



Members' policies and activities concerning refugees and migrants

(July 2016)

After six year of war in Syria, Europe has ended up in a refugee crisis. Many European countries belong to the world's top refugee host hotspots (Source: UNHCR): Germany (593.799), the UK (269.363), France (196.364), Sweden (81.356), the Netherlands (76.008), Italy (54.965), Norway (37.826), Denmark (20.355). This includes refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea. It is expected that the figures will increase. Many refugees move from one country to another (no fixed home address or not yet). Others look forward to return to their country of origin. All European countries will have their share in the (temporary) resettlement of refugees (plan European Commission).

Even far more refugees are registered in Turkey (2.715.798), Lebanon (1.067.785), Jordan (636.040), Iraq 246.051), Egypt (118.512) and Lybia (28027), 490.869 of them living in camps, 4.321.355 out of camps. Within Syria, 6,5 mio persons are displaced, of whom 1,7 mio in camps or collective centres, mainly in Damascus and Latakia.

Integration, employment and education

The refugee crisis is only the acute part of the issue of the growing diversity in almost all European countries, during the last decades continuously affected by migration flows from the Maghreb countries, Turkey, the Latin-American and the Caribbean countries, the South-East Asian area and the former Soviet Union. This diversity causes even broader problems with regard to social and cultural integration, participation in education and employment. Solving these problems is not only a social and economic, but also an ethical duty for Europe.

Refugees and migrants can't fully integrate within Europe, if they don't have full educational opportunities. Also, refugees returning to their country of origin can't rebuild their society without appropriate education after they had to break up their studies or careers due to war and violence. Hence, they should be reached by our educational system wherever they are, also in refugee/asylum centres, irrespective of their personal future (either they stay in the EU or they return to their home country). In both cases, there is a tremendous added social, economic and political value.



Characteristics of refugees

Characteristics of refugees vary according to the country of origin. About 70% are younger than 30ys, 15-25% have already a higher education background. It is unclear how many are qualified for higher education or willing to complement their studies with additional courses, raising their chances on the labor market. When improving the accessibility to higher education, one should take into account that not just information, but also awareness raising is needed. Refugees and large categories of migrants feel an unstable situation, affected by traumas of displacement, eventually by an ill health, suffering from financial problems and unemployment, being unsure about their future within Europe or when returning home. Education is often not their first concern, even less when prior attainment is not directly recognized or when they probably will change country. Nevertheless, there is no time to loose. Education is a vehicle to employment and social emancipation, mutual understanding and shared citizenship. Access to higher education is primordial for an enhanced insertion in society. It will have an impact on the future of our societies.

Open and distance teaching universities recognize several subgroups:

- young students who missed secondary education
- young students who can access higher education
- students who were in the middle of a university study
- students who want to valorise a degree obtained in their home country
- professionals who need conversion courses to find work now pathways into other universities in Europe and in the region

Open universities and inclusive educational models

By their already inclusive pedagogical and organizational models, open and flexible distance higher education institutions are particularly suitable for this type of students. Large numbers are served by high quality education (mass-personalization), students report a high study satisfaction and can remain enrolled even while changing country or returning home. It seems the most timely and sustainable solution for reaching-out to refugees and migrants, quantitatively and qualitatively.

Open and distance teaching universities create opportunities for refugees and migrants. Some of these are specifically set-up for them. By their pedagogies and organization (eg regional study centres), they offer inclusive and excellent learning opportunities.

An overview of activities of open universities, related to refugees and migrants:

- Language courses for free (or low-threshold)
- Intercultural courses for free
- Study centres: student support nearby in every region



- Preparatory/bridging programmes for higher education
- Pedagogical models leading to inclusiveness and excellence
- Collaboration with civil society organisations or community partners
- International collaboration concerning education of refugees

Language courses for free (or low-threshold), including MOOCs and open educational resources

Language courses are of primary importance for refugees and migrants, when arriving in a host country. Most of the open universities offer a range of courses, of which some are offered for free as an open educational resource or as a MOOC.

OpenLearn of the **Open University** offers a number of free online courses and learning materials, including European languages: *Beginners' Italian* and *Beginner's German*, but also *English: skills for learning*, an introductory course of academic English.

