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Issues of Language Diversity for Today's Refugees

Judith A. Cochran

E. Desmond Lee Endowed Professor of Tutorial Education 206 Marillac Hall—University of Missouri–St. Louis One University Boulevard St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4400

Abstract: A mass migration of refugees is threatening the economic and social stability of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, the Palestinian Territories and the European Union. Millions of desperate refugees from Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and sub-Saharan Africa are overwhelming the Middle East and Europe with needs for safety, food and shelter. Their language skills are not viewed as an imperative in the current chaos and yet they remain significant tools for escaping the poverty and misery of refugee life and obtaining employment in host countries. The author profiles how host EU and Middle Eastern countries have addressed refugees' language needs in the past and present. Suggestions are made for possible strategies for addressing language instruction for refugees.

Keywords: Refugees; Language instruction; Middle East; European Union.

1. Introduction

"Who Failed Aylan Kurdi?" and "Lack of Jobs and Education Pushed Syrian Refugees from First Country of Asylum to Europe" are two editorial headlines in the New York Times and London Guardian. (September 16, and November 20, 2015) These headlines capture the essence of the overwhelming exodus of migrants from Middle Eastern and sub-Saharan African areas of the world into the Middle East and European Union. Who is saving the children and their parents? How are the Germans integrating into their society the 24,000 refugees that arrived just in the month of September 2015? Are they to partially integrate children into the educational systems and house their families for decades in makeshift camps as was done for Palestinians in Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, and Syria? How will they teach the German language to prospective and much needed workers in the German economy?

2. Jordan: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Jordan and Turkey currently have the largest number of refugees: 3 and 2.2 million respectively. Jordan has been accepting refugees from Gaza and the West Bank (Palestine), Iraq and Syria for sixty years, exhausting its people and its resources. As King Abdullah II said, Jordan is between Iraq and a hard place. Prior to 1948 Arab–Israeli War, Jordan was inhabited largely by Bedouin tribes. Today, Jordan has 6.5 million people, approximately one-third of who are Palestinians who fled after the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli Wars. Some two million of the Jordanian-Palestinians are living in ten refugee camps recognized by the United Nations (C.I.A. Profile of Jordan, 2014). The Palestinians who arrived before the 1967 Arab–Israeli War were assimilated into Jordanian culture, given citizenship, and enrolled in Jordanian schools. Because they spoke Arabic and many came from cities, they became active in businesses and contributed greatly to the development of Jordan's economic base. Most of these refugees remained in Jordan after their immigration as they had education and employment.

Those who arrived after 1967 threatened the Jordanians' nation-building with Arab tribes native to the region. Today, if you meet a Jordanian, they are certain to identify themselves as Arab to distinguish themselves from Palestinians. The effort to integrate the Palestinian refugees into Jordanian society declined as a result of the refugees' support of the political efforts of the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) and then Fatah from the mid-1960s (Asher, 1994). Jordan retreated to its tribal base for its identity, depriving the Palestinian refugees after the 1960s of Jordanian citizenship and access to higher education. (Yoav, 2007).When the number of refugees threatened the political power structure, Jordanians made gaining employment more difficult for unemployed Palestinians than for unemployed Arab-Jordanians. For example, when Palestinians left the country to work, they returned to find that their citizenship had been revoked.

Today, in addition to the ten previously established Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, there are newer camps for Iraqi refugees, who officially numbered close to 700,000 in 2007. When the situation in Iraq seemed more stable, many Iraqis returned home. Numbering approximately 63,000 in 2012, Iraqi refugees are now arriving at the rate of 300 per month, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Director of Iraqi Refugee Programs, 2011). A third group of refugees—Syrians fleeing their civil war—are living in Za'atari Refugee Camp, one of the largest refugee camps in the world, home to 350,000 to 360,000 Syrian refugees since its opening

in July 2012. As of January 2014, there are almost 600,000 Syrian refugees alone in Jordan (C.I.A. Profile of Jordan, 2015). Numbers of Palestinian, Iraqi, Afghan and Syrian refugees threaten the economic and social stability of Jordan, as some are supporting and sending their sons to fight with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIS), Hezbollah, Fatah, and the Muslim Brotherhood. Fortunately, most of the refugees in Jordan speak and write Arabic as their native language.

