

Studienstart International UoC

- Orientation semester that prepares for desired degree programme by offering basic courses in the respective field of study, subject-specific German courses, seminars on intercultural awareness and study skills
- Rewarded with 12 credit points, which will be credited to the Studium Integrale (obligatory part of Bachelor's degree programme)
- Orientation events and intensive supervision
- After successfully completing Studienstart International plus, the student transfers directly to the first semester without having to apply again

— **STUDIEN** —
 — **START** —
 — **INTER** —
 — **NATIONAL**
 — *plus*

General Background

Primary education

Only **50 percent** of refugee children have access to primary education, in contrast to a global average of 90 percent.

Secondary education

The gap becomes wider: Only **22 percent** of refugee adolescents attend secondary school compared to a global average of 84 percent.

Tertiary education

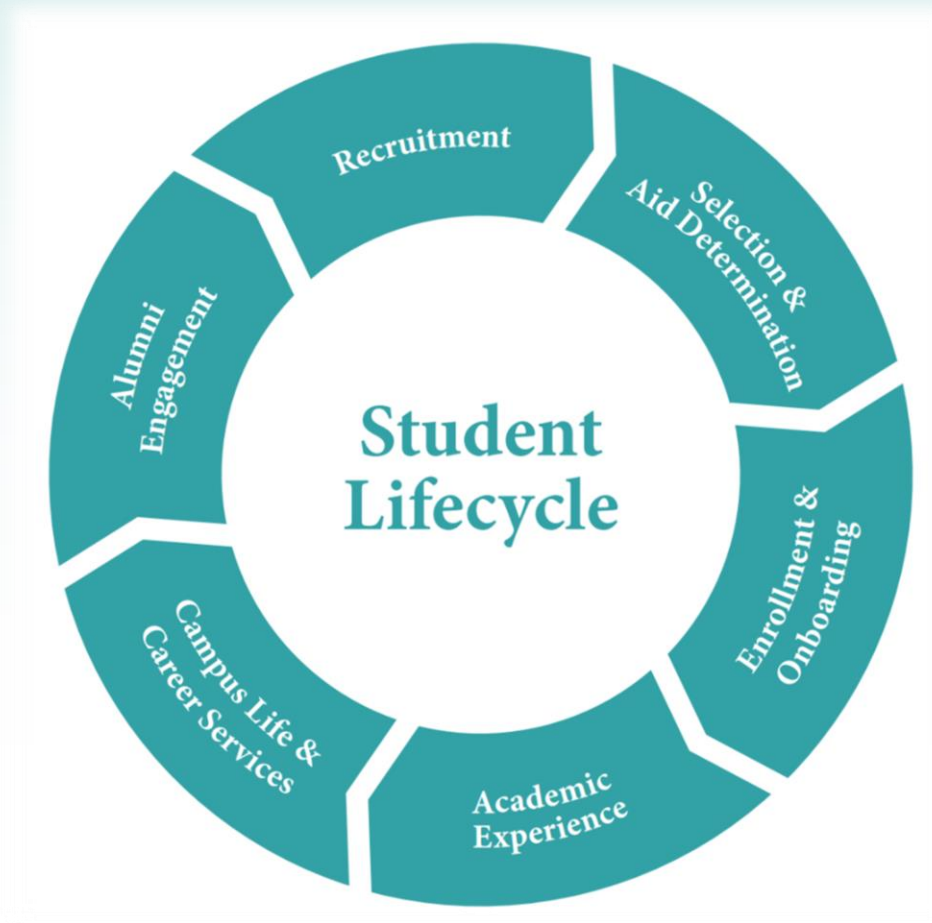
At the higher education level, we observe that **one percent** of refugees attend university when 34 percent of youth around the world do so.

