Examining Refugee Educational Inclusion in the UK: Opportunities and Challenges for Syrian Students in Greater Glasgow

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Abstract

This thesis examines the educational inclusion of Syrian students in mainstream schools within the Greater Glasgow area, focusing on two critical aspects: (1) understanding the opportunities and challenges related to Syrian students' educational inclusion, and (2) examining their inclusion in terms of presence, participation, and achievement. Syrian families and school educators in Greater Glasgow were invited to participate, and data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 11 parents and 15 children, as well as an online survey completed by 6 school educators.

The Capability approach by Nussbaum, focusing on human development, provides the comprehensive philosophical framework for this study. Unterhalter's concept of equity in education, which includes Equity from Below, Equity from the Middle, and Equity from Above, is also incorporated. In addition, this study utilizes the Index for Inclusion developed by Booth and Ainscow, alongside key documents from the UNESCO: 'Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education' and 'A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education'. Collectively, these concepts and documents form the framework for analysing the study's findings, demonstrating their relationship to or deviation from existing literature on inclusive education, the education of Syrian children, and refugee education. Qualitative data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, guided by Braun and Clarke's methodology.

The study's findings reveal a positive outlook on the educational experiences of Syrian students in Scotland. Syrian students enjoyed attending school and also harboured a genuine liking for both their schools and teachers. Parents expressed contentment with school offerings, affirming that schools effectively fulfilled their responsibilities. However, the English language barrier and insufficient measures to mitigate it pose significant challenges to the educational inclusion of Syrian students. Furthermore, disparities between the education systems of Scotland and Syria, alongside evident cultural distinctions, are apparent in the data.

Analysis of the online survey data highlighted commendable efforts by educators to address diverse learner needs in classrooms, mitigating potential challenges. However, despite these positive efforts, significant barriers to inclusive education were identified, particularly for learners from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. The lack of support and training for educators, coupled with insufficient resources and services in certain schools, emerged as significant obstacles to comprehensive educational inclusion.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is the outcome of my independent work and has not been previously submitted for any degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1: Significance of Educational Support for Displaced Populations

Migration and displacement have far-reaching impacts on education, affecting individuals who move, those who stay, and the host communities for immigrants, refugees, or other displaced populations (UNESCO, 2019). The challenges associated with migration and displacement require educational systems to adapt for both those on the move and those receiving, posing a test for countries to uphold the international commitment to the universal right to education (UNESCO, 2019). Settling into a new school environment is crucial for asylum-seeking and refugee children, as it plays a vital role in their social inclusion within the wider community (Peterson et al., 2017). To support this inclusion, McIntyre and Abrams (2021, p.22) emphasize the need for schools to adopt 'an ecological approach that considers the full range of pre and post-migration factors that make up the young person's past and present experiences'. Such an approach can help refugee students experience elements of success in their new environment by acknowledging the complexity of their backgrounds and facilitating their adaptation (McIntyre and Abrams, 2021). Peterson et al., (2017) also highlight that the initial and ongoing educational experiences of asylum-seeking and refugee children are significant factors that will likely shape their perception of the new culture and communities they have entered. Block et al. (2014, p.1339) argue that the lack of appropriate support and response from schools to meet the educational needs of children from asylum-seeking and refugee backgrounds can profoundly impact their learning and education. These impacts may manifest as limited involvement, a sense of disempowerment, frequent absence, difficulty in forming and maintaining social relationships, early dropout from school, and the potential for significantly lower academic performance, leading to unfavourable long-term prospects in terms of employment and overall socio-economic status (Block et al., 2014, p.1339). This underscores the importance of addressing children's

educational needs and highlights the negative impact on their education and learning when those needs are neglected.

Data reveal that over 6.6 million Syrians have been displaced from their country, with an additional 6.7 million internally displaced after the outbreak of the Syrian war in March 2011, resulting in an unprecedented refugee crisis worldwide, arguably the largest since the Second World War (UNHCR, 2023a; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016, Visconti and Galb, 2018). Additionally, two powerful earthquakes struck northern Syria and southeastern Turkey in February 2023, claiming thousands of lives and causing extensive damage to homes and infrastructure across the region (UNHCR, 2023a).

The Syrian community in Glasgow steadily grew following the United Kingdom's launch of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPR) in September 2015, committing to receiving 20,000 Syrians within five years (COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership, 2018). In turn, Scotland's First Minister agreed to receive at least 2,000 Syrians of the total number resettled under this scheme (COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership, 2018). Syria and Scotland are vastly different countries with significant historical, societal, and cultural differences between them. These differences are reflected in their educational systems and curricula, as will be discussed later. Through the voices of Syrian students and parents as well as perceptions of school educators, this study primarily focuses on the educational experiences of Syrian refugees in Greater Glasgow. However, it also illuminates wider implications for other regions dealing with similar refugee populations, offering insights that can inform both localized and global efforts to support the educational inclusion of refugees.

1.2: Research Aim and Questions

This study aims to investigate the educational experiences of Syrian refugees as it relates to the principle of inclusion in education. Inclusion is conceptualized as a process focused on recognizing and dismantling barriers within three pivotal dimensions of education: presence, participation, and achievement as outlined in

‘Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education’ document (UNESCO, 2016). This study specifically examines the degree to which Syrian students and their families feel included in their schools in Greater Glasgow area. The study seeks to address the two following interconnected questions:

1. What are the main opportunities and challenges linked to the educational inclusion of Syrian students in schools?

2. To what extent can Syrian students be present, participate and achieve (UNESCO, 2016, p13) in schools?

The goal is to critically explore the educational experiences of Syrian students in mainstream schools. To achieve this, data were collected from Syrian students, Syrian parents, and school educators using two data collection methods: semi-structured interviews with students and parents and an online survey with school educators. This research will contribute to the limited research knowledge about Syrian refugee students’ education in Scotland by investigating the inclusive practices and opportunities in place to promote their inclusion in schools. On the other hand, it will contribute by aiming to identify any challenges that may hinder their inclusion.

1.3: Significance of the Study

Education holds immense significance for many individuals; it is recognized as essential for nurturing curious minds, uncovering life's passions, and imparting vital self-care skills such as navigating the workforce, managing households, and tackling daily challenges (UNHCR, 2019, p. 5). For refugees, education is even more vital, representing the surest path to recovering a sense of purpose and dignity after the upheaval of displacement (UNHCR, 2019). Schools play a crucial role in this process, as they can help rebuild a sense of security and trust for young people ‘who have seen their primary social worlds disintegrate’ due to displacement and forced migration (McIntyre and Abrams, 2021, p.64). Asylum-seeking and refugee

children, in particular, highly value education, perceiving it as crucial and holding ambitious aspirations for achievement and progression (Walker, 2011; Chopra, 2020). By providing a stable environment, schools not only support academic growth but also contribute to the social and emotional healing that is essential for refugee students to thrive in their new communities (McIntyre and Abrams, 2021).

There is limited understanding of the educational experiences of Syrian students in Scotland and whether their educational needs are adequately addressed. Currently, there is a dearth of information on how schools are responding to the needs of refugee children from recent conflict regions; notably, no longitudinal research has been conducted on refugee children's educational experiences in Scotland (McBride et al., 2018). Although access to education has been one of the most prominent themes in the literature on refugee and migrant education, there has been less interest in areas such as educational experiences, achievement, and equity-related issues (Moskal and North, 2017). In addition, the voices of refugee children and their families are marginalised most of the time in research (Vigneau et al., 2023; McBride, 2018). As a result, the current research will make an important contribution by exploring the educational inclusion experiences of Syrian students in the Greater Glasgow area from three different perspectives: Syrian students, Syrian parents, and school educators.

Key goals of schooling include achieving equity and justice for marginalized groups, ensuring that all students receive fair and inclusive educational opportunities (UNESCO, 2003). It is, therefore, crucial that schools and teachers provide suitable conditions that can actively challenge any discrimination or disadvantageous issues that impact the schooling experiences of refugee students (Keddie, 2012, p.200). Dryden-Peterson (2016a, p.474) emphasized the importance of conducting research related to refugee education, given the global refugee population has surged to unprecedented levels in recent years. Given the ongoing war in Syria and the complexity of the crisis there, an influx of more displaced Syrians in Scotland is not unlikely over the coming years. Hence, this study serves as a crucial resource for understanding the educational experiences of Syrian students in Scotland. While this research focuses on the specific context of Syrian refugee students in Greater Glasgow, the insights drawn from this case study have broader relevance, extending to various refugee education settings across

Scotland, the UK, and internationally. By understanding the inclusion challenges faced in one region, we can better inform policies and practices in other regions hosting refugee populations.

1.4: Legal Definitions and Historical Context of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

This section provides more detail on refugees and asylum seekers' definitions from the historical and legal perspective. This research focuses on Syrian refugees in Greater Glasgow, exploring their experiences within the local context, while also drawing connections to global trends in refugee treatment and legal status. Although the term refugee will be used frequently throughout, this research is about all displaced Syrians in Scotland regardless of their immigration status, whether it be refugee, asylum seeker, leave to remain under humanitarian protection or any other reasons. That said, the Syrian families that participated in this research were granted leave to remain in the United Kingdom (UK) either under refugee status or humanitarian protection, at the time the interviews were conducted. Humanitarian protection offers international protection to individuals ineligible for refugee status under the Refugee Convention; it applies when individuals face serious harm upon return to their home country, though not due to persecution as specified by the Refugee Convention. (Home Office, 2022)

A refugee is defined in the 1951 Convention as someone who:

> *Owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.* (UNHCR, 1951, p.2)

On the other hand, according to Amnesty International:

An asylum-seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim. (Amnesty International, n.d)

Put simply, refugees and asylum-seekers are both individuals who have fled their home countries due to fear of persecution or human rights violations. However, the main difference lies in their legal status. A refugee is someone who has been officially recognized as having a well-founded fear of persecution based on specific reasons, as mentioned above, and has been granted asylum in another country due to inability or unwillingness to return to their home country due to fear. On the other hand, an asylum-seeker is someone who has left their country and is seeking protection in another country but has not yet been officially recognized as a refugee i.e., in the process of applying for asylum and is awaiting a decision on their claim. Until their claim is approved, they do not have the legal status of a refugee and may not have access to the same rights and protections. That said, these legal definitions can overlook the complicated and painful human impact of fleeing, including losing homes, jobs, family, community connections, and hopes for the future (Dryden-Peterson, 2022, p.20).

The term 'refugee' was scrutinized by Arendt (2007), who contended that certain individuals seeking refuge, including herself when she was forced to flee from Nazi Germany, may prefer not to be labelled as refugees. Rutter (2006) argued that migration is often ambiguous, blurring the line between forced and voluntary movement. This ambiguity poses challenges in categorizing migration experiences. Moreover, Rutter challenged the bureaucratic identity of being a refugee, urging policymakers and practitioners to critically assess labels and understand the implications of labelling children as refugees. Similarly, McIntyre and Abrams (2021) argued that terms like refugees, asylum seekers, and new arrivals are collective labels applied to individuals who have been forced to leave their homes due to a variety of circumstances. Upon reaching their new context, 'they lose intersectional aspects of their identity' as their status as asylum seekers or refugees becomes dominant (McIntyre and Abrams, 2021, p.40). This labelling

not only depersonalizes them through homogenization but also marginalizes them, as their lives become controlled by immigration and welfare processes, McIntyre and Abrams argued. Thus, the use of such labels can obscure the complex, individual experiences of displaced people, reducing them to a single, stigmatized identity.

Rutter (2006) explored the historical evolution of the term ‘refugee’ within the UK context. Originating with the arrival of Huguenots seeking sanctuary from religious persecution in 17th-century France, the term was derived from the French word ‘se réfugier’ meaning ‘to seek shelter’. Its usage in the UK became more prominent with subsequent waves of migration, such as the influx of Eastern European Jews. The concept of refugee status gained official recognition with the introduction of immigration laws, notably the Aliens Act of 1905. Over time, the UK government implemented stricter immigration controls, solidifying the term's socio-political significance. Ultimately, the term ‘refugee’ became an official construct following the UK's accession to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, as highlighted by Rutter.

There is a prevailing culture of disbelief associated with refugee people that highlights a troubling trend where refugees' stories are often dismissed or unheard (Eastmond, 2007, p.261). Eastmond emphasizes that many asylum seekers strive to have their stories acknowledged, however, European countries, influenced by growing scepticism, have increasingly adopted more strict policies. This scepticism, originating in the 1980s, reflects a shift in the perception of asylum as a challenge to state powers, leading to the implementation of stringent policies (Rutter, 2006, p.7). Rutter traced the roots of racial discourses to the 19th century, noting the belief in white racial superiority and subsequent racialized interactions with migrants from the Indian subcontinent, the Caribbean, and Europe by the 1960s. Challenges to racial issues in the 1970s and 1980s gave way to multicultural policies, anti-racism movements, and eventually, a shift toward social cohesion and integration by the early 2000s (Rutter, 2006). Traditionally, a refugee was perceived as someone forced to seek refuge due to a committed act or a held political opinion; however, many refugees, have not committed any act nor held radical political opinions (Arendt, 2007). Thus, refugees and seekers of refuge do not form a collective effort to forge a shared identity based on common interests

or concerns; instead, they are distinct individuals brought together under an artificial and imposed category by circumstances entirely beyond their control (Veck and Wharton, 2021).

Rutter argued that media plays a pivotal role in shaping attitudes, with negative portrayals of asylum seekers in the UK since the 1980s contributing to a hostile discourse. Asylum seekers were often labelled negatively, described as ‘scroungers and benefit fraudsters’ in newspaper articles in the 1990s, fostering an environment that led to restrictive regulations, such as denying them the right to work (Rutter, 2006, p.7). The post-9/11 and London bombings era intensified this hostility, framing asylum seekers as threats to national security and potential terrorists, according to Rutter. While primarily driven by tabloid and local print media, even quality newspapers were influenced. Rutter argued that politicians, including political party officers and governmental press officers, played a significant role in portraying this negative image of refugees and asylum seekers by feeding the press with hostile incidents and stories about asylum seekers and refugees. This is on board with Taylor and Sidhu’s (2012) argument that politicians in various Western countries are recognized for fostering public animosity towards refugees and asylum seekers. On the other hand, there were some refugee groups that opposed what is being stereotyped about asylum seekers and refugees by holding oppositional discourses that present those people from a humanitarian perspective by emphasizing their need for refuge and protection as well as by highlighting cultural enrichment discourses, according to Taylor and Sidhu.

Refugee people ‘face a greater likelihood of discrimination, while being subjected to a nationwide discourse that portrays refugees negatively’ (Walker and Zuberi, 2020, p.397). This discrimination will likely have a negative impact on refugee mental health when, for example, it compounds any existing psychological trauma, they argued. Recognizing the challenges schools face in silencing hostile voices against young refugees, Veck and Wharton (2021) argue that educators within inclusive school cultures can counter mistrust and exclusion by maintaining the belief that these children, despite their difficult experiences, deserve to be listened to as individuals with unique voices. Veck and Wharton advocate that educators in inclusive schools should embrace the imperative to welcome and pay attention to children's expressions of their evolving identities; these expressions

should be recognized as announcements of the unique contributions each child brings to the school community. In this context, Dryden-Peterson (2022) argue that teachers and students, particularly in refugee settings, are leading the way in adapting to uncertainty and challenging inequities. They develop lifelong skills to navigate new situations, create inclusive communities, and reimagine education systems to foster interconnectedness, preparing young people for an uncertain and inequitable future.

The introduction of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) housing dispersal in 2000 and the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 aimed to distribute asylum seekers across major cities in the UK to reduce the number of asylum seekers and refugees in the Greater London area (McIntyre and Hall, 2020; Baak, 2019, p. 269; Rutter, 2006, p. 31). This policy was also designed to tackle the rise in asylum-seeking applications, stop the massive influx of asylum seekers, and provide financial relief to local councils (BBC News, 2001). The dispersal mechanism, which involves state control over the movement of displaced people and the locations where they are housed (McIntyre and Hall, 2020), often relocates refugees to communities that are not traditional sanctuary cities. As a result, McIntyre and Abrams (2021, p.34) argue that refugee children are more likely to attend schools in areas facing higher levels of economic deprivation, which can pose additional challenges to their educational experiences and inclusion. Consequently, this policy reconfigures the geographical and social landscape of refugee resettlement, impacting not only the distribution of the population but also the quality of support available to refugee children in their new communities. To ease the social and housing pressure in areas of London and Southeast of England (BBC News, 2001), Scotland and the City of Glasgow in particular, received its first significant numbers of asylum-seeking persons in the early 2000s (Baak, 2019, p.269). As a result, many communities in Scotland have welcomed many refugees and asylum seekers who have arrived in the country in the recent past (Education Scotland, 2015, p.1). During 2015 and 2016 the number of applications for asylum has increased primarily due to crises in the Middle East and North Africa (Scottish Government, 2017, p.13). In recent years, asylum seekers and refugee people started to live in different parts of Scotland, while previously the majority of them lived primarily in the city of Glasgow (Scottish Government, 2017, p.19).

1.5: International Policies on Children's Right to Education

The right to education was recognised as a fundamental human right in many international conventions, documents, and instruments including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948); the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the World Declaration on Education for All (1990); the Salamanca Statement (1994); The Dakar Framework for Action (2000) and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006); The Millennium Development Goals (2000) and the current agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030).

The global institution that initially held the mandate for refugee education was the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) before the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) assumed this role due to its less centralized structure, which may better suit the local provision of education for refugees (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b, p.476). One of the main roles of UNHCR is to ensure that all signatory states that are in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (hereafter 1951 Convention) and its 1967 Protocol are observing the humanitarian principles outlined in the Convention and its Protocol (Rutter, 2006). The 1951 Convention and its companion 1967 Protocol establish international norms defining key characteristics of refugees, their rights, and the legal obligations of the state (Dryden-Peterson, 2016b). UNHCR plays a crucial role in overseeing the protection of refugee people globally (Kirişci, 2014). In addition, UNHCR aims to provide refugee people with physical, political, and social protection and to deliver humanitarian assistance such as water, food, and shelter as well as the provision of education to those in need (Dryden-Peterson, 2016). Education is central to inclusion and development for asylum-seeking and refugee children (Peterson et al., 2017). The right to education, universally acknowledged as a cornerstone for personal development and societal progress, is a fundamental entitlement for every child (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). In alignment with this principle, Article 22 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees asserts that all contracting states must provide refugees with equal treatment to nationals, specifically concerning elementary education (UNHCR, 1951, p.6). Moreover, refugees are entitled to treatment as favourable as

possible, at least equivalent to that given to aliens in similar circumstances, particularly in the context of education beyond the elementary level (UNHCR, 1951). This inclusive approach encompasses various aspects, including access to studies, recognition of foreign educational credentials, fee waivers, and scholarship opportunities (UNHCR, 1951).

Dryden-Peterson (2022) outlined four eras of education for displaced learners. The first era, liberation, focused on empowering refugees through education to fight for social justice and independence. This was followed by localization, which emphasized adapting education to the cultural and linguistic needs of displaced communities. The next era, standardization, aimed at providing uniform education based on global standards, ensuring equal opportunities while often overlooking local contexts. Today, nationalization is the dominant approach worldwide, emphasizing the integration of refugee learners into host countries' national education systems. While this promotes a sense of belonging, it can sometimes come at the expense of their original identities (Dryden-Peterson, 2022). UNHCR identifies the voluntary return of refugee people to their own country of origin as the best option for them (Kirişci, 2014). When a safe return is not possible, UNHCR suggests either resettlement of refugees into a third country, integration into the host country, or a combination of the two in some situations (Kirişci, 2014).

The 1951 Convention was established after the Second World War to provide protection for those people who were displaced because of war, particularly a large influx of Jews who survived the concentration camps and sought asylum during and after the Second World War in different countries (McBrien, 2016). Educators and local communities developed their own education policies and practices prior to World War II; however, the political landscape changed after the Cold War, leading to more decentralized educational systems (Dryden-Peterson, 2016a, p.475). The 1967 Protocol aimed to remove limitations in the Convention concerning geographical and temporal issues, following conflicts like the Vietnam War and civil wars in Africa (McBrien, 2016). However, McBrien argues that the Convention has become outdated and imprecise in addressing present refugee concerns, including non-nation-state terrorism, internal displacement, socio-economic deprivation, natural disasters, and climate change impacts.

The World Declaration on Education for All and its companion Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs, adopted by the World Conference on Education for All in March 1990, Jomtien, Thailand, was a major milestone in addressing the importance of education in human development not least for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, including refugees (United Nations, 1990). Over seven decades ago, the nations of the world, speaking through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, declared that every individual is entitled to the right to education (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). It asserted that a dedicated effort is essential to eliminate educational inequalities. In the realm of accessing educational opportunities, the principle of non-discrimination should prevail and all vulnerable groups including the impoverished, street and working children, rural and remote populations, nomads, migrant workers, indigenous peoples, ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities, refugees, those displaced by war, and people under occupation, should have equal access to learning opportunities without any disparities (United Nations General Assembly, 1948).

As mentioned earlier, education is vital for refugee people, representing the surest path to recovering a sense of purpose and dignity after the trauma of displacement (UNHCR, 2019). It should be the route to labour markets and economic self-sufficiency, marking an end to months or sometimes years of dependence on others (UNHCR, 2019). Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, embraced by all United Nations Member States in 2015, outlines a collective vision for global peace and prosperity (United Nations, 2015). Central to this agenda are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize a shared responsibility among all nations, both developed and developing. These goals underscore the interconnected nature of addressing poverty, enhancing health and education, and reducing inequality to create a more sustainable and equitable future for people and the planet. UNESCO SDG 4 emphasise the need to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015).

However, with political solutions and peace remaining elusive, However, with political solutions and peace remaining elusive ‘millions of refugee children globally risk spending their entire childhood as if in suspended animation, as if their futures are on hold’ (Dryden-Peterson, 2022, p.2). Data shows that millions of

refugee children and youth still face deprivation of the right to education (UNHCR, 2023b). In spite of different international conventions, there is a significant variant globally in relation to the realization of the right to education for refugees (Dryden-Peterson, 2016a, p.475). To be treated as favourable as possible, as stated in the 1951 Convention, is again variable among host countries; and refugees' right to education mainly depends on the policies, practices and laws available in every national context, Dryden-Peterson argued.

The plight of refugee children's education grows ever more urgent; by the end of 2022, the school-aged refugee population swelled from 10 million to 14.8 million, with a staggering 51% remaining out of school (UNHCR, 2024c). In secondary education, urgent investment is needed. While the global average secondary enrolment stands at 77%, it drops to only 41% for refugees, revealing substantial regional disparities (UNCHER, 2024c). Although many refugee learners express high aspirations to access and complete higher education, this pursuit is far out of reach for the vast majority of refugees (Chopra, 2020, p.1). Recent statistics indicate a rise in higher education enrolment among refugee students, climbing from 1 per cent in 2019 to 7 per cent in 2024 (UNCHR, 2024c). However, this figure remains notably lower than the global average for non-refugees, which exceeds 40 per cent (UNCHER, 2024a).

1.6: Navigating the Syrian Crisis: Challenges for Syrian Refugees in the Neighbouring Region

The Syrian crisis began in March 2011 when people protested peacefully against the Syrian regime. However, the regime responded brutally, escalating the situation into an armed conflict between the opposition and the regime. The opposition struggled to maintain unity as it was divided into numerous groups and militias. Over time, Syria transformed into a comprehensive civil conflict, involving major regional and global powers (Baczko, Dorronsoro, and Quesnay, 2018). Hundreds of thousands of Syrian civilians have suffered injuries, fatalities, and abductions due to the escalation of the Syrian conflict (Mahmood et al., 2019). Moreover, this has resulted in significant internal and external displacement of

people (Ferris and Kirişci, 2016). Some were displaced within Syria, moving from one hotspot to another that is relatively safe, while others sought refuge in neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq. Human Rights Watch estimated approximately 920,000 internally displaced persons in Syria in 2018 (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

Many Syrians sought to start new lives in different parts of the world, where access to essential services such as education, health, and employment could help rebuild their lives (Baak, 2019). Arndt argued that the driving force behind waves of refugees toward Europe is the desire for residency, security, destiny, and identity (Arndt, 2015). Conversely, Tyldum (2021) investigated the perceptions of secondary migration among Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan, finding that despite the privileges and services available in Western countries, such as access to labour markets, healthcare, education, social support, and potential indefinite leave to remain, certain individuals may still demonstrate resistance towards the prospect of relocating to Europe or North America. This reluctance was mainly attributed to loneliness, cultural alienation, and social exclusion. In Tiltnes, Zhang, and Pedersen's (2019) study, for example, two-thirds of Syrian refugees in Jordan stated that they are not considering a potential relocation to Europe.

Accessing Europe demanded significant financial means. People from less educated and economically disadvantaged families often found themselves unable to depart Syria or became stranded in neighbouring countries (Crul et al., 2019). Those who left the country earlier more frequently reached Northern Europe via the Balkan route, however, the closure of the primary refugee route to northern Europe in March 2016 resulted in tens of thousands of refugees becoming trapped in Greek refugee camps, according to Crul et al. When refugees leave their home country, they build hopes and intentions for a swift return, but in most cases, this is not feasible (Dryden-Peterson, 2016a, Dryden-Peterson, 2022). Despite the prolonged exile and uncertain return journey, the majority of refugees settling in neighbouring host countries lack pathways to citizenship (Dryden-Peterson, 2016a).

Due to the ongoing war, Syrians have become one of the world's largest refugee populations (UNHCR, 2024b). Over the past years, Syria has been one of the primary countries of origin for asylum seekers in European Union member states

(Kiselev et al., 2020). From 2015 to 2017, nearly 800,000 asylum applications were recorded within the European Union, the authors stated. Turkey hosts a substantial population of Syrian refugees, officially registering 3.2 million individuals (Crul et al., 2019).

The 'Survivors of Detention in Syria' initiative believes that every Syrian who managed to flee is a survivor while the threat of murder still looms. The initiative believes as long as the murderer (the Syrian regime) is free, there will always be risk at all Syrians regardless of whether residing within Syria or beyond its borders. The initiative calls for justice for Syrian detainees, aiming to make their plight an international public opinion issue. The initiative is summarized on their website page, stating: We are - Syrians - who have survived by sheer chance from death or detention ' (Al Arabiya, 2016). Yet, those survivors did not escape the ordeal of losing family, loved ones, and friends, either by death or in detention (Al Watan, 2016).

Given the unique nature of the Syrian conflict, encountering Syrian families where every member has endured the profound impacts of war and violence is not uncommon. This situation may contribute to the development of complex traumas, especially among children. Armed conflict can heighten the risk of psychological trauma symptoms, negatively affecting emotional, behavioural, and cognitive processes (Walker and Zuberi, 2020). The authors argued that these symptoms inevitably impact individuals' academic ability and achievement.

In the realm of education, Syria had experienced more prosperous times in the past, when educational pursuits and achievements were notably more robust and flourishing within the country. For example, before the Syrian war erupted in 2011, primary and secondary enrolment rate in Syria had been near universal rate (Maadad and Matthews, 2020). Before the conflict, over 90 percent of Syrian children attended primary school, and 70 percent attended secondary school (Human Rights Watch, 2017). The literacy rate among 15–24-year-olds was 95% before the Syrian war crisis, however, the enrolment rate in Syrian schools plummeted to 6% within four years of the conflict (UNHCR, 2017). Furthermore, nearly 50 percent of Syrian refugee children in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey were not receiving any education during that time (Crul et al., 2019; UNHCR, 2017).

These statistics hold significance as they impact an entire generation of the Syrian population, suggesting that even if the war concludes, the prospects for economic stability remain constrained (UNHCR, 2017).

With education in Syria primarily conducted in the Arabic language, many Syrian refugees have encountered challenges adapting to the language of their host countries. While such language barriers might be anticipated when resettling in a European country, it proved to be an unexpected hurdle for some Syrians participating in Chopra's study (2020) on Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Chopra highlighted the challenges faced by Syrian refugees upon arrival in Lebanon, emphasizing the language barrier as a significant obstacle. Chopra showed that the perception of being misunderstood or labelled as unintelligent negatively impacted Syrian refugees' confidence and abilities, contributing to a sense of shyness and diminished self-assurance. Dryden-Peterson (2022, p.105) highlighted that instead of focusing on education as a means to create future opportunities, teachers in certain systems, such as the Lebanese one, often feel compelled to prioritize helping their Syrian students cope with the immediate challenges of the present. This shift in focus reflects the pressing needs of students who are dealing with the difficulties of displacement. In Jordan, Syrian children receive education through diverse means, including schools specifically established within Syrian refugee camps (Muhaidat, Alodat, and Almeqdad, 2020). Moreover, for those residing outside the camps, there is an afternoon double-shifting school system (Visconti and Galb, 2018; Muhaidat, Alodat, and Almeqdad, 2020). In the academic year 2015–2016, around 40% of school-age children in Lebanon were Syrian refugees (Crul et al., 2019). The majority of them exclusively enrolled in 'second-shift schools' designed specifically for Syrian refugees (Visconti and Galb, 2018). Crul et al. (2019) argued that Syrian refugee children in Turkey and Lebanon face numerous challenges accessing education, including financial constraints, inadequate housing, and substandard living conditions in refugee camps. The authors argued that while UN agencies strive to cover school-related expenses, public education may not be entirely cost-free due to additional costs such as transportation and school supplies, posing further barriers to education. In addition, Syrian refugees in Lebanon face significant challenges for survival, with a bleak outlook for their future and that of their families (Maadad and Matthews, 2020). National laws and policies in Lebanon tightly restrict the participation of

young Syrians in the labour market, particularly following the surge in refugee inflows during the intensification of the war in Syria (International Monetary Fund, 2017). Lebanon has long emphasized that it is not a country of asylum meant to serve as a final destination for resettlement, which has created enormous challenges for those Syrians who fled to the country (International Monetary Fund, 2017). As Dryden-Peterson (2022) argued, Syrian students, who initially sought physical safety from the war in their homeland, now find themselves engaged in a different kind of battle. They face ongoing struggles for social, economic, and psychological safety, compounded by an uncertain future (Dryden-Peterson,2022). The issuance of Decree 197 by the Ministry of Labour in December 2014 further limited Syrian participation in the labour market to specific sectors, namely cleaning services, agriculture, and construction (International Monetary Fund, 2017). These restrictions impeded the ability of many Syrians to establish a secure livelihood in Lebanon (International Monetary Fund, 2017), leading to an influx of Syrians who enter the labour market in an informal capacity (Chopra, 2020). The poverty experienced by Syrian families in Lebanon has compelled them to prioritise work over education (Shuayb et al., 2016). Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan have significantly limited legal employment opportunities for refugees, primarily due to the substantial refugee populations and concerns about potential competition impacting opportunities for their own nationals (Visconti and Galb, 2018). In Turkey, for example, Syrian refugees were prohibited from legal employment until 2016, leading to the emergence of a substantial informal labour market characterised by underpaid work (Crul et al., 2019).

