



# HIGHER EDUCATION DIVERSITY STRATEGIES FOR MIGRANT AND REFUGEE INCLUSION



THE UNI(di)VERSITY ATLAS OF INCLUSION

This report has been prepared for the **UNI(di)VERSTY** project with support from the **Erasmus+** programme.

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## ABOUT UNI(di)VERSITY

UNI(di)VERSITY aims to support European Higher Education Institutions to uphold their role towards **building inclusive societies in the era of migration**, with a view to promoting the **social inclusion of migrants and refugees**. The project is funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union during the period January 2020 – December 2022.

### UNI(di)VERSITY is implemented by:

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IOM – International Organization for Migration (associate partner)

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## Background

The integration<sup>1</sup> and inclusion of migrants is an important and necessary social and economic investment. It benefits individuals, but also Europe's societies and economies. Education and training is one of the key pillars of EU action for integration. The renewed EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 notes that "[...] education and training is the foundation for successful participation in society and one of the most powerful tools for building more inclusive societies" (European Commission, 2020, p. 8). The action plan acknowledges the potential contribution of higher education in reskilling and upskilling migrants, contributing to their lifelong learning, enabling them to make use of their competences and skills, and thus integrating them faster into the labour market.

This concerns intra-EU migrants, in the context of freedom of movement of EU citizens, but also migrants from further afar; around 8% of migrants within the EU were born outside the EU.<sup>2</sup> Among those migrating to Europe are also a relatively small number of refugees. Approximately 100 million people had to flee their homes during the last 10 years. In 2019, there were 26 million refugees worldwide (UNHCR, 2020); approximately 10% of recognised refugees were living in the EU, making up about 0.6% of the EU's population. To enhance integration of this displaced population, education and training at all levels – schooling, but also vocational, adult and higher education – is required.

Particularly since 2015, evidence has been gathered on university support initiatives<sup>3</sup> for refugees and migrants in a refugee(-like) situation, indicating positive impact on integration prospects (EUA, 2019a). Higher education institutions across Europe have been active in supporting migrants with a refugee(-like) background,<sup>4</sup> welcoming them as students and staff on their campuses and as newcomers to their surrounding communities. A number of EU (co-)funded projects<sup>5</sup> have supported

## EU Action Plan on Integration and inclusion 2021-2027

notes that:

“ [...] education and training is the foundation for successful participation in society and one of the most powerful tools for building more inclusive societies ”

(1) “[...] migrant integration may be broadly defined as: ‘The process by which migrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups....[Integration] refers to a two-way process of adaptation by migrants and host societies...[and implies] consideration of the rights and obligations of migrants and host societies, of access to different kinds of services and the labour market, and of identification and respect for a core set of values that bind migrants and host communities in a common purpose (IOM, 2011).’ [...] Related concepts include social inclusion and social cohesion. Social inclusion refers to migrants’ inclusion and full economic, social, cultural, and political participation into host communities. Social cohesion refers to concepts such as anti-discrimination, countering xenophobia and promoting mutual understanding (IOM, 2017).” IOM Migration Data Portal, accessed 16 June, 2021. <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migrant-integration>

(2) “Statistics on migration to Europe”, European Commission, accessed 16 June 2021, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/statistics-migration-europe_en).

(3) “Refugees Welcome Map”, European University Association, accessed 16 June 2021, <http://refugeeswelcomemap.eua.be/Editor/Visualizer/Index/48>.

(4) In the context of this report, unless indicated otherwise, the term “migrants with a refugee(-like) background” is used to cover a wide range of legal statuses, from recognised refugees to subsidiary and otherwise protected persons, as well as those seeking asylum, or generally in a vulnerable, refugee(-like) situation.

(5) Please refer to the Erasmus+ project database for an overview, using the key word “refugee:” [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects_en).

higher education institutions in sharing good practices, and in enhancing their own activities for and with refugees. Some national programmes have even built upon models of particularly successful university initiatives.<sup>6</sup> Initially, many of these activities were bottom-up, driven by dedicated university staff and students. In the vast majority of cases, they were (and often remain) funded by the institutions' core budget, re-allocating funds and staff time from other areas and activities of the institution, with little national or European funding available (EUA, 2020). Some initiatives have concrete links to the core mission of higher education institutions, which has been found to be crucial for ensuring their long-term sustainability (inHERE Project, 2018). For example, connecting to the values of the universities, their third mission, and their role as an actor in society at large.

"Inclusiveness" has become a strategic priority for many higher education institutions, with impacts across learning and teaching, research, as well as the third mission. Initiatives for migrants in a refugee(-like) situation have contributed to raising awareness on matters of social diversity and inequality, in some cases leading to enhancement of universities' broader diversity and inclusion approaches. Universities are addressing these topics in an increasingly strategic manner. Besides disability and gender, three-quarters of university strategies for diversity, inclusion and equity also address the dimension of ethnic/cultural/migration background in relation to their student body (EUA, 2019b), which may include the target group of students and staff with a refugee(-like) background.

The topic of inclusion is also high on the policy agenda in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and has been cited in a number of Ministerial Communiqués. Most recently, the 2020 Rome Communiqué commits to reinforcing social inclusion and enhancing quality education, stating that, "Socially inclusive higher education will remain at the core of the EHEA and will require providing opportunities and support for equitable inclusion of individuals from all parts of society" (EHEA, 2020a, 5). Ministers endorsed the "Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA," committing to support higher education institutions in making diversity core to their institutional culture (EHEA, 2020b).

## The UNI(di)VERSITY project

Against this background, the UNI(di)VERSITY project aims to connect the discussion around "inclusion for all" and the targeted intervention for those with a refugee(-like) background.

UNI(di)VERSITY's predecessor project, inHERE,<sup>7</sup> carried out a mapping of support services for refugee students in 2016. It found that few initiatives had been underpinned by the institution's mission or by strategic planning. Most initiatives had been ad hoc, introduced through bottom-up approaches by highly committed students and staff



(6) For instance, the "Mentorship in Italian Universities - Youth-to-youth support for the integration of students with different backgrounds" is implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in coordination with the Ministry of the Interior - Department for Civil Liberties and Immigration, in Italian universities. It builds on previously successful programmes. <https://italy.iom.int/sites/italy/files/news-documents/Mentorship%201%20EN.pdf>.

(7) "inHERE, Higher Education Supporting Refugees in Europe", accessed 21 June, 2021, <https://www.inhereproject.eu/>.

members. Over time, the broader theme of diversity and inclusion had gained in importance on the agenda of higher education institutions (EUA, 2019b), and anecdotal evidence suggested that some of the support programmes for students with a refugee(-like) background were indeed linked to the institutions' emerging diversity, equity and inclusion strategies.

Building on the inHERE project, UNI(di)VERSITY moves from sharing information about support measures for support programmes for students with a refugee(-like) background towards institutional strategic planning and a broader approach for inclusion, diversity and equity. Thus, the present report aims to map concrete examples of support measures for students in a refugee(-like) situation across Europe, and analyse how these are linked to university strategies and overarching approaches towards diversity and inclusion.

## Methodology of this report

In order to identify a shortlist of institutions with overarching diversity and inclusion strategies that consider migrants in a refugee(-like) situation, several projects<sup>8</sup> were reviewed where surveys had been conducted or where data had been collected from higher education institutions on the topic (Table 1).

Project	Theme of the project/data collection	Selection criteria applied
<b>EUA Refugees Welcome Map</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Database of support measures for refugees across the European higher education sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explicit mention of a link to diversity strategies by the institutions contributing to the mapping</li> </ul>
<b>TandEM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Towards Empowered Migrant Youth in Southern Europe</li> <li>Dataset on university support measures and national policies for third-country national integration in six southern European countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central or faculty-level strategic document in place for diversity and inclusion that explicitly refers to refugees from third countries (Q2.2)</li> </ul>
<b>INVITED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategies towards Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Universities</li> <li>Dataset on higher education institution approaches to diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutions that have a diversity strategy in place (Q10a) and</li> <li>Institutions that concretely address the dimension of ethnic/cultural/migration background in said strategy in relation to students (Q12)</li> </ul>
<b>Inspireurope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiative to Support, Promote and Integrate Researchers at Risk in Europe</li> <li>Dataset on higher education institution activities to support researchers at risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutions that actively welcome students with a refugee(-like) background (Q5) and</li> <li>Institutions supporting researchers at risk and/or students with a refugee(-like) background, where said support links to a diversity and inclusion strategy (Q6)</li> </ul>

Table 1: Desk research and selection criteria for potential UNI(di)VERSITY interview candidates

(8) Co-funded by the EU and self-funded by EUA.

Identified cases were invited to contribute to the UNI(di)VERSITY project and to provide brief information on how their activities and support measures for migrants in a refugee(-like) situation are linked to their university's diversity, inclusion and equity strategies (or similar central steering documents). In total, 69 institutions signalled their interest in participating. On the basis of the information provided by participants and on the diversity strategy documents made available by their respective universities online, the consortium made an initial shortlist of 17 institutions. The institutions were interviewed in spring 2021<sup>9</sup>. Four of the initially identified cases were excluded during the interview process, as it turned out that there were no concrete links to the diversity strategy after all, leading to a final sample of 13 institutions. Based on the interviews and background research, case studies<sup>10</sup> were prepared and compared with a view to assessing how initiatives for migrants in a refugee(-like) situation have been linked to broader institutional approaches of diversity and inclusion, and how their implementation has been impacted as a result.

Given the small sample size, the report cannot claim to be fully representative of the situation in Europe; rather, it provides some evidence of how institutions are strategizing their efforts to support migrants in a refugee(-like) situation and embed these initiatives into their broader approaches for diversity, equity and inclusion.

## 2. MIGRANTS IN A REFUGEE(-LIKE) SITUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION DIVERSITY STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The following comparative analysis of interviews carried out with 13 higher education institutions across Europe showcases examples of support offered for migrants in a refugee(-like) situation.<sup>11</sup> It discusses how these examples link to the overarching diversity and inclusion strategies, and how this link influences both the day-to-day implementation and the overall impact of the programmes.

### Diversity strategies and inclusion of migrants with a refugee(-like) background

#### Content and framing

Relevant overarching strategies (or similar strategic-level documents) across the higher education institutions interviewed have one key element in common: they describe the institution's actions in the field of diversity, equity, non-discrimination and inclusion in terms of institutional values. One institution even stated that equality and cultural diversity are among its founding principles.

However, the way that these institutional values are expressed differ in the strategies. Most often, a

(9) Please refer to Annex IV for the interview grid.

(10) See Annex I for summaries of all case studies.

(11) See Annex I for summaries of all case studies and Annex III for overview tables of strategies, activities, etc.



broad, “catch-all” diversity strategy is in place (or under preparation) that neither targets nor favours any specific group of students or staff (8 of 13 institutions, Table 2).

## 1. Strategy or policy on diversity, equality or inclusion

#	University	Activity
1	Ghent University (BE)	Diversity policy and action plan
2	Grenoble School of Management (FR)	Under preparation
3	University of Maastricht (NL)	Diversity & Inclusivity
4	Université Libre de Bruxelles (BE)	Diversity Plan
5	University of Göttingen (DE)	Diversity Strategy
6	University of Jyväskylä (FI)	Equality Plan 2019-2021
7	University of the Aegean (EL)	Under Preparation
8	University of Trento (IT)	Three-year Plan for Positive Action
9	University of Zurich (CH)	Diversity Policy
10	Utrecht University (NL)	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Action Plan

Table 2: Strategy or policy on diversity, equality and/or inclusion

These strategies aim to be all-encompassing, acknowledging the diversity of the student body in broad terms. There are also nuances in the framing of the topic of diversity. For instance, two institutions place a specific focus on non-discrimination, while others focus on equity. Alongside gender and disability, strategies often include the dimensions of religion and/or ethnic background, thereby encompassing migrants in a refugee(-like) situation without specifically mentioning them. Only two of the institutions interviewed make explicit reference to the target group of refugees, or migrants in a refugee(-like) situation, in their diversity and inclusion strategy (Table 3).

