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Education Policies and Schooling for Arabic-Speaking Refugee Children in Australia and Turkey

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Abstract: This paper aims to compare refugee settlement and education policies between two geographically and culturally distinct nations, Australia and Turkey. Due to its geographical position in the Middle East, Turkey now hosts millions of refugees especially following the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011. Australia also has a long history of hosting and supporting refugees from many countries and the Arabic-speaking nations are no exception. Conducting a comparative historical analysis, this study aims to fill the gap in our knowledge about the education policies and practices of both countries. Based on the expectations and needs of refugee students, it emerges that new policy practices and approaches backed by adequate academic and financial resources are required in both countries.

Keywords: Syrian refugees, education policies, Australia, Turkey.

Introduction

Refugees' right to education is protected by relevant international laws and conventions including the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNHCR, 1989). Schooling is an important determinant of refugee students' adaptation and sense of belonging to the host country (McBrien, 2005; Olsen, 2000; Trueba, 1990). Moreover, as one of the key areas of new ideas on refugee strategy (Miliband, 2016), education policies should provide equal opportunities and support the social inclusion or integration of people from refugee backgrounds (UNHCR, 2000). According to McBrien (2005), a major obstacle for refugee education is the discrepancy between theory and practice and only a school-based assistance scheme dedicated to school contexts and teachers training can provide support for refugee children. It has been suggested that education policies incorporate insufficient teaching programs and resources, and are lacking in terms of culturally responsive pedagogy, communication with experts, and the psychological support for students. These are what cause serious problems such as high dropout rates, poor academic performance and limited access to education for refugee students (Vogel & Stock, 2015; Lopez Cuesta, 2015).

Prioritizing the education of refugee children is a critically important step in order to avoid generational catastrophe (Gladwell and Tanner, 2014) or producing what is called "the lost generation". Since it is a right enshrined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is still often disrupted or destroyed by forced displacement or simply physical expulsion (Gladwell and Tanner, 2014). In a recent report released by

UNHCR, statistics revealed that an estimated 63% of refugee children are enrolled in primary school compared to 91% of the world's children. Furthermore, approximately 24% of refugee children are enrolled in secondary school in comparison to 84% globally (UNHCR, 2019, pp. 5-6). Many challenges and disputes endangering refugee children's education have been documented over many decades and reinforced in recent years. Included here is a lack of learning and teaching resources, limited or non-existent school availability, lack of documentation, untrained or underqualified teachers, lack of support for teachers, and a host of other issues (Gomleksiz and Aslan, 2018; Koehler and Schneider, 2019; Small, 2019; UNESCO, 2018; Maadad and Rodwell, 2017; Maadad, 2020).

Migration is an increasingly important topic in economic development, and this paper looks at Turkey and Australia, on how they have developed systems for accommodating refugees and asylum-seekers, especially how they have devised education systems for the children of people who are attempting to rebuild their lives and livelihoods after escaping war-torn parts of the world. Historically, both Turkey and Australia have had histories of receiving influxes of people, but the policies of these two countries are based on the existing domestic and economic realities or agendas that certain political parties want to pursue. A country's migration policies and especially the contexts in which they receive refugees should ideally give these people the opportunities to earn higher incomes, access knowledge, gain valuable skills, and send remittances back to the home country. Refugees not only can find safety in their host countries, they can also find opportunities to build their livelihoods.

Australia and Turkey represent two very different countries dealing with the education of refugee and asylum-seeking children, and so substantial comparisons can be made on their policies, procedures, experiences and the trajectory of Arabic-speaking people's stay (or otherwise) in all nations. To evaluate and better comprehend the education policies for refugees devised and implemented in Australia and Turkey, the research question asks: "what are the differences and similarities in educational policies/ useful strategies for Arabic-speaking refugee children in the two culturally and linguistically different countries?" This research question seeks to find answers to the following:

1. How is refugee children's education funded in both countries?
2. What are the host country's language learning policies and strategies for refugees?
3. How is course content organized for refugee education? and
4. What are the extra-curricular activities for refugee students?

Methodology

In this study, we conducted a comparative historical analysis to examine and compare the policies that both countries have implemented for refugees' education. Using document analysis which is a systematic process involving review of documents to get a clear understanding, we aimed to develop better knowledge on the differences and similarities (Bowen 2009; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007). Referring to the documentary sources, we established a set of criteria for assessing education and education policies on refugees before conducting a systematic review. Based on the research problem and rationale, official documents, policy consultations, political statements, decisions and legislation by federal state governments, and newspapers related to refugee education were examined. The data analysis procedure included reading, analyzing and interpreting relevant information and printed documents (Silverman, 2000). We conducted content analysis to organize the information under categories related to the research problem (Bowen, 2009). To improve the

reliability of the study, some regulations and policies cited in official documents were evaluated.

