

# EUROCITIES

CITIES' ACTIONS FOR THE EDUCATION OF  
REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

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## INTRODUCTION

For Europe to properly face up to the challenge of refugee integration, cities must be seen as key stakeholders. There is a clear need to feed accurate and up-to-date information from cities directly to European and national policy makers. The importance of cities in this field was also strengthened by the urban partnership on the inclusion of migrants and refugees, launched in the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU in 2016.

Following the release of the report 'Reception and integration of refugees in cities' in April 2016, this report presents information under the more specific angle of education. The integration of newcomers in our societies is not simply a challenge for the next few years but for future generations. Ensuring children of asylum seekers and refugees and unaccompanied minors have access to education is one of the main integration challenges facing European cities. Most European cities have been involved in the provision of education for migrants and people with a migrant background for a number of years, but the current volume of new arrivals presents a number of new and specific challenges.

With this report, EUROCITIES wants to present some of the practices and policies being implemented at city level for the provision of education services to asylum seekers and refugees.

This report is divided into four sections:

- key findings
- city competences, coordination and funding
- cities ensuring access to the education system
- challenges

This report was prepared on the basis of responses from the following 26 cities, submitted before 9 September 2016:

Amsterdam, Athens, Antwerp, Berlin, Bilbao, Edinburgh, Ghent, Gothenburg, Hamburg, Helsinki, Leeds, Leipzig, Madrid, Munich, Malmo, Nuremberg, Oslo, Pendik, Riga, Stockholm, Tallinn, Tampere, The Hague, Tilburg and Vienna.

# 1

## Key findings

Many cities have specific plans that focus on education for the integration of migrants. In many cities, these plans were already in place before the refugee crisis. Most cities have adapted or are in the process of adapting their strategies to respond to this new challenge. In most cities a strong coordination between different departments and social and education services is in place to enable the successful integration of refugees into education or training.

Cities have a key role to play in coordinating the activities of different stakeholders (independent training institutions, government agencies, private schools, etc.), which interact at local level but often do not cooperate sufficiently if there is no involvement from city administrations. Where cities are responsible for the provision of education, schools tend to be open to all children regardless of their status (asylum seeker, refugee and undocumented migrant).

Cities that have experienced an increase in the number of newcomers have introduced new classes and hired additional educational staff. In most cities, NGOs and volunteers are also involved in the integration and education of refugees. Often these efforts complement the work of city administrations and fill gaps left by insufficient funding or staff. Cities facilitate integration within the mainstream education system by providing additional language classes for newcomers. Language skills can often be a barrier for entering into vocational training; so many cities provide specific language programmes for this purpose.

The same conditions are applicable to all young people wishing to access vocational training and apprenticeships in many cities, regardless of legal status. The degree of collaboration with tertiary education institutions varies significantly across the spectrum of European cities. Cities try to facilitate access for asylum seekers and refugees to tertiary education, often working in partnership with universities and higher education institutions. This is despite the fact that cities often do not hold the competences for tertiary education or the recognition of prior learning.

Strategies for connecting refugees to education services and the labour market are a key aspect of programmes in all cities.

Some of the main challenges reported are:

- finding sufficient financing for programmes such as language teaching
- finding well-trained staff for the implementation of these programmes
- being able to expand services and infrastructure to respond to growing demand
- managing diversity of backgrounds among newly-arrived students
- recognition of existing skills
- dealing with psychological trauma and specific health issues
- inclusion of unaccompanied minors in the education system
- avoiding segregation and ghettoisation of schools with a high share of newcomers
- linking young adults not in education with labour market inclusion programmes

# 2

## Competences, coordination and funding

### 2.1. Responsibilities and competences

Responsibilities and competences in the field of education vary significantly across European cities. Those that responded to our survey are mostly located in countries where they are in charge of, or at least manage part of, the primary and secondary education system, from nursery to high school.

