



**CHAPTER 24**

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEMS FOR  
IMMIGRANT SOCIAL INTEGRATION:  
A REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

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# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEMS FOR IMMIGRANT SOCIAL INTEGRATION: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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## **Abstract**

In the 21st century, there has been a growing global awareness of the issue of international migration. War, violence, starvation, famine, and climate change are all contributing factors to the exodus of people from their home countries. Migrants are more likely to choose socially, economically, culturally, and legally developed nations. On the other hand, migrants have various impacts on the country they migrate to. As a result, it's essential to give immigrants new living arrangements and life dynamics. For immigrants to integrate into and be accepted by the society they came from, the educational system is essential. Education systems that prioritize inclusivity and tolerance for diversity generate a greater number of immigration policies and aid in the social adjustment of migrants. However, exclusionary and marginalizing attitudes and actions in society can result from nation-state-based education systems that are far from inclusive and view diversity as a threat. As a result, immigrants may get marginalized and develop their own cliques. Studies indicate that quality education and social cohesiveness in immigrant education are greatly enhanced by multicultural practices, language education support programs, and early childhood education in particular.

## **Keywords**

*Refugee Education, Early Childhood Education, Cultural Adaptation,  
Social Cohesion, Policy Recommendations*

## **Introduction**

Education is one of the fundamental human rights. Education not only contributes to the development of the individual but also creates a society living in welfare and peace. Education workers often act together with experts working in nutrition, health and child protection (International Organization for Migration, 2021). Effective education and social policies are important for refugee children to successfully integrate into society. The education system is essential for refugees to express themselves as content members of society, to contribute to its welfare, and to join the workforce that the society needs. The education system should nurture refugee children's sense of belonging to society, increase their life satisfaction, reduce their anxiety and stress, and increase their motivation to succeed. (OECD, 2018). Additionally, teachers' awareness of their students' linguistic and cultural heritage, supportive peer relationships, successful acculturation, high aspirations in school, inspirational tales, parental involvement in the school, family unity and a supportive environment, accurate educational assessment, and culturally sensitive school transitions were all important resource factors for success (Graham et al., 2016).

Education of refugee children is important to promote their academic success, contribute to their well-being, allow them to gain confidence, improve their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and make them an active individual of society. The school system is the most important institution in helping kids adjust to society. Schools are vital places for children to unite and be a part of society, especially for refugee children. (Uptin et al., 2013). The school is a door to education, rights, and social support units not only for the children but also for the families. Children who come from different cultures may be less successful than their peers, even though they receive better education and support from the country they come from. Individuals with immigration status are more likely to reside in and attend schools in areas with lower socioeconomic status. Therefore, the quality of the education received also decreases. Another relationship between migration and education varies depending on what job opportunities are available in the country of origin and which professions and skills are valued (Team et al., 2018). On the other hand, immigration and citizenship policies can prevent access to quality education. Restrictive immigration policies, conflicts between laws, legal documents required in the host country and language problems can hinder quality education. Therefore, to overcome these problems, education policies should support refugee children's participation in school (UNESCO, 2018).

Immigration is often seen as a threat to national identity (Ha & Jang, 2015). However, the adaptation of migrants and the acquisition of cultural values can be transferred to individuals through education. Besides that, the education and the adaptation process to individuals must be based on national and universal values. Otherwise, it is unfortunate that during the adaptation process of refugee children, there may be accusations of assimilation policies. It is important to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that respects the cultural backgrounds and identities of these children while also providing support for their integration into their new communities (Pless & Maak, 2004). This can be achieved through culturally sensitive education and community programs that prioritize the well-being and success of these children. As a result, it can be predicted that individuals who grow up with universal values will have more tolerance bringing more success and happiness.

The holistic approach is the approach that should be taken in the education of refugee children. In order for refugee children to adapt to the society and education system, the child's happiness, safety and social cohesion are important. A strong school, family, and community cooperation is required to provide these for the child. Children who are forced to relocate due to war or other unfavorable circumstances must acclimate to their new living environment. To carry out this they have to learn the culture and language of their new home and develop a new sense of belonging (Rutter, 2011). For refugee children to develop new lives and acculturate, social connections and the new society's culture are crucial to their education (Paat, 2013).

In this research, the following research questions were structured by the researcher

- What are the important factors affecting the adaptation of refugee individuals to social life?
- What are the benefits of multicultural education practices for refugee individuals?

## Methodology

This study is designed within the qualitative research perspective with a systematic review of the papers and reports on international migration and national education system. Systematic reviews allows authors to evaluate the previous researchs and reports and contribute to the literature with new and contemporary developments for a more global perspective on the subject (Newman & Gough, 2020). Within this scope, Major studies considering the relationship between international migration and national education in a critical context are considered. The study used document analysis to cover the topic, allowing researcher to evaluate and comments the scientific studies and current materials on related subject (Hu et al., 2008).