## 2. Diversity, Equality and/or inclusion strategy with explicit link to migrants in a refugee(-like) situation



#	University	Activity
1	University of Trento (IT)	Three-year Plan for Positive Action
2	Utrecht University (NL)	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Action Plan

Table 3: Diversity, equality and/or inclusion strategy with explicit link to migrants in a refugee(-like) situation

Besides diversity and inclusion strategies, other central level documents can be linked to the support of migrants in a refugee(-like) situation (Table 4). For instance, Malmö University's central University Strategy 2022 and its Agenda for Global Engagement both cover the theme of diversity and inclusion (without mentioning refugees explicitly). The central Strategic Plan of the University of Barcelona is aligned with the UN's Global Compact for Refugees (United Nations, 2018)

## 3. Other strategic-level document covering diversity, equality and/or inclusion



#	University	Activity
1	Grenoble School of Management (FR)	Signatory to the French Diversity Charter, Obtaining the status of <i>société à mission</i>
2	Sapienza University of Rome (IT)	Statutes with links to diversity and adherence to the UNHCR's Manifesto of the Inclusive University
3	University of Barcelona (ES)	Strategic Plan 2030
4	Malmö University (SE)	Agenda for Global Engagement 2021-2026, Malmö University Strategy 2022

Table 4: Other strategic level document covering diversity, equality and/or inclusion

and Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>12</sup> Sapienza University links to diversity in its central statutes and is a signatory to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' Manifesto of the Inclusive University (UNHCR, 2019). Grenoble School of Management is in the process of acquiring the legal status of a *société à mission*, which would place issues such as diversity at the strategic level of their institu-

(12) "Sustainable Development Goals", United Nations, accessed 22 June 2021, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>.

tion. The school is also a recent signatory to the French Diversity Charter (Conférences des Grandes Écoles, 2020).

Overall, it is evident from the interviews with institutions that linking support for migrants with a refugee(-like) background to institutional strategies for diversity and inclusion or other strategic documents – even if only in principle – enables a more systematic, integrated approach to supporting the target group.

### Policy links

The University of Jyväskylä's support for migrants in a refugee(-like) situation is not only linked to its own diversity strategy, but also to a national network of institutions and a newly launched national action plan for access to higher education (Kosunen, 2021). Since 2016, the university has coordinated a network of support activities, now involving ten institutions across the country; it has also participated in consultations organised by the Ministry of Education to develop the national action plan, which involved migrants themselves. The recent establishment of the national action plan is expected to further strengthen the university's support for migrants in a refugee(-like) background; dedicated funding will be allocated to the university, and the definition of the target group will be enhanced, which is expected to lead to enhanced monitoring.

The University of Göttingen's diversity work is connected to agreements with the State of Lower Saxony, which include targets for women, international students and people with disabilities. These targets apply to all universities in Lower Saxony and have funding implications. To receive additional funding, institutions must ensure that students from these backgrounds complete their courses within a certain timeframe.

The Refugees Working Group, comprising the Grenoble School of Management and other institutions and higher education stakeholders in the region, is also a member of the national *Migrants dans l'Enseignement Supérieur* (migrants in higher education) network in France. Moreover, the Grenoble School of Management also signed a national diversity charter in 2020, aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion in management schools across France (Conférences des Grandes Écoles, 2020).

Finally, the University of Barcelona provides a concrete example of how strategic action for diversity and inclusion, as well as support for students with a refugee(-like) background can be linked to European initiatives: the university leads the European Universities Initiative<sup>13</sup> CHARM-EU,<sup>14</sup> which aims, among other things, to represent an accessible university model. This alliance has identified specific under-represented groups, including migrants with a refugee(-like) background. An overarching inclusion plan, as well as advice and training for all teaching and non-teaching staff at all CHARM-EU alliance members, is under preparation.

### History

The diversity strategies (or similar documents) of the participating institutions date from between 2005 to 2018. Unsurprisingly, the majority of specific support measures for migrants with a refugee(-like) background were initiated around 2015.<sup>15</sup> There are some exceptions, such as the Universi-

(13) For further information on the European University Initiative please visit [https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area/european-universities-initiative\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area/european-universities-initiative_en).

(14) CHallenge-driven, Accessible, Research-based, Mobile European University. In collaboration with Trinity College Dublin, the Utrecht University, the University of Montpellier and the Loránd Eötvös University of Budapest. For further information please visit <https://www.charm-eu.eu/>.

(15) At some of the institutions interviewed, services for students with a refugee(-like) background were later reduced or – in the case of one institution – disbanded, due to a drop in demand.

ty of the Aegean, which in part due to its geographical location on the Greek islands, has supported migrants with a refugee(-like) background for almost 20 years. Diversity and inclusion have been a core principle of two of the institutions interviewed since their establishment: As the city of Malmö is home to a multicultural population, the university's diversity mission is inherent to its location. The University of Trento also states that equality and cultural diversity are among its founding principles.

Several diversity strategies initially took gender balance considerations as their starting point, before later moving on to broader areas. For instance, Ghent University had a specific gender policy in place long before it began working on the topic of diversity in 2008. The diversity policy at the Université Libre de Bruxelles first became a part of the vice-rector's mandate in 2016, when its initial focus was on gender; a broader diversity focus followed in later years. The University of Zurich developed a strategy in 2018 that included the establishment of a dedicated Office for Gender Equality, which was expanded a year later to become the Office for Gender Equality and Diversity.

At some institutions, bottom-up projects drove the development of strategies. For instance, at the Utrecht University, the equality, diversity and inclusion plan had its origins in a PHD volunteer project on refugee inclusion and a staff-led taskforce for diversity. For the preparation of a strategy document on diversity and inclusion, the technical and scientific committee on diversity and inclusion at Sapienza University of Rome relies on expertise from its long-standing services and project work for students with disabilities and for migrants with a refugee(-like) background.

### *Definition of the target group*

As previously discussed, only a few of the strategic documents for diversity make explicit reference to migrants with a refugee(-like) background. In many cases this is linked to the fact that legally, universities are not allowed to collect such information on the backgrounds of their students and staff, and therefore cannot target them explicitly. However, in the context of support programmes, most institutions interviewed define the target group according to their legal status – refugee, asylum seeker, other international protection background, or broadly refugee(-like) background. This sets the scope of the programme and defines who may be supported.

At five of the participating institutions, support programmes are limited to those with full refugee status, legally putting them on par with national students. In another five cases, programmes are also open to asylum seekers: in the case of the Utrecht University, they are in fact the main target group of the Inclusion<sup>16</sup> programme. The University of Barcelona applies a catch-all approach: their programme is open to recognised refugees, asylum seekers and stateless people, and applications from students with a refugee(-like) background can be considered on a case-by-case basis. Maastricht University attracts a high number of international students, and as result, over 50% of its students are not Dutch. However, special attention and support is given to legally recognised refugees and “students with a non-western” background (based on self-identification) amongst the international student body.

During the interviews, most participants made the point that besides support services such as language training and bridging courses, which are often open to anyone, students can only apply to full degree courses and benefit from e.g. adapted admissions criteria, if they have full refugee status.

### *Implementation and monitoring*

There are diverse approaches to the implementation of activities that support migrants with a refu-

(16) “Inclusion”, Utrecht University, accessed 24 June 2021, <https://www.uu.nl/en/education/inclusion>.



gee(-like) background. Higher education institutions may use a combination of the following coordination points: Seven of the institutions interviewed have a diversity office, or at least one diversity officer, that supports all disadvantaged learners, including migrants with a refugee(-like) background. Four institutions have a refugee help desk or similar. At two institutions, refugee support is run by staff from the admissions office, while at another two institutions the international office is largely in charge. There are also cases where staff that run such activities are part of the institutions' student social services or human resources office. At five institutions, internal task forces, working groups and committees are involved in the support programmes, and in one case, a working group of all higher education institutions in the region has been established. In at least six of the institutions, support activities for migrants with a refugee(-like) background are linked to various leadership portfolios – e.g. the vice-rector for academic policy and career management at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, the vice-rector for equality and diversity at the University of Trento, the vice-rector for teaching, learning and equal opportunities at the University of Göttingen, the vice-chancellor for global engagement at Malmö University, or the rector at the University of the Aegean.

The implementation of programmes for migrants with a refugee(-like) background usually involves various actors across the institutions in addition to the diversity or other support offices e.g. language centres, social services, psychological support services, student residence centres, as well as study and tuition services. Staff and students of specific faculties, such as psychology or law, may also provide dedicated support. The move away from project-based activities towards strategic approaches strengthens the overall coordination across actors, and usually also entails some additional staff and financial resources.

Due to legal limitations on the data collection on students' backgrounds, most institutions are not in a position to monitor the progress of the migrants with a refugee(-like) background they support, e.g. whether they eventually enrol into a degree programme, and whether they graduate from it. Anecdotal evidence and existing data on participation in and success rates of language courses and bridging courses,<sup>17</sup> confirm relatively high drop-out rates. Interviewees described the lack of monitoring as a concrete challenge (see also section 3), and some were in the process of setting up a dedicated monitoring and evaluation system.

(17) For specific data on students with a refugee(-like) background supported in support programmes, please refer to the case studies in Annex I, some of which include such figures.

## Which office supports refugees ?

### Diversity Office

7 Institutions

### Refugee Help Desk

4 Institutions

### Staff from Admission Office

2 Institutions

### International Office

2 Institutions

## Activities and support measures for migrants with a refugee(-like) background

All universities interviewed have a range of activities in place to support (potential) students and staff with a refugee (like-) background, including more broadly as newcomers in their city, municipality or region. As discussed in the section “Defining the target group” above, these initiatives may be open to students with different backgrounds – such as refugees, asylum seekers, or even all with a non-EU or migration background. The below table summarises the main activities mentioned by the interviewees.<sup>18</sup>

Activities can be split into two broad categories – the vast majority offer direct support to migrants with a refugee(-like) background (Table 5), whereas some focus on changing the narrative around migration itself (Table 6).

Direct support measures mostly address potential students or staff with a refugee(-like) background (Table 5). For instance, eleven institutions offer language courses for this particular target group, and in six this is part of an overall bridging course. Eight institutions have dedicated admissions services and special recognition procedures for admission purposes in place for applicants with a refugee(-like) background. Fee waivers and similar measures (offered at eight institutions), and buddy, mentoring or coaching programmes (present in six institutions) are also quite common. Guest student programmes or similar initiatives offer refugees the opportunity to participate in selected courses free of charge at five universities, sometimes with the possibility of receiving ECTS credits towards a degree, should they enrol in the future.

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(18) This is not an exhaustive list. The table summarises the main activities discussed during the interviews. Individual institutions' support offering may be even broader than depicted.



Table 5. Overview of support available to migrants with a refugee(-like) background at higher education institutions interviewed for UNI(-di)VERSITY: direct support measures

(19) Students with a refugee(-like) background can participate in selected courses free of charge, sometimes with the possibility of receiving ECTS credits towards a degree, should they enroll in the future.

(20) Students volunteers offer legal support to refugees. They may be awarded ECTS credits for this work.

Universities also are involved in awareness-raising amongst the university community and in the general population, with the aim of changing the narrative around forced migration and refugees. For instance, six institutions offer cultural exchanges, sport events and other integration activities involving both the local population and migrants with a refugee(-like) background, irrespective of whether or not they are potential students.

Seven institutions host dedicated research centres or offer dedicated courses or degree programmes on migration. A further seven collaborate and exchange with national or local government and local NGOs, for instance for the identification of potential students with a refugee(-like) background or to recognise prior qualifications of such applicants. In this collaboration, institutions may also be involved in lobbying and informing national administrations about e.g. visa and legal status issues. Finally, three institutions collaborate with international organisations such as the UNHCR on refugee integration projects, or projects to realise the goals of the Global Compact on Refugees (UN, 2018).



Table 6. Overview of support available to migrants with a refugee(-like) background at higher education institutions interviewed for UNI(-di)VERSITY: indirect support, integration and awareness-raising measures

Additional activities for migrants with a refugee(-like) background not listed in the table above include translation services, special library offers, support to access the labour market (e.g. CV and interview training), teacher training for teaching in the multicultural classroom, internships at the university administration, as well as support to and collaboration with networks and student organisations that bring together students from specific cultural/ethnic/migration backgrounds.



The interviews carried out for the UNI(di)VERSITY project confirm three key messages: Firstly, linking support work for migrants with a refugee(-like) background to institutional strategies for diversity and inclusion or other strategic documents – even if only in principle – enables a more systematic, integrated approach to supporting the target group. Secondly, institutions carry out a diverse range of support activities, and these are implemented in different ways at virtually every institution interviewed. Finally, involvement of stakeholders across the institution – from leadership to staff and students – has been key to ensuring the activities have high impact.

## 3. CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Challenges in diversity, inclusion, and support for migrants with a refugee(-like) background

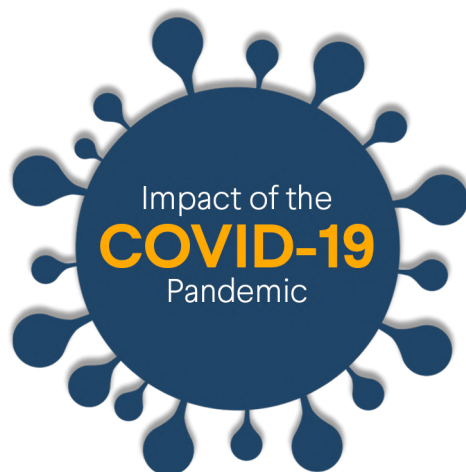
Support programmes for migrants with a refugee(-like) background often start as bottom-up initiatives that are project-based. As a consequence, those that continue to function tend to have limited funding and high reliance on volunteers. Even if the target group is considered in their strategic approaches, for most institutions, monitoring the impact of their initiatives for migrants with a refugee(-like) background remains a challenge. The diversity strategies reviewed for this report mostly targeted disadvantaged learners more broadly. They rarely set any quantitative targets, and most institutions are legally prevented from collecting background information on the ethnic or migration background of their students. Therefore, they are unable to track progress of the students they have supported, e.g. whether participants of bridging programmes eventually enrol as degree students.