Although most adult refugees speak Arabic, their children are becoming less proficient. UNICEF and other organizations have provided makeshift schools for the tens of thousands of children in the Za'atari refugee camp, but barely a sixth attend. Sometimes the parents want the children to work; others think a school certificate earned there will not be valid when they return to Syria. "One eight-year-old child, I asked why he left school," [refugee worker Dominique] Hyde said. "He said his last memory of school was when gunmen came in the classroom and shot the teachers." (David, 2013). "There are sixty-five thousand children under eighteen in the camp, and, because most don't show up at school, a huge pool of kids is available to work for the various rackets." (David, 2013). Some of them work for a kind of mafia boss named "Mohammed al-Hariri, . . . [who runs] illegal businesses, extracting favors, and returning them. He says that he controls twenty streets in the camp." (David, 2013). Currently in Jordan, Syrian, Iraqi, Palestinian and Afghani refugees live in camps and the cities if they can afford housing which has greatly increased in cost. Although literate in Arabic, the language of commerce in Jordan, most Syrian, Palestinian and Iraqi adults are not working due to the high unemployment rate of Jordanians and the preference for hiring Jordanians rather than refugees.

Native languages are a source of learning difficulties in Turkey. In order to understand instruction, most refugee children must learn Turkish in Anatolia/Turkey. The Turkish language was transposed from the Roman alphabet into the Arabic alphabet by Ataturk after WWII. So while Turkish looks familiar to Arabic speaking youth, they can't read or speak it as does not have the phonics they know. Furthermore, the Arabic language has dialects more different from each other than French is from Spanish. (Kamar, 2005). Consequently, even though children may speak Arabic, they may not understand the dialect spoken in other Arabic-speaking countries. Manal Naji, a Syrian refugee mother of a 13 year old boy, talked about why her son was held back a grade last year at the Lebanese public schools he was attending. "He didn't understand what his teacher was saying. He still doesn't. I'm worried. He used to be at the top of his class in Damascus."(Onishi).

Currently, the European Union is negotiating to provide financial support to the 2.2 million refugees living in camps in Turkey. That support will include money to establish schools and teach Turkish. Greece, Hungary, Belgium and other countries will be contributing an as yet undetermined amount as these poorer countries do not see how they can support the 400,000 refugees now in Turkey who are seeking asylum in the EU.

3. Access to Education in Order to Learn Languages

Native languages also are a source of learning difficulties in Arabic speaking host countries. The Arabic language, which is assumed to be the same by non-Arabic speakers, has dialects more different from each other than French is from Spanish.(Kamar, 2005). Consequently, even though children may speak Arabic, they may not understand the dialect spoken in some other Arabic-speaking countries.

Lebanon is a unique country where most citizens are fluent in Arabic, French and English. Their language competencies are a result of the fact that sixty percent of the children attend private French or English language schools. Those who can't afford private education, attend Arabic language government schools. This is where the Syrian and Iraqi refugees learn the Lebanese Arabic dialect. In order to keep the Muslims from increasing their religious proportion of the total population, the Lebanese government has kept Muslim refugees sequestered in refugee camps beginning with their arrival in 1948. In contrast, Christian Palestinian refugees were given citizenship, social services, and access to education. (Lina, 2007). Today, 51% of all Lebanese Palestinians live in twelve camps. Their children go only through only the eighth grade which is when UNRWA camp schools end. Classrooms are crowded and lack telephones, (unless the teacher has her own cell phone), books, and technology. The children sit three to a row on wooden benches in unheated or cooled rooms…often with a single window. These conditions will not improve with the influx of thousands more refugee children.

