

Refugee academics and scholars at risk

- Is there a place for them in the MSCAs?

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MSCA 2017 'Mobility takes research further'

11-12 May 2017, Esplora, Kalkara, Malta

Outline

- Refugee academics and Scholars at risk
- Challenges
- How to include them in MSCA?



Academic Dugnad for Refugees

- Internships at the university
- Academic Network – Buddy system
- Language training
- Recognition, bridging courses and guidance



Scholars at Risk

- Global network of almost 500 universities
- Promoting academic freedom and protecting threatened academics
- 560 applications, 100 placements in 2016
- UiO: 4 SAR scholars in 2017



Refugee academics

- Refugees who completed a PhD and taught or did research
- Small category, but high competency
- Countries: Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea

Scholars at Risk

- Academics recruited from home country because of persecution, academic freedom violations etc.
- Criteria: Merit and risk situation
- Temporary positions/fellowships in higher education institutions
- Countries: Syria, Iran, Iraq, Turkey etc.



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The Academic Refugee project

- Erasmus+ Strategic partnership 2016-19
- UiO (coordinator), Scholars at Risk, UNICA, University of Ljubljana, EUA and EAIE
- Focus on fundamental university values and synergies between the efforts for scholars at risk and for refugee academics
- Activities:
 - International staff training in June 2017
 - MOOC on academic freedom
 - Values in higher education online handbook



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Mohamed

- Dentist from Syria
- PhD from Europe
- Worked as Ass. Prof. and Dentist in Syria
- Worked 2 years at UiO through SRF
- Authorisation as a Dentist in two years!
- Options: Post.doc./dentist/clinical instructor



Reintegration Panel (eF-RI)?



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Two scholars from Turkey

- Both left Turkey July/August 2016 in an acute situation
- A is a scholar at risk in Norway
- B applied for asylum in Norway

- A is doing research, teaching, publishing, networking etc. at the university
- B was only allowed to work after 8 months in the country, still an asylum seeker

- Could they be relevant for Marie S. Curie Individual fellowships?



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Career Restart Panel (EF-CAR)?

Challenges



- Time is a challenge
 - Urgent needs – time consuming processes
 - MSCA as a Second step?
- Academic and cultural differences?
 - Focus on teaching or publishing
 - Language barriers
- What is counted as excellence?
- What training is needed?
- Big differences between individual refugee academics



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- Career Restart Panel (EF-CAR)
 - For displaced researchers
 - Who have been out of research for 12 months
 - Max 5 years in host country?
- Reintegration Panel (eF-RI)
 - For those who got a PhD from Europe
- COFUND?
 - Specific fellowship programme
 - Could we, in addition to the criterion of merit, include a criterion on risk and/or refugee status



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- No requirement of partner in sending country makes it easier for refugees
- In all cases, need to prepare application with host institution
- Need for a good individual project proposal
- Many displaced scholars will not be ready to fulfil excellence requirements upon arrival
- Could we:
 - Use a SAR fellowship period to prepare?
 - Have a refugee seed funding for preparation period?



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After the fellowship

- Options:
 - Stay in Europe as a researcher
 - Return home when possible
- Contribution to home country reconstruction
 - Returning to home country when peaceful
 - through diaspora networks if staying.
- Host will have a network partner in sending country



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Photo: Aksel Vidnes

Thank you for your attention.



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