Around one-third of the participating universities can only address fully recognised refugees and may face legal obstacles in working with asylum seekers. Since the asylum process is very long, there could be huge gains for asylum seekers and society from early participation in e.g. bridging courses and non-degree courses. This could lower costs for and accelerate integration, and generally lead to better psychosocial wellbeing for the target group. This is highlighted by some of the institutions interviewed who specifically target asylum seekers during the waiting period for their protection status.<sup>21</sup>

While some of the universities interviewed collaborate with their local government, public administration, local agencies, and NGOs, most expressed a need for more active collaboration in order to raise awareness about the positive impact higher education can have on the lives of migrants with a refugee(-like) background, and to explore how to use resources efficiently, and how to streamline administrative processes. The latter include lengthy asylum and visa procedures, time-consuming and overly difficult procedures for the formal recognition of prior learning, lack of financial and student support, and housing issues. These issues lead to particularly high dropout rates amongst students with a refugee(-like) background who participate in bridging courses and support programmes, and also amongst those enrolled in degree programmes. The identification of migrants with a refugee(-like) background who might be interested in enrolling in support programmes and degree courses is reported to be an additional challenge that might be diminished through enhanced collaboration with public administration.

(21) "Inclusion", *Utrecht University*, accessed June 24 2021, <https://www.uu.nl/en/education/inclusion>.

At the level of the institution, some of the interviewees reported continued lack of central support, and the need for a more structured set of services devoted to migrant students with a refugee(-like) background, especially in the area of admissions. Some of the universities have already adapted admission procedures, and others were discussing the possibility of positive discrimination, e.g. lowering language requirements and requirements of formal documentation of these students' prior learning.



## Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 crisis has impacted the day-to-day life of people around the world. During the pandemic, higher education institutions largely moved their classes online (UNESCO, 2021). At the time of writing, the immediate impact on students from disadvantaged and migration backgrounds has already been acknowledged (e.g. European Parliament, 2021), with the long-term impact on those from a disadvantaged background only beginning to become evident (European Commission, 2021; AHEAD, 2020). The majority of institutions were considering continuing with blended and hybrid forms of education provision post-pandemic.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the question of ensuring equal access to digitally enhanced forms of higher education will remain a concern, especially for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Interviewees were asked about the impact of the pandemic on their activities for students with a refugee(-like) background, and whether they felt that due to Covid-19, priorities of their institutions had changed in a way that diversity and inclusion would take a lesser, or perhaps even a more important role.

### *Impact on diversity and inclusion at higher education institutions*

Interviewees reported no negative impact on the universities' overall diversity and inclusion strategies.

On the contrary, several interviewees described that the pandemic "shone a light" on the importance of accessibility and inclusion. It has underlined the need for coordinated strategies for inclusion for all disadvantaged learners, including those with a refugee(-like) background. The need to remove barriers, for instance in the context of digital learning and teaching, has never been more evident. Some interviewees confirmed that due to the challenges raised by Covid-19, strategic documents and approaches regarding learning and teaching are being revised, not only with a view to digitalisation, but also with a closer eye on accessibility. Diversity and inclusion, therefore, firmly remain high on the agenda of many of the institutions interviewed, and in some cases even on the policy agenda of their higher education systems. For example, despite the pandemic, Finland has finalised a nationwide action plan to enhance access to higher education (Kosunen, 2021).

### *Impact on support measures and students with a refugee(-like) background*

Unfortunately, most interviewees reported that the pandemic had a negative impact on their support programmes for migrants with a refugee(-like) background, and on the students that they are

(22) This is based on anecdotal evidence from the participants in EUA's Thematic Peer Groups on digitally enhanced learning and teaching. See "Learning and Teaching Thematic Peer Groups", European University Association, accessed 21 June 2021, <https://www.eua.eu/101-projects/540-learning-teaching-thematic-peer-groups.html>.

trying to assist. Most of the challenges resulted from switching to an online format for language training, bridging courses and consultations; social and community aspects of the programmes, considered crucial for integration, are largely lacking in an online classroom. Teaching staff in language programmes reported a strong decrease in the spoken language abilities of their students in an online setting. Furthermore, in at least two of the interviewed institutions, new projects to support the target group had to be postponed indefinitely. In-person consultation, student buddy support and legal labs were cancelled, or moved online and offered in a limited format. Like many local students, students with a refugee(-like) background reported suffering from loneliness and isolation. Three universities provided anecdotal evidence of increased dropouts from bridging programmes, especially for female students with a refugee(-like) background, who may have had to take on additional family responsibilities due to the pandemic (e.g. related to temporary closures of schools and childcare facilities). One institution reported that they were unable to support the large number of requests for additional financial aid from their degree students with a refugee(-like) background, many of whom were struggling financially due to the loss of part-time student jobs.

On a positive note, several interviewees reported that there was no decrease in the enthusiasm of staff and students that work in refugee support programmes, despite the various challenges they themselves had to face due to the pandemic. Several of the institutions that offer bridging courses reported that the move online had made their programmes more accessible. In one case, the programme is open to students from across the country, which previously involving high travel costs for some participants. Especially older students with a refugee(-like) background and those with caring responsibilities actually welcomed the option of attending courses remotely, as this made it easier for them to combine their academic and family lives. One interviewee stated that due to the pandemic, awareness of the difficulties that students with a refugee(-like) background face has increased at the central level of the institution, and that there is evidence to suggest that the atmosphere of support will be even more positive post Covid-19.

## Interviewees' recommendations

Interviewees agreed that broader institutional strategies or other central level steering documents for diversity, equity and inclusion were crucial for the success of their support activities for migrants with a refugee(-like) background. At institutions where diversity, inclusion and equity have become core to the university's organisational culture, the work around the integration of refugees and migrants also improved. Success in this area requires both widespread engagement across the institution – from senior leadership and management to staff and students – to bring about sustainable and long-lasting changes, and the revision of administrative structures and admission criteria in favour of the target group. Continuous revision of strategic documents and policies was recommended, in order to ensure their responsiveness to new challenges, e.g. those arising from the Covid-19 crisis.

Apart from the humanitarian responsibility to support migrants with a refugee(-like) background, the institutional narrative should focus on quality of education and research and the removal of obstacles for all disadvantaged/non-traditional learners. Interviewees brought many arguments in favour of diversity, linking not only to the third mission of the university and its role as an actor in society, but also to its research mission: "[...] diverse perspectives are necessary to achieve excellence in research. Therefore, the more diverse the institution is, the more creative and innovative they can be."<sup>23</sup>

(23) Interview with Andrea, D. Bührmann, University of Göttingen, Germany.

Collaboration and dialogue with other higher education institutions was recommended, to exchange on common challenges and good practices, to pool resources and offer joint support, to reach inter-institutional agreements on e.g. adapted admissions criteria, and to inform policy makers on the issues faced by students with a refugee(-like) background that stem from national administration procedures e.g. visa, asylum, financial support, and recognition procedures. National networks and structures, such as the National Rectors' Conferences, could be used as platforms of inter-university dialogue on this theme.

Virtually all institutions underlined the need to collect further evidence and adapt their support offer, as well as their administrative procedures accordingly, e.g. by revising admissions criteria, offering the option of part-time studies to students with a disadvantaged background, introducing additional consultation and mentoring services, and enhancing bridging courses.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The interviews carried out for the UNI(di)VERSITY project provide evidence that linking support for migrants with a refugee(-like) background to institutional strategies for diversity – even if only in principle – enables a more systematic, integrated approach. Likewise, national frameworks for enhancing access for disadvantaged learners further strengthen the work carried out by institutions in this field. Increased emphasis on the social dimension in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) could positively impact national policy support for universities' diversity and inclusion work in the near future, and in turn perhaps also benefit the work they carry out for migrants with a refugee(-like) background.

The diversity and inclusion strategies of higher education institutions participating in the interviews are mostly of a "catch-all" nature, with a focus on mainstreaming and non-discrimination. In the majority of cases, strategies do not explicitly target (potential) students with a refugee(-like) background. However, this does not need to be a disadvantage per se for the inclusion of students with such a background; at institutions where diversity, inclusion and equity have become a core element of the organisational culture, work surrounding the integration of refugees and migrants has also improved. In the few cases of higher education institutions with strategic documents referring to "refugees", the term is used in the broadest sense, covering a range of legal statuses and backgrounds. Some of the support programmes are more targeted, addressing those with specific legal statuses, such as asylum seekers.

The majority of institutions cannot collect information on the migration background and status of their students and staff due to legal restrictions, which prevents targeted approaches, monitoring of the impact of support programmes, and tracking of academic progress and careers. Some of the participating institutions mentioned that those in a refugee(-like) situation may take part in support programmes, but only full refugee status puts them legally on par with national students and enables enrolment into degree programmes.

Whilst diversity and inclusion strategies are often similar in their definition and scope, implementation of the related activities and services differs vastly across the institutions interviewed due to governance and management structures. Depending on the institution, diversity and inclusion can be in the portfolio of different vice-rectors, or even the rector. Support offices can be linked to different administrative structures – from international offices to human resources. Capacities and



resources also differ, of course, with great variation in the number of support staff and volunteers involved.

But irrespective of the structure, it seems evident that engagement across the institution – including leadership, students, staff and representatives of the target group itself – is important for successful implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies and related activities. Particularly for the support of those in a refugee(-like) situation, engagement and collaboration beyond the institution, e.g. with municipalities and NGOs, is mentioned as an important factor.

Institutions offer a wide range of activities for migrants with a refugee(-like) background. The majority offers language and bridging courses, fee waivers and other direct financial support, and buddy programmes. Some universities are also involved in awareness-raising amongst the university community and amongst the general population, aiming to change the narrative around forced migration and refugees. This, for instance, includes cultural exchanges, sports events and other integration activities involving both the local population and migrants with a refugee(-like) background, commonly beyond the group of potential students.

In carrying out these activities, institutions face similar challenges. Funding to run support programmes was mentioned by almost all participants. Many also pointed to issues around the monitoring of the impact of strategies and support measures, and challenges to identify and reach out to potential students with this background. There is a need for enhanced national support and active collaboration with national administrative structures, for instance in order to streamline procedures for asylum and academic recognition. Several interviewees also pointed to a need for change in higher education institutions' administration – especially in the area of admissions – and called for positive discrimination for the target group when it comes to language and other admission requirements.

The Covid-19 crisis brought numerous additional challenges for higher education institutions, their staff and students. For instance, interviewees reported issues around the accessibility of online learning, lower language learning success in an online setting, and loss of part-time jobs for the participants of their refugee support programmes. However, some positive impact could also be reported. For instance, due to online provision of support programmes, previously geographically hard to reach classes became more widely accessible.

Notably, there was no apparent negative impact on the overall diversity and inclusion work nor on the strategies of the participating higher education institutions. One interviewee observed that, in fact, the pandemic has shone a light on the situation of students with a refugee(-like) background, and the problems that they, and other disadvantaged learners face. Generally, a renewed interest in the topic of accessibility and inclusion at the institution was reported by some, which may well lead to improved practices and strategies in the future.

To enhance diversity and inclusion – and support for those with a refugee(-like) background – in the future, interviewees stated that strategies, policies and measures should continuously be revised and adapted. Issues around the collection of data for specific target groups, such as students with a refugee(-like) background, need to be addressed to enhance monitoring. Interviewees recommended collaboration with actors across the institution, including representatives of the target group. Inter-institutional networks are a means to enable peer learning and pooling of resources, and provide a way to offer joint support. Finally, a change of narrative is recommended, acknowledging that diversity and inclusion are not merely a matter of the institutions' third mission, but can contribute to the overall quality of higher education.



# ANNEX I

## Case studies

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**ULB**

UNIVERSITÉ  
LIBRE  
DE BRUXELLES

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# GHENT UNIVERSITY

## Belgium

Interview with Badra Djait, Diversity and Gender Coordinator



### Linking migrants with a refugee(-like) background to the diversity strategy

Ghent University has a comprehensive [Diversity policy and action plan](#) which strives to create an inclusive university where everyone feels they belong and can develop their talents. The university's strategy is therefore all-encompassing and includes migrants with a refugee(-like) background without specifically targeting them.