Ninety percent of the Palestinian children in Lebanon attend forty UNRWA elementary and thirty-five preparatory schools. If the parents want their children to attend secondary schools, they must pay for them to attend Lebanese government high schools, and most refugee families can't afford to do so. Children taught in refugee camps learn in Arabic and cannot easily pass entrance tests in French or English-language elementary schools or pay for tuition-charging secondary schools or universities. (Norimitsu Onishi, 2013). As of September 2015, there are more refugee children living in Lebanon than there are Lebanese children enrolled in schools. It is easy to understand why refugees are frustrated as they watch their children grow up without French or English language skills in a country where Lebanese, who are competing for the same jobs, are multi-lingual.

Many refugee children are not attending school. According to UNICEF, an estimated one million refugees are children, or about 80% are NOT enrolled in school in Lebanon, 66% in Iraq, 55% in Jordan, and 63% in Turkey. (UNICEF, 2013). Actual figures are almost certainly higher. Hundreds of thousands of refugees have yet to be registered by the United Nations, especially in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. Many families left their countries on short notice, losing such important documents as school transcripts in their exodus. After missing years of school at home, many refugee children are unable to cope with the change in curriculum, schools, and learning the dialect or language.

Before the current civil wars in Syria and Iraq, enrollment of all school-age children in Syria had reached 80%; enrollment of primary age Iraqi children had reached 93% and 33% of secondary school age youth. This data was collected in Iraq before Saddam Hussein began forced recruitment of youth into his Fedayeen Saddam group for teens and Ashbal Saddam (Saddam's Lion Cubs) for children under the age of twelve. All "recruits" were enrolled in a three-week program where they were taught in hand-to-hand combat and forced to rappel from helicopters. Parents rushed to get their sons out of Iraq and into Jordan, paying inflated prices for permits and passports.

Once they arrived in Jordan, Iraqis received no assistance and were granted a two-week stay. If they registered as refugees, the families did not automatically acquire citizenship under Jordanian law. Many had to leave Jordan and spend a night in Lebanon and then return and re-register for another two-week stay in Jordan. (Living in Limbo, 2009). Such disruptions and the lack of financial assistance traumatized many Iraqi students and caused academic difficulties. In 2006–2007, only 14,000 of 64,000 displaced Iraqi children went to school. (Semih, 2008).These numbers were accurate in Jordan before the Syrian refugees began arriving.

In 2007, Jordan hosted as many Palestinian and Iraqis as it has of only Syrians today. For a country of 6 million, its resources are badly strained. In 2007, King Abdullah II opened Jordanian schools to Iraqi refugee children. Enrollment expanded from 18,000 to 22,000 out of 130,000 school age children. Access problems were identified as the limited capacity with some children experiencing discrimination based on country of origin, religion, and legal status. Many children did not receive the necessary mental health or financial support as a result of their refugee status. Jordan did not take the initiative to improve its response to emergency education after the Iraqi crisis; and when the Syrian crisis hit, Jordan was not prepared for a timely and effective response. (Zeina, 2014). As King Abdullah said, "With 1.4 million Syrian refugees, we are slightly more than 20% of our population. I think we are at the limit, actually, and with difficult economic conditions we are in, it's a tremendous burden on our country."(King Abdullah II, September 21, 2014 "60 Minutes")

4. Academic Difficulties

Whether instructors are teaching refugees in Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Gaza, or the West Bank, UNRWA's schools have consistent problems: classrooms are overcrowded with more than forty students per class; the quality of instruction is questionable; many students repeat grades, the numbers of students dropping out is excessive; and there is widespread academic failure. Developing language proficiency is not easy in such conditions.

Despite UNRWA's policy of automatic promotion and limiting failure to 10–20% of its students, UNRWA's schools in Lebanon have repeater rates of 9.6% at the elementary level and 15.5% at the preparatory level, the highest ratios of failure are in the oldest refugee schools administered by the UN.

Palestinian students in Lebanon: Problems Preventing School Success (El-Madi, 1995).