(<http://www.open.edu/openlearn>)

Futurelearn of the **Open University** offers language MOOCs , eg *Understanding IELTS*, improving your English and preparing for tests, such as IELTS reading, writing, speaking and listening; an *Introduction to Dutch* (University of Groningen); *Exploring English: language and culture* (British Council); and a *Beginners' guide to writing in English for university study*

(<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/categories/languages-and-cultures>)

At the national level, **Fernuniversität** joins a German consortium offering a MOOC "Ready4Study", teaching German language and first study skills.

UNINETTUNO offers introductory language courses for Italian language and Arabic language literacy, developed in the context of EDUCAITALIA project and "The Treasure of Letters" initiatives; these courses are already available through the <http://istruzionesenzaconfini.it> online desk, developed by UNINETTUNO to provide access to Higher Education to migrants and refugees.

The course of Italian language "**I learn Italian. The Treasure of the Letters**" allows foreigners to learn to read and write Italian. The video course is composed of 80 video-lessons, related to the textbooks with exercises, and to the specific moments of verification through virtual classrooms. The course is available on the Internet, also through apps for mobile devices (smartphones and tablets). A complete description is available at <http://www.istruzionesenzaconfini.it/en/impariamo-italiano.aspx>.

The "**I Learn Arabic – The Treasure of the Letters**" course includes 150 video-lessons and 4 texts related to the subjects treated by the video lessons. The course was originally designed to contribute to the struggle against illiteracy in Morocco, and for those people who for the first time start to learn Arabic. Full description available at: <http://www.istruzionesenzaconfini.it/en/impariamo-arabo.aspx>

Intercultural courses for free, including MOOCs and open educational resources

Furthermore, social and cultural integration is important. Also here, open universities offer courses for free as they are available as open educational resource or as a MOOC. The content includes European citizenship, European languages and cultures, human rights and European law, religious studies, the Enlightenment, identity and personal change, how to start a business, management skills, etc.

Read more on examples of free courses available...

Openlearn offers a number of free online courses and learning materials, including European culture, and society (such as EU law and UK law). A sample of these courses is provided below.

Title	Length	Link	Level
Europe and the law	20 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/people-politics-law/the-law/europe-and-the-law/content-section-0	Introductory
Exploring languages and cultures	14 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/languages/exploring-languages-and-cultures/content-section-0	Introductory
Human rights and the law	20 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/people-politics-law/the-law/human-rights-and-law/content-section-0	Introductory
Philosophy: the nature of persons	15 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/culture/philosophy/philosophy-the-nature-persons/content-section-0	Advanced
Studying religion	20 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/culture/religious-studies/studying-religion/content-section-0	Introductory
The Enlightenment	16 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/history/history-art/the-enlightenment/content-section-0	Intermediate
Languages at work	6 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/languages/english-language/languages-work/content-section-0	Introductory
Why study languages?	5 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/languages/why-study-languages/content-section-0	Introductory
The importance of interpersonal skills	3 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-management/management/leadership-and-management/the-importance-interpersonal-skills/content-section-0	Introductory
You and your money	12	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/money	Introductory

	hours	-management/money/personal-finance/you-and-your-money/content-section-0	
Learning to learn: Planning for personal change	8 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/learning-learn-planning-personal-change/content-section-0	Introductory
Who are Europeans?	8 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/people-politics-law/politics-policy-people/geography/who-are-europeans/content-section-0	Intermediate
Business English series	Various	Eg. http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/english-skills-learning/content-section-overview	Intermediate
Social problems: Who makes them?	20 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/people-politics-law/politics-policy-people/sociology/social-problems-who-makes-them/content-section-0	Intermediate
Living and working in the new economy	15 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/people-politics-law/politics-policy-people/sociology/living-and-working-the-new-economy/content-section-0	Intermediate
Enacting European Citizenship (ENACT)	10 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/people-politics-law/international-development/global-development-management/enacting-european-citizenship-enact/content-section-0	Advanced
Learning a second language	4 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/languages/learning-second-language/content-section-0	Advanced
Exploring the boundaries of international law	15 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/people-politics-law/exploring-the-boundaries-international-law/content-section-0	Advanced
Who counts as a refugee?	10 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/people-politics-law/politics-policy-people/geography/who-counts-refugee/content-section-0	Advanced

Examples of badged open courses (BOCs)

Examples:

Title	Length	Link	Level
English: skills for learning	24 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/english-skills-learning/content-section-overview	Introductory
Taking your first steps into higher education	24 hours	http://www.open.edu/openlearn/education/taking-your-first-steps-higher-education/content-section-overview	Introductory