Data analysis in qualitative research includes the stages of data preparation, organization, and coding of these data and transforming the codes into themes (Creswell, 2015). Content analysis as the investigative method chosen for this research. The data are examined in detail whereby the similar ones are brought together, and interpreted under certain themes (Creswell, 2015). In this study, the data obtained by the official documents, policy consultation, political statements, decisions and legislation by federal state governments, and newspapers were analyzed in four stages: 1. coding the data, 2. determining the categories of the coded data, 3. organizing the codes and themes, and 4. interpreting the findings (Creswell, 2015). First, the data were read in detail, noting the important places, and then coded according to what the existing literature on refugee education, educational and language learning policies for refugees, and teaching refugee students in Australia and Turkey highlighted. Sentences and paragraphs related to each other were combined under the same code, and then these codes were grouped into separate categories according to their similarity. Based on our research questions, we established four main categories: “educational policies”, “language learning policies”, “funding sources”, and “teaching”.

Refugee Policies in Turkey

Throughout its long history, Turkey has experienced many dramatic movements of people from different regions. During the Ottoman Empire, many Muslims and non-Muslims from various places including Spain, the Balkans, the Crimea, Egypt and elsewhere migrated to Turkey for political, economic and religious reasons (Latif, 2002). Following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey after the First World War, it continued to deal with mass migration especially from the war-torn Middle East as well as from Africa and Asia (Aras and Mencütek, 2015). By the 1990s, due to its geographical position between Europe and Asia, Turkey became a transit country for irregular migrants and asylum-seekers originating from neighboring countries searching for a better life in Europe or elsewhere (Icduygu, 2014).

Turkey has three fundamental legal sources for its refugee policy. The first and oldest is the 1934 Law on Settlements which defines the conditions of being refugees and immigrants in Turkey. Base on this law, people who are of Turkish origin and culture including Turks, Albanians, Circassians, Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Pomaks, Uzbeks, Uyghurs, and Tartars can settle in or receive refugee status in Turkey, temporarily (Kirisci, 2001). The second major legal source comprises the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol which Turkey ratified as one of the first signatory countries. Keeping the geographical limitation option means Turkey provides full refugee status only for asylum-seekers escaping from upheavals in Europe and other parts of the world. Also, Turkey grants the right for other asylum-seekers to stay in the country until resettlement in a third country can be arranged (Kirisci and Karaca, 2014). The last legal source concerned with the refugee policy is the 1994 Asylum Regulation law which governed the status of refugees from outside of Europe, and who were temporary asylum-seekers until their resettlement in a third country. Based on this regulation, the UNHCR is responsible for identifying the refugees' status, protecting their rights, and providing solutions for non-European asylum-seekers.

Policies for Syrian Refugees in Turkey

As a country with approximately 5 million refugees (BM, 2019), Turkey is the world's largest refugee hosting country. Most of these refugees are Syrians (3.6 million) who started to arrive there in 2011 due to the increasingly destructive civil war. Of the 54% total number of Syrian refugees throughout the world, Turkey had the largest population in 2017 while Lebanon currently hosts 15.7% (UNHCR, 2020). Based on the "open door policy", Turkey welcomed all the Syrian refugees escaping from their country's war and political crisis. At the start of the crisis, since Turkey shares long historical, cultural, and religious connections with the Syrians, it accepted them as guests rather than legal refugees. Considering Syrians will have to remain for longer than they possibly intended, Turkey implemented some regulations and legislation to establish an effective asylum system that reflected international standards. The Ministry of the Interior confirmed a "Temporary Protection Policy (TP)" in November 2011 at a UNHCR conference in Geneva. This particular regulation provides temporary asylum status for the Syrians until they are resettled in a third safe country. After they have acquired identity cards and social support, Syrians are accepted in Turkey based on their legal status.

Referring to the first asylum law, the Turkish government approved the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) in April 2013 so that a comprehensive legal framework for asylum-seekers could be set up. In terms of protecting their rights, LFIP is a policy whereby refugees can gain access to free healthcare, education and social services in Turkey. In the following year, as the main government authority in charge of policy-making, General of Migration Management (DGMM) was implemented to oversee situations involving the mass arrival of refugees (Ineli-Ciger, 2016).

The Temporary Protection Regulation which operates under Article 91 of the LFIP went into effect on 22 October 2014. The Turkish Council of Ministers was responsible for assigning rights and requirements to those who are eligible for temporary protection. By ratifying LFIP, this Turkish agency had the responsibility of developing policies. Article 91 of the LFIP states: "Temporary protection may be provided for foreigners who have been forced to leave their country, cannot return to the country that they have left, and have arrived at or crossed the borders of Turkey in a mass influx situation seeking immediate and temporary protection". With further reference to the LFIP, Syrians can take advantage of social and financial support systems offered by the government and other organizations such as the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASF), Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN), and Social Service Centers which are administered by the Provincial Directorates of Family and Social Policies (UNHCR, 2015). Including a few new regulations, LFIP provides the right to work and long-term residency permits to Syrians for at least eight years. Furthermore, Syrians who obtained a permanent residence permit can get all the rights of a Turkish citizen except voting, being elected, and importing tax-free vehicles into the country (Icduygu and Simsek, 2016).

