

**Name of the committee :** United Nations High Commission for Refugees

**Issues :** Bridging the gap in access to education for refugees through ICTs

**Name of the chairs :** Katia Todorov, Bartu Arik

Unprecedented challenges require unprecedented solutions: this is the reasoning behind the overall theme of FerMUN 2020, “ICTs for SDGs”. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have the potential to accelerate progress towards every one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the role of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is to maximise this potential. FerMUN 2020 is a chance for young people from across the world to come together in support of this mission.

## ***Bridging the gap in access to education for refugees through ICTs***

### **1. Introduction**

More than 70 million people around the world are now officially “displaced” for reason of war and persecution. Among them 25,9 millions have refugee status. A refugee is defined as: “Someone who has a well-founded fear of persecution [...] being out of his or her home country and who can’t or [...] doesn't want to claim the protection of this country” as reported by the 1951 Refugee Convention established by the High Commissariat of United Nation for Refugee Agency (UNHCR). This situation is shaky and is today the daily of millions of youth. Only 50% of refugees children go to primary school and 25% of refugees teenagers have a secondary education. Organisation such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) have for a goal to connect every resident of the planet with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). This ambition can lead to a reduction of the lack of education for refugees, giving to ICTs the aspect of civil technology.

### **Definitions**

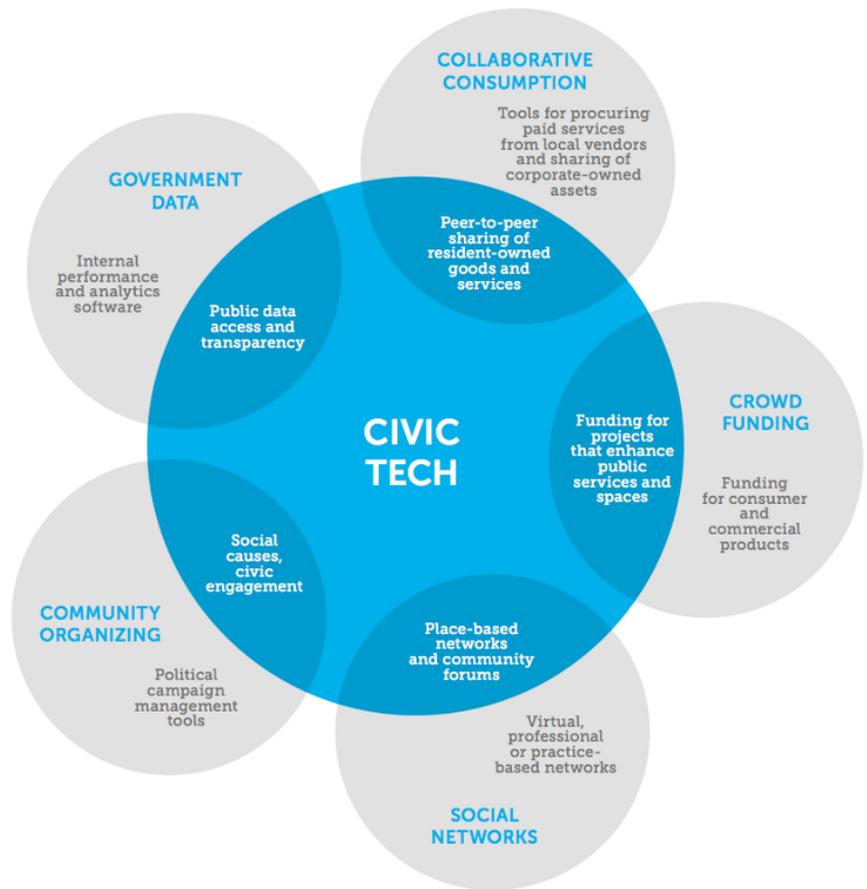
UNHCR : The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the international organization responsible for the protection of refugees, and the support they receive around the world. It’s present in 134 countries around the world and provides vital assistance to people in humanitarian crisis situations. It saw the light in the aftermath of the Second World War to help those displaced by the conflict.