Source: UNHCR

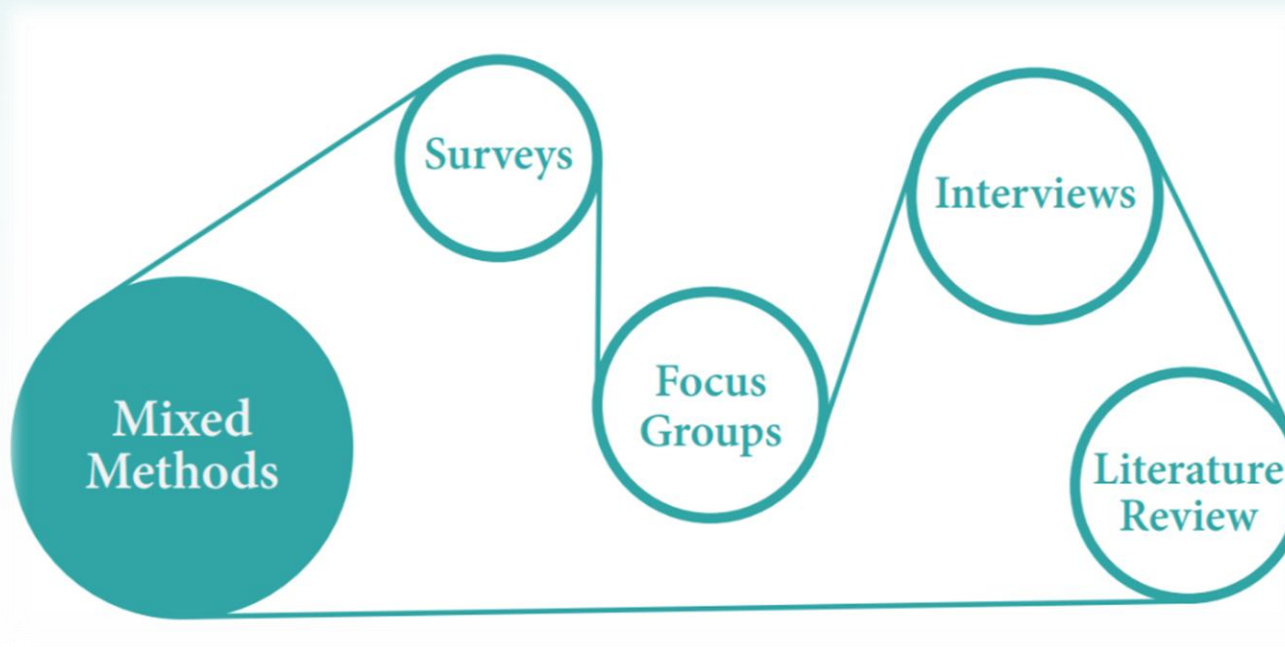
General Background

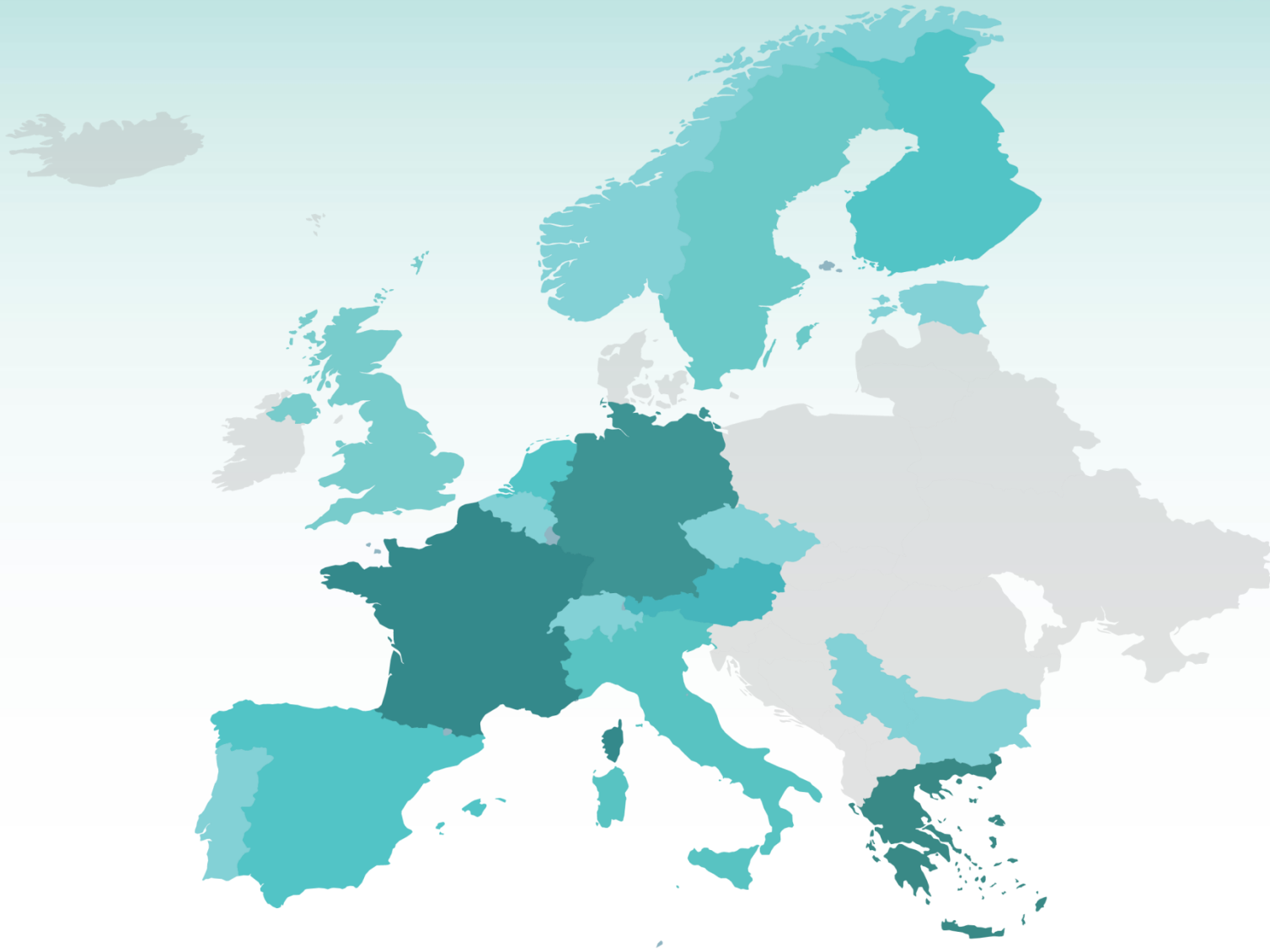


General Background



Study Objective & Method





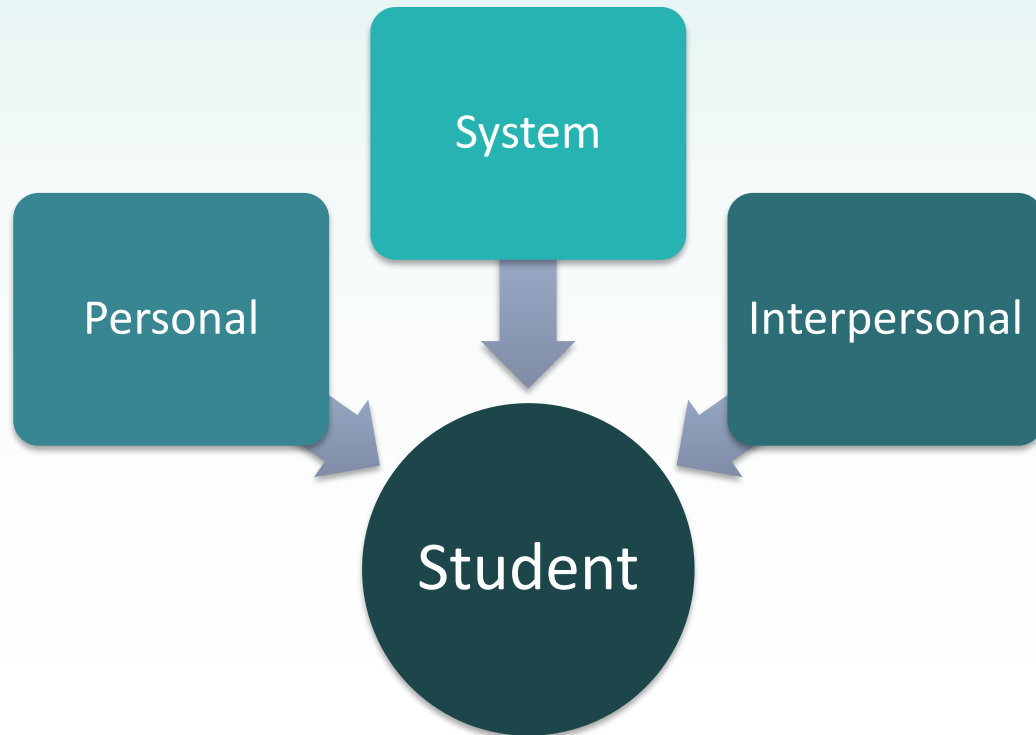
Geographic Profile: Universities



Geographic Profile: Students

Challenges and Best Practices

PERSPECTIVE



Challenges and Best Practices

FRAMEWORK

SITUATION

CHALLENGES

BEST PRACTICES

IMPACT

Challenges

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

**Transition Into
Adulthood**

**Shifting Support
Structures**

**Information
Barriers**

**Non-recognition
of „foreign“
Education**

**Linguistic
Barriers**

**Financial
Barriers**

**Lack of
Administrative
Harmonization**

**Intercultural
Gap**

**Social
Discrimination**

Transition Into Adulthood

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

Suddenly Adult

Best Practices:

- Comprehensive “all encompassing” Advising
- Psychosocially Sensitive Advising
- Staff Training
- Human Perspective

Shifting Support Structures

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

“Each refugee student was supported by two students who helped to integrate into campus life and society as a whole.”

“In Syria, we get money from our parents, no student is working, you focus on your studies. Here, you only rely on yourself.”

Best Practices:

- Structured Buddy Programs
- Long-term Advising
- i.e. “Study-Buddy” at Siegen University

Non-Recognition of “foreign” Education

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

“The main challenges are clearly the language, and the official documents needed for admission. They are often missing.”

Best Practices:

- Transparent Evaluation Procedures
- Alternative Evaluation Pathways
- Respect and Appreciation for Applicants

Linguistic Barriers

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

*The **key challenge** in the educational journey of refugee students.*

“I don’t want to study for this (language) exam my whole life.”

