|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| E-WG-def |  |

**WORKING GROUP ON EXTREMISM, POPULISM, NATIONALISM,**

**AND XENOPHOBIA**

Wednesday 6th of December 2017: 15.00-16.00

**Inclusive societies & recent refugee-related policy developments**

**Members present:** Tanja Fajon, Birgit Sippel

Fajon opened the meeting by expressing her hope that some conclusions from experiences in Lebanon and in Belgium on best practice for integration through education could be drawn out of the meeting..

**Anwar KAWTHARANI**, Dean of the School of Education, Lebanese International University, spoke about the Educational inclusion of migrants: the case of Syrian and Migrants in Lebanon and Lebanese International University (LIU) in specific**.** There is a significant amount of Syrian migrants that move into Lebanon on a daily basis. Lebanon has a population of four million, with two million unaccounted for and just one million registered. Sooner or later, Lebanese people will become the minority in their own country. This is not an offence for them, but the fact remains that they are a nation who has accepted 50% extra on top of their own population. It is quite remarkable to see the Lebanese migrant management. To explain the context, there are some figures to consider: In 2016, there was US$2.48 billion given for the well-being of refugees in Lebanon. By August 31st 2016 only $980 000 million had been injected, less than half the amount promised.

Another $224 million was meant to support the Lebanese education system, just primary schools not high-schools. And the US has 50% that is not accounted for. The Lebanese International University accounts for 33 000 students. However, there is still an education crisis due to the fact that about 500 000 younger students are not being educated: they call this a ticking bomb. What’s will the future be? This is exactly how terrorism starts.

In Lebanon, LIU has 9 campuses, they decided to venture into a programme aiming to accept 10 % of their numbers, or 3 000 to 3800 Syrian refugee students), with a ratio of 60% on scholarships. Thanks to LIU’s commitment to their mission of accessible and affordable education for those going into higher education, they developed a Teacher Diploma programme whereby Syrian graduate students teach other students, not teachers. Professors are currently studying the characteristics of the ‘I’ or ‘Identity’ Generation born between 2001 and 2018, aged 1 to 18 today. If children don’t go to school they are in camps which leads to stagnation.

In order to fully understand the phenomenon at play, we need to distinguish the terms ‘segregation’, ‘integration’ and ‘inclusion’ to create a vision for the future. ‘Integration’ means one size fits different sizes, in other words, one person comes to a country and they must fit in. ‘Inclusion’ is the focus we need to adopt to account for the diverse needs of children and adolescents. The LIU aimed for an inclusive programme fostering heterogeneous thinking. Their vision was that if children can't go to school, bring school to them through Syrian Teacher Diploma holders. We need to talk about inclusive education that caters for the diverse needs. For further information, MEPs should read ‘*The Road Not Travelled, Education reform in Middle East and Africa’* published by the Mena Development Report.

In Lebanon, municipalities and NGOs are taking care of migrants. Their classrooms are containers with eighteen desks. Whereas Americans call it ‘Home-room teaching’, in Lebanon they call it one ‘Home-tent teaching’.

The professors are proud of their achievements with the training of 3000 Syrian refugee students. Mr. KAWTHARANI was shocked to learn that for every five females there was one male studying in LIU. Civil engineering courses are attracting 6 females for every 1 male. Finally, for 40 teachers trained, they have taught 800 students but there are still 500 000 out there.

For further information on the schemes please see reflection in following video: https://www.dropbox.com/s/qic9qnglg9jqwld/TD%20-%20LIU.mp4?dl=0

The second speaker, **Mohammed AL MASRI, Education program manager, Multi Aid Programs - MAPs** said he was Syrian, and this visit in the EP was his first time in Europe. He asked the question: what's the first thing that comes to mind when we think of the word refugee? Usually, there are many stereotypes, some negative and some positive ideas, some right and others not. In 2013 in Syria, his personal dream was to continue education. When he finished his studies he wanted to go to the EU or Canada but decided to stay in Lebanon. It's a very difficult place to survive as a Syrian refugee no matter what your profession might be. There are difficulties with policies and an employment problem. He began a survey in 2013 where they found that nine out of ten teachers were waiting for the right moment to be settled. His dream was to seek asylum somewhere else and work on refugees from within the country. Many qualified professionals are leaving to go to Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq which is really dangerous for the future of Syria.

The LIU is one of the few universities accepting Syrian refugees and they break the stereotypes about refugees with more positive and productive outlooks. Their professors are sharing education which means that the migrants can go from hopelessness to hope. When they did the survey again recently, the results were different. People were building capacities for going back to Syria.

**Brian LALLY, Education Project Co-ordinator (volunteer), Multi-aid Programs - MAPs,** said that MAPs work with nine schools in Lebanon, with 3,500 children. The classrooms are 18 square meters for 35 children. There is a big problem concerning radicalisation, social cohesion and integration given the context of Lebanon. As an education researcher, originally for UCL in London now working with MAPS, he is doing this because children are being denied their human rights. The current provision for formal education in the Syrian community in Lebanon is currently 52% which is appalling. It would be worse if it wasn’t for the work of LIU. Education provision for 15-18 year old Syrian refugees is not so positive at 2% which could lead to radicalisation. Syrian refugees have a lot to contribute to education and society. Policies are preventing refugees from teaching refugee children, they don’t allow people to engage in employment. Since the crises has started, 200 000 Lebanon citizens have fallen below the poverty level and the dropout rate of Lebanese children in formal education has increased. LIU is working to rebuild skills, especially creativity and critical thinking, in order to prevent them from being radicalised. If we don’t give them the skills and resilience to critique the world around them in a positive way, someone else will. Small actors are working for the better so there is reason to be optimistic.

**Julie BODSON**, **Advocacy coordinator, DUO for a JOB, Intergenerational Coaching,** explained thatDUO for a JOB was an idea based on the Belgian context: Brussels is a growing, young and global city as well as the second most multicultural city after Dubai. Inclusive societies can work and we must learn to work together.

Taking this into consideration there were two main findings before launching this platform. The first is that there is a very high youth unemployment rate, especially amongst the Non-EU born population. The second is that there is the lowest activity rate amongst people in the 55 to 65 age group and they feel a lack of valorisation of skills and experience. Therefore, Julie’s team wanted to put the two populations in contact to create an exchange. They created an intergenerational and intercultural exchange with the 50 + category and the young migrants looking for jobs.They created a good system for mentors and mentees with a high welcoming standard. Their first objective was to promote employment for young people with an immigrant background and second was to reinforce social cohesion. They organised a platform where they can meet and exchange experiences, breaking down the stereotypes that each generation has about the other. It works in terms of job skills and talent. All the young people needed was a push to highlight their skills. After a 6 month mentoring period, there is a 75-77 % positive solutions to their situation - 50% have found a job and 20-22% are in further training or internships. There are more than 500 mentors and almost 1000 Duos. They are opening in 3 new cities including Paris in 2019. They would like to increase the number of beneficiaries, diversify the funding, biggest part of funding is private and from big donors, to increase public funding would be welcome. In conclusion there is clearly a positive impact from offering this form of platform.