ITU : The ITU is a United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies (ICT). This institution aims to connect all the inhabitants of the planet by ignoring social and economic barriers, thus protecting everyone’s right to freedom of expression.

**ITC :** Information and communication technologies are part of our daily lives. They mainly translate themselves as computer, Internet, radio-television (live and delayed) and telecommunications. We can also talk about new information and communication technologies (NICT) that designate the tools born from the convergence of computing, telecommunications and audio-visual, such as smartphones, microcomputer, tablets, the Cloud, etc. They allow the control of various vital infrastructures, such as emergency services and drinkable water resources, as well as government services or education.

**Accessible technologies:** They take into account various factors such as dyslexia and other handicaps that could impact the user in a negative way.

**Civic technology :** The concept of "Civic Tech" is still confusing, the different actors of this sector have not yet agreed on a common definition. However, we can define civic technology as the use of technology in order to strengthen the democratic link between citizens and the government. This includes any technology that increases the power of citizens in political life, or makes government more accessible, efficient and effective.



<http://civictchno.fr/2016/01/16/cest-quoi-la-civic-tech/>

**Refugee :** Refugees are outside their country of origin because of : fear of persecution, conflict, violence or other circumstances that have disrupted public order and, as a result, require "international protection ". You will find the legal definition at the following link : [http://www.ofii.fr/IMG/pdf/L%E2%80%99accueil%20du%20demandeur%20%E2%80%99asile/Convention\\_de\\_Geneve.pdf](http://www.ofii.fr/IMG/pdf/L%E2%80%99accueil%20du%20demandeur%20%E2%80%99asile/Convention_de_Geneve.pdf)

## 2. Overview of the issue

### a. Recap and origins of the history of the issue

#### i. Origin : A migration crisis in Europe

##### 1. Beginning

As a result of the various conflicts that became more important in the beginning of the 21st century, migration to Europe has become massive.

A pic was reached in 2015 : more than one million people came into the Schengen area. On Monday, 14 September 2015, the Council of the European Union met to find a distribution agreement for the 120000 migrants stationed in Greece, Italy and Hungary. But no comprehensive agreement was reached. Provoking tensions between the states of Europe who did not have the same vision of the problem.



[https://www.courrierinternational.com/sites/ci\\_master/files/styles/image\\_original\\_1280/public/assets/images/arend\\_2018-06-21-8923.jpg?itok=Gbv0BouU](https://www.courrierinternational.com/sites/ci_master/files/styles/image_original_1280/public/assets/images/arend_2018-06-21-8923.jpg?itok=Gbv0BouU)

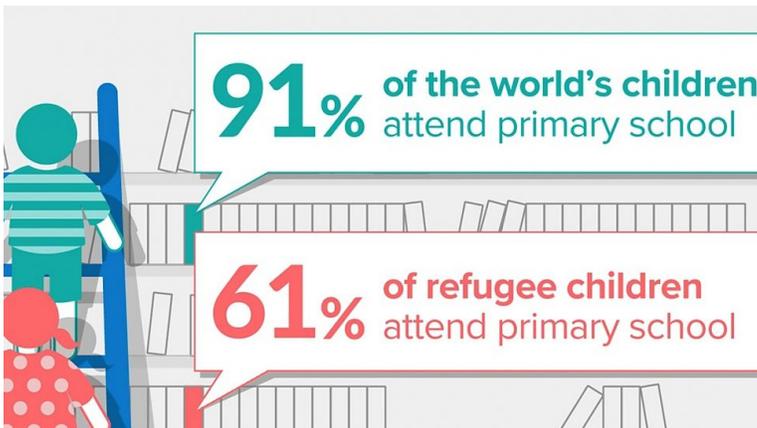
##### 2. Today

As the conflict in Syria entered its seventh year, a political solution still needs to be found. Humanitarian needs have increased significantly since the beginning of the crisis. Syria still has the highest number of moved people with 13.5 million people in need of humanitarian

assistance, including 6 million children. The number of refugees and migrants is still very high but the recent EU Council responses are encouraging, as the new 2019-2024 agenda specifies "A consensus must be found in the Dublin Regulation to reform on a basis of a balance of responsibility and solidarity ". The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants has made education a key element of the response to the international refugee crisis. In addition, the fourth of the Sustainable Development Goals aims to "ensure an equitable, inclusive and quality education and opportunities to everyone for lifelong learning ".

