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Steppingstones or stopping points?

An analysis of three blended higher education programs available to Syrian refugee youths in Jordan through a revisited 4As framework for the right to education

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ABSTRACT

Steppingstones or stopping points? An analysis of three blended higher education programs available to Syrian refugee youths in Jordan through a revisited 4As framework for the right to education

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This literature-based study explores the online and blended higher education programs currently on offer to Syrian youths in Jordan. It analyzes three specific programs through a revisited 4As framework for the right to education, as well as the theoretical paradoxes underlying technology-enabled and refugee-oriented higher education programs and impeding their realization of the right to (higher) education of Syrian refugees.

Firstly, the study will explore the availability of the right to higher education of Syrian refugees in Jordan by outlining all the (uncovered) ICT-enabled programs offered. Secondly, the study will analyze three specific programs through a revisited 4As' framework for the right to education (availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability). Lastly, the study will explore three main paradoxes underlying these programs and hindering the fulfilment of these criteria.

Adopting a rights-based critical approach, this thesis demonstrates that these ICT-enabled programs (re)produce barriers to accessing their programs, create unattainable outcomes, and misrecognize the contextual challenges of refugees, thereby exacerbating feelings of frustration, uncertainty, and hopelessness. Ultimately, this study hopes to demonstrate that these programs, while paving the way for addressing the immense refugee higher education gap, produce a promise for change that cannot be actualized given structural limitations on refugees' lives and futures.

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List of acronyms

AABU	Al al-Bayt University
AUB	American University of Beirut
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
COS	Certificate of Open Studies
CP	Critical Pedagogy
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
EiE	Education in Emergencies
HE	Higher Education
HEI(s)	Higher Education Institution(s)
HEiE	Higher Education in Emergencies
ICTs	Information and Communications Technologies
ID	Identification
IDP(s)	Internally Displaced Person(s)
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IGO(s)	Intergovernmental organization(s)
INGO(s)	International non-governmental organizations
IT	Information Technology
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Services
MENA	Middle East and Northern Africa
MITReACT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology Refugee Action Hub
MOOC(s)	Massive open online course
NGO(s)	Non-governmental organization(s)
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PADILEIA	Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access
RHE	Refugee Higher Education
RQ	Research Question
SPOC(s)	Small Private Online Course
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIGE	University of Geneva
UNWRA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UoP	University of the People

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Thank you to PADILEIA, Jamiya and InZone, and the many more ICT-enabled initiatives out there, without which, necessarily, the analysis of this thesis would not have materialized, but more importantly, for their important work, contribution, and determination to make things better. You are paving the way to change higher learning for displaced people. Thank you.

I would also like to thank PADILEIA in particular for kindly and generously sharing with me an internal report, used in the analysis of this thesis.

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Dedication

To all displaced persons, you are the heart of this thesis. I respect and admire your resilience and willpower. I will do everything in my power not to let you down.

To Mouna Yaqoubi Soussane, une force de la nature, une RDM, la RDM. Merci pour tout maman, je t'aime.

Preface

Lament for Syria, by Amineh Abou Kerech

Syrian doves croon above my head
their call cries in my eyes.
I'm trying to design a country
that will go with my poetry
and not get in the way when I'm thinking,
where soldiers don't walk over my face.
I'm trying to design a country
which will be worthy of me if I'm ever a poet
and make allowances if I burst into tears.
I'm trying to design a City
of Love, Peace, Concord and Virtue,
free of mess, war, wreckage and misery.

Oh Syria, my love
I hear your moaning
in the cries of the doves.
I hear your screaming cry.
I left your land and merciful soil
And your fragrance of jasmine
My wing is broken like your wing.

I am from Syria
From a land where people pick up a discarded piece of bread
So that it does not get trampled on
From a place where a mother teaches her son not to step on an ant at the end of the day.
From a place where a teenager hides his cigarette from his old brother out of respect.
From a place where old ladies would water jasmine trees at dawn.
From the neighbours' coffee in the morning
From: after you, aunt; as you wish, uncle; with pleasure, sister…
From a place which endured, which waited, which is still waiting for relief.

Syria.
I will not write poetry for anyone else.

Can anyone teach me
how to make a homeland?
Heartfelt thanks if you can,
heartiest thanks,
from the house-sparrows,
the apple-trees of Syria,
and yours very sincerely.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1.   Background and research aim

In 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that only 63% of refugee children had access to primary education, 24% to secondary education and a meager 3% to higher education (herein, HE), with only 1% *actually* entering the HE pathway [1]. Even when the refugee crisis is understood as a concomitant educational crisis, attention and effort is typically and mostly centered around primary and secondary education. In an era where 32.5 million (excluding 4.9 million asylum seekers and 5.9 million UNWRA-registered Palestinian refugees) refugees [2] face an average exile time of 17 to 20 years [3], it is critical that not only policymakers, humanitarian agencies and educational providers include HE in emergency responses but also that scholars and agencies research sustainable ways of delivering high-quality HE.

One of these ways is the use of information and communication technologies (herein, ICTs) to deliver blended (both face-to-face and online components) or fully online HE programs. Several non-governmental organizations (herein, NGOs), European Union and United Nations agencies, and international higher education institutions (herein, HEIs) have invested in ICTs to provide access to quality HE to refugees [4].

However, scholarship has not been able to keep pace with these initiatives; and as a result, there exists a gap in research on the use of technologies in refugee education, particularly

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[1] Save the Children, UNHCR and Pearson. "Promising Practices in Refugee Education". *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Pearson, Save the Children International*, (2017): 3-4. UNHCR. "Tertiary Education". *UNHCR*, (2018). http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/tertiary-education.html.

[2] UNHCR. "Refugee Data Finder". https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/

[3] UNHCR. "Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis". *UNHCR*, (2016): 5. http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/missingout-refugee-education-in-crisis_unhcr_2016-en.pdf.

[4] European Economic and Social Committee. "Lives in Dignity: From Aid-Dependence to Self-Reliance". *European Economic and Social Committee*, (2016). https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/refugeesdp/Communication_Forced_Displacement_Development_2016.pdf.

refugee higher education (herein, RHE) [5]. Even more important is that, since most research on refugee online education is produced by the organizations developing and implementing these programs [6], and/or their partners, it is overwhelmingly placed under a beautifying glass. Few [7] have taken a critical approach to the role of online and/or blended educational interventions in the context of displacement, and even fewer to the role of online and/or blended *higher education* interventions in the context of displacement.

It is within this uncritical, over-positive academic context, that this study finds its rationale. It aspires to be a critical investigation into the realization of the right to HE of Syrian refugees in Jordan provided through online and blended HE programs. Using qualitative literature data, the paper examines the availability of the programs on offer to Syrian learners in Jordan and selects three programs to further examine their fulfilment of the right to HE by analyzing their accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability. Thus, this study hopes to address the following questions:

- What university-level online and/or blended programs are available to Syrian university-aged students in Jordan?

- What essential features for the meaningful realization of the right to education (accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability) do these programs display, if any?

- What impedes their fulfilment if anything?

The combination of the four under-researched areas of 1) RHE, 2) refugee online education, 3) refugee ICT-enabled HE and 4) critical digital humanitarianism in Education in Emergencies

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[5] Randa Taftaf and Christy Williams. "Supporting Refugee Distance Education: A Review of the Literature". *American Journal of Distance Education 34*, (2019): 5–18.

[6] Francine Menashy and Zeena Zakharia. "Private engagement in refugee education and the promise of digital humanitarianism". *Oxford Review of Education* 46, no.3 (2020): 314

[7] Francine Menashy and Zeena Zakharia. "Private engagement in refugee education and the promise of digital humanitarianism". *Oxford Review of Education* 46, no.3 (2020):313-330; Tejendra Pherali and Mai Abu Moghli. "Higher Education in the Context of Mass Displacement: Towards Sustainable Solutions for Refugees". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34. No. 2 (2021): 2159–2179.

(EiE) – and in particular, Higher Education in Emergencies (HEiE) - inform the objectives of this research. It is the aim of this study to contribute to the fields of EiE, specifically, HEiE, and to attempt to interrogate, and ever-so-slightly counter, these scholarly imbalances and explore the extent to which these programs serve (Syrian) refugees' best interests and meet their needs. Ultimately, this study hopes to provide a better understanding of the role of technology in RHE, and the extent to which ICT-enabled HE programs provide a truly meaningful right to HE, one that is available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable to refugees, their needs, imagined futures, and realities.

1.2.   Literature Review
This literature review is divided into four sections: the benefits of HE in the context of refugeehood; its barriers; the potential of ICT-enabled education in the context of refugeehood; and the Syrian HE situation in Jordan.

1.2.1.   Higher Education: benefits in the context of refugeehood
Firstly, and predictably, providing HE opportunities to refugees can contribute to their as well as their country of residence's social and economic advancement as they achieve better livelihoods, thereby increasing their social and economic self-reliance [8]. RHE scholars have also argued that HE can promote post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation efforts in the

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[8] Laura-Ashley Wright and Robyn Plasterer. "Beyond basic education: exploring opportunities for higher learning in Kenyan refugee camps". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 42–57; Thomas M. Crea and Mary McFarland. "Higher Education for Refugees: Lessons from a 4-Year Pilot Project". *International Review of Education* 61, no. 2 (2015): 235–245; Sandra Taylor and Ravinder K. Sidhu. "Supporting refugee students in schools: what constitutes inclusive education?". *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 16, no.1 (2012): 39–56; Suzanne Reinhardt. "Exploring The Emerging Field of Online Tertiary Education for Refugees in Protracted Situations". *Open Praxis* 10, no.3 (2018): 211-220; Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 1-101; Anna Hakami. "*Education is our weapon for the future: Access and non-access to higher education for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda*" (Master's thesis, University of Stavanger, 2016): 1-104; Gladwell C., Hollow D., Robinson A., Norman B., Bowerman E., Mitchell J., Floremont, F., Hutchinson, P. "Higher Education for Refugees in Low-Resource Environments: Landscape Review". *UK: Jigsaw Consult, (*2016): 1-90; Sarah Dryden-Peterson and Wenona Giles. "Introduction: higher education for refugees". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 3–9.

country of origin [9]. More interestingly, Zeus has also argued that HE can help the psychosocial, physical, and cognitive protection of refugees [10].

Through RHE, those who have witnessed, and experienced trauma and suffering are better able to "understand and cope with their fate" [11], as well as-reframe the meaning of these events and replace their 'victimhood' with 'survivorship' [12]. Through RHE, refugees also start seeing themselves as contributing to their community [13]: they are not a 'nation-less' disempowered group, but active, contributing members of a community [14]. Likewise, Zeus argues that HE can help refugees restore their self-respect [15] and self-image [16] as it helps "reverse [the] narrative [of the refugee as a passive victim] and […] shape a new narrative of refugees as agents of their own and their communities' development and as such act as a subversion of power structures from within" [17].

In terms of the physical protection benefits of HE, Kirk and Sherab argue that it protects refugees against marginalization and abuse [18] while Bauer and Gallagher, and El Jack note that

[9] Gladwell C., Hollow D., Robinson A., Norman B., Bowerman E., Mitchell J., Floremont, F., Hutchinson, P. "Higher Education for Refugees in Low-Resource Environments: Landscape Review". *UK: Jigsaw Consult* (2016): 1-90; World University Service of Canada (WUSC). "*State of Play: Digital and Blended Innovations for Increased Access to Post-Secondary Education for Refugee Youth*", Ottawa: WUSC (2018): 1-22; Matthew Gallagher and Carrie Bauer. "Refugee Higher Education and Future Reconstruction Efforts: Exploring the Connection through the Innovative Technological Implementation of a University Course in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda". *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 22, (2020): 39–57; Helen Avery and Salam Said. "Higher Education for Refugees: The Case of Syria". *Development Education Perspectives on Migration* 24, (2017): 104-125.

[10] Barbara Zeus. "Exploring Barriers to Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no.2 (2011): 257

[11] Barbara Zeus. "Exploring Barriers to Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no.2 (2011): 257.

[12] Amani El Jack. "Education is my mother and father: the ''invisible'' women of Sudan". *Refuge* 27, no.2, (2010): 19–31; Jason Hart. "Displaced children's participation in political violence: towards greater understanding of mobilization". *Conflict, Security, Development* 8, no.3 (2008): 277–293. In Thomas M. Crea. "Refugee Higher Education: Contextual Challenges and Implications for Program Design, Delivery, and Accompaniment". *International Journal of Educational Development* 46, (2016): 13

[13] Anna Hakami. "*Education is our weapon for the future: Access and non-access to higher education for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda*" (Master's thesis, University of Stavanger, 2016): 79-81

[14] Anna Hakami. "*Education is our weapon for the future: Access and non-access to higher education for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda*" (Master's thesis, University of Stavanger, 2016): 79-81

[15] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 85

[16] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 78

[17] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 84

[18] Kelly Kirk and Domenique Sherab. "Access to Higher Education for Refugees in Jordan". *Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development,* (2016): 12

HE mitigates militarization [19]. Likewise, Avery and Said's argue that HE helps combat radicalization as it creates a basis for hope and empowerment [20].

Furthermore, Hakami in her Master's thesis found that refugees that have progressed to HE become role models for their fellow refugees, inspiring them to successfully complete secondary education and become active participants within their schools and communities [21]. Relatedly, the existence of and access to HE opportunities itself acts as a pull factor for children in primary and secondary grades, encouraging them to stay in school [22] and reducing their recruitment into forced labor, drug trafficking, prostitution, and armed conflict [23].

Nevertheless, while numerous are the benefits of RHE, its potential can be – and frequently is – limited by enduring restrictions on movement and work, as well as a lack of (international and/or local) recognition, accreditation and certification, the latter a commonplace among ICT-enabled programs. One must remain prudent as to not construct HE as a panacea for displaced youths, as it "delays participation in the world of adults and lengthens childhood dependence. This is bitterly resented by many youth. When it does not guarantee employment, education can also raise false expectations among young people" [24] and can lead to feelings of frustration and depression. Indeed, as perfectly put by Zeus, "[p]sychosocial stress due to anxiety and uncertainty of life in a refugee camp is thus exacerbated by few opportunities

[19] Carrie Bauer and Matthew J. Gallagher. "Education for Humanity: Higher Education for Refugees in Resource-Constrained Environments Through Innovative Technology". *Journal Of Refugee Studies* 2, (2020): 418; Amani El Jack. "Education is my mother and father: the ''invisible'' women of Sudan". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 23-25

[20] Helen Avery and Salam Said. "Higher Education for Refugees: The Case of Syria". *Development Education Perspectives on Migration* 24, (2017): 106-108

[21] Anna Hakami. "*Education is our weapon for the future: Access and non-access to higher education for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda*" (Master's thesis, University of Stavanger, 2016): 79-80

[22] World University Service of Canada (WUSC). "*State of Play: Digital and Blended Innovations for Increased Access to Post-Secondary Education for Refugee Youth*", Ottawa: WUSC (2018): 5

[23] Laura-Ashley Wright and Robyn Plasterer. "Beyond basic education: exploring opportunities for higher learning in Kenyan refugee camps". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 44, 52; Gladwell C., Hollow D., Robinson A., Norman B., Bowerman E., Mitchell J., Floremont, F., Hutchinson, P. "Higher Education for Refugees in Low-Resource Environments: Landscape Review". *UK: Jigsaw Consult* (2016): 14; Centre for Universal Education at Brookings. "A Global Compact on Learning: Taking Action on Education in Developing Countries". *Washington, DC: Brookings Institution*, (2011): 1-10

[24] Jo Boyden and Paul Ryder. "Implementing the Right to Education in Areas of Armed Conflict". *University of Oxford*, (1996): 15. https://inee.org/resources/implementing-right-education-areas-armed-conflict

to put into practice what one has learned and find recognition and self-fulfillment in a paid job" [25].

1.2.2. Higher Education: barriers in the context of refugeehood

Despite the well-researched benefits of RHE in re-building identities, futures and resilience, significant barriers - theoretical, structural, and practical - exist, particularly in a displaced setting. Barriers to RHE are predominantly connected to a restricted access to HEIs. Zeus highlights three theoretical paradoxes that hinder refugees' access to HEIs [26].

First, she explains that universities are considered "long-term, sustainable institutions" [27]. Conversely, refugee situations mistakenly, and ironically, connotate "temporariness" [28], when refugees spend roughly 17-20 years in exile [29]. Indeed, if refugees are expected to be resettled or repatriated, then education - and HE in particular - is not considered a priority. Agencies prioritize the provision of food, water, and health expenditures; even within education, primary education receives the most funding, followed by secondary, with tertiary receiving few, if any, funds [30]. This is especially true of humanitarian contexts where primary and/or secondary education are not universal. In most these contexts, the 18-24 age group is overlooked because they are not considered 'as vulnerable' as younger, school-aged children, thus directing most of the already limited educational budget towards compulsory education [31]. This, combined with refugees' general labor restrictions and uncertain futures, creates a (false)

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[25] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 61

[26] Barbara Zeus. "Exploring Barriers to Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no.2 (2011): 256–276; Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 1-101

[27] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 7

[28] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 7

[29] UNHCR. "Missing Out: Refugee Education in Crisis". *UNHCR*, (2016): 5. http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/missingout-refugee-education-in-crisis_unhcr_2016-en.pdf.

[30] Laura-Ashley Wright and Robyn Plasterer. "Beyond basic education: exploring opportunities for higher learning in Kenyan refugee camps". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 47

[31] Dawn Chatty. "Ensuring quality education for young refugees from Syria in Turkey, Northern Iraq/Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), Lebanon and Jordan: Mapping exercise on promoting education for Syrian young people (aged 12–25)". *Refugee Studies Centre*, (2014)

perception of RHE investment as a 'waste' of time and resources [32]. However, as RHE scholar Sarah Dryden-Peterson, points out, the uncertain nature of the future of displaced youths, should not be reason to impede access to HE, but, on the contrary, reason to provide it, to enable them and prepare them "to navigate and create these multiple futures" [33].

Second, Zeus also highlights that HEIs depend on - and operate within - the existence of the nation-state, thus perceiving refugee access to HE as problematic since they are 'without a nation' [34]. In fact, for Anderson, formal education – at any level – is the key to the relationship between what he calls the "imagined nation" [35] and imagined members of the nations, i.e., citizens [36]. Formal education systems facilitate this 'imagination': it serves the 'imagined nation' by forming citizens with a common sense of identity, belonging, and appreciation of rights and duties, and serves its 'imagined' members by preparing them to engage in the modern world as free producers, consumers, and citizens [37]. Refugees, owing to their *imagined* non-membership to this *imagined* political community, are without the protection of the state, and consequently remain outside the social contract, and the entitlement to be 'prepared' for engagement in the modern world by the imagined nation (i.e., the (host) state). If refugees are allowed to access national HEIs, which prepare and form imagined members, then, access to

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[32] Barbara Zeus. "Exploring Barriers to Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no.2 (2011): 260; Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 74-76

[33] Sarah Dryden-Peterson. "Refugee Education: Backward design to enable futures". *Education and Conflict Review* 2, (2019): 51

[34] Barbara Zeus. "Exploring Barriers to Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no.2 (2011): 256–276; Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 32-36

[35] Benedict Anderson. "*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*". 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991): 6

[36] Tony Waters and Kim LeBlanc. "Refugees and Education: Mass Public Schooling Without a Nation-State". *Comparative Education Review* 49, no.2 (2005): 129-147.

[37] Tony Waters and Kim LeBlanc. "Refugees and Education: Mass Public Schooling Without a Nation-State". *Comparative Education Review* 49, no.2 (2005): 129-147; Jo Kelcey. "*Schooling the Stateless: A History of The UNRWA Education Program for Palestine Refugees*". (PhD diss., New York University, 2020): 57-63; Yên Lê Espiritu. "Toward a Critical Refugee Study: The Vietnamese Refugee Subject in US Scholarship". *Journal of Vietnamese Studies* 1, no.1-2, (2006): 410–33; Sarah Subin Yeo, Terese Gagnon, and Hayso Thako. "Schooling for A Stateless Nation: The Predicament of Education Without Consensus for Karen Refugees on The Thailand-Myanmar Border". *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 8, no.1, (2020): 29-55.

formal HE would mean preparing them to become imagined members of the host country, i.e., it would mean preparing them for integration into that country's society. Thus, the inherent ideological and political nature of education, the underlying construed sanctity of the State, and the ensuing socio-political construction of refugees as unworthy non-citizens represent another (great) theoretical barrier to HE.