The prolonged Syrian conflict has led to the shaping of a generation marked by violence, displacement, and an enduring lack of opportunities, potentially resulting in irreversible losses with profound consequences not only for Syria but also for the surrounding region and beyond (UNICEF, 2014, p.1). Kirişci (2014, p.23) argued that ‘such a generation would be unlikely to contribute positively and productively to society and instead risk becoming involved in crime and constitute a threat to societal peace and stability’. In this respect, Gordon Brown, a former prime minister of Britain noted that ‘Young people engulfed in violence need more than nutrition and medicine: They need hope’ (The Washington Post, 2014). Brown, serving as a United Nations special envoy for global education, advocated for education as a source of hope and prospects for a brighter future for Syrian youth.

In 2014, the UNICEF introduced The No Lost Generation strategy in Jordan and Lebanon, aiming to avert the peril of an entire generation of Syrian children facing the risk of being deprived of education amidst the ongoing crisis. This initiative unites a coalition comprising UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with the objective of supporting the efforts of education ministries in the region (Visconti and Galb, 2018). The primary goals are to increase inclusive access to formal and non-formal education, improve the quality and relevance of education, and strengthen national and sub-national education systems. However, as Dryden-Peterson (2022, p.132-133) argued, merely providing access to school will not prevent the emergence of a 'lost generation.' This term refers to those deprived of an education that equips them with the resources, recognition, skills, and knowledge necessary to build a future with equal opportunities and life chances for every child (Dryden-Peterson, 2022, p.132-133). Visconti and Galb's (2018) argued that persistent political instability in the region, coupled with uncertainty regarding the future residence of refugees, along with shared socio-economic needs and similar weaknesses in the education systems, underscores the necessity for a more integrated approach through regional collaboration. This approach is deemed essential for achieving the overarching objective of strengthening education systems at both national and sub-national levels, Visconti and Galb argued.

Several Arab states including Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan, have experienced a significant increase in asylum seekers and refugees from Africa and within the Arab region (Library of Congress, 2013). Despite these challenges, most Arab countries have not ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, relying instead on regional conventions to address refugee issues, according to Library of Congress. However, the implementation of these conventions on the ground has been inadequate. Human rights organizations and the UNHCR have proposed legal recommendations to Arab states for enhancing the legal framework governing refugee issues in the region (Library of Congress, 2013). These recommendations include ratifying the 1951 Status of Refugees Convention and its 1967 Protocol, enacting comprehensive domestic legislation to regulate benefits for refugees and asylum seekers, establishing reception centres on border areas to offer temporary legal protection, and improving cooperation with the

UNHCR to facilitate repatriation and provide services to refugees and asylum seekers.

1.7: Syrian Arrival: Scottish Government's Vision and Community Initiatives

In the opening of the Humanitarian Summit in Edinburgh in 2015, and in the presence of a group of organisations representing both the public and third sector from across Scotland, the Scottish First Minister noted that:

> *In Scotland, we have a long and very proud tradition as a welcoming and tolerant nation - a country where, down the generations, thousands of people fleeing persecution, war and desperate circumstances that we can scarcely imagine, have found refuge, a place of safety and a new home to call their own.*
> (Education Scotland, 2015a, p.1)

The Scottish government envisions a Scotland where refugees can embark on building new lives from the day they arrive, realizing their full potential with the support of mainstream services and becoming active members of communities (Scottish Government, 2017). Inclusion is seen as a two-way process, fostering positive change in both individuals and host communities, leading to cohesive, multicultural societies, as noted in the final report of the New Scots strategy (Scottish Government, 2017). The Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA), convening the Strategic Migration Partnership Group, a national coordination group for refugee resettlement, has provided support to numerous local areas involved in hosting refugee populations since 2015 (Mulvey et al., 2018). Additionally, Scottish people took the initiative in 2015 to support Syrian refugees arriving in Scotland, organising charity fundraising events, including those organised by local schools (Education Scotland, 2015a). A survey demonstrated a higher welcoming attitude toward refugees in Scotland compared to other parts of the UK, with 57% of Scots expressing satisfaction that refugees would successfully integrate into the Scottish community (IPSOS MORI, 2016). Similarly, the positive response rate from the Scottish people exceeded that of all European countries polled in the survey (Baak, 2019).

Table 1.1 presents contemporary legislation and policies that were developed in Scotland, with some of them focusing on refugees and asylum-seekers. The Scottish government developed some of these legislations and policies particularly to support the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the Sottish society (Scottish Government, 2017). These key policies and legislative frameworks address various aspects of social issues and advocacy such as race equality, human rights, English language education, violence against women, housing, and combating hate crime. These initiatives reflect a commitment to inclusion, social justice, and the well-being of diverse communities, outlining comprehensive goals and actions to address various societal challenges. While Scotland has its distinct approach to social policy areas concerning refugee integration, it is important to recognize that immigration and asylum policy is formulated by the UK Parliament in Westminster (Mulvey et al., 2018).

Legislation/Policy	**Description and Aim**
New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2024	The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, launched in March 2024, aims to create a welcoming Scotland for refugees and asylum seekers by coordinating efforts across organizations and communities to enhance their integration. Building on lessons from the 2013 strategy, this updated approach reflects evolving demographics and needs, integrates insights from lived experiences, and incorporates recent academic research. It provides a comprehensive framework and governance structure to ensure effective implementation of refugees' rights and support, emphasizing respectful, inclusive integration that addresses unique challenges such as trauma and barriers to participation. Supported by a regularly updated delivery plan, the strategy promotes partnership approaches and evidence-based interventions to meet Scotland's diverse needs. (Scottish Government, 2024)
New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities 2014–2017	Introduced In 2013 by the Scottish Government in collaboration with various organizations. This initiative aimed to coordinate support for refugees and asylum seekers, fostering a welcoming environment in Scotland for those seeking protection from persecution and human rights abuses. The initiative emphasized education as a key target, aiming to achieve outcomes such as developing English language skills, facilitating access to education, empowering individuals for employment or further education based on their qualifications, and recognizing the value of linguistic diversity in Scotland. The strategy, implemented from 2014 to 2017, gained national and international attention. Following a comprehensive review, a revised version was launched in 2018, the 'New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018–2022' incorporating insights from the original strategy (Scottish Government, 2017)

Welcoming our learners: Scotland's ESOL Strategy 2015 – 2020	An updated strategy, launched in 2015, addressing changes in society over recent years including changes regarding the profile of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Scotland, the transformation of migrants into established communities, and alterations to the criteria for English language proficiency in immigration and welfare benefits. The strategy is emphasizing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision for integration. The strategy reaffirms the vision of ESOL provision in Scotland by stating that all individuals should have access to excellent English language education to develop the necessary skills for active participation in various aspects of Scottish life, including the workplace, further study, family, local community, society, and the economy. Five guiding principles for ESOL provision include inclusion, diversity, progression, quality, and achievement. (Education Scotland, 2015b)
Community Learning and Development (CLD)	This initiative primarily aids disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and individuals, of all ages, in engaging with learning to instigate positive change in their lives and communities. Emphasizing early intervention, prevention, and addressing inequalities, CLD contributes significantly to enhancing overall attainment and promoting community empowerment. (Education Scotland, 2023d)
Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030	Emphasizes the Scottish Government commitment to promoting race equality, combatting racism, and addressing obstacles for minority ethnic communities. Six visions are outlined for achieving race equality by 2030. The first vision articulates the comprehensive goal for race equality in Scotland. The additional themes encompass a range of outcomes related to community cohesion and safety, participation and representation, education and lifelong learning, employability, employment, income, as well as health and home. In regard to education and lifelong learning areas of work, the vision is that every individual is afforded the chance to learn within an inclusive setting, free from any disadvantages linked to racial inequality or racism (Scottish Government, 2016b)
Scottish National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP)	Scotland's first National Action Plan for Human Rights, launched in 2013, focuses on cultural, international, and societal aspects of human rights. Phase two is under development. (SNAP, n.d.)
Equally Safe: Scotland's strategy to eradicate violence against women	Launched in 2016 and updated in 2018, joint strategy by the Scottish Government and COSLA to eradicate violence against women. Aims for a safe, respectful Scotland. (Scottish Government, 2017) (Scottish Government, 2018)
Joint Housing Delivery Plan for Scotland	Launched in 2015, focusing on a strong housing system to make Scotland more productive, cohesive, and fair. Prioritizes high-quality sustainable homes (Scottish Government, 2015c) (Scottish Government, 2017)
Housing Options Guidance	Joint guidance from the Scottish Government and COSLA developed in 2016 outlining key roles for local authorities in addressing housing-related issues, including homelessness (Scottish Government, 2016a)
Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015	Scottish Parliament Act addressing human trafficking, slavery, and forced labour. Introduces unified offense, enhances laws, and ensures rights for victims. (Scottish Government, 2015b) (Scottish Government, 2017)

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015	Aims to empower community stakeholders in decisions on public services, addressing inequality, and granting land and building ownership rights. (Scottish Government, 2015a) (Scottish Government, 2017)
Report of Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion	Established in 2015, aims to eliminate hate crime. The Initial report was launched in 2016, and a review of hate crime legislation was conducted in 2017 with consideration for new categories, including refugees and asylum seekers. (Scottish Government, 2016c) (Scottish Government, 2017)

Table 1.1: Legislations and policies developed to address various social issues in Scotland.

Syrians have arrived in the UK in different ways. Most of them have been resettled through the Vulnerable Person Resettlement program (VPR) while others have made their way via other means, such as seeking asylum upon arrival or utilizing skilled migration schemes, using their educational, economic, and social capital to secure employment (Baak, 2019). An illustrative example is the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA), which offers a platform for academics from refugee contexts to find employment in the UK. Established in 1933 by prominent British academics and scientists in response to Hitler's decision to expel leading scholars from German universities, CARA continues to play a vital role (CARA, n.d.). I personally know two Syrian academics who recently arrived in the UK through CARA. Those resettled via the VPR scheme receive a five-year leave to remain in the UK, in contrast to other countries that typically grant permanent residency to individuals resettled under similar schemes (Baak, 2019, p.269). Baak contends that this limited residency duration impacts the resettlement experience for individuals and families, creating uncertainty regarding the extension of their stay in the UK beyond the initial five-year period.

Refugee families seek culturally accepting and safe environments in host countries for settlement (UNHCR, 2017). Scotland has established inclusive education frameworks and initiatives to integrate refugees into the community. Scotland's education system, guided by the Curriculum for Excellence, prioritizes inclusive education and acknowledges diverse learner needs (UNHCR, 2017). It emphasizes that learners' abilities are unique and can succeed in the right environment. In practice, the educational needs and experiences of children from

refugee backgrounds pose challenges for refugees settling in Scotland, including interruptions in prior education, language support needs, and trauma issues (McBride et al., 2018). Acknowledging the diversity within refugee communities is crucial for those assisting refugee children, necessitating flexible educational responses, as a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective (Rutter, 2006). However, concerns were raised regarding the academic literacy development of students with English as an additional language in Scotland, impacting the achievement of advanced learners due to insufficient support (McBride et al., 2018). The authors emphasized the diverse nature of refugee populations, which vary in language, nationality, culture, religion, and social backgrounds. McBride et al. contended that this heterogeneity poses significant challenges for local authorities and agencies in Scotland tasked with providing educational services to refugees.

1.8: Positionality

Any qualitative inquiry must provide information about the researcher, encompassing experience, perspective, prior knowledge, background characteristics, and any personal connection with the study under investigation (Patton, 1999). Patton argued that addressing these aspects is crucial because the researcher serves as the instrument in qualitative research, contributing to the establishment of researcher reliability. Recognizing the researchers' paradigmatic stance is crucial, as it constitutes a framework of assumptions about the social world that shapes the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2017). This framework, comprising the researchers' ontological and epistemological positions, establishes the philosophical foundation of the research endeavour, impacting aspects such as topic selection, formulation of research questions, methodological approaches, sampling techniques, and study design, according to Hesse-Biber.

Education and, more specifically, inclusion, are multifaceted issues that intersect with various aspects of an individual's life, past, and present. Recognizing the sensitivity of the topic under scrutiny, I approached it with care and consideration throughout the interviews. Considering the ongoing crisis in Syria and the potential challenges faced by participants in Syria or during their journeys to the UK, I emphasized to the Syrian families their right to refrain from discussing any topics that

might cause distress. Drawing on my identity as a Syrian parent and established connections within the Syrian refugee community in Greater Glasgow, I utilized our shared cultural and linguistic backgrounds to build trust with participants. Consequently, I avoided intrusive questions to respect participants' privacy and ensure their comfort.

Understanding that involving children in research requires distinct skills, I reviewed relevant literature to enhance his understanding of procedures for children's participation in research. Moreover, I am not detached from my children; as a parent myself, I maintain regular contact with them. Additionally, having previously worked as a primary school teacher in both Syria and Kuwait, I possess extensive experience in daily interactions with children. Furthermore, my involvement in teaching an Arabic program online to young Scottish students across various schools in Scotland, under the joint initiative of Strathclyde University and Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT), further underscores my familiarity with engaging children.

Merriam et al. (2001) delineated the intricate nature of researcher identity and its influence on the research process, particularly through an examination of insider and outsider perspectives. Merriam et al. argued that early discussions of insider/outsider status assumed that researchers were predominantly either insiders or outsiders, with each status having its own set of advantages and disadvantages. However, the authors noted that more recent discussions have revealed the complexity inherent in these positions and have acknowledged that the boundaries between them are not clearly delineated. They concluded that what an insider perceives and understands may differ from, but is equally valid to, what an outsider understands. As a Syrian refugee myself, I am aware of the experience of being a refugee in a foreign country. This awareness guided my approach, ensuring a sensitive, supportive, and professional manner throughout the data collection process for Syrian families. Building on personal connections within the relatively small Syrian community in Greater Glasgow, I already knew some participants before the interviews, fostering a sense of rapport and trust with both Syrian children and their parents. I understand that this may present challenges regarding the voluntary basis of participation, as some individuals may feel pressured to decline my invitation even if they are not entirely comfortable being

involved. Therefore, I have openly communicated to them that it is completely acceptable if they do not wish to participate. In addition, I recognise the importance of establishing rapport, trust, and friendship with Syrian families who expressed interest in participating but with whom I had no prior contact. In such instances, I endeavoured to initiate informal conversations before conducting interviews. As a male researcher, cultural norms may have hindered the recruitment of female adults i.e., Syrian mothers. As a result, there is a higher number of male participants (11) compared to females (2) in this study. My fluency in the two most common languages in Syria—Arabic and Kurdish—facilitated effective communication with all participants.

1.9: Thesis Outline

This thesis is organised into nine chapters. **Chapter One introduces** the study by outlining the research questions and rationale, emphasizing the importance of education for refugee children. It provides context by reviewing the Syrian crisis, the state of education in Syria and neighbouring regions, and relevant Scottish legislation and policies supporting refugee inclusion. **Chapter Two** provides a **systematic literature review** concerning the education of Syrian refugees in various contexts. It presents the main issues discussed in the existing research on Syrian students' educational experiences. **Chapter Three** outlines the **explanatory framework** informing this study, which revolves around the capability approach, inclusion, and equity in education. This framework will guide the examination of practices shaping the educational experiences of Syrian refugee students throughout the study. **Chapter Four** details the main elements of the research **methodology**, covering research design, sample selection, data collection methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations. **Chapters Five to Seven** present the **findings** of the study. Chapter Five draws on findings from the perspectives of Syrian parents on the schooling of their children. This is followed by chapter Six, which explores the voices and experiences of Syrian students in the Greater Glasgow area. Chapter Seven presents the perspectives of school educators regarding the educational inclusion of Syrian students. **Chapter Eight** presents a **discussion** of the data collected from Syrian parents, students, and school

educators in light of the reviewed literature and research on the educational inclusion of Syrian students in various contexts. The final chapter, **Chapter Nine**, **summarises** the key aspects of the research, addresses the research questions, and provides the original contribution of the research, along with implications, recommendations, research limitations, and final reflections.

It is important to note that the chapter lengths in this thesis vary considerably, reflecting the distinct scope, focus, and depth required for each section. Foundational chapters, such as the systematic literature review (Chapter Two) and the methodology (Chapter Four), are more extensive because they involve a comprehensive review of existing scholarship and a detailed explanation of the research design and methods. Additionally, the chapters vary in length according to the nature of the findings they present. For instance, chapters presenting empirical findings are more concise, as they focus on synthesizing key insights from research participants. Chapter Six, which discusses the experiences of Syrian children, is shorter than Chapter Five, which details the perceptions of Syrian parents. This discrepancy was due to the fact that parents were generally more communicative and willing to elaborate on their thoughts, whereas children may have been more reserved. Some children may have felt shy or hesitant to speak freely, especially in front of a researcher, and the presence of research tools like a recorder may not have created an environment conducive to open discussion. These factors likely contributed to the shorter length of the chapter on children's experiences.

The variation in chapter lengths reflects the natural differences in participant engagement and the complexity of the topics covered. Each chapter is tailored to its specific focus, ensuring that every subject is addressed with the appropriate level of detail, based on its significance to the overall study. This structural diversity follows a logical progression, balancing the theoretical, methodological, and empirical elements of the thesis. The approach allows for a thorough exploration of each area, maintaining clarity and depth where necessary.

Chapter Two: Systematic Literature Review: Education Experiences of Syrian Refugees

This chapter aims to map the academic journal publications on refugee education, shedding light on the existing knowledge concerning the educational experiences of Syrian refugee students.

2.1: Scope of the Review

Due to the extensive body of research on migration, including refugee and asylum-seeking education, this systematic review has the objective of examining literature with specific criteria. The focus of this systematic review on the educational experiences of Syrian refugees is confined to peer-reviewed empirical studies, deliberately excluding books and book chapters due to concerns about research quality and subjectivity. This choice stems from the belief that peer-reviewed articles offer a more reliable assessment of research quality, limiting the risk of bias and often undergoing evaluation by knowledgeable researchers. The search was conducted in February 2021, restricted to documents in the English language, emphasizing recent research published between 2011 and 2021, a timeframe chosen to align with the outbreak of the Syrian crisis. It is unlikely that specific research has been conducted on the Syrian refugee population before this date. This focused timeframe is deemed sound, particularly when examining the literature on the refugee population, considering the frequent introduction of new policies and strategies, notably in the Middle East region. By narrowing the review to this specific timeframe, the researcher aims to provide a more comprehensive and relevant analysis of the issue under investigation. Furthermore, this review places a particular emphasis on Syrian refugees as a central element, with a significant emphasis on formal school education. The exclusion of literature solely examining higher education reflects a deliberate choice. While insights can be gained from research on education for refugee students of other nationalities, the primary focus of this literature review is on the education of Syrian refugee students, aligning with the core objectives of the present research.

It is essential to note that this systematic literature review was undertaken by a single researcher. However, it is acknowledged that collaboration with a team of researchers could have enhanced the study's quality and mitigated the risk of bias throughout the entire process, from defining inclusion and exclusion criteria to reporting and evaluating the studies involved.

While reviewing the literature, terms such as integration, mainstreaming, and inclusive education are often used interchangeably to describe the goal of making mainstream schools accessible to all learners. However, this study makes a clear distinction between these terms. Specifically, "integration" typically refers to the process of placing students with diverse needs into mainstream settings, while "inclusion" emphasizes the broader, more holistic approach of ensuring that all students are fully engaged and supported within these environments. In this study, the terms "inclusion" and "educational inclusion" are employed to highlight this broader, more holistic approach to achieving meaningful engagement and support for every student.

2.2: Searching Databases

Employing a systematic review methodology, this research adopted a consistent, comprehensive, and transparent approach to searching the literature, following the guidelines outlined by Atkinson et al. (2015). While acknowledging the potential unintentional exclusion of qualifying documents, as Atkinson et al. suggested, the term 'comprehensive' is approached cautiously although concreted efforts were made to make this study as exhaustive as possible. The literature review was conducted in alignment with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) statement, developed by Moher et al. (2009), albeit confined to a literature review scope. The PRISMA statement, encompassing sections such as Title, Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussions, served as a structured checklist, contributing to the reduction of bias risk, and enhancing the transparency and quality of this systematic review.

The following two databases that are key to social science have been searched: Scopus, and Web of Science. In terms of search strategy, I employed various

keywords including Syrian, refugee, education, schooling, asylum seeker, crisis, war, children, students, school, inclusion, displaced, and migrant. Various search filters, such as All Text, Title, Subject Terms, Abstract, or Author-Supplied Abstract, along with Keywords, were selectively applied, and advanced search options were utilized to refine results to the most relevant ones. For instance, one search query combined terms like Syrian AND (refugees or asylum seekers or displaced or migrants or immigrants) AND (education or school or learning or teaching or classroom or education system) NOT (higher education or college or university or postsecondary). Following the approach recommended by Atkinson et al. (2015) for a comprehensive literature search, I executed a sequential search process, beginning with an initial screening for relevant literature and subsequently engaging in a thorough analysis of pertinent documents. Thus, title screening was carried out to identify pertinent papers, which were then organized in a specific file within my Mendeley reference manager software. Subsequently, abstract screening was conducted on each paper in Mendeley. Papers meeting the initial inclusion criteria were marked as favourites, signifying their qualification for the full-text reading stage, where they would be thoroughly reviewed against the inclusion criteria. The final step involved determining whether each study would be included in the final list of reviewed studies for this systematic literature review.

2.2.1: Stage one: Title screening

During the initial phase of the literature search based on title screening, 75 papers were identified. Frequently, the title alone did not offer sufficient indication for inclusion or exclusion, necessitating abstract screening to minimize the risk of inadvertently excluding qualifying documents. At the outset, I adopted a broad inclusion approach, as recommended by Atkinson et al. (2015), acknowledging the need for further narrowing in subsequent stages when documents are read in full. From the initial search, I observed that including research from both developing and developed countries in this literature review could lead to significant disparities in the provision of and accessibility to education. For instance, some developing countries provide education to refugees and asylum-seekers in camps or separate schools. Although the initial intention was to encompass the educational experiences of Syrian students across diverse settings

such as refugee camps, separate schools, and formal institutions in both developing and developed countries, I chose to exclude literature concerning education in refugee camps, which falls within the distinct domain of education in conflict and emergencies. Instead, I focused on literature that scrutinizes the education of refugees and their inclusion into host settings.

2.2.2: Stage two: Abstract screening

Abstract screening was carried out on a total of 75 papers identified across both databases. Initially, 2 duplicates were identified, and 41 papers were excluded, resulting in 32 papers for further consideration. Key reasons for exclusion at this stage included the absence of education as a primary theme, non-empirical research, a focus on education in refugee camps, the lack of a specific focus on Syrian refugees, and research concentrated on higher education. Refer to *Appendix 1* for a comprehensive list of the 41 studies excluded during this stage, along with the reasons for their exclusion.

2.2.3: Stage three: Full-text article

Following the abstract screening, 32 papers remained in consideration. Refer to *Figure 2.1*, adapted from Moher et al. (2009, p.3), illustrating a flow diagram outlining the phases of study selection in this systematic review. The 32 remaining papers underwent a thorough full-text review to ensure compliance with inclusion criteria. This process led to the exclusion of an additional 7 papers due to emerging information; details of these excluded studies can be found in *Appendix 2*. Consequently, a total of 25 papers were included in the final review. The number of studies included in this literature review may appear limited due to the focus on a singular theme—education—specifically within one refugee group and a relatively short timeframe.

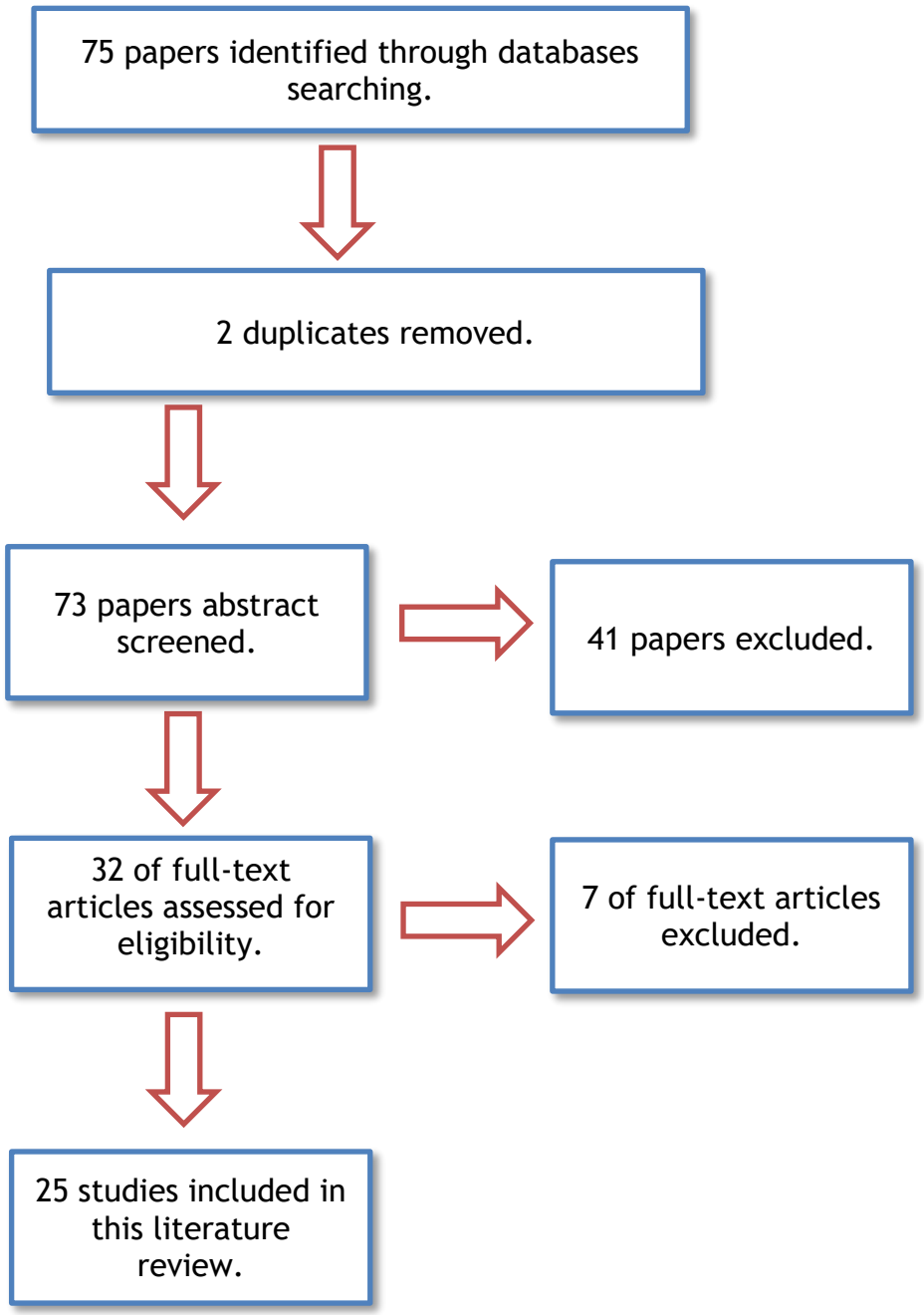


Figure 2.1. Flow of information through the different phases of this systematic review. Adapted from (Moher et al., 2009).

2.3: Overview of the Reviewed Studies

The literature on the education of Syrian refugee students encompasses a diverse range of studies conducted in various countries including Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iceland, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom. Turkey dominated with 16 studies, followed by Lebanon with 5 studies. Primary school contexts were more prevalent than secondary school contexts. Interviews were a commonly employed data collection method, complemented by various other methods such as focus groups, observation, questionnaires, surveys, and document analysis. The study samples primarily consisted of classroom teachers, with additional participation from school principals, policy actors, special educators, administrators and officials from the Turkish Ministry of National Education, representatives of local authorities, and Syrian children and adults. Qualitative research methods were prominently employed, with 22 studies adopting qualitative approaches. One study utilized quantitative research (Aydin et al., 2019), while two studies incorporated mixed research methodologies (Uyan-Semerci and Erdoğan, 2018; Kaysılı et al., 2019). *Table 2.1* provides a comprehensive overview of the studies included in the exploration of Syrian refugee students' education.

Table 2.1: Summary of Reviewed Studies

Author(s) & Title	***Location***	***Publication year & Journal***	***Aim***	***Data collection***	***Sample***	***Main Findings***
Ali M. Alodat & Fawwaz A. Momani: (Gifted Syrian refugee students in Jordanian schools: have we identified them?)	Jordan	2018 Gifted and Talented International	Evaluating educational services offered for Syrian gifted students in Jordanian schools.	Semi-structured interviews	35 school principals, and 7 educational supervisors	Identification services that are provided for gifted Syrian refugees' students are insufficient and inadequate. Syrian refugee students in Jordan are underrepresented in the gifted pro- grams whether it be in their schools that they attend or in the schools for the gifted students.