## ii. Education for refugees facilitated by technology

Of the 17.2 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate, 6.4 million are school-age children between 5 and 17 years old. They have only limited access to education, 3.5 million of them do not have the opportunity to go to school. While Education is a fundamental right, enshrined in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.



Education protects refugee children and youth from forced recruitment by armed forces, child labor, forced marriage and sexual exploitation. It empowers refugees and educates them about the world around them and about themselves so that they can live productive, fulfilling and independent lives.

<https://www.unhcr.org/fr/education.html>

The lack of access to education can today be reduced by new technology such as internet which allows access to information and communication. Internet is a recently developed technology to enable network neutrality and open access for all. He then has no idea what is being transmitted because of his open neutral architecture with different imaginable topics that can be developed around the world. The problem is that refugees do not have access to the tools to use this technology.

Overall, refugees are half as likely to have an Internet-connected phone as the general population, and 29 percent of refugee households do not have a telephone.



<https://usbeketrica.com/article/il-faut-comprendre-que-les-refugies-ont-des-telephones-portables-et-sont-instruits>

Thanks to associations such as Techfugees. It is a decentralized organization since it exists in 25 countries. It organizes meeting spaces between refugees who are interested in tech, and people from the non-refugee tech community. Together they create platforms, tools, applications to help integrate refugees into a new country.

Accessible technologies also reach a maximum of young people, providing information in spite of illiteracy, dyslexia and other disabilities. Through applications such as *instant transcription* that facilitates communication and potentially education. They thus make it possible to avoid health problems, to warn populations in case of emergency and can provide jobs through the use of telecommunication.

### iii. Civil tech and their impact on refugees

The emerging ICT landscape for refugees brings together different actors. Established humanitarian organizations and NGOs are conducting technology-focused interventions. Parallel to the proliferation of new actors who react to the crisis with digital projects.

Civic Tech is a collection of generally less formal organizations. The civic technology community is composed primarily of people with a background in technology to create technological solutions to social problems. Many of these projects are partially or entirely done by volunteers.

The most important player in the field of civic technology is undoubtedly Techfugees: a network organization created by the famous technology writer Mike Butcher in September 2015. Techfugees serves as a kind of umbrella organization, which brings together several other organizations and eventually federates them, for civic technology projects focused on refugees and hackathons. Civic technology activities tend to be concentrated in larger cities where internet connectivity and access to resources are good.



<https://buttercms.com/blog/buttercms-gets-behind-global-refugee-summit>,

We can identify some strengths and weaknesses common to civic technology approaches in this space. In the particularly volatile situations in which refugees find themselves, the international community of civic technologies can provide extraordinary support and expertise. But members of the civic technology community can sometimes have naïve ideas about digital projects as "miracle solutions" while underestimating the complexity of the problem and the importance of the local context and experience on the digital landscape. ground.