Futurelearn offers MOOCs on intercultural issues and courses, which prepare for insertion in professional life or studies. All courses are free and open. Certification can be purchased and they can be used as preparation for higher level study. The dates shown on the website are when they next run but they are repeated regularly. A sample is provided here:

Cultural studies and modern languages: and introduction (University of Bristol)

Intercultural communication (Shanghai International Studies University)

Muslims in Britain: changes and challenges (University of Cardiff)

Identity, conflict and public space (Queen's University, Belfast)

Religion and conflict (University of Groningen)

Management and leadership: growing as a manager (Open University)

How to succeed at: Interviews (University of Leeds)

Starting a business: 1 to 6 (University of Leeds)

Epargner et investir (Grenoble, Ecole de Management)

Propaganda and Ideology in everyday life (University of Nottingham)

Re-enchanting the city: designing the human habitat (University of New South-Wales, Australia)

What works: promising practices in international development (University of Oslo)

Why the European Union: a brief history of the European Union (University of Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona)

Causes of War (King's College, London)

Cooperation in the contemporary world: unlocking international politics (university of Birmingham)

Some MOOCs can be accumulated in programmes for which certificates are delivered, eg programmes on business and finance; management and leadership; or on the digital economy.

[Study centres: student support nearby in every region](#)

The study centres of the open and distance teaching universities are spread all over the respective countries and internationally. Study centres give consultancy and study advice. Students can enroll for preparatory courses, degree courses and continuing education. They give easy access to the universities in regions where refugees and migrants are living.

UNED, Spain has 61 associate centres spread all over the country, in most cases co-organized with cities. Besides this, UNED has more than 100 extension centres, just for teaching classes. Outside Spain, UNED has established associate centres in 13 different countries.



Feruniversität has 27 study centres all over Germany. Refugees and migrant students are offered information and study advice in German or in English. Studycentres are part of the teaching and learning provisions at Fernuniversität, by which blended learning is realized according to quality standards.

The Hellenic Open University has a network of 7 peripheral study centres comprises, situated in corresponding administrative prefectures in Greece, in addition to the main campus in Patras.

UNINETTUNO's organizational model is based on a network of **Technological Poles** or study centres, 24 in Italy and 39 abroad (28 in Africa and the Middle-East, ncl. Jordan, Iraq, Syria and Egypt), available to the students and equipped with all the technologies to follow distance-learning courses and learning activities via video-conference and face to face tutoring)

The complete list and full details about the UNINETTUNO Technological Poles are available at: <http://www.uninettunouniversity.net/en/politecnologici.aspx>

Preparatory programmes

To prepare students for higher education studies, open universities offer to students diagnostic tools to assess what are their opportunities for studying ad where preparatory courses can remediate or complete some knowledge areas which are too weak.

Introductory and orientation courses accommodate students to study tracks in higher education. Also MOOCs and OERs are delivered for free as a preliminary taster for a wide range of subjects.

Diagnostic tools

The **OUUK** makes diagnostic tools available. The PEARL English resource can be used from August. <http://www.open.ac.uk/study/credit-transfer/>

English level	http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/do-it/english-skills	Explains level of English required, how this can be demonstrated formally (mostly paid for) or via a self-assessment quiz.
English Language skills (non OU)	http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr	Free self-assessment tool that could be used to assess skill in English for EAL; covers reading writing, listening and speaking. Students would need guidance about which level they need to have achieved.

Module/subject specific

Languages diagnostic	http://fels.open.ac.uk/language-diagnostics/	Advice and guidance to help students find out about an OU language qualification and
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website		choose the appropriate level for starting in French, German, Spanish and Italian: info provided on content, assessment, learning points, proficiency and teaching style.
Am I ready for Maths?	http://mcs.open.ac.uk/mu123/	Module specific (MU123) quiz testing maths skills.
Are you ready for science study?	https://students.open.ac.uk/openmark/science.level1ayrf.general/	Readiness for science short course or health science (SDK125 or SK124). Diagnostic provides information about time required, duration of course, IT and equipment needs, English reading and comprehension and maths; assessment provided but few links to other resources.

UNINETTUNO developed and implemented a preparatory course in mathematics for students enrolling in Engineering and Economics courses. The “Corso propedeutico di Matematica”, publicly described at <http://www.consorzionettuno.it/it/cyberspaziomateria.aspx?faculty=°ree=6&planid=13&courseid=390&lf=it>, is currently offered for all the students enrolled in UNINETTUNO courses or, as a single course, at a fee of 400€.