Best Practices:

- Language Courses
- Translated Information
- Multi-lingual Advisors

Financial Barriers

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

“Based on our experience, many students faced difficulties to follow courses mainly because they were still struggling with their personal material condition”

Best Practices:

- Comprehensive Information About Funding Opportunities
- Creative Funds
- i.e “Stipend Counselling” at the UoC

Social Discrimination

CHALLENGES & BEST PRACTICES

Intersectional discrimination

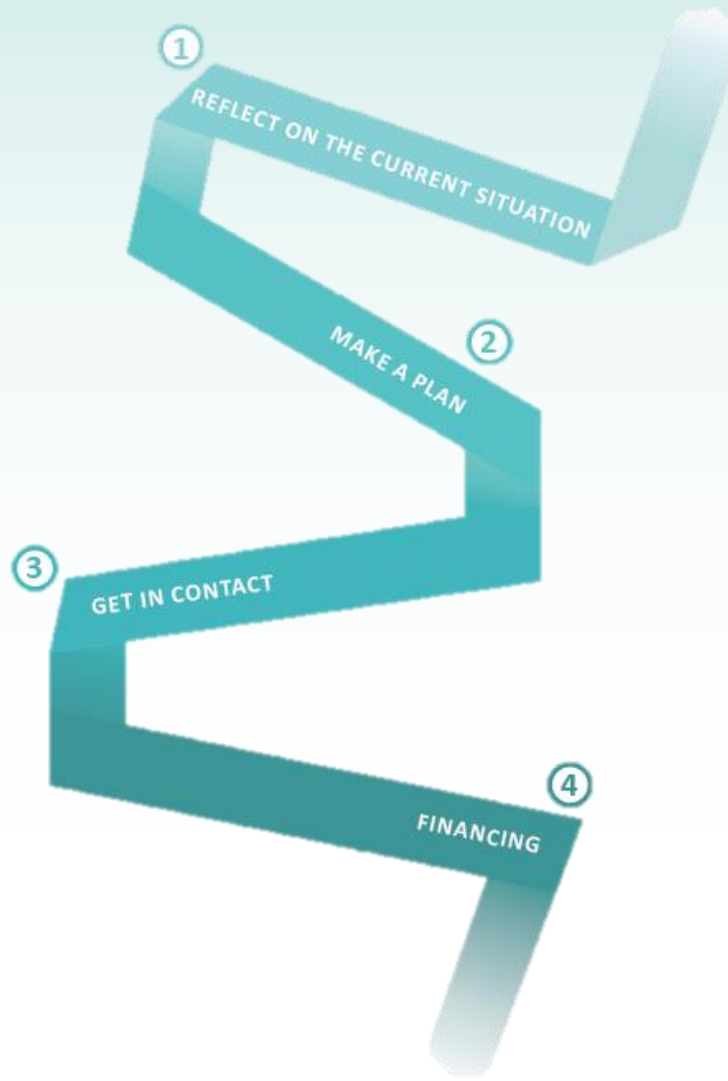
On the basis of “race” and ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, gender expression and identity, political belief and socio-economic status

Best Practices:

- Openness and Acknowledgement
- Staff Training

Roadmap for Improvement

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE



Advice from Around Europe

“Be prepared for several revisions of your initial research/education/implementation plan because the conditions of the target-population are extremely fluid and unforeseen cultural, linguistic and administrative barriers constantly appear. Also, base your actions on diverse teams of experts with different disciplinary and cultural backgrounds”

“Have all as 1-2 contact ll necessary e).”

lawy

Ask the refu person(s) th information

Key Questions Going Forward

- How do we better prepare as Institutions of Higher Education to provide continued support for refugee students through their academic journey?
- How do we help curb potential drop-out rates due to lack of institutional support?
- How do we build bridges between communities by including European peers in the social integration efforts of refugee students?
- Do our expectations and assessments of the current situation match those of our refugee students?



SUPPORTING UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY PATHWAY FOR REFUGEE-MIGRANTS

Beyond Access: Supporting Refugee Student Success in European Higher Education Institutions

Lena Reuter
Mariana Arjona Soberón

General Background

- Need for data concerning refugee students
- Case Study: Germany
 - Drop-Out rates among students:
 - 28% of German nationals drop out of their Bachelors studies
 - compared to 41% of international students
- Data for refugee students expected to be similar to those of international student (see IO1)

General Background

Main Reasons for high drop out rates for internationals:

- Insufficient support for foreign students during their studies
- No preparation for transition into working life

according to Volker Meyer-Guckel, Deputy Secretary General of the Stifterverbandes für die Deutsche Wissenschaft

Key Findings

- There are currently very few programs that specialize in institutional support for refugee students beyond preparatory programs.
 - **Examples:** Pedagogical Follow-up (Sorbonne), Individual Consulting (University of Bologna)
- Most refugee students can then find support in programs tailored for international students or for the general student population.
 - **Examples:** Student Counseling Services (University of Cologne)

Student Success

„By student success, we mean academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge skills, and competencies, persistence, and attainment of educational objectives“. (Kuh et al., 2011)

As one student counselor put it: “Students succeeding is university’s top priority, just as the students’ well-being, because it is connected.”