Those cities without much say over the education system use alternative means to complement the existing official curriculum. They do this mainly by funding extra classes and activities for children of asylum seekers and refugees, in order to ensure their swift integration into the school system.

Several cities, including Berlin, Edinburgh, Hamburg, Oslo and Vienna, have full responsibility over all school and education matters. Leipzig, Munich and Nuremberg are directly responsible for early childhood education (e.g. nursery and kindergarten) and share responsibility with the regional government for school education and vocational training. In Riga, the education of asylum seekers falls under the responsibility of the state, but as soon as asylum seekers are granted refugee status, the responsibility for their education is shared between the state and the city.

Similarly in Gothenburg, Malmo and Helsinki, the city administration is directly responsible for compulsory primary school and upper secondary school education, including vocational training. These city authorities are responsible for municipal adult education, which in Gothenburg also includes the language course 'Swedish for Immigrants' (SFI). In Amsterdam and The Hague, the responsibility is shared with the national government.

Even in cases where cities do not hold responsibility for any part of the education system, there is usually a degree of involvement or collaboration with schools, allowing city administrations to include refugees in mainstream education strategies. In Bilbao and Madrid, for example, the regional government has full control over the education system but city councils are responsible for maintaining the buildings and monitoring schools.

### 2.2. Coordination with other stakeholders

#### Public agencies and other levels of government

Many stakeholders interact at local level but often do not coordinate their activities sufficiently to provide coherent solutions for newcomers. Other public agencies have competences for part of the education system, which are closely linked to other aspects of integration (e.g. housing, labour market inclusion, civic participation). Cities have a key role to play in coordinating the activities of different stakeholders, such as training institutions, governmental agencies and private schools, which interact at local level but often do not cooperate sufficiently in the absence of the involvement of the city administration.

In Ghent, the taskforce on refugees coordinates the collaboration between different city services, the public service for social welfare, local NGOs and independent volunteers. One of the working groups within the taskforce focuses specifically on integration, with education being a key consideration.

Munich has a newly-established masterplan on education, involving all municipal actors and other partners such as employment agencies, apprenticeship organisations and labour market actors, as well as social

welfare institutions and decision makers at the federal policy level. Riga has granted funding to set up the Asylum Seekers Coordination Centre, which is tasked with the interinstitutional coordination of issues concerning refugees and with organising training for specialists.

Antwerp, The Hague, Nuremberg and Tallinn have been organising coordination meetings between their social services since the beginning of the refugee crisis. In Gothenburg, the city authority also has a special cross-sectoral organisation dedicated to working with new arrivals.

In Berlin, all school districts have their own coordination units, which meet to communicate about urgent issues such as receiving young asylum seekers and refugees in state schools. Bilbao is part of a regional network managed by the Basque government and focusing on the inclusion of asylum seekers in the education system.

Some cities report good examples of multilevel governance. For example in Vienna, the StartWien-Youth College (<http://bit.ly/2gF3qWl>) is a joint project managed by the Vienna Social Fund, the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund, the municipal department for integration and diversity and the Vienna office of the Austrian public employment service. It offers basic courses in language, vocational training and orientation, and IT, among other subjects, for young people aged 15-21 who have a poor level of the German language. It is co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).

In Berlin, the city's department of education has initiated a number of Europe-wide collaborations on the integration of newly-arrived young people in the mainstream school system. Among these collaborations, an exchange with the school administration in Vienna (in the framework of an ERASMUS+ strategic partnership) is expected to generate an exchange of good practices on both sides in terms of administration, methodological approaches and didactic concepts, innovative teaching and iTTraining schemes.

### **Cooperation with civil society**

The mobilisation of civil society organisations during the first few months of the refugee crisis in 2015 provided an essential complement to public action. Volunteers can still play a very important role as cities set out adapting their education infrastructure to accommodate growing numbers of students and tackle shortages of qualified staff. This is particularly the case for language learning, the provision of general information and orientation on education for asylum seekers in reception centres, and also in terms of basic education for asylum seekers who have to wait several weeks or even months before being registered in the system. Most cities take the lead in coordinating volunteers' initiatives or contracting NGOs as implementing partners. The overall aim is to enable newcomers to find their way into the education system as quickly as possible.