Education Policies for Refugees in Turkey

Based on the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, all children including those of foreign nationality have the right to a free "basic education" in public schools up to grade 12 (Turkish Ministry of National Education, 2015). Under the auspices of the National Education Basic Law No. 1739, the Ministry of Education controls basic education in both public and private schools from preschool to higher education. Based on the standard curriculum run by the Ministry of National Education, while public schools in Turkey are

free, private schools are fee-paying institutions. Higher education in Turkey in both the public and private sector universities is controlled by the Higher Education Council of Turkey (Tansel and Bircan, 2006). On the subject of the increasing refugee population, education policies and services for foreigners are now garnering much more interest in Turkey (Icduygu ve Simsek, 2016; Coskun and Emin, 2016), given the longevity of the crisis in Syria.

By January, 2020, 63.3% of the 1,820,172 school-age children from refugee backgrounds received an education in Turkey. 98.4% (648,108) of refugee children who go to school are registered in legal education institutions operated by the Ministry of National Education. Given that education is a significant contributor to saving Syrian children from becoming another ‘lost generation’, for this reason Turkish national education policies and procedures are being developed by educators, government bureaucrats and civil society organizations to meet the learning needs of refugee students (Dallal, 2016). The Turkish Ministry of Education released an outline in 2013 that highlighted its responsibility to provide learning opportunities for Syrian refugee children. On this basis the responsibility to arrange the curriculum for Syrian students is that of the Ministry of Education of the Syrian Interim Government. The plan also states that Syrians who graduated from high school and passed the exams enabling them to enroll in university in Syria can now register in Turkish universities. In 2014, the government passed the “Law on Foreigners and International Protection” relying on the outline announced in 2013. As a legal framework, the law identified the function and implementation of protection policies including free education, healthcare, and social assistance for refugees in Turkey (Ineli-Ciger, 2016).

With regard to the Law on Foreigners and International Protection, the government approved its “Temporary Protection Legislation” in 2014, which indicated that all subjects related to the education of refugee students at primary and secondary schools are planned by the Ministry of National Education (Aras and Yasin, 2016). Under the aegis of the Turkish Ministry of Education the circular known as “Education Services for Foreign Nationals” was ratified on 23 September 2014 as the first comprehensive government policy examining the education of students from refugee and immigrant backgrounds. Organizing all the policies as a standard, the purpose of the circular is to lead and design the process to ensure education services are made available for all refugee children living inside and outside of the camps. Regarding the circular, Ministerial and Provincial Commissions release reports associated with the education needs of foreigners and ensure that international organizations, public and civil society institutions work together properly and efficiently, and are effective in what they do. Additionally, since the responsibility of leading and carrying out the application process for education services is that of the Provincial Commissions, they must ensure that learning institutions that refugee students attend reflect their enrolment status (Icduygu ve Simsek, 2016; Seydi, 2014). As a particular government entity, the Immigration and Emergency Education Department which is part of the General Directorate for Life-Long Learning began operating on May 16, 2016. The function of this department is planning, organizing, implementing and directing the education system during extraordinary circumstances encompassing immigration.

Children from refugee and asylum backgrounds and now living in Turkey can access education in three ways: firstly, public schools and private schools (like all Turkish citizens); secondly, Temporary Education Centers (for Syrians) inside or outside of refugee camps; and thirdly, education programs run by non-government organizations (Apaydin, 2017; Bircan and Ulas, 2015; Tosten and Toprak, 2017; UNICEF Türk, 2018). Operated by the Ministry of National Education, the education system in the country’s public schools is delivered through the curriculum in three stages: primary school, secondary school and high school. Refugee students without a resident permit can enroll at these schools in their province of residence

with a Foreigner ID Card or Temporary Protection Identity Document. Children from refugee backgrounds have full access rights to education and are registered in the e-school system as Turkish children do. The second option in which to access education is through the Temporary Education Center, which is available for Syrian refugee students. Although most of these centers are permanently closed, some are still functioning and offer 10,720 refugee children (1.57%) access. Temporary Education Centers which are located inside and outside of the camps implement the Syrian curriculum and this is done by Syrian voluntary teachers in the Arabic language (Karakus, 2019; Dorman, 2014).

The Turkish government is aiming for a gradual transition of the students in TEC and to put these children into the standard public schools to consolidate their integration into Turkish society (Tosten et al., 2017). Education in TECs will continue for the current students but new students will not be accepted and they will be required to enroll at formal Turkish schools. Consequently, the number of Syrian students enrolled has risen from 155,852 (2017) to 655,075 out of 1, 047,536 by the end of 2018 (Life-Long Learning, 2018). The third option for refugee students to access education is charitable organizations, institutions, and foundations. As an example, under the Presidency of Religious Affairs, the Center for Women, Family and Youth started a project to support refugee girls who had to leave their schooling and provided an opportunity to return to schooling. Moreover, children from refugee backgrounds in Turkey can attend conferences, vocational, art, and language courses that are run by government or nongovernment organizations. They are also able to attend high school and open education vocational high schools (Hayat Boyu Ogrenme, 2018).