Dina Kiwan: (Inclusion and citizenship: Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon)	Lebanon	2021 International Journal of Inclusive Education	Examining the inclusion of Syrian and Palestinian refugees in education in Lebanon	Semi-structured interviews, Observation, Website materials' analysis	1 school director, 1 NGO director	The education system difference between Lebanon and Syria was identified as a key barrier for Syrian children, given that in Lebanon the language of instruction is in English and French while curriculum is delivered in Arabic in Syria.
Jo Kelcey & Samira Chatila: (Increasing Inclusion or Expanding Exclusion? How the Global Strategy to Include Refugees in National Education Systems Has Been Implemented in Lebanon)	14 public schools across Lebanon	2020 Refuge	Examining how teachers and principals in Lebanese public schools understand and enact inclusion for Syrian refugee students.	Focus groups, Interviews, document analysis, observation	Syrian and Lebanese parents, Teachers, School principals, Policy actors	The inclusion in Lebanon has been implemented in ways that reproduce inequities in education. Teachers and principals in public schools perceive and implement inclusion in ways that underpin and reflect education inequities.
Nina Maadad & Julie Matthews: (Schooling Syrian refugees in Lebanon: building hopeful futures)	Lebanon	2020 Educational Review	Exploring the role of hope in achieving successful refugee schooling and education	Interviews, observation	Teachers, students, and families in 2 public schools, 2 private schools, and 2 informal schools in refugee camps	Hope enables refugees to think beyond current challenges and difficult conditions and creates a belief that there is a better future in a better community to be strived for. Refugee education in Lebanon is facing historical, political, economic and religious challenges. Schools can contribute to building more inclusive and just communities and societies.
Shereen Hamadeh: (A critical analysis of the Syrian refugee education policies in Lebanon	Lebanon	2019 Journal of Education Policy	Policies and efforts in place in relation to the education of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.	Document analysis, Interviews	1 schoolteacher, 1 social worker, 1 school principal	Syrian refugees in Lebanon are facing genuine challenges in related to education and health care. There is a genuine fear of Syrian children being a lost generation due to lack education, which is one of the basic human rights

using a policy analysis framework)						
Elizabeth Buckner, Dominique Spencer& Jihae Cha: (Between policy and practice: The education of Syrian refugees in Lebanon)	Beirut, the Bekaa Valley and Tripoli: Lebanon	2018 Journal of Refugee Studies	The study examines education policy for Syrian refugees in Lebanon.	Semi-structured interviews	44 key informants from a diverse range of organizations	There are gaps between policy and practice in education. International conventions about children's rights combined with foreign aid have helped to create a national refugee education framework and, thus, promoting refugees' access to schooling.
Ira Bogotch, Dustin Pappas, Cole Kervin & Emily Silliman: (Towards a Socially Just System of Newcomer School Integration: Syrians in Canada and Germany)	Canada and Germany	2020 Handbook on Promoting Social Justice in Education	Understanding the experiences of educators in integrating newcomers	Interviews, observation	Various educators in schools within the state of North Rhine, and 2 Schools in Ontario, Canada,	Educators in Canada and Germany face institutional daily barriers in related to the integration of newcomers. Canada deploys systematic innovation and structural supports to facilitate the integration process, while in Germany there is limited systemic supports provided to educators.
Hanna Ragnarsdóttir: (Refugee families in Iceland: opportunities and challenges in schools and society)	Iceland	2020 International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being	Investigating Educational practices of Syrian children with refugee background	Semi-structured interviews	8 head teachers, 5 heads of divisions, 6 supervisory teachers, 4 special educators, and parents	Most of the children did well both academically and socially in their first months in the schools. Parents and children experienced challenges after a few months

Roda Madziva & Juliet Thondhlana: (Provision of quality education in the context of Syrian refugee children in the UK: opportunities and challenges)	Nottinghamshire, United Kingdom	2017 Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education	Understanding the key processes regarding the development of quality education for refugee children and their integration in schools	Interviews	Syrian adults, Syrian children, school-teachers, council authorities and representative, migrant support organisations	Cooperation between different agencies is a key factor in relation to integration of refugee children in schools and the wider community. Schools can address the specific needs as well as meet the psychological needs of Syrian refugee children; and thus, promote inclusion when adequate resources are in place.
Elif Karsli-Calamak & Sultan Kilinc: (Becoming the teacher of a refugee child: Teachers' evolving experiences in Turkey)	Ankara, Turkey	2021 International Journal of Inclusive Education	Understanding the experiences of classroom teachers of Syrian refugee children in relation to inclusive education	Observations, field notes, informal interviews, and semi-structured interviews	5 teachers in a primary public school	Teachers expressed their concerns about scarcity of educational and economic resources needed to boost access of Syrian refugee students to education.
Ozlem Erden: (The effect of local discourses adapted by teachers on Syrian child refugees' schooling experiences in Turkey)	Central Anatolian, Turkey	2020 International Journal of Inclusive Education	Exploring Schooling experience of refugee children in relation to local policies and discourses	Observation, Interviews	34 teachers, 39 refugee students in primary stage	Local discourses affect teachers' pedagogic decisions. Classroom activities are affected by teachers' perceptions that are formulated from local discourses on refugees.

Nermin Karabacak : (AN Examination of Syrian Students' Educational Experiences at School from the Reflections of Teachers)	Rize, Turkey	2020 Problems of Education in the 21st Century	Examining Syrian students' experiences at school	Focus group, semi-structured interviews, observation	34 teachers in 3 primary schools, 3 lower-secondary, 3 upper-secondary	Language is a significant problem that Syrian students encounter which creates barriers to their education as well as their communication. Barriers that face Syrian students in education include behavioural, academic, socio-cultural and family barriers.
Sevda Dolap-cioglu & Yeliz Bo-lat: (The education issues of Syrian students under temporary protection status)	Turkey	2019 Research in Educa-tion	Examin-ing edu-cational issues that face Syrian students under temporary protection	Interviews	10 class teachers in a primary public school	The need to learn the language is the most important educational prerequisite that can affect students' academic success and establishing communication. Authorities should provide Syrian students with better opportunities to learn Turkish language.
Ahmet Kaysılı, Ayşe Soylu & Mustafa Sever: (Exploring major roadblocks on inclusive education of Syrian refugees in school settings)	Ankara, Turkey	2019 Turkish Journal of Education	Exploring the barriers in front of inclusive education of Syrian refugees and the clashes between Syrian and Turkish students.	Semi-structured interviews	12 teach-ers, 5 school administra-tors, 10 parents (Syrian and Turkish) in 5 middle schools	Holistic approach is essential to better implement inclusive education for Syrian refugees. The social tension that happens in the wider community between refugees and hosts impacts school's relationships.

Hasan Aydin, Mahmut Gundogdu & Arif Akgul: (Integration of Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Understanding the Educators' Perception)	Istanbul, Turkey	2019 Journal of International Migration and Integration	Exploring perception of pre-service teachers' attitudes towards Syrian refugee children	Survey	353 pre-service teachers	Training and professional development is needed for teachers to enable them to serve Syrian refugee students. It is crucial to integrate Syrian refugees in public schools, however, the current education system lacks the philosophy related to inclusion and multiculturalism.
Hasan Aydin & Yeliz Kaya: (Education for Syrian Refugees: The New Global Issue Facing Teachers and Principals in Turkey)	Istanbul, Turkey	2019 Educational Studies	Offering Insights into the needs and challenges that Syrian refugees face in Turkish public schools	Semi-structured interviews, classroom observation	7 teachers, and 2 principals in 2 inner-city elementary schools	Syrian refugee children in Istanbul had access to education in welcoming and secure learning environment. Language is the main challenge that Syrian refugee students face in Turkish public schools. Inadequate resources, inappropriate curriculum planning, and limited capacity of providing trained teachers who can work effectively with refugees were reported.
Cßetin Cßelik & Ahmet Icßduygu: (Schools and Refugee Children: The Case of Syrians in Turkey)	Istanbul, Turkey	2019 International Migration	Exploring the institutional habitus of public schools and temporary education centres	Semi-structured interviews	14 Syrian parents, 6 teachers in Temporary Education Centres and Public Schools	The institutional habitus of both types of schools may generate exclusionary practices for Syrian children
Memet Karakuş: (Views of Teachers and Students on the Problems of Syrian Children in a Refugee School in Turkey)	Southern part of Turkey.	2019 International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies	Exploring the perceptions of Syrian refugee teachers and students about education process in temporary education schools	Interviews	12 Syrian students, 4 Syrian teachers in primary school	Syrian refugee's education face economic, sociological and political problems in Turkey.

K. Onur Unutulmaz: (Turkey's Education Policies towards Syrian Refugees: A Macro-level Analysis)	Turkey	2019 International Migration	Analysing the transformation of education policies in Turkey towards Syrian refugees	Semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, on-site observations, document analysis, research reports	32 individuals from a diverse set of institutions	The current strategy that aims to integrate Syrian students in Turkish education system is positive, however, it brings significant challenges associated with the political and legal context that should be addressed.
Sevilay Şahin & Sabahattin Sümer: (The Problems Experienced in the Integration Process of Syrian Students into the Turkish Education System)	10 cities in Turkey	2018 Universal Journal of Educational Research	Navigating the problems experienced at schools in the integration process of Syrian students into the Turkish Education System	Questionnaire with open-ended questions	66 school principals	There are some problematic areas in relation to the inclusion of Syrian students into Turkish educational system including: overcrowded classrooms, language and communication problems between Syrian and Turkish students, cultural differences related issues, problems related with the teaching methods of the teachers, problems related with the supply of guidance services
Asiye Toker Gokce & Erdal Acar: (School Principals' and Teachers' Problems related to the Education of Refugee Students in Turkey)	Kocaeli Province, Turkey	2018 European Journal of Educational Research	Examining the challenges that are related to the education of refugee students in schools	Semi-structured interviews	4 school principals, and 6 teachers	Communication and adaptation issues were reported as the most significant problems faced by Syrian students.
Pınar Uyan-Semerci& Emre Erdoğan: (Who cannot access education? Difficulties of being a student for	Şanlıurfa and Hatay Turkey	2018 Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies	Exploring the factors that determine being out of school for Syrian children in Turkey.	Interviews, questionnaire	541 Syrian parents	Parents' education level and family income are the most two significant factors that affect children's access to school.

children from Syria in Turkey)						
Aslihan Tezel McCarthy: (Politics of refugee education: *educational administration of the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey)*	Turkey	2018 Journal of Educational Administration and History	Examining the central education authorities' response to the education of refugee students	Document analysis, observation, and semi-structured interviews	14 semi-structured interviews conducted with representatives of different organizations	The needs of refugee children are not prioritised in education policy making and curriculum development. Teachers and principals in public schools are underprepared to deal with refugee students who come diverse cultural and ethnical populations.
Y. Yesim Ozer, Aysegul Komsuoglu & Z. Ozde Atesok: (One Common Future, Two Education Systems: The Case of Syrian Children in *Istanbul)*	Three areas with large Syrian population in Istanbul, Turkey	2017 European Education	Exploring the educational status of Syrian refugee students in both public schools and temporary education centres	Interviews, Workshops	School principals, deputy principals, teachers, administrators and officials from Turkish Ministry of National Education	The dual educational system, which consists of public schools and Temporary Education Centers (TECs), creates a kind of segregation and hinders the culture of togetherness. Language and adaptation issues are the main barriers in front of the integration of refuges in Turkish education system.
Nurettin Beltekin: (Turkey's Progress Toward Meeting Refugee Education Needs The Example of Syrian Refugees)	Mardin, Midyat and Kızıltepe, Turkey	2016 Eurasian Journal of Educational Research	Analysing the progress that Turkey has made toward meeting the educational needs of Syrian refugees	Interviews, observation	Teachers, coordinators, and directors at public schools	Th educational needs of refugee students have not been adequately met despite the various ways of support that Turkey has provided such as developing schools in the refugee camps. Thie failure to meet refugee students' educational needs could be attributed to the lack of a systematic approach in relation to refugee education in Turkey

Overall, the reviewed research illuminates the restricted services and resources accessible for fostering students' learning and adaptation. These studies collectively underline the multifaceted challenges faced by Syrian refugee students globally, emphasizing the crucial role of language acquisition, holistic approaches, and international cooperation in ensuring inclusive and quality education.

I opted to categorize the studies in this overview into three sections based on their geographical locations. The first section scrutinizes educational experiences, challenges, and policy perspectives for Syrian students in Turkish schools. Subsequently, the second section explores the educational status in two Arab countries, Lebanon and Jordan, exploring policies and practices linked to the education of Syrian refugees. The third section provides the inclusion experiences of Syrians in four Western countries, examining practices and challenges associated with their education. This choice aims to enhance the contextualization of the educational experiences of Syrian students and mitigate potential disparities in themes and outcomes across these regions. However, *Section 4.5* in this chapter, (Discussion of the Key Themes Associated with the Education of Syrian Students), along with subsequent chapters in the study, particularly *Chapter 8* (Discussion) and *Chapter 9* (Conclusion), consolidate and analyse the findings based on themes rather than geographical locations.

2.3.1: Exploring Educational Experiences, Challenges, and Policy Standpoints for Syrian Students in Turkish Schools

In this review, 16 studies specifically address the education of Syrian students in Turkey, a reflection of the country's status as the host to the world's largest refugee population, accommodating approximately 4 million refugees, including 3.6 million Syrians (UNHCR, 2020).

Karsli-Calamak and Kilinc (2021) aimed to understand the experiences of classroom teachers working with Syrian refugee children in the context of inclusive education at a primary public school in Ankara, Turkey. The authors utilized various data collection methods, including observations, field notes, informal

interviews, and semi-structured interviews with five first-grade teachers. Specifically selecting teachers from first-grade classrooms was intentional, as the focus was on Syrian refugee children with no prior schooling in Turkey. The study highlighted teachers' concerns about the scarcity of educational and economic resources necessary to enhance access for Syrian refugee students to education. Concerning early education services, they clarified that preschool education in Turkey is neither compulsory nor free, leading to restricted access for refugee children to avail themselves of early education services. In the city of Rize, situated in the eastern part of the Black Sea Region of Turkey, Karabacak (2020) examined the experiences of Syrian students through the perspectives of their teachers. The case study comprised 34 teachers in public schools with Syrian students in their classes. The findings underscored language as a significant challenge impeding the education and communication of Syrian students. In addition, various barriers were identified, including behavioural, academic, socio-cultural, and family-related challenges. The study advocated for enhanced vocational training and development for teachers to better cater for the academic and psychological needs of these students.

In their qualitative research conducted in 2019, Kaysılı et al. carried out a case study aiming to investigate the cultural and social factors that hindered the educational inclusion of Syrian refugees. The study employed semi-structured interviews with 12 teachers, 5 school administrators, and 10 parents (both Syrian and Turkish) across five middle-stage schools in Ankara. The research highlighted that conflicts among Syrian and Turkish students within schools could be attributed to broader social tensions in the community between refugees and hosts, subsequently affecting school relationships. The study emphasized the necessity of adopting a holistic and collective approach to address challenges hindering the inclusion of Syrian refugees. Şahin and Sümer (2018) employed a mixed research methodology, utilizing questionnaires containing open-ended questions to collect data from 66 principals representing diverse school levels across 10 cities in Turkey. The objective was to identify issues encountered in schools concerning the inclusion of Syrian students into the Turkish Education System. The findings brought to light several problematic areas related to the inclusion process, including overcrowded classrooms, language and communication barriers between Syrian and

Turkish students, cultural differences, challenges associated with teaching methods, and issues related to the provision of guidance services.

McCarthy (2018) investigated the response of central education authorities in Turkey to the education of refugee students. The study utilized document analysis, observation, and 14 semi-structured interviews with representatives of NGOs, ministerial administrators, and Ministry of National Education (MoNE) officials to gather data. Findings indicated a lack of prioritization of the needs of refugee children in education policy and curriculum development. Consequently, teachers and principals in public schools were found to be inadequately prepared to address the needs of students from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Aydin and Kaya (2019) conducted their study through interviews and classroom observations, engaging teachers and principals working with Syrian refugee students in two inner-city elementary schools in Istanbul. The primary objective was to gain insights into the needs and challenges faced by Syrian refugees in Turkish public schools. Despite acknowledging that Syrian refugee students in Istanbul had access to education in a welcoming and secure learning environment, the findings emphasized language as the primary barrier encountered by these students in Turkish public schools. Additionally, the study identified challenges such as inadequate resources, inappropriate curriculum planning, and a limited capacity to provide trained teachers capable of effectively working with refugee populations.

Ozer, Komsuoglu, and Atesok (2017) undertook an exploration into the educational status of Syrian refugee students within both public schools and Temporary Education Centres (TECs) across three districts in Istanbul characterized by a substantial Syrian population. The study, relying on two workshops and interviews with school principals, deputy principals, teachers, and guiding officers, along with administrators and officials from the Turkish Ministry of National Education, unveiled language and adaptation issues as primary barriers impeding the inclusion of refugees into the Turkish education system. The dual educational system, comprising both public schools and TECs, was identified as fostering segregation and hindering a culture of togetherness, as per the study's findings. Similarly, in their 2019 qualitative study, Çelik and İçduygu conducted semi-structured interviews with 14 Syrian parents and 6 teachers in both public schools and TECs in Istanbul. The objective was to probe the institutional habitus of these

educational entities and assess how they shaped the educational experiences of Syrian students. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the study aimed to comprehend how schools translated policies into practice, depending on their positions in the national education field. The authors concluded by arguing that the institutional habitus of both school types may generate exclusionary practices for Syrian students.

Investigating the educational challenges experienced by Syrian students under temporary protection in Turkey, a study conducted by Dolapcioglu and Bolat (2019) utilized a case study approach in a primary public school with Syrian students. The study involved interviews with ten teachers over an academic semester. Key findings underscore the paramount importance of learning the Turkish language for academic success and effective communication. The study emphasizes that a lack of proficiency in Turkish may lead to behavioural issues, isolation, and rejection by peers. The authors advocate for enhanced opportunities for Syrian students to acquire proficiency in the Turkish language. Likewise, the challenges associated with the education of refugee students in schools situated in Kocaeli Province were the focus of Gokce and Acar (2018), who interviewed 4 school principals and 6 teachers. Gokce and Acar utilized interview notes for data collection, which were subsequently transcribed and reported as interview data. However, the absence of recording techniques raises concerns about the completeness and accuracy of reporting participants' perspectives solely through handwritten notes during interviews, I believe. Participants highlighted communication and adaptation issues as the most significant problems faced by Syrian students, aligning with findings—presented earlier— from Ozer, Komsuoglu, and Atesok (2017).

Unutulmaz (2019) focused on analysing the transformation of education policies in Turkey concerning Syrian refugees. The study employed secondary and primary instruments for data collection, including semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, on-site observations, document analysis, academic literature, and research reports. Thirty-two individuals from a diverse set of institutions participated in semi-structured interviews, revealing that the strategy to integrate Syrian students into the Turkish education system yielded positive outcomes but also brought about some significant challenges associated with the political and legal context that should be addressed. Within the context of local policies and

discourses, Erden (2020) investigates the schooling experiences of Syrian refugee students. The study utilized classroom observation to gain an initial understanding of the school culture and teachers' and refugee students' behaviour in a public school in Central Anatoli. That was followed by conducting semi-structured interviews with 34 schoolteachers and 39 Syrian students. The research, framed by Critical Ethnography, reveals the impact of local discourses on pedagogic decisions and classroom activities, shaping teachers' perceptions regarding refugees.

Beltekin (2016) employed a combination of observation and interviews with teachers, coordinators, and directors at public schools in Mardin, Midyat, and Kızıltepe to collect data for analysing Turkey's progress in addressing the educational needs of Syrian refugees. Despite Turkey's efforts, including the establishment of schools in refugee camps, the study revealed that the educational needs of refugee students remain unmet. This failure to meet their needs is attributed to the absence of a systematic approach in Turkey concerning refugee education. Uyan-Semerci and Erdoğan (2018) sought to explore the determinants of Syrian children being out of school in Turkey. The study involved 541 Syrian parents in Şanlıurfa and Hatay, cities with substantial Syrian populations, through interviews and questionnaires. Findings underscored parents' education levels and family income as the two most significant factors influencing children's access to education.

In a school located in a socioeconomically disadvantaged town in the southern part of Turkey, Karakuş (2019) conducted a study that scrutinized the perceptions of Syrian refugee teachers and students regarding the educational process within a school providing temporary education for Syrian refugees. This school enrolled approximately 900 Syrian students, offering an Arabic curriculum resembling that of Syria. Notably, first-grade students followed a curriculum designed for Turkish students. The research uncovered economic, sociological, and political challenges faced by Syrian refugees in Turkey's education system. Consequently, the author advocated for a multidimensional approach addressing the diverse needs of refugee students across various facets of education. Lastly, in the singular quantitative research study identified within this systematic literature review, Aydin et al. (2019) aimed to investigate the attitudes of 353 pre-service teachers toward Syrian refugee students. The study utilized surveys as a data collection method, revealing the critical need to integrate Syrian refugees into public schools. However, the

research underscored the deficiency in the current teacher education and the broader Turkish education system regarding the philosophy of refugees, inclusion, and multiculturalism. Consequently, the study advocated for training and professional development for teachers to enable them to effectively serve Syrian refugee students in schools.

2.3.2: Educational Landscape in Lebanon and Jordan: Policies and Practices

This review incorporates five studies conducted in Lebanon and one in Jordan. These both neighbouring countries share historical ties with Syria, occasionally marked by tensions, particularly in the case of Lebanon.

Kelcey and Chatila (2020) scrutinized how teachers and principals in Lebanese public schools perceived and put into practice inclusion for Syrian refugee students. The findings, drawn from diverse research methods including focus groups, interviews, document analysis, and observation, relied on data from Syrian and Lebanese parents, teachers, and policy actors. The study argued that teachers and principals in public schools understood and implemented inclusion in ways that reinforced and reflected inequalities in education. In another study within the Lebanese context, Hamadeh (2019) scrutinized the policies and efforts pertaining to the education of Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Relying primarily on document analysis, with only three interviews conducted with a schoolteacher, a social worker, and a school principal, the findings highlighted genuine challenges faced by Syrian refugees in Lebanon concerning education and healthcare. Additionally, there is a genuine fear that Syrian children may become a lost generation due to the lack of education, a fundamental human right, the study highlighted.

Maadad and Matthews (2020) directed their attention to the pivotal role of hope in achieving successful refugee schooling and education. The study sampled teachers, students, and families from two public schools, two private schools, and two informal schools in refugee camps. Employing observation and interviews, the findings highlighted the historical, political, economic, and religious challenges

confronting refugee education in Lebanon. The study emphasised the potential of schools to contribute to the construction of more inclusive and just communities. Moreover, it highlighted how hope empowers refugees to envision a future beyond current challenges, fostering a belief in a better community worth striving for. Despite the inclusion of participants from informal schools in refugee camps, this study, (Maadad and Matthews, 2020), was incorporated into the literature review due to its inclusion of four private and public schools, along with a substantial participant count (98), providing a diverse range of perspectives on the topic.

In Kiwan's (2021) study, the examination of the inclusion of Syrian and Palestinian refugees in education in Lebanon was undertaken by exploring the policies and practices of states and international organisations concerning refugee populations. Data were collected through observation, analysis of website materials, and semi-structured interviews with a school director and an NGO director. The study identified the difference in the education systems between Lebanon and Syria as a significant barrier for Syrian children, given the language of instruction in Lebanon is in English and French, while the curriculum is delivered in Arabic in Syria. The final study within the Lebanese context in this section investigated the education policy for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, employing semi-structured interviews to collect data from 44 key informants representing various organizations, including teachers, principals, UN agencies, and the government (Buckner, Spencer, and Cha, 2018). The authors argued that there were gaps between policy and practice in education. Nevertheless, the study acknowledged that international conventions on children's rights, coupled with foreign aid, have contributed to creating a national refugee education framework, thus promoting refugees' access to schooling.

Lastly, Alodat and Momani (2018) conducted a qualitative research study focused on evaluating educational services provided for Syrian gifted students in Jordanian schools. The study utilized semi-structured interviews with 35 school principals and 7 educational supervisors. Findings indicated that the identification services offered for gifted Syrian refugee students were insufficient and inadequate. Moreover, Syrian refugee students in Jordan were found to be underrepresented in gifted programs, both in the schools they attend and in schools specifically designed for gifted students.

2.3.3: Inclusion Experiences in the Western Countries: Practices and Challenges

This literature review incorporates three studies from Western countries focusing on the education of Syrian refugee students, with one study from Iceland, one from the United Kingdom, and another investigating the Canadian and German contexts in this regard.

Ragnarsdóttir (2020) conducted interviews with Syrian parents, eight head teachers, five heads of divisions, six supervisory teachers, and four special educators to explore the educational practices of Syrian children in Icelandic schools. While most children initially performed well academically and socially, challenges emerged after a few months. The study revealed limited understanding among schools regarding the educational background of refugee children, and the assessment tools used were not well-developed. The conclusion highlighted that despite feeling secure and safe in Iceland, Syrian families faced challenges related to the loss of social networks, status, role, and limited opportunities due to institutional discrimination. Bogotch, Pappas, Kervin, and Silliman (2020) conducted interviews across schools in two geographic regions in Canada and Germany to understand educators' experiences in integrating Syrian refugee children. The study unveiled daily institutional barriers faced by educators in both countries. While Canada deployed systematic innovation and structural support for inclusion, Germany lacked comparable systemic support for educators.

Understanding the key processes for developing quality education and including Syrian refugee children into schools was the aim of Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) who conducted a study in Nottinghamshire, UK. The focus of the study was on Syrian refugees who were relocated to the UK in late 2015. Interviews were conducted with Syrian adults and children, schoolteachers, council authorities, representatives, and staff from migrant support organizations. The study found that Syrian refugee children were welcomed by their school peers in England. The study emphasized the importance of cooperation between different agencies for the inclusion of refugee children in schools and the wider community. Findings

indicated that schools could address specific needs and psychological requirements of Syrian refugee children, thus, promoting inclusion when adequate resources are in place. Challenges hindering quality education for refugee children included a lack of teacher training and a lack of resource provision. The next section will present the main findings from the reviewed studies and discuss the key points addressed.

2.4: Discussion of the Key Themes Associated with the Education of Syrian Students

The reviewed studies offer comprehensive insights into the educational experiences of Syrian children, providing an in-depth analysis of both challenges impeding their learning and the services implemented to enhance their educational journey. Despite disparities and similarities, a consistent acknowledgement of the crucial significance of education for refugee children pervades all the reviewed studies. Notably, the educational needs of Syrian refugees appear comparatively better addressed in Western countries, while the Arab region confronts substantial challenges in refugee education. In Turkey, the education of Syrian refugees presents a complex landscape, combining challenges faced by students and their families with concerted efforts by Turkish authorities to integrate this growing Syrian population into schools and, consequently, the broader society.

This section provides a deeper examination of the main themes associated with the education of Syrian refugees across diverse settings: Turkey, the Arab region, and Western countries. The discussion consolidates findings based on thematic elements rather than geographical locations, focusing on two primary themes: (1) challenges within the educational environment and (2) the influence of family and community on the educational experiences of Syrian students.

2.4.1: Theme One: Challenges within the Educational Environment

The first theme highlights challenges in the education of Syrian students including education policies, disparities between school systems, and language barriers. It also examines challenges in regard to cultural differences, inclusion, underprepared schools, and scarce resources.

2.4.1.1: Education Policy, School System, and Language Barrier

This section first discusses the evolution of education policy in Turkey and the challenges faced by Syrian students in Lebanon. It also navigates different education systems for Syrian children and examines language barriers associated with their education.

Education policies concerning Syrian refugees in Turkey have undergone three distinct stages (Unutulmaz, 2019). The initial phase (2011-2014) was characterised by a temporariness stay concept, relying primarily on community-based education, similar to the situation in Lebanon managed by private actors, Unutulmaz (2019) argued. Subsequently, as the influx of Syrian refugees continued, the second phase witnessed the engagement of local, national, and international NGOs, the author noted. Eventually, Turkish authorities aimed to integrate all Syrian refugees into the formal education system, aligning with the approach in Jordan, where the intent was to enrol Syrian children in public schools. Unutulmaz (2019) argued that this vision was influenced by the strong likelihood of a significant proportion of Syrians staying permanently in Turkey. Lebanon, on the other hand, developed the Reaching All Children with Education (RACE) strategy based on UNICEF's Regional Response Plans in response to the No Lost Generation Initiative (Hamadeh, 2019). The national strategy aimed to provide equitable access to education for the extensive number of Syrian refugee school-aged children in the country, the author noted. Moreover, the strategy aimed to strengthen the Lebanese education system and policies, thereby enhancing the overall experience of teaching and learning in public schools. The study unveiled academic challenges encountered by the (RACE) strategy, such as students who had been out of school for an extended period

facing difficulties when enrolled in classes based on their age, as their age did not align with their academic level. Furthermore, obstacles included a lack of accreditation and the inability to provide proof of grade level, posing additional challenges for the strategy. As a result, the Ministry of Education revamped its policy by inviting Syrian students to undergo a placement test, enabling the assessment of their academic levels and subsequent placement in the appropriate class accordingly (Hamadeh, 2019). Buckner et al. (2018) highlighted the existence of policy-practice gaps in Lebanon's education system, nevertheless, they argued that the policy framework played a crucial role in enhancing access to public schooling for Syrian refugees, representing a noteworthy achievement. The mechanisms contributing to this access included pressures from international conventions on children's rights and the receipt of foreign aid. While it is positive to acknowledge this, there is still a requirement for sustained and ongoing efforts to bridge gaps between policy intentions and implementation.

In Turkey, Beltekin (2016) emphasized that the educational needs of refugee students have not been adequately met due to a lack of a systematic approach. Therefore, Unutulmaz (2019) advocated for the development of effective and comprehensive long-term education policies in Turkey, emphasizing that there is no one-size-fits-all approach applicable to different countries. Each country should tailor policies that best serve its unique context, he noted. This is on board with Gokce and Acar's (2018) proposal of the development of a curriculum tailored to Syrian students' needs, suggesting special classes suitable for their age groups to enhance overall educational experiences and facilitate their inclusion in Turkish society. This underscores the importance of context-specific education policies for countries hosting a large number of refugees, as highlighted by Unutulmaz (2019). Beltekin recommended the establishment of a systematic framework, similar to UNHCR's framework, encompassing standards related to access, participation, inclusion, quality, partnership, observation, and evaluation. Ozer et al. (2017) advocated for an inclusive education system that reframes the current model to foster a common future between refugees and host societies based on mutual understanding and acceptance.

Navigating different school systems has been identified as a challenge for Syrian children's education. The disparity between the Syrian and Icelandic school systems

presented challenges for students, parents, and school staff in Iceland (Ragnarsdóttir, 2020). Similarly, the variance in the national curriculum between Syria and Lebanon proved problematic in the Lebanese context, with subjects taught in Arabic in Syria and either English or French (languages of instruction in Lebanon) for maths and science in Lebanese schools (Crul et al., 2019; Hamadeh, 2019). The difficulties in adapting to the education system in Lebanon contributed to high drop-out rates among Syrian children, despite NGOs informally offering the Syrian curriculum (Kiwan, 2021). However, the lack of certification undermines the viability of this educational route, Kiwan argued.