## **b. Various impacts**

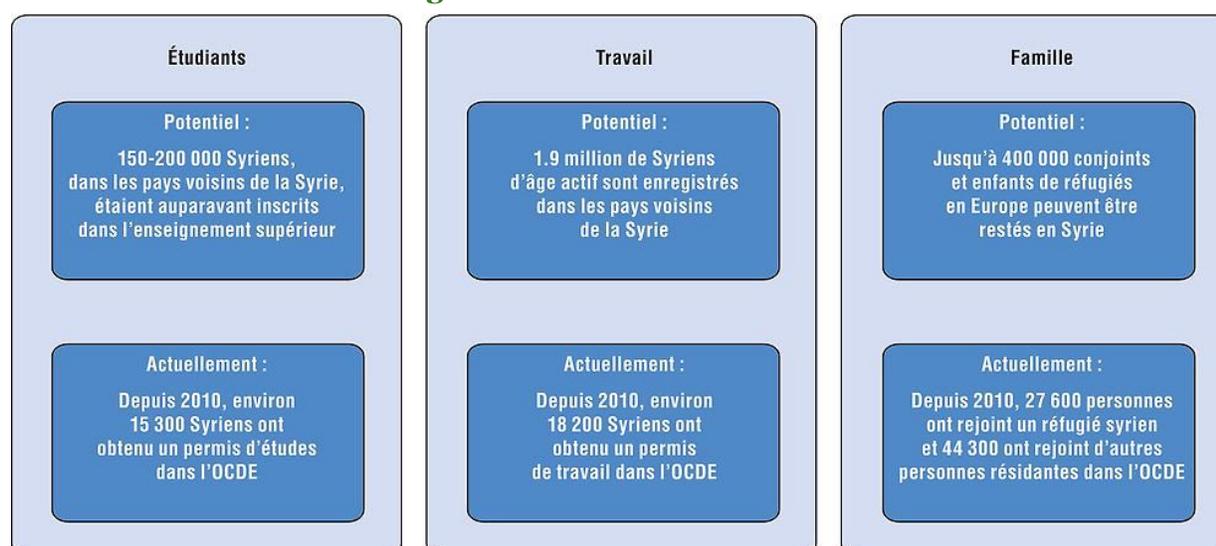
### **i. Environmental**

Refugee camps have a significant impact on the environment, such as around conflict zones in West Africa.

CAP-VERT	Soil erosion and land degradation, Threats to biodiversity
COTE D'IVOIRE	Deforestation, Threats to biodiversity, Threats to coastal ecosystems
GAMBIE	Drought and agricultural productivity, Threats to forests and marshes, Intensive fishing and coastal erosion
GHANA	Deforestation, Land degradation and coastal erosion, Intensive fishing and declining water volume of Lake Volta
GUINEA	Intensive fishing and destruction of mangrove forests, Land degradation
GUINEA BISSAU	Deforestation, Cashew culture and soil erosion, Bijagos biosphere reserves
LIBERIA	Deforestation and rubber plantations, Threats to biodiversity, Water pollution

Source : L'AFRIQUE, « Atlas d'un environnement en mutation », UNEP, 2008.

### **ii. societal and governmental**



## **c. The main victims**

### **i. Who are they ?**

As we saw in the definitions above, a refugee is a person who has had to flee his country and his life because of some form of persecution, violence or conflict. They often take a lot of risk to reach Europe and to be safe. In the first ten months of 2015, 3,329 migrants lost their lives while crossing the Mediterranean Sea, according to figures from the International Organization for Migration (IOM).



According to the Regulation of the European Parliament and the European Council No 604-2013 of 26 June 2013 known as "Dublin III", refugees must remain in the first European country crossed or issued a visa. Stuck at the border, these men, women and children must wait for the issue of their residence permit or risk crossing into other European countries illegally.

Refugees are then sent to different infrastructure, to camps or as in Iraq, nearly 60% of refugees live in urban areas outside camps and have limited access to secondary school as most Syrian refugee children speak Arabic, while the language of learning is Kurdish. According to the report published by the Norwegian Refugee Council and by UNICEF, only 10% of children and young refugees in urban areas go to school.

### **ii. What are they living ?**

Currently, young refugees face many barriers to access to school, the problem of language in schools, the problem of language, registration requirements, direct and associated costs, discrimination and difficulties to get to school. There is also a barrier to education that is related to the need for money.



<https://www.nationalgeographic.fr/histoire/2017/08/laccueil-des-migrants-et-refugies-en-france-et-en-europe>

#### d. And if we succeed

If the problem of education for refugee children was finally resolved, we could observe various positive changes. As much about the economy, society and government. The economy would be more dynamic thanks to new actors in consumption capacities, the society would be strengthened by the integration of refugees who would prove a real cooperation and a fraternity between the inhabitants and the governments would have a problem of less and would be closer to find ways to ease the conflict that has caused these refugees.