Drop-out for economic reasons	20.0%
Repetition of classes	19.0%
Harsh treatment at school	3.2%
Difficult family conditions	16.5%
Disinterest or physical handicap	19.5%
Lack of transportation or recurring displacement	13.0%

Another cause of academic failure is the disruption of schooling during the wars in their home and host countries. Some parents, concerned for their children's safety, keep their children home for months or years, thereby weakening the academic background needed for students to successfully enter UNRWA or host country schools.

If I would improve the quality of education, I would make course levels more in line with the level of education the students were actually at. There was only one level of education for each course, no honors or special help classes. I would like them to add simple needs such as heat, buses to pick up children for school, lockers to put our books in. As a small girl, it was hard to carry all of my course books in a bag on my back to school but I did it for fear they would be stolen at school.

In classrooms swollen by the influx of refugee children, there is little time for refugee children's teachers to give needed individual attention within incredibly large classes. The ideal student-to-teacher ratio in UNHCR camps is 40/1 but can be as high as 68/1. (Traynor, 2015). According to UNHCR in 2015, official numbers of Syrian refugees in Egypt learn with an average of 93 students per classroom.

In 2009, The European Union funded tuition for all Iraqis refugees living in Jordan.(Semih, 2009). Through a Catholic Church sponsored program called Caritas Internationalis, many U.S. citizens have helped to cover the expenses for some Iraqis for fees and books as part of a program that provides emergency relief for refugees in Jordan and Lebanon and inside Syria. When Palestinian refugee children living in Syria and Jordan were accepted into local schools, their enrollment and literacy rates are similar or above those of the "native" students.(Jordan Fact Paper, 2009). The same can be expected of Syrian and Iraqi refugee children who attend local schools in neighboring host countries who are given the opportunity to succeed.

Currently, about 13% of Syrian refugee children, or about 53,000, are enrolled in Lebanese public schools. The estimated 400,000 Syrian refugee children could outnumber the number of Lebanese children. Because Lebanese Arabic language schools are underfunded, Syrian parents are likely to find their children having learning difficulties caused by the Lebanese dialect, required English and French courses, and the substandard conditions in the schools. Some 70% of the schools lack water and toilets. There are no science or language labs, limited library books, and

outdated curriculum taught from mimeographed texts. (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). An adjustment is required for many Syrian children who go to refugee schools. In Lebanon, the aid agency Caritas runs an outreach program to help refugees prepare for and obtain school assistance. (Patrick, 2014).

According to Maria Calivis, a regional director of UNICEF, “If this problem [failure to educate youth] is left unaddressed, the children will lose hope, especially the adolescents. They will replicate and perpetuate the violence that they have seen. And they will lack the skills and knowledge that one day will be needed to rebuild Syria.” (Onishi). The same logic applies for Palestinian, Iraqi, and other refugee children worldwide. Furthermore, if they remain in camps in the host countries, children will grow into dissatisfied, resentful adults who have limited language and life opportunities. They may seek to escape their poverty using the violence that they have experienced. Their image of life in their native countries can be reminiscent of better times. To quote an eleven-year-old Syrian girl named Gharam, now living in Lebanon, “We had a lovely life. I went to school. I had friends. I was happy. The most frightening thing was the bombing of my school.” (Patrick, 2013).

What will Germans do with the one million refugees expected to arrive by December 2015? Last year, the Germans found housing, provided a stipend and provided vocational education for the much needed 198 refugee workers who arrived last year. With a strong, existing apprentice program for vocational education, Germany is far ahead of the Middle Eastern countries whose educational systems were re-organized after WWI by England in Egypt, Israel, Iraq and Jordan and by France in Lebanon and Syria. Germany could provide a prototype for refugee education based upon its apprenticeship training.