In Turkey, two primary educational options were available for Syrian children: public schools and Temporary Education Centres (TECs). In 2014, the Turkish government introduced the Temporary Protection Regulation, extending temporary protection to Syrian refugees in the education and health sectors (Crul et al., 2019). Although this granted Syrian children the entitlement to enrol in public schools or temporary education centres, the registration process often encountered challenges, primarily attributed to infrastructure limitations, Crul et al., argued. TECs, established specifically for Syrian refugee children, provided an alternative formal education operated by Syrians in Turkey (Ozer et al., 2017). Parents favoured sending younger children to TECs to learn the Arabic language and culture, while older ones were directed to public schools, having already acquired the language and culture (Çelik and İçduygu, 2019). Çelik and İçduygu argued that the policy of instructing in Arabic in TECs, following the Syrian curriculum, was officially justified as facilitating Syrians' return to Syria but was actually aimed at preventing them from staying long-term in Turkey. Çelik and İçduygu (2019) noted that families intending to settle permanently in Turkey may prefer sending their children to public schools over those without such plans. However, Ozer et al. (2017) identified substantial challenges encountered by Temporary Education Centers (TECs) in Turkey, including issues with the quality and adequacy of educational personnel, monitoring, infrastructure, and Turkish language instruction. Likewise, concerns were expressed by participant teachers in Karakuş's (2019) study about the future of TECs, impacting long-term planning due to the anticipated closure of these centres. This situation compels students to enrol in Turkish public schools. Consequently, TECs were gradually phased out following a 2016 policy change by Turkish authorities, which affirmed the right of refugee

children to receive free education in public schools, particularly at the kindergarten and low primary levels (Karsli-Calamak and Kilinc, 2021).

In addition to public schools and TECs, there is another type of school called Imam Hatib, a religious school where Arabic is used as the instructional language alongside Turkish (Kaysılı et al., 2019). Syrian students and their parents felt more welcomed and included in Imam Hatib schools than in state schools, which the authors attributed to better communication among Syrian students, their Turkish peers, and teachers. Given the reported lower adaptation issues in Imam Hatib schools, Kaysılı et al. (2019) recommended further research to analyse how refugees more easily adapt to these schools.

The language barrier that Syrian students face has been identified as a major challenge in front of their education by many studies. In Turkish public schools, the language barrier has been mentioned frequently throughout the reviewed studies see, for example, (Şahin and Sümer, 2018; Aydin and Kaya, 2019; Dolapcioglu and Bolat, 2019; Karabacak, 2020). Karakuş (2019) specifically highlighted the scarcity of Turkish language teachers as one of the primary hurdles hindering the education of Syrian children, leading to delays in language acquisition. Despite an initiative by the Turkish National Ministry of Education in 2016, which saw the employment of 5000 Turkish teachers nationwide to address this issue, the challenge remained prominent. Notably, many of the newly hired teachers were reported to be young and inexperienced.

Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) underscored that older children attending secondary stages in the UK encounter more significant language barriers, given the heightened English proficiency requirements. This mirrors the situation in Turkey, where Syrian refugees encounter language and adaptation challenges more prominently in secondary schools compared to primary schools, where children adapt more readily to the school environment and language (Ozer et al., 2017). The communication challenges arising from the language barrier were consistently reported by both teachers and principals in Gokce and Acar's (2018) study. This aligns with the findings of Aydin and Kaya (2019), where teachers and principals argued that the primary challenge faced by Syrian students was gaining admission to public schools without access to any language training. Gokce and Acar (2018)

proposed that Syrian students lacking proficiency in Turkish should enrol in first-grade classes, irrespective of their age. However, this approach may present challenges when older students are placed in classes with much younger peers, potentially resulting in psychological issues, as argued by participants in the same study. Karakuş (2019) emphasized that classrooms in Temporary Education Centres (TECs) accommodating students of varying ages and educational levels can adversely impact their learning experience.

For optimal parental engagement, schools need to foster an ethos of inclusion, cultivate a positive attitude towards refugees, and celebrate diversity (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012). However, Çelik and İçduygu (2019) observed a contrasting scenario in Turkish public schools, where these principles are largely absent. They argued that public schools isolate Syrian parents and limit their involvement in their children's education due to language barriers. Notably, these schools neither recruit teachers from a Syrian background nor provide interpretation services during parent-teacher meetings, they argued. Recognising the pivotal role of language in the education of Syrian refugees, the participatory schools in Aydin and Kaya's (2019) study took proactive measures. They provided free extensive tutorials after school and special classes on Saturdays, aiming to offer additional support to Syrian students requiring assistance in learning the Turkish language. Acquiring proficiency in the Turkish language stands as the foremost educational prerequisite impacting academic success and communication establishment, therefore Turkish authorities should enhance opportunities for Syrian students to learn the language (Dolapcioglu and Bolat, 2019).

2.4.1.2: Cultural Differences and Inclusion Challenge

This section addresses cultural and social challenges for Syrian students, focusing on differences between Syria and host countries. It also discusses obstacles to their educational inclusion, such as stereotypes and negative perceptions, especially in Turkey and Lebanon.

The difference between Syrian and Icelandic school cultures posed challenges for students, parents, and school staff when certain topics or activities conflicted

with cultural norms or religious values (Ragnarsdóttir, 2020). An illustrative instance is the challenge posed by mixed swimming classes for Syrian girls, leading them to opt out of such classes. Similarly, issues related to cultural differences were identified as problematic in the context of integrating Syrian students into the Turkish educational system (Şahin and Sümer, 2018). Ozer et al. (2017) argued the high demand for Temporary Education Centres (TECs) among Syrian refugees, attributing it to language and cultural barriers encountered by Syrian students in Turkish public schools (see also Çelik and İçduygu, 2019).

Challenges to the inclusion of Syrian refugees in Turkish schools and broader society were highlighted by Kaysılı et al. (2019). These challenges were evident in the narratives of participants, both Turkish and Syrian, detailing the issues each side posed for the other. Accusations surfaced, with some Turkish parents claiming that Syrian children exhibited aggressive behaviour towards their own, while some Syrian parents accused Turkish children of discriminatory conduct. Additionally, some teachers criticized Syrian students for regular absences and carelessness. Notably, certain Turkish participants openly expressed a preference for Iraqi refugees of Turkmen origins over Syrian refugees, citing perceived similarities in language, culture, and religion between Turkish and Turkmen people. That being said, the notion of inclusion has been questioned by some teachers in this study due to the challenges that Syrian refugees face in public schools in relation to language, behavioural, and social barriers.

Despite Aydin et al.'s (2019) findings of no significant differences in participants' attitudes based on ethnicity, they suggested that participants from Kurdish-origin demonstrated a more positive attitude towards Syrian refugees compared to Turkish-origin participants in specific aspects of their research. While no explicit explanation or clear statistical evidence was provided by the authors, the demographic composition of Syria and Turkey might offer insight. Given my familiarity with this demographic, it seems plausible that the positive attitude among Kurdish participants could stem from the considerable number of Syrian refugees, particularly those in Istanbul, who are of Kurdish origin. This somehow echoes the findings of Kaysılı et al. (2019), who revealed that some Turkish individuals prefer Turkmen children over Syrian ones due to linguistic, cultural, and religious similarities.

Ozer et al. (2017) criticized the fact that Syrian refugees in Turkey are only entitled to temporary residency status, deeming it a barrier to their inclusion. The authors questioned the viability of establishing permanent education policies for Syrian refugees who are granted temporary leave to remain in Turkey. Aydin and Kaya (2019) argued that teachers and principals from public schools displayed a positive attitude towards Syrian students in their study. Nevertheless, public schools in Turkey 'can be generally characterized as having exclusionary institutional habitus', because of the historical and political formation of national education policies in the country (Çelik and İçduygu, 2019, p.257). Çelik and İçduygu highlighted that Turkey's national education policies do not authentically reflect diversity, as ethnic and religious minorities are not acknowledged in such a monolingual curriculum. This omission denies students from minority groups the opportunity to learn their mother tongue language, Çelik and İçduygu argued. For instance, neither the Kurdish language nor Alevi values are represented, and only Turkish Muslim Sunni principles find recognition in the monocultural curriculum applied in public schools, the authors argued. This observation prompts a critical question about the feasibility of including Syrian refugees in Turkish schools and society, particularly when certain groups of Turkish citizens are excluded from national education policies, I argue. Similarly, Karsli-Calamak and Kilinc (2021) expressed concerns regarding educational equality for marginalized Kurdish children. The repercussions of this educational inequality extend to students from low-income households, particularly in economically less developed areas of Turkey, where public schools may suffer from inadequate infrastructure (Karsli-Calamak and Kilinc, 2021).

As discussed earlier, Çelik and İçduygu (2019) argued that the policy regarding instruction in Temporary Education Centers (TECs), conducted in Arabic following the Syrian curriculum, was officially justified as aiming to minimize problems Syrians may face when they return to Syria. However, they argued that it was intended to prevent Syrians from staying in Turkey for an extended period. According to Ozer et al. (2017), the continuation of TECs will not promote the inclusion of Syrian refugee children into Turkish mainstream education and, consequently, their inclusion into the wider community. Karsli-Calamak and Kilinc (2021) emphasized that in the effective implementation of inclusion, all

stakeholders should have a say in issues concerning them and propose solutions that address their concerns. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Turkey, where refugee children and their families lack representation in the education context, according to Karsli-Calamak and Kilinc. Furthermore, the authors argued that teachers' representation is severely limited in the broader decision-making process related to refugee students' education.

In the Lebanese context, Kelcey and Chatila (2020, p.17) argued that inclusion is predominantly a structural phenomenon, leading to the downward inclusion of refugees with access to education opportunities of lower quality than those provided to host state nationals. They argue that education inequalities in Lebanese public schools result from structural shortcomings in public services, underserving both Syrian refugee children and local Lebanese children. Focusing on hope is a notable theme as many studies concentrate on challenges, problems, and barriers faced by refugee populations. Maadad and Matthews (2020), in their study on the role of hope in achieving successful refugee schooling and education, stress that hope in education can open doors to a brighter future. Therefore, the schooling of refugee children should be taken seriously as it plays a crucial role in creating stability and spreading security and safety in communities. However, the findings of the study show that refugee education in Lebanon is grappling with historical, political, economic, and religious challenges.

The wider community can significantly impact refugee inclusion, especially in the initial stages of arrival (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). Local neighbours in Nottinghamshire, for example, were reported to assist Syrian children with their homework. Additionally, some mainstream organizations offered Saturday English classes for newly arrived Syrian refugees. The study emphasizes the critical role of multi-agency support in promoting quality education for refugee children. Bogotch et al.’s (2020) study on educators' experiences in including Syrian refugees in Canada and Germany reveals institutional daily barriers to the inclusion of refugee children in schools. Interestingly, the study uses the German term ‘Neuzugewanderte’ meaning newcomer as defined by the authors, instead of the term refugee. The authors suggest that this terminology, developed around the Syrian refugee crisis, may indicate a positive attitude from the host country towards asylum seekers, as language reflects the values and attitudes of speakers.

However, one might question: what happens when these Syrian refugees have lived in the host country, such as Germany, for a few years? Would they still be considered newcomers? Furthermore, online sources indicate that the term ‘Neuzugewanderte’ means 'new immigrant' or 'newly arrived immigrant', thus, doesn't necessarily align with the authors' definition of ‘newcomer.’

Local discourses play a significant role in the inclusion of Syrian children, shaping societal attitudes, policies, and practices regarding education and community integration. The image of Alan Kurdi, the Syrian boy who drowned in 2015, profoundly impacted global empathy towards refugees, particularly Syrians (Dryden-Peterson, 2022). It humanized the refugee crisis by transforming abstract statistics into a deeply emotional narrative, fostering compassion and a willingness to accept refugees, Dryden-Peterson argued. This photo, according to Dryden-Peterson, influenced public discourse, media narratives, and policies, encouraging more humane treatment of displaced individuals worldwide. As Madziva and Thondhlana (2017, p. 952) argued, Syrian children have generally been more welcomed in schools, perhaps due to the extensive publicity surrounding the Syrian refugee crisis, in contrast to some groups of children from European backgrounds who continue to face discriminatory behaviours.

Kelcey and Chatila (2020) observed that almost all the teachers and principals in their study acknowledged the right of refugee children to education. However, discriminatory public discourse has influenced the views of some of them, shaped by historical tensions between Syria and Lebanon. Additionally, discrimination and bullying are prevalent issues faced by Syrian refugee students in Lebanon, according to Kiwan (2021). Negative stereotypes against Syrian refugees also persist in the Turkish context where teachers in public schools often exhibit strong influence from prevalent negative stereotypes and prejudices about Syrians portrayed in the media (Çelik and İçduygu, 2019).

2.4.1.3: School Unpreparedness and Lack of Resources

This section highlights challenges related to unprepared schools and educators, along with insufficient resources and services in the educational environment.

Limited training and professional development emerge as significant barriers to refugee education across various studies. In Iceland, schools struggled with limited information about the educational backgrounds of refugee students, with some teachers lacking training in multilingual education (Ragnarsdóttir, 2020). A similar challenge was reported in the British context, where a lack of teacher training was identified as a potential hindrance to providing quality education for refugee children (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). This mirrors the situation in Turkey, where the absence of training and professional development for dealing with refugee children is frequently highlighted in studies (e.g., Şahin and Sümer, 2018; Kaysılı et al., 2019; Aydin et al., 2019; Karabacak, 2020).

Teachers in Turkish public schools face challenges in communicating and teaching Syrian students due to language barriers, attributed to a lack of proper in-service training programs and activities (Çelik and İçduygu, 2019). Furthermore, issues related to teaching methods were identified as barriers to the inclusion of Syrian students into the Turkish education system by Şahin and Sümer (2018). Karakuş's study (2019) revealed that teaching was not the primary occupation for many teachers, as financial difficulties led them to take up teaching roles. In Lebanon, Kiwan (2021) described the shortage of qualified teachers in public schools as a challenge in meeting the diverse needs of Syrian refugees.

The lack of resources and services presents a significant challenge to the education of Syrian refugees. For example, parents of Syrian children in compulsory education in Iceland expressed concerns about the educational system, citing a lack of services in schools to support their children’s learning and adjustment (Ragnarsdóttir, 2020). Similarly, the scarcity of educational resources and economic constraints affecting the access of Syrian refugee students to education were reported in both Lebanon and Turkey (Kiwan, 2021; Karsli-Calamak and Kilinc, 2021). Furthermore, Kelcey and Chatila (2020) argued that public education in Lebanon is of poor quality, leading to education inequalities for both Syrian refugee children and local Lebanese children compared to their counterparts in private schools. In Turkey, problems related to the lack of guidance services hindered the inclusion process of Syrian students into the education system (Şahin and Sümer, 2018). In the Jordanian context, Alodat and Momani's study (2018)

focused on the educational services for Syrian gifted students. The study revealed inadequate and insufficient identification services due to administrative, legislative, and financial challenges. Overcrowded schools, resulting from the large influx of Syrian students, reduced the capacity to provide appropriate educational services given the financial challenges faced by the education sector in Jordan.

2.4.2: Theme Two: The Influence of Family and Community on the Educational Experiences of Syrian Students

This second theme discusses the influence of family and community on the education of Syrian students namely: parents' disengagement and its underlying causes; and the social, economic, and psychological issues affecting Syrian students.

2.4.2.1: Parents (Dis)Engagement

This section sheds light on the multifaceted challenges faced by Syrian refugee families in supporting their children's education. Madziva and Thondhlana's (2017) research highlighted the communication challenges faced by Syrian parents due to their limited English linguistic skills, hindering effective communication with their children's schools. In Hamadeh's (2019) argument, the disengagement of parents with schools and teachers and not being able to follow up on their children's progress posed a significant challenge to the education of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon. This disengagement was attributed to the low educational level of parents, many of whom were almost illiterate. The author argued that parents, grappling with immediate survival concerns, prioritized shelter and food over their children's education. This prioritization was seen as a consequence of the severe difficulties faced by these families in meeting their basic needs.

Aydin and Kaya (2019) underscored the crucial role of family support in education. Participants in their study emphasized that students whose families actively monitored and followed up with them demonstrated higher academic performance and better adaptation to the new education system. This was

compared to families that showed less involvement and concern for their children's educational journey.

2.4.2.2: Social, Economic, and Psychological Issues Impacting Syrian Students

This section discusses social and economic challenges faced by Syrian refugees in schools and community. It highlights communication issues, differences in school cultures, and varying expectations. Socioeconomic problems, such as fatigue from begging, nutrition issues, and absenteeism, are reported. In addition, it presents trauma and psychological needs, emphasizing the insufficient support for Syrian children who have experienced war-related trauma.

Ragnarsdóttir (2020) conducted an examination of the opportunities and challenges faced by Syrian families in schools and community. Despite a generally positive start for Syrian students in Icelandic schools during their initial months, both parents and teachers identified numerous challenges. These challenges encompassed issues such as a lack of communication, disparities in school cultures, and differing expectations. Participant teachers noted that older Syrian students encountered greater difficulties, particularly in language acquisition and other subjects, leading to social isolation from their peers. This resonates with the argument made by Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) that older children in the secondary stage are more likely to face significant challenges, especially with the high English proficiency requirements.

Socioeconomic problems among Syrian refugees were also documented in the reviewed studies. A school principal in Kocaeli Province, Turkey, highlighted the socioeconomic challenges faced by Syrian students, noting instances of fatigue among Syrian students due to evening begging activities (Gokce and Acar, 2018, p.477). Another principal raised concerns about nutrition issues among students who came to school without proper morning meals, potentially impacting their learning negatively. In addition, school absenteeism emerged as a prevalent issue in the education of Syrian refugees in Turkey (Gokce and Acar, 2018; Karakuş, 2019). Factors such as family income, parental education level, parent’s employment status, language competence, and caregiving needs were analysed by

Uyan-Semerci and Erdoğan (2018) to assess their impact on children's school attendance. The findings indicated that parental education level and family income were the two most significant factors influencing children's access to school. Unemployment was identified as the primary reason for high poverty rates among Syrians in Turkey. The study also revealed that 42% of Syrian families had at least one member with a disability or chronic illness. While there wasn't a statistically significant relationship between school access and the number of persons needing care in a household, the authors suggested that only about 10% of Syrians secured regular jobs, with the majority engaged in informal employment, receiving wages far below the legal minimum.

Karakuş (2019) emphasized the vulnerability of boys and girls in higher school grades to social problems, with boys potentially entering the labour market and girls facing the risk of early marriage. Therefore, Gokce and Acar (2018) advocated for necessary measures by Turkish authorities to prevent Syrian children from engaging in cheap labour and begging activities, ensuring regular access to schools. Similar reports of child labour for boys and early marriage for girls were documented in Lebanon as well (Kiwan, 2021). Shedding light on the intricate difficulties faced by Syrian refugees in navigating legal processes and accessing essential services in Lebanon, Kiwan (2021) highlighted that Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. Citing Human Rights Watch reports, she pointed out that Syrians seeking refuge in Lebanon were granted a temporary 6-month residency, extendable for an additional 6 months for a fee of $200. The challenging process of renewing residency, often leading to illegal residence, exposes Syrians to increased vulnerability, as they are not allowed to work legally. The reports indicated that living illegally has heightened psychological and economic difficulties for Syrian families, fostering a fear of arrest by Lebanese authorities. Despite the challenges of illegal residency, Syrian students were allowed to enrol in schools without requiring proof of legal residency (Kiwan, 2021). However, registering Syrian newborns in Lebanon has proven extremely difficult, placing these children in a ‘legal limbo’ (Kiwan, 2021, p.289). The absence of documentation renders fundamental aspects of life impossible, including securing employment and entering marriage, Kiwan argued.

Several studies examined the psychological well-being of Syrian children affected by war and migration, highlighting the lack of adequate support in addressing trauma and educational disruptions, particularly in Turkey. For example, Gokce and Acar (2018) addressed concerns about the psychological health of Syrian children, stemming from their experiences during the war in Syria. In addition, Karakuş's (2019) study identified shared challenges, including psychological issues related to war and disruptions in education for Syrian students. Moreover, Aydin and Kaya (2019) uncovered a lack of proper psychological support for Syrian children who faced difficulties due to the trauma of war and migration in Turkey. The authors argued that Turkey lacks experience in educating and assisting traumatized children from refugee backgrounds.

2.5: Concluding Insights from Chapter Two

The studies in this literature review span three diverse locations: Turkey, the Arab region, and the Western region. Despite varying strategies employed by host countries to facilitate the inclusion of Syrian refugee students into new education systems, significant challenges persist. Foremost among these challenges is the language barrier, posing a substantial obstacle to the education of Syrian refugees. The disparities between the Syrian education system and those of the host countries present major hurdles to successful inclusion. Another critical challenge lies in the shortage of well-trained educators capable of addressing the diverse needs of refugee children, impeding the opportunity to meet both their educational and psychological requirements. Consequently, comprehensive training and professional development for teachers are imperative to enhance their capacity to cater to the diverse needs within classrooms.

The reviewed studies also shed light on limited services and resources available to support students' learning and adaptation. Notably, younger students demonstrate more facile adaptation to new school environments, while their older counterparts encounter greater challenges. Moreover, psychological, economic, and social issues emerge as formidable barriers to the education and inclusion of Syrian refugees across various settings, particularly in the Arab and Turkish

contexts. Sociocultural challenges, such as conflicts between students' cultural norms or religious values and school culture, are more prevalent in Western countries. Addressing these multifaceted challenges necessitates a comprehensive approach that considers the unique circumstances of diverse learners.

The disengagement of Syrian parents from their children's education is frequently cited as a barrier, impeding effective communication between schools and families, and potentially having adverse effects on the education of Syrian students. This lack of parental involvement is often linked to financial challenges, as observed in Lebanon, and linguistic barriers, prevalent in Turkey and Western countries. The limited percentage of Syrian refugees resettled in the Western countries, may benefit from comparatively better educational opportunities than those in the Arab region and Turkey. In both Turkey and Arab countries, the establishment of an education system grounded in principles of equity and inclusion holds promise for fostering a more positive educational experience for both local and refugee students. That said, in Lebanon, where government policies toward refugees are often characterized as hostile (Kelcey and Chatila, 2020, p.13), prospects for establishing an education system that caters to the diverse needs of students from refugee backgrounds are dim.

Chapter Three: Explanatory Framework

The Capability approach by Nussbaum, focusing on human development, serves as a comprehensive philosophical framework for this study. Education holds a crucial role in this approach as it enables the development of basic capabilities and access to others, contributing to lifelong satisfaction. Additionally, Unterhalter's (2009) concept of equity in education, delineating Equity from Below, Equity from the Middle, and Equity from Above, is included and utilized as part of the study's overall framework. Furthermore, this study is based on three key documents. Firstly, the Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2016) provides a framework for enhancing schools based on inclusive values, with the goal of fostering learning and participation in education. This Index encompasses three interconnected dimensions: creating Inclusive Cultures, developing Inclusive Policies, and evolving Inclusive Practices (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Secondly, two key documents from UNESCO: 'Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education' (UNESCO, 2016), and 'A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education' (UNESCO, 2017) are employed to evaluate the educational inclusion of Syrian students, examining aspects such as access, participation, and achievement. These concepts and documents collectively form the framework for analysing the study's findings, demonstrating how they relate or deviate from existing literature on inclusive education, the education of Syrian children, and refugee education. The documents and concepts will be used as a useful criterion in capturing and understanding the educational inclusion of Syrian students in schools in Greater Glasgow.

Next, I introduce the Capability approach first, as it serves as a comprehensive philosophical framework that underpins more operational and policy-oriented concepts, such as equity and inclusion. *Figure 3.1* illustrates how Capability serves as the overarching framework supporting both Inclusion and Equity.

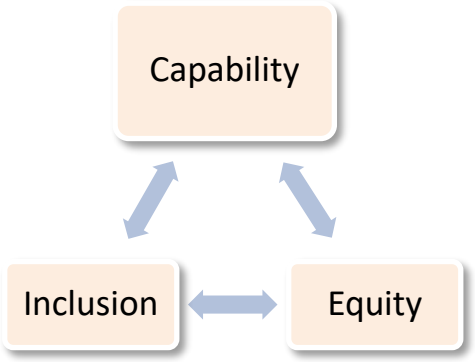


Figure 3.1. Capability as a bigger umbrella supporting Inclusion and Equity

3.1: Capability Approach

Understanding societal well-being, freedom, and social justice is crucial for assessing social progress and formulating policies (Robeyns, 2017). A significant framework for contemplating these concepts is the Capability approach, developed by philosopher and economist Amartya Sen in the 1980s, according to Robeyns. Sen defines 'capability' as the opportunity to achieve valuable combinations of human functioning, representing what an individual can do or be (Sen, 2005, p.153). The Capability approach is characterised as a 'broad normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-being and social arrangements, the design of policies, and proposals about social change in society' (Robeyns, 2005, p.93). Its uniqueness lies in its interdisciplinary nature and focus on the plural or multidimensional aspects of human development, Robeyns argued.

Burchardt and Vizard (2011) argued that the Capability approach can be put into practice by measuring and evaluating the equality and human rights position of individuals and groups within the Capability space. Evaluating capabilities involves examining what people achieve, how they are treated, and their autonomy, Burchardt and Vizard argued. Robeyns (2017) suggests that while the Capability approach has primarily been employed for evaluative and normative purposes, such as assessing well-being or advocating for justice based on capabilities, it could also be beneficial for explanatory studies. This includes examining how institutions or policies foster certain capabilities or analysing individual behaviour using the

concepts of functioning and capabilities, according to Robeyns. Reindal (2016), who argued that inclusion in education needs to be reconsidered from an ethical perspective, suggested that the Capability approach can contribute to building an ethical framework for inclusive education by highlighting the connection between dignity and the development of capabilities. Similarly, Hedge and MacKenzie (2012) argued that the Capability approach presents a valuable framework for envisioning a future where equitable education is more fully realized. On the other hand, Dean (2009) critiqued Sen's concept of ‘capabilities’, contending that it overlooks three vital realities: the interdependence of humans, the challenges in the public realm, and the exploitative nature of capitalism. Dean advocates for an emancipatory politics of needs interpretation, arguing that a focus on rights better serves this approach than the concept of capabilities.

Subsequently, Martha Nussbaum introduced another version of the capabilities approach as a framework for considering human well-being and justice. Her emphasis is on ensuring individuals possess essential capabilities for a good life, thereby promoting social justice and equal opportunities for all. Nussbaum proposed a set of ten independent and essential capabilities for human dignity and quality of life. The categories she proposed include (1) life; (2) bodily health; (3) bodily integrity; (4) senses; imagination and thought; (5) emotions; (6) practical reason; (7) affiliation; (8) other species; (9) play; and (10) control over one’s environment (Nussbaum, 2011, pp.33–34). She advocates actively working towards fulfilling these fundamental capabilities. Nussbaum argued that the current situation is not promising and that ‘the aim of ensuring dignity and opportunity for each person’ should be prioritized by all nations (Nussbaum, 2011, p.16). The ten capabilities that Nussbaum proposed should be delivered to all individuals given they are fundamental factors in implementing social justice (Nussbaum, 2011).

Nussbaum outlines her approach by posing the question of what capabilities entail, suggesting that they constitute the abilities and potentialities of individuals, i.e., 'What is this person able to do and to be?' (Nussbaum, 2011, p.20). Capabilities bestow individuals with boundless potential for imagination and action, granting everyone the opportunity to do and be whatever they desire, Nussbaum argued. Decent societies are characterized by offering citizens a spectrum of options to choose from, ensuring individuals enjoy ultimate freedom to be who they wish

without restrictions, according to Nussbaum. In essence, the societal role is to furnish opportunities for everyone without interfering with their freedom of choice (Nussbaum, 2011). The Capability approach neither seeks uniform capabilities across individuals nor prioritizes achieving equality in all capabilities, but rather serves as a framework for evaluating and comparing individuals' overall advantages (Hedge and MacKenzie, 2012). It does not advocate for specific societal structures or policy choices; instead, it offers essential insights to inform policymaking by illuminating disparities in capabilities, Hedge and MacKenzie argued.

Nussbaum (2011, p.24-25) noted that ‘on the other side of capabilities is functioning. Functioning is an active realization of one or more capabilities’. Unterhalter stated that ‘capabilities’ which represent the freedoms to achieve combinations of valued functioning are real alternatives to formulate and achieve well-being' (Unterhalter, 2009, p.416). Functioning entails translating something one can do—and, of course, wishes to do—into an actual action. When an individual seizes a given opportunity to do or be something, it transforms into a functioning. An illustrative example involving both a capability and a functioning could be when a refugee child is provided the opportunity to learn their mother tongue language in a host country. In this context, the opportunity to learn the language represents a capability, while the process of learning itself constitutes a functioning.

The concept of a threshold was underscored in Nussbaum’s Capability approach, arguing that only when this set of capacities is met can a minimum level of social justice be implemented. However, she acknowledged that achieving justice requires more than this set of capabilities alone, as complex distributional issues may still float on the surface (Nussbaum, 2011). For Nussbaum, treating all individuals with equal respect entails surpassing a certain threshold level of combined capability, signifying not coerced functioning but substantial freedom to choose and act.

Three categories of capabilities: basic, internal, and combined were developed by Nussbaum (2011). Basic capabilities are inherent powers a person is born with, though they can be developed and influenced by parental experience and maternal nutrition. Internal capabilities are potentials that enable a person to perform a specific capability, while combined capabilities result from the interplay of

internal capabilities with external capabilities, facilitating the effective exercise of a given capability (Robeyns, 2005).

Education plays a fundamental role in the Capability approach. Nussbaum (2011) argued that education possesses the transformative ability to elevate an individual's basic capacities into developed internal capacities, fostering a sense of lifelong satisfaction for those who are educated. Moreover, Nussbaum underscores the significance of education in granting people access to additional capabilities that might remain elusive without, at the very least, a basic education. However, Nussbaum acknowledges that children may necessitate exceptions in this approach, recognizing their limitations in expressing opinions on certain complex issues.

3.2: Unterhalter's Concept of Equity

Equity is a complicated and debated concept (Bulkley, 2013). Equity entails prioritizing fairness to ensure that the education of every learner is accorded equal significance (UNESCO, 2017). In simple terms, equity means 'fairness' and is connected to both the features of a system i.e., public education, and the processes— actions— taken within that system to make things fair (Unterhalter, 2009). External factors can influence equity in education such as concentrated poverty, as well as discussions and decisions beyond education can play a role in ensuring fair and equal education (Bulkley, 2013). According to Unterhalter, there are three forms of equity: 1) Equity from Below, 2) Equity from the Middle, and 3) Equity from Above (Unterhalter, 2009). The author argues that equity manifests when the abstract concept of equality is translated into tangible actions. Moskal and North (2017) explored Unterhalter's three forms of equity in articles focused on migrants in various contexts. They proposed that establishing educational systems and processes for migrants and refugees based on equity to support their inclusion, necessitates considering all three types of equity. This involves examining policies and the structure of education systems while also hearing and learning from teachers and students.