Thirdly, the "powerful, yet constructed, narrative" [38] of refugees as helpless victims dependent on aid [39] has not only implicitly painted a picture of refugees as "incapable of dealing with the challenges" of HE [40], but also, and more importantly, has been internalized by and incapacitated refugees who "eventually take on that assigned attitude of dependency and finally suffer from the 'dependency syndrome' imposed on them by relief agencies" [41].

Moreover, several scholars in the field of RHE unsurprisingly also cite structural barriers around gender, culture, religion, and disability as further hindering HE access [42].

Regarding practical barriers, Dryden-Peterson cites the interruption of refugees' education, prior to and during their displacement [43], as one of them. As many refugees spend most of their lives in camps and as the latter often lack primary and secondary education, they

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[38] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 40

[39] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 37-40

[40] Barbara Zeus. "Exploring Barriers to Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no.2, (2010): 261

[41] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 39

[42] Ryan Naylor, Les Terry, Alberto Rizzo, Nga Nguyen and Nathan Mifsud. "Structural Inequality in Refugee Participation in Higher Education". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 32, no.3 (2019): 1–17; Duncan MacLaren. "Tertiary Education for Refugees: A Case Study from the Thai-Burma Border". *Refuge* 27, no.2, (2010): 103–110; Anna Hakami. "*Education is our weapon for the future: Access and non-access to higher education for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda*" (Master's thesis, University of Stavanger, 2016): 1-104; Negin Dahya. "*Education in Conflict and Crisis: How Can Technology Make a Difference? A Landscape Review*". Bonn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit *(GIZ)*, 2016: 1-66; Farhia A. Abdi. "Behind Barbed Wire Fences- Higher Education and Twenty-first Century Teaching in Dadaab, Kenya". *Bildhaan - An International Journal of Somali Studies* 16, no.8, (2016): 1-15; Laura-Ashley Wright and Robyn Plasterer. "Beyond basic education: exploring opportunities for higher learning in Kenyan refugee camps". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 42-57; Sarah Dryden-Peterson and Wenona Giles. "Introduction: higher education for refugees". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 3–9; Heather A. Donald. "*Preparing for Uncertainty: Exploring Access to Higher Education in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi*" (Master's thesis, York University, 2014): 1-120; Thomas M. Crea. "Refugee Higher Education: Contextual Challenges and Implications for Program Design, Delivery, and Accompaniment". *International Journal of Educational Development* 46, (2016) :12–22

[43] Sarah Dryden-Peterson. "The Politics of Higher Education for Refugees in a Global Movement for Primary Education". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 12-14

often find themselves ineligible to access HE opportunities [44]. Moreover, even when primary and secondary education opportunities exist, they remain non-formal, thus rendering it difficult to pursue an education beyond and outside the camp.

Moreover, RHE scholars also agree that refugees, even those with prior educational qualifications, face practical barriers to entering HE, including but not limited to the high cost of tuition fees and auxiliary costs (e.g., transportation, scholastic material) and a concurrent low financial status, a restricted freedom of movement, the inability to provide educational (e.g., school diplomas and examination results) and ID documentation (e.g., birth certificates) and the varying requirements of HEIs [45]. The Global Business Coalition for Education also notes the high opportunity cost - in the form of forfeited income - that entry into HE represents [46]. Additionally, other RHE academics allude to the lack of fluency in the language of the host society [47] and of information about the HE opportunities available to refugee students [48], especially in urban zones where collaboration between NGOs and central points of information are scarce [49], as practical barriers.

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[44] Laura-Ashley Wright and Robyn Plasterer. "Beyond basic education: exploring opportunities for higher learning in Kenyan refugee camps". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 43; Sarah Dryden-Peterson. "The Politics of Higher Education for Refugees in a Global Movement for Primary Education". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 14

[45] Sarah Dryden-Peterson and Wenona Giles. "Introduction: higher education for refugees". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 3–9; Heather A. Donald. "*Preparing for Uncertainty: Exploring Access to Higher Education in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi*" (Master's thesis, York University, 2014): 1-120; Gladwell C., Hollow D., Robinson A., Norman B., Bowerman E., Mitchell J., Floremont, F., and Hutchinson, P. "Higher Education for Refugees in Low-Resource Environments: Landscape Review". *UK: Jigsaw Consult* (2016): 12; Ryan Naylor, Les Terry, Alberto Rizzo, Nga Nguyen and Nathan Mifsud. "Structural Inequality in Refugee Participation in Higher Education". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 32, no.3 (2019): 1–17; Thomas M. Crea. "Refugee Higher Education: Contextual Challenges and Implications for Program Design, Delivery, and Accompaniment". *International Journal of Educational Development* 46, (2016): 12–22

[46] The Global Business Coalition for Education. "Exploring the Potential of Technology to Deliver Education & Skills to Syrian Refugee Youth". *The Global Business Coalition for Education*, (2018): 15

[47] Paula G. Watkins, Husna Razee, and Juliet Richters. "I'm telling you… the language barrier is the most, the biggest challenge: barriers to education among Karen refugee women in Australia". *Australian Journal of Education* 56, no.2, (2012): 126–141; Gladwell C., Hollow D., Robinson A., Norman B., Bowerman E., Mitchell J., Floremont, F., and Hutchinson, P. "Higher Education for Refugees in Low-Resource Environments: Landscape Review". *UK: Jigsaw Consult* (2016): 12-13

[48] Gladwell C., Hollow D., Robinson A., Norman B., Bowerman E., Mitchell J., Floremont, F., and Hutchinson, P. "Higher Education for Refugees in Low-Resource Environments: Landscape Review". *UK: Jigsaw Consult* (2016): 12, 53-54

[49] Sarah Dryden-Peterson and Wenona Giles. "Introduction: higher education for refugees". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 3–9; Gladwell C., Hollow D., Robinson A., Norman B., Bowerman E., Mitchell J., Floremont, F., and Hutchinson, P. "Higher Education for Refugees in Low-Resource Environments: Landscape Review". *UK: Jigsaw Consult* (2016): 12

Other practical barriers to refugees' access to HE are found in the restrictive – and consequently exclusionary - practices of universities. Indeed, as highlighted by Dryden-Peterson, many universities use enrolment quotas that prioritize their nationals [50] and, as advanced by Donald, many charge refugees a higher tuition fee as they consider them 'international students' [51]. Unless refugees are enrolled in a fee reduction or waiver program specifically designed for refugees, public HEIs in host countries will typically charge refugees an international fee [52].

Furthermore, as touched upon, refugees are often faced with a constant lack of work opportunities in camps and outside of camps, often not being granted any right to work [53]. Naturally, this creates a sense of frustration and discourages refugee learners from pursuing any HE.

Lastly, Avery and Said also refer to the dire conditions of refugees' everyday lives as a barrier to and challenge of HE [54]. The immense mental and emotional pressures produced by the condition of refugeehood make day to day survival challenging enough and hamper refugees' HE access and success.

1.2.3. Expanding access to HE for refugees: the role of ICTs

Understanding the immense HE gap experienced by refugee youths, many studies and initiatives have proposed to leverage ICTs to overcome some of the aforementioned barriers.

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[50] Sarah Dryden-Peterson. "The Politics of Higher Education for Refugees in a Global Movement for Primary Education". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 10–18.

[51] Heather A. Donald. "*Preparing for Uncertainty: Exploring Access to Higher Education in Dzaleka Refugee Camp, Malawi*" (Master's thesis, York University, 2014): 85, 94

[52] Gladwell C., Hollow D., Robinson A., Norman B., Bowerman E., Mitchell J., Floremont, F., and Hutchinson, P. "Higher Education for Refugees in Low-Resource Environments: Landscape Review". *UK: Jigsaw Consult* (2016): 12

[53] Laura-Ashley Wright and Robyn Plasterer. "Beyond basic education: exploring opportunities for higher learning in Kenyan refugee camps". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 50-51

[54] Helen Avery and Salam Said. "Higher Education for Refugees: The Case of Syria". *Development Education Perspectives on Migration* 24, (2017): 104-125

Dahya, a leading scholar in the field of ICT-enabled HEiE, points to technology as a tool to support, ease, and enable access to quality HE in difficult-to-reach areas [55]. In HE, the costs of curriculum design, salary and classroom space are passed on to the students. Bauer and Gallagher and Burde et al. argue that ICTs, as they allow for asynchronous learning, can decrease some of these expenses, including transportation and classroom space [56]. Moreover, Joynes et al. agree that ICTs have been shown to increase HE access due to their flexibility and ability to better fit learners' schedules as well as their economic and family responsibilities [57]. Indeed, in an emergency context, wherein the demand for (higher) education far outweighs the supply of human and material resources and infrastructures, ICT models hold the potential to facilitate more affordable, flexible and less resource-heavy (higher) education. Dahya and Dryden-Peterson, exploring the HE situation for Somalis in the Kenyan Dadaab camp, also found that, if designed and implemented appropriately, ICT-enabled HE, particularly mobile learning, has the potential to overcome barriers to space, time, mobility and costs, but also gender and disability [58].

UNESCO's report on technologies for refugee education also highlights that ICTs enhance access to textbooks and learning content, thus reducing costs and improving the quality of curricula [59], and support the adaptation of learning materials to local needs, thus increasing

[55] Negin Dahya. "*Education in Conflict and Crisis: How Can Technology Make a Difference? A Landscape Review*". Bonn: Germany: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), 2016, 16-17, 32-33

[56] Carrie Bauer and Matthew J. Gallagher. "Education for Humanity: Higher Education for Refugees in Resource-Constrained Environments Through Innovative Technology". *Journal Of Refugee Studies* 2, (2020): 416-436; Dana Burde, Ozen Guven, Jo Kelcey, Heddy Lahmann and Khaled Al-Abbadi. "What Works to Promote Children's Educational Access, Quality of Learning, And Wellbeing in Crisis-Affected Contexts. Education Rigorous Literature Review". *Department for International Development*. (2015)

[57] Chris Joynes and Zoe James. "An Overview of ICT For Education of Refugees and IDPs. Knowledge, Evidence, And Learning for Development". *Save The Children*. (2018). https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/overview-ict-education-refugees-and-idps/.

[58] Negin Dahya and Sarah Dryden-Peterson. "Tracing pathways to higher education for refugees: The role of virtual support networks and mobile phones for women in refugee camps". *Comparative Education* 53, (2017): 284–301

[59] Fengchun Miao, Sanjaya Mishra and Rory McGreal. "Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs, Transformation" in *Open Educational Resources: Policy, Costs, Transformation*, ed. Fengchun Miao, Sanjaya Mishra and Rory McGreal. (Paris: UNESCO and Burnaby: Commonwealth of Learning, 2016): 1-12. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002443/244365e.pdf

the scalability and rapidity of implementation and distribution [60]. These are potentials also cited by the World Bank in their report on ICTs and refugee education [61]. Similarly, Unwin et al., taking a speculative approach on the role of ICTs in basic education for 2020-2025, estimate that the increased use of ICTs in education will increase the diversity of content provision as well as enable refugee and IDP children's participation in formal, non-formal and lifelong learning [62]. Interestingly, they also predict that ICTs will be used to provide counselling for refugees, as well as general legal information [63].

Focusing on mobile learning, from a teaching perspective, Carlson argues that the use of ICTs in conflict-affected educational settings reduces the training time of teachers, accelerates recruitment, and enables the exchange of ideas, pedagogies, and feedback [64]. From a student perspective, he also explains that technology-enabled education facilitates student engagement and allows for more collaborative, self-paced, sturdy learning programs [65].

Moreover, The Global Business Coalition for Education, in its exploration of technologies' potential to deliver quality education to Syrian children and youths, also makes the compelling argument that ICT-enabled (higher) education can work to develop the digital skills of refugees, skills that have become critical to be able to fully participate in contemporary society [66]. Investing in ICT-enabled (higher) education could then act as an "equalizing force" that not

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[60] UNESCO. "*A lifeline to learning: Leveraging technology to support education for refugees*". (Paris: UNESCO, 2018): 52-58. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002612/261278e.pdf

[61] Kent Lewis and Simon Thacker. "*ICT and the Education of Refugees: A Stocktaking of Innovative Approaches in the MENA Region: Lessons of Experience and Guiding Principles*". (Washington DC: World Bank, 2016). 6-11. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/25172/Lessons0of0exp0d0guiding0principles.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[62] Tim Unwin, David Hollow and Mark Weber. "*The future of learning and technology in deprived contexts*". (London: Save The Children International, 2017): v, 11-13. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13074/pdf/the_future_of_learning_and_technology.pdf

[63] Tim Unwin, David Hollow and Mark Weber. "*The future of learning and technology in deprived contexts*". (London: Save The Children International, 2017): v, 12. https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/13074/pdf/the_future_of_learning_and_technology.pdf

[64] Sam Carlson. "Using Technology to Deliver Educational Services to Children and Youth in Environments Affected by Crisis and/or Conflict". *Washington: USAID*, (2013): 15

[65] Sam Carlson. "Using Technology to Deliver Educational Services to Children and Youth in Environments Affected by Crisis and/or Conflict". *Washington: USAID*, (2013): 17

[66] The Global Business Coalition for Education. "*Exploring the Potential of Technology to Deliver Education & Skills to Syrian Refugee Youth*". (The Global Business Coalition for Education, 2018): 1-2, 7

only democratizes (higher) education but also digital literacy [67], thus, ever-so-slightly reversing the digital exclusion of displaced youths. However, Reinhardt et al. also remarkably argue that this reversal may in fact reinforce a digital divide among refugees, as access to these programs is actually only expanded to (relatively) advantaged refugee learners [68].

Additionally, and interestingly, the Coalition also notes that the potential of ICTs, specifically in HE, largely depends on the fields and studies pursued [69]: online and blended learning programs are seen as the most cost-effective, accessible, and quality option for general subjects but less appropriate for specialized fields like medicine and engineering [70].

However, while the use of ICTs in HE, and education in general, can help overcome certain barriers, it comes too with its own set of barriers, particularly in resource-constrained environments, hosts to 85% of the global refugee population [71]. Any online or blended HE initiative should therefore consider and respond to these barriers.

Bauer and Gallagher, drawing from Dankova and Giner's findings [72], cite a lack of financial and physical access to Internet-enabled devices as well as poor digital infrastructures and electricity access, and consequently, a lack of and/or poor Internet connectivity as these inherent barriers [73]. Moreover, the high cost of (mobile) data plans constitutes another technological barrier [74].

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[67] The Global Business Coalition for Education. "*Exploring the Potential of Technology to Deliver Education & Skills to Syrian Refugee Youth*". (The Global Business Coalition for Education, 2018): 1
[68] Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Roland Happ, and Sarah Nell-Müller. "Online technology for promoting the inclusion of refugees into higher education: a systematic review of current approaches and developments" in *Research Handbook on International Migration and Digital Technology* ed. Marie McAuliffe, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021): 188-189
[69] The Global Business Coalition for Education. "*Exploring the Potential of Technology to Deliver Education & Skills to Syrian Refugee Youth*" (The Global Business Coalition for Education, 2018): 8
[70] The Global Business Coalition for Education. "*Exploring the Potential of Technology to Deliver Education & Skills to Syrian Refugee Youth*". (The Global Business Coalition for Education, 2018): 8
[71] UNHCR. "Refugee Data Finder". https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/
[72] Petra Dankova and Clotilde Giner. "Technology in Aid of Learning for Isolated Refugees". *Forced Migration Review* 38, (2011): 11-12
[73] Carrie Bauer and Matthew J. Gallagher. "Education for Humanity: Higher Education for Refugees in Resource-Constrained Environments Through Innovative Technology". *Journal Of Refugee Studies* 2, (2020): 416-436
[74] Constantin Reinprecht, Renata Suter, Bronwyn Parry and Florian Rampelt. "No Longer a 'Lost Generation'? Opportunities and Obstacles of Online and Blended Learning Programmes for Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no.3, (2021): 3211

A lack of digital literacy, very simplistically defined as "the set of skills, knowledge and attitudes required to access, create, use, and evaluate digital information effectively, efficiently, and ethically" [75] becomes another inherent challenge of ICT-enabled RHE. Moreover, and importantly, these initiatives should also sensitize refugee learners to other implicit and inherent issues to the delivery of ICT-enabled HE such as privacy, data and identity management, surveillance, and mis/dis-information [76].

Additionally, a few scholars have also asserted that, notwithstanding the benefits of ICT initiatives to democratize education, such programs also inherently reduce the likelihood of socialization and integration into host communities and overlook the importance of face-to-face interactions to the psychosocial wellbeing and healthy development of individuals, especially youths [77].

Furthermore, when it comes to the focal population of this study, Syrian refugees perceive online learning to be inferior to face-to-face learning and online professors to be less skilled than HEIs professors [78], which can become a personal barrier to accessing these programs. Furthermore, the fact that, as mentioned, fully online learning is incompatible with scientific fields represents another factor into Syrian, in particular male, youths' reluctance to

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[75] Heidi E. Julien. "Digital Literacy in Theory and Practice" in *Advanced Methodologies and Technologies in Library Science, Information Management, and Scholarly Inquiry* ed. Mehdi Khosrow-Pour. (Hershey: IGI Global, 2019): 23

[76] Holger Pötzsch. "Critical Digital Literacy: Technology in Education Beyond Issues of User Competence and Labour-Market Qualifications". *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society* 17, no.2, (2019): 221-240; Richard Kern. "Twenty-five years of digital literacies in CALL". *Language Learning & Technology* 25, no.3, (2021): 132-150; Rodney H. Jones. "The text is reading you: Teaching language in the age of the algorithm". *Linguistics and Education* 62, (2019): 1-7; Neil Selwyn. (2016). "Minding Our Language: Why Education and Technology Is Full of Bullshit… and What Might Be Done About It". *Learning, Media & Technology* 41, no.3, (2016): 437-443; Neil Selwyn. "Technology and education – why it's crucial to be critical". In *Critical perspectives on technology and education*, edited by Scott Bulfin, Nicola F. Johnson, and Chris Bigum. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015: 245-255; Luci Pangrazio and Neil Selwyn. "Personal Data Literacies: A Critical Literacies Approach to Enhancing Understandings of Personal Digital Data". *New Media & Society* 21, no.2, (2019): 419-437; Luci Pangrazio. "Reconceptualising critical digital literacy". *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 37, no.2, (2016): 163-174

[77] Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Tobias Deribo, Roland Happ, Sarah Nell-Muller. "Integrating Refugees into Higher Education – the Impact of New Online Education Program for Policies and Practices". *Policy Reviews in Higher Education* 2, no.2 (2018): 216-217; Gabi Witthaus. "Findings from a Case Study on Refugees Using MOOCs to (Re) Enter Higher Education". *Open Praxis* 10, no.4, (2018): 353

[78] Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 350-351

online learning [79], as these are perceived to be the fields with most high status, employability, and economic mobility [80]. Another factor that contributes to Syrian youths' preference towards traditional face-to-face learning is "the absence of [a] legal framework for the provision and accreditation of online programs" [81]. Indeed, governments, particularly in the Arab world among which is the focal location of this study (Jordan), do not have legislation on the accreditation and formal recognition of online programs and credits, which results in a discursive concern that online learning does not meet quality educational standards and a systemic practice that refrains regional HEIs and employers to recognize online qualifications and credentials [82].