Framework

Factors Influencing Student Success

Social

Economic

Environmental

Educational

Pieces of the Puzzle

Student Perspective

- What sort of support do refugee students say they need?

Staff Perspective

- What sort of support do HEI Staff believe students need?

Program Design

- How do we use this information to create appropriate programs?
- Step-by-Step Guide

Gathered Data

- Student Survey ~200 responses.
- A focus group was carried out with students at the UoC
- Staff Survey received ~50 responses
- Telephone interviews were conducted with staff

Student Perspective

Student Perspective: Social

- **42%** of refugee students say they have good interactions with other students, while **48%** say they have little to no interactions with local students at all
- Only **13%** are taking part in the buddy system, and **58%** do not even know about a buddy system at their institution.
- **15-22%** of all refugee students state that they don't feel confident to voice their opinion in class

Student Perspective: Economic

“Because of local language issues, looking for a student job or internships is harder to find compared to locals.”

“It is very hard to maintain the expenses.”

Student Perspective: Economic

- Out of the 41% who have taken advantage of the existing support structures, the majority (61%) asked for financial counselling.

Student Perspective: Environmental

“I understand the difference between the education systems and quality, however i can’t see the difference between students as big as universities here think.”

“the valuation of our previous studies and diplomas is not entirely fair. A pharmacist refugee for example is considered a bachelor student here while European ones are treated as master holding students.”

Student Perspective: Social

- 33% of refugee students do not know what a student advisor does and where to find one
- 51% of refugee students do not know what the student representation council does
- 54,6% of refugee students have never taken advantage of the support offers at their institution while 40,7% have
- 64% of the students wish for more support from universities' side

Student Perspective: Educational

“ Study support, I'm having hard time not knowing what is important and what is not, and the teachers are not helping much.”

“Studying costs me more time ”

“I have to translate in my head the whole time ”

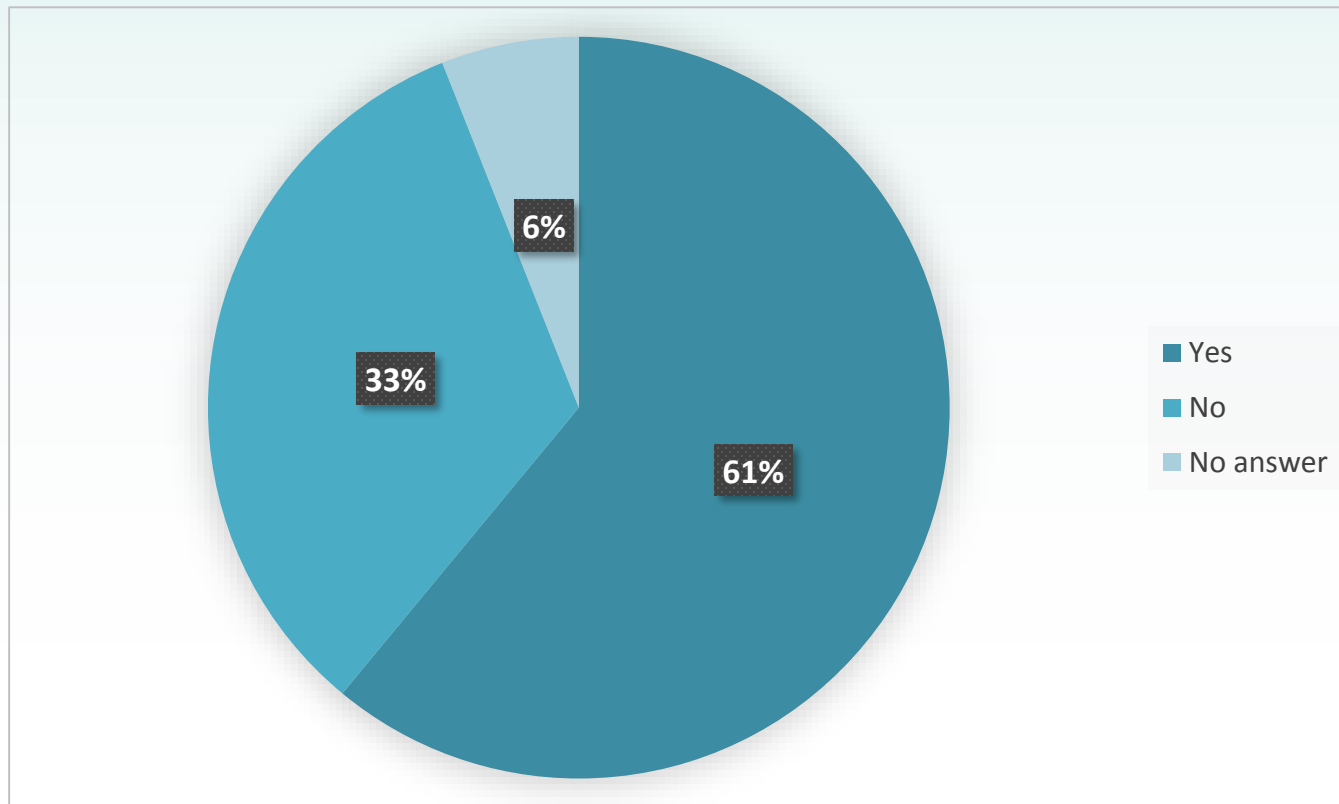
“I feel embarrassed when I have to do a presentation with my poor language ”