Germany is where companies invest billions of dollars annually in training young people who have completed tenth grade for apprenticeships in healthcare, information technology, and above all, manufacturing. The results are hard to dispute: Germany's high school drop-out rate is around 7 percent (compared to the U.S.' dismal 23 percent.) And while 8 percent of Germany's youth population (ages 16-24) is unemployed, US youth unemployment is at 16 percent compared to 25% for youth in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. Germany's highly-skilled workforce helps it create high-end products that the world is hungry for. As a result, Germany exports more products than anywhere else except China, and the country has been a lone beacon of good news while the rest of Europe has been struggling with multiple financial problems.

5. Educational Outcomes

Academic difficulties, language differences and limited access to schools are producing unexpected and unwanted educational outcomes. Currently, there is a mismatch between what refugee children learn in school and the skills they need to be employed in host country economies. So, while the assumed outcome of employability seems eminent, in actuality, parents, students and politicians continue to be misled when they proudly cite graduation rates. Refugee graduates of camp or host country schools are likely find themselves unemployed or underemployed.

Given the difficulties in gaining access to higher education and the challenges of adapting to different curricula, languages, and dialects, graduation rates are outstanding achievements for parents, children, and educators. The goal of refugee students’ education should be to teach students to understand and perhaps adapt to differing political systems and cultural values, thus preparing graduates for language diverse socio-economic and political futures. This content needs to be taught throughout the refugee and local educational systems, enhancing the relevance and quality of education offered. In their current isolation within camps and their limited time in school, learning such important content is unlikely.

Furthermore, Western educators do not know that Syrian, Iraqi and Afghani students expect to be employed by the government following their graduation from elementary, secondary, and university institutions. Beginning with and continuing through the 500 years of Ottoman rule, graduates from all levels of education were employed in the government. This guarantee is no longer true in such countries as Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon. This expectation explains the high youth unemployment in these countries. Most governments cannot afford to employ the number of citizens or refugees who graduate. The result is that refugees are sentenced to low paying jobs which they must find on their own even if they graduate from eighth grade. Unemployment has risen to approximately 25% of youth throughout the region.(Farzaneh Roudi-Fahimi, 2011). Protests directed at the government for the lack of work have taken place in Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, and Syria. These societal conditions have created protests and rebellion among refugees in all Middle Eastern countries. The unfortunate outcome based upon the failure of the governments to meet student expectations and provide positions for all graduates contributed to the Arab Spring or Arab Awakening and subsequent protests.

Currently, very few refugees can afford to or are able to attend universities in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, or Jordan. Inability to read, write and speak in Turkish keeps many Middle Eastern refugees out of Turkish universities. If students of Syrian and Palestinian-Syrian origin can pass admission tests, they can enter their own Syrian universities, when and if those universities are still operating. And finally, Egypt has been denying admission to Syrian university students previously enrolled in their universities and returning to school from summer vacations. The Egyptian army and the Muslim Brotherhood have each attacked what they see as the others’ most vulnerable populations. The supporters of Islamists have been targeting the Egyptian Christians and the army has been targeting the Syrian refugees. (Ursula, 2013). According to one Syrian mother, “We could not stay in Syria. I could not send the children to school, because [both sides] ask which side you support, and if you answer wrongly, they will kill

you. . . bullets shower down, there were planes that dropped bombs." (Human Rights Watch, 2013). These conditions keep refugees from graduating from universities thus limiting their employment futures.

Enrollment and graduation numbers can be used to demonstrate political and social support for Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian refugee youth in host countries. These numbers do not address the need for quality education as identified by marketable language skills and transferable knowledge of graduates. For example, in an English language classroom, refugee students were asked to demonstrate their English skills. The first three students called upon asked the author the same question, "What Jordanian food do you like?" This phrase had been memorized in the class but did not function well when transferring memorized English skills into a conversation that goes beyond six words. The lack of relevance of the curriculum may be one cause of high dropout rates from refugee schools. If graduation cannot get them better employment and does not promise to advance to their social needs, conversational or otherwise, why go to crowded, uncomfortable schools?