### Definition of the target group

Ghent University opts for a mainstreaming approach, grouping recognised refugees with all newcomers, which includes all those who have recently arrived in Belgium. Recognised refugees are awarded exactly the same rights as Belgian students. However, asylum seekers have a separate status and due to federal law, are not awarded these same rights. The university defines students with a migration background as those of whom at least one parent did not have Belgian nationality at birth. A distinction is made between EU and non-EU. International students, with an address outside of Belgium, are not included in this category.



### History of the diversity strategy

Ghent University began working on the topic of diversity in 2008, and before this, a specific gender policy already existed. Refugee students and students with a migration background are included in the work of the diversity strategy without being singled out as a target group. Nonetheless, specific projects aimed at newcomers and migrants were launched in 2012, which increased in 2015 after the onset of the refugee crisis.



### Enhancing the diversity skills of students and staff

As part of the Diversity policy and action plan, the university is working on several key projects. These include:

- A [diversity scan](#), launched in February 2021, in-

volving five faculties which aims to help lecturers screen and adapt their learning materials to ensure a more diversity-sensitive education;

- A coaching trajectory for staff in collaboration with students, as part of the diversity scan;
- Support and training for teachers, launched in April 2021, to ensure that they incorporate diversity as much as possible into their teaching practices.

“The university itself can improve the integration of refugees and migrants by making diversity, inclusion and equity a core part of the university's organisational culture.”

### Activities and services for refugees and asylum seekers



Ghent University supports refugee students in the following ways:

- A contact point for refugees with one dedicated staff member was set up in 2015;
- A preparatory course for potential students who are newcomers to Belgium was launched in 2012 in collaboration with the city council. It aims at supporting those wishing to pursue higher education, including [academic Dutch classes](#) for refugees for a minimal fee;
- They help refugees get recognition of their diplo-



- mas in collaboration with the city council;
- o An elective course for mentor students entitled “University-wide course: Coaching and diversity”, worth three credits. All students, including refugees and those with a migration background, can take part in this mentor project, coaching a mentee for a whole academic year. The mentees tend to be students, and activities include social and study guidance, such as learning to take notes during courses, overcoming language barriers, making study plans and preparing for exam questions, dealing with ICT and learning platforms, and overcoming the fear of failure and uncertainty;
- As refugees are entitled to the same support as Belgian students, the social support centre of Ghent University can assist refugee students based on their financial situation by providing them with a grant or helping them with accommodation.

Ghent University caters for asylum seekers in the following ways:

- Students who are in a particularly vulnerable position, including asylum seekers who have completed two years of secondary school in Belgium, can benefit from a study fund at Ghent University;
- The university has launched the Reno project, which would, from September 2021 onwards, allow asylum seekers to avail of courses at the university worth 24 credits while waiting for their refugee status to be approved.

In addition, there is also the Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees ([CESSMIR](#)) at Ghent University, which focuses on the social impact of migration and fleeing.



### Statistics and monitoring

No official statistics are gathered on refugees. However, every year, Ghent University gathers statistics on students with a migration background (EU and non-EU, those who benefit from a grant, those who speak a foreign language at home).

As for activity-related statistics, approximately 10 out of the 20 students who attended the higher education preparatory course for newcomers in 2019-2020 were refugees. In 2018-2019, 11 out of 18 were refugees. Furthermore, in 2020-2021, there were 93 mentors and 148 mentees taking part in the “University-wide course: Coaching and diversity”.

### Challenges and ways to overcome them



The recognition of diplomas is a time-consuming process that needs to be accelerated. Asylum seekers face long waiting times and it can be frustrating if they are finally not granted refugee status and are therefore unable to register as fully-fledged students. Such administrative procedures are out of the university's control. However, the university itself can improve the integration of refugees and migrants by making diversity, inclusion and equity a core part of the university's organisational culture.

### Impact of Covid-19 on the institution's diversity activities



The pandemic forced Ghent University, like all universities, to move the majority of their classes online, including language classes for newcomers. This affected refugees and migrants who would have preferred face-to-face interaction with their teachers. Likewise, the pandemic delayed the above-mentioned “Reno” project.

# UNIVERSITÉ LIBRE DE BRUXELLES (ULB)

## Belgium

Interview with Laurent Licata, Vice-Rector for academic policy and career management, in charge of the diversity and gender policies of ULB

ULB

UNIVERSITÉ  
LIBRE  
DE BRUXELLES



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

The Université Libre de Bruxelles' [diversity plan](#) focuses on origin, age, gender and disability, but does not explicitly mention refugees. It consists of a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the university's situation, its strengths and weaknesses in terms of diversity, and sets out 26 actions to be carried out over the two-year duration of the plan. A part of the diversity plan was developed in consultation with the diversity service of the Brussels-based employment agency [Actiris](#) and targets the institution's staff, not students.



### Definition of the target group

As refugees are not explicitly mentioned in the diversity plans, they are not a defined target group.



### History of the diversity strategy

ULB began working on the topic of diversity in 2016, when it was incorporated into the university's gender policy. The university's activities and services targeting refugees were developed independently from the university's diversity strategy. In terms of a timeline, the university's [Welcome Desk for Refugees](#), actually predates the establishment of the diversity and gender policy. Similarly, ULB established a [Solidarity Fund](#) in 2016, offering support for researchers at risk, including, including asylum seekers and refugees.



### Activities and services for refugees

As stated above, the university has a solidarity fund for researchers at risk, and a desk for refugees, run by the student social service with a view to accompanying refugee students through the registration process. Within ULB, the desk for refugees financially supports admission exams, French lessons and French language proficiency exams for refugees. There is also an [InforEtudes service](#), providing information and guid-

ance to all prospective students.

In addition, the university's registration service exempts refugees or asylum seekers from providing certain documents for their admissions. For example, they are allowed to provide a certificate of success if copies of diplomas are too complicated to acquire.

Furthermore, refugees are exempt from registration fees if they cannot benefit from a grant from the Walonia-Brussels Federation.

ULB is also part of the [Universités hospitalières](#) project, which aims to facilitate access to studies, [support migrants during their academic journey](#) (through discussion groups, the creation of networks and intercultural activities), raise awareness among the community, and take action in society.

“ One of the actions of the diversity plan is to **improve the data on the** different aspects of diversity, which will be hugely important in the **fight against discrimination.** ”

### Coordination, monitoring and dedicated staff



The desk for refugees has dedicated staff who work and collaborate with contact people appointed to the registration service and the InforEtudes service. Its

activities are monitored as part of the student social service.



### Statistics

At the central level of the university, data is only available on staff's nationality, which gives an incomplete picture of diversity related to origin. One of the actions of the diversity plan is to improve the data on the different aspects of diversity, which will be hugely important in the fight against discrimination.

The desk for refugees supported 34 bachelor and master students in 2020-2021. In addition, there were 25 "auditors" (individuals allowed to follow courses, without formally being a student), of which 21 were taking French courses supported by the service. There were 18 auditors of Turkish nationality.



### Challenges, lessons learnt and solutions

Social integration within the university is extremely challenging for refugees, who often express the need to meet people and to be supported in their studies through working groups. Therefore, the desk for refugees is considering setting up a mentoring system to better integrate refugee students into their faculties.



### Impact of **Covid-19** on the institution's diversity activities

The members of staff working at the desk for refugees have been working remotely since the start of the health crisis. However, this has not hampered their support of student candidates thanks to fluid communication via email. The biggest impact of the crisis has been the severe loneliness and isolation felt by these students, much like many other students, but which has certainly been aggravated by their situation.

# UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ (JYU)

## Finland

Interview with Marita Häkkinen, Coordinator of SIMHE – Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education in Finland



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

Refugees, or migrants with a refugee(-like) background, are not explicitly mentioned in the university's Equality Plan for 2019–2021. The strategic document notes that, “The diversity of students is acknowledged in the development of student admission.” Linked to this action area in the plan, adapted admission criteria and dedicated counselling services are offered to potential refugee students. These measures also receive funding on the basis of the strategic development programmes that emphasise equality and non-discrimination.



### Activities and services for refugees and asylum seekers

There are three main lines of support available at University of Jyväskylä:

- The Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education in Finland initiative ([SIMHE](#)) offers guidance and counselling for migrants interested in academic studies in Finland. It was created in 2016 at the university in collaboration with Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, and now spans 10 of the 35 Finnish higher education institutions. It is coordinated by the University of Jyväskylä. Counselling is open to anyone, even those wishing to study at an institution that is not part of SIMHE.
- In recognition of the challenging position of refugees and asylum seekers as degree-seeking applicants, the university offers adapted admissions criteria that enable refugees to apply without documentation of their prior learning. The faculty that they apply to evaluates the educational background based on a summary report.
- The [INTEGRA](#) programme combines academic language training (English and Finnish, worth 45 ECTS credits) with university studies in the participants' own disciplines. It can be accessed by



refugees and asylum seekers as a bridging course. SIMHE guidance is offered as part of INTEGRA training, and an individual follow-up plan outlining next steps is created for each student towards the end of the course.

“ The university Equality Plan does not explicitly define the target group of refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background – rather it **promotes the overall equality and non-discrimination of staff and students** from different language and cultural groups. ”

### Action at national level



The Finnish government is supportive of the measures offered at the university for refugees: SIMHE was founded in response to the proposal by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2016 to establish nation-wide projects that identify the competences of highly educated migrants and guide them towards study and career paths. The INTEGRA programme continues to be funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Admissions criteria are now adapted for refugee applicants across the Finnish higher education sector, based on an agreement between all institutions. Diversity and inclusion are high on the Finnish policy agenda. A [national Action Plan](#) to enhance access to higher education has been developed in consultation



with all stakeholders, including migrants themselves. A draft of this policy was about to be presented to higher education institutions at the time of the interview and was launched in June 2021. This new action plan will impact the university funding frameworks and therefore enhance the funding for support for all disadvantaged learners. It proposes a number of concrete initiatives involving positive discrimination and further adaptation of admissions. The plan will likely also lead to enhanced monitoring.

oral language learning has decreased.



### Definition of the **target** group

The university Equality Plan does not explicitly define the target group of refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background – rather it promotes the overall equality and non-discrimination of staff and students from different language and cultural groups.

The specific support measures are open to different target groups: while only potential students with a full refugee status can apply and benefit from the adjusted admissions criteria, the INTEGRA and SIMHE programme are also open to asylum seekers.



### Implementation and **monitoring**

The Equality Plan is implemented, monitored and newly drafted every three years by the university's Equality Committee. SIMHE is part of the university admissions services. The INTEGRA programme is led by the university language centre.

The Equality Plan does not set concrete targets or quotas. However, its next version will link to the national Action Plan and therefore a clearer definition of target groups is expected to be introduced.

The SIMHE counselled close to 400 potential students between 2016 and 2020. Around half of these had a refugee background. The progress of refugee students cannot be tracked once they are enrolled, as legally the institution cannot collect such information on their students' background.



### **Impact of Covid-19** on the institution's diversity activities

SIMHE's guidance and counselling services are open to anyone, anywhere in Finland. Therefore, they were always online and largely not impacted by Covid-19. INTEGRA has moved 100% online due to Covid-19. This was challenging for some participants: it is an intensive 45-ECTS programme over nine months requiring a lot of online work. Teachers report that especially

# GRENOBLE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT (GEM)

## France

Interview with Jaclyn Rosebrook-Collignon, Head of Sustainability and Global Responsibility



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

Currently, there is no formalised diversity strategy at the Grenoble School of Management (GEM). However, the institution is in the process of acquiring the legal status of a *société à mission*, which involves bringing solutions to the challenges of the 21st century. This status change mandates that a strategy be in place for a number of core areas linked to the UN's SDGs, e.g. to promote quality education for all (SDG 4) and others including diversity. On top of a currently more project-based approach, the institution will be devising a diversity strategy in the near future. In addition, GEM has signed the French national *Charte de Diversité* of the *Grades Écoles de Management*.



### Definition of the target group

Refugees are considered to be those with the official legal status of refugee. Asylum seekers do not fall under this category.



### Refugee Grant Programme and Refugees Working Group

The Grenoble School of Management began working with refugees in 2015.

#### Refugee Grant Programme

Recognised refugees who are qualified and who have certified that they have a B2 level in French are eligible to apply for the institution's international and *grandes écoles* programmes. Ten refugees can be accepted each year: however there are rarely this many who apply. The first intake took place in 2016 with three enrolments. Since 2016, 13 refugees have been accepted. If the refugee is accepted onto the programme, their fees are waived by the institution.

