

Forum: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Issue: Promoting the Social Inclusion of Refugees in their Host Nation

Name: Derya Okten

Position: Head Chair - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Introduction:

As of the end of 2023, 117.3 million people are forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order according to the UNHCR. Because of heightened political tensions, especially seen in recent years, our world is facing unprecedented and overwhelming levels of displacement globally, presenting significant challenges for host nations to assist and act in due time. Effective social inclusion strategies play a major role in the long-term success of refugee resettlement, even while urgent humanitarian aid is vital.

The economic challenge currently faced by refugees and nations hosting them is that an increasing number of middle-income countries (MICs) are opening their doors to host refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers. Despite having only 37 percent of global GDP, MICs host 75 percent of the world's refugees (World Bank).

In order to ensure that refugees have access to opportunities and resources that will enable them to succeed, social inclusion for refugees entails integrating these people into the social, economic, and cultural fabric of their host countries. Strong social inclusion benefits host communities' social cohesiveness and stability in addition to improving the wellbeing of refugees, overall adding to the quality and diversification of the host country.

Definition of Key Terms:

- 1. Refugee:** An individual who has been forced to flee their home country due to fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.
- 2. Host Nation:** Host nations are countries that receive and provide temporary or permanent residence for migrants. They serve as the new home for

individuals or groups who have migrated from their country of origin. (Collins Dictionary)

3. **Social Inclusion:** The process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society (World Bank)
4. **Integration:** Occurs when separate people or things are brought together (Vocabulary)
5. **IDP:** Abbreviation for Internally Displaced People
6. **MIC:** Abbreviation for Middle Income Countries
7. **Supnationals:** Entities that operate above individual countries, having authority or influence that extends across national borders. They are formed when multiple nations collaborate to address shared issues and make collective decisions that impact all member countries.

Background Information

Timelines of Refugee Crisis and Social Inclusion

In 1951, the Refugee Convention is adopted into the UN, highlighting several rights that refugees are entitled to, including asserting the right that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom and the basic minimum treatment and rights of refugees including housing, work and living rights that are recognised internationally.

The UNHCR's Mandate Expansion

In 1999, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) formally expanded its mandate to include social inclusion and integration for refugees in addition to basic rights aforementioned to improve the quality of life for refugees and include long term strategies along with immediate protection in foreign areas.

Adoption of the New York Declaration and Global Compact

In September of 2016, The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants was adopted by the UN General Assembly, reaffirming the importance of the international

refugee regime and containing a range of commitments for member countries to acknowledge (UNHCR).

In December of 2018, the Global Compact on Refugees was adopted, a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation (UNHCR). The four key objectives of the Global Compact include easing the pressures on host countries, enhancing refugee self-reliance, expanding access to third-country solutions and supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic

Already vulnerable refugees and other displaced people lack access to basic healthcare services and equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic, and already scarce employment opportunities are almost impossible to find. Additionally, over 60% of refugees experience significant mental health issues, including PTSD, exacerbated by the pandemic and ongoing conflicts. This data underscores the need for targeted mental health support within inclusion efforts (WHO, 2021).

Refugee Origination (as of 2023)

Country	Refugee Amount (million)
Afghanistan	6.4
Syrian Arab Republic	6.4
Venezuela	6.1
Ukraine	6.0
South Sudan	2.3

Highest Host Country Acceptance of Refugees (as of 2023)

Country	Refugee Amount (million)
Islamic Republic of Iran	3.8
Türkiye	3.3
Colombia	2.9
Germany	2.6
Pakistan	2.0

Current Situation

Living Conditions and Educational Opportunities

Nearly 60% of refugees live in cities rather than camps, according to current statistics, which emphasises the significance of community-based inclusion methods (UNHCR, 2024). Despite these initiatives, refugees frequently face significant challenges even after arriving in their host country. For example, relative to the national average, refugee unemployment rates in many host countries can reach 20%. Education attainment is also an issue, with only 50% of refugee children having access to secondary education in some regions (UNICEF, 2023).

Access to education remains a critical issue, with only about 50% of refugee children having access to secondary education in some regions (UNICEF, 2023). Limited educational opportunities can hinder refugees' long-term prospects and contribute to their socio-economic marginalisation, impacting their safety and integration into society.