Student Perspective: Educational

- Almost half of the students struggle with the local language in class: 43% compared to 53,3% who can follow the class easily
- 43% of asked students can't find their study material online.
- 26,7% think that the study load is **not** right, while 12,8% don't know.
- 29% do not know how to study for their exams

Student Responses:

Do you need more support during your studies from the university?

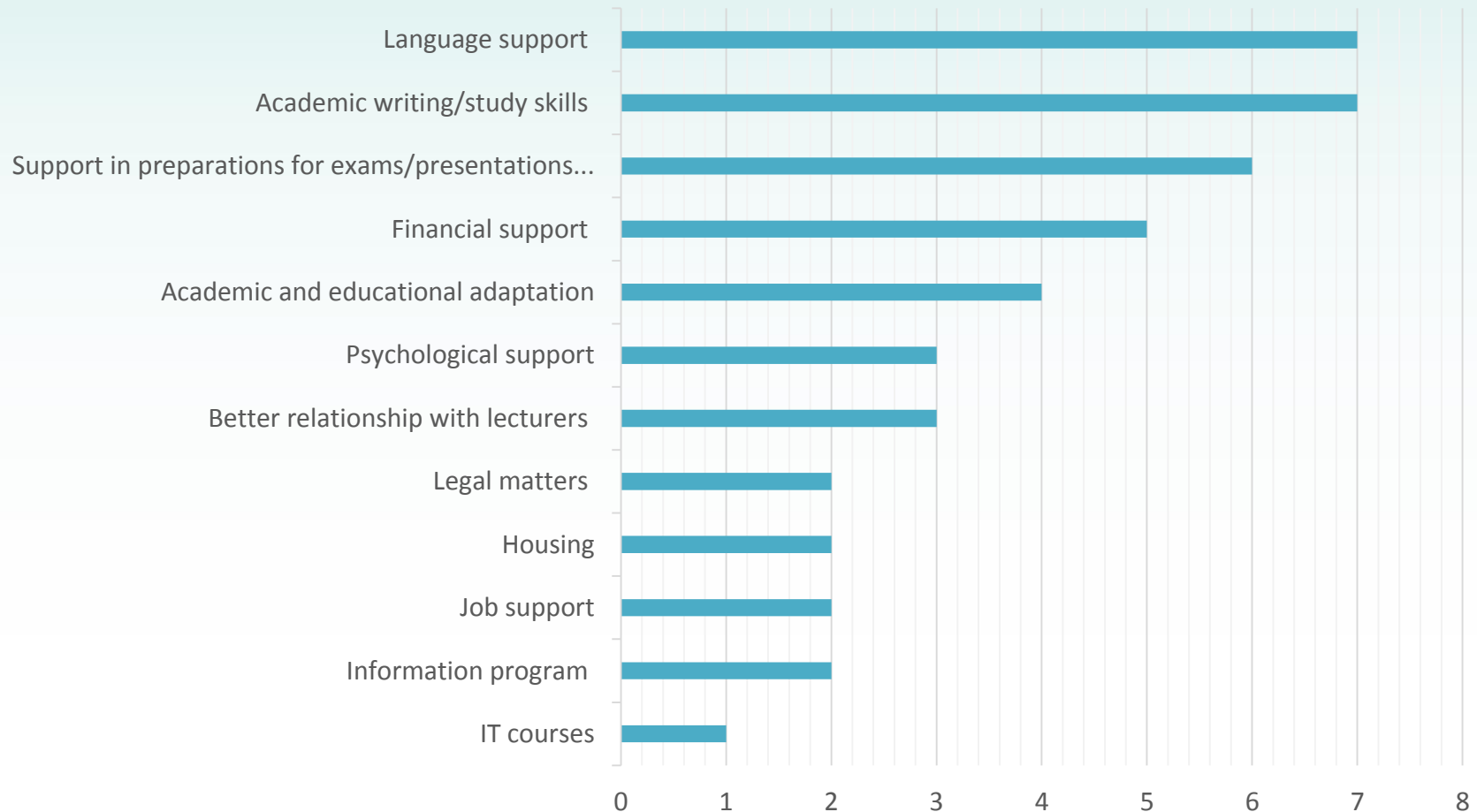


Student Responses:

- 42% say they have good interactions with other students, compared to 48% say they have little to no interactions with local students at all
- Only 13% are taking part in the buddy system
- 15-22% of all students state that they don't feel confident to voice their opinion in class

Student Responses:

What kind of support would you wish for?