Students from refugee backgrounds in Turkey have the opportunity to go to university regardless of the high school they graduated from. Students who pass the accreditation exams (baccalaureate) and YÖS - an exam for foreign students - can go to a Turkish university. Based on the students' exam scores, universities provide scholarships from the Turkish government, Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, and other nongovernment organizations. The students who attended education institutions as undergraduates, postgraduates or higher receive diplomas are accredited by the Ministry of Education and the Council of Higher Education (Aras and Yasun, 2016).

EU and UNICEF Funded Projects on Refugee Education in Turkey

Based on the integration of students from refugee and asylum backgrounds into the Turkish school system, government and nongovernment agencies including international organizations carry out a range of policies. There are two international organizations supporting the Syrian refugees, the EU and UNICEF. As part of the agreement between the EU and Turkey in 2016, the EU stated its agreement to provide financial support (3 billion Euros) to end the irregular migration from Turkey to Europe. Based on the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT), the EU Delegation assigned 500 million Euros of this amount to the refugees' education (European Commission, 2016). In partnership with the EU, the National Ministry of Education implemented an expedited Turkish language program for students from refugee backgrounds who had to leave school and their peers behind. In terms of teaching Turkish, part-time teachers graduating in Turkish Language and Literature courses help children from refugee backgrounds in public schools and Temporary Education Centers. At these institutions, there are six Turkish language levels (from beginner to advanced) offered to refugee children, one that follows the curriculum in Turkish such as for Science and Math (Eyüp et al., 2017). In partnership with UNICEF, the National Ministry of Education conducted a program to help children who have never enrolled in an elementary school or left behind their peers for at least three years (MEB, 2016a).

Another EU-funded project is Promoting Integration of Syrian Children into the Turkish Education System (PICTES) which is coordinated by the Immigration and Emergency Education Department under the Ministry of National Education. Within PICTES, 90 million Euros were allocated to promote healthcare, psycho-social support, and education of the Syrians living in Turkey. Implemented in 23 provinces where most of the Syrians were living, the project granted Syrian children the right to learn Turkish and Arabic language courses, transportation services, educational materials, mentoring and counseling services. For this particular project to work, apart from Turkish and Arabic teachers, counselors, security and cleaning personnel, and 7400 individuals were recruited (Coskun et al., 2017). As part of the PICTES strategy, principals, assistant principals, and the teachers employed by the MoNE went into a training program in 2017 on how to educate refugee children from diverse backgrounds.

Through the World Bank and German KfW Development Bank, 200 million Euros were assigned by the EU to support the construction of schools for Syrian students. Based on the reports of the Ministry of Development, Turkey needs an extra 26,615 classrooms for the education of the Syrian students. The EU offered to construct 2,510 (105 schools) for 2017-2018 but classrooms did not become available due to some bureaucratic obstacles. Based on the cooperation between the Ministry of Education Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development and UNICEF, 514 Syrian teachers underwent a period of training based on the pedagogical methods, classroom management strategies, and psycho-social support systems provided by 21 academicians for two weeks in 2015-2016. Furthermore, due to the cooperation between UNICEF and the Turkish Post, Telegraph and Telephone (PTT) directorate, \$150 (inside camps) and \$220 (outside of camps) were allocated on a monthly basis to Syrian volunteer teachers at the schools operated by the Ministry of National Education. As another international organization supporting refugees' education in Turkey, the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) dispenses educational and learning materials to Syrian students (Coskun et al., 2017).

Education Policies for Refugees in Australia

Australia's refugee program is at least 170 years old and in fact, the first group of refugees were probably the Lutherans who settled in the fledgling South Australian colony from 1839 onward, and who had fled the restrictions imposed on their faith in Prussia. Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century other settlers such as Poles, Hungarians, and Italians left places where religious and political persecution had occurred. Following federation in 1901, Australia continued to permit refugees to arrive as unassisted migrants, on the condition of meeting certain restrictions documented in the Immigration (Restriction) Act 1901. This was the cornerstone of the 'White Australia' Policy. Small numbers of Greek, Russian, Armenian, Jewish, Bulgarian and Assyrian refugees were able to settle in Australia after proving they met the government's migration criteria. Between 1933 and 1939, more than 7,000 Jews escaped Nazi Germany and were settled in the country and in 1937, the first refugee settlement support services were established by the Australian Jewish Welfare Society with financial help from the Australian federal government (Shoah Resource Center, n.d.; Rutland, 2005).