Madrid has created a programme called 'Volunteers for Madrid', which has 1,400 people prepared to support the integration process in the city's neighbourhoods. Nuremberg has a central staff for 'Citizens volunteering, corporate volunteering'. The staff help match volunteers to jobs, organise training for volunteers, give them a platform for networking and gathering information, and help with fundraising.

Tilburg relies on volunteers to provide preschool education in reception centres, but has professionally organised their involvement to ensure a smooth transition to primary school. More formal partnerships with NGOs (financial and/or material support from the city) are in place in cities such as Antwerp, Ghent, Gothenburg and Hamburg, among others.

Following the increase in the number of asylum seekers arriving in the city, Helsinki introduced a pilot scheme to purchase services from NGOs to support integration and education measures.

In autumn 2015, Malmo started an integration project called "Ung möter ung" ("Young meets young") together with an external organisation. It aims to encourage young people to help each other with language development and integration.



## 2.3. Working with school communities

The reaction from school communities (e.g. teachers, parents and students) towards the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers varies across Europe but has mostly been positive. Many cities have tried to distribute newcomers across different schools to avoid high concentrations in a limited number of areas. Most schools had previously engaged in the welcoming and integration of newcomers, but some requested extra support where they lacked prior experience.

### **Teachers**

In Ghent, the spike in the number of students from an asylum seeking or refugee background has led to greater demand for resources, especially on the issue of communicating on the refugee situation. Based on this request, the city compiled a list of educational resources to raise awareness on the topic, as well as an overview of all local NGOs and city services that are involved in the care of refugees.

Hamburg is training 'intercultural mediators' and 'cultural agents' through its teacher training institute, to support schools in dealing with the greater diversity. Vienna created an internship programme to support 35 teachers from an asylum-seeking background to work in schools, providing help to teachers and pupils.

In Stockholm, schools that are taking on refugee children follow an action plan on how to welcome their new arrivals.

Similarly, Malmo has guidelines for receiving newcomers, which all schools are supposed to follow. These are complemented by digital guidelines aimed at head teachers and teachers containing more detailed information and tips on how to arrange education for newcomers.

In countries less accustomed to migration and diversity, teachers may be more likely to express concerns and doubts. Riga, through its education, culture and sport department provides four-day training sessions for civil servants, including teachers, on 'migration, development and human rights', in the framework of an EU-funded project.

### **Communication with local communities**

Cities play an instrumental role in working with communities to alleviate fears and prejudice. In some cases, parents and local residents have expressed concerns about the impact of the arrival of a large number of new students with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds on the quality of schools.

Parents' associations in Nuremberg work closely with newly-arrived children and their families to promote integration. A number of complaints and concerns were expressed in three school districts during a two month period in autumn 2015 when school sports halls were used as accommodation for refugees. City officials and head teachers addressed this issue by communicating clearly on the reasons and duration for which the facilities would be needed.

The Hague invests time in keeping parents and local residents informed to satisfy concerns about safety, especially in cases where refugees are living in close proximity of schools. Head teachers and members of school management boards are also involved in this process and can exchange good practices on how to tackle this issue sensitively, for example by inviting parents to the school for a personal talk to address their concerns.

Antwerp organised a press conference to reassure the public about the refugee situation in schools. Similarly in Edinburgh, the city made official announcements and published press releases when the first refugees arrived, accompanied by supportive comments from senior politicians.

Berlin is in continuous dialogue with residents to allow for exchange of opinions on a number of topics, including issues of perceived unequal treatment between locals and newcomers.

## Parental involvement

The involvement of parents is often used as a tool for integration and social inclusion in cities, although parental involvement programmes do not tend to specifically target refugees.