Safety Concerns

Numerous statistics demonstrate the vulnerability of displaced individuals in both host nations and displacement circumstances, making their safety a crucial concern to highlight. Promoting their effective integration and well-being requires addressing these safety risks.

Violence and Exploitation

People who have been relocated to foreign countries are often unfamiliar with the environment they have been exposed to and are often more vulnerable to violence and threats. According to a 2023 UNHCR report, refugees, especially women and children, are disproportionately affected by violence. Approximately 30% of refugee women and girls report experiencing sexual violence, reflecting a severe safety gap in many host environments (UNHCR, 2023).

Access to Legal Rights and Protection

Unfortunately, legal rights and protections from host countries tend to be a major issue towards displaced people. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported in 2023 that only 40% of refugees have adequate access to legal support and protection services (IOM, 2023) and may endanger the safety of refugees; especially if they're not made fully aware of the extent to their access to legal protection.

Implemented Solutions

To combat the growing issue of refugee numbers and host nation accommodation, there have been several attempts to implement solutions. Some that have failed include trying to implement overly restrictive asylum policies. Countries like Hungary and Poland implemented highly restrictive asylum policies that led to significant delays and human rights concerns, not limiting to extending periods in detention or poor living conditions in camps. Additionally, the key reason why some solutions implemented are failing are because they lack a long term plan and are rather quick fixes or short term solutions that do not benefit either refugees or the host countries well. To be able to establish successful and resolute solutions in this debate, delegates are highly encouraged by the chairs to plan for the future thoughtfully of both the host nations and refugees to increase the success of refugee inclusion and integration.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

European Union (EU)

The European Union's stance on refugee inclusion and integration into host nations can paradoxically be seen as supportive and restrictive. While they encourage policies surrounding the social inclusion of refugees such as funding for programs and aid especially around countries where refugee influx is high, they also enforce strict border controls and

migration policies. This includes a policy called the Dublin Regulation, that assigns asylum application responsibility to the first country of entry, increasing pressure on countries like Greece and Italy where transit of refugees are high.

Greece

Greece, being one of the primary entry points as a country for refugees crossing the Mediterranean, has faced significant challenges grappling with the amount of refugees coming in. In 2023 alone, approximately 40,000 people landed on Greek islands, with Lesbos being a major hub for these refugees mainly from Africa and the Middle East. The Greek government has faced criticism under their handling of refugee immigration, with many refugees facing poor camp conditions, extended asylum processing and reports of hostility from the public and even coast guards sending refugees back to the sea, resulting in the deaths of dozens of refugees according to the BBC. Italy is in a similar position to Greece due to its close proximity to the coastlines.



Fig. 1: Sea routes taken by refugees

United States of America (U.S.A)

The U.S. has faced significant refugee challenges at its southern border, particularly in states like Texas and Arizona, where migrants from Mexico seek new opportunities. In 2023, over 2.5 million encounters were reported at the southern border. To support social inclusion and integration, the U.S. utilises federal programs such as the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). However, the country has been criticised for limited success in granting asylum and for significant delays. During the Trump administration (2016-2020), the refugee admissions ceiling was reduced to a record low of 18,000, exacerbating these concerns.

NGO Representatives

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a global human rights organisation that campaigns to end human rights abuses and promote justice, freedom, and equality worldwide (Amnesty International). Amnesty International strongly advocates for the rights of those who don't have a voice and is adamant about incorporating community programs and for governments to provide basic necessities like adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and healthcare in their host nations. These measures and Amnesty's monitoring of the progress and action taken by countries is crucial for enabling refugees to rebuild their lives and fully participate in their new societies.

Open Arms

Open Arms is an NGO that focuses on rescuing and assisting refugees specifically in need of help crossing the Mediterranean Sea where many attempt dangerous journeys to escape conflict, persecution, or poverty. Founded in 2015 by Spanish activist Òscar Camps, Open Arms remains diligent in their mission to rescue and rehabilitate as many refugees crossing these dangerous sea routes. In addition to real time sea rescue, Open Arms also offers legal advocacy, access to integration programs, psychosocial support as well as raising public awareness in local communities about the refugee crisis.

Supranationals

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The UNHCR strongly supports and actively engages with member nations and respective governments to address topics related to the safety and wellbeing of refugees worldwide and work to ensure they have access to essential services and opportunities. They work to advocate for policies that promote integration for refugees to access job opportunities, education and adequate healthcare and overall enhance refugees' participation in social, economic, and cultural life.