There would also be other less direct impacts, which are multiple and diverse. The following quote show on of them:

“The best way to fight terrorism is not through guns. It’s through pens, books, teachers and school.” Ms Malala Yousafzai, a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

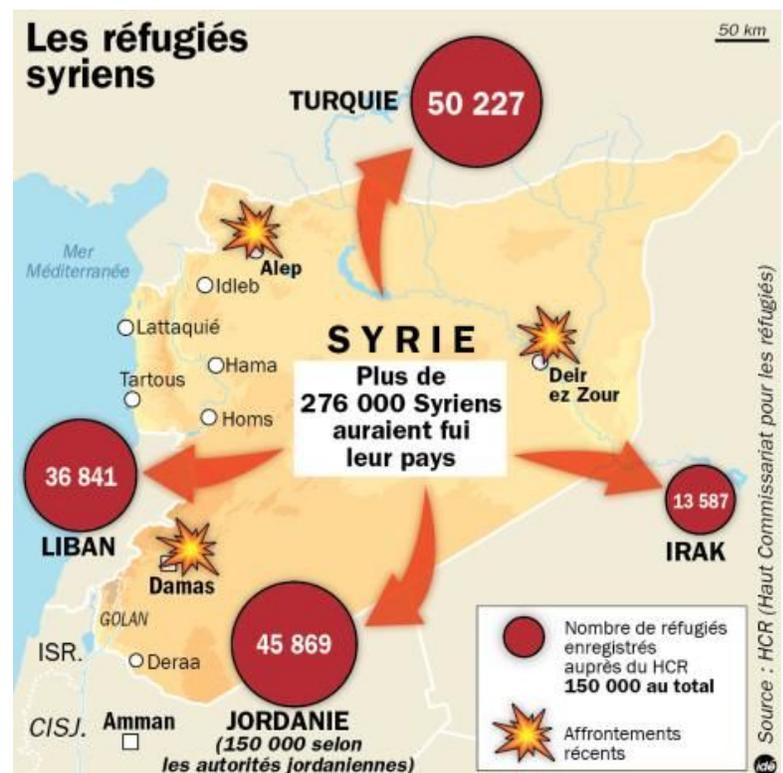
### 3. Case studies :

#### i. Syria: an example of crisis that poses a problem for education

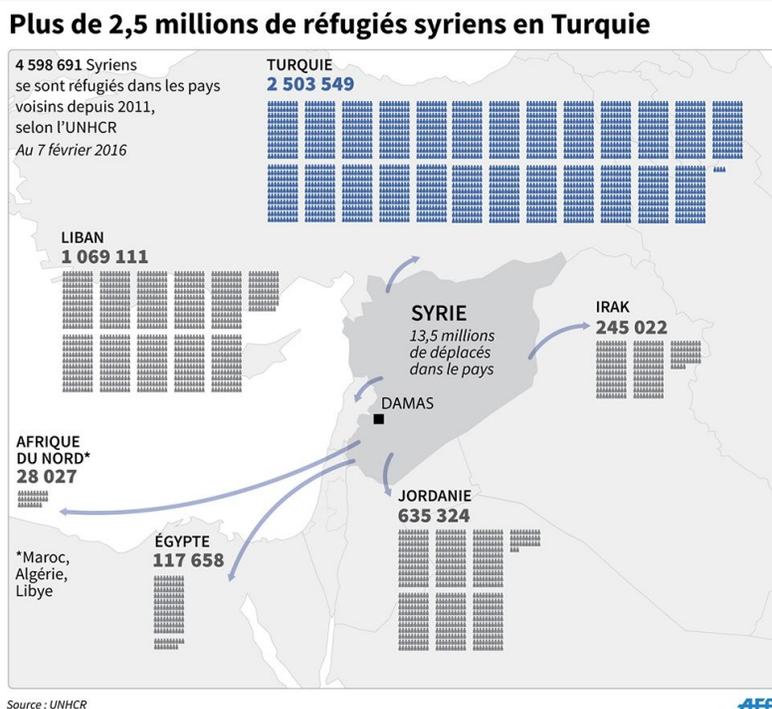
According to UNICEF, more than 13 million children in the Middle East are currently out of school, including nearly three million Syrians inside and outside the country. While before the conflict, the attendance rate in Syria was 99%.