Equity from Below 'entails dialogue and discussion about the expansion of a capability set across many different points of view' (Unterhalter, 2009, p.421).

Unterhalter stated that Equity from Below seems to align with the emphasis in the Capability approach on agency and process freedoms. She suggested that societal environments that foster Equity from Below would also support the development of individual empowerment and freedom in educational settings for people from diverse backgrounds. This, in turn, would broaden the range of meaningful choices available to a wide range of people, thus expanding their capabilities (Unterhalter, 2009, p.417). However, sustaining Equity from Below requires the implementation of rules and regulations related to Equity from Above, Unterhalter argued. Equity from Above can be linked to establishing rules and policies by a widely recognised authority that are fair and reasonable for a wide and diverse range of people, which can expand individuals' capability sets, she argued. These rules address crucial issues such as the minimum years of education necessary for a valuable life and the appropriate teacher salaries relative to national averages. Equity from Above, rooted in rules and notions of public good, aligns with the Capability approach's focus on creating conditions for positive freedoms. Various perspectives on these rules emphasize participatory discussion, ethical rationality, and ensuring multiple assessments, reflecting diverse views on the nature and value of education. Thus, the establishment of equitable rules plays a vital role in fostering agency and expanding capability sets, especially in contexts characterized by diverse ideas concerning the nature and value of education. All three forms of equity are critical and should be in place to broaden capabilities in education, acknowledging human diversity (Unterhalter, 2009; Moskal and North, 2017).

Unterhalter (2009) argues that Equity from the Middle in education is associated with the movement of various resources, such as skills, ideas, money, time, organization, and other material elements that facilitate the processes of learning and teaching. These arrangements are vital as they impart value to education when aligned with the other two forms of equity. She illustrates with the example of money, emphasizing that the existence of skills and materials, related to Equity from the Middle, lacks fairness or justice in themselves without being integrated with Equity from Above and Equity from Below. In other words, she compares Equity from the Middle to money, asserting that both lack intrinsic value without social arrangements that grant value. Unterhalter states that the professional development of teachers is a vital component of fostering Equity from the Middle

in education; as it involves the dissemination of ideas, practices, and skills that enhance investments in children's learning.

3.3: Index for Inclusion

The 'Index for Inclusion,' initially launched by the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education in Bristol in 2000, has gained widespread adoption in the UK and globally as a tool advocating for inclusive education (Alborno and Gaad, 2014). Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow were the developers of the first edition in 2000, with subsequent editions released in 2002, 2011, and 2016 (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Given the core principles discussed within these editions remain largely consistent, I utilize the fourth edition of the Index for Inclusion published in 2016.

The Index delineates three interconnected dimensions that can facilitate inclusion in education, namely creating Inclusive Cultures, producing Inclusive Policies, and evolving Inclusive Practices—refer to *Figure 3.2*—adapted from Booth and Ainscow (2016, p.17). In accordance with the Index for Inclusion, inclusive education is defined as an approach that values and respects all individuals, emphasizing the cultivation of an inclusive culture, policy, and practice.

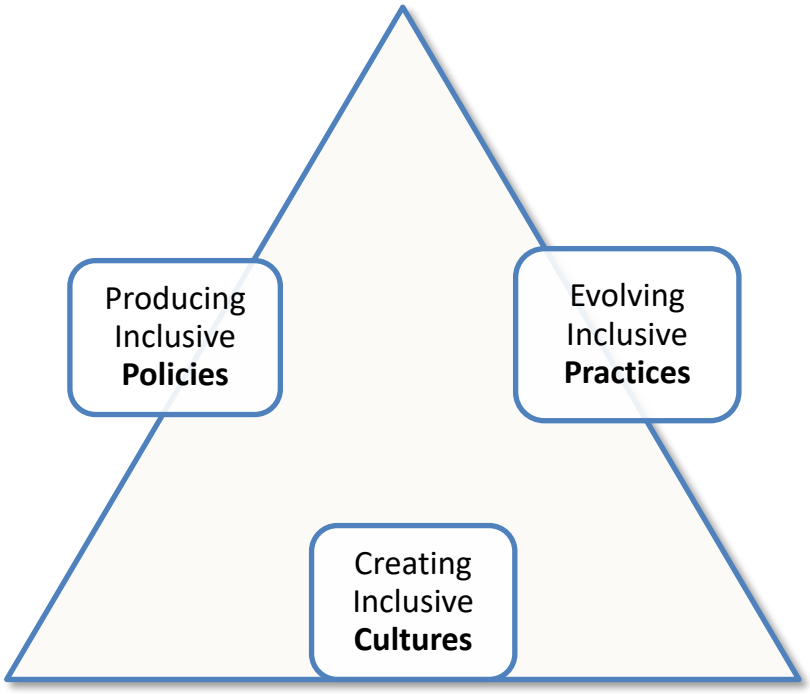


Figure 3.2: The Three Dimensions of the Index for Inclusion According to Booth and Ainscow (2016)

The first dimension of the Index for Inclusion 'Creating Inclusive Cultures' focuses on creating Inclusive Cultures within schools (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). This involves establishing secure, accepting, collaborative, and stimulating environments where everyone is valued. Shared inclusive values should be developed and communicated to all stakeholders, guiding decision-making and practices. By embedding change within school cultures, inclusion becomes integral to the identities of adults and children, ensuring continuity and coherence in development. The second dimension of the Index for Inclusion 'Producing Inclusive Policies' emphasizes that inclusion is integrated into all aspects of school planning and involves the participation of everyone (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Thus, policies should promote the involvement of children and staff from the start and encourage reaching out to all children in the community while minimizing exclusionary pressures. Support policies should encompass activities that enhance the school's capacity to respond to diversity equitably. All forms of support have to be interconnected within a comprehensive framework to ensure the participation

of everyone and the overall development of the school (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Lastly, the third dimension 'Evolving Inclusive Practices' focuses on developing the content and methods of teaching to align with inclusive values and policies (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Therefore, teaching and learning activities should be tailored to be responsive to the diverse needs of students within the school. In addition, children should be encouraged to be active, reflective, and critical learners, while adults collaborate to take collective responsibility for the learning of all children.

These three dimensions must be in place within the educational settings and are essential for the development of the inclusion process, Booth and Ainscow (2016) argued. According to Carrington et al. (2023), the Index for Inclusion plays a crucial role in facilitating dialogue and reflection among both staff and students, fostering shared values that contribute to a sense of belonging and connectedness within the school community. The Index for Inclusion argues that while each of these i.e., policy, culture, and practice represent an important area of focus for development, they often overlap (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). It emphasizes the importance of evidence-based practice to understand the influence of cultures and policies. Merely labelling a document as a 'policy' does not make it effective unless it reflects a clear intention to regulate the practice, Booth and Ainscow (2016, p.49) stated. Without a well-defined implementation strategy, such documents may become mere rhetoric, used to impress inspectors and visitors, rather than serving their intended purpose (Booth and Ainscow, 2016).

This study employs the Index for Inclusion in its framework because it provides a flexible and adaptable framework for evaluating educational inclusion in schools (Alborno and Gaad, 2014). Carrington et al. (2023) argued that the Index for Inclusion is underpinned by five core values: equality, participation, community, respect for diversity, and sustainability. These values serve as guiding principles for various facets of school actions, goals, and practices. Carrington et al. emphasize that the Index for Inclusion offers a constructive approach for schools to assess and improve themselves, fostering open dialogue among stakeholders and encouraging the exploration of assumptions and opinions on the basis of honesty, equality, and trust. On the other hand, Reindal (2016) highlighted the need to rethink why we include all children in education, stressing the importance of discussing this from an ethical standpoint. The author suggests that while inclusion aims to treat all

children equally, it also involves recognizing their differences. Reindal (2016, p.6) illustrates this with an example of a child with additional needs who felt excluded when starting kindergarten as she was not treated as a 'natural' member. This made the child realize that she was from the very start defined as peripheral and not as a natural part of the group. The author argued that such an experience is an example of injustice and shows that inclusion should be based on valuing diversity and respecting human dignity. Reindal proposed that the Capability approach can provide an ethical framework for inclusive education by linking dignity with the development of capabilities, suggesting that it can interpret inclusion as the establishment of communities with distinct characteristics, as mentioned earlier (Reindal, 2016). All in all, incorporating the Index for Inclusion can enhance my analysis by offering a structured approach to investigating the diverse dimensions of educational inclusion for Syrian students in Scottish schools. This includes illuminating the dynamics of inclusion and belonging within the school community, as well as providing insights into the relationships between Syrian students and their teachers.

3.4: UNESCO (2016, 2017) Documents

In 2016, UNESCO and the International Bureau of Education developed a significant document titled 'Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education' (UNESCO, 2016). Subsequently, in 2017, UNESCO's Education Sector, in collaboration with the International Bureau of Education, formulated 'A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education,' (UNESCO, 2017) building upon the foundation laid by UNESCO’s (2016) document. Both documents articulate inclusion as a process centred on identifying and dismantling barriers across three crucial dimensions of education: presence, participation, and achievement. In addition, both documents prioritize learners who are at risk of marginalization, exclusion, or underperformance, receiving focused consideration. Summarising the essence of equity and inclusion in education, the documents convey a straightforward yet powerful message: 'Every learner matters and matters equally' (UNESCO, 2017, p.12). However, it is important to acknowledge the inherent complexity associated with these notions. Effectively translating this

‘straightforward’ message into practice demands transformative changes in both the thinking and practices at various levels within an education system (UNESCO, 2017).

3.5: Synthesising Concepts and Documents

The explanatory framework presented in this chapter will guide an investigation into the practical implementation of these concepts and documents, shedding light on how these concepts and documents influence the overall educational experiences of Syrian students, both within and outside the school environment. The three dimensions articulated by Booth and Ainscow (2016) resonate with the three forms of equity conceptualized by Unterhalter (2009), as will be explained later in this section. Furthermore, the three dimensions and the forms of equity also exhibit connections to the Capability approach (Nussbaum, 2011) in certain aspects. It is important to note, however, that while Booth and Ainscow's inclusion framework and the forms of equity by Unterhalter primarily concentrate on fostering learning and participation within school contexts, the Capability approach offers a broader framework encompassing various aspects of human well-being. See *Figure 3.3* which shows the Capability approach as a comprehensive philosophical framework that underpins the more operational and policy-oriented concepts of equity and inclusion. In addition, the figure visualises how the three dimensions of the Index for Inclusion are connected to the three forms of Equity, as will be demonstrated in the *Discussion Chapter*.

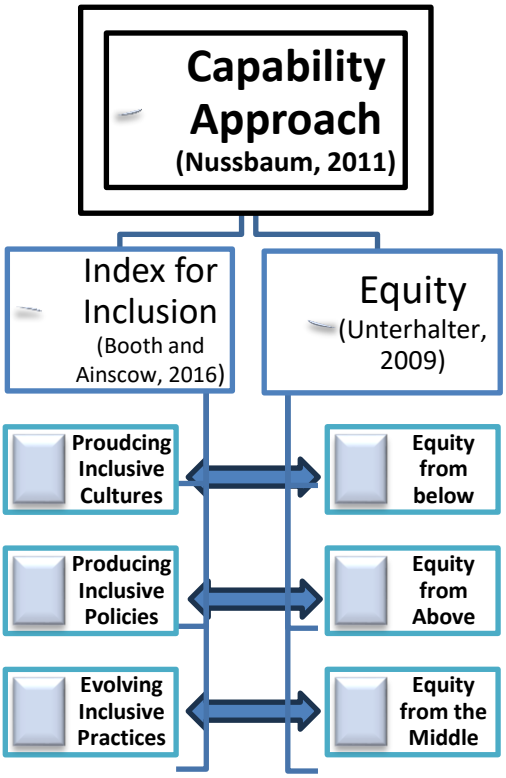


Figure 3.3: Connecting Equity and Inclusion in Light of the Capability Approach.

Drawing parallels, Equity from Below finds resonance with the dimension of creating Inclusive Cultures, as both notions celebrate diversity by highlighting the heterogeneous nature of individuals. Likewise, Unterhalter noted that Equity from Below aligns with the Capability approach's focus on agency and freedom. She argued that societies promoting Equity from Below would enhance individual empowerment in education, offering diverse backgrounds more meaningful choices, thus expanding capabilities. The unlimited potential for individuals to be and do whatever they desire is a fundamental aspect of the Capability approach. This aligns with Equity from Below as it addresses individuals' social relations in everyday life, aiming to perpetuate agency and process freedoms for all.

The dimension of producing Inclusive Policies aligns with Equity from Above, as both involve establishing rules that are fair, reasonable, and inclusive. Such policies should promote the participation of all individuals, including students and teachers in an educational context while valuing diversity across different

contexts. This resonates with Unterhalter's argument that Equity from Above entails ensuring laws about fair access and participation in education, which can enhance individuals' capability sets. By ensuring fair and inclusive policies, Equity from Above contributes to creating an environment where individuals have equal opportunities to develop their capabilities. Hence, the preceding parallel strengthens the correlation between developing Inclusive Policies, Equity from Above, and Capability enhancement.

Equity from the Middle and the evolving of Inclusive Practices converge on the significance of resources, skills, ideas, and expertise in enhancing learning and participation, both within schools and in the broader community. Likewise, the Capability approach provides teachers with a diverse and comprehensive method to assist all students in recognizing, shaping, and expanding their abilities (Hedge and MacKenzie, 2012). The Capability approach regards the capacity to build meaningful relationships with others based on mutual recognition as a central concept for maintaining control over one's environment (Nussbaum, 2011). Similarly, fostering mutual respect in an educational setting, both among students and between students and educators, is a pivotal principle for promoting Inclusive Practices (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Furthermore, the Capability approach questions whether a given capability is available for individuals and whether the needed resources for this capability are present (Robeyns, 2005). The importance of resources holds a central position in the Capability approach, mirroring its significance in equity and inclusion. Overall, the dimension of evolving Inclusive Practices is intricately connected with the other two dimensions of the Index for Inclusion. For example, when a school develops cultures and policies based on inclusion, it creates a pathway for translating these cultural and policy foundations into Inclusive Practices. Just as Equity from the Middle is not valuable and does not have the capacity to implement equity by itself in a given context if not associated with Equity from Below and Equity from Above, anticipating Inclusive Practices should not be expected unless an Inclusive Culture has already been established based on the formulation of Inclusive Policies.

Equity and inclusion form the core principles of both UNESCO's (2016, 2017) documents, as previously noted. Both documents deliver a clear and impactful message that every learner is equally valued and important. Nussbaum emphasises

every individual's right to be treated as a dignified being, valued equally with others, and free from discrimination and humiliation. In the Capability approach, inclusion means ensuring that every person lives a life filled with dignity and growth, where they are genuinely valued for themselves rather than just being part of a policy labelled as inclusive, even if that policy doesn't always lead to real inclusion (Hedge and MacKenzie, 2012). Therefore, when establishing inclusive values within an educational environment, it is imperative to equally value all students, with students and staff treating each other as human beings (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). In addition, genuine efforts should be made to minimize all forms of discrimination and bullying, thereby reducing barriers to the learning and participation of all students throughout the education process, according to Booth and Ainscow.

In brief, establishing a community where every person is valued and treated as a dignified being can foster the process of discussion and participation of all individuals and, thus, contribute to equity and inclusion within a given setting, such as a school or community. This applies to individuals from refugee backgrounds too. By gaining equal access to resources, fostering opportunities for participation, and having support systems that recognize their dignity and potential, refugees can rebuild their lives, integrate successfully, and contribute meaningfully to the setting whether it be a school or community. When efficiently implemented, the discussed concepts and documents can play a fundamental role in shaping educational processes and experiences within educational settings and beyond. In a broader context, these core concepts have the potential to promote agency, equity, and inclusion in the larger community that celebrates diversity by creating opportunities for every individual to have access to community resources on an equal basis with others. The aspiration is that all individuals can perpetuate agency and process freedoms across various aspects of their lives.

3.6: Concluding Insights from Chapter Three

The examination of frameworks and documents in this chapter revealed the complex interplay between various concepts influencing the educational experiences of students. Key frameworks such as Booth and Ainscow’s ‘Index for

Inclusion' and Unterhalter's forms of equity provided a nuanced understanding of how inclusive practices can be developed. The alignment between creating inclusive cultures, producing inclusive policies, and evolving inclusive practices with Equity from Below, Equity from Above, and Equity from the Middle highlighted a comprehensive approach to fostering educational equity.

Creating inclusive cultures, which aligns with Equity from Below, emphasized agency and empowerment, while producing inclusive policies, reflecting Equity from Above, focused on establishing fair and inclusive rules. Evolving inclusive practices, corresponding to Equity from the Middle, underscored the importance of resources and skills in enhancing learning and participation. These connections supported the Capability Approach's broader framework, which integrates educational contexts with overall human well-being and the need for mutual respect and resources.

UNESCO's principles underscored the importance of valuing every learner and ensuring a dignified educational environment. The effective implementation of these frameworks could significantly impact equity and inclusion, particularly for marginalized groups such as refugees. By integrating these concepts, educational settings have the potential to enhance their approach to inclusion, fostering better support and integration for all students. This comprehensive approach promises to improve educational processes and experiences, promoting greater agency and inclusivity within diverse communities.

In conclusion, this chapter provided a detailed overview of critical frameworks for enhancing educational inclusion and addressing barriers to education. Together, these concepts offered valuable insights into promoting equity and inclusion in educational settings.

Chapter Four: Methodology

This chapter delineates the fundamental components of the research methodology employed in investigating the educational inclusion of Syrian students in mainstream schools in Greater Glasgow. The study examines actions, moments, approaches, and factors deemed crucial for fostering the educational inclusion of Syrian students, examining these facets from the perspectives of educators, students, and parents. The primary focus of this study is to gauge the extent to which Syrian refugee children are included in schools in Greater Glasgow, addressing two key questions:

1- To what extent can Syrian students access, participate and achieve in schools?

2- What are the main opportunities and challenges associated with Syrian students' educational inclusion?

To address these inquiries, I invited Syrian families and school educators in Greater Glasgow to participate in this study. The study employed two distinct data collection methods: semi-structured interviews and an online survey. Regarding data analysis, a thematic analysis approach for qualitative data, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), was adopted. Subsequent sections will expound on the integral components of the research methodology, encompassing research design, participants, research methods, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

4.1: Research Design

While acknowledging the challenge of defining a qualitative research approach, Lichtman (2006, p.22) describes the qualitative approach as 'a way of knowing that assumes that the researcher gathers, organizes, and interprets information... with his or her eyes and ears as filters'. Creswell (2005) suggests that a qualitative approach is essential for achieving in-depth insights. The qualitative approach centres on human voices, relying heavily on individuals' perspectives to enhance understanding, as emphasized by Lichtman (2006, p.32). Qualitative research

methods, as suggested by Patton (1999), are well-suited for probing specific cases deeply and comprehensively. Likewise, Creswell (2005) suggests that a qualitative approach is essential for achieving in-depth insights. The qualitative approach centres on human voices, relying heavily on individuals' perspectives to enhance understanding, as emphasized by Lichtman (2006, p.32).

This research employs a qualitative approach that fits well the research's purpose, aiming to gain a detailed and in-depth understanding of Syrian students' educational experiences, particularly those related to educational inclusion practices. The research adopts an interpretive paradigmatic approach as its primary paradigmatic umbrella to construct knowledge. Within the interpretative paradigm, it is presupposed that meaning is socially constructed through interactions between humans or between humans and objects (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p.23). Understanding social reality requires investigating the perspectives of those involved, Hesse-Biber argued. Therefore, applying an interpretive paradigm enables the construction of knowledge related to the educational inclusion of Syrian students, capturing their own perspectives, those of their parents, and the perspectives of their educators.

The current study implements a qualitative case study research design with qualitative methods for data collection. A case study design is deemed appropriate for examining a 'specific example of a phenomenon or situation that can help illuminate whatever research question is under investigation' (Curtis et al., 2014, p.43). While there is no standardized way to design a case study as it is an approach to research rather than a pack of specific strategies, the chosen design should align with the study's purpose, Curtis et al. argued. I chose the case study method to gain a thorough understanding and analysis of the phenomena under scrutiny—the educational experiences of Syrian students in Greater Glasgow. Refugee children often encounter a greater array of obstacles to education when compared to the children of immigrants (Suárez-Orozco, Bang, and Kim,2011). This disparity in educational experiences is indicative of distinct challenges that refugee children confront within the educational landscape. Therefore, employing a case study design enables a nuanced understanding of the intricate educational and social situations faced by Syrian children, offering detailed insights into the issue under scrutiny (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001).

Curtis et al. (2014) argued that reliability relates to how carefully the research was conducted and the likelihood of the same findings emerging if the study were to be replicated. To enhance the reliability of research findings, triangulation was employed in the present research. Triangulation, as outlined by Patton (1999), involves using a combination of research methods to provide cross-data validity checks, reducing the vulnerability to errors associated with a single method. Three types of triangulation—methods, theory, and data sources—are utilized in this research. Methodological triangulation occurs with the use of two different data collection methods, semi-structured interviews and an online survey. Theoretical triangulation involves analysing data using concepts related to the explanatory framework, encompassing inclusion, equity in education, and the Capability approach. Data sources triangulation is implemented, considering students, parents, and educators as distinct sources of data in this research. In addition, pilot interviews were conducted to refine the interview questions and to identify potential issues, thereby enhancing the reliability of the study. Details about pilot interviews will be provided later in the *Data Collection Methods (Section, 4.4)* of this chapter. Additionally, providing information about the researcher, which will be presented later, can contribute to the reliability of the research (Patton, 1999).

Validity, literally meaning truth, identifies how accurately an account represents participants' realities of social phenomena (Curtis et al., 2014). Validity maintained through providing detailed descriptions of the research context and participants to enable transferability, information about the participants will be discussed in the following section. Furthermore, researchers' acknowledgement and disclosure of potential biases and limitations, as will be discussed later in *Conclusion Chapter*, enhanced the validity of this study by addressing their impact on the research process. Lastly, this research acknowledges that in qualitative research, findings are inherently ‘highly context and case dependent,’ necessitating careful consideration to maintain contextual relevance and prevent unwarranted generalizations (Patton, 1999, p.1197). Therefore, it is crucial to recognize that the participants in this research represent individual cases, and their educational experiences are rooted in personal contexts. As such, the findings are not representative of broader groups, serving as reflections of the participants' perspectives in their specific contexts.

4.2: Participants

Syrian families residing in Greater Glasgow are at the centre of this study, which comprises a total of 10 cases. The study specifically investigates Syrian students' educational inclusion within schools. Recruitment involved 10 Syrian families with children in mainstream schools in Greater Glasgow, facilitated through social connections. In addition, school educators across the Greater Glasgow area were invited to partake in an online survey to help understand the educational experiences of Syrian students. The survey was promoted through social media platforms such as Twitter and WhatsApp.

Data collection commenced post-approval from Glasgow University's College of Social Science Research Ethics Committee, the letter of ethical approval can be found in *Appendix 3*. Recognizing that Syrians are not native English speakers, I translated essential documents, including the Participant Information Sheet, Child Plain Language Statement, Informed Consent forms for both children and adults, and the privacy notice, into Arabic. Despite the presence of Kurdish families in this research, the documents were not translated into Kurdish. Prior to the Syrian crisis in 2011, learning and teaching Kurdish were forbidden in Syria. The Syrian regime enforced strict policies, and anyone caught learning or teaching Kurdish could be arrested and accused of being a 'separatist' with the intent to undermine national unity. As a result, the vast majority of Kurds in Syria do not read or write Kurdish proficiently. However, most are able to read and write in Arabic, the official language of Syria.

In addition, I employed child-friendly language, tailored for students and easily understandable in children's materials, to ensure its accessibility and comprehension by all participants. Each family received translated copies of these documents, and English versions were provided upon request. Either a Participant Information Sheet or a Child Plain Language Statement was provided for Syrian adults and students which elucidated the study's aims, voluntary participation, interview processes, confidentiality, and anonymity. Consent forms were signed for face-to-face interviews, with verbal consent for online interviews. A straightforward consent form was created for students and read aloud to ensure their willingness to participate in the research, coupled with initial verbal consent

from their parents signifying the children's involvement. At the conclusion of the interview, participants were reassured about their continued willingness to be part of the project. This step was crucial as, by then, they had gained a clearer understanding of the information shared during the interview, allowing them to assess the nature of the research and the data collected from them. Refer to *Appendix 4* which displays ethics documents including Participant Information Sheet, Child Plain Language Statement, and Informed Consent forms for both adults and children.

Recognizing that qualitative research involves active interaction with individuals and may lead to unforeseen circumstances as rapport is built with participants (Lichtman, 2010), I was mindful of potential unexpected situations, especially given the unique context of the Syrian families. Lichtman highlighted that researchers might encounter disclosures from participants that could be personally or socially sensitive, necessitating the use of judgment and sensitivity. In such instances, Lichtman advised researchers to promptly redirect the interview and suggest that the participant seek guidance from a counsellor or another trusted support person.

This research aimed to maintain ethical standards and sensitivity in engaging vulnerable individuals throughout the research process. Lichtman (2014) addressed various concerns related to studying vulnerable participants, particularly children and individuals with limited English proficiency. In alignment with Lichtman's (2014) recommendations, I adhered to crucial principles while conducting this research that involved vulnerable participants. These include ensuring the well-being of participants, upholding privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, emphasizing the importance of truthfulness and accuracy in reporting data, fostering a balanced rapport and friendship, avoiding intrusiveness and any form of inappropriate behaviour, and conducting research founded on principles of inclusion and social justice. Additionally, I was mindful of two potential challenges when dealing with vulnerable populations: the issue of power imbalance and concerns related to informed consent and protection (Lichtman, 2014). In addition, I adhered to the principles emphasized by Kallio et al. based on their review throughout the data collection phase. They underscored that while the primary goal of qualitative research is to gain a rich understanding of the

phenomena being investigated, researchers must remain ethically vigilant, avoiding the collection of unnecessary data (Kallio et al., 2016). Accordingly, I tailored questions about schooling specifically to the needs of my research, ensuring that only relevant inquiries were posed to Syrian families. Furthermore, I consistently reminded participants that they were under no obligation to discuss any topic that made them uncomfortable and that they had the autonomy to halt the interview at any point without providing justification. In case of disclosures, a pre-prepared list of local support services, including healthcare and counselling, was available.

Interviews with Syrian families involved both children and their parents. Typically, one adult and one child from each family were interviewed, although there were instances where additional family members participated, contributing valuable insights to the research. In four cases, multiple family members were recruited and interviewed. The choice between individual or group interviews was left entirely to their preference. However, I expressed a preference for individual interviews with parents, conducted separately from children, to allow for more open discussions about their children's experiences. Interviews took place at mutually agreed-upon locations convenient for both families and the researcher. Alternatively, families were offered the option of online interviews through platforms such as Zoom for health or practical reasons. Conducting interviews via telephone or WhatsApp was an option for those who did not have access to the internet or were not confident in using the Zoom platform, as the recruitment process prioritised participant comfort. It is noteworthy that a modest £10 voucher was provided to the child or children interviewed, aligning with the customary practice in Syrian culture of bringing a gift when visiting a home. Importantly, the majority of families were unaware of this gesture before the interview, ensuring minimal influence on the recruitment process.

Concerning the online survey, the objective initially was to explore educators' perspectives on the education of Syrian students in the city of Glasgow. Therefore, I intended to distribute a physical survey to teachers in three local schools with a significant number of students from refugee backgrounds, including Syrian refugees. However, the ethics department at the University of Glasgow requested additional approval from the relevant local authority, Glasgow City Council, through the Education Services Research Group. Considering the complexity and

time-consuming nature of obtaining such approval, I altered my approach to address this concern. I recruited school educators across the Greater Glasgow area through social media platforms such as Twitter, and WhatsApp. Additionally, I reached out to selected school headteachers via email, extending invitations to both them and their school staff to participate in the online survey. Although specifics about the schools or local authorities were not requested, some of these educators likely resided and worked outside Glasgow City Council, for example, in East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire. As a result, this approach captured a more diverse range of experiences from educators across different local authorities. Furthermore, reframing the study to focus on the Greater Glasgow area enhanced participant confidentiality and anonymity.

The invitation links directed interested participants to the online survey, commencing with a brief welcoming paragraph introducing the research and the researcher. Subsequently, participants encountered a structured sequence, commencing with a Participant Information Sheet, followed by a Privacy Notice, and concluding with an Informed Consent section, please refer to *Appendix 4* which displays ethics documents. Within the survey itself, participants were prompted to provide three fundamental pieces of information: their current position, the stage of their school, and whether they had experience working with Syrian students in a mainstream school within the Greater Glasgow area. It is noteworthy that, despite concerted efforts, the response rate to my online survey was low, yielding only six responses from educators.

4.3: Interview's Participants Description

Among the Syrian families I interviewed, the majority fell into the category of medium-sized families, comprising two to four children, while three families were classified as large-sized, with five or more children. Participants demonstrated a diverse range of educational backgrounds, encompassing individuals with limited literacy to university professors. English language proficiency varied among the participants, with children generally exhibiting greater skills than their parents. The sample included Syrian families from different regions of Syria, predominantly Arab, with two families from the Kurdish ethnicity. It would have been interesting

to gather information about the education level and age of the Syrian parents I interviewed. However, due to the vulnerability of the group, I chose not to collect such details to mitigate the risk of potential participant identification.