## Systematic Review

Three policies are crucial for refugees' access to quality education. Early childhood education, language training support programs for children, and multicultural education practices (curricula, teachers' skills and preparation to teach culturally diverse children, learning and teaching materials) are important components of quality migrant education (UNESCO, 2018).

### Early childhood education

Early childhood is a critical period for cognitive, social emotional, language, physical development. Effective and comprehensive early childhood education programs provide a strong foundation for cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, which is essential for well being, academic achievement and success in school. The participation of refugee children in early childhood education programs should be prioritized. As a matter of fact, the European Commission aims to make early childhood education and care accessible to refugee children in its 2021-2027 targets. Research shows that refugee children have lower rates of participation in pre-school education compared to the local population. Countries need to support participation in early childhood education for refugee children's healthy integration into society. For example, in Denmark, three-year-old children are given a language test, and children whose Danish language level is not sufficient are referred to pre-school education and language support programs are implemented. Social assistance is reduced for families who do not accept the support language programs (Foged & Van der Werf, 2023).

Children who migrate to a different country at an early age are more likely to actively participate in the education system and achieving well academically. This can be explained by the fact that younger immigrants acquire the language more quickly, overcome linguistic barriers, and more easily assimilate into the customs and values of the new nation (Lazear, 1999). For this reason, early childhood education should be available to refugees. Because preschool education can help children's literacy, numeracy, and language development. The academic performance, school adjustment, and peer relationships of refugee children will all be aided by early childhood education. Children benefit from early childhood education, and so do their families. Incorporating families into the educational process helps to ensure that children are adapted to society and that parents are informed about child development (Gambaro et al., 2020). Early childhood education and early intervention programs often guide parents in their children's education, motivation and success, providing them with parenting skills, language learning, and access to community resources. This support is crucial for refugee families who may be unfamiliar with education systems and its requirements. Many refugee families are also dealing with a variety of issues related to education system.

Families' awareness should be increased and financial support should be provided if necessary. In addition, the competencies of early childhood education professionals in working with refugee children and their families should be increased. many studies show that early childhood education professionals feel inadequate in this regard. The challenges refugee children encounter in the educational system can be lessened by early childhood education institutions offering flexible arrangements and providing multicultural materials to complement the program (IOM, 2021). Families who are welcomed and supported by early childhood education institutions will be more willing to integrate into society and will make more effort to do so. Early childhood education will also support the well-being and comfort of the mother. The child learning the language and the values of the host culture will help the family to accelerate this process (Gambaro et al., 2020).

According to researches, many refugee children and their families have experienced trauma due to war, conflict, displacement, or loss of someone who live their social environment. Early childhood education programs with professional educators can provide a safe and supportive environment for refugee children and their families. It is crucial that children can express their feelings, thoughts and build resilience, and learn healthy coping mechanisms. Early childhood education is an important tool to support the well-being of children who are exposed to many negative experiences in the family and social environment with the migration process. In some cases refugee children can face social isolation, racism, xenophobia and cultural adjustment issues. Early childhood education settings provide opportunities for refugee children to interact with children from diverse backgrounds, fostering social skills, empathy, and a sense of belonging. Children need to go to school and receive social support in order to support their physical and psychological health, be happy and develop positive social relationships. The fact that a child is self-confident, develops social relationships, can be strong in the face of difficulties, has life satisfaction and is a happy individual indicates that he/she has psychological well-being. On the contrary, children who do not receive social support and cannot be included in the education system may be discriminated in the society and may experience anxiety and depression. Without access to early education, refugee children are at risk of falling behind their peers academically, this situation triggers marginality and poverty in immigrant children (Brough et al., 2003; Shallow & Whittington, 2014).

### **Language Education Support Programs**

Many refugee children have little command of the language of instruction when they first arrive in their host country. Language assistance programs are designed to help students learn languages more quickly by providing them with specialized teaching in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In addition to language skills, language support programs often include components of cultural orientation to help refugee children navigate their new surroundings. This may involve introducing them to cultural norms, customs, and expectations in the host country. The perspective to mother tongue of refugees and related policies are usually determined by the nationalist belief of the migrated society, monolingual approaches, prejudice, and xenophobia-based attitude (Feuerherm, 2013).

In multicultural societies, refugee individuals learn the language of migrated society as well as receive education in their language. In review of problems encountered by refugee children in schools, the most common problem is that they don't receive enough assistance to learn the language (Ager & Strang, 2008). Since they speak different languages, the majority of refugee children find it difficult to express themselves in the country where they have fled. The language is critical for interaction; therefore, lack of language abilities negatively affects the social interaction of refugee children. Language support programs should progressively incorporate refugee children into regular school settings as they improve their language skills, offering extra assistance as needed to enhance their academic success and social inclusion.

