

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Topic B:

The issue of integrating refugees into a country's labor force



The topic above wishes to investigate the varying issues that stem from the inability of most UN countries to seamlessly transition refugees into their work force. This includes both problems that arise prior to the integration, or the lack of it, and problems after the integration. Notably, there are several crucial areas that form the backbone of how Topic A should be approached. These include the understanding of the socioeconomic impact, effects of cultural assimilation and the effectiveness of social integration. As well as the extent to which education is provided (for example vocational and language training) and whether supportive policy frameworks are in place. The points above explore the most important themes of the issue.

Before delving deeper into the topic it is needed to establish a proper understanding of the key terms, as we need definitions to align our perspectives and to form a shared understanding. First off there is the socioeconomic impact which means the effect on social and economic factors that include amount of education, income, type of occupation, etc. (APA Dictionary of psychology). Another important phrase is cultural assimilation; this is defined as when a cultural minority starts to blend in with the majority which causes a loss of cultural diversity as a whole (Pauls). Then there is vocational training which is simply training that focuses on skills needed for a specific type of job which proves to be beneficial for jobless refugees (“Vocational Training: Definition and Different Types”). And finally, a supportive policy framework which is a document that sets rules and procedures for creating company policies in a manner that prevents as much injustice as possible (“What is policy framework?”). While not absolutely crucial, these definitions make the discussion of the topic far more comprehensive.

This topic has been a major issue in the past century with countless wars leaving countless people displaced and looking to make a living someplace else. But the area which has the most refugees at the moment is Europe (Dyvik), which is why the topic is especially relevant there. The issue has become more prominent ever since 2015 when the flow of refugees from Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan started to significantly increase (Peters and Cassimon). This has then become an even greater issue with the Ukrainian refugee crisis that started in 2022 (United Nations). With refugee amounts this high spread out over an extremely short amount of time, integration into a country's labor force becomes increasingly difficult as there are fewer open jobs and social problems between permanent residents of a country and refugees start to arise as well. This is often because locals begin to feel “cheated out” of their jobs. And again this has become more of an issue over the years as the amount of refugees has not decreased and many are staying permanently. Due to how relevant the issue is it becomes increasingly important to debate it as it is a large problem that urgently requires a proper solution rather than temporary fixes.

There are several major stakeholders that are already involved in finding solutions to this issue. Most notably the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), which has been working in over 100 countries to apply legal standards for refugees to provide them with the same chances as the locals. For this topic they have mainly worked on establishing supportive policy frameworks to ensure that refugees don't have any major disadvantages when it comes to obtaining jobs appropriate to their skill level. One of the current projects being worked on by the UNHCR is the "refugee education 2030: a strategy for refugee inclusion" ([Link to Document](#)). The purpose of this project is to make integration a much smoother process as the education makes sure that adults will be able to get a job quicker thanks to language training (United Nations). Then there are also organizations such as IMO (International Organization for Migration) which in this case has a more direct approach than the UNHCR as instead of focusing on the legal side of the matter they directly assist in the relocation of refugees. An example of this was 2022 when they successfully relocated 120,000 refugees in the European Union (News - Global). There have also been several countries that have already implemented some major positive changes that help in the integration process. France, Ethiopia, Egypt, Germany, Norway, and Turkey have been analyzed by UNESCO and shown to have fantastic inclusive policies as well as good practices in general not only granting refugees education but also providing easy access into higher education which puts them on level ground with people local to those countries (Martin and Stulgaitis).

There are several effective solutions to these issues, some already having been implemented in certain countries, and it is worthwhile exploring them. The ones that have already been mentioned and most widely adopted are policy reforms and tailored job training. These are widely effective but not being used to their full potential in the majority of UN countries. Collaboration between the UN and other NGOs may prove to be of crucial help as well due to it expanding the effect it may leave on countries. Employer incentives are another solution as motivating employers to hire refugees with subsidies will cause an increase, however in this case other social issues would need to be discussed.

Concluding, it is clear that refugee integration into a country's workforce is an issue that needs to be debated due to its growing relevance especially in the past decade. The new wars that are emerging will continue to worsen the issue. However several countries, NGOs, as well as the UN have already been working on the issue developing a large number of solutions. What is now necessary is to make the solutions more refined by making them applicable to more countries, this could be done by adding onto existing solutions or creating new ones that can prove more effective.

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