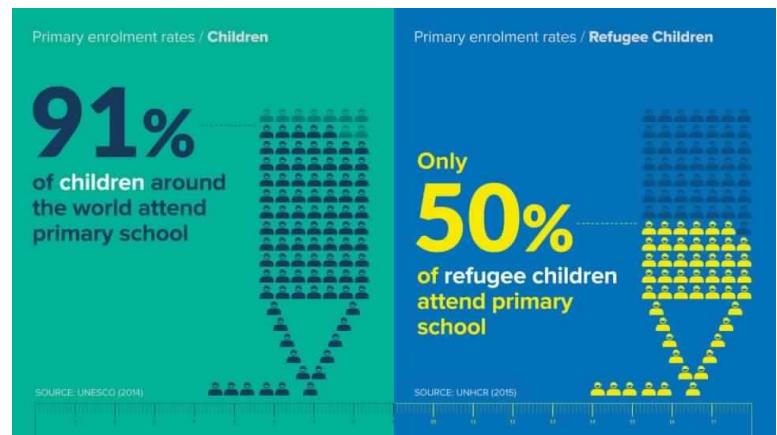


Figure 3- UNHCR reports crisis in refugee education

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "UNHCR Reports Crisis in Refugee Education." UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/news/press/2016/9/57d7d6f34/unhcr-reports-crisis-refugee-education.html.

¹⁰OurWorld20. "The Contributions of Refugees: Lifting Barriers to Inclusion." Our World, ourworld.unu.edu/en/the-contributions-of-refugees-lifting-barriers-to-inclusion.

¹¹"European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights." Together in the EU - Promoting the Participation of Migrants and Their Descendants | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 1 Jan. 1970, fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2017/migrant-participation.

¹² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "UNHCR Reports Crisis in Refugee Education." UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/news/press/2016/9/57d7d6f34/unhcr-reports-crisis-refugee-education.html.

which were enrolled in education. However, the remaining 56 percent received no education, and that is only in Jordan, who actually does provide an education to a certain extent, unlike most host countries.

Refugees suffer from physical and mental pains as well. A huge percentage of refugees experience post-traumatic stress disorder, due to the dangerous and shocking events they often go through. This disorder increases the chance for suicide and may affect the people's ability to function. Refugees also suffer from many health problems, mainly due to the poor sanitation of refugee camps. Also contact between humans and mosquitoes increase the likelihood that they would get diseases in refugee camps. To counter that, refugee camps in Iraq, for example, now include clinics, as well as a mental health care center. The World Health Organization and its partners stress the need for a better understanding of health conditions and services in order to properly take care of the Syrian refugees.

Economic Inclusion

A major concern when it comes to the economic inclusion of refugees is with the response towards the influx of refugees; how refugees take the jobs of native workers and reduce wages. "Refugee populations are actively engaged with host-country economies in an effort to improve their circumstances."¹³ Refugees take jobs that the natives don't want. Also, the refugees create their own businesses, and could be seen as increased customers for domestic enterprises.

Refugees in host countries are willing to accept lower wages and harsher working conditions than the natives in the country. When refugees are competing with natives, it puts more pressure on authorities of host countries to enforce labour standards such as minimum wage, working hours and safety at work. For example, with regards to Syrian refugees whom have found asylum in Jordan, a study has found that "unemployment amongst Jordanians in three areas with high concentrations of Syrian refugees – the capital Amman and the northern governorates of Irbid and Mafraq – rose from 14.5 per cent to 22.1 per cent between 2011 and 2014,"¹⁴ which is based on a survey of approximately 4,000 Jordanian and Syrian households in an area where three quarters of the Syrian refugees in Jordan are present. The situation of refugees working in both host communities and inside refugee camps has shown that almost all of them



¹³Cassidy, John. "The Economics of Syrian Refugees." *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 19 June 2017, www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/the-economics-of-syrian-refugees.

¹⁴ "Informally Employed Syrian Refugees, Working under Harsh Conditions, Further Strain Jordanian Labour Market." Study: *Informally Employed Syrian Refugees, Working under Harsh Conditions, Further Strain Jordanian Labour Market*, 18 May 2015, www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/news/WCMS_369592/lang--en/index.htm.

do not have work permits, and are therefore employed in the informal economy and outside the bounds of labour law.

In most markets, refugees are generally paid less. According to the same study, “15 percent of Jordanians made less than 200 Jordanian dinars (about \$US 282) a month, while as many as 44 per cent of Syrian refugees working outside camps made less 200 Jordanian dinars a month.” Besides the fact that the refugees are paid less, they also work longer hours. About 30 percent of Syrian refugees worked more than 60 hours a week, with 16 percent working 80 hours or more.