In Athens, the 'open schools' programme brings communities together by opening 25 schools during afterschool hours to organise activities such as language courses, cooking classes, or music lessons, aimed at both migrants and refugee parents and their children. With support from philanthropic organisations, the programme aims to transform municipal-owned public school buildings into sustainable centres for the local community. In summer 2016, 1,250 participants, of whom 450 were refugees, took part in these activities.

In Berlin, the lack of social services and staff in schools is an obstacle for promoting parental involvement, but wherever schools have managed to encourage it, this has had a positive impact on learning and teaching, mutual understanding, and the way pupils from different backgrounds interact with each other.

In Malmö, the city focused its efforts during the first phase after the arrival of refugees on intercultural training for staff, to help them to meet pupils and parents. The city now also employs special school 'guardians' who facilitate contact between families and schools.

## 2.4. Funding and capacity

Ensuring access to education for children of asylum seekers and refugees implies additional costs and effort for city authorities. They need to increase their infrastructure, hire new staff, develop specific measures for children of refugees, give guidance to immigrant parents and build staff capacity to address specific needs of newcomers.

Antwerp saw an increase of over 500 students in special language classes between September 2015 and June 2016. Leipzig has established 80 new classes in 50 schools, while Gothenburg has opened new schools and extended its secondary education system to cover other municipal areas in order to find available places.

Due to the large number of additional classrooms needed, Stockholm set up pre-fabricated classrooms in existing schools.

Pendik, a municipality of Istanbul, reported having integrated 450 students from a refugee background and opened five new classes.

Between January and August 2016 Malmö received 1,959 pupils aged 6 to 15, prompting the city to open 55 new classes in June 2016.

Leeds has provided some extra funding, training and support programmes to the four school districts admitting the highest share of newcomers.

Edinburgh had already recruited staff before 2015 to respond to the arrival of EU mobile citizens (mostly Polish) in city from 2004, and was therefore equipped to deal with increase in migration.

In Helsinki, €7.5 million was allocated to the creation of the Helsinki Skills Centre. In Gothenburg, schooling for children of asylum seekers is largely funded by the national government.

In the case of new arrivals in possession of a residence permit, government funding is available in the majority of cases and is designed to cover the increase in costs over the first two years after a residence permit has been granted, including the costs of education.

Oslo receives financial support from the state in order to offer education to asylum seekers and refugees, but this does not cover upper secondary education.

In Ghent, additional funding from the regional government was allocated to the city to cope with the influx of refugees and was used, for example, to organise supplementary integration programmes and language courses. However, there were not enough locations available in which to organise these additional classes. Similarly in Antwerp, special funding for refugee children is granted by the Flemish region.

This funding enables every primary school and 10 selected secondary schools to establish a class for newcomers and receive extra teaching time.

Specific projects and programmes also benefit from external funding in some cases. For example in Hamburg the national ministry of education is funding several projects and programmes for refugees. A new federal programme has been launched in Germany to support local administrations with the educational integration of new migrants by providing resources for additional staff. Leipzig has obtained funding through this programme for extra staff to analyse the needs and existing offers in various fields relating to education for refugees. In The Hague meanwhile, the majority of new staff hired have been flexible employees (teachers, social workers, etc.). Financing in this case comes from the Dutch ministry of education, which has given school boards greater flexibility to finance additional staff.

# 3

## Access to the education system

### 3.1. Access to general education for asylum seekers and refugees

Most city administrations hold competences for the organisation of nurseries and early childhood education. Integrating children into the education system as early as possible is seen as a priority for language learning, and has the added benefit that it allows parents to focus on their own integration. In many cities the nursery school system was already under pressure and in many cases the city has had to open up new places to deal with the growing demand.

In general, education services are open to and often compulsory for all children regardless of their status, and usually from arrival.

Children typically have to be schooled from anything within a few days to several months after their official registration with the city authorities, or whenever and wherever a place is available.