As the sixth largest country in the world and a continent all to itself, Australia comprises nine states and territories spread over 7.6 million km². Australia is now home to more than 25 million people and of these, more than one quarter were born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Since 1945, when the first Department of Immigration was created, approximately 7 million permanent migrants have settled in the

country and built new lives. A decade ago the Department of Immigration and Citizenship noted the contribution of immigrants from many parts of the world to Australian society, culture and prosperity; their efforts marked ‘an important factor in shaping our nation’ (Phillips et al., 2010). However, despite the fact that Australia is regularly described as a ‘nation of immigrants’, much confusion and misinformation exists in politics and the wider society regarding how many permanent migrants Australia has accepted. Publicly available statistics on both permanent and temporary migration are often used interchangeably and/or incorrectly. In terms of numbers, no official statistics were actually retained concerning refugee settlement from 1901 to 1948. Nonetheless, the Australian Parliamentary Library estimated that Australia from July 1948 to June 1977 period received 269,266 assisted humanitarian arrivals. This was augmented by another 33,000 unassisted humanitarian arrivals. Since the Refugee and Humanitarian Program began operating in 1977, Australia up to 2012 had received 392,538 offshore refugee and humanitarian entrants and issued 42,714 onshore protection visas (Refugee Council of Australia, 2012).

Australia’s Labor government in the immediate aftermath of World War II embarked on a much more ambitious refugee program, the goal being to meet employment shortages in a growing economy and to increase the country’s population (‘populate or perish’). In July 1947, the government entered into an agreement with the new International Refugee Organization to settle displaced people from Europe’s many refugee camps. Subsequently, during the 1950s more than 170,000 refugees – the biggest groups being from Hungary, Ukraine, Poland, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Czechoslovakia – were welcomed into the country. The numbers of humanitarian arrivals rose substantially following the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and the Warsaw Pact countries’ invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. In order to meet the needs of refugees and other migrants, ship-board English classes were established (the precursor of the modern Adult Migrant English Program), army camps were transformed into migrant hostels for on-arrival accommodation and the community-based scheme known as the Good Neighbour Council was established to coordinate volunteer settlement support for migrants at the local level (Fleming, 1975). During the 1960s and early 1970s the overwhelming majority of refugees were Eastern Europeans escaping persecution in Soviet Bloc countries.

This was occurring at a time when the ‘White Australia’ policy was gradually being made redundant, given that Australian governments were increasingly trading with and entering into security alliances with Asian nations. Interestingly enough, the refugee intake began to diversify in the early 1970s in the wake of the wars in Southeast Asia, and in 1972, when 198 Asians expelled by Uganda’s then president Idi Amin were settled. Humanitarian settlement from Chile commenced the following year (1973) in the wake of the socialist Allende’s government being overthrown by a military coup. Then in 1974, Cypriot refugees began arriving in Australia after the Turkish military landing of Northern Cyprus in 1974. This was followed shortly after by the 1975 hostilities in East Timor, bringing 2,500 evacuees to Darwin; it signaled the beginning of a Timorese refugee diaspora in Australia.

The collapse of the South Vietnamese government in April 1975 triggered a chain of events prompting the necessity to restructure Australia’s refugee program. Mass flights of Vietnamese refugees into nearby nations prompted an international response to which Australia committed support in the last year of the Whitlam government. By late 1975, the first 400 Vietnamese refugees were resettled in Australia from the camps in Singapore, Guam, Hong Kong and Malaysia. During the next two decades, Australia resettled more than 100,000 Vietnamese refugees and only a small proportion, around 2000, came directly to Australia by boat to seek asylum and during this time the term ‘boat people’ entered the Australian vernacular. Darwin received its first boat in April 1976 and on it were five

Indochinese men. Over the next five years there were 2,059 Vietnamese boat arrivals with the last arriving in August 1981.

Events such as these reveal that the scale of the refugee 'problem' had simply increased as the decades passed. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, the Australian Senate's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense was prompted to begin an investigation into how Australia should respond. In its 1976 report titled *Australia and the Refugee Problem*, the committee identified an urgent need for a new approach to refugee settlement. Citing the Department of Immigration's failure to offer any additional assistance to newly arrived Vietnamese refugees, the report said this provided 'irrefutable evidence of the complete lack of policy for the acceptance of people into Australia as refugees rather than as normal migrants'. The Senate committee made 44 recommendations concerning the need to develop a new refugee resettlement policy. This report marked the beginning of new thinking which changed the national refugee program from the humanitarian element of a general migration program, into one entailing a dedicated and planned humanitarian program where settlement support would be more sophisticated. The arrival of 27 Indochinese asylum-seekers in November 1989 heralded the beginning of the second wave. Over the following nine years, boats arrived at the rate of about 300 people per year, and these originated mainly from Vietnam, Cambodia and southern China. In 1999 there was a third wave of asylum-seekers, predominantly comprising people from the Middle East. These were quite often in larger numbers than prior arrivals and had been helped on their way by the notorious 'people smugglers'.