Moreover, most ICT-enabled programs and initiatives for refugees are developed and delivered by Western providers [83]. However, not only do most refugees not end up in a resettled Western country, but importantly too, most courses delivered reflect Western neoliberal (academic) culture, promote Western concepts and values, and are based on Western pedagogies [84]. Particularly for refugees, this can be overwhelming as they now face feelings of acculturation not only in the host society they are in, but also in the educational culture within which they are integrated as contextual (social, cultural, economic, technological, and

[79] Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 350-351
[80] Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 350-351
[81] Hana A. El-Ghali and Emma Ghosn. "*Towards Connected Learning in Lebanon*". Beirut: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2019: 6
[82] Hana A. El-Ghali and Emma Ghosn. "*Towards Connected Learning in Lebanon*". Beirut: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2019: 6, 16; Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 350-351; Constantin Reinprecht, Renata Suter, Bronwyn Parry and Florian Rampelt. "No Longer a 'Lost Generation'? Opportunities and Obstacles of Online and Blended Learning Programmes for Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no.3, (2021): 3201, 3213
[83] Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Roland Happ, and Sarah Nell-Müller. "Online technology for promoting the inclusion of refugees into higher education: a systematic review of current approaches and developments" in *Research Handbook on International Migration and Digital Technology* ed. Marie McAuliffe, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021): 186; Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 350
[84] Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Roland Happ, and Sarah Nell-Müller. "Online technology for promoting the inclusion of refugees into higher education: a systematic review of current approaches and developments" in *Research Handbook on International Migration and Digital Technology* ed. Marie McAuliffe, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021): 186

psychosocial) mismatches between the Western providers and refugee learners arise and as they encounter unknown educational concepts, practices, and methodologies [85]. Indeed, in the particular case of Syrian refugees, the adaptation from a more traditional, authoritative, memorization-based pedagogy to one mostly revolving around critical thinking and independent research and study can also represent a challenge to ICT-enabled programs [86]. Lastly, inherent barriers to ICT-enabled learning are also connected to the language of instruction, and, as most are delivered by Western providers, English often becomes the lingua franca, regardless of the languages and dialects of both the host and targeted population [87].

1.2.4. The Syrian Higher Educational Crisis: the context of Jordan

The conflict in Syria has been widely acknowledged as one of the biggest humanitarian crises of modern times and has led to an influx of millions of refugees into neighboring countries. Within Jordan only and as of 2022 there are 661.670 registered Syrian refugees [88]. Despite the importance of HE for refugees and the more than 500.000 Syrian refugees aged 18-24 [89], access is severely limited.

In Jordan, most refugees are registered with the UNHCR with approximately 80% living in urban and peri-urban areas, and 20% in UNHCR-run camps [90]. In 2016, 12% of the Syrian

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[85] Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Roland Happ, and Sarah Nell-Müller. "Online technology for promoting the inclusion of refugees into higher education: a systematic review of current approaches and developments" in *Research Handbook on International Migration and Digital Technology* ed. Marie McAuliffe, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021): 186

[86] Kussai Haj-Yehia and Khalid Arar "Arab World Refugee Challenges in Higher Education: The Case of Syrian Refugee Students in Jordan" in *Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugees Students in Global World* ed. Khalid Arar, Kussai Haj-Yehia, David B. Ross, and Yasar Kondakci. New-York: Peter Lang, 2019: 354

[87] Constantin Reinprecht, Renata Suter, Bronwyn Parry and Florian Rampelt. "No Longer a 'Lost Generation'? Opportunities and Obstacles of Online and Blended Learning Programmes for Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no.3, (2021): 3212; Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Roland Happ, and Sarah Nell-Müller. "Online technology for promoting the inclusion of refugees into higher education: a systematic review of current approaches and developments" in *Research Handbook on International Migration and Digital Technology* ed. Marie McAuliffe, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021): 184-186; Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 350

[88] UNHCR. "Syria Regional Refugee Response'. *UNHCR*. https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/syria

[89] Oguz Esen. "University study offers way to integrate Syrian refugees". *University World News*, (2022). https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20222030061816422#:~:text=More%20than%20500%2C000%20Syr ian%20refugees,and%20to%209.5%25%20in%202021

[90] Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 333

refugee population in Jordan (84.000) were aged 18-24 [91], and of these only 4,5% were participating in HE [92], which remains considerably higher than the then refugee enrolment rate of 1% [93]. However, this is still alarmingly lower than Syria's pre-conflict 26% rate [94] and the then global enrolment rate of 36% [95].

This is due to recurrent barriers to HE, including refugees' lack of ID documentation and proof of prior academic qualifications (including prior HE studies), the general incapacity of Jordanian HEIs to absorb these numbers of refugees, and the higher cost of living and tuition in Jordan – compared to Syria [96]. Alarmingly, Jordanian HEIs also consider Syrian students to be international students and are thus charged higher fees [97]. Other constraints are found in the limitation of movement and employment, lack of information about available opportunities, refugees' commitment to economic and domestic responsibilities, lack of sufficient scholarships, gender norms and geographical distance from refugee camps [98].

Moreover, Jordanian HEIs follow the American model, whilst Syrian institutions follow the French, thus representing a unique compatibility constraint for Syrian students [99]. Similarly,

[91] Juliet Dryden. "Higher Education Opportunities Available to Syrian Refugees in Jordan". *Wana Institute,* (n.d.). https://wanainstitute.org/en/fact_sheet/higher-education-opportunities-available-syrian-refugees-jordan

[92] Hana A. El-Ghali, Fida Alameddine, Samar Farah, and Soraya Benchiba. "*Pathways to and Beyond Education for Refugee Youth in Jordan and Lebanon"*. (Beirut: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs and the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education, 2019): 15

[93] Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 332

[94] Juliet Dryden. Higher Education Opportunities Available to Syrian Refugees in Jordan. *Wana Institute,* (n.d.). https://wanainstitute.org/en/fact_sheet/higher-education-opportunities-available-syrian-refugees-jordan

[95] Daniele Vieira, Takudzwa Mutize and Jaime Roser Chinchilla. "Understanding access to higher education in the last two decades". *UNESCO.* 2020

[96] Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 333; Kussai Haj-Yehia and Khalid Arar "Arab World Refugee Challenges in Higher Education: The Case of Syrian Refugee Students in Jordan" in *Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugees Students in Global World* ed. Khalid Arar, Kussai Haj-Yehia, David B. Ross, and Yasar Kondakci. New-York: Peter Lang, 2019: 352-358

[97] Kussai Haj-Yehia and Khalid Arar "Arab World Refugee Challenges in Higher Education: The Case of Syrian Refugee Students in Jordan" in *Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugees Students in Global World* ed. Khalid Arar, Kussai Haj-Yehia, David B. Ross, and Yasar Kondakci. New-York: Peter Lang, 2019: 352

[98] Kussai Haj-Yehia and Khalid Arar "Arab World Refugee Challenges in Higher Education: The Case of Syrian Refugee Students in Jordan" in *Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugees Students in Global World* ed. Khalid Arar, Kussai Haj-Yehia, David B. Ross, and Yasar Kondakci. New-York: Peter Lang, 2019: 352-358

[99] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 134; Kussai Haj-Yehia and Khalid Arar "Arab World Refugee Challenges in Higher Education: The Case of Syrian Refugee Students in Jordan" in

language also constitutes a barrier: Jordanian universities largely deliver content in English, especially in engineering, science, and medicine studies, whilst Syrian HEIs do so mostly in Arabic [100].

To address this HE crisis, and that of refugees in general, international, and local actors have developed scholarship programs, and increased provision of TVET and online and blended programs. This research will focus on the latter medium in the context of Jordan.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

In conformity with the 4As framework developed by Katarina Tomaševski, the first UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, and adopted by the CESCR in its General Comment no.13 on the right to education [101], this study understands that for the right to HE to be truly fulfilled, i.e., for HE to be a meaningful and valuable right, it must display the following essential features: availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability [102] (see Table 1).

Availability means that there are sufficient educational institutions and programs for all persons concerned and that they sufficiently provide material and human resources [103].

Education (meaning, educational institutions and programs) also must be accessible, economically, physically, technologically, and without discrimination (inter alia gender,

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Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugees Students in Global World ed. Khalid Arar, Kussai Haj-Yehia, David B. Ross, and Yasar Kondakci. New-York: Peter Lang, 2019: 354

[100] Kussai Haj-Yehia and Khalid Arar "Arab World Refugee Challenges in Higher Education: The Case of Syrian Refugee Students in Jordan" in *Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugees Students in Global World* ed. Khalid Arar, Kussai Haj-Yehia, David B. Ross, and Yasar Kondakci. New-York: Peter Lang, 2019: 354

[101] UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). "*General Comment No. 13: The Right to Education (Art. 13 of the Covenant)*". 1999, E/C.12/1999/10

[102] Katarina Tomaševski. "Human Rights Obligations: Making Education Available, Accessible, Acceptable and Adaptable". *Gothenburg: Novum Grafiska AB*, 2001: 1-47. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf.

[103] Koumbou Boly Barry. "Right to education: the cultural dimensions of the right to education, or the right to education as a cultural right - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Koumbou Boly Barry". *UN General Assembly*, (2021): 14; Katarina Tomaševski. "Human Rights Obligations: Making Education Available, Accessible, Acceptable and Adaptable". *Gothenburg: Novum Grafiska AB*, 2001: 13-15. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf

religion, language, social status, poverty, distance, disability, ethnicity) [104]. Thus, an analysis of accessibility should explore Syrian refugees' direct and indirect barriers to access blended/online HE programs [105].

Education must also be acceptable, i.e., the content of education must be culturally appropriate, non-discriminatory, relevant and of good quality [106], and the educational institutions must be safe and the educational providers qualified and respectful [107]. This means ensuring that educational contents, curricula, and teaching methods respect and develop cultural resources and meet the minimum educational standards set nationally and/or internationally [108].

Lastly, for education to be adaptable, it must be sufficiently flexible so that institutions and programs can adapt to the needs of changing societies and to the evolving needs of learners within their diverse social and cultural settings [109]. Indeed, education delivery must adapt to learners' realities, needs, capacities and specific conditions (inter alia, geographical location, gender, age, ethnicity, culture, educational background, special needs, weather) – not the other way around. This means ensuring an understanding of local realities and a capacity to anticipate

[104] Koumbou Boly Barry. "Right to education: the cultural dimensions of the right to education, or the right to education as a cultural right - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Koumbou Boly Barry". *UN General Assembly*, (2021): 14; Katarina Tomaševski. "Human Rights Obligations: Making Education Available, Accessible, Acceptable and Adaptable". (*Gothenburg: Novum Grafiska AB*, 2001): 13-15. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf
[105] Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey*". Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 330
[106] Koumbou Boly Barry. "Right to education: the cultural dimensions of the right to education, or the right to education as a cultural right - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Koumbou Boly Barry". *UN General Assembly*, (2021): 14; Katarina Tomaševski. "Human Rights Obligations: Making Education Available, Accessible, Acceptable and Adaptable". (*Gothenburg: Novum Grafiska AB*, 2001): 13-15. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf
[107] Hajrulla Hajrullaia and Basri Saliua. "The Application of 4-A Scheme in the Context of Higher Education in Macedonia". *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 232, (2016): 71
[108] Koumbou Boly Barry. "Right to education: the cultural dimensions of the right to education, or the right to education as a cultural right - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Koumbou Boly Barry". *UN General Assembly*, (2021): 14; Katarina Tomaševski. "Human Rights Obligations: Making Education Available, Accessible, Acceptable and Adaptable". (*Gothenburg: Novum Grafiska AB*, 2001): 13-15. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf
[109] Koumbou Boly Barry. "Right to education: the cultural dimensions of the right to education, or the right to education as a cultural right - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Koumbou Boly Barry". *UN General Assembly*, (2021): 14; Katarina Tomaševski. "Human Rights Obligations: Making Education Available, Accessible, Acceptable and Adaptable". (*Gothenburg: Novum Grafiska AB*, 2001): 13-15. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf

needs and reorientate responses, methods, and evaluation mechanisms [110]. As this researcher understands – and analyses - it, while accessibility explores the barriers *to* access HE interventions, adaptability investigates the barriers, or rather challenges, learners face *when* accessing HE programs and that arise from their particular realities.

Table 1. 4As Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework		
RIGHT TO EDUCATION	AVAILABILITY	– fiscal allocations matching human rights obligations – schools matching school-aged children (number, diversity) – teachers (education & training, recruitment, labour rights, trade union freedoms)
	ACCESSIBILITY	– elimination of legal and administrative barriers – elimination of financial obstacles – identification and elimination of discriminatory denials of access – elimination of obstacles to compulsory schooling (fees, distance, schedule)
RIGHTS IN EDUCATION	ACCEPTABILITY	– parental choice of education for their children (with human rights correctives) – enforcement of minimal standards (quality, safety, environmental health) – language of instruction – freedom from censorship – recognition of children as subjects of rights
	ADAPTABILITY	– minority children – indigenous children – working children – children with disabilities – child migrants, travelers
RIGHTS THROUGH EDUCATION		– concordance of age-determined rights – elimination of child marriage – elimination of child labour – prevention of child soldiering

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Accordingly, this study will attempt to assess the ICT-enabled HE programs available to Syrian refugees in Jordan through this lens, using these essential features (availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability) as criteria of evaluation.

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[110] Koumbou Boly Barry. "Right to education: the cultural dimensions of the right to education, or the right to education as a cultural right - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Koumbou Boly Barry". *UN General Assembly*, (2021): 14; Katarina Tomaševski. "Human Rights Obligations: Making Education Available, Accessible, Acceptable and Adaptable". (*Gothenburg: Novum Grafiska AB*, 2001): 13-15. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf
[111] Katarina Tomaševski. "Human Rights Obligations: Making Education Available, Accessible, Acceptable and Adaptable". (*Gothenburg: Novum Grafiska AB*, 2001): 12. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf

It is worth noting, albeit briefly, that the reason behind the selection of the 4As framework as an analytical lens and the theoretical foundation of this work is practical as well as political. The use of the UN's - the closest inter-governmental organization to a global governance institution we have - own indicator on the realization of the right to education, might hold more ground and applicability among IGOs and (I)NGOs. Simultaneously, the 4As' adoption in the context of HEiE is also a political statement as the scheme was mainly developed with basic education in mind, thus implicitly placing HE on par with compulsory education and recognizing it as too a human right that must be held to the same standards as any other type or level of education, and that, as such (i.e., as a human right), must also be accessible to displaced populations to the same extent and standards as that delivered to more fortunate populations.

However, since the 4As framework, as currently conceptualized and practiced, did not seem sufficiently comprehensive nor adequate to deliver a meaningful right to HE for refugees, I decided to evaluate these programs through a revisited 4As framework that introduces within acceptability two crucial features: critical pedagogy (herein, CP) and psychosocial wellbeing.

For any (higher) education to be truly meaningful and successful, it must place the learner at the center of its approach and adopt a 'problem-posing' approach that treats learners as co-investigators and knowledge as collaborative and dialogical [112]. Curriculums that are based on CP understand that "there is no set curriculum or program because all decisions related to curriculum and material to be studied are based on the needs and interests of students" [113] and ensure that teachers assist learners in identifying their condition of oppression, understanding their situatedness within unequal power relations, and developing the tools, skills and techniques to empower themselves, their voices, and their experiences to ultimately produce

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[112] Paulo Freire. "*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*". (New York: *Continuum Books*, 1970)
[113] Peter McLaren. "Revolutionary Pedagogy in post-revolutionary times: Rethinking the political economy of critical education". *Educational Theory* 48, no.4, (1998): 134

alternatives and change for themselves [114]. Only this way will education be truly transformational and disruptive of the status quo, and learners able to truly break free from their condition of oppression and structural injustice and fully participate in the world. Thus, CP, if done appropriately, becomes the more important for disadvantaged populations such as refugees as it can contribute to breaking cycles of marginalization, a commonly claimed aim of most educational projects. CP was incorporated in this study's analysis for this very reason - to highlight the cruciality of CP for educational projects targeting marginalized populations and investigate whether the commonly advanced benefits of (higher) education in terms of empowerment, emancipation and change are actualized, or remain *potential* benefits.

Furthermore, as seen in the literature review, HE is as much an educational intervention as it is a psychosocial one. Given the immeasurable effects of forced migration on displaced peoples' psychosocial wellbeing resulting from pre-flight [115], in-flight [116], and post-flight stressors [117], refugees in HE are more likely to encounter different and additional psychosocial stressors over and beyond those faced by their non-refugee peers [118]. If delivered without critical understanding of the structural limitations and inequalities impacting refugees' lives and futures, and without dedicated attention to and understanding of refugees' particular needs, HE access can become as much a source of distress as a lack of it [119]. It is therefore crucial,

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[114] Peter McLaren. "Revolutionary Pedagogy in post-revolutionary times: Rethinking the political economy of critical education". *Educational Theory* 48, no.4, (1998): 431-462; Paulo Freire. "*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*". (New York: *Continuum Books*, 1970)

[115] Ann S. Masten, and Joy D. Osofsky. "Disasters and Their Impact on Child Development: Introduction to the Special Section." *Child Development* 81, no. 4 (2010): 1029–1039

[116] Chesmal Siriwardhana, Shirwa S. Ali, Bayard Roberts and Robert Stewart. "A systematic review of resilience and mental health outcomes of conflict-driven adult forced migrants". *Conflict and Health* 8, no.13 (2014): 1-14

[117] Zoé Brabant and Marie-France Raynault. "Health situation of migrants with precarious status: review of the literature and implications for the Canadian context- Part A". *Social work in public health* 27, no.4 (2012): 330-344; Angela Nickerson, Richard A. Bryant, Derrick Silove and Zachary Steel. "A critical review of psychological treatments of posttraumatic stress disorder in refugees." *Clinical psychology review* 31, no.3 (2011): 399-417

[118] Bogic Marija, Njoku Anthony and Priebe Stefan. "Long-term mental health of war-refugees: a systematic literature review". *BMC Int Health Hum Rights* 15, no.29 (2015): 29; Jutta Lindert et al. "Depression and anxiety in labor migrants and refugees - A systematic review and meta-analysis". *Social Science and Medicine* 69, no.2 (2009): 246-257

[119] Susan Webb, Karen Dunwoodie, Jane Wilkinson, Luke Macaulay, Kristin E. Reimer, and Mervi Kaukko. "Recognition and precarious mobilities: The experiences of university students from a refugee background in Australia". *International Review of Education* 67, (2021): 871-894; Lambrechts, A. Agata. "The super-disadvantaged in higher education: barriers to access for

particularly in the case of RHE, to explore whether programs have positively contributed to the wellbeing of learners (inter alia, through confidence, community-building, or materialization of outcomes) or conversely, and/or simultaneously, whether they may have inadvertently produced psychosocial harm to the communities they serve. Psychosocial wellbeing was incorporated within this study's analysis for this very reason - to investigate whether the psychosocial (potential) benefit of HE access has been actualized through these programs, and/or whether, on the contrary, programs may have inadvertently exacerbated feelings of frustration, uncertainty and hopelessness.

Thus, an analysis of acceptability should not only explore the cultural relevance and present and future value of the program to refugee learners - in the form of material benefits (professional and academic development) - but also investigate its potential structural and psychosocial benefits to, respectively, transform the structural injustices experienced by refugees (CP) and positively support their psychosocial wellbeing. Essentially, an analysis of acceptability, as I approached it, analyzes whether learners are able to reap the (potential) benefits of HE through these programs.

Nonetheless, the essential features analyzed, and the subsequent categories identified, are not clear-cut; they are interrelated, interdependent, and complementary, and as such, necessarily overlap, as will become evident throughout the third chapter of this thesis. While determining why and how these features and subcategories overlap remains outside the scope of this

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refugee background students in England". *Higher Education* 80, (2020): 803-822; Mangan, Doireann and Winter, Laura Anne. "(In)validation and (mis)recognition in higher education: The experiences of students from refugee backgrounds". International Journal of Lifelong Education 36, no.4, (2017): 486-502

research, a table explaining my reasoning behind the assignment of certain subcategories to certain essential features is presented as an appendix [120].

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[120] See appendix A

CHAPTER 2: Research Methodology

2.1. Data collection

This study is informed by the following research questions:

- RQ1: What university-level online and blended programs are available to Syrian university-aged refugee youths in Jordan?

- RQ2: What essential features for the realization of the right to education (accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability) do these programs display, if any?

- RQ3: What impedes their fulfilment if anything?

This study conducted a comprehensive, systematic review of the literature on the online and blended HE programs available to Syrian youths in Jordan. The literature was drawn from an English-language systematic internet search, using Google Search, to create a comprehensive dataset and gather the names of the current online and blended HE programs designed for and/or available to Syrian refugees in Jordan.

These programs were screened based on the following criteria:

- Timeframe: 2014-2021.

- Target population: University-aged camp-bound and urban at-risk Syrian refugees who have completed secondary education.

- Location: Jordan.

- Educational model:

    o Medium of instruction: Online and/or Blended Learning.

    o Level: University (undergraduate).

    o Actor: non-profit local, regional and/or international educational providers.