It is very often up to city authorities to provide the necessary infrastructure and spaces needed to comply with compulsory school attendance. However, in some cities, due to national regulations, eligibility for a place in school is dependent on residency or employment status and not applicable to children of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers.

### 3.2. Specific measures for newcomers

Integration isn't simply about guaranteeing access to education; most cities also have strategies and actions in place to ensure that schools are aware of and adapted to the specific backgrounds and needs of children of asylum seekers and refugees. One-stop-shops, welcome/reception/introductory classes and qualification assessments are a common feature in many city strategies, with the intention of getting children quickly up to speed with the curriculum and to ensure they have a good enough grasp of the local language to be placed in regular classes.

In The Hague, city authorities organise welcome classes for asylum seekers who are still in the asylum process, which usually take place in or near asylum centres. Children who do not yet speak Dutch are first given language classes and gradually introduced to other subjects. After a maximum of two years, children move into the regular Dutch education system.

In Oslo, children aged seven and upwards are offered initial welcoming classes before entering mainstream education. Different welcoming classes are offered based on a child's need for language training. Some children spend up to two years in the welcoming classes, while others might only spend several months. Adults are offered the chance to participate in an introductory programme with language courses for two years, starting within three months of being granted a place to live in Oslo.

In Hamburg, the city education authority runs welcome classes in each reception centre for asylum seekers and refugees. These classes focus on the quick acquisition of language skills as well as on a general orientation regarding German culture and values. This 'education from day one' approach avoids any loss of time and prevents children from being kept in limbo for undefined periods.

In Munich, the approach is to generally try and match the needs of groups which are excluded from the state and Bavarian funded programmes in order to supply all migrants with language classes and trainings.

For unaccompanied minors seeking asylum, Leeds has appointed a 'virtual school head' with a statutory responsibility to ensure all children in the care of the local authority are in appropriate education. The city is also developing transition classes in anticipation of the arrival of 80 to 90 unaccompanied minors in 2017.

In Edinburgh, the city administration provides specific support to Syrian refugees resettled through the UK government programme. This support includes language training and professional orientation.

In cases where refugees are illiterate, they must first attend literacy classes. Berlin's senate department of education has established the so-called 'bridge courses' to give students additional language support during the transition period from the welcome class into the regular classes.

In Malmo, the city is offering study advice to around 3,000 newly-arrived pupils in their own language.

Leipzig's educational advisory service is offering monthly group and individual study sessions for asylum seekers to learn about the German education system and opportunities, particularly in the field of further education.

Tampere has organised extra training sessions and developed its curriculum to address the different official options for newcomers.

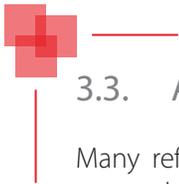
Ghent uses a dual approach: it provides additional support and flexible programmes, or organises extra classes for children aged 6 to 12 to help them integrate into the regular school system. Children aged 12 and older attend 'reception classes' until they are deemed ready to be integrated into regular classes – this normally happens after a year.

As part of its 'integration from day one' strategy, Vienna has developed a city-wide needs-based service of orientation support offering education counselling, systematic recording of competences, German language courses, basic education, access to further education, educational coaching and support for asylum seekers.

In Stockholm, the 'START' project is a new resource within the education department open to all city schools. Through the project, city staff meet the whole refugee family together with an interpreter and mother tongue teacher to assess an individual pupil's level of knowledge, initially in maths, English and their native language.

In Oslo, there is a school centre responsible for assessing the skills of children in order to find those in need of customised training.

Munich plans to establish a central 'assessment and assignment centre' in order to reach all refugees registered in the city and integrate them into the education system, get more information about their specific needs, individual abilities, social and educational profile and their personal ambitions and desires for the future. This will make it easier for the city to find the appropriate education opportunities for individuals.



### 3.3. Access to vocational training

Many refugees and asylum seekers, including unaccompanied minors, are older when they arrive and cannot be integrated into the general education system as easily as young children. In many cases they are introduced into the vocational training system instead, providing they are eligible. Sometimes the eligibility can depend on being granted a work permit following a transitional period for asylum seekers.