In the early 1980s, the refugee program grew to an annual intake of up to 22,000, the largest annual intake in 30 years. Vietnamese refugees settled from camps in Asia constituted the majority of new arrivals, with significant numbers of refugees also from Laos, Cambodia and Eastern Europe. They were augmented by smaller groups of Soviet Jews, Chileans, El Salvadorians, Cubans and members of ethnic minorities from Iraq, i.e. Assyrians, Chaldeans and Armenians. The Special Humanitarian Program began in 1981, providing a settlement option to people who had endured serious discrimination or human rights abuses, had escaped their country of origin and had close ties with Australia. In 1984, the refugee program included 106 Ethiopians, the first significant group of Africans. During the mid-1980s as the Soviet system in Eastern Europe started to unravel, the number of refugees and humanitarian entrants from there rose (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania), augmented by more people escaping war-torn conditions in the Middle East (Lebanon and Iran), Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, East Timor and Latin America (Chile and El Salvador). Awareness grew concerning the very real psycho-social impacts of persecution and conflict, leading in 1988 to the establishment of the first torture and trauma services in Sydney and Melbourne.

Education of Refugee Children

Ideally, refugee children receiving their education in Australia should be enrolled in institutions that provide safe places for new encounters, productive experiences, learning opportunities and positive interactions. For this to happen, the country's classrooms must deliver literacy and numeracy, viable post-school options, social and economic participation, life choices, and a sense of settlement in the community. Currently, however, Australian schools are always battling to receive the required funding and they are not always in position to provide effective English as a second language (ESL) teaching and support. A few years ago the Refugee Council of Australia reported that people needing protection and coming to Australia are keen to study and begin training and update their qualifications, in order to make up for lost time and opportunities in their home country, and young people especially

are very motivated. Yet they encounter a myriad of problems in studying and training, especially if they arrive with little or no English and have had a very limited or different experience of education previously (Refugee Council of Australia, 2016).

Importantly, in 1989 a special visa category within the refugee program was established to facilitate priority resettlement for refugee women at risk and their children. In the 20 years since then, under this program Australian governments have resettled 8,800 refugee women and their children. In 1991, the Special Assistance Category (SAC) visa was introduced to respond to crises in particular countries, permitting settlement of people in vulnerable circumstances and with connections in Australia. The SAC offered resettlement options for people from the former Yugoslavia, the former Soviet Union, East Timor, Lebanon, Sudan, Burma, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Cambodia and members of the Ahmadi religious movement. Gradually, however, the SAC was phased out by the Howard government, which expressed concern that it had, at least in part, become more of a family reunion program. Its preference was for humanitarian family reunion to be managed under the Special Humanitarian Program, through the split family provisions it introduced from 1997.

The 1980s and 1990s were in fact decades that introduced significant changes to how settlement services were implemented, represented by the shift from migrant hostels to the On Arrival Accommodation program, from the old Grant-in-Aid Program to the Community Settlement Services Scheme and with the replacement of the Community Resettlement Settlement Scheme in 1997 by the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy. The last decade has witnessed further changes to the provision of refugee services and significant shifts in the regional composition of the Refugee and Humanitarian Program. A decade ago, half of the program was focused on resettlement from Europe. Now this makes up less than 1% of the program. Resettlement from Africa increased from 16% to 70% in 2003–4 and 2004–5, being reduced to a third of the program today. The continuing crisis in Iraq and the commencement of large-scale resettlement of Myanmar people from Thailand and Bhutanese from Nepal have seen the program shift to one evenly divided between Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Australian government policy on asylum-seekers is complex, controversial, and continues to change. Australia has had a policy of mandatory detention for people arriving by boat without a valid visa since 1992, and indefinite immigration detention is possible under Australian law. Asylum-seekers arriving by plane generally are not subject to mandatory detention, although this may apply if their visas are cancelled or expire. The offshore (people arriving from overseas) and onshore (people arriving in Australia and claiming asylum) components of Australia's Humanitarian Program have been linked since 1996. Subsequently, an increase in onshore claims reduces the number of places for people arriving under the offshore program, with significant effects on sponsored places for people in refugee-like situations (Royal Australasian College of Physicians, 2015).

Considering the importance of education for children from refugee backgrounds, education policies are the remit of government and nongovernment agencies for each state and territory in Australia. Understanding that education is a significant way to overcome social and economic disadvantage and improve one's life, the Australian Education Act 2013 was revised in 2018 for education providers in all states and territories ("Australian Education Act of 2013" 2018). As a significant government institution in partnership with other government agencies, The Department of Social Services (DSS) ensures a variety of policies and services to help people in need throughout Australia. To support the integration of refugees, DSS offers services for their settlement through the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP). The Settlement Council of Australia (SCOA) regulates the practices of settlement agencies that serve refugees in all states and territories (SCOA 2017).

Not only is it mandatory to have an education from preschool through to high school in all states and territories in Australia, education is a fundamental right for all children no matter what nationality they are from. Through the Council of Australian Governments and the Education Council, the Australian federal government cooperates with states and territories to develop and implement policies. Each state and territory in Australia is self-governing and has the right to devise its own plans, programs and activities for refugee children's education. In Australia public schools are tuition fees-free and open to all students regardless of the district boundaries. Australia has a similar policy to that of Turkey excepting those with Temporary Visas whereby all children from refugee backgrounds have the right to a tuition-free education. Based on the policy of non-discrimination, all refugee children attend school 5 days a week based on the Australian National Curriculum and receive the same education services as their peers (Maadad, 2019).