Staff Perspective

- 68,2% feel like they are aware of the special needs refugee students have, while 6,82% don't and 2,27% aren't sure
- 70,6% feel like there is a need to improve support structures for refugee students, while 14,71% don't and 14,71% aren't sure
- 68,18% of university staff thinks the university takes into account possible special needs of refugee student, 22,73% don't
- 32,1% think that The university website is a good information resource for refugee students, 39,3% don't; 28,8% don't know
- 28,8% think that The university has good counselling facilities for refugee students, 50% don't; 21,4% don't know
- 38,6% think that The university actively promotes interaction between refugee students and other students, 40,9% don't, 15,9 % don't know
- 56,3% think that counselling and support structures at their institutions are good, 37,5 % don't

Staff Perspective: Social

„Staff needs to understand the student better, understanding takes more time“

“Some students have severe personal circumstances. Therefore, they sometimes lay behind, some students do not have a big network in Dutch Society”

“Women support groups could be helpful.”

“Stronger mental, psychosocial aids and advisory services specifically for refugees, especially women.”

“Handling the trauma students experience”

Staff Perspective: Economic

“Older students no longer receive financial support from the government, since many refugee students have to repeat part of their educational studies, they will more likely than not end up in that category.”

“Refugee students have different priorities than dutch students. Jobs and housing are a main concern for them, which makes sense, they want to get their lives back as soon as possible.”

Staff Perspective: Environmental Context

“Politicians need to be involved.

Universities need more support and have to be heard by the government”

“More staff; Simplification of advisory structures; no duplications; no new, temporary projects, but an increase in the jobs that have existed for a long time.”

“ Combination of awareness and support in their success, especially for refugee students who have experienced a lot, is definitely one of the responsibilities of a university:”

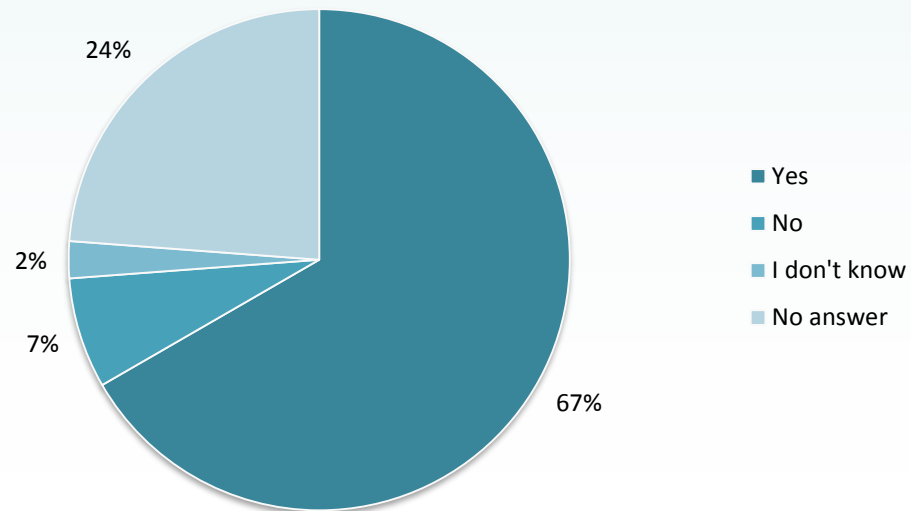
“For counselling much more time is needed and it is found that many refugees have difficulties to get information about what options are offered to choose a career in addition to studying in Germany.”

“Better networking of offers, so that the offer is on the one hand more efficient and on the other hand more transparent for the refugees.”

“ Things that are very 'normal' to us, is many times not 'normal' for our refugee students. More explanation is necessary in almost all cases. ”

