NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS DIALOGUE

Expanding the dialogue on Higher Education & Refugees from Syria

Monday March 4, 2019
CRISTAL ERLIB HOTEL
100 meter Rd. Badawa | Erbil > Kurdistan Region of Iraq

For more information:
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THIS PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED BY
DAAD | BRITISH COUNCIL | CAMPUS FRANCE | NUFFIC
NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS DIALOGUES
Language Needs of Syrians for Higher Education - Language for Resilience

Eight years into the Syrian crisis, millions of Syrians have fled their country finding refuge in the neighbouring countries. Amongst them, only a small number of post-secondary age students are currently enrolled in a university program, and the majority of those are struggling to adapt to the academic system of the host countries.

Various measures have been taken by local, regional and international stakeholders in the countries affected by the crisis to provide educational opportunities and tangible solutions to the challenges faced by both the students from Syria and the hosting communities.

The project HOPES (Higher and Further Education Opportunities and Perspectives for Syrians), funded by the European Union’s Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis, the ‘Madad Fund’ and implemented by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the British Council, Campus France and Nuffic organized in 2017, a series of National Stakeholders Dialogues across Egypt, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) Jordan and Lebanon, bringing together representatives from ministries and higher education institutions as well as key institutional stakeholders involved in tertiary education and the Syria crisis.

The first gathering was dedicated to presenting an overview of the situation, mapping of challenges and responses as well as an exploration of further approaches on the national level. As a result and according to the majority of research studies and surveys, it was found that the lack of appropriate language skills and specifically in the language(s) of instruction in higher education constitutes one of the main obstacles affecting the enrolment of Syrian refugees in higher education institutions in these countries as well the successful completion of their studies.

The need for higher-level foreign language courses (English, Turkish, French, etc.), specialised in the study field chosen by the student and including online language support was agreed upon as a top priority during the two-day conference on Higher Education and Refugees in the Mediterranean region organized by the HOPES project in partnership with the European Commission’s Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) in September 2017 in Lebanon.

Within this context, the HOPES project will be launching a second series of National Stakeholders Dialogues across Egypt, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey bringing together experts, institutional stakeholders and students to explore in-depth further approaches to helping both refugee students and institutions to overcoming language barriers.

For more information on the HOPES project, please visit: www.hopes-madad.org
For more information on the complete reports of the inaugural national stakeholders dialogues as well as the conference on Higher Education and Refugees in the Mediterranean region, please visit http://www.hopes-madad.org/national-stakeholder-dialogues/

The notion of language and resilience

Language for Resilience is an approach to language support programming based on research conducted by the British Council into the language needs of refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. It explores all the areas in which refugees need language skills to take part in a new society and access services, education and jobs.

In terms of higher education, lack of appropriate language skills can be a particular barrier to refugees from Syria as they often have come from a fully Arabic medium education system but are now in education systems where
courses may often be taught in English or another foreign language, and this can further reduce the already low participation rate in Higher Education amongst the Syrian community.

This HOPES National Stakeholder Dialogue seeks to bring experts and Syrian students together to discuss what concrete steps can be taken to help refugees from Syria and host community students to overcome language barriers to higher education. The hoped for result is a series of recommendations which can be put forward on a national and regional level.

The topics below will be analysed and discussed by attendees with the goal of developing innovative solutions, and considering the key attributes to make them successful: access, quality and relevance.

- Addressing the specific language requirements of the local higher and further education systems
- Encouraging a culture of commitment – addressing drop out
- Different models of language course delivery in the local context
- eLearning – fully utilising blended, online and digital courses
- English ‘Language for Specific Purposes’
- Needs in terms of teacher training


For more information on the Language for Resilience programming and the virtual exhibition, please visit https://www.britishcouncil.org/language-for-resilience
TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

8:30 - 9:00  Registration

9:00 - 9:20  Welcome Addresses and Introductory statements

9:20 - 10:30  1. Panel session: Addressing the specific language requirements of the local higher and further education system

  > **Mr. Hogir Tofiq**, Director of English Language Center at Sulaimanya Polytechnic University (SPU)

  > **Prof. Dr. Himdad A.Mohammed**, Salahaddin University

  > **Mr. Shaswar Mahmoud**, English Project Manager at British Council

  > **Mr. Louay Salman Hajj**, HOPES MA student at Sulaimaniya university

10:30 - 11:00  Coffee break and brainstorming activity

11:00 - 12:30  2. Language for resilience for Syrian students: Brainstorming and Group Discussions
Identifying opportunities in language programmes

  > Programmatic challenges and needs
  > Capacity of the higher education institutions

12:30 - 13:30  4. Recommendations and feedback from the group discussions

  **Follow up and closing remarks**

  > Closing remarks by **Ms. Clarisse PASZTORY**, Head of the European Union’s Office in Erbil - KRI

13:30  Lunch Reception