Name	*Family*	*Gender*	*Group*	*Interview Language*	*Interview Duration*	*Interview nature*	*Interview Type*	*Notes*
Amjad	1	M	Father	Arabic	36.19	Face to Face (F2F)	Pair Interview*	* A pair interview is an interview that involves, any, two participants being interviewed together.
Hamza	1	M	Brother*	Arabic	36.19	F2F	Pair Interview	*Brother of Yasser. Had been in schools previously
Yasser	1	M	S3	Arabic	19.55	F2F	Individual Interview	
Waleed	2	M	Father	Arabic	33.27	F2F	Individual Interview	
Maha	2	F	P4	Arabic	15.06	F2F	Individual Interview	
Khalil	3	M	Father	Arabic	32.01	F2F	Individual Interview	
Zahra	3	F	P3	Arabic	09.04	F2F	Individual Interview	
Mohamed	4	M	Father	Arabic	69.35	F2F	Pair Interview	
Abdullah	4	M	Brother*	Mixed	69.35	F2F	Pair interview	*Brother of Huda. Had been in schools previously
Huda	4	F	S1	English	22.08	F2F	Individual Interview	
Nisreen	5	F	Mother	Kurdish	56.11	F2F	Individual Interview	
Tareq	5	M	P7	Mixed	22.14	F2F	Pair Interview	

Ziyad	5	M	P6	Mixed	22.14	F2F	Pair Interview	
Salih	6	M	Father	Kurdish	16.03	F2F	Group Interview	
Khadija	6	F	Mother	Kurdish	16.03	F2F	Group Interview	
Samir	6	M	Brother*	Kurdish	16.03	F2F	Group Interview	*Brother of Aisha and Ridwan. Was almost silent
Aisha	6	F	S4	English	28.24	F2F	Pair Interview	
Ridwan*	6	M	P7	English	28.24	F2F	Pair Interview	*Participant withdrew shortly after the beginning.
Omar	7	M	Father	English	40.04	Online	Individual Interview	
Anas	7	M	S5	English	26.25	Online	Individual Interview	
Fawaz	8	M	Father	Arabic	27.02	F2F	Individual Interview	
Luaai	8	M	P4	Arabic	11.35	F2F	Individual Interview	
Maher	9	M	Father	Arabic	15.07	F2F	Individual Interview	
Nidal	9	M	P4	Arabic	20.06	F2F	Pair Interview	
Zainab	9	F	P3	Arabic	20.06	F2F	Pair Interview	
Kamal	10	M	Father	Arabic	72.03	Online	Individual Interview	

Table 4.1: An overview of the interviews conducted with the research participants.

The above *Table (4.1)* provides detailed information about the interviews conducted with the research participants. In total, the research included 14 adults and 12 children. Among the 26 participants, the majority, comprising 19 individuals, were male, while the remaining 7 were female. Within the male group, 12 were adults and 7 were of school age. Conversely, in the female group, 5 participants were of school age, and 2 were adults. Among the participants, fathers constituted the majority, with 9 fathers interviewed compared to only 2 mothers. Additionally, two 'single' adult males participated in paired interviews with their fathers, while another 'single' adult male took part in a group interview with both parents. Regarding the students' sample, two-thirds of the students (8) were in the primary stage, and the remaining (4) were in the secondary stage. Interviews were conducted in three languages: Arabic, Kurdish, and English. Arabic was the predominant language in interviews (14 instances), followed by English (5 instances) and Kurdish (4 instances). Additionally, two participants used a combination of English and Kurdish, while one participant frequently switched between Arabic and English. Most interviews were conducted face-to-face (16), with only three conducted online. Interview durations varied significantly, ranging from 9.04 minutes to 72.03 minutes. On average, each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes, resulting in a total duration of 570.89 minutes across the 19 interviews. Out of the 19 conducted interviews, 13 were individual interviews, 5 were conducted in pairs, and only one group interview was carried out.

4.4: Data Collection Methods

This research employed two distinct methods for data collection: interviews with Syrian families and an online survey targeting school educators. Surveys and interviews share similarities as social research methods, differing primarily in the interviewer's presence during semi-structured interviews, while survey respondents independently read and respond to questions (Bryman, 2004).

4.4.1: Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews served as the primary investigative tool in this study, offering a flexible and reliable approach to data collection from participants—Syrian families. Initially, the focus group method was considered for data collection in this research. However, it was ruled out because the researcher believed that Syrian parents might prefer to discuss their children's experiences individually. This choice was influenced by Baak's (2019) study, where Syrian parents explicitly expressed a preference for being interviewed in parent pairs. Baak's initial focus group was deemed ineffective, as parents felt constrained in openly sharing their children's experiences, especially the negative aspects, in the presence of other parents. Additionally, some participants in focus groups may conform to others' responses, even if they disagree, while others may be hesitant to discuss their experiences in a group setting due to concerns about community gossip (Liamputtong, 2019). Liamputtong argued that, in contrast to interviews, focus groups have limited capacity to generate in-depth information and cannot capture the complex practices and beliefs of participants due to time constraints and the nature of group interaction. Therefore, I opted to proceed with interviews involving Syrian families, allowing participants to choose between Arabic, Kurdish, or English as their preferred language. In cases where Arabic or Kurdish was chosen, the researcher transcribed the data verbatim in the original language. For the excerpts used in the findings/discussion chapter, the researcher translated relevant portions from Arabic and Kurdish interviews into English for analysis. Despite the use of verbatim transcription, sensitive or identifying information was excluded to prioritize privacy and confidentiality.

All interviews with Syrian families were audio-recorded. Initially, the plan was to employ two recording devices or smartphones as a precautionary measure against potential technical errors leading to data loss. However, this decision was reevaluated, and a different approach was implemented for enhanced trustworthiness and secure data backup. An iPhone 12 Pro Max was used for recording interviews. Following each family interview, the recordings were temporarily transferred to iCloud, a virtual storage platform. Subsequently, the recordings were stored on the university’s OneDrive for Business, a Microsoft-approved, cloud-based storage service suitable for preserving all types of university

data. Moreover, the smartphone employed for recordings was equipped with a passcode to thwart unauthorized access to the device. Additionally, the Find My iPhone feature was activated to facilitate locating the device on a map in the unlikely event of misplacement. Interview transcripts are maintained in an anonymized manner and will be retained for ten years after the completion of the PhD, allowing for potential publications arising from the project. Retention of the research data aligns with the University of Glasgow Guidelines, and specific information regarding research data storage was communicated in the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form to provide clarity for those interested in this aspect. All data shared by participants was treated with utmost confidentiality and anonymized, removing any identifiable details from project reports. Institutional anonymity was preserved to prevent the disclosure of specific schools or organizations mentioned during data collection by Syrian families or school educators. Written and recorded information was securely stored in a locked filing cabinet, and electronic files on computer systems were password-protected. At the conclusion of the research period, all physical documents would be securely shredded, and voice recordings permanently deleted.

All members of Syrian families, including both adults and children, were invited to participate in interviews. These interviews encompassed discussions with children, parents, and, in some instances, older siblings. In this study, student participants represented both primary and secondary school levels, while individuals aged 18 and above were classified as adults. Data collection with Syrian families spanned three months, commencing in mid-January and concluding in mid-April 2022. As mentioned earlier, being interviewed online was a viable option, particularly when a family expressed a preference for online interviews due to reasons such as health concerns or practical considerations. As a result, interviews with two out of the total ten participating families were conducted online. When Syrian families opted for online or telephone interviews, I emailed or sent them the informed consent form via WhatsApp, requesting them to thoroughly review it and confirm their willingness to proceed. In these instances, recorded verbal consent was accepted as an alternative to physically signing the consent form, recognizing that some families might not have access to printers. In such cases, I verbally presented the informed consent form before the interview, ensuring they provided their verbal consent. Furthermore, I ensured all participants had a clear

understanding of my research project, offering them the opportunity to ask questions. All participants were explicitly informed that participation was voluntary, and they retained the freedom to withdraw at any point without the need for justification.

Family interviews were conducted in various formats: individually, in pairs, or as a group. I aimed to conduct interviews with adults in a private setting away from children whenever possible, to provide a comfortable space for them to openly discuss their children's experiences, as mentioned earlier. The older students were given the choice of being interviewed either independently or in the presence of an adult, whereas the younger students were interviewed in the presence of an adult. For safety precautions, I consistently informed my supervisors or an emergency contact when visiting participants' homes to manage any potential risks. Additionally, I carried a charged mobile phone for communication if needed. All aspects of the interview process adhered to the general Health and Safety Policy established at the designated location. That being said, I was prepared to follow government and local authorities' guidance in case of additional Covid restrictions. For example, if another lockdown were imposed, I was ready to prioritize online interviews over in-person ones. However, no further Covid-related disruptions occurred during the data collection period.

The utilization of semi-structured interviews provided a supportive framework for conducting interviews, ensuring comprehensive coverage of key areas of investigation. This method facilitated conversations with Syrian families, providing insight into their perspectives on significant aspects of Syrian students' schooling practices, particularly in the context of educational inclusion, as emphasized by Bryman (2004). Drawing on Kallio et al.'s review-based paper, the advantages of the semi-structured interview method were highlighted, including the ability to build mutuality between the interviewer and participant, the opportunity for follow-up questions based on participants' responses, and the promotion of individual verbal expression during the interview (Kallio et al., 2016).

I developed semi-structured interview guides and adhered to them during the interviews with Syrian families. Nevertheless, I granted participants the opportunity to freely discuss any additional topics related to the education of

Syrian students that might not have been explicitly addressed in my interview. Participants were afforded the space and flexibility to delve into issues of their choosing, even if they deviated from the immediate focus of my research, as expected by the semi-structured interview design. It is essential to recognize that research participants are unique individuals with diverse backgrounds and personalities, and they should be approached with care, prioritizing their dignity and respect above all else.

My interview guides underwent a meticulous three-stage validation process to ensure the appropriateness of questions for Syrian families, with separate guides crafted for adults and children. Initially, I submitted the guides to my supervisors for evaluation and subsequently discussed them in a supervisory meeting. Following this, three pilot interviews were conducted to gauge question clarity and participant responses, leading to refinements, especially in the adult guide. The three pilot interviews encompassed participants of diverse demographics, including a male adult, a female adult, and a child. Noteworthy insights emerged from the pilot interviews, emphasizing the individuality of each participant's responses. Notably, one participant shared her perspective on her children's education, highlighting a unique aspect. She expressed appreciation for the lighter school bags here compared to her home country, where children often carry heavy loads. The second participant made an intriguing comparison between his children's mainstream school and a weekend Arabic school, referring to the mainstream school as a ‘foreign school.’ While this term is commonly used in Syria to contrast national or Arabic institutions with Western ones, it doesn't inherently suggest negativity. Rather, it highlighted the importance of using clear and accessible language during interviews to ensure smooth communication. In addition, the interaction with the child further underscored the need for simplified questions and the expectation of answers that may diverge from the initial inquiry.

Further discussions with supervisors provided valuable suggestions, drawing from their extensive experience in research with refugee children. Additionally, I sought feedback from three PhD colleagues in the school of education, refining questions based on their insights. Adjustments were made to accommodate concerns such as older students’ reluctance to disclose friends' names and the sensitivity of certain inquiries about relationships with teachers. Ultimately, these collaborative efforts

ensured the clarity, sensitivity, and suitability of the interview guides for engaging Syrian families effectively.

The semi-structured interviews with Syrian families comprised questions related to students' education in Scotland, with a specific emphasis on educational inclusion. For instance:

- How do you perceive your children's overall experience in school?
- What opportunities and services are there to facilitate children's inclusion?
- What are your perspectives on barriers to inclusive practices?
- What methods may improve inclusive practices in schools?

These constituted the primary areas addressed in the interviews, for detailed interview guides for adults, secondary, and primary students, please refer to *Appendix 5*. Nevertheless, the formulation of questions was tailored to ensure clear understanding by all participants, recognizing that some, including children and parents, might be unfamiliar with the concept of inclusion. Moreover, those acquainted with the term might perceive it through the lens of the interpretation prevalent in the Arab region, primarily focusing on the inclusion of students with disabilities in schools (Gaad, 2011).

I employed the five-step process recommended by Kallio et al. (2016) for researchers using qualitative semi-structured interviews, refer to *Table 4.2*. Initially, researchers need to establish the prerequisites for employing semi-structured interviews, justifying their choice and evaluating its appropriateness for the research questions. This entails drawing on previous knowledge and conducting an extensive literature review to build a conceptual foundation for the data collection process. In my case, I conducted a systematic literature review to gain a comprehensive understanding of the education of Syrian refugee children across various settings. The next step involves formulating a preliminary interview guide, comprising a set of questions that guide the dialogue between the researcher and the participant(s) on the research topic. Subsequently, pilot testing the interview guide is crucial to ensure the inclusion of all necessary data and identify any potential adjustments or changes required for the interview questions. I conducted

pilot testing interviews before initiating interviews with Syrian families. The final phase of the development process is presenting the ultimate interview guide in the study paper, enabling other researchers to evaluate and enhance the guide used in the study further. Using these five-step guides contributed to the trustworthiness and objectivity of this research and made the findings more credible (Kallio et al., 2016).

(1) identifying the prerequisites for using semi-structured interviews
(2) retrieving and using previous knowledge
(3) formulating the preliminary semi-structured interview guide
(4) pilot testing the guide
(5) presenting the complete semi-structured interview guide.

Table 4.2: Five steps of developing a semi-structured interview developed by Kallio et al. (2016, p.2954).

Furthermore, the conduction of interviews in fieldwork with Syrian families was organised by following the six stages of interviews suggested by Yeo et al. (2014, p.189), refer to *Table 4.3*. The six-stage process ensured a comprehensive and respectful approach to interviews. Beginning with the establishment of rapport in the first stage, it proceeds to introduce the research in the second stage, highlighting the significance of informed consent. Emphasizing participant control, the third stage provides background information, setting the tone for the interview. The fourth stage emphasizes achieving breadth and depth during the interview, periodically checking participant engagement. The fifth stage focuses on a positive conclusion, giving advance notice and offering suggestions. Finally, the sixth stage underscores expressing gratitude, clarifying data treatment, providing support service contacts, and staying alert to unexpected insights.

Stage	Process
One	**Establish an initial rapport**
Arrival and introduction	**'Host' the interaction**
Two	**Seeking informed consent: aims, objectives, voluntary, confidentiality**
Introducing the research	**Scope of the interview: …the participant is in control of what they disclose**
	No right or wrong answers, hearing their perspective in their own words
Three	**Contextual background information (for reference, and to set tone)**
Beginning the interview	
Four	**Breadth and depth of coverage**
During the interview	**Checking in with participant**
Five	**Give some advance notice i.e. 'the final thing I wanted to ask you about is...'**
Ending the interview	**End on a positive note: Suggestions and recommendations**
Six	**Thanks for participation: value of their contribution**
After the interview	**How the information will be treated and used**
	Give contact information for support services (if agreed)
	Listen out for 'doorstep data'

Table 4.3: Stages of the interview adopted from Yeo, et al. (2014, p.189).

4.4.2: Online Survey

The online survey was designed to explore educators' perspectives concerning the educational inclusion of refugee students, with a specific focus on Syrians. This encompassed an investigation into existing opportunities and services aimed at facilitating their inclusion, along with an examination of potential barriers that might impede their inclusion into schools. The survey sought to elucidate school

educators' views on the inclusion of Syrian students, assessing the consistency or divergence between educators' and families' perspectives regarding potential challenges faced by Syrian students that could impede their inclusion into the educational system. On the other hand, the survey aimed to capture insights from school staff regarding the opportunities and services available to foster the inclusion of students from refugee backgrounds. The educator's perspectives were compared with the perspectives shared by Syrian children and parents, providing a platform for engaging with diverse voices on the matter under scrutiny, and examining the educational inclusion of Syrian students.

This structured online survey gathered data from educators across the Greater Glasgow area using an open-ended, self-completed format. Using surveys in research can be a crucial method of inquiry, providing insights that may not be attainable through other methods (Dale, 2014). The integration of surveys with other methods can enhance research quality, as they complement each other effectively, Dale argued. Bryman (2004) argued that self-completion surveys offer advantages over interviews in terms of speed, efficiency, and absence of interviewer variability. In the context of the present research, the convenience factor was paramount. The online survey provided a more convenient option for school educators, considering their daily workload. Through the online format, educators could complete the forms at their convenience and their preferred pace (Bryman, 2004). However, self-completion surveys have drawbacks compared to interviews, such as a lack of prompting and probing, limitations in asking numerous questions, uncertainty about whether the intended person responded, and a potentially lower response rate, according to Bryman. I have chosen to formulate the online survey with open-ended questions over closed-ended questions for the following reasons:

> *-Respondents can answer in their own terms. They are not forced to answer in the same terms as those foisted on them by the response choice.*
>
> *-They allow unusual responses to be derived.*
>
> *-The questions do not suggest certain kinds of answers to respondents.*
>
> *-They are useful for exploring new areas or ones in which the researcher has limited knowledge.* (Bryman, 2004, p.145).

Nevertheless, open-ended surveys may pose challenges for researchers given their time-consuming nature, requiring extensive coding of responses (Bryman, 2004). Furthermore, the open-ended format demands more effort from respondents, as they may be required to provide more detailed written responses compared to closed-ended questions. Overall, the online survey was directed at school staff and encompassed the following four questions concerning the educational inclusion of refugee students in their schools:

- In your experience, what are the main opportunities associated with the educational inclusion of Syrian students in your school/community? Can you give examples, please?
- In your experience, what are the main challenges that hinder the inclusion of Syrian children in your school/community, if any? Can you give examples, please?
- From your point of view to what extent Syrian children are included in your school in terms of access, participation, and achievement?
- Can you give some suggestions and recommendations that may promote the education/inclusion of Syrian/non-Syrian refugee children in your school/community?

All school educators who took part in this online survey affirmed their experience in dealing with students from refugee backgrounds, including Syrians, within mainstream schools in the Greater Glasgow area. To ensure participant consent, a single tick box was incorporated at the online survey's top, signifying that completing and returning the survey indicated their agreement. This approach suited the nature of the survey, where the specific questions were transparent from the outset, and no probing inquiries were involved. Survey completion times may have varied, with an approximate average duration ranging from 15 to 25 minutes. Access to the survey was facilitated through Jisc Online Surveys, endorsed and supported by the University of Glasgow.

4.5: Data Analysis: Interviews

This research employed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis to analyze qualitative data, adopting the method for both interview and online survey data separately and independently. Although Lichtman's (2010) three C's of analysis—coding, categorizing, and concepts—was considered, Braun and Clarke's approach was chosen for its practicality and detailed structure. Thematic analysis, as defined by Braun and Clarke, involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within the data, organizing and describing it in rich detail. The research considered this method suitable, offering accessibility and theoretical flexibility for analyzing qualitative data. Furthermore, the research adhered to the six-step process outlined by Braun and Clarke for thematic analysis, refer to *Table 4.4*. The steps include data familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report.

Phase	Description of the Process
1- Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas
2- Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3- Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4-Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
5-Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6-Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis. Using thematic analysis

Table 4.4: Phases of thematic analysis adopted from Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87)

Interviews with Syrian families were conducted in Arabic, Kurdish, and English, which introduced both challenges and opportunities in the data analysis process. One of the key considerations during transcription was whether to maintain the

original language or translate the content into English immediately, given that English would be the language of the final thesis. I approached this dilemma by exploring both methods and reflecting on their effectiveness. Initially, I translated the first interview from Arabic to English as part of the transcription process. However, this raised concerns about potentially losing some nuances and authenticity inherent in the original language. As a result, I made the decision to transcribe all interviews verbatim in their original languages, ensuring that the data remained as close as possible to its source. This approach allowed for a more faithful capture of the participants' voices.

During data analysis, I carefully considered the best language for coding, categorization, and theme generation. Ultimately, I opted to conduct the analysis in English across all interviews, regardless of their original language. This decision was made with the understanding that while analysis in the original languages might preserve certain cultural and linguistic nuances, translation into English was essential for the consistency and coherence of the final product. It also facilitated engagement with a broader academic audience.

Rather than viewing the translation process as a limitation, I regard it as a critical and complex aspect of the research methodology. The ability to navigate multiple languages provided a rich and nuanced dataset, even though I remained mindful of the potential for some subtle meaning to be lost in translation. The careful transcription and coding process helped to mitigate this risk, turning the multilingual nature of the research into a strength that deepened the analysis.

In the following sections, I first elaborate on the thematic analysis process for the interviews with the Syrian families, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework. Subsequently, the analysis of the online survey will be presented.

4.5.1: Familiarizing Myself with the Data

In the initial phase of data analysis, I commenced by reading the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive overview of their content, aligning with Braun and Clarke's (2006) methodology. Subsequently, I revisited the transcripts to

deepen my understanding, exploring the participants' voices and familiarizing myself with the overarching thoughts and perceptions conveyed by Syrian families regarding the education of their children in mainstream schools in Greater Glasgow.

4.5.2: Generating Initial Codes

During this stage, I initiated the systematic coding of noteworthy segments across the entire dataset, aligning with Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach. All interview transcripts were uploaded to NVIVO 12 software to facilitate data organization and analysis. Initially, I encountered technical challenges with NVIVO 12 software, particularly in handling Kurdish and Arabic transcripts, as the software struggled to display certain long sentences from these transcripts in the Microsoft Word Document format. Despite attempts with alternative formats like Microsoft Excel Worksheet, Rich Text Format, and Text Document, similar issues persisted, prompting discussions with colleagues and supervisors. Consequently, I manually addressed the challenge by dividing long sentences into two parts to ensure the software could display the complete content of the transcripts.

Two primary approaches exist for generating codes. The first involves creating a predetermined start list of codes before data analysis, derived from the conceptual framework, research questions, hypotheses, and problem area (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p.57; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018, p.669). In the second approach, codes may be responsive to and emerge from the data (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018, p.669). In my coding process, I opted for the second method, employing an inductive approach where codes were generated from the emerging data. This choice aimed to maintain accuracy and loyalty to the data and foster a more spontaneous coding process. I perceive the deductive approach, creating pre-established code lists, as lacking authenticity and originality.

After a thorough examination of qualitative data coding methods (Saldana, 2014), I opted to employ both descriptive and structural coding in my analysis. Descriptive coding involves using nouns to succinctly summarize coded data segments, capturing the basic topic in a short phrase (Saldana, 2021, p.134). On

the other hand, structural coding applies content-based or conceptual phrases representing a topic of inquiry to larger data segments related to specific research questions (Saldana, 2021, p.130). Structural coding is particularly suitable for research involving multiple informants and employing semi-structured or standardized data collection methods (Saldana, 2021). The inclusion of both structural and descriptive coding provides added flexibility during the coding process, preventing reliance on a single method.

During this stage, I formulated an initial list of codes, as detailed in *Appendix 6*. Subsequently, I revisited the codes and implemented some modifications, documented in *Appendix 7*. Coding is a nuanced process, demanding the researcher's repeated reading and re-reading of the data, frequent assignment and reassignment of codes, continual placement and replacement of the code list, and ongoing refinement of both the collected data and the code list (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2018, p.670-671). The authors emphasize the importance of researchers navigating back and forth through the data on several occasions to ensure the consistency and thorough coverage of codes and data. In response, I conducted another comprehensive review of all interview transcripts, revisiting my initial set of codes for further refinement. Adjustments were made to certain codes, names were changed for improved clarity, and new segments of data were coded using additional codes, see *Appendix 8* for details. After revisiting the interview transcripts and conducting continuous reviews of the code list, I finalized the definitive version, comprising 53 codes, see *Appendix 9*.

4.5.3: Searching for Themes

In this stage, I initiated the process of collating my final list of codes into potential themes following the guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2006). The approach involved combining similar codes to formulate overarching themes. Similar codes were collected together for further coding and analysis (Saldana, 2010, p.130).

Some codes became major topics, while others were grouped under a major topic to form subsets of that topic (Lichtman, 2010, p.199).

Despite encountering challenges related to overlapping codes and potential themes, I attempted to leverage features in NVIVO and Microsoft Word, such as Mind Map, Project Map, Concept Map, and SmartArt. However, finding linkages on the computer screen remained challenging, prompting a shift to a more tangible approach. Consequently, I printed the list of codes (53 in total) and cut the codes into individual pieces, see *Appendix 10* for pictures of the printed and cut codes. After multiple attempts, I successfully clustered similar codes into five distinct groups and assigned names to each group, which would function as potential themes in my data analysis. The five groups were designated as follows:

1. Barriers and Challenges,
2. Resources and Support,
3. Engagement with local communities,
4. Learning and achieving at school,
5. Engagement with School/Staff

4.5.4: Reviewing Themes

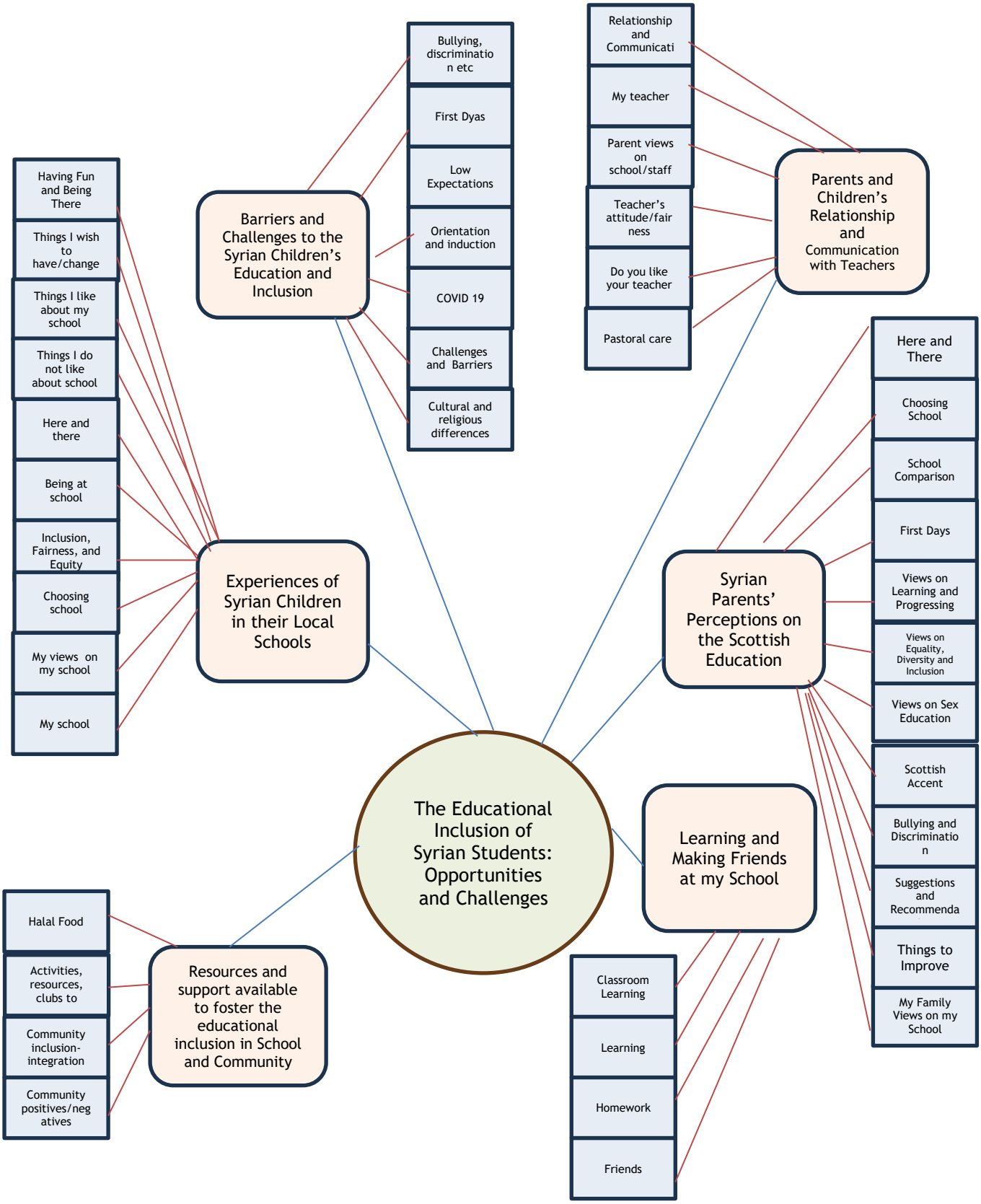
This stage involved verifying the compatibility of my themes with the dataset, as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). They emphasized that 'data within themes should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes' at this stage (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.91). To ensure this coherence, I re-evaluated my code categorizations, leading to adjustments in my potential themes. I also opted to rename the themes to provide more nuanced insights into each one. Consequently, after a thorough review of the themes and their associated codes, I formulated an updated list of six themes, namely:

1. Syrian parents' perceptions on the Scottish Education.
2. Experiences of Syrian students in their local schools.

3. Resources and support available to foster the educational inclusion of Syrian students in their school and community.
4. Learning and making friends at my school.
5. Parents and students' relationship and communication with teachers.
6. Barriers and challenges to the Syrian students' education and inclusion.

In the second step of this stage, I created a thematic map of the analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggestion. Refer to *Figure 4.1*, which illustrates the thematic map of my analysis and the systematic categorization of similar codes to formulate potential themes.

Figure 4.1: Thematic Map: Categorization of Codes to Formulate Potential Themes.



4.5.5: Defining and Naming Themes and Producing the Report

At this stage, an ongoing analysis of my data unfolded, involving the definition and refinement of the specifics of each theme and the overarching narrative of the analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Recognizing the need for a more structured approach, I introduced subthemes to the six main themes, aiming to enhance the organization of each theme and mitigate potential overlapping issues. Refer to *Appendix 11* for the resulting themes and subthemes at this stage. After careful consideration and an in-depth examination of each theme through continuous review and analysis of my data, I implemented some minor adjustments, detailed in *Appendix 12*.

After consultations with my supervisors, I opted to segregate the data from interviews with Syrian families into two distinct chapters. One chapter focuses on the findings from Syrian parents, while the other presents the findings from Syrian students. Consequently, I made final adjustments to my themes and subthemes accordingly. Please refer to the two dedicated chapters on findings, *Chapters 5 and 6*, for an updated version of the themes and subthemes derived from my interviews with Syrian families.

