



## ***DigIT: Developing Digital Skills and Tools for Better Inclusion of Refugees and Immigrants***

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Toolkit to higher education (HE) training for educators

### **CHAPTER-7**

**Language support needs and how to adapt the teaching process accordingly**



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#### **Disclaimer**

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## **Introduction**

Access to higher education (HE) is a fundamental right that should be granted to all individuals regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances. However, refugees and immigrants often face numerous barriers that prevent them from fulfilling their desire and motivation to access HE. These barriers can be cultural, social, economic, and legal in nature, and they require a concerted effort from all stakeholders to overcome.

HE professionals play a crucial role in facilitating access to HE for refugees and immigrants, as they are in a unique position to provide tailored support and guidance. However, HE professionals need to be aware of the specific challenges faced by refugees and immigrants and equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to address these challenges.

This digital toolkit is designed to address this need by providing HE professionals, student association members, social workers, teachers/career advisors from schools and colleges, and workers from refugee support organizations with a comprehensive guide on how to facilitate access to HE for refugees and immigrants. The toolkit's objectives are to raise the level of competence and socio-economic awareness among HE professionals, enhance refugees/immigrants' professional and personal growth, and encourage refugees/immigrants to pursue their education and contribute to community development.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the toolkit, the recommendations provided are based on the latest legal and policy developments affecting access to HE, as well as the best practices identified by experts in the field. This digital toolkit was created to serve as a valuable resource for HE professionals and other stakeholders involved in facilitating access to HE for refugees and immigrants. By equipping HE professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to address the barriers faced by refugees and immigrants, we can promote social inclusion, diversity, and community development.

## ***Chapter 7-***

### ***Language support needs and how to adapt the teaching process accordingly***

#### **Introduction:**

One of the most significant barriers that refugees and immigrants face when it comes to accessing higher education is the required level language to be admitted in a degree programme they want to access. This can be a significant challenge for refugees and immigrants who may not have had access to formal language instruction or who may have had their education disrupted due to conflict, displacement, or other factors. This module discusses various topics on issues surrounding language support for refugees/immigrants in accessing to and progressing in higher education.

#### **Recommendations for the Challenge:**

***Offer targeted support for language learning and academic writing skills to help refugees and immigrants meet the language requirements for higher education.***

To address this challenge, higher education institutions can offer targeted support for language learning and academic writing skills to help refugees and immigrants meet the language requirements for higher education. This can take a variety of forms, including language classes, tutoring, and language support services. These services can help refugees and immigrants to improve their language skills and to meet the language requirements for higher education.

One effective approach to providing language support is to work in partnership with community-based organizations that provide language instruction and support to refugees and immigrants. By partnering with these organizations, higher education institutions can ensure that language support services are accessible to refugees and immigrants in the community, and can help to address language barriers to higher education.

Another effective approach is to offer targeted language and academic writing courses that are specifically designed to help refugees and immigrants meet the language requirements for higher education. These courses can be tailored to the needs and backgrounds of refugees and immigrants, and can provide them with the language skills and academic writing skills they need to succeed in higher education.

In addition to language classes and academic writing courses, higher education institutions can also provide language support services such as language labs, language tutoring, and language conversation groups. These services can provide refugees and immigrants with opportunities to practice their language skills in a supportive and structured environment.

***Offer support for cultural adjustment and language learning for family members of refugees and immigrants.***

The challenges that refugees and immigrants face in accessing higher education are not limited to the individuals themselves, but also impact their families. Family members who are not familiar with the language or culture of the host country may struggle to adjust and support their loved ones in their pursuit of higher education. Therefore, it is important for HE institutions to offer support for cultural adjustment and language learning to the families of refugees and immigrants.

One way to provide such support is to offer language classes and cultural orientation sessions for family members. These classes can help family members develop basic language skills and learn about the cultural norms and customs of the host country. Additionally, HE institutions can establish peer support networks for family members to connect with other individuals in similar situations and provide mutual support.

HE institutions can also offer resources for family members related to healthcare, housing, and other aspects of daily life. This can help alleviate the stress and anxiety that family members may experience as they adjust to a new environment.

Moreover, HE institutions can collaborate with community organizations and local government agencies to provide additional support for family members. This may include connecting them with employment or volunteer opportunities, offering childcare services, or providing access to legal advice and advocacy.

***Ensure that information and communication about higher education opportunities are accessible and provided in multiple languages.***

One of the biggest barriers to higher education for refugees and immigrants is a lack of information and knowledge about available opportunities. Many refugees and immigrants may come from countries with vastly different education systems, and may not be familiar with the higher education system of the country where they have sought asylum. In addition, language

barriers can make it difficult for refugees and immigrants to access information about higher education, as many resources may only be available in the official language of the country.

To address this barrier, it is essential that HE institutions and refugee support organizations work together to provide information about higher education opportunities in multiple languages. This can include translating existing materials into different languages, as well as developing new resources specifically targeted at refugees and immigrants. These resources should be easily accessible and available in a variety of formats, including online, print, and in-person.

HE institutions can also consider partnering with local community organizations, faith-based groups, and other stakeholders to help disseminate information about higher education opportunities to refugees and immigrants. This can be done through community events, workshops, and other outreach efforts that are designed to be inclusive and welcoming to individuals from diverse backgrounds.

In addition to providing information about higher education opportunities, it is also important to ensure that communication with refugees and immigrants is culturally sensitive and respectful. This means taking into account the different cultural norms and expectations that may exist, and providing information in a way that is easy to understand and navigate.

By ensuring that information and communication about higher education opportunities are accessible and provided in multiple languages, HE institutions and refugee support organizations can help to remove one of the biggest barriers to higher education for refugees and immigrants. This can ultimately lead to increased participation and success in higher education, as well as greater social and economic integration into the wider community.

### *External Sources*

- The UN Refugee Agency - Higher Education Programs for Refugees:  
<https://www.unhcr.org/education/higher-education.html>
- The European Commission's Erasmus+ Program for Refugees:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities-for-refugees\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities-for-refugees_en)
- The Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford: <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/>
- The Journal of Refugee Studies: <https://academic.oup.com/jrs>
- The Migration Policy Institute: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/>
- The International Association of Universities - Refugees, Displaced Persons, and Higher Education: <https://www.iau-aiu.net/Refugees-Displaced-Persons-and-Higher-Education>
- The World University Service of Canada - Student Refugee Program:  
<https://www.wusc.ca/our-work/student-refugees/>
- The Refugee Education Initiative: <https://refugeeeducationinitiative.org/>
- The Higher Education Support Program by the Open Society Foundations:  
<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/what-we-do/themes/higher-education-support-program>
- The International Refugee Assistance Project: <https://refugeerights.org/>
- European website on Integration: [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/report-health-refugees-and-migrants-who-european-region\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/report-health-refugees-and-migrants-who-european-region_en)

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<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3516031>
- Hockings, (2011, p. 521).