The youth themselves know that they are not getting a quality education. They recognize that their teachers are not skilled or certified. In fact, one of the major criticisms of the refugee schools is the "limited non-educational expertise at the field level." (Semih, 2009). Such politically correct phrasing chastises classroom teachers, supervisors, and directors of instruction. To be certified in a UN refugee school, a teacher must have ten days of training as compared to months and years of preparation in teacher training institutes. Many teachers are not certified in refugee schools. (Semih, 2009). An additional criticism is that there is "no connection between schooling and content that is meaningful or useful." (Semih, 2009).While this statement seems harsh, employers in the marketplace support it by frequently refusing to hire graduates of UNRWA or government school graduates, opting instead for graduates of private schools. No wonder graduates have learned that whom you know rather than what you know is more important in getting a job.

Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq have followed different paths to increase refugees' access to education. Their outcomes are quite different. Jordan has allowed Palestinians to open universities like Petra that caters to Palestinian descendants of the refugees who fled Palestine in 1948. This approach allows them to keep Palestinians out of Jordanian universities, where quota systems increase the enrollment of Arab Jordanians. They may use same model today for Iraqi and Syrian refugees. Egypt has expanded existing university enrollments to reach 180,000 students in such institutions as Ain Shams. (Judith, 2008). Obviously this large number of students can't attend classes but do take tests at the end of the year. Lebanon created fifty-eight universities during its fifteen-year civil war in order to accommodate students from different faiths who could not travel during the war. These Lebanese universities continue to instruct Sunni Muslim, Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Roman Catholic, and other students. Regardless of the solutions to increase enrollment and subsequent graduation rates from universities, many graduates are unemployed. And with refugees arriving in ever-greater numbers, the governments cannot continue to pay the $500,000 daily cost of caring for refugees from Iraq, Syria, Iran and Palestine. (Semih, 2009). The challenges of educating and caring for refugees seem unsolvable.

6. Suggested Educational Solutions

The ideal solution from host country perspectives is to have the refugees return to their homelands. Often, such solutions are not feasible. As refugees overwhelm and destabilize host countries, education is not viewed as an imperative. Language instruction, particularly in the dialect of the local marketplace, needs to become a priority. Relevant education for refugees is one consistent pathway to employment and independence within a host country. For example, training in technology and accounting would teach refugees skills used in many businesses, in the military, and in government positions. Many of the Syrian refugees are secondary or university educated and may already have a profession. They would benefit from a bilingual educational system that initially taught business terms in their native language. As they became proficient in the technical concepts in their native language, a language bridge could be built in the language of their employer.

Mobile computer labs could also serve camps as classrooms for trainings. Such mobile classrooms are being piloted in Jordan. While there are computer software programs for language learning, there is a need for bilingual instructors to address linguistic differences that can't be foreseen by software programmers. Refugees could in this manner learn up-to-date skills to prepare them for positions in the local marketplace.

At a more basic level, literacy in math and reading can be taught at any age using a variety of strategies, such as language experience. The only requirements are paper, pencil, and a literate refugee or local volunteer. Rather than wait for schools to be furnished with books, blackboards, seats, and tables in refugee camps, this engaging method of teaching basic literacy skills delivers immediate, relevant instruction. In addition, it could increase the literacy and employability of many of refugee mothers who are trying to support their children without their husbands.

If the refugees do not need technical or literacy education, they do need to learn vocational skills. Apprenticeships, like those in Germany, could be formed to teach refugees skills that host country tradesmen and other refugees may possess. Each tradesman who accepts an apprentice would receive a stipend from a philanthropic source. In Iran in the 1950's, young men without means were apprenticed to multiple tradesmen for a few months until they satisfactorily learned to be a book seller, stone mason, carpenter, or plumber, or other marketable skills. The tradesmen were paid by the parents to accept an apprentice. Refugees could follow the same model of instruction for short-term apprenticeships in any marketable field. Such apprenticeships could become a setting for language immersion instruction as many refugees are isolated from host country natives and have little opportunity to learn their language.

Another proposed solution for strengthening language skills is to provide instruction in deficit areas that will enable refugees to return and rebuild their countries or to contribute to the development of the countries where they now live. No host country can continue to subsidize refugees and, in the case of Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq—its own people. The objective is to make refugees self-sufficient as soon as possible. Relevant, quality education would do that.

