Chapter 12

Teachers Working With Refugee Children and Families:
Lessons Learned From the GÖÇ–MAT Project in Turkey

Martha Allexsaht-Snider

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0939-8329
University of Georgia, USA

Elif Karsli-Calamak
University of South Carolina, USA

Mana Ece Tuna
TED University, Turkey

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the authors tell the story of the GÖÇ-MAT project in Turkey, a two-year professional learning project designed to foster early childhood education teachers' development of competencies for teaching students with refugee status. The authors elucidate the different aspects of the GÖÇ-MAT project implementation and some of their findings from the research with teachers and with families having refugee status. Their goal, then, is to provide a possible roadmap for programs of professional learning in other settings around the globe. The authors hope to motivate other educators to take inspiration from the lessons learned in the GÖÇ-MAT project in Turkey to create professional learning spaces for teachers adapted to the unique contexts in which they are working. These professional learning spaces can support teachers' development of new ways to provide inclusive and equitable quality education for students with refugee or migrant statuses.

INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the UN adopted a *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration,* acknowledging that migration defines our globalized world in the 21st century. This UN declaration connects all of us across countries and regions of the world where refugees and migrants have been leaving and arriving-from Syria to Norway, from Guatemala to Canada, from Venezuela to Colombia and Brazil, from Myanmar to Bangladesh, from Sudan and Somalia to Kenya. The Global Compact systematically addresses migrants'-men's, women's and children's- human rights, and, in particular, calls us to "provide inclusive and equitable quality education to migrant children and youth." It also calls us to "facilitate access to lifelong learning opportunities, including by strengthening the capacities of education systems and by facilitating non-discriminatory access to early childhood development, formal schooling, non-formal education programs for children for whom the formal system is inaccessible, on-the-job and vocational training, technical education, and language training." (United Nations, 2018, p. 23). The overall aim is "to create conducive conditions that enable all migrants to enrich our societies through their human, economic and social capacities" (p.3).

We are writing this chapter to reach teachers and educators in communities around the world who are trying to fulfill the promise of the UN Global Compact, who are working to provide quality education to children and youth with migrant or refugee status. A small number of studies conducted in the last decade have documented the challenges teachers in these settings face (Henderson, 2017; Miller, Mitchell, & Brown, 2005; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012; West & Ring, 2019). A few studies have also shown how teachers use practical and creative strategies to address their lack of resources and knowledge for working with refugee and migrant communities who bring a wide range of language resources, educational backgrounds, and experiences with trauma due to displacement, violence, and war (Baldwin, 2015; Roxas, 2010, 2011). At the same time as teachers in these studies have identified the need for professional learning and resources to support their work, educators and policymakers have recently issued reports calling for programs of professional learning designed specifically for teachers of students with refugee or migrant status (Mason & Orcutt, 2019; Refugee Education Conference Report, 2017; Richardson, 2018; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2018).

In this chapter, we tell the story of the GÖÇ-MAT project in Turkey, a professional learning project designed to foster teachers' development of many of the competencies for teaching students with refugee or migrant status outlined in the recent reports. Our goal, in elucidating the different aspects of the GÖÇ-MAT project implementation and research with teachers and with families having refugee status, over the two years of the project, is to provide a possible roadmap for programs of professional learning in other settings around the globe. We hope to motivate other educators to take inspiration from the lessons learned in the GÖÇ-MAT project in Turkey to create professional learning spaces for teachers adapted to the unique contexts in which they are working. Our goal is to expand support for teachers seeking to provide inclusive and equitable quality education for students with refugee or migrant status in many regions of the world.

Turkey is at the center of the current worldwide trend of mass migrations, with approximately three and a half million displaced Syrians, almost half of whom are children (Directorate General of Migration Management [DGMM], 2019). Since 2011, a majority of Syrian refugees has moved from being guests to becoming residents, and Turkish educational policy has evolved toward integration of children with refugee status into the public school system (Tuna & Karslı, 2017). Currently, the number of refugee children in public schools reached around 650,000 (MONE, 2019). In collaboration with the Turkish

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