This dataset helped answer RQ1, which constitutes the analysis of the availability component of this study. Given the novelty of these programs, the protractedness and magnitude of the crisis, and the demographic (Syrian youths) and geographic (Jordan)

specificity of this research, the availability of the right to HE of these programs was explored in a descriptive, general manner, outlining *all* the (uncovered) current online and/or blended HE programs available to Syrians in Jordan. The programs are yet too recent, scarce, and small-scale to be evaluated on the criterion of availability, doing so would be unjust and undermining of the importance of these programs' work. Therefore, availability was approached separately from the other essential features, as its own research question, to explore the existence of HE ICT-enabled opportunities currently on offer to Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Once the Google search yielded results on the names of these programs, three programs were selected and researched individually through a general Google search to obtain more specific results on the characteristics and impact of these initiatives and thereby attempt to answer RQ2 and RQ3. Concretely, 44 (academic, bibliographic, organizational, and journalistic) sources were identified and analyzed.

Although this study would certainly have benefited from primary data from field research, for pragmatic reasons (namely, finances, relative language barriers, restricted access to camps, and time constraints) the methodology of this research remained exclusively document based.

2.2. Data selection

The secondary qualitative literature data collected through a systematic internet search included:

1. Reports and evaluations obtained from the webpages of these programs' implementing agencies.

2. Academic literature in the form of edited book chapters and journal articles that have priorly investigated these programs in general, specific parts of them, and/or their pilot courses.

3. Online newspaper articles that have discussed – albeit concisely - these programs.

4. Supplementary documentation shared via email exchanges with the relevant educational providers and staff members of the programs and organizations, where possible.

2.3.Data analysis

Once data was collected on the online and blended HE programs for Syrians, this research attempted to evaluate these programs using a qualitative, deductive content analysis research method. Indeed, the patterns that this thesis researched have already been identified and correspond to the remaining three essential features of the right to education, to wit: accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability.

The above-mentioned data sources were analyzed via Atlas.ti to generate parent and child codes that revealed key words, phrases and structures related to these features, and helped answer RQ2 and RQ3. The categorization of the parent codes corresponded to the three remaining essential features (accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability), and were informed by a set of guiding questions, independently developed from the 4As framework, the perceived needed additions to it (namely, psychosocial wellbeing and CP), and the presented literature review [121].

This research, however, remains highly limited in that 1) the collection of data lacked primary sources from field research and was exclusively literature-based, 2) the analysis resulting from the implementing agencies' own reports and webpages was in some measure politicized and biased, and 3) the use of a single method of analysis (i.e., content analysis) also meant that this research's findings were not verified. All this, admittedly, considerably reduces the credibility, validity, and authenticity of this study's findings.

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[121] See appendix B

CHAPTER 3: Findings and analysis

The main objective of this study is to evaluate whether online and/or blended HE programs available to Syrian refugees in Jordan truly fulfil their right to (higher) education, by analyzing them through a revisited 4As framework.

The first section of this chapter attempts to answer RQ1 and give a more concrete sense of the *actual* availability of HE opportunities for Syrians in Jordan. The second section of this chapter attempts to answer RQ2. It is divided into 4 subsections, the first providing a background for each of the (three) selected programs, and the following three subsections respectively analyzing these programs' fulfilment of each of the remaining essential feature for the right to HE (namely, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability). Lastly, RQ3 is analyzed in the discussion chapter of this thesis, in a more explorative and, admittedly, speculative manner.

1.1. Availability: What university-level online and/or blended programs are available to Syrian university-aged students in Jordan?

The findings drawn from a comprehensive, systematic review of the literature on the online and hybrid HE programs available to Syrian youths in Jordan are synthetized and presented below as a comprehensive Excel spreadsheet table (see Table 2).

Table 2. The Higher Education ICT-enabled programs available to Syrian youth refugees in Jordan

Programs	King's College London's PADILEIA	Jamiya	University of Geneva's InZone	Kiron	Edraak	University of the People in Arabic	MIT's ReACT Hub
Launch date	2017	2016	2016 (Jordan) 2010 (Kenya)	2015	2014	2020	2017
Medium of instruction	Choice of blended or online	Blended	Blended	Blended (in Germany, Jordan and Lebanon) or online	Blended (only in Jordan) or online	Online	Blended
Targeted population	Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon (camps and urban areas) and marginalised host learners in Jordan and Lebanon, ages 18-35.	Syrian refugees in Za'tari camp and Amman, ages 18-39.	Refugees in Azraq camp (Jordan) and Kakuma camp (Kenya) as well as a cluster of marginalised local learners, ages 18 and above.	Refugees accross the world.	Arabic-speaking learners of all age and groups.	Arabic-speaking refugees — mainly from Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Iraq.	Refugee learners and marginalised communities in MENA, Colombia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Urguay, Greece and the United States.
Language of instruction	English	Arabic (with some English material)	English (some material and tutoring in Arabic), with the Community Healthcare Workers course begin fully offered in Arabic.	English	Arabic	Arabic	English
Learning pathways and subjects	Bespoke short courses: Facilitated 'Massive Open Online Courses' (MOOCs) with academic-developed content delivered online via FutureLearn or Kiron or in a blended learning format offering a taster into healthcare, entrepreneurship, business management, English and digital skills. Foundation course: Contextualised eight-month classroom-based foundational programmes to prepare students to meet entrance requirements for local and international universities in Maths, science, English and digital skills. Online learning: six to 12 months of university credit-bearing courses delivered online via Kiron with further possibility to transfer to a Kiron (Europan) partner university.	12-week blended 'Small Private Online Courses' (SPOCs) (open online courses designed by specific university and available only to its enrolled students) in Java Programming or Global Studies.	Certificate of Open Studies (COS) in Digital Fabrication (in development). Introduction to Computer Programming (length of course unavailable). 12-week Basic Engineering course in partnership with Purdue University. 12-week Global History course in partnership with Princeton University. 12-week Community Healthcare Workers course in partnership with University of Geneva (in development to be turned into a COS). Diploma Course in Humanitarian Translation and Interpreting in partnership with Yarmouk University (Jordan) (length of course unavailable). Facilitated English language course (length of course unavailable), in partnership with Arizona State University's Education for Humanity and King's College's PADILEIA, offering speaking and writing skills ranging from A1 to B2, latter of which is the proficiency level required to enrol in an English-speaking HEI. Access to 10 online MOOCs in partnership with Coursera for Refugees, including English, Medical emergencies, International migration, International criminal law, Children's rights, Disability inclusion in education and Methods statistics in social science.	Three-to-four-year Bachelor programme whereby the first two years Kiron offers its students access to Kiron-selected MOOCs in four subject areas (Business and Economics, Computer Science, Engineering, and Social Sciences) and the last year to two years students transfer their online credits to one of 41 (European) partner universities where they pursue their studies offline and are awarded a Bachelor's upon successful completion. While studying online at Kiron, students can access volunteer buddy mentoring programmes, counseling services, career services, language courses, study hubs, digital skills training and virtual internship placements.	Original MOOCs designed by Edraak and tailored to Arabic-speaking students. Access in Arabic to courses taught and developed by international universities (e.g., Harvard, MIT, Berkeley). Blended courses in partnership with Jordanian universities to provide content to learners in Jordan. Blended courses in partnership with Jordanian universities, humanitarian actors and NGOs to provide course content in refugee camps in the region.	Two-year Associate Degree in Business Administration in Arabic, with simultaneous English-language courses, with possibility of progressing to University of People's English-language Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, upon successful completion of the Associate Degree and English-language courses. Full Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration in Arabic (in development).	9-month long Certificate in Computer and Data Science whereby learners complete: • Online MIT edX undergraduate-level courses in programming using Python, computational thinking and data science. • Online Human Skills series consisting of workshops in personal development (visioning and goal-setting exercises), skills in virtual networking and interactive digital skills, and cohort-building. • 11-week interactive bootcamp with Na'amal. • 3-6 months paid professional internships, or experiential self-learning capstone projects (for those without the right to work), with a 50% rate of internship to job conversion. The program also offers peer study sessions and office hours with community MIT TAs and ReACT programme alumni, providing English language tutoring, professional mentoring, and academic guidance.

Programs	King's College London's PADILEIA	Jamiya	University of Geneva's InZone	Kiron	Edraak	University of the People in Arabic	MIT's ReACT Hub
Prerequisites	Valid registration with UNHCR. Some educational attainment (but no proof of prior academic credentials required). Selection exams on Mathematics and English. Access to connectivity and Internet-enabled device.	Valid UNHCR registration. Any type of ID documentation. Proof of prior academic credentials (high school diploma). Minimal requirement of computer literacy. No prior knowledge in programming required, however preference for science backgrounds. Reliable internet and computer access.	Valid UNHCR-registration. Proof of prior academic credentials (high school diploma), but no prior knowledge required. Selection exams. Minimal requirement of computer literacy (for Basic Engineering and Introduction to Computer Programming courses). Proficiency in English and Arabic literacy (for Basic Engineering course). Reliable access to internet and Internet-enabled device. (No mention of ID documentation).	No proof of refugee status (meaning students can start studying while applying for asylum). No proof of prior academic credentials. No proof of language proficiency. No exam-based selection. Access to Internet and Internet-enabled device. (ID requirements unavailable or not required).	Access to internet and internet-enabled device.	Proof of prior academic credentials. However, if unable to provide documentation, applicants may take an Ability to Benefit test, the Wonderlic Basic Skills Test, approved by the US Department of Education to qualify for entry to UoP. No mention of ID documentation.	Completion of an online application. English and math examinations. Video interview. Selection based on aptitude, interest in computer and data science, and diversity of participants (acceptance rate of 7%). No further data available on eligibility criteria.
Tuition	PADILEIA courses are free of charges. However, if students wish to transfer to partner or non-partner universities they must pay full tuition to the selected university.	Jamiya courses are free of charge. However, if students wish to transfer to partner or non-partner universities, they must pay full tuition to the selected university.	InZone courses are free of charge. However, if students wish to transfer to partner or non-partner universities, they must pay full tuition to the selected university.	Kiron courses are free of charge. However, if students wish to transfer to partner or non-partner universities, they must pay full tuition to the selected university.	Edraak courses are free of charge. However, if students wish to transfer to university, they must pay full tuition to the selected university.	No tuition fees. However, there exist other fees: application, transfer credit and course assessment (certificates, ESL, undergraduate registration) fees. The total cost to earn an Associate and Bachelor's Degree, respectively, is $2,460 and $4,680.	No tuition fees. However, if students wish to transfer to university, they must pay full tuition to the selected university.
Accreditation and recognition	Only learning via Kiron (bespoke short courses + online learning) is accredited through Kiron's own credit point system (Kiron Credit Points) and credits transferrable to (partner) universities. Students will still have to fulfill all the admission requirements for the university of their choice, as well as the requirements established by the national bodies governing HE (in the case of Jordan, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research).	Accredited by University of Gothenburg (convertible to 7.5 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)), thus granting it EU recognition. Students will still have to fulfill all the admission requirements for the university of their choice, as well as the requirements established by the national bodies governing HE (in the case of Jordan, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research).	Accredited by University of Geneva (convertible to ECTS; exact number of credits unavailable), thus granting it EU recognition. When implemented, COS will bear 12 ECTS. As part of their 2021-2025 Strategy, InZone will ensure that all courses directly receive ECTS (as opposed to conforming and being convertible to ECTS). Students will still have to fulfill all the admission requirements for the university of their choice, as well as the requirements established by the national bodies governing HE (in the case of Jordan, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research).	Externally accredited through Kiron's own credit point system (Kiron Credit Points), meaning that despite Learning Agreements with local universities, ultimately, the recognition of Kiron online credits rests on the selected (partner or non-partner) university's flexibility to accept a non-traditional route into HE. Kiron's online courses are thus not automatically accredited but become so if recognized by the university that ultimately awards the degree. In Jordan, only the Computer Science track is recognised and transferrable to a local Jordanian HEI. Students will still have to fulfill all the admission requirements for the university of their choice, as well as the requirements established by the national bodies governing HE (in the case of Jordan, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research).	Only blended courses with Jordanian partner universities are accredited, thus granting these national recognition.	Accredited by Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC), granting it US recognition.	Accredited by MIT's accrediting body, the New England Commission of Higher Education, thus granting it US recognition.

Programs	King's College London's PADILEIA	Jamiya	University of Geneva's InZone	Kiron	Edraak	University of the People in Arabic	MIT's ReACT Hub
Certification	Obtention of a PADILEIA certificate of completion upon succesful examination (micro-credentials).	Obtention of a certificate of completion from the University of Gothenburg upon succesful examination (micro-credentials).	Obtention of a certificate of completion from the University of Geneva or partner course/MOOC provider upon successful examination (micro-credentials).	Obtention of a certificate of completion from MOOC provider upon succesful examination (micro-credentials). Obtention of a Bachelor's degree upon successful completion at partner or non-partner university (macro-credentials).	Obtention of a certificate of completion from Edraak upon succesful examination (micro-credentials).	Obtention of an accredited two-year Associate Degree in Business Administration (macro-credentials), which can upon succesful completion lead to a Bachelor's degree (macro-credentials).	Obtention of a Certificate in Computer and Data Science from MIT upon succesful examination (micro-credentials).
Achieved Syrian enrolments	Between 60 - 96 Syrians in Za'atari camp (in 2020). Data unavailable for Amman.	31 Syrians enrolled in pilot course (2016-2017): 17 (12 male and 4 female) in Za'atari camp + 14 (10 female and 4 male) in Amman. Data unavailable for rest of course.	118 (2020) and 239 refugees (unclear whether all Syrians) enrolled in InZone courses through InZone Hub in Azraq camp (2021). Data unavailable for Amman cluster.	Approximately 200 enrolled refugees (unclear whether all Syrians) in Jordan (2020).	Estimated Syrian outreach of 3.000 camp-bound refugees as of 2017.	36.000 enrolled students (from over 200 countries). Data specific to Syrian refugees was unavailable.	135 enrolled learners in 2021-2022 academic year, 98 of which were refugees, stateless or IDPs (however, data on their nationality was unavailable).
Partners	King's College London (UK) (lead partner). Future Learn (UK) (for-profit online learning platform). Kiron Open Higher Education (Germany) (not-for-profit online learning platform). Local universities: Al Bayt University (Jordan) and American University of Beirut (Lebanon).	University of Gothenburg (Sweden). INGOs in Jordan: Norwegian Refugee Council and Jesuit Refugee Service. Edraak (non-profit Arabic online learning platform). Syrian exiled academics.	Humanitarian actors: UNHCR, IFRC, Care International, IRC, INEE and Terre des hommes. International universities: University of Geneva, University of Lausanne, Università IULM, King's College's PADILEIA initiative, Princeton University, Pursue University, German Jordanian University and Arizona State University's Education for Humanity initiative. Local universities: Kenyatta University (Kenya) and Yarmouk University (Jordan). Private sector: Voltaire, IEEE. MOOCs: Coursera for Refugees.	MOOCs platform: Coursera, edX, iversity and open HPI. 41 academic partners. NGOs in Jordan: Jesuit Refugee Services.	Humanitarian actors: UNICEF, IFRC, Beyond Conflict, Jordan Humanitarian Fund. International Agencies: World Bank. Private sector: British Council, Institut Francais, Microsoft, Crescent Petroleum, Hssoub, Cerego. NGOs: edX, Amideast, Queen Rania Teacher Academy, Dream Blue Foundation. National bodies: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of interior, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology. International Universities: University of British Columbia, UCL, American University of Beirut, American University of Cairo. Local universities: Jordan University of Science and Technology. (for a complete list of partners, see https://www.edraak.org/en/partners/)	International universities: NYU, University of Edinburgh, UC Berkeley.	Internal partners: MIT Nurturing Emerging Talent, MIT Open Learning, MIT Bootcamps, MIT J-WEL, MIT Global Experiences, MIT's Office of the Provost, MIT Afghan Working Group, MIT Integrated Learning Initiative. External partners: Na'amal, Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium, International Rescue Committee, President's Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, Paper Airlines, Close the Gap, Cooperative C.Pue.D., Tiny Toronto and Talanta.
Donor's	UK Department for International Development (DFID), through the Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR) program.	Open Society Foundation (US). Asfari Foundation (UK). Private donations.	University of Geneva (Switzerland). République et Canton de Genève (Switzerland). Hôpitaux Universitaires Genève (Switzerland). Flux Foundation (US). Ford Foundation (US). Open Society Foundation (US). Princeton University (US).	Crowdfunding. German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Foundations: Ford Foundation (rest unavailable). Corporate sector (unavailable). Private individual donations.	Queen Rania Foundation (founder). Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi. Mikati Foundation. Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.	Foundations: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation, Andrew W. Mellow Foundation. Individual donors.	Western Union Foundation. Individual private donors. Rest of donors unavailable.
Website	https://padileia.org/	http://alexandriatrust.org/incubated-projects/jamiya-project	https://www.unige.ch/inzone/	https://kiron.ngo	https://www.edraak.org/en/	https://ar.uopeople.edu/	https://react.mit.edu/

1.2. What essential features for the meaningful realization of the right to education (accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability) do these programs display, if any?

1.2.1. The programs

This section will explore the three remaining features of accessibility, acceptability and adaptability with respect to three programs. These programs, included in the above table, are: PADILEIA, Jamiya and InZone. The reason for this selection is associated to on one hand, an insufficiency and/or unavailability of required documentation (University of the People in Arabic, Edraak, MITReACT Hub) and on the other, a relative abundance of academic and organisational research on the program (Kiron) [122]. This study thus prioritised programs that were seemingly underesearched, but that nonetheless had sufficient (relevant) documentation to inform an analysis.

PADILEIA: Facilitating HE pathways

PADILEIA aims to expand access to HE for Syrian refugees and marginalized local communities in Jordan and Lebanon [123]. The project is part of a British grant scheme, the Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR) to help improve the quality, access, and affordability of HE in targeted low-resource states [124]. PADILEIA is led by King's College London, in partnership with Al al-Bayt University in Jordan (herein,

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[122] For more information on Kiron's work please visit https://kiron.ngo/.

For more information on Kiron's impact please see Greenaway, Thomas. "Providing refugees with access to online education – A new frontier for the internalization agenda". In *The Future Agenda for Internalization in Higher Education – Next Generation Insights into Research, Policy, and Practice* ed. Douglas Proctor and Laura E. Rumbley. Oxon: Routledge, 2018: 177-187; Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia Olga, Nell-Müller Sarah and Happ Roland. "*Digital Approaches to Promoting Integration in Higher Education - Opening Universities for Refugees*". Springer Cham, 2021; Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Olga, Happ, Roland, Nell-Müller, Sarah, Deribo, Tobias, Reinhardt, Franziska and Toepper, Miriam. "Successful Integration of Refugee Students in Higher Education: Insights from Entry Diagnostics in an Online Study Program". *Global Education Review* 5, no.4 (2018): 158-181; Suter, Renata and Rampelt Florian. "*Digital Solutions for Alternative Routes into Higher Education Possibilities and Challenges of Digital Teaching and Learning Scenarios for Refugees: First Results from the Integral Project*". Barcelona: Proceedings of EduLearn17 Conference, (2017): 4640-4645; JET Education Services. "*Kiron Campus – Kiron Open Higher Education; Harnessing the power of MOOCs to unleash refugee potential*". Paris: UNESCO, 2021: 1-17; Belma Halkic and Patricia Arnold. "Refugees and online education: student perspectives on need and support in the context of (online) higher education". *Learning, Media and Technology* 44, no.3, (2019): 345-364

[123] Shibli, Rabih. "Increasing access to higher education for refugees through digital learning". Times Higher Education, 2022

[124] Shibli, Rabih. "Increasing access to higher education for refugees through digital learning". Times Higher Education, 2022

AABU), the American University of Beirut in Lebanon (herein, AUB), the for-profit digital education platform, FutureLearn (UK) and the nonprofit digital online platform, Kiron Open Higher Education (Germany) [125]. It aims at expanding HE access by offering three English-based learning pathways [126]:

- Bespoke short courses, designed by King's College London and hosted by FutureLearn, in English, Digital Skills, Entrepreneurship, Nursing and Business Management.