Furthermore, UNINETTUNO is developing advanced courses in Italian language for foreign students willing to enroll in UNINETTUNO degree programs available only in Italian language.

Bridges Programmes / The Open University in Scotland

Bridges Programmes (<http://www.bridgesprogrammes.org.uk/>) is a unique work experience scheme for refugees and asylum seekers (‘clients’) in Glasgow. Bridges Programmes and the Open University in Scotland worked collaboratively on a range of projects and initiatives between 2005 and 2015 including developmental testing of resources for speakers of English as an additional language and supporting new migrants and refugees into education, training and employment.

Bridges’ approach is to build on clients’ existing skills, hopes and ambitions in the process of social inclusion and economic integration. Education, including recognition for prior learning, was a key element for many clients and Bridges was keen to collaborate with colleges and HEIs, including The Open University in Scotland to develop new programmes and processes. For example, a bespoke open educational resource (OER) called ‘Reflecting on Transitions’ (<http://www.open.edu/openlearnworks/course/view.php?id=1840>) was developed by The Open University in Scotland in collaboration with Bridges Programmes funded through the Scottish Funding Council’s knowledge exchange ‘innovation voucher’ scheme.

In 2008, the partnership launched a new initiative to offer information, advice and guidance for refugees into education and employment. A designated OU tutor and study advisor was seconded to Bridges one day a week to offer educational advice, including facilitated use of OU online resources, such as:

- self-assessment for speakers of English as an additional language
- learning materials from a range of subject areas



- information on credit transfer
- vocational guidance tools

Bridges clients were given the opportunity to study OU Openings courses (now replaced with Access modules but currently not available in Europe), including a new personal development course called 'Learning to Change'. Information, advice and guidance was also given to clients wishing to study other OU courses.

Case studies: http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/LearnDevDist/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Valerie_Teresa_Mike_June2014.pdf

Conference paper:

http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/LearnDevDist/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/FINAL_NCVO-VSSN_Conf_OUB_Paper_1_020911_2.pdf.

UNED has Access Courses for those older than 25 and furthermore, older than 45. These courses take an academic year and they are to be paid. They comprise the basic fundamentals of languages, maths, arts, geography and a specific introduction to university studies.

Pedagogical models

Open and distance universities have developed new approaches to learning design and their courses are conceived in such a way that students can study independently at a distance, although study support is given in study centres or online. Hence, face to face time is limited and teaching face to face partly is integrated in the study material or in the online course. Course development in open and distance teaching universities is led by new types of learning design. This creates flexibility, students can study where they want and even when they want. This is meeting the life conditions of refugees. The university comes close to the student and will even will follow the student when he is going to live in another country or returns to his home country.

Recently, MOOCs have accelerated the development of new modes of teaching and learning, also in traditional universities.

Open and distance teaching universities offer degree courses designed according to these models. At the **Fernuniversität In Hagen, Germany**, all courses are open for refugees. The Fernuniversität even offers funding to refugee students for the study material fees. These are the only fees FernUniversität charges, as it doesn't have registration fees. Refugees can enrol as 'academic' students first to explore the university and their level of knowledge. They can switch to degree programs. This offer for free studies is very relevant for the EU-country with the largest number of refugees.

The **Open University of Cyprus (OUC)** offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of 240 ECTS and 90-120 ECTS respectively. In a broader context, the OUC is prepared to offer some of its



undergraduate or postgraduate modules (of existing programmes of study) in English for the needs of refugees.

Anadolu University (AU) in Turkey offers more than 50 associate and undergraduate degree programs as well as about 30 certificate programs. All of the programs can be suitable for refugees according to their needs or interests. Turkey is the country with probably the largest numbers of refugees.

Short learning programmes (SLP's)

Open and distance teaching universities offer also short learning programmes (SLP's) at the university level. Some programmes are specifically suitable for refugees and migrants, eg courses on Europe (history, policy, politics, sociology, economics, social policies) and on subjects which increase the employability of refugee students (business, health care, teacher training). SLP's comply with the European Qualification Framework and form building blocks for further degree studies. SLP's are mainly delivered through open and online modes of education, accompanied by tuition.