World Bank

The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides financial and technical assistance to developing countries to support economic development and reduce poverty (World Bank). Their efforts to support refugees are more financially heavy; integrating them into through investments in education, job opportunities and healthcare. To note, The World Bank consists of two main parts: the International Bank for Reconstruction

and Development (IBRD), which provides loans to middle-income and creditworthy low-income countries, and the International Development Association (IDA), which offers concessional loans and grants to the world's poorest nations.

International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

The IOM is an intergovernmental organisation that provides services and advice concerning migration to governments and migrants alike (IOM). They not only focus on refugee support but those also displaced by events such as natural disasters through on-site emergency relief, resettlement and integration assistance into host nations. The IOM acts as a bridge between host nations and migrants so that migration is beneficial for both the migrant and the host nation's communities.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants
 - Adopted on September 19, 2016 with member nations unanimously agreeing that the refugee crisis is a global one
 - Ease the pressures on host countries and communities;
 - Enhance refugee self-reliance;
 - Expand third-country solutions; and
 - Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.
- The Global Compact on Refugees
 - Framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation (GCR).
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (**A/RES/217 III**)
 - Adopted in 1948, the UDHR serves as a global framework for promoting and defending human rights, it lays out a common standard of fundamental freedoms and rights for all people, irrespective of their nationality, ethnicity, or other distinctions. It emphasises and tackles issues of justice, freedom, and respect for all people, including access to healthcare.
 - While the UDHR is not legally binding, it has inspired countries all over the world and over 80 human rights treaties. It also creates a basis of the fundamental values. Furthermore, it has had a major influence on the development of international human rights.

- Protection of Migrants, December 19, 2017, UN General Assembly Resolution, **(A/RES/72/152)**
 - Safeguarding migrant rights and enhancing international cooperation.
 - Recognizes migrants' contributions to host societies
 - Emphasises protection of migrants' human rights
 - Supports implementation of the Global Compact for Migration
 - Encourages international solidarity and support for host countries
- **Global Concessional Finance Facility (GCFF)**
 - Established in 2016 by the World Bank, the UN and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) initially as a response to the Syrian refugee crisis
 - The GCFF aims to provide financing to support projects that benefit both refugees and host nations to further promote social inclusion of refugees
 - Funding from GCFF is vital to strengthen infrastructure, provide essentials like education and healthcare
 - Collaborates with international organisations such as the UNHCR to ensure funding is aligned with global standards and upholds quality for refugees
 - Uses impact measurement tools to monitor progress on both refugees and host nations, helping to refine and improve social inclusion strategies.

Possible Solutions

Aligning Refugee Admissions with National Capacity

Despite providing a global public good by hosting significant numbers of refugees, MICs do not have access to the same levels or types of concessional and grant financing available to low-income countries (LICs) to address fiscal stresses on services, infrastructure, and the economy (World Bank). To ensure a balanced approach that supports the quality of life for both refugees seeking shelter and local residents maintaining their livelihoods through employment, establish a global framework that allocates refugee resettlement based on each nation's economic capacity and resources.

Refugee Worker Programs with Restricted Rights

To avoid resentment and tensions between the host nation's locals and refugees seeking asylum within said country, implementing a system where refugees are granted temporary work visas rather than full asylum status can allow them to work and contribute

economically without granting permanent residency or full citizenship rights, aiding in addressing labour shortages and provide immediate sources of income to already vulnerable groups of people. Applications for full asylum grants can be permitted after a certain quota of work hours are completed.

Improving Conditions for Safe Refugee Repatriation

To ease the overwhelming numbers of refugees that host nations may be struggling to handle, investing in infrastructure, governance, and economic opportunities to rebuild communities, improve security, and ensure basic services in refugees' country of origin can stop the problem of displacement at its source. By addressing root causes of displacement and fostering local stability, this approach aims to facilitate the safe return of refugees and their successful reintegration into their home countries.

Bibliography

Useful Links + Works Cited

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- [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.](#)
- [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.](#)
- [Mental Health of Refugees: An Overview.](#)
- [The Refugee Project](#) (recommend using as a resource)
- [Tracking Refugee Movement](#)
- [UNHCR - Maps](#)
- [BBC: Greek coastguard threw migrants overboard to their deaths](#)