4.6: Data Analysis: Survey

The analysis of the survey data followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process. It's crucial to note that the process was notably more streamlined for the online survey data due to its smaller volume compared to the interview data. To begin, I familiarized myself with the data by reading the survey responses multiple times and jotting down initial ideas. Subsequently, I systematically coded interesting features of the data across the entire dataset, organizing relevant data under each code. Refer to *Appendix 13* for details about codes that emerged during this stage. Following that, I conducted a thorough review of the codes, making necessary revisions and adjustments. Furthermore, I strategically grouped related codes together, with the objective of consolidating all relevant data under each potential theme, refer to *Appendix 14.* Subsequently, I organized the relevant

codes into categories and created four themes as outlined below: (refer to *Appendix 15* for details)

1- Educational Support Services available for Syrian students

2- Challenges for Syrian Students including Language and Communication Barriers

3- Positive Perceptions and Inclusion

4- Suggestions and recommendations from School Educators

Afterwards, I embarked on refining and defining the themes, culminating in the generation of the following four themes:

1- School Support Services and Resources

2- Challenges associated with the Educational Inclusion

3- Perceptions of Inclusion and Diversity

4- Suggestions and recommendations to promote Educational Inclusion

4.7: Ethics

Ethics play a foundational role in research, encompassing every step of the research process—from selecting the problem and identifying aims to interpreting and analysing data, and finally, culminating in publication and data storage (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p.95). The present study obtained ethical approval from the University of Glasgow Ethics Committee before initiating data collection, see *Appendix 3*. Eastmond (2007) highlighted the acute ethical concerns when dealing with individuals unable to control the fate of their stories, especially in the context of forced migrants. Therefore, I prioritized confidentiality, accountability, and sensitivity to power dynamics throughout the research process, as suggested by Eastmond. Creating a trustworthy environment, I was conscious of the power dynamic with Syrian families and avoided fostering a sense of friendship as it can blur the boundaries between the researcher and the participant, potentially compromising the objectivity and integrity of the research, as recommended by Lichtman (2010). When researchers become too close to their participants, they may unintentionally bias their interpretations of the data or influence the participants' responses. Therefore, maintaining a professional distance

helps ensure that the research remains impartial and free from undue influence. Acknowledging the vulnerability of refugee populations, particular attention was given to potential situations of vulnerability. Moreover, the recognition of the potential high-risk nature of this research, involving vulnerable groups such as children and Syrian refugees, was accompanied by the acknowledgement that the researcher, being a trained teacher and a Syrian refugee, held a privileged position to conduct the study with due ethical considerations. I prioritized the voluntary nature of participation, placing a paramount emphasis on preserving the participants' well-being. Anticipating that interviews might probe sensitive topics beyond the explicitly outlined research questions, I remained prepared to change the subject or halt the interview if participants showed signs of discomfort.

While conducting some interviews at participants' homes introduced potential risks, it facilitated a comfortable environment where participants felt at ease. To address security concerns, I implemented precautionary measures, including informing supervisors and an emergency contact about the location and timing of visits to participants' homes, with a follow-up report after each interview. Carrying a charged mobile phone added an extra layer of precaution.

All participants, including both children and their parents, engaged in this research voluntarily and received comprehensive information about the project's purpose and their roles. The role of informed consent was to make sure that participants were fully aware of the purpose of the research that they were being involved in (World Health Organization, 2007). The World Health Organization emphasised that informed consent is not merely a form to be read and signed by participants; rather, it is a crucial process integral to the research. I consistently and explicitly communicated to participants that they had the right to withdraw from participation at any time without the need for justification. To protect confidentiality, I took measures to ensure participants would not be identifiable in the final report, meticulously removing any data that could lead to identification.

In brief, to mitigate potential upset or distress among participants, particularly Syrian families, I implemented the following measures during data collection:

• Commenced interviews by confirming participants' voluntary and informed participation, emphasizing their right to withdraw at any point.

- Adapted the interaction with students based on their age and specific needs, considering the situation.
- Avoided probing into unnecessary or distressing topics for both students and their parents.
- Scheduled interviews at convenient times for participants.
- Clarified the purpose of the interview and managed expectations post-interview.
- Demonstrated sensitivity to both verbal and non-verbal cues, prioritizing participants' needs and emotions.
- Ensured the presence of at least one parent during interviews with children

In addition, I provided my contact details to all participants—Syrian families and school educators—should they have any questions or concerns that they want to discuss further later. Furthermore, I consistently communicated with my supervisors through online meetings throughout the data collection period. These sessions served as opportunities to monitor progress, openly address any challenges or concerns, and engage in discussions to ensure the smooth advancement of the research.

In the subsequent part, I explore ethical insights gained from the research, particularly concerning the challenges faced by participants from refugee backgrounds. I address concerns over citizenship applications, issues with comprehension of research documents, and the need for tailored approaches to ethics procedures. These ethical insights could be valuable for researchers working with families from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.

Individuals from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds may exhibit caution towards researchers in general and may be wary of any formal approaches. The standard ethical research procedures, such as consent forms, participant information sheets, privacy notices, and recorders, might induce feelings of uneasiness and anxiety among some individuals. The reason could be that many of these procedures were developed for and by researchers in Western countries, which may not be suitable for application in other contexts involving participants from different backgrounds. Consequently, certain aspects of the research process in Western countries may inadvertently exclude participants, such as refugees and asylum seekers, who are already disadvantaged and marginalized within their societies. In the Swedish context, Karlsson (2019) observed that asylum-seeking

participants in her research preferred not to share their experiences through audio-recorded interviews. In my own research, some families opted to withdraw from participation due to concerns about their citizenship applications, despite reassurances regarding the anonymity and confidentiality of their data. Concerns over citizenship applications can impact participation in research, as the Home Office imposes stringent criteria and conducts thorough checks during the application process. This process can be lengthy and unpredictable, ranging from weeks to years. While some may be granted citizenship quickly, others face rejection after years of waiting, causing immense stress for applicants. This unpredictable and seemingly arbitrary nature of the process is deeply troubling for many individuals from refugee backgrounds, I believe. Despite being aware of these challenges, families agreed to participate in the research due to trust in the researcher or the person who facilitated recruitment. The researcher adhered to university ethics requirements, despite the paperwork causing discomfort for some participants, to ensure the ethical conduct of the study.

The hesitancy of some Syrian families to be involved in my research could be rooted in cultural aspects tied to their experiences in Syria, reminiscent of official paperwork procedures in their home country. For instance, signing a document might evoke the belief that they are bound by all its terms and conditions, mirroring bureaucratic processes in Syria. Given that many Syrian refugees have not grown up in host countries and may not be well-versed in local regulations, they may tend to avoid involvement in research or similar activities requiring the signing of paperwork and documents. Moreover, considering that my research involved interviewing children, families may harbour specific concerns regarding their children being interviewed. Parents may worry about the possibility of children discussing matters that they consider private, especially when recorders are used during interviews, as was the case in my study. Additionally, during the period when I commenced recruiting families, there were incidents in Sweden involving the social work department taking children from some Arab/Muslim families. These incidents received extensive media and social media coverage, including reports from formal press outlets such as Al Jazeera. Consequently, some families were hesitant to allow their children to be interviewed by a researcher they had not previously met. This hesitancy had, to some extent, an impact on my recruitment process, resulting in challenges in recruiting more families.

The ethics department typically instructs researchers to disseminate various forms related to the ongoing research to participants. Some of these forms are often written in technical language, posing a challenge for certain groups to comprehend easily. For instance, in my own experience, I was tasked with distributing a document titled 'Privacy Notice' to my participants. Unfortunately, this document was written in technical language that could be difficult for some individuals to grasp, refer to the attached document in *Appendix 16* for details. In addition, despite providing participants with comprehensive project explanations in ‘plain’ language, I observed that this ‘plain’ language was not easily understandable for most people during my research. I often encounter similar issues in my role as an interpreter for organizations assisting refugees and asylum seekers. These organizations sometimes assume that individuals are familiar with the intricacies of the UK system and immigration procedures, which can be complex and difficult to understand, especially for those new to the country. As a result, refugees and asylum seekers may struggle to comprehend documents written in technical language, leading to challenges when they are asked to sign mandates or agreements. This issue is mirrored in research when participants are presented with similar documents. Therefore, the ethics department should consider adopting a more tailored approach when dealing with vulnerable groups, such as refugees and asylum seekers. This could involve modifying the ethics application to alleviate the requirement for researchers to obtain signed consent forms from certain vulnerable individuals. This alternative approach has the potential to create a more relaxed environment for these individuals when participating in research. Furthermore, researchers should endeavour to provide participants with documents genuinely written in plain language to ensure full comprehension.

4.8: Concluding Insights from Chapter Four

The methodology chapter of this research provided a comprehensive overview of the methods employed to explore the educational inclusion of Syrian refugee students in Greater Glasgow.

The study employed in-depth interviews with Syrian families and a structured online survey with school educators to gain an understanding of the educational inclusion of Syrian students. Both methods utilized thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke, involving stages such as familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for and reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. The interviews with Syrian families provided insights into their experiences and perceptions, leading to the identification of six key themes, including Syrian parents' perceptions of Scottish education and barriers to educational inclusion. These themes were then organized into two distinct chapters—one focusing on parents and the other on students. The online survey captured educators' perspectives on the inclusion of Syrian students, with open-ended questions designed to explore opportunities and challenges. The survey data analysis resulted in four primary themes: School Support Services and Resources, Challenges associated with Educational Inclusion, Perceptions of Inclusion and Diversity, and Suggestions and Recommendations to Promote Educational Inclusion. Both data collection methods provided a nuanced and detailed understanding of the subject matter, underscoring the study's comprehensive approach.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research. The study had adhered to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the confidentiality and well-being of participants, particularly given the sensitive nature of working with refugee families. Informed consent had been diligently obtained, and measures had been taken to address the unique challenges faced by participants, such as concerns about citizenship and cultural sensitivities. The research process had been designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of participants, ensuring that their voices were heard and respected.

Overall, the methodology chapter demonstrated a rigorous and thoughtful approach to research, combining multiple data collection methods and analytical techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the educational experiences of Syrian refugee students. The careful consideration of ethical issues and methodological choices underscored the study's commitment to producing valid, reliable, and respectful research outcomes.

Chapter Five: Syrian Parents' Perceptions Towards their Children's Education in Greater Glasgow

This chapter examines the perspectives of Syrian parents on their children's schooling in the Greater Glasgow area, derived from interviews conducted with Syrian parents. Organized around key themes, the chapter examines parents' views on children's enrolment in schools, the nature of the relationship and communication between Syrian families and schools, the cultural and educational differences between Syria and Scotland and their impact on the schooling of Syrian students in Scottish schools, and Syrian parents' perspectives on the schooling experience of their children in Scotland. It is noteworthy to articulate that, given a systematic literature review with specific criteria has been utilized in this study, occasionally some references may be made in findings and discussion chapters to some studies that did not meet the criteria to be included in the literature review chapter.

The majority of parents in this study (9) are men, with only two women, reflecting cultural and religious norms in Syrian society, where men typically socialize with other men. Six parents have children in both primary and secondary stages, four have children only in primary schools, and one has children only in secondary schools. For ethical reasons, I refrained from asking participants about their age, previous education, and the exact number of children. Acknowledging the concerns that individuals from refugee backgrounds may encounter when participating in research, as discussed earlier, and taking into account the difficulties faced by numerous Syrian refugee families, it was crucial to ensure their participation did not cause discomfort or risk their identities being recognized. Therefore, certain personal information was either omitted or loosely presented throughout the study. The subsequent *Table 5.1* provides basic information about the Syrian parents involved in the study, presented in alphabetical order.

PSEUDONYM	GENDER	STUDENTS' STAGE	NOTES
AMJAD	M	Primary+ Secondary	
FAWAZ	M	Primary+ Secondary	
KAMAL	M	Primary+ Secondary	
KHADIJA*	F	Primary+ Secondary	*Salih's wife
KHALIL	M	Primary	
MAHER	M	Primary	
MOHAMED	M	Primary+ Secondary	
NISREEN	F	Primary	
OMAR	M	Secondary	
SALIH*	M	Primary+ Secondary	*Khadija's husband
WALEED	M	Primary	

Table 5.1: Information about Syrian Parents

5.1: Parents' Views on Children's Enrolment, Initial Experiences, and Behaviour Management

This theme examines parents' perspectives on choosing school, early experiences, school discipline and behaviour management.

5.1.1: Choosing School

This section encapsulates the insights gained from Syrian parents regarding the criteria influencing their choice of schools for their children. School choice is a pivotal consideration given the diverse array of school types and the varied operational approaches across Scotland. The selection process is significantly influenced by factors such as location, the school's track record in supporting refugee students, the designated officer's recommendations, and distinctions between schools. These aspects are crucial determinants in the decision-making process. Data from the interviews with the Syrian families indicated that the distance of the school played a vital role for a few Syrian parents in choosing their

children's schools. The closer the school was, the better the situation appeared. Other families, like Khalil's, who had 2 children in primary school, preferred choosing a school that already had students from refugee backgrounds, assuming such a school would better cater to their children's needs. Khalil's perspective aligns with the study conducted by Madziva and Thondhlana (2017), revealing that schools in Nottinghamshire exhibit varied responses when admitting Syrian children, depending on their past interactions with refugee children. Schools with prior experience in accommodating refugee children displayed a more lenient and understanding attitude, recognizing the challenges these children may face and the need for additional support, Madziva and Thondhlana argued. In contrast, schools lacking prior experience with refugees may demonstrate a different, potentially less receptive attitude. For instance, the authors stated that one school expressed a notably negative stance during enrolment, questioning how to handle the presence of these children.

Most of the interviewed families (6 out of 10) arrived in the UK under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). These families received assistance from local authorities and were allocated a specific officer to help them settle in the country. Such assistance included areas of health, schooling for children, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes for adults, and social benefits. In addition, families that arrived under the VPRS scheme were provided with accommodation upon arrival. A few families that arrived via VPRS, such as Khalil's and Waleed's, consulted their designated officers to help them choose a school for their children.

Omar, whose children were in the primary stage when they first arrived in Scotland, admitted that, initially, he mistakenly believed that all schools in the city might be similar. After some time, he realized significant differences existed between schools in the area. This realization prompted him to change his two children' school and enrol them in another, hoping for a better overall schooling experience. Indeed, Omar believed that the change had made a significant positive difference for the entire family, as the overall environment of the new school, including students' behaviour and backgrounds, was much 'better' than the previous one. Similar to Omar's experience, a Syrian parent in Vigneau et al. (2023) assumed, based on his prior experiences in Syria, that schools in different

neighbourhoods within Canada were essentially the same. However, following the family's relocation and subsequent change in the children's school, his son faced notable challenges upon enrolment at the new school. Teachers and administrators contacted the parent to communicate the child's struggles at school, indicating a lack of connection with teachers and a perceived lack of support. This manifested in the child's expressions of anger and reluctance to attend school, as observed by the parents at home. The parent disclosed that the demographic composition of the previous school significantly differed, with a notable presence of Arabic-speaking and Muslim students. In the Australian context, Tippett et al. (2023) found significant variations in the approaches to supporting students from refugee backgrounds among schools, even though these schools had been recognized as leaders in refugee education. Factors like community disadvantage and the demographic composition of the student cohort played a crucial role in determining not only the extent of resources available to the school but also the way in which these resources were allocated, Tippett et al. argued.

Nisreen’s experience echoed Omar's. Nisreen, a mother of two children in the primary stage, observed disparities between schools within the Greater Glasgow area, noting that some schools better catered to the students’ needs than others. Her children had attended a few schools in the area due to moving house. Many refugee families often find themselves residing in temporary accommodations, and it is not uncommon for them to undergo multiple relocations before securing more permanent housing (Crul et al., 2019). In practical terms, this translates to enduring prolonged insecurity concerning the availability of a safe and suitable living environment and facing challenges in accessing the education they are entitled to receive (McIntyre and Hall, 2020). Nisreen remarked that her children's attainment was better in Catholic schools than in non-denominational schools, and she preferred her children to attend a Catholic school because she found them more disciplined. However, she was disappointed when she could not re-enrol her children in a Catholic school after they spent one year in a non-Catholic school due to moving homes. Certain local authorities in Scotland have denominational primary and secondary schools, operating similarly to other education authority schools (Education Scotland 2023c). Most denominational schools in Scotland are of the Roman Catholic faith (Education Scotland 2023c).

5.1.2: Initial Experiences

This section explores the perspectives of Syrian parents regarding their children's initial experiences in Scottish schools. The 'New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities 2014–2017' initiative, introduced by the Scottish Government in collaboration with various organizations in 2013, aimed to coordinate support for refugees and asylum seekers (Scottish Government, 2017). It focused on fostering a welcoming environment in Scotland for those seeking protection from persecution and human rights abuses, with a particular emphasis on education. The initiative targeted outcomes such as developing English language skills and facilitating access to education. It also recognized the value of linguistic diversity in Scotland. This strategy gained national and international attention and underwent a comprehensive review. A revised version, the 'New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018–2022,' was launched in 2018, incorporating insights from the original strategy (Scottish Government, 2017). Furthermore, the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, launched in March 2024, built on the 2013 strategy to create a welcoming environment in Scotland for refugees and asylum seekers (Scottish Government, 2024). This updated strategy incorporated lessons learned, reflected current demographic and needs changes, and integrated insights from lived experiences and recent research. It offered a comprehensive framework and governance to effectively implement refugees' rights and support, focusing on respectful and inclusive integration while addressing challenges like trauma and barriers to participation (Scottish Government, 2024).

Tyrer and Fazel (2014) argued that children face numerous challenges upon arrival in the resettlement country, including acquiring a new language and adapting to the educational and cultural settings of an unfamiliar school. Therefore, creating a welcoming environment free of racism was identified as one of the crucial aspects of good practice concerning the education of refugee children (Rutter, 2006, p.5). The interviews revealed that the enrolment process for Syrian children in schools was a straightforward one, supported by local authorities. Moreover, most parents expressed a positive outlook on their children's first days at school. Khalil, a father of two girls in primary school, reflected on

their initial days and expressed satisfaction with the school's support for his daughters since their arrival in Scotland. He believed that the school cared about his children, respecting their culture and traditions, emphasizing that they felt welcomed when they first joined. This may or may not be ascribed to the potential impact of the widespread attention generated by the Syrian refugee crisis, which, according to Madziva and Thondhlana (2017), has resulted in schools generally offering a more hospitable reception to Syrian children. Notably, his daughters developed a strong relationship with one teacher who assisted them upon their arrival in Scotland. Nisreen also spoke positively about the school's treatment of her son, Tareq, P7, who required Additional Support for Learning, after they arrived in Scotland. Tareq gradually settled down with the school assigning him a special assistant. Nisreen mentioned that at times Tareq did not talk, but the assistant effectively communicated with him using sign language to facilitate his interaction with others. Additionally, the school organized fun sessions and activities to prepare Tareq before taking him to the classroom. These sessions included making breakfast, preparing toast, and playing games in a room. Nisreen believed these special arrangements were very helpful in preparing Tareq to start learning with his peers in the classroom. She particularly praised Tareq’s current teacher for supporting him and noted significant progress in his reading and writing skills. That said, Tareq made a remarkable comment while discussing his classroom experience, mentioning instances when students are divided into different groups for tasks. He articulated, ‘I am in the dumb group’ in my class. This indicates that grouping students based on abilities is not going unnoticed by students and teachers should be careful in this matter.

Omar expressed satisfaction with the English language assistance his two children received when they initially arrived in Scotland at the primary stage. Similarly, Maher, whose family relocated just before the pandemic, appreciated the school's continuous support for his children, Nidal and Zainab, throughout the lockdown, finding it particularly beneficial for their family.

Data gathered from interviews with Syrian parents highlighted that language posed a significant barrier, especially during the initial stages of Syrian children's arrival in Scotland, impacting their education. Parents and children shared their experiences and perspectives on grappling with various accents and local dialects

of English for the first time after settling in Scotland. Waleed, a parent with two children in primary school, expressed concerns about his children facing communication issues when speaking with a Scottish accent outside of Scotland. He proposed the adoption of a 'standard' English in schools, akin to the use of Modern Standard Arabic 'Al Fuṣḥā' in the Arab region, as a means of communication in educational settings. On the other hand, Abdulla, currently a university student who attended school in Glasgow, and his father, Mohamed, who has three children currently in school, expressed a preference for the Scottish accent over other accents. Abdulla recounted the challenges he faced in comprehending a core subject delivered by a teacher with a distinct non-Scottish accent during his school days.

Similar to other Syrian parents, Kamal, a parent with four children spanning both primary and secondary stages, highlighted the challenges his children encountered upon their initial enrolment in a UK school. Despite having a reasonably proficient level of English, which Kamal ensured by enrolling them in private schools even back in Syria, his children faced difficulties in communication with both peers and teachers during the initial phase. This struggle was attributed to the diverse English accents spoken by students in school, including the distinct Scottish accent. Furthermore, Kamal raised concerns about the adequacy of English language support provided to students upon their initial arrival in Scotland. He emphasized that the current support system seems tailored for individuals who have already acquired a basic proficiency in a language but struggle with certain aspects. This approach, he argued, does not cater to those arriving from non-English speaking countries with little to no knowledge of the language. This echoes Guo's et al. (2021) study about Syrian children in Canada, which argues that it is problematic for children to speak English in the classroom, especially considering that many Syrian children initially do not understand any English. This difficulty hinders their ability to follow their teachers' instructions, the authors argued. Guo et al. highlighted that the miscommunication within the classroom resulted in certain refugee children expressing discomfort, leading to a lack of desire to attend school. To address this, Kamal proposed a more effective method of assistance for these students upon their arrival. Kamal's suggestion entails implementing a mandatory one-year English course for refugee and asylum-seeking students, especially those in the older age group, upon their arrival in the UK. Following the

completion of this course, each student would undergo a placement test to assess their proficiency in various subjects before formal enrolment in schools. This approach aims to ensure a more comprehensive and targeted language learning experience for students who may have limited English proficiency upon their arrival. The English course designed for migrants, according to Kamal's proposal, should be conducted by specialized teachers at dedicated centres. The objective is to adequately prepare students for the school environment. Kamal criticised the existing practice, characterising it as students being ‘thrown’ into mainstream schools without any prior preparation, deeming it inefficient and potentially causing educational and psychological challenges for non-English-speaking students. He emphasized the importance of avoiding age disparities within English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, as current setups often feature significant age gaps among learners. Kamal argued that this age difference could pose additional challenges, particularly for younger learners when placed in classrooms with substantially older students. In response to similar concerns, Jordanian authorities introduced a regulation that prohibits the enrolment of any student who is three years older than the standard age for a particular classroom or grade (Allan, 2021, Visconti and Galb, 2018). This regulation, aimed at preserving classroom quality, has resulted in the exclusion of numerous Syrian students who were unable to attend school in Syria due to closures, destruction, internal displacement, or family circumstances related to the conflict (Human Rights Watch,2016). Crul et al. (2019) argued that the majority of Syrian students in Lebanon face both academic and social challenges in school. This stems from the practice in numerous schools of assigning students to grades that do not correspond to their academic capabilities; noting that many Syrian students arriving in Lebanon have encountered interruptions in their education, having missed one or two years, or, in some instances, never been enrolled due to the repercussions of the war, Crul et al. argued.

All in all, the placement of Syrian students presents a complex situation where the method of enrolment can yield distinct challenges, as demonstrated by the aforementioned research. Thus, when students are assigned to classes based on their academic abilities, a potential consequence is the emergence of age-related challenges, given that some students may significantly differ in age from their peers. Conversely, if the placement is determined by age, it introduces the

possibility of academic challenges, as students may find themselves in classes that do not adequately align with their educational proficiency. Consequently, the choice of enrolment criteria poses a delicate balance, requiring careful consideration to mitigate both social— age-related— and academic challenges for the diverse group of Syrian students.

Furthermore, Kamal noted that ESOL classes offered to those newly arrived in Scotland lack intensity. He proposed that implementing a more rigorous curriculum for English language learning could substantially enhance students' language proficiency, thereby easing their educational inclusion into schools. Kamal's assertion stands in contrast to the Scottish Government's narrative on ESOL provision. According to Education Scotland (2015), colleges in Scotland offer a flexible array of full-time and part-time schedules tailored to meet diverse learner needs. Furthermore, the teaching staff in ESOL programs are highly qualified, utilizing their expertise to foster learner development (Education Scotland, 2015). The source describes ESOL learners in Scottish colleges as notably motivated, actively engaging in classroom activities, and maintaining positive relationships with their teachers. It also highlights that a majority of ESOL learners successfully attain their qualifications, progressing either into employment or further education. However, it is noteworthy that success rates among learners from non-white ethnic backgrounds were reported to be considerably lower compared to those from white European backgrounds (Education Scotland, 2015).

5.1.3: Parents' Perspectives on School Discipline and Behavioural Issues

Syrian parents shared their concerns about behavioural issues, particularly instances of bullying, in their children's schools. One specific case involved Maha, P4, enduring persistent bullying without effective intervention from the school. Waleed, Maha's father, expressed the family's ongoing struggle with this issue, advocating for a more comprehensive approach. Likewise, Syrian participants in Guo et al.'s study (2021) highlighted instances where teachers often failed to provide adequate interventions in addressing bullying or racist remarks. Waleed proposed the employment of experts to address bullying, emphasizing the

inadequacy of the current method, which primarily involves brief conversations with the perpetrator. Waleed recommended personalized sessions with those displaying bullying behaviour, understanding motivations, and implementing solutions. In cases of persistent misbehaviour, he suggested a change of school as a consequential measure, underscoring the importance of fostering bullying-free environments across all schools. Syrian children in Guo et al.'s study (2021) experienced persistent bullying and racism in Canada. They recounted instances of ethnic and religious discrimination, including incidents where they were physically assaulted and told to return to their 'own' country when attempting to pray outside the school building. Furthermore, Syrian refugee students encountered significant challenges of discrimination and bullying within the Lebanese context, as highlighted by Kiwan (2021).

Language use has become a concern for some families, exemplified by Nisreen, who observed her children engaging in actions and uttering words deemed inappropriate for their age. She pointedly attributed these behaviours to the lack of proper supervision from the school staff. Nisreen emphasized the need for schools to prioritize behavioural issues, addressing them thoroughly due to their impact not only on the misbehaving student but also on other students. Expressing gratitude that her family had not encountered bullying or discrimination, Nisreen advocated for stringent measures against issues like bullying, discrimination, and racism. She underscored the urgency for schools to adopt strict disciplinary approaches, voicing genuine concerns about potential bullying incidents affecting her children's mental health and overall well-being.

Mohamed expressed concerns about the multicultural environment in the school, where children are exposed to inappropriate language for their age. He believes that schools can take better measures to prevent such occurrences, emphasizing that in his town in Syria, such behaviour would be deemed unacceptable, and schools were disciplined about these issues. Additionally, Mohamed conveyed disappointment with the new headteacher at his son's school, contrasting the current leadership unfavourably with the former headteacher's 'noble characteristics'. He believes the new headteacher lacks control and has strained relationships with some families, alleging that frequent calls to discuss minor behavioural issues may be intentional to cause inconvenience for families. Despite

Mohamed and his son Abdulla recognizing the school's seriousness in addressing bullying and discrimination, they acknowledge that incidents can still occur among students, with Abdulla noting that even teachers and staff, along with conscientious students, oppose bullying when witnessing it.

Salih and Khadija, parents of three children in both primary and secondary stages, categorically ruled out the possibility of their children facing differential or unfair treatment based on their background by school staff, asserting that schools treat all families impartially. Likewise, Omar expresses confidence that all students are equally valued in his children's school. Fawaz, the father of a primary and secondary stage child conveys that, while his children have not experienced bullying yet, he acknowledges its occurrence in schools. He emphasizes that if any of his children were to become a victim of bullying, he would not take it lightly and would ensure resolution before allowing them to return to school. Fawaz's stance reflects his intolerance towards discrimination, a sentiment that prompted the family's move from England to Scotland two years ago. This decision stemmed from their previous residence in a small town that witnessed racist incidents against migrants, with Fawaz highlighting the vulnerability associated with being named Mohamed in a school in that town was sufficient for discrimination and bullying.

5.2: Family-school Relationship and Communication

This section is based on insights gathered from interviews with Syrian parents concerning their relationship and communication with their children's school. It explores the ways in which schools facilitate communication with Syrian families despite the language barrier. The data reveals that the majority of parents maintained regular contact with their children's teachers to discuss the experiences and academic progress of their children.

Syrian families received regular updates on each student's progress through periodic reports and engaged in communication with schools regarding their children's advancement during parent evening meetings. These meetings provided families with the chance to probe into matters related to their child's education in detail. The face-to-face meetings transitioned to online or over-the-phone sessions

when social distancing protocols were implemented amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these changes, most families continued to actively participate in parent-teacher meetings to stay informed about and involved in their children's education.

Veck and Wharton (2021) argued that schools must transform into environments that are trustworthy for children seeking refuge. In Iceland, educators observed distinctions in establishing trust when dealing with children from refugee backgrounds compared to those from immigrant backgrounds (Ragnarsdóttir, 2020). A specific instance was highlighted by a preschool teacher who demonstrated how challenging it was to convince parents that the school gate was carefully locked and that their children were safe. Contrary to the sceptical attitude Syrian parents showed in Iceland in relation to concerns about the safety and well-being of their children in schools, Amjad, with a child in primary and another in secondary school, and his son Hamza, who had completed his secondary education in Glasgow, expressed satisfaction with the attentive care provided by teachers and staff. Amjad, in particular, praised the safety protocols implemented in primary schools. He cited an example of the strict authorization process, wherein only he or his wife were permitted to pick up their youngest child, highlighting their contentment with the school's security measures:

> *Amjad: The teachers are truly excellent.*
> *Hamza: There is genuine care from the teachers.*
> *Amjad: Absolutely, they don't allow him [Amjad's son] to leave on his own until they see either his dad or mum. This is truly excellent.*

Nevertheless, Amjad expected additional support from his children's school when they encountered issues with their previous accommodation, impacting the overall well-being of the family and the children's education. The Joint Housing Delivery Plan for Scotland, initiated in 2015, aimed to enhance Scotland's productivity, cohesion, and fairness through a robust housing system (Scottish Government, 2015c; Scottish Government, 2017). It emphasized the importance of prioritizing the development of high-quality, sustainable homes. Another initiative, Housing Options Guidance, was a collaborative effort between the Scottish Government and COSLA, established in 2016 to delineate the essential roles of local authorities in tackling housing-related concerns (Scottish Government, 2016a). However, Amjad appeared visibly frustrated during the interview due to the housing challenge faced

by his family and himself. He articulated their vulnerability during that time, describing their desperate attempts to seek help from different parties without being accommodated. Karlsson (2019) argued that having a suitable home that addresses children's needs is integral to their rights and a crucial factor in their welfare. Her research on children in one of the reception centres for asylum seekers in Sweden revealed that the housing conditions in these centres are substandard and fail to meet the needs of children.