- An 8-month blended classroom-based Foundation programme in different subjects (see Table 2), designed by King's College London and hosted by AABU in Jordan and AUB in Lebanon.

- A 6-12 months Kiron-accredited facilitated online track hosted and delivered by Kiron and leading to a potential transfer of credits into Kiron's partner universities.

Jamiya: Reconnecting HE networks

Jamiya is a UK-based organization that aims to support HE for Syrian refugees with the definite goal of using ICTs to reconnect HE networks for Syrian refugees [127]. It does so by partnering with international universities, local NGOs, MENA educational technology experts, and very importantly and uniquely, by recruiting displaced Syrian academics [128].

The initiative offers blended and accredited Arabic-language undergraduate-level courses in conformity with European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (herein, ECTS) [129]. The subjects on offer are 'Java Programming' and 'Global Studies', both 12-week courses

[125] Shibli, Rabih. "Increasing access to higher education for refugees through digital learning". Times Higher Education, 2022
[126] Shibli, Rabih. "Increasing access to higher education for refugees through digital learning". Times Higher Education, 2022
[127] Shibli, Rabih. "Increasing access to higher education for refugees through digital learning". Times Higher Education, 2022
[128] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 133; Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 133
[129] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 118

provided in the Za'atari camp as well as Amman [130]. The courses were developed in collaboration with the Swedish University of Gothenburg by a team of Swedish and Syrian academics who adapted the course material from an existing face-to-face course at the University of Gothenburg and translated it to Arabic [131].

The courses are delivered online via the Jordanian, Arabic-language, digital education platform Edraak, while the face-to-face component of the course is facilitated in Arabic by local tutors and facilitators in two INGO centers, the Norwegian Refugee Council (herein, NRC) youth center in Za'atari camp and the Jesuit Refugee Services (herein, JRS) center in Amman [132]. The material is provided in Arabic with side-by-side English translations, with an intent to encourage future English acquisition [133].

InZone: Reinforcing learning ecosystems

InZone is a cross-faculty initiative from the University of Geneva (herein, UNIGE) that offers mainly English-based, blended, contextualized HE to "refugee populations stranded in transit countries" [134], and to a much lesser extent, host communities. It has been on offer in the Kakuma refugee camp (Kenya) since 2010, and the Azraq camp (Jordan) since 2016 [135]. InZone is deliberately designed as both an educational and humanitarian program [136]. It offers a broad

[130] Alfred, Charlotte. "A 'University in Exile' to Reconnect Syrian Students and Academics". *The New Humanitarian*, 2017

[131] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 117; Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 133; Alfred, Charlotte. "A 'University in Exile' to Reconnect Syrian Students and Academics". *The New Humanitarian*, 2017

[132] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 133; Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 118

[133] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 133

[134] Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium. "InZone". *Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium*, (n.d.)

[135] Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium. "InZone". *Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium*, (n.d.); Lou Pisani. "Tertiary Education - The InZone Learning Ecosystem". *Global Compact on Refugees* (n.d.)

[136] Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium. "InZone". *Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium*, (n.d.)

range of courses delivered through a carefully developed student-centric learning ecosystem to enable collaborative problem-solving learning [137]. This ecosystem comprises the lecturer, the online tutor, the onsite facilitator, the course coordinator, and the students [138]. The ecosystem is supported by onsite learning hubs led by refugees, including alumni [139]. The initiative offers transferrable credits, conforming to the ECTS, making them internationally recognized and "creating a first steppingstone towards a degree" [140].

In particular, the Azraq Higher Education Space, which is "founded upon the idea that re-thinking higher education - breaking it apart and starting over - requires an innovator's mindset", offers [141]:

- A 12-week course in Global History, in partnership with Princeton University (US).

- A 12-week course in Basic Engineering, in partnership with Purdue University (US).

- A 12-week course in Community Healthcare Workers, in partnership with the Faculty of Medicine's RAFT program at UNIGE (Switzerland).

- A course in Introduction to Computer Programming.

- Facilitated English enhancement courses, in partnership with PADILEIA (UK) and Arizona State University (US).

- Access to MOOCs hosted by Coursera for Refugees.

- Diploma in Humanitarian Translation and Interpreting, in partnership with Yarmouk University (Jordan).

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[137] Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium. "InZone". *Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium*, (n.d.); Lou Pisani. "Tertiary Education - The InZone Learning Ecosystem". *Global Compact on Refugees* (n.d.)

[138] Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium. "InZone". *Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium*, (n.d.); Lou Pisani. "Tertiary Education - The InZone Learning Ecosystem". *Global Compact on Refugees* (n.d.)

[139] Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium. "InZone". *Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium*, (n.d.); Lou Pisani. "Tertiary Education - The InZone Learning Ecosystem". *Global Compact on Refugees* (n.d.)

[140] Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium. "InZone". *Connected Learning in Crisis Consortium*, (n.d.)

[141] InZone. "Our Hubs - Azraq Refugee Camp". *Université de Genève*, (2021)

1.2.2. The analysis

This section attempts to answer RQ2 by presenting a synopsis of the findings revealed through a deductive content analysis of the data and providing insights into the already identified three (of four) essential features for the right to education.

Within each of these features, subcategories have been developed and consolidated through the data. Within accessibility, these subcategories correspond to administrative, technological, and structural barriers. Within acceptability these are quality of the course and credentials; cultural contextualization of the content, teaching methodology and course delivery; adoption of a critical pedagogy approach; and very importantly, the programs' wellbeing impact. Lastly, within adaptability, the subcategories drawn from the data correspond to the contextual challenges faced by students within the programs, and the support services developed to address them.

1.2.2.1. Accessibility

When it comes to (higher) education, accessibility simplistically refers to the direct and indirect barriers hindering refugees' access to it. The content analysis of the data found that these programs, while overcoming certain barriers (namely, gender and financial), not only produced others of their own, owing to their technological and Western nature, but also reproduced common refugee barriers to traditional HE access, barriers that are fundamentally embedded in the fact of their refugeehood. This section is divided accordingly.

Reproducing formal HE barriers

Several barriers embedded in the traditional HE system were carried to these programs. Indeed, all three programs required some proof of ID, with InZone and Jamiya further requesting proof of academic credentials. As seen in the literature review, and as widely known, most refugees are unable to provide such documentation, thus automatically barring them from applying to these programs. Second, and very importantly, all three programs also required proof of refugee status, through a valid UNHCR registration, thus excluding those awaiting

official status. Lastly, information on the programs and the courses offered was also found to be rather poorly distributed or unclear, thus inadvertently impeding awareness of, and consequently, access to, these opportunities.

While data around InZone made no mention of information distribution, in the case of Jamiya, the initiative opted to raise awareness locally via its partner NGOs in Jordan, the NRC in the Za'atari camp and the JRS in Amman. Interestingly, applications were high in the Za'atari camp while very low in Amman [142]. This is in line with arguments that refugees in urban settings are particularly affected by a lack of available and clear information [143]. This might show a lack of expertise around refugee education, as the distribution of information and awareness is one of the simplest, yet most pervasive and consequential, obstacle to HE access; and a lack of understanding of the Jordanian context, as 80% of Syrian refugees in Jordan reside in urban and peri-urban areas [144].

PADILEIA, on the other hand, distributed information on the program through a website specifically launched for student recruitment, which could have been problematic given refugees' ubiquitous lack of connectivity and digital devices, however, the website was cleverly advertised through UNHCR SMS messages to all registered Syrians in Jordan [145], although, again, this automatically excluded those awaiting status.

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[142] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 135

[143] Sarah Dryden-Peterson and Wenona Giles. "Introduction: higher education for refugees". *Refuge* 27, no.2 (2010): 3–9; Gladwell C., Hollow D., Robinson A., Norman B., Bowerman E., Mitchell J., Floremont, F., and Hutchinson, P. "Higher Education for Refugees in Low-Resource Environments: Landscape Review". *UK: Jigsaw Consult* (2016): 12

[144] Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 333

[145] PADILEIA. "AABU Foundation Programme: Analysis of year-on-year trends" (unpublished document shared via email exchange, undated): 4

Producing ICT-enabled HE barriers

The initiatives, owing to their technological and Western nature, produced new sets of barriers. First, Jamiya's applications were only possible online [146], which indubitably represented a great barrier to accessing the program, given the widespread lack of access to connectivity and digital devices for refugees, particularly those in camps. Information on the application processes of PADILEIA and InZone was however unavailable.

Moreover, another barrier inherent to ICT-enabled learning is that it is delivered by Western providers and, as such, predominantly taught in English [147]. Excluding Jamiya, delivered in Arabic, both InZone and PADILEIA adopt English as the main language of instruction, which not only necessarily discourages potential Syrian students from applying, but also, by requiring some English proficiency and English selection exams, practically impedes them from accessing these alternate programs.

Moreover, other obstacles to accessing these programs include the inherent technological barriers that refugees, especially camp-bound, face. These mainly represent the high cost of devices and data cards, poor Internet connectivity and speed, low digital literacy, and a lack of access to Internet-enabled devices [148]. Here too, inherent technological barriers within ICT-enabled programs, specifically those delivered in developing settings and targeting refugee learners, are produced, as they all necessarily and formally require Internet access as well as

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[146] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 135

[147] Constantin Reinprecht, Renata Suter, Bronwyn Parry and Florian Rampelt. "No Longer a 'Lost Generation'? Opportunities and Obstacles of Online and Blended Learning Programmes for Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no.3, (2021): 3212; Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Roland Happ, and Sarah Nell-Müller. "Online technology for promoting the inclusion of refugees into higher education: a systematic review of current approaches and developments" in *Research Handbook on International Migration and Digital Technology* ed. Marie McAuliffe, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021): 184-186; Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 350; Gladwell C., Hollow D., Robinson A., Norman B., Bowerman E., Mitchell J., Floremont, F., and Hutchinson, P. "Higher Education for Refugees in Low-Resource Environments: Landscape Review". *UK: Jigsaw Consult* (2016): 12-13

[148] Carrie Bauer and Matthew J. Gallagher. "Education for Humanity: Higher Education for Refugees in Resource-Constrained Environments Through Innovative Technology". *Journal Of Refugee Studies* 2, (2020): 416-436

access to Internet-enabled devices. This is of particular importance in the context of Jordan, where refugees spend 10 to 20% of their disposable income on data, and understandably prioritize its usage towards communication rather than education [149]. Not only that, but InZone's 'Basic Engineering' and Jamiya's 'Java Programming' also formally require some computer literacy to enroll in their programs.

This interestingly points to and reveals an intrinsic misalignment of and incompatibility between (some of) these programs' offerings and the realities of the targeted population to whom they offer it. Nonetheless, it should also very importantly be acknowledged that these programs have responded to certain of these technological barriers through the provision of connectivity and computer access in student hubs, explored under adaptability.

Overcoming structural barriers

Conversely, and commendably, all three programs overcame financial barriers of tuition and auxiliary costs as they provided courses free of charge and offered transportation allowances (PADILEIA and InZone) or reimbursements (Jamiya).

Moreover, all aimed towards gender equity, and have laudably succeeding in it, with a self-reported 51% female (of all nationalities) enrolment rate in InZone [150] and a more precise 43% Syrian female enrolment rate in PADILEIA [151]. Regarding Jamiya, and exclusively with regard to their pilot IT course, the overwhelming majority of students enrolled in camps were male, while the inverse situation occurred in Amman [152], perhaps roughly revealing that female learners in urban settings feel safer and/or feel less bound by gender norms in urban settings

[149] Constantin Reinprecht, Renata Suter, Bronwyn Parry and Florian Rampelt. "No Longer a 'Lost Generation'? Opportunities and Obstacles of Online and Blended Learning Programmes for Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no.3, (2021): 3211

[150] Université de Genève. *InZone Achievements– 2021*. Genève: Université de Genève, 2022: 2

[151] PADILEIA. "AABU foundation programme: Analysis of year-on-year trends" (unpublished document shared via email exchange, undated): 5

[152] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 135

than refugee camps. However, it is unfortunate that none of these initiatives addressed disability equity nor mentioned any future efforts towards it.

The programs analyzed, while overcoming some barriers embedded in the traditional HE system (namely, gender norms and financial costs), have also reproduced others (namely, requirement of ID and academic documentation and lack of available and clear information) and produced new ones, intrinsic to the technological nature of these programs and incompatible with the technological and economic realities of refugees. Consequently, these programs, as argued by Reinhardt et al, in fact, expand access for, and serve, only relatively advantaged refugee learners [153], thereby limiting their accessibility. Indeed, the programs open access to HE opportunities to refugees with a UNHCR registration, some English and computer proficiency, the ability to provide ID and prior academic credentials, and a financial access to data cards, smartphones and/or computers, luxuries – in the context of displacement - that most do not have.

1.2.2.2. Acceptability

When it comes to (higher) education, an analysis of acceptability should investigate whether Syrian learners are able to turn the potential benefits of HE into *actual* benefits through these ICT-enabled programs. This will be done by looking at 1) the cultural contextualization of these programs, 2) quality in terms of teaching, accreditation, and very crucially, tangibility of outcomes, 3) application of a critical pedagogy approach, and 4) wellbeing impact.

Partially contextualizing

Despite all three programs explicitly aiming for cultural contextualization of the course, none entirely succeeded.

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[153] Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Roland Happ, and Sarah Nell-Müller. "Online technology for promoting the inclusion of refugees into higher education: a systematic review of current approaches and developments" in *Research Handbook on International Migration and Digital Technology* ed. Marie McAuliffe, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021): 188-189

Both PADILEIA and InZone were delivered in English, as is customary with Western ICT-enabled programs [154]; however, both programs realized the challenge it represented for students and began distributing English and Arabic transcriptions of course content, and adding Arabic subtitles to MOOCs, with the latter a feature specific to PADILEIA [155].

Only Jamiya delivered courses entirely in Arabic [156], recruiting exiled Syrian academics to reconnect the Syrian HE network and better understand the psychosocial and learning contexts of students [157]. Nonetheless, even then, students reported a rather high difficulty getting accustomed to the courses' academic demands and assignments as well as the courses' general learning and teaching methods [158]. Indeed, none of the programs contextualized their learning/teaching methodology within that of Syrian learners. This is a finding common across all three programs, and that is in line with Reinhardt et al. and Haj-Yehia and Arar's results presented in the literature review. Indeed, as most ICT-enabled programs for refugees are developed by Western providers, they are based on Western pedagogies [159], which can be overwhelming for students, particularly Syrian refugees, as they try to reconcile their

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[154] Constantin Reinprecht, Renata Suter, Bronwyn Parry and Florian Rampelt. "No Longer a 'Lost Generation'? Opportunities and Obstacles of Online and Blended Learning Programmes for Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no.3, (2021): 3212; Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Roland Happ, and Sarah Nell-Müller. "Online technology for promoting the inclusion of refugees into higher education: a systematic review of current approaches and developments" in *Research Handbook on International Migration and Digital Technology* ed. Marie McAuliffe, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021): 184-186; Kathleen Fincham. "Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey". *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15, no.4, (2020): 350

[155] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. *Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*. London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 22

[156] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 134

[157] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 138

[158] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 135-138; Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 130

[159] Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Roland Happ, and Sarah Nell-Müller. "Online technology for promoting the inclusion of refugees into higher education: a systematic review of current approaches and developments" in *Research Handbook on International Migration and Digital Technology* ed. Marie McAuliffe, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021): 186; Kussai Haj-Yehia and Khalid Arar "Arab World Refugee Challenges in Higher Education: The Case of Syrian Refugee Students in Jordan" in *Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugees Students in Global World* ed. Khalid Arar, Kussai Haj-Yehia, David B. Ross, and Yasar Kondakci. New-York: Peter Lang, 2019: 354

accustomed traditional, well-defined, authoritative, memorization-based pedagogy with the programs' more critical thinking, creativity, and autonomous learning-based pedagogy [160].

This is reflected in the following quotes:

"I did not understand what is required in the question, so Mr A. only read the question and then explained for me: for example, with this word they mean such…, and with this one they mean such… and in this way you directly get the answer and you understand it… this helped me a lot in the end" [161] (Jamiya female pilot student).

"There are some significant cultural differences I've encountered in the last few weeks that crystalized while I was visiting with the students. I am acquainted with the pedagogies and learning culture in Syrian higher education (more along the lines of didactic instruction and rote memorization). It wasn't initially clear how much of a challenge that this would present for the students in a course like ours that requires a shift towards thinking critically" [162] (InZone online tutor for refugees in the Azraq camp).

Creditably, community and local involvement was a crucial component in all three programs. They all developed partnerships with local and regional NGOs and recruited local Arabic-speaking facilitators (InZone and PADILEIA) and tutors (Jamiya), with, as mentioned, Jamiya going as far as to include displaced Syrian academics. Moreover, InZone brought in trained non-learner and alumni refugees to form their on-the-ground management team and

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[160] Kussai Haj-Yehia and Khalid Arar "Arab World Refugee Challenges in Higher Education: The Case of Syrian Refugee Students in Jordan" in *Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugees Students in Global World* ed. Khalid Arar, Kussai Haj-Yehia, David B. Ross, and Yasar Kondakci. New-York: Peter Lang, 2019: 354

[161] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 130

[162] Mohammed Aziz Dridi, Dhinesh Radhakrishnan, Barbara Moser-Mercer, and Jennifer DeBoer. "Challenges of Blended Learning in Refugee Camps: When Internet Connectivity Fails, Human Connection Succeeds". *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 21, no.3 (2020): 259

manage physical student hubs, respectively [163]. PADILEIA also took inspiration in refugees' shelter-building practices and integrated the camp-bound refugee community itself in the assembling of physical student hubs [164].

While cultural contextualization may not be appropriate in terms of learning/teaching methodology and language of instruction, the programs, as seen, integrated both local partners and the affected community in its development, implementation and delivery and developed linguistic support services in the form of bilingual explanations and transcriptions, and, as will be seen under 'adaptability', also learning support services.

Tangible learning, intangible outcomes

All three programs showed quality in terms of staff training, partnerships, and (relative) accreditation. The programs delivered appropriate online technical training and support to their professors, recruited from academia. In the case of PADILEIA and InZone these were recruited from partner implementing universities while Jamiya recruited exiled Syrian academics. Thus, professors in all three programs had the necessary qualifications, university-teaching experience, and technical training.

Moreover, online and local tutors, facilitators, and volunteer mentors were selectively recruited based on subject-specific knowledge and expertise, and also received training on online facilitation. InZone recruited their online tutors based on recommendations from professors at UNIGE and later trained them on online facilitation in refugee contexts [165]; PADILEIA selected their online tutors and mentors based on prior English language teaching experiences in refugee camps [166]; and Jamiya matched their Syrian professors to students to act

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[163] InZone. "Launch of a Community Health Worker course in Azraq refugee camp". *Université de Genève*, (2020); InZone. "*InZone Strategic Orientations - 2021*". Genève: Université de Genève, (n.d.): 5-6; InZone. "Our Hubs - Azraq Refugee Camp". *Université de Genève*, (2021)

[164] Rabih Shibli. "Increasing access to higher education for refugees through digital learning". *Times Higher Education*, (2022)

[165] Paul O'Keeffe. "The case for engaging online tutors for supporting learners in higher education in refugee contexts". *Research in Learning Technology* 28, (2020): 6

[166] Fiona Reay. "Key learnings from teaching English to refugees online". *SPHEIR*, 2018

as mentors – even after the course - over Whatsapp and Skype [167]. However, while all teaching staff received continued technical training and support, no psychosocial support was provided – or at least, none was mentioned.

In terms of partnerships, all developed a diverse network, working collaboratively and complimentarily with regional and local NGOs, international humanitarian actors and international universities (see Table 2), with InZone further creating a partnership with a local (public) university (Yarmouk University) in 2020 for the joint delivery – with UNIGE - of their Diploma in Humanitarian Interpreting and Translation [168], and with PADILEIA having partnered with AABU since its inception to provide classroom and study spaces with connectivity and computer access for their Foundation course [169].