In the case of Syrians living in Türkiye, they initially received education in Arabic language in the Temporary Education Centers. The curriculum used by the centers was the Syrian curriculum and education was provided by Syrian volunteer teachers in the centers (Emin, 2016). In this system just 5 hours of Turkish language education were provided. Then, it was increased to 10 hours a week and an effort was made for Syrian children to learn Turkish. Syrian children have received a complete Turkish education since the Temporary Education Centers were closed and Syrian children were transferred to schools where Turkish children are educated. This has caused some families to request Arabic education for their children. The research by Emin (2016) concluded that Syrian children preferred temporary education centers where they could rather receive education in their language and curriculum. The research (Essomba, 2020; Kardeş & Akman, 2018; Keskinçilic-Kara & Şentürk-Tüysüzer, 2017; Pourslami et al., 2013) suggests that one of the critical problems with education of refugee children is the language-related issues. The lingual differences also cause problems for refugees to adapt to and swarm with social environment they are in. This can be explained by use of violence by the children when they are unable to express themselves and think that they are not understood.

Language support programs are also important for children's adaptation to society and psychological well-being (Shallow & Whittington, 2014). Children who cannot speak the language of the society are more likely to face discrimination and peer bullying. Moreover children are more likely to experience emotional problems such as anxiety, stress and depression (Padilla & Perez, 2003). Children's self-confidence and self-esteem are also negatively affected (OECD, 2018). Individuals who are fluent in the language of the society can adapt to school and society more easily and develop a sense of belonging (Dawson & Williams, 2008). Language also plays an important role in the socialization and acculturation process of the child in the new environment. In practices such as Germany, where the integration of refugee children into the education system and society is good, well-structured language support programs, goals and standards for the child's education are well-structured. In addition, intercultural learning and the teaching of the child's mother tongue are also emphasized. Family participation in the education process is also encouraged. In order for children to adapt and participate in society, it is necessary to increase the language proficiency of parents through language support programs and to educate them about the development of the child (Edele et al., 2021). Parents without language proficiency cannot assist and guide their children to adapt to host nation. For example, parents who cannot use the language of the host community cannot participate in the labor market and may experience economic difficulties. Therefore, the family's ability to use language effectively in the social sphere will contribute to the child's quality of life and psychological development, as well as protect family unity (Ochs, 2006; OECD, 2017). In the education process of refugee children, teaching materials in the language of the refugee child can also be included in the national education system. Such materials can facilitate the achievement of learning objectives. Contribute to the social cohesion and social adaptation of the child (UNICEF, 2022).

### **Multicultural Educational Practices**

Since refugee children often speak different languages and have different cultural values, they live between two different worlds at home and at school. The child builds a wall or a bridge between these two worlds (Ochs, 2006). If the culture, values and lifestyle of refugee children are respected, they also respect the culture and values of the new society. So that culturally responsive teaching and inclusive classroom environment is crucial for refugee children and their education (Markey et al., 2021).

The structure and some practices of schools are favorable to certain groups of students. Some students with cultural and linguistic differences are labeled as having learning difficulties or needing special education. These students benefit less from school facilities and opportunities in the learning process and show more school failure (Cartledge et al., 2008). However, in order to increase the quality of education and to achieve the highest aims, in the classroom environment should be given equal opportunity to all children. Multicultural education practices promote equity and access to quality education for all students, regardless of their background or identity (Gay, 2004). This may involve addressing disparities in resources, funding, and academic achievement, as well as providing support services, such as language education programs, special education, and counseling, to meet the diverse needs of all students. Therefore, culturally responsive classroom management focuses on providing equal access to learning opportunities for all children regardless of social class, race, gender, language or background. Multicultural classroom environments are an educational reform that enhances the adaptation and motivation of children with values and cultural patterns different from those of the dominant society. In these environments, the diversity of children from different cultures is valued as a rich learning resource for multilingualism and multiculturalism (Curran, 2003).

Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges the culture of students from different cultures and incorporates different cultures into school life. In the teaching environment, meaningful connections are made with the cultures of community members and made a component of the teaching process (Vavrus, 2008). In multicultural classroom environments, the teacher should be aware of and respect the behaviors, beliefs, prejudices, values and assumptions of students from different cultures (Weinstein et al., 2003). Only in this way the teacher can ensure that all students benefit equally from the opportunity to learn. The reasons for creating multicultural classroom environments in education are to create learning experiences for students from different cultural backgrounds and to end social injustices within the education system.