#### Refugees Working Group

The Refugees Working Group comprises the local higher education community<sup>24</sup> as well as several non-education-based organisations. Within this consortium, many activities and support services are organised and offered. The role of each consortium partner, and the support they might offer to all local refugees aligns with the specific competencies of the institution and their students. Activities involving higher education institutions include the following:

- The Université Grenoble Alpes created the [DU pass](#) in 2015, which is a pathway to accelerate refugees' French language skills allowing them to continue or begin their studies.
- To facilitate the application process, the consortium has also created a special portal for refugees where they can find out about the entry processes for the different higher education institutions in the area;
- All refugees in the local higher education community can take part in four-part Career Booster workshops aimed at personal and professional development. In particular, these workshops help participants write their CV and understand the French job market. Career Booster workshops are organised by GEM's diversity coordinator and the student association *Ensemble*, which organises intercultural activities for refugees;
- Students at Science Po are involved in a legal project helping refugees get their legal papers from the French Office for Immigration and Integration;
- Refugees have the possibility to audit courses (not for credit) at GEM (on a case-by-case basis) and the other institutions of the consortium, so they can find out more about the schools and programmes they are interested in attending.

(24) Grenoble School of Management, ENSAG School of Architecture, Crous Grenoble Alpes, Universités Sans Frontières Network, CUEF Université Grenoble Alpes, Grenoble INP (School of Engineering) and Science Po Grenoble

Activities involving non-higher education institution organisations include:

- The student support network, the CROUS, offers assistance to refugees regarding accommodation, canteen passes, grants and social assistance;
- The local antenna of [SINGA](#) helps refugees and other newcomers to build social, professional and entrepreneurial projects.

The Refugees Working Group has also been involved in the [Migrants dans l'Enseignement Supérieur](#) (Migrants in Higher Education) network since 2017. In addition to the work carried out by the consortium, they work with the local metropolitan area, which has access to a larger number of refugees and is particularly active when it comes to refugees' employment opportunities.

“We would like to reach out to refugees who are currently not eligible to apply for higher education programmes, such as unaccompanied minors.”



#### Dedicated staff

GEM has a dedicated Diversity Coordinator who is also in charge of the Career Booster and the accompaniment of “atypical” student profiles. The Diversity Coordinator works on the topics of gender, disability and refugees.

In an informal capacity, the Head of Sustainability also acts as the refugee contact person and represents GEM in the Refugees Working group consortium, assisting ad hoc with academic or financial problems faced by refugee students.

There is also a dedicated student financial advisor for all GEM students who need assistance.



#### Challenges and lessons learnt

Although refugees can apply for the institution's international and *Grandes Écoles* programmes, the vast majority go down the international route. The *Grandes Écoles* selection process – the “*concours*” – is rigorous both academically and culturally. GEM is currently exploring with other *Grandes Écoles* whether it would be possible to waive some of the requirements. The selection process for the international programmes is more straightforward and the classes are taught in English. Nonetheless, pursuing the international programme can cause difficulties for refugee students. For example, they may not have the visa required to undertake an internship abroad, which is a compulsory component for many of these programmes. Furthermore, for those wishing to stay in France long-term, finding employment straight away can be problematic as they may not have the required level of professional French, be familiar with French work culture, or have an appropriate profile for the local French job market. Refugees face many other challenges such as administrative, academic and financial issues. Firstly, getting refugees into the programmes is, of course, a long and drawn-out process. When they are enrolled as students, many have to work alongside their studies, leading to less time for their education. In addition, as the majority are mature students, it is more difficult to get a grant from the CROUS.

#### How to overcome these challenges



With such a small sample of refugees, solutions tend to be found on a case-by-case basis. That being said, it is clear that there is a need for more structured, targeted support in the future. Professional mentoring programmes are currently being developed within the consortium which could be a big help to refugee students in the future. Also, GEM would like to reach out to refugees who are currently not eligible to apply for higher education programmes, such as unaccompanied minors.

#### Impact of Covid-19 on the institution's diversity activities



As human contact is crucial for this target group, supporting refugees remotely has been challenging. The university is planning to collect informal feedback from the refugee students at the end of the academic year to see how they fared academically in the face of the pandemic.

# UNIVERSITY OF GÖTTINGEN

## Germany

Interview with Andrea Dorothea Buehrmann, Diversity Research Institute, Vice President for Teaching, Learning and Equal Opportunities<sup>25</sup>



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

The University of Göttingen aims at a truly inclusive catch-all strategy, neither discriminating against nor favouring any group of staff or students. Responding to the needs of refugee students is incorporated into their [diversity strategy](#).



### Definition of the target group

In general, the University of Göttingen operates a policy of self-identification when it comes to its diversity activities and support services. However, refugees must have the required legal status to benefit from any targeted refugee support.



### Target agreements with the State of Lower Saxony

There is no specific diversity or refugee target agreement, but rather targets for women, international students and people with disabilities. These targets apply to all universities in Lower Saxony and have funding implications for the institution.



### Activities and services for refugees

The University of Göttingen is engaged in a [Refugees Welcome!](#) project, with a dedicated task force. With the help of funding from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the university offers:

- Special office hours for refugees;
- A dedicated contact person for refugees;
- The possibility for refugees to enrol as guest students;
- German classes, including academic integration classes for scholars and students;
- Special library offerings;



- A Scholars at Risk (SAR) office.

In addition, there are many student-led initiatives, such as:

- ConquerBabel – translation services and German classes;
- A free Refugee Law Clinic, where student volunteers can be awarded credits;
- ConnAction – sports offering for refugees.

“

Diverse perspectives  
are **necessary to**  
**achieve excellence**  
in research.

”

### Monitoring and statistics



Over the past few years, there had been one expert full-time staff member dealing with refugees. Unfortunately, for budgetary reasons, this post was discontinued in April 2021. However, although there may be fewer refugees, those currently enrolled require more assistance.

(25) Andrea D. Bührmann occupied this position in March 2021, when this interview took place.





## Challenges and lessons learnt

The University of Göttingen is confident about the philosophy underpinning their diversity strategy, also espoused by the Association of American Colleges and Universities in their [Making Excellence Inclusive](#) campaign. To be a well-respected research university, the key to success is focusing on the research-based argument that diverse perspectives are necessary to achieve excellence in research.<sup>26</sup>



## Impact of **Covid-19** on the institution's diversity activities

The university's learning strategy is based on a capabilities approach whereby digitisation, internationalisation and diversity are necessary to make enhanced research courses.

However, Covid-19 shone a light on accessibility and inclusion when it comes to digital learning and teaching technologies, and has underlined the importance of removing all barriers to such technologies, including for refugees.

“ The University of Göttingen aims at a **truly inclusive catch-all strategy**, neither discriminating against nor favouring any group of staff or students. ”

(26) Andrea D. Bührmann, The Reflexive Diversity Research Programme. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021.

# UNIVERSITY OF THE AEGEAN

## Greece

Interview with Chryssi Vitsilaki, Rector of the University of the Aegean



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

The University of the Aegean addresses issues of diversity as part of their overall inclusiveness strategy. These are realised in the mandate and everyday work of various committees for gender equality, refugees, and people with special needs. In terms of strategic documents, a four-year plan is currently under preparation, which will include the inclusiveness strategy explicitly. The university adopts a catch-all approach, enabling people with a migration background, asylum seekers and those with full refugee status to access all relevant services.



### History of the diversity strategy and refugee support

The University of the Aegean has supported refugees for almost 20 years, with an intensification since 2016 due to the rapid increase of immigrant and refugee populations.



### Activities and services available to refugees

The University of the Aegean offers a wide range of services to refugees and is involved in many refugee-related initiatives, namely:

- Greek language courses offered voluntarily by members of the academic staff and students from the School of Social Sciences;
- Enhancement of intercultural education with [special programmes and activities](#), both in the university facilities and in the first reception centres for immigrants and refugees;
- Training teachers in intercultural education for courses that concern refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background;
- A [permanent refugee and migration observatory](#) with international recognition, as well as research programmes and awareness raising encouraging



social integration and coexistence with the local population, such as the “The perspective of a permanent refugees’ and immigrants’ settlement in Greece” programme, funded by the [HFRI](#);

- Continuous cooperation with international organisations for the protection of refugee populations, such as the Protocol of Cooperation between the University of the Aegean and the UNHCR;
- Integration of refugees and students with a refugee(-like) background through the Science4Refugees in Aegean Archipelago ([SCIREA](#)) project and participation of the teaching staff in the Scientific Committee for the Support of Refugee Children;
- Participation in the Greek section of Scholars at Risk for the support of refugees with an academic profile.

In addition, the university has signed a special cooperation protocol with local and regional authorities to offer academic and research expertise on the subject.

“ the Covid-19 crisis raised challenges vis-à-vis teaching and training. **The university’s strategic documents and approaches should therefore be adapted**, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic.”



### Coordination, implementation and monitoring

Activities and services have their own particular features, and are implemented by academics, students, postgraduates and PhDs, as well as with the involvement of target group members.

The implementation is mostly monitored through the guidelines and evaluation plans of the various national and international agencies funding the research. The internal quality of the administrative aspects of research is certified by the [relevant national agency](#) and the research design and implementation are certified by the approval of the [University's Ethics of Research Committee](#).



### Statistics

Around 600 students have been supported, mostly from Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia.



### Challenges, lessons learnt and future aspirations

The integration of young people with a refugee(-like) background through the SCIREA project has been a challenging task, as has training teachers in intercultural education.

As for the effects of the pandemic, the process of social integration for the existing refugee population remains on track, with a reduction in the flow of migrants with a refugee(-like) background being observed. The post-Covid-19 era, however, remains uncertain regarding future influxes of migrants with a refugee(-like) background and the problems that might emerge.

Moreover, the Covid-19 crisis raised challenges vis-à-vis teaching and training. The university's strategic documents and approaches should therefore be adapted, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic.

# SAPIENZA UNIVERSITY OF ROME

## Italy

Interview with Graziella Gaglione, Head of Unit “International Education and European Programmes Unit”



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

The Scientific Technical Committee on Diversity and Inclusion, created by Sapienza, comprises professors, technical-administrative staff and students. Members were appointed on 29 January 2021 by Rectoral Decree. The committee aims to implement strategic plans and projects to enhance individuals' potential, support equality and integration, promote collaboration, and create new networks, both internal and external, to foster inclusion policies.

As far as refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background are concerned, Sapienza University of Rome has adhered to the UNHCR's [Manifesto of the Inclusive University](#) since 2019, which aims to support the admission of refugees to university education and research, and promote social integration and active participation in academic life.

Evidence suggests that all these elements are feeding into Sapienza's inclusion policy and strategy, creating a unique set of aims and values.



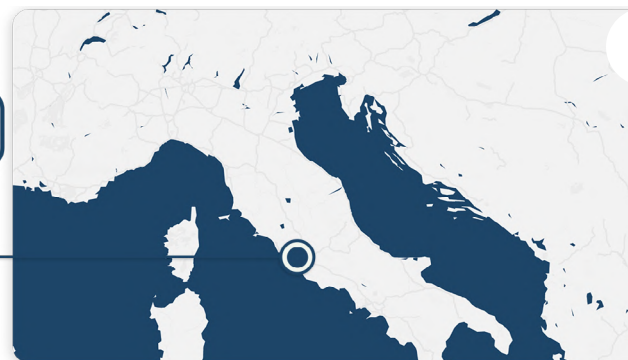
### Definition of the target group

There is no specific definition of target groups such as refugees, scholars at risk or migrants with a refugee(-like) background, but Sapienza pays special attention to inclusive policies and strategies aimed at avoiding any form of racism and discrimination, as well as at backing integration and inclusion.



### History of the diversity strategy

Sapienza has a long-standing experience in strategies and services dedicated to physical disabilities and specific learning difficulties. Attention to refugees has grown in importance over the recent years. Since signing the manifesto, a working group has been established which identifies the different emerging needs



of students or prospective students who are refugees or have a refugee(-like) background. In addition, as stated above, in February 2021, a [Technical and Scientific Committee on Diversity and Inclusion](#) was set up which promotes the processes of inclusion and fights any form of direct or indirect discrimination within the university.

### Degree course on Global Humanities



Moreover, in line with the Manifesto of the Inclusive University, Sapienza has launched a [BA in Global Humanities](#). This is a three-year degree open to Italian and international students wishing to pursue careers as journalists, as well as careers in public bodies, co-operation and humanitarian organisation. The course focuses on global citizenship, allowing students to expand their knowledge on:

- the complex historical processes affecting the global transformation of contemporary societies;
- the history of religions, anthropology, sociology, migration studies, global health, legal studies and political sciences.

“ There is a real need to **collaborate** more actively with **different local agencies and entities** specifically dedicated to refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background. ”





## Services and activities offered to refugees and migrants

The working group is engaged in a wide range of activities, namely:

- the [UNICORE 3.0 project](#), backed by the UNHCR which is the implementation of university corridors for refugees from Ethiopia to some Italian universities;
- advocacy within the [Scholars At Risk initiative](#);
- the development of a set of services specifically aimed at helping refugees and migrant students with a refugee(-like) background with academic and socio-civic issues;
- research on the situation of refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background in academia, such as the invisibility of migrants during the Covid era and the mobility of migrant students in 2019;
- the project “[Mentorship - Towards an Italian network of inclusive universities](#)” which aims to encourage student participation and develop dialogue on the role of young people as key players in promoting inclusion and multiculturalism, and which involves tutoring activities for foreign students.