If this situation continues, the future cost of a "lost generation" will be enormous: it will cost the post-conflict Syrian economy an estimated \$ 2.18 billion a year.

In less abstract terms, a Human Rights Watch report contains the following quote: "If a person is sick, they can seek treatment and healing. If a child does not go to school, it will create big problems in the future: they will end up in the street, or return to Syria to die fighting, radicalize themselves into extremists, or die in the ocean trying to reach Europe. The lyrics come from Shaza, a Syrian woman whose teenage son, unable to



attend school in Istanbul, returned to Syria and was killed. This leaves a learning deficit of almost 70% for the generation of young Syrian refugees without opportunities for quality education and training.



## ii. Elmedresa : a platform that works for Syria

Elmedresa (which means "school" in Arabic) is an online learning platform launched by the Syrian Education Commission (SEC) in March 2016. The NGO was founded in 2013 to teach children and adolescents Syrians are located in Turkey in Arabic and on the basis of a Syrian program. First, SEC was active in 32 schools and after a rapid expansion, they now provide courses up to secondary level in 322 schools, which represents about 300,000 students.

The SEC launched the [elmedresa.org](http://elmedresa.org) platform to expand the scope of its courses for Syrian children in Turkey who are not in school. SEC creates its own video content in a studio in Istanbul, in 2016 150 videos were finished on 2,700 expected.

Two major obstacles for Syrian school children have been identified by Human Rights Watch. In Turkey, language and economic difficulties force children to work for money. The Elmedresa platform offers a solution to the first and aims to improve the second by providing at least some level of schooling for working children.

Elmedresa uses the "reverse class" model, in which content is introduced through videos that students watch online outside of school, and are then clarified and consolidated in class

with a teacher. The Syrian Education Commission, the Turkish NGO behind the platform hopes that this will enable them to reach more students and more effectively.

For more information, see page 16 of the following document [https://regasus.de/online/datastore?epk=74D5roYc&file=image\\_8\\_en](https://regasus.de/online/datastore?epk=74D5roYc&file=image_8_en).

### iii. Instant Network School in sub-Saharan Africa

In collaboration with the Vodafone Foundation and the refugee community, UNHCR developed and adapted the Instant Network School (INS). This INS program has grown significantly since the Vodafone Foundation partnered with UNHCR in 2014 to connect schools in Dadaab camp. Today, 31 Instant Network schools are established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, South Sudan and Tanzania.



It is an innovative response to the challenges faced by teachers in sub-Saharan Africa who work in classrooms with a large number of students of varying ages and abilities

Selected schools and community centers are equipped with a "digital box" consisting of a set of tablets, solar cells, a satellite or mobile network, as well as a suite of e-learning content and materials. Each INS is managed by a local coach who provides ongoing training and support to learners and teachers.

Daily logs of use of INS are recorded and uploaded on a global platform that tracks usage, reports issues, and identifies areas where reconfiguration or capacity building is required. Preliminary data shows that the program has increased participation rates, increased teacher motivation and improved test scores in all four countries.

"Seeing how ICTs have changed learning for my students is the most interesting thing I have ever experienced. They are more engaged and interested. "

Ador, teacher at Greenlight High School, Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya.



## 4. Possible solutions :

In this part we will discuss the solutions proposed by UNESCO for the Syrian crisis and how could we improve these solutions, by deepening them and concretizing what can be.

- Access - Reducing the lack of access to education for young people

The available data clearly show that quality secondary education, especially for women and those belonging to vulnerable groups, is essential to consolidate their basic skills and acquire the skills needed to live and work. These skills are essential to empower young people in such crisis situations. One of the major concerns of education provision in countries in crisis is access to primary education at the expense of the following levels of education. This means that the financial resources available for the provision of post-primary education opportunities are very limited.