Except for Jamiya, who showed a completion rate of approximately 28% for its pilot course [170], both PADILEIA and InZone had relatively high completion rates, with respective averages across all course offerings of 78% [171] and 73% [172]. However, this only tells us that 78% and 73% of enrolled students graduated from these programs; it does not tell us whether they were able to materialize their learning outcomes. Indeed, PADILEIA, who was the only program to thoroughly document their impact, looked at the successful transition rate of their graduates and

[167] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 134; Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 118

[168] InZone. "*InZone Achievements– 2021*". Genève: Université de Genève, 2022: 11

[169] Constantin Reinprecht, Renata Suter, Bronwyn Parry and Florian Rampelt. "No Longer a 'Lost Generation'? Opportunities and Obstacles of Online and Blended Learning Programmes for Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no.3, (2021): 3216

[170] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 118

[171] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. *Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*. London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 25

[172] Connected Learning Crisis Consortium. "*2021 Yearbook*". Connected Learning Crisis Consortium, 2022: 22

found that only 5% [173] and 14% [174] (a statistic including both host and refugee populations in *both* Lebanon and Jordan) respectively accessed HE and employment. As a staff member transparently acknowledged:

> "[W]hen the project started there was an ambition to get the qualifications that would lead to higher education and work – but I don't think we can say we did that" [175].

PADILEIA's only accredited program is that delivered by Kiron. However, it is externally accredited through Kiron's own credit-point system [176]; and while Kiron does partner with universities in Europe [177], and has agreements with a few in Jordan [178], the prerogative of accepting credit transfers and recognizing their certificates is entirely contingent upon the selected university's interpretation of the completed online courses as prior learning [179].

None of the three programs studied have partnered with local universities to recognize their programs' credits and allow credit transferability to local undergraduate courses. While PADILEIA does have a partnership with AABU, this is one logistical in nature, as the University only provides space for Foundational courses to be facilitated [180]. However, even if their credits were transferrable and their certificates recognized by (some) Jordanian HEIs, the same barriers to access HE in Jordan would exist. Students would still need to meet the requirements of the

[173] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. "*Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*". London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 63

[174] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. "*Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*". London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 68

[175] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. *Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*. London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 65

[176] Thomas Greenaway. "Providing refugees with access to online education – A new frontier for the internalization agenda". In *The Future Agenda for Internalization in Higher Education – Next Generation Insights into Research, Policy, and Practice* edited by Douglas Proctor and Laura E. Rumbley. Oxon: Routledge, 2018: 182-183

[177] Thomas Greenaway. "Providing refugees with access to online education – A new frontier for the internalization agenda". In *The Future Agenda for Internalization in Higher Education – Next Generation Insights into Research, Policy, and Practice* edited by Douglas Proctor and Laura E. Rumbley. Oxon: Routledge, 2018: 182-183

[178] Kiron. "How can I transfer to a university in Jordan". *Kiron*, 2019. https://support.kiron.ngo/hc/en-us/articles/360008401299-How-can-I-transfer-to-a-local-university-in-Jordan-

[179] Thomas Greenaway. "Providing refugees with access to online education – A new frontier for the internalization agenda". In *The Future Agenda for Internalization in Higher Education – Next Generation Insights into Research, Policy, and Practice* edited by Douglas Proctor and Laura E. Rumbley. Oxon: Routledge, 2018: 182-183

[180] Constantin Reinprecht, Renata Suter, Bronwyn Parry and Florian Rampelt. "No Longer a 'Lost Generation'? Opportunities and Obstacles of Online and Blended Learning Programmes for Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 34, no.3, (2021): 3216

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Jordan ((namely, obtention and proof of the Jordanian General Secondary Education Certificate (commonly, 'Tawjihi') or obtention of equivalency through paid examination (totaling JOD 225) [181], minimum scores in TOEFL, IELTS or National exam of the English language)) [182] and of their selected university (inter alia, administrative, academic, experiential learning [183], and linguistic admission requirements) [184]. Moreover, Jordan's high tuition and auxiliary costs would remain, preventing learners from transferring into a local university even if they could, i.e., even if their credits and certificates were recognized by local HEIs.

As InZone and Jamiya are accredited by European HEIs (University of Gothenburg for Jamiya and UNIGE for InZone) and conform to ECTS, there might exist a greater *theoretical* possibility for formal and informal recognition by (partner and non-partner) European HEIs and employers, respectively.

However, even theoretically, InZone and Jamiya's diverse partnerships with international universities does not bind the latter to recognize the blended programs' conferred certificates and credits. Indeed, as with PADILEIA's Kiron pathway, the decision to recognize these programs' academic digital credentials remains that of the selected university and potential employer. Besides, and repeatedly, even if universities accept to recognize their credentials and transfer their credits, the student will still need to meet the university's administrative, academic, linguistic, and financial admission requirements.

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[181] Edraak. "*Policy Brief - Syrian Refugees' Educational and Economic Needs: Focus on Jordan*". n.d.
[182] Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. "Study in Jordan - Access to Higher Education". http://rce.mohe.gov.jo/StudyInJordan/en/
[183] Experiential learning essentially refers to learning from the process, through experience and exploration, and by doing. Some of these experiences include apprenticeships, fellowships, internships, clinical and field work experiences, volunteering, study abroad, and student teaching. (Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning. "Experiential Learning". Northern Illinois University. n.d.)
[184] Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. "Study in Jordan - Access to Higher Education". http://rce.mohe.gov.jo/StudyInJordan/en/

While linguistic and financial barriers remain, with tuition fees for non-EU students ranging from €1,000 to €20,000 per year [185], administrative barriers (provision of prior academic credentials) may be slightly more accessible with the European Commission's frameworks and initiatives such as Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (commonly known as the Lisbon Convention), the European Network of Information Centers – National Academic Recognition Information Centers (ENIC-NARIC) guide for credential evaluators, the European Recognition (EAR) Manual for HEIs, the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR), and the Toolkit for Recognition of Refugees [186].

However, even if that may be the case, that is contingent on the ability to resettle. To put this (imp)probability in perspective - in 2022 only 42.300 refugees of 32.5 M [187], meaning only 0.13% of refugees were resettled in 2022. Moreover, access to HE in a resettled context also comes with its own set of challenges, inter alia: acculturation, language and cultural dissonance, financial precarity, legal precarity (visas), lack of immediate family support due to family separation, feelings of isolation and loneliness, unfamiliarity with campus and academic expectations, lack of staff and peer understanding of their situation and invalidation of refugees' experiences, negative impact on sense of identity and belonging, and xenophobia and discrimination [188].

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[185] European Commission. "Higher Education in Europe". https://education.ec.europa.eu/study-in-europe/planning-your-studies/higher-education-in-europe

[186] Stig Arne Skherven and Roger Y. Chao Jr. "International Perspectives from Higher Education and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 85-99
Bryce Loo. "*Recognizing Refugee Qualifications: Practical Tips for Credential Assessment*". New York: World Education Services, 2020: 4-6; European Commission. "Higher Education for migrants and refugees". https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/inclusive-and-connected-higher-education/higher-education-for-migrants-and-refugees

[187] UNHCR. "Refugee Data Finder". https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/

[188] Kussai Haj-Yehia and Khalid Arar "Arab World Refugee Challenges in Higher Education: The Case of Syrian Refugee Students in Jordan" in *Higher Education Challenges for Migrant and Refugees Students in Global World* ed. Khalid Arar, Kussai Haj-Yehia, David B. Ross, and Yasar Kondakci. New-York: Peter Lang, 2019: 369-371; Susan Webb, Karen Dunwoodie, Jane Wilkinson, Luke Macaulay, Kristin E. Reimer, and Mervi Kaukko. "Recognition and precarious mobilities:

Furthermore, in terms of employment outcomes, PADILEIA and InZone's course offerings were in fact found to be misaligned with refugees' legal context within Jordan. Indeed, since July 2021, the Ministry of Labour authorized Syrian refugees to work in construction, agriculture, manufacturing, services and sales, crafts, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery work, plan and machine work, and basic industries [189]. Thus, courses such as healthcare (PADILEIA and InZone) and engineering (InZone) are simply legally inaccessible to Syrian refugees. Moreover, this is without considering the fact that only 62.000 work permits were issued to Syrian refugees in 2021 [190].

As for IT programming courses (Jamiya and InZone), while there is increasing demand for it in the Arab World [191] and Jordan [192] in particular, there exists just as much offer. The tech sector is very competitive with 19% of MENA graduates opting for an IT career in 2017 only [193], a number that has certainly increased since, and with a sectorial preference for more educated and specialized foreigners [194]. Moreover, potential MENA IT employers require not only Bachelor's degrees but also, depending on the position, experiential learning and professional experience (see Table 3) [195]. Even *if* the employers decide to recognize the certificates obtained through these programs –as this ultimately remains the employer's

The experiences of university students from a refugee background in Australia". *International Review of Education* 67, (2021): 871-894; Lambrechts, A. Agata. "The super-disadvantaged in higher education: barriers to access for refugee background students in England". *Higher Education* 80, (2020): 803-822; Mangan, Doireann and Winter, Laura Anne. "(In)validation and (mis)recognition in higher education: The experiences of students from refugee backgrounds". International Journal of Lifelong Education 36, no.4, (2017): 486-502

[189] UNHCR. "Jordan issues record number of work permits to Syrian refugees". *Geneva: UNHCR USA*, 2022. https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2022/1/61effaa54/jordan-issues-record-number-work-permits-syrian refugees.html#:~:text=Syrian%20refugees%20have%20been%20allowed,forced%20to%20flee%20their%20homes.

[190] UNHCR. "Jordan issues record number of work permits to Syrian refugees". *Geneva: UNHCR USA*, 2022. https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2022/1/61effaa54/jordan-issues-record-number-work-permits-syrian refugees.html#:~:text=Syrian%20refugees%20have%20been%20allowed,forced%20to%20flee%20their%20homes.

[191] Deloitte. "*Opportunities for Arab youth employment in the hospitality, technology and media industries in the MENA region*". UK: Deloitte, 2017

[192] RYSE. "*Employment and Market Systems Assessment in Jordan*". RYSE, 2020

[193] Deloitte. "*Opportunities for Arab youth employment in the hospitality, technology and media industries in the MENA region*". UK: Deloitte, 2017: 24

[194] Deloitte. "*Opportunities for Arab youth employment in the hospitality, technology and media industries in the MENA region*". UK: Deloitte, 2017: 24, 48

[195] Deloitte. "*Opportunities for Arab youth employment in the hospitality, technology and media industries in the MENA region*". UK: Deloitte, 2017: 28

prerogative– the IT industry seeks highly technical and specialized entry-level skills (see Table 4) [196] that may not be taught in these short-cycle (averaging 3 months) courses, although I cannot assert with certitude. Lastly, there is also a gender dimension at play here: there remains a regional perception that IT jobs are more suitable for male youths [197], thus further reducing the potential employment outcomes of female IT graduates. Lastly, in the case of Jordan, this is a field based in big cities (Amman, Irbid and Zarqa) and dominated by Jordanian nationals, with 96% of IT employees being Jordanian [198], thus becoming a physically and preferentially inaccessible field for these programs' refugee graduates. These barriers to entry and competition in the IT workforce apply to the MENA region, but certainly too to resettled societies, who, again, pose the additional barriers of resettlement and the psychosocial challenges ensuing it.

Table 3. Key positions and qualifications in the Technology Industry in the MENA region. [199]

	Key Positions	Required Qualifications
Popular positions	IT Business/Data Analyst	• Bachelors degree (Computer science/ Information system)
	Web Architecture / Mobile Developer	• Bachelors degree (IT/Computer science/ Software development) • Minimum of 2 years experience
	Database Administrator	• Bachelors degree (IT/Computer science) • National diploma • Minimum of 3-5 years of experience
Less known positions	Data Engineer	• Bachelors degree (IT/Computer Science) • Minimum of 2 years experience
	Network and Information Security Engineer	• Bachelors degree (Computer Science) • Minimum of 1-2 years of experience
	UI/ UX designers	• Bachelors degree (Computer Science) • Availability of a portfolio (Class projects)

Employers usually prefer candidates with relevant work experience (full-time job, internships or other experiential learning opportunities)

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[196] Deloitte. "*Opportunities for Arab youth employment in the hospitality, technology and media industries in the MENA region*". UK: Deloitte, 2017: 35

[197] Deloitte. "*Opportunities for Arab youth employment in the hospitality, technology and media industries in the MENA region*". UK: Deloitte, 2017: 24, 48

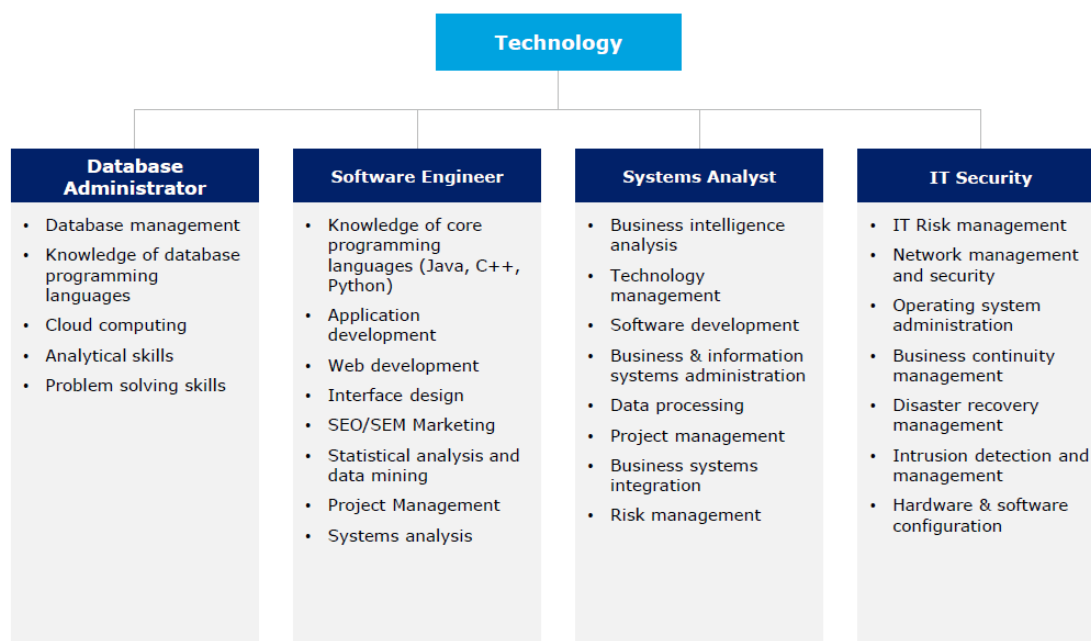[198] RYSE. "*Employment and Market Systems Assessment in Jordan*". RYSE, 2020: 7

[199] Deloitte. "*Opportunities for Arab youth employment in the hospitality, technology and media industries in the MENA region*". UK: Deloitte, 2017: 28

Table 4. Key skills required in the technology industry in the MENA region. [200]

A question, thus, arises – are these programs designed as steppingstones or stopping points? As a Jamiya student pertinently asked – "[a]fter the […] material we have taken, is there a follow-up?" [201]. Do the programs open access to HE for the sake of access? Seemingly, and unfortunately, the projects do not have progression in mind, or at least, in action. However, PADILEIA must be exceptionally acknowledged for developing legal counselling, HE and scholarship application, and professional guidance and CV assistance, support services [202].

[200] Deloitte. "*Opportunities for Arab youth employment in the hospitality, technology and media industries in the MENA region*". UK: Deloitte, 2017: 35

[201] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 132

[202] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. *Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*. London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 53-60

The lack of relevance and applicability of these programs to Syrian refugees' present, and probable future, academic and professional context in Jordan along with the lack of feasibility of their possible, albeit improbable, future academic and professional context in Europe affects the scalability and tangibility of these initiatives and creates a certain plateau and stagnation for these programs' learning outcomes, which inevitably affects the acceptability of the program delivered, as it is delivered without deliverables.

Trusting learners, containing futures

In semi-application of a Freirian approach, all three programs showed a rather learner-centric and collaborative pedagogy. They all consulted with students prior and throughout implementation. Most subjects were developed in accordance with surveyed student interests, conducted needs assessments, and observed needed skills – and community needs, in the case of InZone. Moreover, the projects continuously adapted to student needs and feedback through the establishment of regular needs assessments and, both student and staff, feedback loops. This undeniably – albeit perhaps implicitly - acknowledges the agency and voices of refugee learners and creates a safe, trusting space for them to express their needs and hopes.

InZone, in a more explicit manner, goes as far as to encourage student participation and inclusion in not only 1) the implementation of the program through their training and recruitment of former students as student-hub managers and tutors to subsequent cohorts [203], but also 2) in assisting their own communities through the application of their newly acquired subject-specific knowledge and skills to finding and creating their own solutions to community needs [204]. Additionally, InZone developed a learner-centric feedback system based on elected student representatives who survey the needs of their peers, meet to discuss findings, and relay

[203] Connected Learning Crisis Consortium. "*Quality Guidelines Playbook - Lessons Learned Through Contextualized Practice*". Connected Learning Crisis Consortium, 2017: 23
[204] Connected Learning Crisis Consortium. "*Quality Guidelines Playbook - Lessons Learned Through Contextualized Practice*". Connected Learning Crisis Consortium, 2017: 24

them to InZone, who makes the appropriate changes [205]. More concretely, the initiative's 'Introduction to Engineering' course, in partnership with Purdue University, lays the groundwork for good, albeit partial, CP practice in contexts of refugeehood. The course is centered on a local need identified by students themselves, the solution to which, developed through the course, inventively, becomes the students' individualized final course assignment [206]. Moreover, a group of selected students in the course are also tasked with peer mentorship and have the possibility to become course leaders for subsequent iterations of the course [207].

PADILEIA too, with time, engaged students to participate through testing learning activities, contributing to language support and glossary-building, and completing self-assessments on their digital skills [208]. The initiative also brought in their alumni to produce their own digital media content – in the form of videos and podcasts - for the courses, allowing them to share their stories and achievements [209].

On the other hand, the available sources on Jamiya made no mention of such participatory methods.

Professors, and, particularly, local facilitators and tutors, also contributed to the establishment of this safe, trusting space, by constantly being understanding of and flexible to the different learning, psychosocial, linguistic and (work) schedule needs of students. Explicit information on the type of hierarchy (horizontal or vertical) established between learners and the teaching staff was, however, unavailable. Notwithstanding, while InZone had no (available) documentation on students' perceptions of the teaching staff and environment, PADILEIA and

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[205] Mosaik Education. "*Refugee Learning Ecosystems: Reimagining Higher Education Access for Refugees*". UK: British Council, 2021: 35

[206] Connected Learning Crisis Consortium. "*Quality Guidelines Playbook - Lessons Learned Through Contextualized Practice*". Connected Learning Crisis Consortium, 2017: 24

[207] Connected Learning Crisis Consortium. "*Quality Guidelines Playbook - Lessons Learned Through Contextualized Practice*". Connected Learning Crisis Consortium, 2017: 24

[208] Connected Learning Crisis Consortium. "*2019 Yearbook*". Connected Learning Crisis Consortium, 2020: 72

[209] Connected Learning Crisis Consortium. "*2019 Yearbook*". Connected Learning Crisis Consortium, 2020: 72

Jamiya both reported a high satisfaction with their student-teacher relations and the (tolerant, inclusive) class environment, and an even higher esteem for their local tutors and facilitators, and gratitude for their help throughout the course, with one Jamiya student, admitting – "[i]f we manage to pass this course, we dedicate our success to Hussein [the tutor]" [210]. This reflects the important psychosocial and learning support role that on-site, local tutors and facilitators play for students and their personal and academic development, a topic also touched upon in the wellbeing subsection.

However, on the lesser positive side of the spectrum, and explaining my *'semi'*-Freirian argumentation, the short duration of the courses (averaging 3 months) and the overall practical nature of the most common courses across programs (healthcare, engineering, IT) seem to point to an (over)emphasis on skills, which in turn seems to indicate an (over)orientation towards employability and employment. This is problematic because doing so creates a (false) link between (higher) education and employment and frames employment as the most important – and sole – goal of (higher) education [211].