Among the cities responding to our survey there are varying degrees of responsibility for the vocational system. Some have full or shared responsibility, while others play a coordination role as they try to bridge the gap between education and employment and involve the private sector in their overall integration strategies.

Many cities use vocational training as a means to foster integration and ensure a quick transition into the labour market for refugees, by coordinating the efforts of different departments and agencies. Language ability is the main obstacle to accessing the vocational training system in many cities, and for starting an apprenticeship within the private sector. City administrations are attempting to address this through targeted programmes. They may also try to shorten the duration of vocational training programmes where there is a demand on the labour market. This is the case in Gothenburg, where a specific scheme has been developed in the sanitary and hospitality sectors, leading to a significant number of participants securing positions.

The city of Stockholm has launched YFI (<http://bit.ly/2hJ1jAy>), a three-year project partly financed by the European Social Fund. Its aim is to develop successful methods to combine vocational education and language courses in Swedish for students with limited educational backgrounds. The project enables students to begin their vocational education before they have completed their language courses, thus reducing their overall time spent in education.

Helsinki city administration has created a 'skills centre' combining vocational education, employment and language training services. Services are mainly targeted at refugees over the age of 17 and those immigrants whose language level and skills are not at the level needed for employment and vocational training.

In Tampere meanwhile, asylum seekers can access the city's vocational training college (<http://bit.ly/2hibUFN>), where it has created a specific department focusing on training for adult immigrants, providing services to around 600 students per year. In 2015, around 200 students with a refugee background or asylum seeker status were given summer language courses, literacy training or basic schooling through the college.

In Oslo, refugees aged over 16 have a legal right and an obligation to complete a minimum of 600 hours of language training. If needed, they can have up to 3,000 hours of training. Asylum seekers are eligible for up to 175 hours of language training. The provision of this training is the responsibility of the municipality.

In some cases in The Hague there are provisions within integration and language courses that enable students with a vocational background to be linked with Dutch vocational programmes. This is especially relevant in cases where language and integration courses are compulsory.

In Tilburg, the city administration wants to invest in a more in an integrated approach, comprising simultaneous integration courses and study preparation, to guide refugees and asylum seekers towards intermediate vocational education and tertiary education.

In Hamburg, refugees over the age of 16 are immediately sent into vocational schools upon arrival. They attend two-year courses specifically designed for their needs which include mostly language support activities and practical training placements in companies.





### 3.4. Access to tertiary education

Most cities do not have clear competences in the field of tertiary education. They do however often cooperate with universities to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers can smoothly access and integrate into the system if they are able to prove that they have already followed secondary education. City administrations also increasingly assist with the recognition of skills and qualifications. Berlin offers a scholarship programme for newly-arrived refugees and asylum seekers seeking to finance their education, for example to buy books or other educational material.

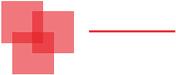
In Ghent, asylum seekers are invited to study at the University of Ghent and anyone with official refugee status can enrol in any course. The university established a contact point for refugees in May 2016. Refugees with an interest in tertiary education can sign up for the preparatory programme, which allows them to integrate smoothly into the tertiary education system. The university does not require proof of previous diplomas, although those refugees wishing to have recognition of their certification can apply for an assessment through the Flemish ministry of education.

Madrid has secured agreements with universities to set up assistance procedures to enable refugees to continue with their university studies. In Amsterdam, students with a refugee background and over the age of 18 are offered bridging classes to ensure they are up to speed and have the necessary language requirements to begin their studies.

Stockholm's labour market administration cooperates with the Royal Institute of Technology by providing refugees and asylum seekers who already hold a degree in engineering with free entry into some courses at the institute, in order to help them access the labour market.

Munich supports the recognition of qualifications through its foreign qualifications advisory and support service. Its objective is to advise people with foreign qualifications and support them in realising their potential within the German labour market.