- ❖ How can ICTs be used to provide young refugees with comprehensive and fulfilling education?
- ❖ Connected learning is an innovative form of higher education that uses information technology to combine face-to-face and online learning, how can these technologies be proliferated?

- Quality -Raise quality at the heart of learning

In a crisis, like that of refugees, we do not really think about education and even less about the quality of this one. But a good way to counter a crisis is to exploit the development of innovative solutions that will ensure the right of all young people to quality education and relevant learning in an inclusive field that respects the diverse needs of learners.

- ❖ Accessible technologies help to ensure a better quality of education, how can it be made available to refugees?

- Strengthening the system - Strengthening education systems for resilience

In times of crisis and transition to comprehensive recovery, education systems need to both build and strengthen host country education systems to develop and maintain resilience to shocks, mitigate their impact and ensure resilience. continuity of service provision. This can in turn contribute significantly to peace building and social cohesion.

- ❖ How can stakeholders (government, private sector, NGOs and others) join their technology projects for refugees?

## 5. Main international actors :

## 1. The main NGOs

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is an independent association in financial and political terms. Its purpose is non-profit and seeks to help the public interest. The main NGOs involved in our problematic are the following:

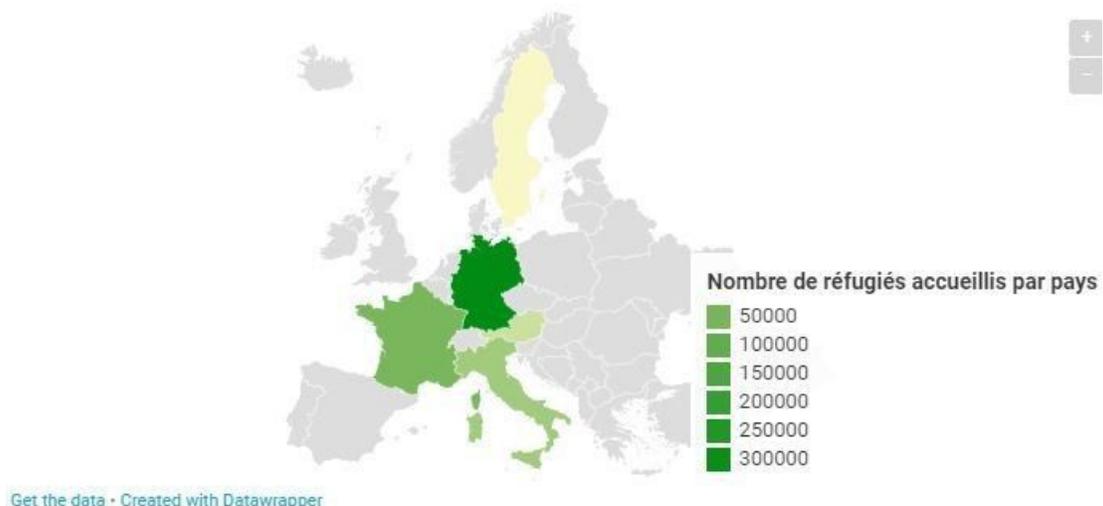
- Turkish NGO Support to Life
- Commission de l'éducation syrienne
- SSSD : Syrian Society for Social Development

## 2. Autres acteurs

- CCLC : Coordinated by UNHCR and the University of Geneva (InZone), the Consortium on Connected Learning in Crisis was founded in 2016. The purpose of this center is to promote, coordinate and support the provision of quality higher education in contexts of conflict, crisis and displacement.
- Diair participates in the implementation of the refugee reception and integration policy
- GIZ : GIZ is a service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and work in international education, it is committed to shaping a future worthy of being lived around the world. GIZ has over 50 years of experience in a wide variety of fields.
- BMZ : Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Its goals are freedom and security for all; a life without poverty, without fear and without destruction of the environment. This is the goal of Germany's development policy.

## Nombre de réfugiés accueillis par pays en 2017

Source: Eurostat



## 6. Guidelines for research :

- How to give access to digital education to refugees in camps ?
- How to improve education in existing infrastructure using ICT ?
- How to use the latest innovations, such as new software, for the benefit of refugees ?

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