The course offerings and the courses' content are consequently restricted to the skills and knowledges *believed* to be necessary to break cycles of exclusion and marginalization, i.e., they are restricted to the skills (here, primarily, English and digital skills) perceived to be necessary to compete in the (Western) job market. Thus, as they increase the economic opportunities of their learners, workforce-oriented, skills-based HE initiatives only enable the creation of *individual* opportunities and the improvement of *individual* daily lives and experiences. They do not teach learners to interrogate, challenge and counter the status quo and the power relations

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[210] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 138
[211] Amy J. Bach, Todd Wolfson, and Jessica K. Crowell. "Poverty, Literacy, and Social Transformation: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of the Digital Divide". *Journal of Media Literacy Education* 10, no.1, (2018): 32-33

– and ensuing structural injustices - sustaining it, but rather how to improve their individual conditions *within* the status quo, which ultimately only works to sustain the highly stratified neoliberal capitalist status quo [212].

The initiatives place learners at the center; integrate the learner and non-learner affected community into the implementation of the program; promote rather friendly and understanding relations between the teaching staff and students; and concurrently create a safe, visible space for refugees. Nevertheless, their adoption of a Freirian approach is only partial as they remain largely workforce-oriented, economically-driven and skills-based and fail to address and encourage critical consciousness around situations of oppression and liberation, thus (unintentionally) perpetuating cycles of institutionalized marginalization, sustaining the status quo, and creating false promises of change and empowerment.

Moreover, since legal barriers to employment (Jordan) and resettlement (Europe) remain, a workforce-orientation becomes the more problematic - and demoralizing - as even *individual* change through employment becomes hindered. In turn, that most subjects delivered are not legally accessible in Jordan along with the fact that these projects are delivered in English, focused around digital skills, and accredited by European HEIs and in conformity to ECTS, might also indicate that these programs are *Western* workforce-oriented, which points to one of three underlying assumptions: 1) the programs are developed with the (false) hope of resettlement in mind, 2) the programs are developed with a concerning obliviousness to the wider legal context in Jordan, or 3) the programs are complacent with the current outcomes - or lack thereof – of their programs.

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[212] Amy J. Bach, Todd Wolfson, and Jessica K. Crowell. "Poverty, Literacy, and Social Transformation: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of the Digital Divide". *Journal of Media Literacy Education* 10, no.1, (2018): 32-33

Nonetheless it is worth noting that these programs are forms of empowerment in and of themselves. As they create trusting, visible spaces for students and include them, and their communities, in the implementation of the programs, they recognize the agencies and voices of learners. In doing so, they *do* revert the dominant deficit-centered narrative of 'refugee as passive, helpless victim'. In this sense, not only are these programs forms of empowerment in and of themselves, but also intrinsic challenges to the status quo. However, while forms of empowerment, they do not *lead* to neither individual nor collective change – albeit they do to relative individual and community improvement - as neither are able to break free from their situations of structural oppression, rather these are learnt to be lived better. Nevertheless, this is not to place the solution to what is a deeply entrenched systemic issue with inconceivable layers and dimensions on the shoulders of these interventions – or any other interventions; this would simply be unrealistic.

Offsetting wellbeing impacts

All three programs understood the value of social interaction for youths in general, and for refugee youths in particular. They did so by not only integrating a face-to-face component to their online course delivery, but by very importantly, establishing physical student hubs where learners would have access to connectivity and computers, and in the case of PADILEIA even water, food, and AC [213]. Moreover, in all three programs these hubs were designed for students to access online courses under the learning and technical guidance of local tutors (Jamiya) and local facilitators with subject-specific knowledge (PADILEIA and InZone). In fact, local tutors (Jamiya) and facilitators (InZone and PADILEIA) played such a great role that they became the teachers, providing the most understanding, encouragement and (psychosocial, learning, and technical) support to learners. The importance of physical interaction with students and the

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[213] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. *Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*. London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 41

paramount support role that local tutors and facilitators play for students is evident in this learner's statement:

"[A]t the end of every lesson I go out and say I do not want to go back!! He [the tutor] kept saying: No… You have the capabilities you should return… This was happening after every lesson!" (Jamiya pilot student, female) [214].

Moreover, InZone and PADILEIA, albeit to different extents – PADILEIA's Foundational course being much greater -, very importantly included disadvantaged host learners within their offerings, allowing for social interaction and greater socialization with the host community. In the thoroughly reported case of PADILEIA, this inclusion later translated to a greater feeling of integration and belonging to the host community among refugee learners, and a greater feeling of understanding and empathy with the refugee community among host learners [215]. This is reflected in the following statements:

"I am Jordanian and since we live in a poor area of Jordan, immigrants were looked at as a competitor in a poor region of the country. Within the course, I met lots of Syrians and we became close friends, I don't have this feeling anymore and learnt to be more empathetic" (Year 4 AABU host community student, male) [216].

"As refugees, we do not meet lots of people from outside our community. The programme helped me a lot to meet new people and feel part of the society" (Year 2 AABU refugee student, female) [217].

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[214] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* edited by Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 130

[215] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. *Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*. London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 78-79

[216] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. *Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*. London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 79

[217] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. "*Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*". London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 79

PADILEIA also reported a change in refugees' self-image, as learners reported an increased sense of confidence and self-efficacy [218]. While only PADILEIA documented their program's impact on students' wellbeing and self-perceptions, it would not be unreasonable to extrapolate these results to Jamiya and InZone. This is in line with the literature review presented earlier on the psychosocial benefits of HE to refugees [219]. Refugees, through PADILEIA's program, and likely through Jamiya and InZone's, indeed started seeing themselves not merely as 'nation-less' disempowered group, but as students, active members of a community. This shows that Zeus' argument that HE access helps refugees restore their self-respect [220] and self-image [221] and, in doing so, helps undo the (internalized) narrative of refugees as passive victims [222] might also be true of ICT-enabled HE programs.

While these programs have contributed to Syrian learners' self-perception, self-confidence and sense of belonging, their lack of relevance and applicability to neither present – and probable futures – in Jordan nor possible - albeit improbable - futures in Europe directly, and negatively, impacts the wellbeing of learners. Indeed, the greatest impact on learners' wellbeing is implicit and inadvertent, and demonstrated throughout this section. Offering 3-months, skills-based, workforce-oriented, ECTS-conforming courses in fields that refugee learners cannot legally access (Jordan) and for contexts that they realistically will not reach (Europe), necessarily creates frustration, and exacerbates feelings of uncertainty, hopelessness, and depression. As seen in the literature review, "[p]sychosocial stress due to anxiety and

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[218] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. "*Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*". London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 75-76

[219] Anna Hakami. "*Education is our weapon for the future: Access and non-access to higher education for refugees in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda*" (Master's thesis, University of Stavanger, 2016): 79-81; Barbara Zeus. "Exploring Barriers to Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations: The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand". *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no.2 (2011): 257

[220] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 85

[221] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 78

[222] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 84

uncertainty of life in a refugee camp is thus exacerbated by few opportunities to put into practice what one has learned and find recognition and self-fulfillment in a paid job" [223]. This is seemingly the case here.

De-contextualized outcomes (i.e., intangible outcomes) not only affect the potential material (academic and professional development) and structural (personal and collective empowerment and change) benefits of HE programs and thus, the acceptability of the programs, but, importantly, they also affect their learners' wellbeing as they are unable to materialize these potential benefits and outcomes. This, in turn, necessarily further limits the acceptability of these programs as not only are the potential psychosocial benefits of HE hindered but also as some psychosocial harm is caused.

1.2.2.3.   Adaptability

These programs and their students faced numerous challenges along the way. These mainly arose from an inherent incompatibility between the Western context in which these programs are developed and the Syrian refugee context to which they are applied. This aligns with Reinhardt et al.'s argument that ICT-enabled HE interventions, as they are mainly provided by the West, carry with them fundamental contextual mismatches [224]. Accordingly, this last subsection will begin exploring the challenges faced by students once they have accessed these programs to then describe the ways in which the programs have responded to these challenges.

Failing to meet contextual challenges

The most flagrant incompatibility between the context of inception (primarily Western European) and that of application (primarily refugee camps) is found within the technological

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[223] Barbara Zeus. "*Exploring Paradoxes around Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations. The Case of Burmese Refugees in Thailand*" (Master's thesis, University of London, 2009): 61

[224] Franziska Reinhardt, Olga Zlatkin-Troitschanskaia, Roland Happ, and Sarah Nell-Müller. "Online technology for promoting the inclusion of refugees into higher education: a systematic review of current approaches and developments" in *Research Handbook on International Migration and Digital Technology* ed. Marie McAuliffe, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021): 186

nature of the programs themselves. Indeed, poor connectivity and power outages in camps, combined with the high cost of data cards in Jordan and refugees' ubiquitous lack of financial access to computers, renders these programs very difficult to implement.

While Syrian refugees do have access to smartphones, and those may be sufficient - albeit not ideal - to *access* ICT-enabled HE, they are simply unsuited for general tasks such as researching, writing, uploading assignments, and working on presentations. Certainly, they are even less suited for programming. Indeed, as expressed by three Jamiya students enrolled in the pilot IT course:

"[…] [O]ne should make an effort, but (suppose) you want to go home and study, but you don't have the right settings, as we said you do not have a computer, electricity or internet" [225].

"I mean at home you do not study because there are no devices… you can only read the theoretical (material) without application" [226].

"I do not have a computer in the house to applied what I learned" [227].

This was a finding shared by PADILEIA's staff who reported that their students' greatest challenges were an unreliable connectivity and a lack of suitable devices for study [228]. The Syrian refugee context, particularly that of the camp, is simply not equipped for the technological requirements of these programs, even less so if these are programming courses,

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[225] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 122

[226] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 121

[227] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 121

[228] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. "*Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*". London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 51

which points to a deep misalignment of course offerings with the ubiquitous technological realities of (Syrian) refugees.

Moreover, another contextual incompatibility is found within the general condition of displacement. More precisely, Jamiya students found it difficult to resume their studies after years of interruption, and to do so within the (distracting) camp environment, as illustrated in the following quotes:

"It has been 6-7 years that we have interrupted studies, it is difficult to complete… I mean at this level. One should have a high pace to continue" [229].

"We suddenly interrupted out studies, and we got back to study suddenly" [230].

"I wish the course is more simplified… or in two stages for example... the course requires that we study hard as we've been told, and here the situation of the camp does not allow to study the quantity required from us" [231].

"[T]he environment in general does not allow… small caravans (the houses), there is (always) noise… young children" [232].

These statements also indicate that the short duration of courses, in particular in camp settings, is perhaps simply impractical and counterproductive as it necessarily renders courses more intensive and stressful, which is only exacerbated by the general conditions of life - and

[229] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 121
[230] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 121
[231] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 121
[232] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 123

study - in camp and the general condition of refugeehood (namely, the protracted interruption of studies). This, in turn, points to a need to develop preparatory courses prior to the beginning of classes. Indeed, none of the programs offered such courses.

As situations in camps are rarely exceptions, and given the protractedness of the crisis, and the general short nature of the courses (averaging 3 months), it would be reasonable to infer that these insights were also shared by students across InZone and PADILEIA, though no information was available on the matter.

Lastly, this study also found an incompatibility between, or rather an impracticability of the programs' academic demands and class schedules with the economic realities of Syrian learners. Indeed, refugee learners were time-constrained and struggled to study and timely attend, if at all, classes due to work and/or domestic responsibilities, prioritizing the latter when schedule clashes occurred. This was a challenge documented by both Jamiya [233] and PADILEIA [234], and evidenced by the following statements:

> "My work lasts until 3 pm, and the time of the course is between 12 and 3, which means
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> that I have to get permission for 3 hours… and deducing these three hours leaves me with
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> only 3 work hours a day, it as if I did not go to work" [235].

> "There is another matter, for example, the professor gives us homework and we have a
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> full day to solve it… but the problem is that you go home there is no computer… sometimes

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[233] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 121, 125-126

[234] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. "*Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*". London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 52

[235] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 121

you come to the course late because of the work, for example you arrive at 2 o'clock, you cannot follow on…" [236].

This arguably shows a lack of contextualized and critical understanding of, and thus capacity to anticipate, the (fundamentally) different needs and realities of refugee learners, thereby affecting the adaptability of programs as courses are not understanding of, nor adapted to, Syrian learners' unique context. As with de-contextualized outcomes (i.e., intangible outcomes), de-contextualized course settings (i.e., incompatible course settings) negatively impacts the wellbeing of learners as study becomes a unique stress factor, and inability to do so creates feelings of frustration, self-doubt, and low self-esteem. Again, this affects the acceptability of the programs and showcases the interconnectedness of essential features as issues of adaptability affect issues of acceptability. Moreover, it also has practical effects, as learners struggle to keep pace and find themselves forced to drop out, or at the very least discouraged to continue. While this was not reported in any of the programs, it is alluded to by one Jamiya female student:

"I was very lost and I had a strong desire to drop out and my determination was falling down and I was telling myself I no longer wanted to pursue… I do not know… I am able to do nothing… this is how I felt" [237].

While the initiatives commendably recognize refugee learners as independent students, undoing the narrative of 'refugee as passive victim', they also inadvertently invalidate the

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[236] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 121
[237] Laure Kloetzer, Miki Aristorenas and Oula Abu-Amsha. ""My course, my lifeline" – Reconnecting Syrian Refugees to Higher Education in the Za'atari Camp". In *Challenges and Opportunities in Education for Refugees in Europe – From Research to Good Practices* ed. Fabio Dovigo, Leiden: Brill, 2018: 130

unique contextual challenges *refugee* students face when (re)accessing HE *and* technology-enabled HE, arguably placing the "failure to succeed" upon the learner [238].

Responding to contextual challenges

The initiatives studied have attempted to respond to these challenges via the provision of diverse student support services. All three programs have established physical student spaces where learners could access connectivity and computers. However, with the exception of Jamiya's INGO student centres [239], these were only accessible during class hours, thus leaving students without access to a reliable network and suitable device once home, and necessarily overlooking employed students whose work schedule clashed with the student spaces' opening hours. In PADILEIA's Foundation case, tablets were laudably provided upon request, though students seemed unaware of this feature [240]. Moreover, during COVID19 the Programme provided data cards and lent tablets to all those without financial access [241].

All three analysed programs also developed learning support services, principally in the form of peer-to-peer and mentoring networks. For Jamiya, this role was assumed by the Syrian professors, via Whatsapp, as they were thought to be best positioned to understand and assist learners and as Whatsapp remains a widely used and accessible platform among refugees [242]. For PADILEIA and InZone, learning support was provided by carefully selected and trained volunteer students from their implementing partner university with advanced subject-specific knowledge: King's College for PADILEIA and UNIGE for InZone. Additionally, InZone

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[238] Amanda Poole and Jennifer Riggan. "Time with/out Telos: Eritrean Refugees' Precarious Choice of Im/Possible Futures in Ethiopia and Beyond." *Anthropological Quarterly* 93, no. 3 (2020): 426

[239] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 133

[240] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes, and Matt Thomas. "*Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*". London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 51

[241] PADILEIA. "*PADILEIA Rapid Evaluation: Community Report*". London: Jigsaw Consult, (2021): 2, 4; Connected Learning Crisis Consortium. "*2020 Yearbook*". Connected Learning Crisis Consortium, 2021: 27; PADILEIA. "AABU foundation programme: Analysis of year-on-year trends" (unpublished document shared via email exchange, undated): 2

[242] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 134

developed an internal peer-to-peer network among refugee learners, with alumni assisting subsequent cohorts [243], while PADILEIA developed a mentorship program, via Whatsapp, specific to refugee learners in Jordan and Lebanon, connecting over 100 refugees with 30 students at King's College and providing soft skills, scholarship application and linguistic support [244]. Importantly though, only Jamiya offered mentoring in Arabic, InZone and PADILEIA did so in English. Moreover, as mentioned, tutors and facilitators provided in all programs an immense learning and technical support to students.

Psychosocial support was alarmingly not provided neither by InZone nor Jamiya, at least not in an explicit manner, as the former developed an English-language course in co-authorship with Syrian refugees to assist learners in developing (positive) coping mechanisms [245] while the latter connected Syrian professors to groups of learners via Whatsapp to support them [246]. In what capacity and to what extent psychosocial support was *actually* provided through these indirect ways unfortunately remains unanswered.

On the other hand, PADILEIA, admirably developed standalone psychosocial support services adapted to each of their three learning pathways. Representing 19%, psychosocial services were the second most frequently reported services accessed [247]. Psychosocial support was delivered through group and individual counselling sessions and the establishment of a 'students support day' [248], the latter weekly covering career planning, CV writing, interviewing

[243] Connected Learning Crisis Consortium. "*Quality Guidelines Playbook - Lessons Learned Through Contextualized Practice*". Connected Learning Crisis Consortium, 2017: 23

[244] PADILEIA. "Breaking down barriers to higher education for Syrian refugees". *SPHEIR*, (2019)

[245] InZone. "Refugee Capstone Project - Resilience". *Université de Genève,* (n.d.)

[246] Maria R. Aristorenas, Paul O'Keeffe, Oula Abu-Amsha. "Jamiya Project 2016: Reconnecting Refugee Higher Education Networks" in *Strategies, Policies and Directions for Refugee Education Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning* ed. Enakshi Sengupta and Patrick Blessinger (Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018): 134

[247] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. *Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*. London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 59

[248] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. *Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*. London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 59

techniques and formal HE and scholarship applications [249]. Additionally, PADILEIA also provided extra psychosocial support during the lockdown [250].

While PADILEIA was meticulous in providing standalone psychosocial services, none specifically tended to refugees. This is problematic as refugees have unique needs that demand particular support and attention and should not be amalgamated with other learners' needs [251]. Indeed, as argued by Avery and Said, refugees' everyday dire conditions also act as a barrier to and challenge of HE [252]. This is reflected by a PADILEIA Kiron-pathway refugee student in Lebanon, who saw himself forced to drop out, thus pointing to the urgency and importance of providing specific psychosocial support to refugees, if only to allow course delivery to be effective and to retain what are ultimately the primary targets of these programs:

> "I can't actually communicate with my family in Syria due to the current situation, we are living in a miserable situation that is why I could not continue with the course" [253]

Refugee learners faced unique technological, financial, learning, and psychosocial challenges that were overlooked, or highly miscalculated, and that needed particular attention, necessarily further affecting the adaptability of programs. The student support services, when developed, did not address these unique challenges, but rather approached refugee learners' needs as general learner needs, thereby placing refugee learners at a "super-disadvantage" [254]

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[249] Rabih Shibli. "Increasing access to higher education for refugees through digital learning". *Times Higher Education*, (2022)

[250] PADILEIA. "*PADILEIA Rapid Evaluation: Community Report*". London: Jigsaw Consult, (2021): 4

[251] Susan Webb, Karen Dunwoodie, Jane Wilkinson, Luke Macaulay, Kristin E. Reimer, and Mervi Kaukko. "Recognition and precarious mobilities: The experiences of university students from a refugee background in Australia". *International Review of Education* 67, (2021): 871-894; Lambrechts, A. Agata. "The super-disadvantaged in higher education: barriers to access for refugee background students in England". *Higher Education* 80, (2020): 803-822; Mangan, Doireann and Winter, Laura Anne. "(In)validation and (mis)recognition in higher education: The experiences of students from refugee backgrounds". International Journal of Lifelong Education 36, no.4, (2017): 486-502

[252] Helen Avery and Salam Said. "Higher Education for Refugees: The Case of Syria". *Development Education Perspectives on Migration* 24, (2017): 104-125

[253] Katrina Barnes, Bethany Sikes and Matt Thomas. *Summative Evaluation – PADILEIA*. London: Jigsaw Consult, 2021: 53

[254] Lambrechts, A. Agata. "The super-disadvantaged in higher education: barriers to access for refugee background students in England". *Higher Education* 80, (2020): 803-822

and preventing them from fully and equitably participating in, and benefiting from, these programs [255].

This chapter attempted to evaluate the three selected programs on the essential features of accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability, each with its identified subcategories. The next chapter will analyse the theoretical impediments to each of the analyzed features.

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[255] Lambrechts, A. Agata. "The super-disadvantaged in higher education: barriers to access for refugee background students in England". *Higher Education* 80, (2020): 803-822

CHAPTER 4: Discussion

In an attempt to work towards the global delivery and fulfilment of refugees' right to HE through ICTs, this chapter, reflecting on the above findings, attempts to answer RQ3. It does so by presenting and analyzing three major conceptual paradoxes inherent to the alternate, ICT-enabled HE programs explored in this study. This reflective 'theoretical paradox' format was inspired by and must be credited to Barbara Zeus' remarkable thesis on Higher Education in Protracted Refugee Situations (HEPRS) in the Thai-Burmese border and whose findings have been presented throughout this study. While she explored theoretical paradoxes within the global system that impede refugees' access to HEPRS, I wish to contribute to these - albeit briefly due to space constraints - by analyzing, more specifically, the internalized theoretical paradoxes around and within ICT-enabled HEPRS programs that impede the fulfilment of accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability, and with it, the comprehensive realization of (Syrian) refugees' right to higher education. These are as follows:

1. The programs are developed in response to refugees' general inability to access the formal HE system but reproduce the same barriers in practice.