On a regular basis, **the Open University (OUUK)** has over 400 modules that lead to over 200 SLP-qualifications that are available to students who reside in Europe. There is a more limited number of modules/ qualifications for students who reside outside Europe. These qualifications range from certificates/ diplomas in higher education to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees as well as a range of short non-credit bearing vocational courses. All of these modules can be studied flexibly and at a distance. The open University of Cyprus is offering three new short training programmes in the area of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Greek.

Complementary post-degree courses make the home degree of students equivalent to the national degree of a EU country.

Collaboration with civil society organisations or community partners

To reach-out to refugees and migrants, universities need to collaborate with civil society organisations which are familiar with them through activities they organize for them in specific city areas, asylum centres or refugee camps. Education becomes then part of an holistic approach to people often in a precarious situation and about missing educational opportunities.

The **OUUK** works with a range of voluntary sector partner organisations who are involved in communities in the UK, the Social Partnership Network (<http://www.open.ac.uk/cicp/main/social-partnerships>).

All the partners have a firm commitment to widening access and social inclusion and the combined potential to reach over seven million people.



SPN members share common values related to lifelong learning and social mobility and a commitment to creating strategies and activities that contribute to a more diverse higher education system.

The National Network for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO) project will deliver some exciting new resources, which will be launched by September 2016, including a website called PEARL which stands for part-time education for adults returning to learn and six free online courses.

Social partners involved include: the Association of Colleges, Learndirect, the Learning and Work Institute, the Workers' Educational Organisation, UnionLearn, etc.

Civil Society Organization already working with **UNINETTUNO** for social inclusion initiatives, specifically focused on migrants and refugees, include: the Italian Red Cross (<http://www.cri.it/>), AMSI (<http://www.amsimed.org/>), Uniti X Unire (<http://unitiperunire.org/>), Consiglio italiano per i rifugiati (<http://www.cir-onlus.org/>), Fondazione Migrantes (<http://www.migrantes.it/>), etc.

Universidade Aberta in Portugal cooperates with many research institutes in Europe and latin-America, eg Centre d'études de la Diversité Culturelle et de la Citoyenneté dans la Santé et le Social (CEDIC), Genève; Centro de Estudos Migratórios Latino americanos (CEMLA), International Migration, Social, Integration and Social Cohesion, Research Group Multilevel Governance of Immigrant and Immigration Policies (IMISCOE), Rotterdam, etc.

The **Hellenic Open University** collaborates with the Ανοιχτό Σχολείο Μεταναστών Πειραιά/Piraeus Open School for Immigrants, <http://asmpeiraia.blogspot.gr/> and with the Greek Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

International collaboration

Universities have prepared a project in order to deliver the best education and services to refugees and migrants in Europe and in neighboring countries, offering a full range of open courses, degree courses and short learning programmes. They have developed partnerships for a large-scale outreach to refugees and people in developing countries.

The **Open University (OUUK)** already teams up with The British Council to deliver academic programmes to displaced **Syrian refugees** who have temporarily settled in Jordan and Lebanon. English, French and German language skills will be taught in classrooms by the British Council to approximately 3000 Syrians and disadvantaged Jordanian students, with around 300 of the highest achieving students progressing to Open University accredited online degree courses. There will also be opportunities for at least 400 students who have completed a language course to continue their studies by taking a short online course on the OU's social learning platform, FutureLearn. While not



accredited, these free short courses provide learners with knowledge and skills that will help them to earn a living or find a job when they return to Syria.

The Open University (OUUK) currently has a strong partnership with the Arab Open University which operates in 7 countries in the region: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Oman and Bahrain. This relationship provides undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes with local recognition by the Ministry of Education in each country as well as OU validated degrees. The OUUK would be open to further collaborations in this region if they presented themselves.

Among most successful actions of the **Open University (OUUK)** in analogue conditions, the TESSA and TESS projects in Africa and India have to be mentioned (teacher education, health care, ...). In such approaches (in collaboration with regional universities), mobile devices can be incorporated. In these projects 100.000's of students are reached. Themes can focus on needs and shortages on the labour market in the countries envisaged and in Europe. OERs and MOOCs can be integrated in such initiatives, but should be subject to curriculum development of short learning programmes for these student groups.

The **Open University of Cyprus** is already collaborating with the Al Quds Open University in Palestine and could consider a joint action for Short Learning Programmes suitable for refugees. The two Universities are already discussing the implementation of an eLearning training programme for refugee educators.

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