The majority of refugees who obtain work in host countries occupy low-skilled and low-wage jobs. Some are able to take these jobs upon arrival hence increasing competition with host community workers. About 30% of Jordanian workers who used to work in agriculture and construction no longer work there after the refugee crisis.

IV. Key Vocabulary

Refugee¹⁵: A person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or a natural disaster.

Asylum¹⁶: The protection granted by a state to someone who has left their home country as a political refugee.

Inclusion¹⁷: The action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure.

Influx¹⁸: An arrival or entry of large numbers of people or things.

V. Important Events and Chronology

Date	Event
1948	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UDHR, states that “if people need to be treated with dignity, they require both social and economic rights”

¹⁵ “Refugee | Definition of Refugee in English by Oxford Dictionaries.” Oxford Dictionaries | English, Oxford Dictionaries, en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/refugee.

¹⁶ “Asylum | Definition of Asylum in English by Oxford Dictionaries.” Oxford Dictionaries | English, Oxford Dictionaries, en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/asylum.

¹⁷ “Inclusion | Definition of Inclusion in English by Oxford Dictionaries.” Oxford Dictionaries | English, Oxford Dictionaries, en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/inclusion.

¹⁸ “Influx | Definition of Influx in English by Oxford Dictionaries.” Oxford Dictionaries | English, Oxford Dictionaries, en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/influx.

	which shows the importance of granting refugees their social and economic rights, which all countries that signed the UDHR agreed upon.
1951	UN Refugee Convention was created to outline the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of states in order to protect them.
1967	The Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, which is a key treaty in international refugee law that includes 147 countries.
2011	The Syrian refugee crisis started and the UN identified that 13.5 million Syrians require humanitarian assistance.

VI. Past Resolutions and Treaties

Selected UN General Assembly Resolution on Refugees and Related Matter talks about the refugees and their economic and social burden and placement of the refugees

<http://www.unhcr.org/4b9fb1199.pdf>

69/152. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Focusing on the inclusion of the refugees in the host country and making sure of their safe environment and including in ways such as creating birth certificates in the host country in order to become part of the country.

<http://www.unhcr.org/excom/bgares/55e054479/office-united-nations-high-commissioner-refugees.html>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees." *UNHCR*, www.unhcr.org/excom/bgares/55e054479/office-united-nations-high-commissioner-refugees.html.

VII. Failed Solutions Attempts

Countries are using refugee camps as the long term solution for the inclusion of refugees socially and economically, even though "refugee camps are designed for the short term: to meet an emergency need and then disappear."¹⁹ A refugee camp isn't the ideal place in which proper inclusion of refugees can occur and the "average amount of stay in a refugee camp may lead up to twelve years or more."²⁰ This leads to failure of inclusion considering that these camps are made only for the short term while inclusion can not occur on the short term. In addition, refugee camps conditions do not really allow for the inclusion of refugees.

VIII. Possible Solutions

- Providing financial support for host countries by the UNHCR in order to provide socially and economically for the refugees

¹⁹ Renner, Nausicaa. "The Failure of Refugee Camps." *Boston Review*, 24 Nov. 2015, bostonreview.net/editors-picks-world/elizabeth-dunn-failure-refugee-camps.

²⁰ U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, www.state.gov/j/prm/policyissues/issues/protracted/.

- Access to an education which allows the refugees to be involved socially in the society
- Creation of a department of health care for refugees
- Language courses and cultural tutorials in order for refugees to become included in the society
- Awareness campaigns for natives to accept refugees

IX. Useful Links

To understand the Social and Economic impact of large refugee populations on host developing countries:

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Social and Economic Impact of Large Refugee Populations on Host Developing Countries." *UNHCR*, www.unhcr.org/excom/standcom/3ae68d0e10/social-economic-impact-large-refugee-populations-host-developing-countries.html

Ways for refugees to contribute to host countries, and "lifting barriers to Inclusion":
 OurWorld20. "The Contributions of Refugees: Lifting Barriers to Inclusion." *Our World*, www.ourworld.unu.edu/en/the-contributions-of-refugees-lifting-barriers-to-inclusion

What cultures can do for the social inclusion of refugees:

"What Can Culture Do for the Social Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees? - Creative Europe - European Commission." *Creative Europe*, 3 Sept. 2017, www.ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/news/20170309-what-can-culture-do-social-inclusion-migrants-and-refugees_en.

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