Many refugee students have come from communities where literacy or numeracy are not valued (Hek, 2005). In fact, it has been reported that some arrive in Australia with only very basic conversational English, others are beginners, many are bilingual and many have no experience at all of formal schooling systems (Miller et al., 2005). This highlights the very real problem of literacy dilemmas that have not been encountered by high school ESL and mainstream teachers previously. Serious challenges described by Sangster (2002) nearly twenty years ago comprise the recognizing and matching sounds and letters of English in Australia, and this is despite prior English exposure or instruction, and dependence on high levels of teacher instruction and direction. Luke (2003) noted that problem of taken-for-granted literacy practices that are embedded in everyday classroom practices and conventions in Australia, but these are not going to be apparent to refugee students. All too often, they experience problems such as these: ordering ranking and listing; recognizing diagrams, pictures and graphics; and transferring models and patterns. Given that full expression and repetition are more common in oral communication teaching methods, refugee students will remain unfamiliar with linear approaches to written communication for too long (Sangster, 2002).

Of great concern in the education of refugee children and the immersion and mainstreaming practices, is assisted integration into mainstream classrooms and mainstream assistance post-integration (Haig and Oliver, 2007, p. 7). This is because as written in one study, 'they just can't do the work in class. They get into class and there's no way they can do the work' (T6, ESL coordinator, cited in Matthews, 2008). Immersion, despite the fact that systematic support may be available, is difficult for students who are not conversant with what has been described as the power dynamics of literate cultures (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993). It is true that literacy policies and practices have yet to accommodate the multi-literate competencies, discourses and textural resources which has been argued for by Luke (2003). Furthermore, the unsuccessful integration of refugee students into Australian schools is likely to result in alienation and frustration, simply because these students require explicit instruction and induction into literate codes and cultures of power (Delpit, 1998). On this topic it is important to note here that ESL pedagogy is itself culturally specific and predicated on teaching European and Asian migrants from literate backgrounds. Rutter (2006) contends that refugee students require texts, pedagogies and assessment tools to: firstly, monitor the learning progress rather than measure summative achievement; and secondly, build on the communicative competences of those from non-literate traditions.

With reference to the diversity aspects of refugee children's education, the Australian government implements policies that promote multiculturalism, and these are based on the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council statement (Maadad, 2020). In New South Wales, focusing on the experiences of refugees in other parts of Australia, services, resources, and links are provided to the teachers, students, and community members to raise awareness

about refugees and their problems. In May 2017, the NSW Government committed \$22 million over four years to the Refugee Employment Support Program (RESP). It is managed by the NSW Department of Industry and delivered by Settlement Services International partnering with the corporate sector. This program will support up to 6000 refugees and 1000 asylum-seekers, in an effort to find sustainable and skilled employment for them in Western Sydney and the Illawarra (NSW Government, n.d.). Victoria's government and nongovernment agencies offer English language courses to promote positive academic outcomes and services to bolster the relationships between students and teachers. Through local services, school enrollment and integration processes of the students from refugee backgrounds have improved in this state (Watkins et al., 2019). The state government in Queensland provides a visa program that leads to permanent residency. Also, services on promoting access to playgroups and kindergarten programs are available for refugee children and asylum-seekers.

In South Australia, the Department of Education in partnership with the Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC) has developed an assistance program to deliver school packages for children who are from refugee backgrounds (South Australia Department for Education, n.d.). Multicultural programs such as cultural festivals and activities were promoted the state government to encourage students from refugee backgrounds to interact better with their community members (Maadad, 2019). The Australian federal government established schools such as the School of Languages (SOL) and The Secondary of English to support learning of refugees and asylum-seekers the day they arrived in Australia. Regarding higher education, each state and territory in Australia implements an additional second curriculum to prepare the students for university education or possible job positions in the future. The children from refugee backgrounds can benefit from that program (Maadad, 2019).

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the world that we live in now is very different to that of 1951, however, it seems as if even though things have vastly changed and challenges have diversified, what was set in 1951 at the Geneva Convention in relation to the Status of Refugees has remained the same. Seventy years since the inception of the international refugee regime the world has never agreed upon an effective solution or even updated what is required for solving or at least better managing the refugee crisis (Maadad and Darmawan, 2021). It is important to state that in the current refugee situation, the number of child refugees is now higher than that of the Second World War (McIntyre and Neuhaus, 2021). In recent years significant efforts have been made to improve the inclusion of refugee learners in national education systems, however, barriers to education continue and new issues arise and worsen the situation due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. There is also the troubling possibility that discrimination and xenophobia directed at refugee populations increases, seriously impacting their enrolment, schooling, education and retention.