Oslo has cooperation agreements with universities and has established an 'Academic Dugnad', which roughly translates into a voluntary community effort, aimed at refugees and asylum seekers. The aim is to give them the chance to use their academic skills for their own benefit and that of their host society. The conference of Austrian universities has set up the MORE programme, open to all refugees regardless of their asylum status. The programme is supported by the city of Vienna. MORE courses aim to provide space for reflection for refugees, where they can find out whether university studies are an option for them.



### 3.5. Access to adult education

Some cities have responsibility for general adult education and integration courses, a field in which there is often collaboration with the private sector, NGOs and voluntary organisations. In Gothenburg and Stockholm, access to adult education is only available to recognised refugees (not asylum seekers in the asylum process) and beneficiaries of international protection. In both cities the adult education system also offers vocational education combined with language courses and support. Gothenburg also offers language classes adapted to certain highly-educated professionals, including healthcare staff, technicians, engineers and teachers.

In Leipzig, the adult education centre run by the city provides German language and integration courses. Madrid uses a mainstream approach to include refugees and asylum seekers in the programmes run for its citizens. The Hague subsidises adult education for refugees: in the Netherlands, all non EU-citizens have a legal obligation to prove that they are integrated into Dutch society by taking an exam within the first three years of their arrival. In Ghent, undocumented adults who are not covered by the Civic Integration Decree can participate in private training courses organised by NGOs.

# 4

## Challenges

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The scale of the new arrivals in cities inevitably brings with it challenges and leads to a tangible demographic change at local level. In many cities, education systems were already under pressure due to growing populations and budget cuts. Depending on their formal competences, cities have had to respond to this new situation by expanding and upgrading their infrastructure and training and hiring new staff (teachers, education assistants, social workers, etc.).

Beyond issues of capacity and funding, cities also have to avoid segregation, respond to questions and doubts from their schools and communities, assess the knowledge and skills of newcomers and ensure a smooth transition between welcome classes and regular schooling. Within welcome and introductory classes, groups are very diverse, with young people with a good educational background alongside young people with little education, sometimes not even literate in their own mother tongue. This makes it difficult to set up customised learning paths. Many students also have specific needs due to traumatic experiences and having witnessed war and other atrocities.

Cities report difficulties in reconciling specific needs and challenges of refugee children and the requirements of the national curriculum with measures of a school's 'success'. While schools want to be inclusive, and may possess the skills and expertise to help these young people integrate into society, they are nevertheless rigorously scrutinised for their performance. In some cases schools may find it challenging to live up to national standards set by their departments of education.

Preventing segregation is another challenge, and many cities try to avoid a situation in which newcomers are concentrated in just a few schools. Instead they prefer to distribute them across different schools.

For some cities, the greatest challenges have been recruiting and training up qualified staff and opening new classes quickly enough to meet demand. In some cities this means employing retired teachers and head teachers to meet the growing influx of children and young people. There is also greater demand for teachers that speak the same language as the new arrivals.

It is also up to cities to ensure that schools have good links with other sectors, such as welfare, integration and leisure services. These all also play a key role in the reception and social integration of newcomers in the community.

A further challenge is the amount of uncertainty around the duration of newcomers' stays in the municipality, particularly for those at risk of being denied refugee status. This makes it difficult to foresee and plan for the number of staff needed within a few school years.

Most cities were already putting strategies in place before the refugee crisis in order to bridge the gap between formal education and labour market inclusion. This is even more important now, as many older refugees do not wish to spend too much time on education and prefer to begin work. Education can represent a long and challenging path when compared with the need to earn money quickly. By failing to provide quick and efficient solutions to this challenge, cities run the risk of forcing individuals into irregular jobs, thus compromising their chances of proper integration.



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1, Square de Meeûs  
B-1000 Brussels  
tel +32-2-552.0888  
info@eurocities.eu  
www.eurocities.eu  
@EUROCITIESweet