In addition, the university offers:

- recognition procedures for refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background;
- orientation on admission policies to study programmes;
- some places for international students on a bridging or [foundation year](#), to get acquainted with the Italian education system and culture;
- the [HELLO International Student Help Desk](#), which caters for international students, students with a refugee(-like) background and refugees alike.



## Coordination, monitoring and statistics

Currently, within Sapienza there is no central coordinator of all ongoing activities aimed at supporting refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background. However, coordination takes place through the engagement and commitment of the manifesto's working group and through the previously-mentioned technical committee.

As for statistics, refugee students are not identifiable through the registration system. Some data is available, however, through projects and programmes: A joint initiative of the Ministry of Interior and Confer-

ence of Rectors provides 100 [scholarships](#) every year to young refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background, allowing them to enrol on a Bachelor's, Master's or PhD programme, out of which an average of six or seven scholarship holders are enrolled at Sapienza.

Thanks to the [Mentorship Project](#) launched in Sapienza in September 2020, 48 students (30 male and 18 female) have been supported, mainly from countries outside Europe, such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Iran, Colombia, Afghanistan, Brazil, China and Japan. In the 2020-2021 academic year, there were 9,863 migrants from all over the world who registered as students and accessed the university's integration services.

## Challenges and ways to overcome them



Sapienza University of Rome has found the identification of refugees and of migrants with a refugee(-like) background extremely challenging. As for existing gaps, there is a real need to collaborate more actively with different local agencies and entities specifically dedicated to refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background. There is also an urgency to create a structured set of services devoted to refugees and students with a refugee(-like) background managed by the Central Administration of Sapienza.

A central-level strategic document, as an expression of the commitment of the university's governing body, can play a crucial role in overcoming challenges relating to the inclusion of refugee and migrant students. Therefore, the top-down approach in this regard is extremely important, if not imperative.

## Impact of Covid-19 on the institution's diversity activities



The Covid-19 crisis has affected refugee students and students with a refugee(-like) background in a hard-hitting way. At the beginning of the pandemic, the university received many requests for help, mainly from students who relied financially on part-time jobs, sometimes even undeclared work.

The university is therefore increasingly aware of the difficulties that refugees and migrants with a refugee(-like) background face today and there is evidence that the situation post Covid-19 could improve, also due to the European Commission's policies on inclusion.

# UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO

## Italy

Interview with Barbara Poggio, Vice-Rector for Equality and Diversity



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

Equality and cultural diversity are among the founding principles of the University of Trento and are embraced as part of the institution's daily life. In order to achieve this objective, the University of Trento approved [a Three-year Plan for Positive Action \(2017-2019\)](#) which includes tools and measures aimed at identifying and removing any discrimination based on gender, religion or belief, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation and sexual or gender identity, disability, age, and occupation.

Linked to this strategy is the university's reception programme, which targets asylum seekers and/or those under international humanitarian protection who have the necessary qualifications to attend university.



### Definition of the **target** group

The target group is composed of asylum seekers and refugee students who are already in the Province of Trento.



### History of the strategy and the refugee initiatives

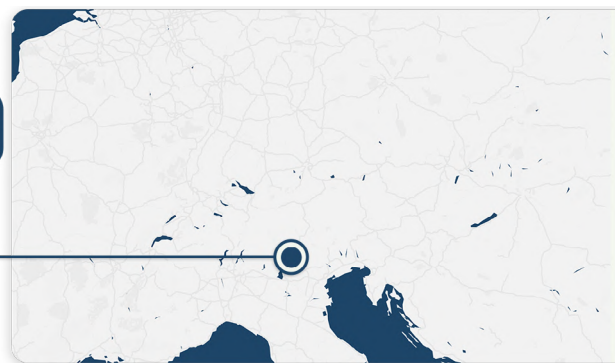
The strategy on equality and diversity has been in place since 2014, and the engagement on refugees' issues started in the same year.

Linked to the strategy, the project [UniTrento for Refugees](#) (2016-2021) on the reception of asylum seekers at the university has been launched. The project began with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in July 2016 as a joint commitment between the university and the Province of Trento to guarantee the right of access to university education to applicants and/or holders of international protection.



### Impact of refugee initiatives on the **International Migration Laboratory (IML)**

The University of Trento is also home to an [International Migration Laboratory](#) (IML), which is not part



of the UniTrento for Refugees project, but has some overlapping activities.

It promotes training, research and informed debate on migration and its consequences for departure, transit and arrival. This involves collaboration with the main actors in the field of immigration of the Trentino region. The IML coordinates research activities on the subject of international migration across the various departments of the University of Trento.

To fulfil the project's objectives, representatives of the different university departments cooperate with the Vice-Rector for Equity and Diversity Policies and the Equality & Diversity Office.

“Equality and cultural diversity are among the **founding principles** of the University of Trento and are embraced as part of the institution's daily life.”

### Activities and services for refugees



The UniTrento for Refugees project offers five study places for a full degree course to refugees and asylum seekers each academic year. There is a four-step selection procedure involving:

- pre-selection of eligible candidates in collaboration with the local authorities;
- selection of candidates by the Equality & Diversity Office through an interview to learn about interests and previous studies;
- orientation about the choice of degree course and support in the registration phase;
- access to free courses in Italian, computer science and peer tutoring before taking the entrance test.

provide further support, such as:

- foundation courses in basic subjects;
- orientation meetings and buddy support;
- scholarships and grants;
- more flexible enrolment procedures;
- part-time study options for working students;
- creating a permanent and coordinated working group to meet and balance support needs;
- dialogue on common challenges and good practices with all actors involved.

The main [activities](#) of the project are:

- providing guidance on academic choice;
- assessing the students' foreign qualifications;
- exempting students from tuition fees for single courses and Italian language courses;
- reserving a number of places for asylum seekers;
- helping students apply for scholarships and accommodation at Opera Universitaria.



#### Coordination, monitoring and **statistics**

A working group coordinates, implements and monitors all activities relating to refugee students. Actors include the student welcome office, psychological support services and the Study and Tuition Service Office. Since 2016, 22 students have benefited from the refugee reception project. More specifically, this concerns 11 students from West Africa, one from Central Africa, two from the Middle East, seven from South East Asia and one from Latin America.

In terms of status, one student has been a recognised refugee, two have been subsidiary protection holders, one has been a humanitarian protection holder and 18 have been applicants for International Protection.



#### **Challenges** and lessons learnt

The limits and challenges facing refugee students are profound, including lengthy recognition procedures, juggling family life and studies, high dropout rates, difficulties meeting admission requirements, poor skills in basic disciplinary areas, access to accommodation, poor materials, and lack of financial support.



#### **Enhancing refugee initiatives** into the future

The university would like to widen the programme to include refugees from outside the province, and to

# MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY (UM)

## Netherlands

Interview with Dr. Constance Sommerey, Chief Diversity Officer & Luc van den Akker, Financial Aid Officer



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

Maastricht University (UM) has a global [diversity strategy](#) which focuses on activities rather than diversity characteristics.



### Definition of the **target** group

Refugees need have the required legal status to be considered refugees. If they are not yet recognised as legal refugees, they are considered to be asylum seekers.

While at UM, over 50% of the students are not Dutch, “migration background” would refer to “students with a non-western background.” These students are invited to self-identify.



### Strengthening diversity competencies

UM offers international classroom training as part of its diversity strategy. This is included in their basic teacher training programme and includes intercultural competencies, such as how to create an inclusive atmosphere in the classroom with people of diverse backgrounds without singling out refugees.



### Activities and services for refugees and students with a non-western background

#### Refugees

UM has a language centre which offers mandatory Dutch and social integration courses for refugees of a certain educational level allowing them to obtain their residence status. These classes act as a stepping stone to higher education for many refugees.

At UM, refugees pay the same tuition fees as European students but are exempt from paying the registration fee. In addition, UM implements the [UMHERS scholarship programme](#), offering five tuition waivers per academic year for talented [refugee](#) students living in the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion. UM also allows asylum seek-



ers to enrol in their courses. Unlike other institutions, which require asylum seekers to pay non-European tuition fees, UM only requires them to pay the same tuition fees as refugees and European students, making it a popular study destination among this target group. UM has psychologists who work with refugees. Ad hoc solutions are also provided to refugees on an individual basis, such as academic mentors and student buddies.

#### Students with a non-western background

UM boasts a range of special networks and student organisations for students with a non-western background, such as Afro-Caribbean students and Asian students. UM makes a pointed effort to consult these networks on the topic of inclusion. One example of this collaboration is the attempt to appoint people of colour among student support staff to deal with issues such as racial discrimination.

The university holds targeted events such as empowerment workshops for students of colour and anti-racism workshops. In addition, UM is engaged in the integration of students with a non-western background in the Dutch labour market. It is currently planning an alumni-led workshop series for members of the target group who wish to stay working in the Netherlands, and the surrounding area, after their studies.

Research on diversity and inclusion is also at the heart of UM's work. Research into racism is currently ongoing, including focus groups for students and staff of colour as well as the entire university community. UM is currently devising a working definition of racism because it sees that experiences are interpreted differently by different students and staff, which makes it very difficult to address discrimination.





## Coordination, monitoring and **statistics**

To monitor the inclusivity of the classroom and the workforce, recurring surveys are circulated among staff and students. A future aspiration is to have students assess their tutors and fellow students on the inclusiveness of the classroom atmosphere, competencies which are not yet formally assessed. If diversity and inclusion is something that is to be taken seriously, UM should have the means to monitor it. If competencies relating to diversity and inclusion are not included in evaluations, these topics will not be addressed.

UM has a central contact person and mediator for refugees. This role involves being in contact with the university's admissions officers, the municipality, and organisations dealing with refugees for financial support and housing.

UM collects data on refugees' legal status as well as their country of origin, but does not collect data on students with a non-western background. In 2021, approximately 50 refugees were enrolled in UM. No other data can be shared for privacy reasons. The central contact person cannot take any information from this database and it is up to the refugees themselves to get in touch with the contact person, if they so wish.

“ If diversity and inclusion is something that is to be taken seriously, **UM should have the means to monitor it.** If competencies relating to diversity and inclusion are not included in evaluations, these topics will not be addressed. ”



## **Challenges** and lessons learnt

The higher education journey is a long and complicated path for refugees in the Netherlands and at UM. Enrolling on a higher education course can take up to two years, involving getting transcripts, and mastering English and learning Dutch, among other skills. Once

enrolled, other challenges come to the fore. Many may only be studying because their foreign diploma is not recognised and therefore may not be motivated. Others may face financial or psychological problems, due to the fierce pressure they are under, hampering their studies and resulting in them re-enrolling on a course several times.

A key lesson learnt has therefore been expectation management. Both university staff and refugees need to have a realistic picture of the journey ahead in order not to become too frustrated or disheartened. Therefore, key advice is to take things one step at a time and to be patient.

In the future, UM would like to invest much more in support services for refugee students, so that they are less ad hoc. To achieve this, they would like to sit down with refugee students and discuss their needs with them in terms of additional institutional support services, especially for onboarding students.

## Impact of **Covid-19** on the institution's diversity activities



As refugees tend to be used to face-to-face communication and physical paperwork, the fully online society, fuelled by the pandemic, has been of great difficulty.

Students with a migration background, especially those that came to UM from further away, have experienced extreme loneliness during the pandemic, which the university has been trying to address by providing some online events.

Students facing a language barrier have also found online teaching extremely challenging during the pandemic. The comfort of being able to use hand gestures and expressions to explain themselves has been taken away, and certain students are therefore more reluctant to speak up in class.

That being said, some students have appreciated the opportunity to return to their home countries, rather than being isolated in the Netherlands, while continuing their studies at UM. In this way, the pandemic has shown the university how they can offer education across the globe.

# UTRECHT UNIVERSITY (UU)

## Netherlands

Interview with Ragna Senf, Project Manager of the Inclusion programme



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

Utrecht University (UU) has a dedicated [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion \(EDI\) Strategy and Action Plan](#) in place for 2021 to 2025, directly linking to the overarching strategy of Utrecht University. In it, values such as equality, diversity, inclusion, accessibility and mutual respect are formulated as important points of departure for all the university's activities.

The EDI Strategy and Action Plan makes specific reference to refugees. It aims to develop and provide training and work experience places for refugees with and without residence status, and to generally raise awareness about EDI. Emphasis is put on collaboration with the municipality.



