

Education for refugees and unaccompanied minors: a needed reality

Maddalena Colombo

Director of CIRMiB

Università Cattolica, Brescia (ITALY)



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore



**Ensuring continuity in
education for refugee**

***1st multiplier event, the 28th of
January 2022***

Università di Urbino

Collection of 9 essays/studies (Colombo & Scardigno, 2019)

- Gathered in 2018, among the convenors to the middle-term conference of ESA-AIS in Catania (field of study: sociology)
- Divided in 3 sections: «education policies for migrants», «adults as social actors of migration», «minors as social actors of migration»
- Introduction by Stefania Giannini (Assistant of General Director Education at UNESCO): «*we need evidence-based knowledge to maintain that the cultural capital is a fundamental source of citizenship rights for displaced people*»

Where education for refugees and unaccompanied minors is carried out



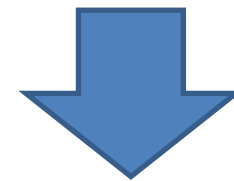
In:

Adult education in evening courses (CPIA)

Vocational Training centres

Special courses in Universities

Prisons



Risk of educational segregation



Issues at stake

1. This kind of education is «**necessary but difficult**»: what kind of processes are brought about in it?
2. In what conditions is it possible to achieve **good results** (i.e. the completion of a course of study, the acquisition of an European certificate, etc. ?
3. What **reactions** do the «**school actors**» have when refugees and unaccompanied minors are attending education activities due to their multicultural backgrounds and life precariousness ? **Teachers, Principals, students, etc.**
4. What is needed to improve the **effectiveness of the educational policy** for refugees and unaccompanied minors ?

Sociological Meanings

What is «human capital» (HC) for displaced people?

- HC is a **lever of their success in migration** and integration in the host country
- HC is needed for **capability boosting**: skills, knowledge, interests, aspirations, preferences, desires and communication codes
- Developing HC leads to **overcome «victimisation»** of migrant people
 - *Within the educational contexts the multicultural background is a **resource for innovation, global thinking, and diversity advantage***



Education as a right and a duty



- **For each person** (*no matter where she/he lives or where she/he is moving to*): everyone needs education to support autonomy and promote social and civic participation
- **For the State / community** : culture is a common good that must be equally distributed. The State will ensure its own identity and continuity if every citizen is aware of hes/her own cultural ties.

New comers



Second generation

- 1) Avoiding educational waste
- 2) Preventing school dropout for economic or cultural / familiar reasons

Social Research on Education for refugees

- A **new field of investigation** → a sort of «slippering» object because it is out of the formal education system
- **Quantitative data**: what kinds of activity, who attend, how many and what kind of participants, which courses/activities are successful and which are not,
- **Qualitative data**: participant observation, in-depth interview, collection of auto-biographies, etc. ... to analyse the occurring processes :

**teaching to illiterate adult students;
diversity management in the classroom;
reducing inequalities;
life-balance for at-risk young migrants;
stereotypisation and discrimination of
refugees;
recognition of academic qualifications;
guidance to work;
access to social and health care services**

Examples of stressful situation for teachers:

(evening courses at CPIA) Old teachers, with traditional mindsets, have to deal with unaccompanied young migrants, whose cultural background is often very low, or far from the western culture

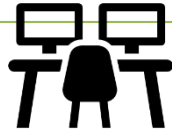
students are «minors» for the law but they have a long (and often negative) life experience on their shoulders... → risk of dis-connection and misunderstanding

educational times and programs do not fit these students

teachers are not able to customise them

Patterns within educational settings

Bureaucratic:



enhancing technical skills
and school authority

- Accomplishment of expected standards
- Respect for procedures
- Application of rewards and penalties



***...make Universalistic and Effective
an educational institution***

Creative and customised:

Organising the welcoming of
displaced people



- Unrestricting of the rules
- Making the inclusion possible
- Valorising the «exceptional» of each student
- Cooperative style of teaching/learning



No «welfarism»
No «racialism»

Super-diversity: 'diversification of diversity'

BY VERTOVEC: *A high level and kind of complexity of the nature of immigration, in terms of: ethnicities, languages, religions, countries of origin, migration channels and immigrant legal statuses (economic migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers etc.).*

Increased diversity not only between natives and immigrants, but also within them.



Multiple differences characterize the emergent social patterns and conditions and pose significant challenges for policy and research.

Superdiversity in education: loss or advantage?

- Lack of preparation among teachers
- Routinisation of teaching practices
- Isolation of/within a single establishment

A new challenge:

- Making experience of superdiversity in order to become intermediators of:
 - *school integration*
 - *social integration*

UNIVERSITÀ CATTOLICA del Sacro Cuore

CIRMiB

Centro di Iniziative e Ricerche
sulle Migrazioni - Brescia

contact:

Maddalena.colombo@unicatt.it

Thanks!