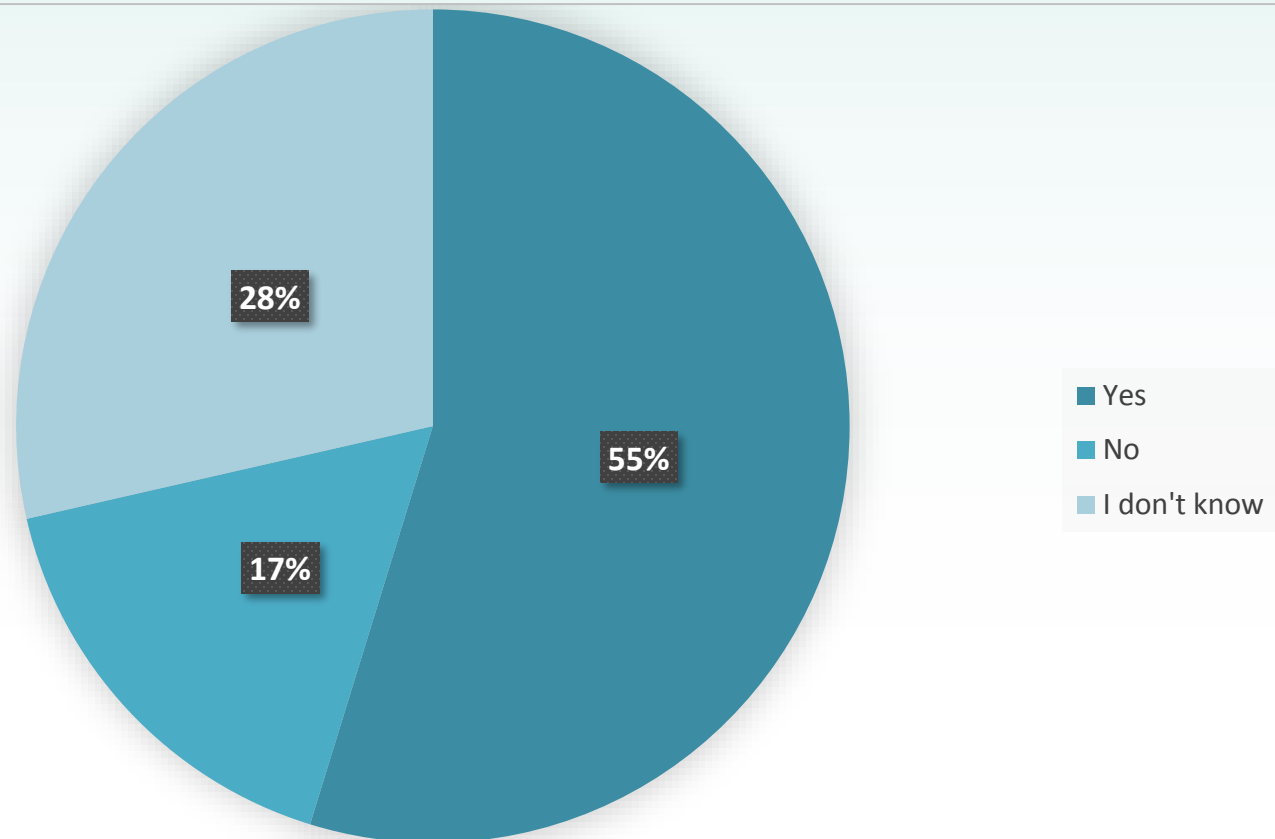
Staff Responses:

Are you aware of the needs of refugee students?



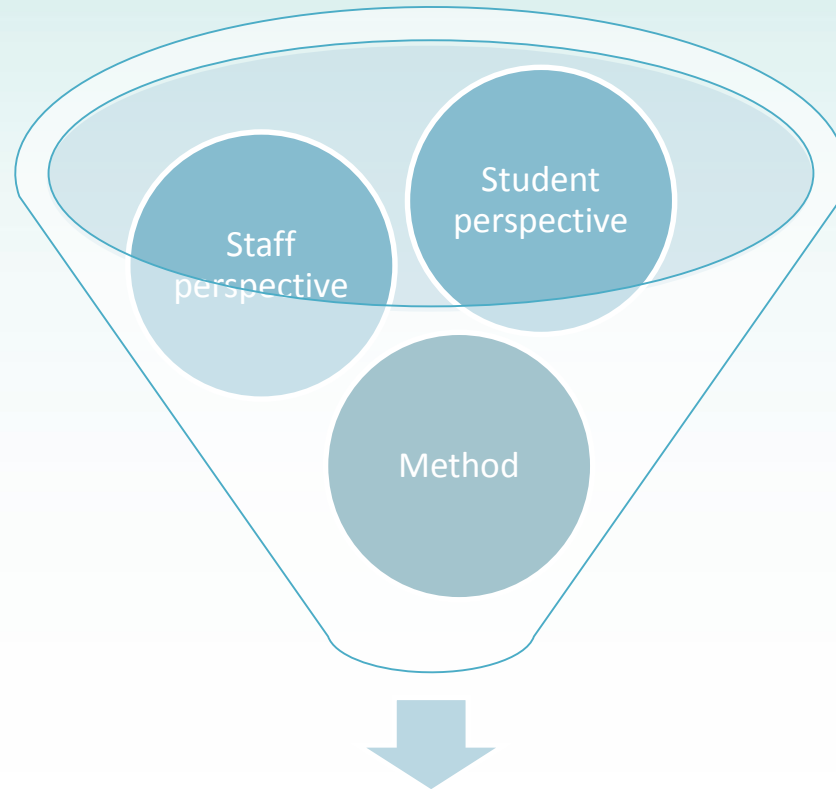
Staff Responses:

Do you think there is a need for improvement of the student support structures at your university?



Taking Action

Next Steps



Support Programs tailored for
refugee student success

Semester	1	2	3	4	5	6
Students challenges						
Planned Activities						
Desired Outcome						



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Thank you!