### Definition of the target group

Legally, the university cannot collect information on the background of its students or staff. The term refugee is used in the broadest sense possible in the university's support programme [Inclusion](#). This programme especially targets those currently waiting for their refugee status application to be processed, but it is also open to people with a refugee status and rejected asylum seekers. As part of the application process for following a Bachelor's course, potential students with a refugee background are asked to self-declare their status, but no proof is required. However, for traineeships, only those with refugee status and who are receiving benefits from the municipality can apply.



### History of the diversity strategy

The EDI strategy and its link to refugee inclusion were driven by two projects.

The Inclusion programme started as a PhD volunteer project in 2015, asking teaching staff to set up an extra chair in their classes for refugee guest students. Initially, it had no dedicated funding, but rather, funds for other areas were re-allocated for the salaries of part-



time support staff, and donations were used to pay for travel costs.

In parallel, a task force for diversity was set up, initially with a focus on outreach to non-traditional students and employees. Over time, the institution's refugee activities were also linked in. The task force was the basis for the institution's EDI Office, established in 2021.

### Activities and services for refugees and asylum seekers



Through the Inclusion programme the university offers newcomers with a refugee(-like) background the chance to participate as guest students in a range of courses offered by UU and the [University of Humanistic Studies](#). Language training is offered in collaboration with the [English Academy for Newcomers \(EAN\)](#). In addition, a buddy programme links each refugee student to two local students, who offer support on cultural and academic aspects as well as helping with social integration.

A pilot for traineeships for refugees offers unpaid six-month work placements at the university, with potential follow-up employment. The university collaborates with the municipality to ensure that there is no cut in benefits due to the employment status of their interns. The trainees receive training in the Dutch language, professional development, and intercultural awareness. So far, five trainees have taken part in the traineeships and three have received a work contract.

The university is also involved in [pilot projects](#) on the recognition of qualifications held by refugees in the absence of formal proof of qualifications, in line with Article VII of the [Lisbon Recognition Convention \(LRC\)](#).

### Implementation and monitoring



The EDI Office is an overarching office, heavily involved in the different programmes related to equality, inclusion and diversity throughout the university. The office aims to take a bottom-up approach, and many of the concrete tasks are actually carried out by other parts of the university, often in collaboration with various faculties and offices. As the office has only recently been established, its approach is still being formalised. The Inclusion programme is part of the Human Resources office. There are also other projects related to refugee inclusion across the institution, e.g. the [ARENA](#) project with the Admissions office. Furthermore, the project manager of Inclusion is also the primary representative of UU for the Scholars at Risk network.

It is estimated that (apart from Inclusion students) there are about 20 students with a refugee background fully enrolled in the university. Due to the legal limitations on collecting information on the background of students, there is only anecdotal evidence available on these refugee students at the university.

Inclusion itself had about 550 students overall, 30% of whom dropped out. Their progress beyond the programme and whether they proceeded with their studies has not been tracked so far. During the summer of 2021, the results of a survey from former Inclusion students are expected to be published. The programme will be evaluated based on this survey. As from the 2021-2022 academic year, all students will receive a survey at the end of their course, so Inclusion can keep better track of where they go next and why.

“The recent establishment of the EDI Office is a clear statement that the university believes that diversity and inclusion is important and that a diverse **student and employee population, including refugees, is something worth striving for.**”

Funding has been a key issue making it hard to set up teams to support refugees and to address overarching diversity issues. The recent establishment of the EDI Office is a clear statement that the university believes that diversity and inclusion is important and that a diverse student and employee population, including refugees, is something worth striving for.

Dropouts are high amongst Inclusion students, but comparable to the dropout rates at other universities with similar programmes. A lot of these dropouts are unavoidable, with refugees suddenly busy with their procedure and having to focus on that. However, some dropouts may be linked to the language barrier and differences in the education system. Further evidence needs to be collected, and additional support measures may need to be offered, such as preparatory classes or an academic refugee support network. Looking ahead, more focus needs to be placed on making it possible for refugees to continue their initial experience at UU by signing up for a full degree programme.

#### Impact of **Covid-19** on the institution's diversity activities



With Covid-19 and the move to online classes, it has been a stressful year for teaching staff. However, there has been no overall impact on the interest to support refugees by UU teachers. The move online on the one hand made the Inclusion programme more accessible, as it involves refugee students from the entire country, usually with high travel costs involved. On the other hand, the social and community aspects of the programme are completely lacking in an online classroom.



#### Challenges and ways to overcome them

# UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA (UB)

## Spain

Interview with Cati Jerez, Coordinator of the UB Support Programme for Refugees and People from Conflict Zones



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

According to the [University of Barcelona's Strategic Plan 2030](#), it is "strongly committed to society and wants to assume its social responsibility by contributing to the improvement of living conditions and the level of cohesion and social inclusion, both in the community in which it is located and in the rest of the world." In particular, the strategic plan aims to promote proximity between members of different cultures and to support the inclusion of vulnerable and underrepresented groups, including refugees. The strategy is aligned with the [UNHCR and the OECD's complementary pathways to resettlement in third countries](#), the [Global Compact for Refugees](#) and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.



### Diversity and inclusion in a European University initiative

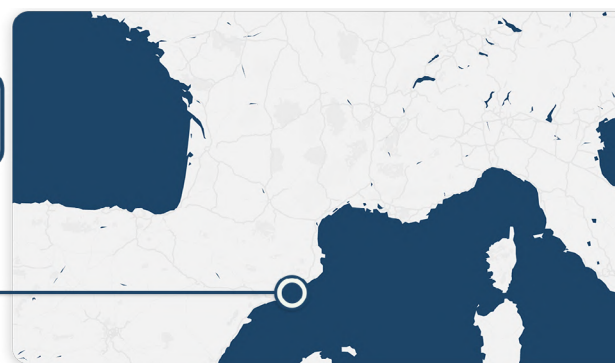
The university leads the [CHARM-EU alliance](#) (together with Trinity College Dublin, the Utrecht University, the University of Montpellier and the Loránd Eötvös University of Budapest), which embraces inclusion as one of its core values. CHARM-EU has identified refugees as an under-represented group and in this framework, where diversity and inclusion refer to a wide range of situations, they are developing an inclusion plan, as well as advice and training for teachers and other staff members within the alliance.

The development of these actions has had an important impact at the CHARM-EU structural level, but will also impact the institutions that come together under it.



### Definition of the target group

Different programmes target the inclusion of people with a refugee(-like) background as well as under-represented and vulnerable groups under the university's diversity activities. The university's [Social Policy](#)



[Program and Access to the University \(PSAU\)](#) targets students with a low socio-economic background, Spanish students, students born in Spain to foreign parents with or without Spanish nationality and foreign students. On the other hand, the university's [Refugee Programme](#) is open to recognised asylum seekers, refugees and people with a refugee(-like) background. Applications from students with a refugee(-like) background are considered on a case-by-case basis. There are synergies between the two programmes, such as the joint development of mentorship programmes

### History of the diversity strategy



In 2005, UB's delegate commission for sustainability and accessibility drafted a document called "Diversity and Accessibility to the UB," leading to the creation of the PSAU several years later. Adopting an inclusive approach, the aim of the PSAU was, and still is, to promote access to vulnerable groups, among which there are migrants with a low socio-economic background and second-generation migrants. In a more targeted approach, the [University of Barcelona's Solidarity Foundation](#) (FSUB) was entrusted with the coordination of the Refugee Programme in 2015, and this marked the beginning of the design and implementation of strategies for the academic and social inclusion of refugees.

### Services and activities available to refugees and migrants



The following services are offered as part of the university's PSAU, within the framework of the Prometheus programme, an initiative supported by Barcelona City Council which promotes the access of low-income students to higher education:

- Accompaniment of migrants with a low so-



cio-economic background of and low-income students from secondary school to their enrolment in university studies;

- Mentorship training and mentorship sessions among Prometheus students and UB university students;
- Follow-up of the achievements and needs of Prometheus students.

The following services are offered as part of the Refugee Programme:

- A transition course to the university specifically targeting refugees who are outside the EU and wish to study at UB, with 15 places each edition, co-financed by the Barcelona City Council. The course focuses on Spanish, Catalan, human rights as well as knowledge of the social, economic and cultural environment;
- Tutorial action plans and permanent academic monitoring for refugees;
- Scholarships for refugees exempting them from tuition fees for undergraduate and Master's degrees;
- A comprehensive scholarship for those following the university's extension course, which covers accommodation, maintenance, as well as permanent psychosocial support;
- Coordinating actions with local entities such as public administration, NGOs, and enterprises to promote the inclusion of refugees in the labour market, such as an internship programme with Nestlé;
- CV and interview clinics in coordination with the student service;
- A protocol for the recognition of prior knowledge;
- Legal advice;
- Awareness-raising actions for the general population and the university community focusing on the origin, causes and consequences of the forced movement of people.



#### Coordination, implementation and monitoring

The FSUB is made up of two people who are tasked with designing and implementing the Refugee Programme.

Psychological support services are coordinated with the Faculty of Psychology and with the PSAU, with their monitoring and evaluation being coordinated by the

FSUB.

Social inclusion activities are carried out by the FSUB, including peer-to-peer activities and volunteering, with the Student Residence organising various activities that support the social inclusion of the students participating in the Refugee Programme.

Other activities, such as those related to access to financial aid, job pools, recognition of prior studies, and access to Spanish training courses are coordinated with the dedicated vice-rectorates, areas and services of UB and the FSUB.

The UB Refugee Programme has the support of three main municipalities: Barcelona City Council has supported the programme since 2016, co-funding the transition course to the university. The municipalities of L'Hospitalet de Llobregat and Viladecans support the programme with specific financial assistance for the accommodation of those who leave the university residence, thereby aiding the social inclusion of students.

“Undoubtedly, the Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the **need to articulate coordinated strategies for educational inclusion** aimed at both refugees and people with low socio-economic situations.”

#### Statistics

UB has assisted more than 200 people since 2015. A total of 43 people have participated in the last three transition courses, mostly from Syria, and to a lesser extent from Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Men make up 65% of those participating in these courses and women 35%. The average age is 27. There is a high completion rate, with 89% of those starting the transition course finishing it. In terms of success rates, 97% have achieved a language level of B1-B2 in both Spanish and Catalan, as well as a knowl-

edge of the cultural, social and economic environment. However, 22% of the students do not join the educational system after this course, either because they return to their country of origin due to the improvement in the security situation, or because of the uncertainty generated by the administrative situation. In terms of courses, students who pursue further studies mainly opt for Master's studies (69%), undergraduate studies (21%), and to a much lesser extent vocational training courses (10%). Since 2018, almost 30 tuition fees exemptions have been granted for refugee students already living in Barcelona. These students come from Syria, as well as El Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela, Egypt, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

the Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the need to articulate coordinated strategies for educational inclusion aimed at both refugees and people with low socio-economic situations.



### Challenges, lessons learnt and strategies to overcome them

The consolidation and expansion of support by public administration is a priority for the development of the Refugee Programme's actions. At local level, the challenge is to expand the participation of city councils in the field of socio-educational inclusion, such as accommodation, as well as to explore more areas of collaboration, namely the training of administration staff in refugee topics. As for national level administration, the need for collaboration in the granting of study visas and, once in the territory, the renewal of documentation should be highlighted.

The Conference of Rectors of Universities (CRUE) is a workspace with great potential in which universities can exchange experiences and in which relationship frameworks can be established for the incorporation and replicability of the model. This could be a great mechanism for overcoming many challenges related to the integration of refugees in Spanish universities, such as visa granting processes.



### Impact of Covid-19 on the institution's diversity activities

The pandemic has had a profound effect on those assisting refugee students, in particular the teaching staff, who had no specific training in virtual teaching methodologies before the outbreak. Information, advice and legal consultation processes were paralysed, with documentation renewal processes also slowing down. Due to the restrictions, refugee students could not take part in volunteering activities and the level and degree of support is not comparable to previous years, with many refugee students suffering due to the reduction in social interrelationships. Undoubtedly,

# MALMÖ UNIVERSITY

## Sweden

Interview with Teresa Tomašević, Coordinator for Migration Issues



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

In its 2022 Strategy, Malmö University promotes an all-encompassing strategic approach to diversity that does not single out refugees. Likewise, the university's recently launched [Agenda for Global Engagement \(2020–2026\)](#) includes refugee students and staff without specifically mentioning them.



### Definition of the target group

No distinction is made between Swedish students, refugees, and students with a migration background. International students, however, are considered as a separate category.



### History of the diversity strategy

Malmö University was established in the early 2000s in a bid to boost higher education in a city with declining industry and low rates of tertiary-educated inhabitants. As the city of Malmö is home to a multicultural population, the university's diversity mission comes with the territory and is part of the university's DNA.



### Research on migration and inclusion issues

Malmö University boasts an entire research centre dedicated to this topic, [the Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare \(MIM\)](#). The university also engages in advocacy and lobbying, for example, by taking part in a public investigation on the issue of the requirement to pass language and cultural tests to obtain Swedish citizenship.