In the past, refugee programs have focused upon increasing access and graduation rates, while ignoring academic difficulties. Finding facilities, running water, electricity, food, and certified teachers have not been as easy. In the Middle East, Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian refugees combine to create social, economic, and political crises in every host country. Likewise, there is no value in educating youth in programs that are of poor quality, only to graduate unemployable refugees. Host countries should utilize the human capital they have in refugees in order to enhance their own countries.

And finally, Palestinians in the West Bank present a partial solution to the refugees' need for education and infrastructure. The West Bank's educational structure provides choices: academic, vocational, language, and cultural education. As one the smallest countries in the Middle East, the West Bank has 5,860 square kilometers (2,263 square miles) and 2.678 million people, approximately 341,400 (as of 2012) of whom are Israeli settlers in addition to approximately 196,400 Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem (as of 2011). (C.I.A. Profile of Palestine and C.I.A. Profile of Lebanon). The West Bank has an overwhelmed government infrastructure with Iraqi, Palestinian, and Syrian refugees and has Israeli settlers who comprise 20% of its population. In addition, West Bank officials have not been able to close the nineteen Palestinian refugee camps located within its borders. (West Bank Refugee Camps). Refugees living in camps must pass checkpoints to leave or enter the camps. These checkpoints are manned by the Israeli military. Such conditions increase the membership of young men in Hezbollah, Fatah, and Hamas. Limited educational access also effectively reduces the employment options for refugees, making their unemployment rates in the West Bank one of the highest in the world. (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). Syrian and Iraqi refugees in other countries will soon get a similar message if access to basic language, additional education and employment are restricted.

The West Bank utilizes existing infrastructures of schools of all ethnic groups, faiths, in addition to that of the government. Arabic language Islamic schools are run by the government and by private organizations. The private Christian schools represent different denominations: Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, and Anglican schools. There are ten schools for the Roman Catholics taught in Italian or French and six Greek Orthodox schools taught in Greek in the West Bank. The Lutherans have four schools taught in English and German, and the two Anglican schools taught in English are in Ramallah and Jerusalem. These all offer K–12 education to over 330,000 children living in the West Bank in addition to the public schools conducted in Arabic by the Palestinian Ministry of Education, the Arabic-language UNRWA camp schools, and the Israeli Ministry of Education schools taught in Hebrew. The Anglican school has a vocational track for students in the last three years of high school, and all public government and private schools have liberal arts and science tracks. There is also vocational training for secretaries at the YMCA. Like the private schools, the technical schools and universities are supported by different religious faiths and administered as a collaborative by the Palestinian government. (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). Each of these schools teaches in the language of their sponsor. For example, Greek Orthodox children learn Greek in addition to English and Arabic. The diverse languages taught in the West Bank schools provide a linguistic and cultural model for refugee camps.

In some host countries, the government controls religious and government schools and administers their offerings to native and refugee students. In another model, religious bodies like Caritas and the Muslim Brotherhood, provide emergency relief, education, and loans to refugees. The same is true of such international social institutions as the YMCA that provide housing, vocational training, adult literacy and healthy lifestyle activities.

Refugee immigration threatens the political, social, and economic balance in host countries. Formally establishing partnerships through the EU before refugees become unmanageable may support social, economic, and governmental collaboration within the affected countries and throughout the region. Individual country approaches cannot meet the needs of the refugees. Nor can internationally uncoordinated UNHCR and UNRWA be effective as branches of the United Nations targeting refugees. In the past, increasing access to education and graduation rates, while ignoring academic difficulties, were the first steps in establishing schools for refugees. Currently, there is no value in educating youth in programs that are of poor quality, only to graduate unemployable refugees. While not an immediate solution, host countries could encourage external funding from Gulf, Canadian or US in order to utilize the human capital that can potentially enhance rather than destroy host countries' wellbeing.

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