2. The programs understand the protractedness of the condition of refugeehood but demonstrate a rather transitional understanding and practice of the localization of their refugeehood.

3. The programs are designed for refugees, but misrecognize their separate, unique support needs.

4.1.   Accessibility: Trapped between systems

All three analyzed ICT-enabled programs were developed in response to refugees' ubiquitous lack of access to formal HE. Indeed, these programs aim to expand refugees' access to HE by providing an alternate route through ICTs. However, they eventually reproduce the same administrative barriers and produce some of their own. This, I argue, is because the goal

of all three programs ultimately remains entrance to traditional (Western) HE. Indeed, these programs, while promoted as HE programs, are *not* HE programs. They provide access to accredited undergraduate-level courses from international universities and offer otherwise difficultly accessible learning opportunities to refugees, but they are *not* HE programs per se. Rather, they are bridging programs - hence, their short-cycle nature - aiming to facilitate a *possible* entrance to formal (Western) HE. In doing so, they reproduce the same barriers. If the ultimate goal is traditional HE entrance, then these programs must optimize their resources and their learners' potential pathways by ensuring that the students selected already fulfill the eligibility criteria necessary to (possibly) enter formal HE, i.e. that they possess the documentation and language and digital skills (enhanced through the program) required by universities.

4.2. Acceptability: Trapped between curricula

The programs under study are indeed bridging programs. Most of the undergraduate-level courses offered are short-cycle, averaging 12 weeks. Precisely because they are transitional programs, there exists a conflict within their understanding of the localization of refugeehood. All three programs, again, emerge out of an urgent need to increase refugees' access to HE, which does point to an underlying protracted understanding of their refugeehood. However, there seems to be an inconsistency in their understanding of the protractedness of the localization of their refugeehood in Jordan.

In their implementation, these programs understand the permanency of their localization in Jordan. The programs recruit local tutors and/or facilitators (PADILEIA, Jamiya and InZone), Syrian teachers (Jamiya), develop partnerships with local NGOs and local universities (InZone and PADILEIA), and even prepare students for and encourage them to participate in the delivery and innovation of crisis response (InZone). Within this involvement of affected and local communities, there lies an understanding of the need to reinforce community resilience,

self-reliance and unity which points to an implicit aim for sustainability, that is, in turn, based on an understanding that Syrian refugees' localization in Jordan *is* enduring.

However, that the programs are largely inapplicable to the Jordanian professional and academic context, and are seemingly, since their inception, oriented towards entrance into Western HE and workforce tacitly points to a rather temporary conceptualization of the refugee camp and a (false) transitional understanding of the localization of Syrian refugees in Jordan: they will one day resettle in Europe where they will be able to apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge and secure access to formal HE and/or the workforce.

Because of their transitional nature, and because of their Western origin, these programs come with a necessary, conflictive, choice: build an internationalized or a localized curriculum? The programs contradictorily opted for both: localized in its implementation and internationalized in its orientation. The programs try to maximize options and pathways, but in trying to lead somewhere, anywhere, they ultimately - perhaps harshly - lead nowhere. The programs end up being irrelevant to the present local context *and* the future international context of Syrian refugees in Jordan, and as such, it becomes irrelevant for Syrian refugees in Jordan but also refugees in general, as again, resettlement remains a highly unlikely outcome.

4.3. Adaptability: Trapped between contexts

All three programs were designed *specifically* for refugees. However, all of them, as seen in the third chapter, failed to recognize the contextual (technological, learning, economic, and psychosocial) challenges refugees encountered and develop the appropriate support services. This, I argue, is rooted in a profound mismatch between the fundamentally different contexts of inception (European universities) and implementation (Syrian refugees in Jordan, with a primary focus on camp-bound refugees). Like other HEIs in resettled societies, and as products of European HEIs themselves, these programs are deeply embedded within their European

academia context of inception which, as other scholars have shown [256], conceptually translates into a misrecognition, or a general unawareness of, the magnitude and complexity of the contextual challenges refugees face daily *and* when entering HE. Subsequently, in practice, this translates into an amalgamation of refugees' (unique) needs with that of learners in general and a failure to deliver the appropriate, separate support services refugees need.

Consequently, the primary target of their programs, refugees, do not, *cannot*, fully participate in these programs, and thus, fully benefit from the provided educational opportunities nor can they benefit from them to the same extent as their non-refugee peers. All this arguably results in an important denial of equitable access to the potential (psychosocial, cognitive, economic, and social) benefits of learning opportunities, which again, becomes the more alarming when these programs are developed for refugees and to respond to a systemic inability to access HE and its benefits.

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[256] Susan Webb, Karen Dunwoodie, Jane Wilkinson, Luke Macaulay, Kristin E. Reimer, and Mervi Kaukko. "Recognition and precarious mobilities: The experiences of university students from a refugee background in Australia". *International Review of Education* 67, (2021): 871-894; Lambrechts, A. Agata. "The super-disadvantaged in higher education: barriers to access for refugee background students in England". *Higher Education* 80, (2020): 803-822; Mangan, Doireann and Winter, Laura Anne. "(In)validation and (mis)recognition in higher education: The experiences of students from refugee backgrounds". International Journal of Lifelong Education 36, no.4, (2017): 486-502

Chapter 5: Implications and conclusion

The key contribution of this thesis lies in its crucial incorporation of CP and psychosocial wellbeing within its 4As analysis. The 4As framework, as currently conceptualized and practiced, and as this thesis has implicitly demonstrated, is inadequate and insufficient to meet the needs and hopes of (Syrian) refugees.

This study found that there was generally and in all features a certain lack of critical understanding - or at the very least, critical application - of the structural limitations on refugees' lives and futures, fundamentally embedded in, and compounded by, the very fact of their refugeehood. This lack of realistic assessment is manifested in a dependency on traditional HE systems and a subsequent reproduction of the traditional HE barriers refugees face (accessibility); a transitional conceptualization of refugees' localization and a subsequent internationalized, resettlement (academic and professional) program orientation (acceptability); and a misrecognition of refugees' realities and a subsequent absence of dedicated support (adaptability). Consequently, the HE programs designed to be inclusive alternates, (re)produce exclusions; the HE programs designed to be sustainable and transformational, are temporary and intangible; and the HE programs designed to respond to refugees' plight, misrecognize their plight. Importantly, this lack of critical consciousness is then passed on to the learners: the programs' courses do not explore refugees' own situations of systemic oppression, nor do they clarify expectations around the programs' possible pathways and outcomes.

In turn, a lack of contextualized understanding and teaching of the structural constraints on refugees' lives and futures, as these hinder their ability to materialize and enact the potential benefits and promises of (higher) education, translates into false (dangerous) hope. This

produces, what Poole and Riggan have termed as, "teleological violence" [257] as learners are instilled with ideas of progress and 'bright futures' and made aware of their own potential, but "constantly reminded of their inability to arrive at the promised future" [258]. Un-criticality does not spare refugees from demoralization and discouragement, but limits their access to information, clouds their decision-making, leaves them unprepared to navigate structural constraints, and disallows them from shaping their own, attainable, future, thereby hindering their agency to create change for themselves and disempowering them [259]. However, programs must not abandon hope but operate within a contextualized and critical understanding of hope to allow learners to make informed choices, set realistic goals, and plan and prepare for their futures in exile [260].

While CP sheds a light on a lack of critical understanding and teaching as perhaps these programs' greatest lacuna, psychosocial wellbeing demonstrates the psychosocial harms of an uncritical, decontextualized approach. As currently (and un-critically and de-contextually) conceptualized and practiced, and while holding great potential and commendably paving the way to RHE, these ICT-enabled HE projects produce a promise for change that cannot be actualized given structural limitations on refugees' lives and futures.

The initiatives do demonstrate potential in their overcoming of gender and financial barriers, their blended format, their participatory methods and integration of both the affected and local community, their selective recruitment and training of the teaching staff (professors, tutors, and facilitators), their contribution to learners' self-image and their establishment of

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[257] Amanda Poole and Jennifer Riggan. "Time with/out Telos: Eritrean Refugees' Precarious Choice of Im/Possible Futures in Ethiopia and Beyond." *Anthropological Quarterly* 93, no. 3 (2020): 415
[258] Amanda Poole and Jennifer Riggan. "Time with/out Telos: Eritrean Refugees' Precarious Choice of Im/Possible Futures in Ethiopia and Beyond." *Anthropological Quarterly* 93, no. 3 (2020): 419
[259] Michelle J. Bellino and the Kakuma Youth Research Group. "Closing Information Gaps in Kakuma Refugee Camp: A Youth Participatory Action Research Study". *American journal of community psychology* 62*, no.*3-4, (2018): 492-507
[260] Michelle J. Bellino and the Kakuma Youth Research Group. "Closing Information Gaps in Kakuma Refugee Camp: A Youth Participatory Action Research Study". *American journal of community psychology* 62*, no.*3-4, (2018): 492-507

physical student hubs with access - albeit limited - to connectivity and computers. Nonetheless, this potential can, and *should*, be built on. (Higher) educational projects as well as the organizations and academics researching them should include the critical aspects of CP and wellbeing to their programs' development and analysis, respectively, if they are to adequately and equitably meet the needs of refugees.

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APPENDIX A

Essential feature	Subcategories	Comments
Accessibility	• Formal HE barriers • ICT-enabled HE barriers • Structural barriers	These subcategories in the form of barriers have been assigned to 'accessibility' as they necessarily limit refugee learners' *access* to the program.
Acceptability	• Quality (teaching, accreditation, and tangibility) • Cultural contextualization • Critical Pedagogy • Psychosocial wellbeing	Quality, cultural contextualization and critical pedagogy have been assigned to 'acceptability' as they affect the programs' implementation, curricula, teaching methodology, language of instruction, orientation, and outcomes. These categories were put under 'acceptability' as they impact - positively, or negatively - refugee students' learning experience and learning outcomes and with it, their ability to fully reap the promised benefits of HE. That these programs, through the subcategories analyzed, enable - or inadvertently impede - the conversion of potential benefits into *actual* benefits for refugee learners then speaks to the programs' standards, relevance and value, their 'acceptability'. While the first three subcategories look at what impedes and/or facilitates this conversion of potential benefits into actual benefits, the subcategory of psychosocial wellbeing is more peculiar as it itself constitutes a (potential) HE benefit. While it could have been assigned to 'adaptability' given the specific, yet ubiquitous, psychosocial effects that ensue refugeehood, and the concomitant need to respond to refugees' specific realities and challenges, the subcategory of psychosocial wellbeing was placed under 'acceptability' as to explore whether these programs were able to materialize the (potential) psychosocial benefits of HE. Moreover, the inclusion of psychosocial wellbeing into acceptability was also done to analyze how these programs may have - inadvertently - impacted their learners' psychosocial wellbeing, thereby possibly hindering the conversion of potential HE benefits into actual benefits. The wellbeing impact of a program indeed, necessarily, affects its 'acceptability' as educational projects aiming to better the lives, futures and conditions of their learners should 'do no harm'.

Adaptability	- Refugee learners' challenges - Programs' support services	The categories of refugees' challenges when entering the programs and the latter's development of support services was assigned to 'adaptability' as it demonstrates an understanding of - or lack thereof - and flexibility to - or lack thereof - the different, and specific, needs and realities of refugee learners. It is also worth noting that psychosocial wellbeing was also approached throughout 'adaptability', however, not as a potential benefit or harm to be analyzed, but a potential consequence to be accounted for, as a lack of specific attention and adequate (learning, technological, economic, and psychosocial) support negatively impacts and exacerbates the wellbeing of refugee learners.

APPENDIX B

Essential feature	Implication	Aspects covered	Questions
Availability	Sufficient provision of educational institutions, programs, and human and material resources.	• Program size. • Duration of the program. • Target age group. • Syrian refugee enrolment rate. • Teacher workforce size. • Location of the program. • Provision of scholastic resources and materials (textbooks and digital tools), • Provision of sanitation services. • Learning pathways.	a) What is the program size? b) How many Syrian refugees in Jordan have access to this initiative? c) Are there enough teachers and facilitators? d) Are scholastic (e.g., textbooks) and technological material provided? If so, are they sufficiently and equitably provided? e) If the program is blended and offers a physical location, are sanitation facilities available?
Accessibility	Provision of higher educational programs that overcome refugees' direct and indirect barriers to access.	• Entry requirements and eligibility criteria (including language, digital literacy, ID documentation, proof of prior study, and digital ownership requirements). • Costs: tuition and auxiliary (scholastic materials, transportation (if the program is blended), data cards, laptops). • Easily accessible and clear information on the program. • Gender equity. • Disability equity.	a) Who is eligible and what are the criteria for admission? b) Does the program require the provision of ID documentation? c) Does the program require the provision of proof of prior study and completion of secondary education? d) Are there any language requirements? What is the

			language of instruction?
			e) Are there any costs (tuition and auxiliary (e.g., textbooks and transportation))?
			f) If there are costs, what are they?
			g) If textbooks are needed, are they provided to students, or must they access them on their own?
			h) Is technology provided or is it a prerequisite?
			i) Are transportation costs covered by the program or student expenses?
			j) Is information around the program made available and accessible? How is it distributed?
			k) Do female learners have the same access to this initiative?
			l) Do youths with disabilities have the same access to this initiative?
Acceptability	Provision of a quality, critical, culturally contextualized, tangible, beneficial educational program.	• Course format (i.e., blended or exclusively online). • Subjects offered. • Accreditation (are the programs and their content recognized as meeting the expected standards?), certification (do these programs have formal assurance that students have successfully met the programs' requirements?	a) What subjects are offered? (i.e., to what extent is choice available to refugees?) b) Is the program delivered exclusively online, or is it blended? (In other words, does the program understand the importance of socialization needs

i.e., do these programs confer academic degrees?), and recognition (are these programs recognized by other HEIs? If so, to which extent? (i.e., only partner HEIs, or also local, regional and/or international HEIs?).

- Acquisition of academic knowledge and soft/transferable skills.
- Value of the program to employability/employment prospects.
- Value of the program to traditional HE transition.
- Program clarity on students' expectations and realizable pathways.
- Alignment of courses offered with Jordanian and wider legal and political context.
- Reported learning outcomes (e.g., test scores, student reflections, student transition rate, completion rate).
- Contextualized curricula.
- Compatibility of teaching methodologies and practices with Syrian learning and teaching methodologies and practices.
- Consultation, inclusion, and participation of Syrian learners in the design of the program.
- Educational background of providers and designers, if any.
- Diversity of partnerships and expertise of partners.
- Teacher technological and psychosocial support.
- Teacher qualification and training.

of young adults and the psychosocial needs of refugees?)

c) Is the host community included in the program? (i.e., is there interaction with Jordanian students, as to facilitate integration and promote socialization?)

d) Is the program learner-centered?

e) Does the curriculum adopt a Critical Pedagogy approach?

f) If not, does it display any features of critical pedagogy?

g) Are criticality, and critical interrogation, reflection and awareness on the social, digital, and educational world as well as their own world and situation encouraged by the program and in courses?

h) Have students been consulted (regarding subjects, interests, motivations, skills, needs, imagined futures) prior to the design and implementation of the course?

i) What is the curriculum? What is the method of learning? What is the method of teaching?

j) Is the program's teaching and learning

		- Experience and/or sensitivity training of teachers, tutors, and facilitators to refugee education. - Status of teacher-student interaction, communication, and relation. - Classroom environment.	methodology compatible with the Syrian teaching and learning methodology? k) Are the learning and teaching methods, and the subjects offered valued by, relevant to, and meeting the needs of Syrian students? l) Is the curriculum contextualized and culturally relevant and respectful of Syrian identity? m) If the program is in English, is linguistic support provided? n) Is the curriculum internationalized or locally contextualized? o) If internationalized, does the program hold international accreditation and recognition, facilitate credit transferability, and is clear on the likelihood of resettlement? p) If locally contextualized, does the course hold local accreditation and recognition, facilitate credit transferability to local HEIs, and is aligned with the host country's legal and societal context? q) Does the program offer tangible pathways into employment in the host, resettled and/or home country?

			r) Does the program offer tangible pathways to (re)enter 'traditional' HE in the host, resettled and/or home country?
			s) Is the program relevant to refugees' current situations and imagined futures? (i.e., is the program relevant to students' current location in Jordan, their potential future resettlement and/or potential repatriation?)
			t) Are the programs' offered credits competitive enough in their current or potential resettlement or repatriation locations?
			u) Is information on the program's possible employment and HE pathways available and clear? (i.e., are students' expectations of the program's job and further education prospects made clear?)
			v) Do students acquire subject-specific knowledge only or too soft/transferrable skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, entrepreneurship)?
			w) Who designed the program (e.g., tech-

			corporations, policymakers, experts with educational backgrounds, experts with educational backgrounds in displacement contexts, others)?
			x) What are the selected professors' qualifications? What criteria are tutors and facilitators recruited on? Does the teaching staff receive training from the organization?
			y) Does the teaching staff receive the necessary technical and technological support?
			z) Does the teaching staff (including tutors and facilitators) receive psychosocial support?
			aa) Are teacher professional development (TPD) programs conducted?
			bb) What are the teacher – student channels of communication? How is the student-teacher relation? Are teachers and students experiencing communication problems? If so, how are problems being solved? Are any mechanisms in place?
			cc) Are learners treated as co-investigators?

			Is there space for refugees' experiences and voices to be heard? Are teachers willing to learn from them and their experiences? (i.e., are refugees' agencies and potentials recognized?)
			dd) Does the organizational structure of the educational providers affect or hinder communication to and with students?
			ee) Is the classroom and/or online environment healthy, respectful, and tolerant?
			ff) What are the students' perceptions of the program?
			gg) What are the students' perceptions of their acquired skills and knowledge as well as their learning experience, the courses' resources and content, the qualification of their instructors and the teaching methods employed?
			hh) What are the teachers' perceptions of and experiences within the program? What are their perceptions of their workload?
Adaptability	Provision of an educational	• Student support services (preparatory courses,	a) Are different levels offered?

	program that is flexible, understanding, and responsive to the different needs, challenges, and realities of refugee learners.	academic support, technological and digital literacy support, student psychosocial support, language support, career development support, scholarship support). • Monitoring, feedback, and evaluation mechanisms. • Consultation, inclusion, and participation of Syrian learners during the implementation of the program. • Anticipation of, and flexibility to respond to, intrinsic technological issues (i.e., weak Internet connection, unstable network infrastructures, low ownership of Internet-enabled devices, poor digital literacy, little opportunity to socialize/alternatives to social interaction). • Flexibility to students' time constraints and their family and work responsibilities. • Suitability of the program and the courses offered to the technology available and/or provided to refugees (i.e., can the online components of the programs be effectively accessed via smartphones and/or tablets? If not, are cyber centers available to students?).	(i.e., are the courses flexible enough to cater for a wide variety of student levels?) b) Does the program offer technical support to students? c) Does the program offer academic/learning support and guidance? d) Does the program offer preparatory courses prior to the beginning of classes? e) Does the program offer special needs support? f) Given the displacement context and the trauma and daily stressors faced by Syrian youths, is psychosocial support specific to refugee learners provided? g) Are the program and the teachers' academic demands understanding of and flexible to students' difficulty to resume schooling, schedules, and domestic and work responsibilities? (i.e., are teachers and the program understanding of

			the students' conditions?)
			h) Does the program address the barriers that come with online initiatives (i.e., poor Internet connection, shortages of electrical power, inadequacy of Internet infrastructures)? What mechanisms, if any, are in place to address power outages? (e.g., is the technology flexible? Can content be accessed offline?)
			i) Have students been consulted during and after implementation?
			j) Does the program have feedback, complaint, monitoring and evaluating mechanisms? What are they?
			k) Is information on the provided student support services made clear and available?