### Services offered to refugees and students with a migration background

There is no contact point for refugees at Malmö University. At the peak of the refugee crisis in 2015, a welcome centre was set up. However, this was disbanded when the demand for such services decreased. Rather than designating specific services for refugees, a variety of services are made available to Malmö University's students, many of which would benefit the



target group:

- Academic Swedish and Swedish as a second language classes;
- Academics with a foreign qualification can follow the successful Foreign Academics programme, a tailored programme helping those who obtained academic qualifications outside of Sweden to enter the Swedish labour market;
- Counselling is made available for newcomers, with interpretation services also offered;
- Welcome and integration activities for all incoming students;
- In collaboration with the national authorities, the university recognises foreign secondary school certificates and prior learning of those who obtained degrees outside of Sweden.

### Coordination, monitoring and statistics



As a result of the refugee crisis, a Migration Group was set up in 2016 chaired by the university's Pro-Vice Chancellor of Global Engagement. This group has been managed by the Coordinator of Migration Issues since 2018.

Certain activities are monitored when needed, such as the success rate of those attending Swedish as a foreign language classes. Over the years, the university has also kept in touch with those who completed the Foreign Academics programme to monitor their progress.

However, for privacy and legal reasons, the university does not record information about refugees. To give a rough idea, about 20% of those who follow the Foreign Academics programme are people with a residence permit due to grounds for asylum.

### Challenges and lessons learnt



One of the biggest legal obstacles facing universities in

Sweden is not being able to work with asylum seekers, which is the role of the National Migration Authority in Sweden. However, Malmö University recognises that the asylum process is extremely long and that there could be huge gains for asylum seekers and society if they could initiate their studies before gaining asylum, in order to save time and keep their academic skills up to date. To address this challenge, Swedish universities will have to lobby their senior management as well as politicians.

Working with a diverse population of students, including students with a refugee(-like) background is considered to be a worthwhile and hugely important endeavour at Malmö University. The key to success when working with these students is engagement with staff and teachers. Even more importantly, engaging with senior management on such issues is crucial in order to bring about sustainable and long-lasting changes.

often have caring responsibilities, actually welcomed working online during the pandemic. Attending courses remotely rather than in person made it easier for them to juggle their professional and family lives.

“ One of the biggest legal obstacles facing universities in Sweden is not being able to work with asylum seekers. [...] There could be huge gains for asylum seekers and society if they could **initiate their studies before gaining asylum**, in order to save time and keep their academic skills up to date. ”



#### Impact of **Covid-19** on the institution's diversity activities

The pandemic has had both a positive and negative impact on refugees and students with a migration background at Malmö University.

Conducting language classes online has been challenging and difficult for the students. Furthermore, a project with the municipality to teach Swedish for beginners at the university had to be postponed because of the pandemic, and was subsequently cancelled due to insufficient applications, possibly as a result of the decline in the target group population.

However, those on the Foreign Academics programme, who tend to be older than the average student and



# UNIVERSITY OF ZÜRICH (UZH)

## Switzerland

Interview with Chantal Marquart, Project Officer  
Global Responsibility, International Relations Office



### Linking refugees to the diversity strategy

The University of Zurich (UZH) has a [Diversity Policy: Promoting, Practicing, and Benefiting from Diversity](#) that formalises its commitment to actively and systematically promoting diversity and preventing discrimination. This is an all-encompassing policy covering disability, gender, gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, social or occupational position, and language. Refugees are not specifically addressed in the diversity policy. However, they often face intersectional discrimination, the forms of which are indeed covered by the strategy.



### Definition of the target group

The target group is defined as “refugees,” which refers to asylum seekers holding an N permit, provisionally admitted foreigners/refugees holding an F permit, and recognised refugees holding a B permit. These are the groups that are usually considered in refugee integration strategies in Switzerland.



### History of the diversity strategy

UZH launched its diversity policy in September 2018. In 2019, the mandate of the Office for Gender Equality was expanded to encompass matters of gender identity and sexual orientation, thus renamed the Office for Gender Equality and Diversity, and was mandated to develop an implementation plan.

However, most of the work directly targeting refugees is carried out by the university’s International Relations Office rather than its Office for Gender Equality and Diversity. The refugee project at UZH started in spring 2017 as a Discovery Semester, strongly driven by student volunteers, and was gradually professionalised, becoming the START! Study programme.



### Activities and services offered to refugees



UZH offers a dedicated integration programme for refugees called the [“START! Study” programme](#). The aim of this programme is for refugees to understand the content and requirements of a study programme at UZH, to prepare themselves for tertiary-level training and continuing education in terms of language skills, and to learn what tertiary-level training and continuing educational opportunities are available in Switzerland.

The programme includes:

- German, English, IT and mathematics classes;
- A wide selection of modules in different subjects;
- Methodology sessions for study skills;
- Counselling;
- A mentoring programme;
- Social events.

There will be no programme participation fees for the 2021-2022 academic year. From the academic year 2022-2023 onwards, the responsible municipality will pay a contribution toward the costs.

Some public events are organised in the context of START! Study, most of which are for a professional audience and are announced on [UZH's website](#).

Research on this topic is also planned in the future.

### Coordination, monitoring and statistics



The Office for Gender Equality and Diversity drafts regular reports for the university’s executive board on the implementation of the diversity policy. START! Study is embedded in the International Relations Office and cooperates with the Admissions Office, the Language Center and other services, and also

maintains contact with the Office for Gender Equality and Diversity.

From spring 2017 to summer 2021, START! Study had supported 90 students, including students from Turkey (34.4%), Afghanistan (21.1%), Syria (13.3%), Iran (11.1%) and other countries.

“ One of the main challenges that UZH is working on right now is the **coordination and collaboration with the social services**, by trying to involve them more thoroughly in the university integration process. Their agreement with the activities of START! Study is key to the success of the programme. ”



#### Main challenges and ways to overcome them

Refugee integration requires coordination with many stakeholders, which can be challenging. One of the main challenges that UZH is working on right now is the coordination and collaboration with the social services, by trying to involve them more thoroughly in the university integration process. Their endorsement of the activities of START! Study is key to the success of the programme.



#### Impact of Covid-19 on the institution's diversity activities

Most courses and events for refugees, as for all other students, took place online as a result of the pandemic. This was not ideal for their motivation and social integration. However, UZH will keep a mixed format in the future with some on-site activities as well as some online activities for information events, due to the benefits that online activities can bring in terms of accessibility.



# **ANNEX II**

## **Bibliography**

## ANNEX II – BIBLIOGRAPHY

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# **ANNEX III**

**Overview tables of strategies  
and activities**

Table A:

# Strategies

						
		Strategy or policy on diversity, equality or inclusion	Diversity, equality or inclusion strategy with explicit link to refugees	Other strategic-level documents focusing on diversity, equality or inclusion	Link to national policy or European initiatives	Mainstreamed diversity strategy or policy (addressing all disadvantaged groups)
	Ghent University	✓				✓
	Université Libre de Bruxelles	✓				
	University of Jyväskylä	✓			✓	
	Grenoble School of Management	✓ <sup>27</sup>		✓ <sup>29</sup>	✓	
	University of Göttingen	✓			✓	✓
	University of the Aegean	✓ <sup>28</sup>				✓
	Sapienza University of Rome			✓ <sup>30</sup>		✓
	University of Trento	✓	✓			
	Maastricht University	✓				✓
	Utrecht University	✓	✓			
	University of Barcelona			✓ <sup>31</sup>	✓	✓
	Malmö University			✓ <sup>32</sup>		✓
	University of Zurich	✓				✓

(27) Under preparation.

(28) Under preparation.

(29) Signatory to the National Diversity Charter, obtaining the status of société à mission.

(30) Adheres to the UNHCR's Manifesto of the Inclusive University, statutes with links to diversity.

(31) Strategic Plan 20130 is aligned with the UNHCR and the OECD's complementary pathways to resettlement in third countries and the Global Compact for Refugees.

(32) Agenda for Global Engagement 2021-2026 and the university's overarching strategy which also focuses on diversity and inclusion.

Table B:

# Implementation of diversity, equality and inclusion activities

				
	Dedicated staff or existence of diversity and inclusion office, committee, working group or similar	Dedicated contact point for refugees or refugee-related issues	Formal monitoring in place of diversity, equality and inclusion activities	Collaboration with international, national or local government, and local NGOs/businesses
 Ghent University	✓	✓		✓
 Université Libre de Bruxelles	✓	✓	✓	
 University of Jyväskylä	✓		✓	✓
 Grenoble School of Management	✓			✓
 University of Göttingen	✓	✓		
 University of the Aegean	✓		✓	✓
 Sapienza University of Rome	✓	✓		✓
 University of Trento	✓		✓	✓
 Maastricht University	✓	✓	✓	
 Utrecht University	✓	✓	✓	
 University of Barcelona	✓		✓	✓
 Malmö University	✓		* <sup>33</sup>	✓
 Universität Zürich	✓	✓	✓	

(33) Only certain activities are monitored when needed.



Table C:

# Support services and activities

												
		Language courses	Recognition of prior learning/ adapted admissions procedures	Bridging courses	Consultation and counselling	Mentoring/ buddy programmes	Fee waivers/ scholarships or financial support	Research, courses, or degree programmes on migration	Guest student programmes	Cultural exchange, sports events and other integration activities	Legal support	Scholars at risk support
	Ghent University	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
	Université Libre de Bruxelles		✓		✓		✓					✓
	University of Jyväskylä						✓					
	Grenoble School of Management	✓	✓		✓				✓			✓
	University of Göttingen	✓							✓	✓	✓	✓
	University of the Aegean	✓						✓		✓		✓
	Sapienza University of Rome	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	University of Trento	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓				✓
	Maastricht University	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
	Utrecht University	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓			✓
	University of Barcelona	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	
	Malmö University	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓		✓
	University of Zurich	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

## ANNEX IV – Interview grid

### UNI(di)VERSITY interview grid

Higher education institution:

Interviewee (name, role):

Survey response:



### Introduction:

- Inform that the **meeting is being recorded** (for note-taking afterwards). Agree Y/N
- **Thanks for participating** in the small Google doc survey in summer 2019 – and for your continued interest in contributing, despite the project's delay due to Covid-19.
- The first phase of the project carries out an **analysis of European institutions' approaches to migration**, and specifically the **inclusion of refugee students**, as part of their third mission and overall approaches towards diversity.
- The aim of this interview is to find out about **how your institution approaches the topic** and **how it links into diversity and inclusion strategies overall**, how you define the target group, challenges faced etc. In preparation, we looked at the materials you have shared in the Google doc and/or materials on your institution's website.
- The findings will **feed into a small publication**, including an analysis summarising all the interviews, and a brief summary for each institution. We would send you the text related to your institution before it goes to editing. Agree Y/N

You have indicated in the Google doc that your university has a diversity strategy or similar document in place, linking concretely to migrants with a refugee-like background. We looked at your website and found:

HEI specific: "quote from strategy"

- 1 Please tell us more about your institution's **strategic approach to diversity** and how refugees link into it concretely?
- 2 In the strategy and your institution's activities how do you define the **target group**? (e.g. third-country national, migrant background, full refugee status?) What implications does this definition have for access to support?
- 3 **History** – For approximately how long has your institution had a dedicated diversity strategy? How did refugee students/students with migrant background become a feature of this strategy? (e.g. dedicated staff, project, funding, links to national/EU policy?)

4 HEI specific question

5 In practice, **what activities for refugees are covered in your strategy?** (e.g. outreach, access, bridging, integration activities, recognition procedures, advocacy, research on and with the target group etc.)

6 How are these activities **coordinated and implemented?** Is implementation monitored? Is there dedicated staff

7 Could you **share some figures**, e.g. numbers of students supported, their nationalities?

8 **Challenges and lessons learnt** – what are the main challenges at your institution in supporting the target group?

9 What suggestions would you make to **overcome said challenges?** Specifically, do you think strategic documents and approaches should/could be adapted to enhance support for the target group?

10 Did the current **Covid-19 crisis impact your activities** in any way, i.e. are they on track, or did diversity and refugee inclusion take a “back seat”? Will Covid-19 have consequences on the long-term sustainability of these activities/strategies?

● **Thank you** very much for your time.

● Next steps of UNI(di)VERSITY: The project partners UNIMED and Sapienza University will proceed with a **campaign on higher education institutions’ commitment to diversity and refugee inclusion**. They might contact you and ask to publish a statement from your university as part of this activity. In addition, they are looking for student representatives to take part in a social media campaign to give concrete examples of the commitment the university made in relation to migrant/refugee inclusion. Would you like to nominate a student to take part in this activity? If yes, please share their contact details.

# **HIGHER EDUCATION DIVERSITY STRATEGIES FOR MIGRANT AND REFUGEE INCLUSION**