The refugees encounter challenges and try to adapt to a new culture (Kovacev & Shute, 2004). The refugees must be supported to overcome the challenges they experience and must receive a well-designed program for them to resist (Esses et al., 2017), and education that is sensitive to multiculturalism, shows respect to differences, and is provided by trained teachers (Assaf et al., 2010). The teachers go through a difficult process as they have little knowledge on the past, culture, and language of refugees they educate and fail to satisfy the needs of refugee children in some cases. The refugees, who feel excluded and believe that their culture is not respected, may detach themselves from society and develop negative feelings to the migrated society (Cuddy et al., 2007). The research (Atasü-Topçuoğlu, 2012; Scharpf et al., 2021; Vecchio et al., 2017) shows that refugee children are at high psychological and sociocultural risk. The prejudice, social exclusion and negative patterns against refugee children would have negative influences on the psychological well-being of children and interrupt their academic success (Guerra et al., 2019). Refugees are sometimes faced with discrimination and exclusion because of their language, culture, ethnicity, religion and values. For example, in Europe, Muslim children and young people may be discriminated and sometimes labeled as terrorists due to the rise of Islamophobia. Although addressing religious diversity is a challenge for schools, schools need to address these issues and make curricular changes to prevent prejudices, discriminatory and marginalizing language, thoughts and behaviors (Arnot et al., 2013). Besides that, according some researches, parental misperceptions of educational approaches and expectations, stereotypes and low expectations from teachers, bullying and racial discrimination, trauma from pre- and post-migration, and forced detention were major risk factors for learning difficulties (Graham et al., 2016).

In multicultural classroom practices, teachers shape the educational environment in accordance with cultural differences in achieving academic and social goals. Teachers set high expectations for behavior. Teachers communicate with children according to their cultural differences. They collaborate with children's families and develop appropriate intervention strategies for children with behavioral problems (Weinstein et al., 2003). When we examine this viewpoint establishing a secure and encouraging learning environment in the classroom where each student feels appreciated and valued is essential for multicultural education. Preschool educators need to foster an atmosphere free from bias and discrimination, facilitate effective communication, and promote teamwork among pupils from diverse backgrounds. Teachers work hard to modify their lesson plans and instructional resources to accommodate a wide range of student demands. To develop relevant and interesting education, this involves taking into account the languages, cultural backgrounds, and learning preferences of the pupils. Educator assistance and training are crucial for putting intercultural education into reality. Teachers may learn ways for fostering diversity and inclusion in the classroom, as well as how to identify their own prejudices, by participating in orldisional development programs. Multicultural education initiatives are enhanced by collaboration with families, community groups, and cultural institutions. Refugee children can participate in active learning activities and establish links to their cultural heritage by interacting with a variety of community resources. Multicultural education approaches, in general, help children develop cultural awareness, empathy, social interaction, support, collaboration, and understanding, so preparing them for a world that is increasingly varied and accepting.

## **Conclusion**

For refugee children, early childhood education can be viewed as an excellent chance to improve academic achievement and help them adjust to the formal education system. However, there should be a harmony between education policies and migration policies. For example, considering that asylum-seekers coming from Syria would stay temporarily, so that no permanent education policies were developed for this group for a while, and Syrians were given education in Arabic with the Syrian education curriculum in Temporary Education Centers. Later, since it was seen that Syrians were permanent and there was a two-headed education system in our country, temporary education centers were gradually closed and Syrian children were allowed to continue their education within the Turkish education system.

As a result, education shapes refugee children's expectations and aspirations in the new society and life, and creates new opportunities for all children. On the other hand, education creates desirable and accessible material and moral resources for refugee children. However, it is necessary to start early and make early childhood education accessible to all children. The educational system must be designed with consideration for the unique requirements and characteristics of people from diverse cultural backgrounds. It is necessary to know that language learning is vital for the adaptation of children from different cultures to society and to support refugee children with language teaching programs. Immigrant-receiving countries in particular should search multicultural education programs and their implementation for adaptation of refugee children to society. The culture of living with differences can be supported by the multicultural education. As a conclusion, it is an important factor for refugee children to learn the language and express themselves in the school and society as well as for their social acknowledgement.

The goal of multicultural education is to provide an inclusive learning environment that values and recognizes the opinions, experiences, and contributions of people from many cultural backgrounds. Language support programs are essential for immigrant children to properly integrate into their new communities and educational environments. Most of these initiatives focus on providing the linguistic support and reducing barriers that are necessary for refugee children to succeed in school and in their social lives. Language support programs play a critical role in helping refugee children overcome educational challenges and build a foundation for success in host country. Therefore, in order for people from diverse cultures to integrate into society and promote social welfare, education systems in the modern world must place a greater emphasis on multicultural education practices, language education, and early childhood education.



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