This paper has discussed in detail the trajectory of refugee settlement and education programs in Turkey and Australia, and the problems encountered by both countries' governments throughout the decades. Turkey has been more on the 'frontline' of such experiences due to its very close geographical position to the Middle East and specifically Syria, which is on its southern doorstep. Australia has been a country that is in some respects 'slightly removed' from the immediate experience of refugees' plight, and mainly had to react to movements of people coming from hundreds – if not thousands – of kilometers away. Both countries have similar rights and measures that guarantee access to education. This

study has highlighted the subtle and not-so-subtle differences between Australia and Turkey in their treatment to Arabic-speaking refugee children trying to obtain an education. A future challenge for both countries is the requirement for more government support, community-based initiatives to promote the education and active involvement of refugees. As Maadad (2020) revealed in her study, “Community-based programs centered on developing leaders from within migrant and refugee communities are vital. This helps to bridge gaps in understanding and cultural differences as well as allow individuals to remain connected to refugee youth and bridge their experiences within two differing cultures” (p. 63).

In Turkey, all children including from foreign nationality have a free basic education right in all public schools from kindergarten to high school (Turkish Ministry of National Education, 2015). 63.3% of the 1,820,172 school-age children from refugee backgrounds get education in Turkey and 98.4 % of those children are enrolled in a formal education institution ruled by Ministry of National Education. Similar to Turkey, education is a fundamental right for all children in Australia from preschool through to high school regardless their nationality. For both Turkey and Australia, the governments provide free education in public schools for all children regardless their nationality (Maadad, 2019a). In Turkey children coming from refugee backgrounds can get education through three ways: public/private schools (like all Turkish citizens, Temporary Education Center (for Syrians) inside or outside of refugee camps, and education programs organized by non-government institutions (Apaydin, 2017; Bircan and Ulas, 2015; Tosten and Toprak, 2017; UNICEFTÜRK, 2018). Refugee students can register at public schools at their district of residence with a Foreigner ID Card or Temporary Protection Identity Document. Although most of Temporary Education Centers are permanently closed in Turkey, some of them serve inside and outside of the camps follow the Syrian curriculum in Arabic with Syrian voluntary teachers (Karakus, 2019; Dorman, 2014). Refugee students also have access to education through vocational courses, language courses, open high schools organized by governmental and governmental institutions and foundations (Hayat Boyu Ogrenme, 2018). For Australia, the government applies policies supporting multiculturalism based on the Australian Multicultural Advisory Council statement (Maadad, 2019b). In New South Wales, services and resources regarding the experiences of refugees are provided to the students, teachers, and community members to get attention on refugees and their problems. Likewise, to Turkey, in Victoria, the government and nongovernment agencies provide language courses to support academic performance of the students (Watkins et al., 2019). In South Australia, through the cooperation with the Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC), the Department of Education has a program to deliver school packages for children refugee backgrounds (South Australia Department for Education, n.d.). To support language learning of refugees and asylum seekers, the Australian federal government founded schools such as the School of Languages (SOL) and The Secondary of English.

Considering the higher education, the Turkish Ministry of Education released an outline in 2013 pointed educational opportunities for Syrian refugee children. The plan also mentioned that Syrians refugees who graduated from high school and passed the exams to go to university in Syria can register in Turkish universities. In 2014, Turkish government passed “Law on Foreigners and International Protection”, identifying its purpose and application involving free education, social assistance and healthcare for the refugees in Turkey (Ineli-Ciger, 2016). Additionally, students from refugee background have opportunity to go to university and get scholarship from Turkish government based on their exam scores (Aras and Yasun, 2016). In the different way with Turkey, each state and territory in Australia has its own plans and strategies for refugee children’s education and applies an additional second curriculum to prepare the refugee students for university education. The Australian government also provide assistance programs and vocational

courses to support career positions of students from refugee and asylum backgrounds (Maadad, 2019b).

The education system and the curriculum must be re-examined by policy-makers and educators to develop appropriate approaches that are suitable for refugee education, recognizing all the special needs of these children. Schools must ensure they have the tools, resources and specialized teachers to transfer knowledge that refugee children can comprehend which will help them gain the skills that they have missed out on prior to reaching their destinations. Failing to do so will create difficulties for both learners and teachers, and may furthermore compound the refugees' feeling of being educationally and socially devalued or isolated.

This study has described in detail what policy-makers and governments in Australia and Turkey can do to help refugee children to thrive in schools. Firstly, refugee children should have equitable access to education at all stages of life, with acknowledgment of prior interruption or limited access to education. Secondly, a coordinated whole-school response for supporting refugee students and their individual needs should be established. Thirdly, it is necessary to ensure effective school enrolment and orientation processes are available so that refugee students can be identified and supported in their transition to school. Fourthly, it is advised to implement school policies and practices that are effective in identifying and addressing the needs of refugee students, and this must be backed by allocating resources which target the relevant educational physical, social and emotional well-being factors of refugee students. Proper attention must be paid to proper access to counseling resources, and support for bilingual and EALD students. Fifthly, children should be included in refugee student-support strategies as a critical aspect of school plans. Sixthly, accurate data on refugee students, their needs and progress they are making in their learning must be collected and maintained. Seventhly and finally, data on the well-being of refugee students will inform the development of personalized learning-support approaches, and this is strongly linked to the school staff understanding well the impact of trauma and the ability to respond well to the learning and welfare needs of refugee students.

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