Maher appreciated schools' proactive communication with the family in cases of a child's absence or tardiness, expressing contentment with the safety measures and diligent monitoring in schools. Conversely, Mohamed criticized a specific issue in communication with his children's secondary school. He cited instances where he received text messages indicating his child's absence from a particular class, causing him fear and anxiety, especially since he personally dropped off the child in the morning. Mohamed voiced dissatisfaction with this form of communication, which hindered parents from effectively following up on the situation, as the school did not respond when he replied to the original messages seeking clarification. In such situations, Mohamed expressed concern for his children's well-being and felt compelled to visit the school in person, only to discover that the child was present at school but might have been delayed for reasons such as restroom breaks or moving between classrooms. Despite this communication challenge, Mohamed acknowledged his satisfaction with the requirement for parental consent in various aspects of his children's school activities, spanning from the early years to high school. This included matters such as photography and participation in school trips. In addition, Mohamed was pleasantly surprised by the friendly and approachable nature of the headteacher at his children's primary school. He described her as 'simple and caring a lot about the children in her school.' Mohamed even witnessed her tying children's shoelaces for their safety on several occasions. Initially mistaking her for the janitor, he only realized she was the headteacher a few months later. Moreover, Mohamed praised the teachers' approach inside the classroom, particularly in primary schools. He appreciated instances where teachers would sit down on the floor with the students. As a father of three, he believed that such practices contributed to building a better relationship between students and teachers, grounded in friendliness. Mohamed perceived these seemingly minor actions as having a significant impact on children,

helping to dispel any feelings of fear towards their teachers. He emphasized the importance of cultivating a friendly atmosphere, free from negative emotions like fear or nervousness, as it fosters a conducive environment for children's learning. Likewise, Khalil, father of two primary-aged children expressed a positive relationship with school staff and teachers, noting, ‘They are very good, with many smooth dealings... always smiling and collaborating.’

Participants expressed confidence in schools' effective handling of any concerns raised by Syrian families. Additionally, nearly all Syrian parents were familiar with the appropriate contacts at school to address any issues related to their children's well-being or academic progress. Most families indicated that they would approach the headteacher in such cases. Conversely, schools may initiate contact with families if they have concerns about a student's well-being, behaviour, or academic performance. The interview data revealed that communication between schools and Syrian families also occurs through surveys, emails, or papers sent by schools. These forms of communication serve the purpose of gauging the family's thoughts and opinions on specific aspects of the current school practices. Furthermore, schools may extend invitations to families to share their perspectives on proposed changes that might occur in the future. However, according to Omar, this may not always be the case. He suggested that when changes are at the school level, parents are involved and asked to express their views. However, if the changes originate from higher authorities, such as the government, schools may not consider the views of parents on the matter. In practice, the aforementioned modes of communication may not effectively reach all families. Omar, for instance, admitted that he frequently overlooks school correspondence, which occasionally contains crucial details about upcoming events and activities. He attributed this tendency to a cultural inclination among Syrian families not to pay extensive attention to such newsletters and information. Consequently, he acknowledged that this oversight sometimes leads to missing out on certain activities due to their inadvertence. This sentiment is supported by Hamadeh's (2019) research in Lebanon, which affirms that tracking their children's progress posed a challenge for Syrian parents.

Most parents asserted that school staff and teachers interact with all families impartially, irrespective of their backgrounds, colour, nationality, or any other

distinguishing factor. As an illustration, Waleed expressed his appreciation for the school headteacher, who served as a character reference for him and his family during their British citizenship application. He was pleased that the headteacher placed trust in him, even though he was a ‘Syrian refugee’:

> *So, she [the headteacher] provided me with her email, and through that, she shared her passport number and related information. It was a gesture of trust, considering I am a Syrian refugee.*

The trust established between Waleed and the school headteacher differs from data presented by Veck and Wharton (2021) that revolves around the nature of mistrust and how it differs between interpersonal relationships and attitudes towards refugees. The argument highlighted the unique challenges refugees face in encountering widespread mistrust solely based on their status as displaced individuals. Veck and Wharton argued that mistrust, in the context of personal interactions, emerges from negative experiences with individuals who were once trusted. This is distinct from the mistrust directed at refugees, where suspicion is not based on their actions or words but is generalized due to their displacement from their place of origin, according to Veck and Wharton.

Recognizing that some parents may not be competent in English, schools offer interpreters to facilitate communication with families. Many families acknowledged the availability of interpreters, accessible upon request, either through phone calls or in-person meetings such as parent evenings. Kamal characterized parents' evenings as a crucial opportunity to pinpoint the child's strengths and areas of improvement, enabling proactive measures to be taken:

> *They have this process, and it's a wonderful process. Honestly, I have no complaints about it at all. During Parents' Evening, this is how they operate in the high school, we consistently attend. My wife and I go, and we engage with all the teachers. In thorough detail, we learn about our son, his weaknesses and strengths… Yes, I mean, practically, we receive a comprehensive report about him, and if there's an issue, we'll discuss it with the teachers.*

Schools may also employ online resources to translate information for families. On occasion, schools might suggest that families bring a friend or family member over 18 to interpret non-critical matters. However, Maher's family, who arrived in Scotland within the last two years, mentioned seeking assistance from a native-speaker friend when contacting their children's school, as the school does not provide interpreters when requested. The researcher emphasized to the family that it is their right, and schools are obligated to provide interpreters upon request.

In terms of communication challenges, Kamal mentioned that schools sometimes take a while to respond to changes. For instance, he had to report a change of the family address multiple times before it was updated in the school system, leading to inconveniences in certain situations. In addition, Kamal raised concerns about situations where schools rely on students to interpret for their families instead of providing professional interpreters. He pointed out that relying on students for interpretation may not guarantee accuracy or honesty. Furthermore, he suggested that it would be more effective if schools could send any correspondence about students directly to their parents in a confidential manner, rather than relying on the students to deliver them. Students might forget to show the documents to their parents on time, or they might intentionally hide them for various reasons, he added. Regarding his relationship with schools, Kamal has cultivated a strong and positive rapport with his children's teachers and staff:

> *Our relationship is with the teachers themselves; we have a very positive connection. I mean, we interact with the teachers directly, and we talk, and, in some cases, we've even developed a friendly relationship with certain teachers.*

Kamal shared an engaging and candid conversation with the headteacher of his child's school. Expressing his critiques during a meeting with the headteacher, Kamal acknowledged the democratic ethos in Scotland and expressed his desire to embrace democratic principles, emphasizing, ‘I am in a democratic country.’ In a warm and encouraging response, the headteacher supported Kamal's engagement in democratic practices, saying, ‘Practice as much democracy as you want here.’ This dialogue highlights the openness and democratic values prevalent in the educational landscape of Scotland. Notably, the conversation may reflect a yearning for democracy among Syrians, given Syria's current status as one of the

least democratic countries. Kamal's desire to speak freely without fear is indicative of this, and the headteacher's response underscores the democratic nature of Scotland.

5.3: Cultural and Educational Differences between Syria and Scotland

Syria and Scotland differ significantly in numerous aspects. The cultural variances between Syria and Scotland play a significant role in shaping Syrian parents' perceptions of their children's education. This section explores the perspectives of Syrian parents regarding the distinctions between the two countries, with a specific focus on culture and the education system.

5.3.1: Cultural Difference

Cultural differences between Syria and Scotland were a prominent topic in the interviews with Syrian families. While families expressed appreciation for certain aspects of the schools' efforts, such as providing Halal food, they harboured concerns about other aspects, such as sex education. Sex education emerged as a notable point of concern for several Syrian parents. Nisreen, for example, voiced concerns about the extent of sex education her two children were receiving, particularly expressing worries that the content might not be suitable for their primary school age. Nisreen, especially concerned about her son Tareq, who requires Additional Support for Learning, feared that such exposure may have adversely impacted his mental well-being. Furthermore, she expressed disappointment in her son's current school for not seeking her consent or soliciting her input on the sex education curriculum. Nisreen also suggested that her concerns might be specific to the individual school, as some of her friends with children in other schools were consulted regarding sex education content. Similarly, Mohamed expressed unease about the content covered in sex education classes attended by his children. He noted that although he had the option to withdraw his children from these classes last year, they have now become compulsory. His particular concern centres around the early introduction of sexual

content, including teachings about homosexuality and transgender issues. Mohamed preferred that his children learn about these matters in accordance with their Arab and Islamic teachings rather than being obligated to follow the curriculum mandated by the state school. Similarly, Waleed suggested the option to opt out of sex education in schools, citing his opinion that children are exposed to this content at an early age. While he has no objection to introducing sex education when his children are older, he advocates for postponing it to a more appropriate age. Likewise, Omar raised concern about sex education classes, emphasizing that as parents, they are not provided with sufficiently detailed information about the content and format of the lessons. While he is comfortable with primary students receiving education on this matter, his greater concern lies with the content taught to secondary students. This concern may stem from his belief that secondary-stage children are exposed to more advanced teachings about sex education.

Nevertheless, despite their concerns, Syrian families acknowledged and valued the schools' efforts to accommodate their cultural needs whenever possible. Waleed, for instance, expressed gratitude for the school's understanding of their Islamic culture, allowing his daughter to be excused from sex education classes upon parental request. Similarly, Khalil noted that the school took into consideration the concerns of the Muslim community by organizing gender-separated classes when covering sensitive topics such as sexual education. Khalil also expressed appreciation for the school's respect for their cultural beliefs during Ramadan, noting that his children were not burdened with overwhelming tasks during this time. Omar acknowledged the secondary school's responsiveness to his son's need to pray occasionally during school hours. Moreover, Omar highlighted the Catholic school's consideration of the family's concerns about religious visits and events typically held at a church, allowing the children to opt-out if needed. In addition, a few Syrian families conveyed their satisfaction and gratitude to schools for providing Halal food for Muslim children. As highlighted earlier, the responses from Syrian parents suggest that schools, even within the same local area, can vary in how they respond to families’ diverse needs and requests.

5.3.2: Education System

The disparity between the Scottish and Syrian education systems emerged as a significant key point in the interviews with Syrian families discussing their children's schooling experiences in the Greater Glasgow area. This resonates with the results presented in Madziva and Thondhlana's study (2017), wherein numerous Syrian parents expressed a lack of understanding regarding the UK education system. During interviews, parents drew comparisons between their children's education in Scotland and their previous schooling experiences in Syria or neighbouring countries, specifically examining school textbooks and tests. Interestingly, while educators in McIntyre and Abrams (2021) noted that Syrian and Eritrean students in England seem to adapt quickly to the norms of the English curriculum—possibly due to their previous educational experiences in systems shaped by European influences, a result of their countries' colonial histories—the interviews in Scotland suggest a different dynamic. This indicates that regional variations in the UK education system, coupled with differences in local support structures, may play a crucial role in shaping the educational inclusion of refugee students. A notable difference is the absence of textbooks in Scottish schools, posing a challenge for some of them to effectively track their children's learning progress. Omar, in particular, expressed that the lack of books and examinations made it difficult to assess his children's proficiency levels and identify areas that needed improvement, especially during the initial three years of the secondary stage. According to Omar, the education system in Syria is more intense and denser compared to Scotland due to the regular tests and evaluations. He believes that setting more tests would enhance parents' and students' ability to evaluate learning progress effectively. Omar also highlighted additional notable differences between the education systems in Syria and Scotland. The absence of regular tests and grading in the Scottish education system, particularly at the primary stage, raised concerns. Mohamed and Omar both noted that their children seemed less invested in their learning, possibly because progression to the next year is automatic in Scotland without the application of grade retention.

Parents play a significant role in their children's education, as they can be guided to serve as their child's initial teacher (Stolk et al., 2023). Khalil, Mohamed, and Omar emphasized the pivotal role of parents and children themselves in

determining the trajectory of a child's education. According to their perspective, schools fulfil their teaching responsibilities, and from that point onward, it becomes the children's responsibility to exert effort and achieve success. Furthermore, they underscored the significance of parents actively monitoring their children's performance, viewing it as a crucial factor contributing to improved academic outcomes. This concept of parental responsibility aligns closely with the deeply ingrained values of Syrian culture. Nevertheless, refugee families may encounter challenges in providing home-based language support if they lack literacy resources (Stolk et al., 2023). Mohamed, for instance, identified his limited proficiency in the English language as a hindrance to his children reaching their full educational potential. He harboured the belief that, had they remained in Syria, his children might have achieved greater success, likely pursuing careers as doctors or engineers.

Some families shared insights into their children's prior educational experiences before arriving in Scotland, where education was either not a priority or not accessible. For instance, Amjad reminisced about the challenging life he and his family faced in Lebanon:

> *I used to work in Lebanon, dealing with housing rent and everything, but with the demanding nature of the work, it became exhausting. Supporting the entire family was challenging, and we faced considerable hardships in Lebanon… financially, even if you work, affording housing rent remains elusive. And what about providing food and drink for the entire family, especially when you have four kids... It's a struggle. In Lebanon, spare time was a luxury I didn't have. I worked to cover housing expenses and provided for their basic needs, with little involvement in the day-to-day affairs at home... I knew that their mother took care of arranging food for them, ensuring they were fed, while my focus was solely on working to bring in money.*

Maher and his family faced significant challenges in Lebanon due to the escalating pressure on Syrians. Maher encountered difficulties in providing education for his children in Lebanon, with public schools refusing to enrol them, and the financial constraints preventing him from registering them in private schools. Maher expressed his happiness regarding his children's education in Glasgow, emphasizing that everything they need is readily available. In the Iraqi

context, the situation was not significantly better. Salih, questioned the role of education amid the absence of basic needs such as food and clothes when reflecting on the education his children received in Northern Iraq, Kurdistan Region. Khadija, Salih's wife, mentioned that the teacher's relationship with students was occasionally harsh, particularly with low-achieving learners, which could lead to children becoming reluctant to attend school, she noted.

Similar to Amjad's experience in Lebanon, numerous Syrian parents mentioned prioritizing the provision of shelter and food for their children over education in the Lebanese context. Hamadeh (2019) argued that the education of children was not a primary focus for Syrian parents, who first prioritize ensuring shelter and food for their families. This is on board with Shuayb et al.'s (2016) argument that the economic hardship faced by Syrian families in Lebanon has led them to prioritise employment over educational pursuits. Khater (2023) further highlighted the obstacles to education faced by Syrian children in Jordan, including issues such as child labour, early marriage, limited access to schools, insufficient qualified personnel, inadequate educational infrastructure, and challenges related to the necessary documentation for enrolment in education.

In comparing the education systems of Syria and Scotland, Kamal expressed a preference for the flexibility that Scottish students have in choosing subjects during the upper secondary stage, contrasting it with the less flexible system in Syria. He explained how the Scottish system aims to develop learners' skills in subjects they enjoy based on the chosen academic route, which should align with their desired field or major. Kamal characterized the learning experience in Syria as a 'filling' process. This evokes Pablo Freire's concept of banking education. According to Freire (2009), this model portrays teachers as the subject and learners as passive objects, reinforcing a lack of critical thinking and undermining learners' ownership of knowledge, thereby fostering conditions for oppression. Kamal, on the other hand, contended that the curriculum in Syria encourages students to work hard through challenging exercises, which may not be as prevalent in the Scottish curriculum. For instance, he mentioned that a 'smart' student in Syria would be capable of solving a lengthy math exercise spanning three or four lines. Kamal believes that students in Scotland are not learning as much in school, pointing out a perceived lack of intensity in the curriculum. Additionally, he identified the

absence of homework as a potential hindrance to children's academic achievement, asserting that homework plays a crucial role in the learning process. According to Kamal, utilizing the fresh minds of children in the early stages of school is an advantage that schools in Scotland should better capitalize on.

5.4: Parents Perceptions on Children's Learning and Family-Community Engagement

This theme explores Syrian parents' perspectives on various aspects of their children's experiences in Scottish schools. It also discusses the engagement of Syrian families with their local communities in Scotland.

5.4.1 : Parents' Views on their Children's Learning at School

Interviews revealed a predominantly positive outlook among Syrian parents regarding their children's learning in schools, although some held less optimistic views. This positive outlook may be attributed to the fact that Syrian families are now in a safe and secure place away from their war-torn country. Guo et al. (2021) reported a similar finding in their study on Syrian refugees' inclusion in Canadian schools. The authors noted that Syrian children were generally relieved to be in a place where they felt safe, secure, and far away from the war. Concerning achievements, certain parents expressed uncertainty about whether their children were genuinely progressing in their learning.

Some Syrian families received support for their children's learning in the form of a designated staff member at their children's school. This assistant played a crucial role by providing English language support to the students and liaising with other teachers and staff to monitor the student's academic progress. Additionally, the assistant maintained regular communication with the families, keeping them updated on their children's achievements and development.

Another form of support available to foster the learning of Syrian students involved catch-up classes offered by some secondary schools for students requiring

improvement in specific areas. Additionally, some participants mentioned that their children attended English language classes designed for those for whom English is a second language. These classes were scheduled either before or after the regular school day. Nevertheless, Syrian parents emphasised the necessity for more targeted assistance in overcoming language barriers, especially for those arriving from non-English speaking countries, to enhance their inclusion into both school and the broader community.

Syrian parents highlighted various positive aspects of Scottish schools that contribute to their children's learning. Khalil appreciated the non-discriminatory nature of schools, emphasizing the equality of opportunity for all students. Waleed expressed enthusiasm about his children learning multiple languages, including Spanish, in addition to English, considering it a valuable privilege. Waleed also noted that the schools focus on imparting life skills, enabling students to navigate various situations in their lives. Mohamed particularly valued the flexibility in subject choices during the secondary stage of his children's education in Scotland. He believes that allowing learners to choose subjects they are interested in is crucial for academic success. However, Mohamed reiterated the belief that his children might have excelled further in Syria. He attributed this perceived shortfall to his own lack of proficiency in the English language, hindering his ability to effectively follow up and support his children's learning at home. Khalil expressed satisfaction with the care and encouragement his children receive at school, as mentioned earlier. He enthusiastically shared that the school frequently features photos of two or three Syrian students on the ‘Golden Board’ highlighting distinguished achievements among students. Similarly, Waleed praised the after-school English language support that significantly contributed to his daughter's progress. Despite this, Khalil believed that his children had the potential to learn more than their current curriculum offers and encouraged teachers to provide additional tasks and homework where possible. Similarly, Waleed suggested a heightened focus and interest from the school to enhance children's learning and knowledge.

5.4.2: Engagement with Local Community

This section examines how Syrian families engage with their local communities in Scotland, presenting a spectrum of experiences ranging from positive interactions to notable challenges, including instances of discrimination and verbal assault. The term ‘local community’ in this context refers to the specific area or neighbourhood where a group of people resides, encompassing all interactions and communications, whether they occur or not within that location.

While the majority of Syrian families reported positive experiences in their local communities, a few families encountered challenges. For instance, Omar shared an ‘unpleasant’ experience in their previous neighbourhood in comparison to their current area. The father recounted an incident where someone threw a small cross into their house in that neighbourhood. Despite a police investigation, the person responsible could not be identified. Omar’s family perceived this act as a potential threat or, at the very least, an indication that they were not welcome in the area. Consequently, as a precautionary measure, the family was relocated from that neighbourhood. Another incident involved Khalil and his wife experiencing a verbal assault from a fellow student's mother in front of their children's school. The woman accused them of hitting her car and proceeded to swear at Khalil's wife. Fortunately, a crowd of people intervened and sided with Khalil's family, affirming that they did not touch the other lady's car.

The interview data revealed that certain Syrian families had limited engagement with their local community. Mohammed mentioned that, overall, things were good in their day-to-day experience within the neighbourhood. However, their interaction with local people was notably limited. Omar echoed a similar sentiment, stating that their minimal engagement with the local community was primarily influenced by cultural and religious differences.

Language barriers, cultural differences, and a dearth of initiatives designed to attract Syrians to local communities may contribute to this limited engagement. Spicer (2008) highlighted various social factors that could hinder the inclusion of individuals from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds in the local community in

the UK. These factors include a lack of English language support, isolation, poverty, inadequate housing, restricted access to health and social welfare services, and limited supportive social networks.

Syrian families, such as Khalil's, actively participate in local entertainment centres and swimming pools near their homes. Children play a crucial role in fostering engagement with people in their local community. For instance, Khalil mentioned that his daughters were invited to birthday parties hosted by their local friends. Moreover, Khalil's children attended classes in a local mosque to learn the Quran and Arabic language. Despite these activities, Khalil expressed disappointment about the lack of school-organized trips to notable sites and landmarks across Scotland for his children. He took pride in associating his children with Scotland, highlighting that the youngest was born in the country, while the others were in the process of becoming citizens through naturalization. Khalil believed that more school trips to significant landmarks and sites in Scotland would be beneficial. He emphasized that such trips should be organized by schools to familiarize the children with the country they are soon to become citizens of. On the contrary, Kamal expressed contentment with the diverse array of engaging activities and clubs available for his children in Scotland, including exciting trips to various sites and landmarks. He underscored the significance of local community centres in fostering inclusion for families with refugee or asylum-seeking backgrounds. Kamal highlighted a specific service tailored for Syrian families in the Greater Glasgow area, facilitating connections with other Syrian families and organizing enjoyable trips and picnics across Scotland. Others, like Khadija and Mohamed, were less demanding about what schools offered in terms of activities. Khadija mentioned her son's excitement for an upcoming cinema visit with the school, while Mohamed indicated regular participation in activities organized in mosques. Waleed, however, suggested the need for more community activities for children to enhance their inclusion. Similarly, Fawaz, emphasized the importance of schools establishing stronger connections with various community stakeholders, such as clubs, libraries, and sports centres, to provide additional opportunities for children.

Chapter Six: Syrian Students' Experiences of Schooling

This chapter presents the voices and experiences of Syrian students in the Greater Glasgow schools. It begins by elucidating findings on the learning experiences of Syrian students in their schools. Subsequently, it explores the contrasting perspectives of Syrian students on the bullying-friendship dichotomy. Finally, the chapter presents insights into the available opportunities and resources for Syrian children within their local school and community. *Table 6.1* presents information on the Syrian students involved in the interviews, comprising eight primary students, four secondary students, and three adults.

NAME	GENDER	CLASS	NOTES
ABDULLA	M	N/A Adult Now	Attended schools in the Greater Glasgow area. Now at University
ANAS	M	S5	
AISHA	F	S4	
HAMZA	M	N/A Adult Now	Had been in schools in the Greater Glasgow area. Now working in the hospitality sector
HUDA	F	S1	
LUUAI	M	P4	
MAHA	F	P4	
NIDAL	M	P4	
RIDWAN	M	P7	Participant was shy and withdrew shortly after the beginning
SAMIR	M	N/A Adult Now	Never been to schools in the UK. Was almost silent as part of a group interview with his parents (Khadija and Salih). Now working in the servicing sector
TAREQ	M	P7	Additional Support for Learning
YASSER	M	S3	
ZAHRA	F	P3	
ZAINAB	F	P3	
ZIYAD	M	P6	

Table 6.1: Overview of Syrian Students Involved in Interviews.

Two of the adult participants shared insights from their experiences at the time they attended schools in Scotland. The sample includes ten boys and five girls. It is important to note that the gender imbalance was unintentional, and the selection process depended on parental decisions and nomination. Some families voluntarily nominated multiple children for interviews, such as Salih and Khadija's, Maher’s, and Nisreen's families. In contrast, Kamal's family repeatedly delayed their child's participation, indicating a shift in the father's initial acceptance. Upon noticing this delay, I encouraged the father to reach out whenever the child was ready for the interview. However, no contact has been established since then.

6.1: Overview of Syrian Students' Schooling Experience

Overall, Syrian students express positive experiences in Scottish schools, often contrasting them favourably with previous educational experiences they have had in countries such as Lebanon or Iraq, which were described as more challenging. Despite initial difficulties, primarily attributed to limited English language skills, the majority of students report feeling included through the formation of friendships. They also highlighted the widespread use of technology as a facilitator of their learning experiences. Young participants highlighted various aspects of schooling that made their experiences enjoyable: such as teachers, friends, PE classes, handwriting, science, sports, learning, arts, golden time, writing, and maths. Conversely, their experiences varied regarding aspects they did not like or found challenging in schools. While some students stated they liked everything and had no specific dislikes, others mentioned particular subjects, short breaks, strict teachers, bullying, and interactions with classmates as things they did not appreciate. That said, some Syrian students expressed desires for certain improvements or changes in their schools, including larger playgrounds, more spacious classrooms, additional sports equipment, increased seating in the playground, better support for students experiencing depression, the addition of a football pitch, and shorter, less busy class days. During the interviews, some students shared interesting thoughts, such as a primary child in P4 expressing a wish to be the headteacher to extend break and lunch times. Another primary child in P3 expressed a desire to return to the nursery because there were fewer

learning classes there. The subsequent sections will further discuss the schooling experiences of Syrian students in mainstream schools in the Geater Glasgow area.

6.2: Syrian Students' Learning Experiences at School

This theme first explores the educational experiences of some Syrian students in both Lebanon and Northern Iraq before they arrive in Scotland. Subsequently, it provides insights into Syrian students' learning experiences in Scottish schools.

6.2.1: Education before Arriving in Scotland

The research acknowledges that to understand the personal narratives shared by refugee people in terms of who they are and their past experiences, we need to connect these experiences and statements with the social and political contexts that have influenced and continue to influence the conditions of their lives (Eastmond, 2007, p.252). In addition, it is crucial to focus on the pre-migration experiences of refugee children and recognise the potential diversity in these experiences (Rutter, 2006). McIntyre and Abrams (2021, p.22) further emphasize the need for schools to adopt 'an ecological approach that considers the full range of pre and post-migration factors that make up the young person's past and present experiences'. Such an approach can help refugee students experience elements of success in their new environment by acknowledging and integrating their complex histories and current challenges into the educational framework, McIntyre and Abrams (2021) argued.

During interviews with Syrian students, Yasser, Hamza, and Aisha recalled their educational experiences before arriving in Scotland. Hamza, in his early twenties, reflected on his challenging education in Lebanon, where the use of the French language in the Lebanese education system posed difficulties for him: *'In Lebanon, I remember that the curriculum was in French…Maths in French, Science in French, so it was a bit hard'*. Yasser, an S3 student, noted a significant lack of resources in Lebanese schools, emphasizing that the only available teaching aid was the board. Aisha, an S4 student, remembered her challenging school experience in the Kurdistan region, north of Iraq:

They were not like really helpful like the teachers here now…And, like, back in Kurdistan they didn't really care about your education…They just didn't care about you and they had favourite students…And the way they speak to you was different…they would hit you sometimes… Even if you, like if the teacher didn't like you… If you didn't do anything and the teacher didn't like you, she [the teacher] would hit you.

Based on Aisha, Hamza, and Yasser's recollections of their schooling in Lebanon and Iraq, the situation appeared unpromising. A UNICEF report revealed alarming statistics, indicating that 69.9% of Syrian students in Jordan have encountered at least one form of physical violence, with 39.5% reporting being physically harmed by their teachers (Allan, 2021). The subsequent section explores Syrian students' experiences of schooling in Scotland.

6.2.2: First Days in Scotland

In Scotland, education for children is free and compulsory (Scottish Government, 2018). Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is a piece of legislation enacted by the Scottish Parliament that aims to improve the well-being of children and young people in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2016). The legislation implements different measures related to various aspects of the lives of children in young people. For example, one of the provisions that the Act set out is Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) which is a policy and framework that aims to ensure the well-being of children and young people (Scottish Government, 2022). It is designed to provide an integrated approach to support children in different aspects including education, health, and social services.

Settling into a new school environment is essential for asylum-seeking and refugee children, as it impacts their social inclusion into the broader community (Peterson et al., 2017). The authors emphasize that the initial educational experiences of asylum-seeking and refugee children are pivotal, as they are likely to influence their perception of the new culture and communities they have entered. That said, most Syrian students expressed that having limited knowledge

of the English language was a significant barrier in front of their settlement into schools upon their initial arrival in Scotland. For some, the situation was even more challenging, as certain students arrived with a complete lack of English language skills. Hamza, for instance, mentioned that he did not know anything in English when he first arrived, apart from the very basics such as ‘Yes’ or ‘No’:

> *I didn't know English at all at that time. You know, only like the letters, of course, but no talking. Only ‘yes’, ‘no’, these things... So, when I entered school, there was difficulty dealing with teachers and students.*

Huda, an S1 student, reflected on her initial experiences, expressing, ‘*I didn't know many people, and it felt like a significantly larger school compared to my primary*’. Similarly, Yasser, recounted his early days, saying, ‘*I was somewhat lost, unsure of where to go, and I didn't have many friends’*. In contrast, Aisha had a more positive outlook on her first day, remarking, *‘It was quiet, it was nice and everybody was like really nice to you. They'll come up to you and try to help to you and show you around’*.

6.2.3: Views on School and Teachers

The majority of Syrian students expressed a genuine liking for their schools and exhibited a positive attitude toward their educational environment. Many of them asserted that their current school is either the best in the area or among the top schools, at the very least. Analysis of the interview data revealed that Syrian students generally have favourable opinions about their teachers and maintain positive relationships with them. Aisha, for instance, shared her positive views on the school staff, emphasizing their genuine concern for students and their proactive communication. She noted that support and assistance are readily available when someone is facing challenges. When asked about their favourite aspects of school, both Huda and Anas highlighted the significance of teachers and friends. However, it's worth noting that this attitude is not uniform across all participants. Huda, for instance, expressed a preference for certain teachers, while indicating a dislike for others due to what she perceived as a ‘boring teaching style’. While most Syrian students hold the belief that teachers treat all students impartially without favouring any group or individual, Abdulla diverges from this

perspective. According to him, teachers may occasionally show preference toward certain students in the classroom, resulting in the neglect of others. Abdulla contends that teachers tend to prioritize students who work diligently, while those who irregularly attend class often receive less attention and care.

The majority of students expressed that teachers put in significant effort to create a positive learning environment and extend support to those encountering difficulties in their studies. According to the students, teachers exert themselves to ensure that everyone comprehends the lessons by presenting the material in an accessible manner. Hamza, however, raised the question of whether schoolteachers could offer guidance to secondary students at an earlier stage to explore various paths leading to potential future careers. His own experience suggested a lack of such guidance, leaving him uncertain about his future in a timely manner. This uncertainty, in turn, posed challenges for him in selecting subjects, as secondary students are expected to choose subjects relevant to their post-school pursuits.

Collaborative work in pairs and groups was identified as a widespread practice in the classroom learning of Syrian students. Responses from the students indicated that students willingly cooperate and assist each other within their classrooms when the opportunity arises. For instance, Anas, an S5 student, elaborated that in certain situations, when there's a project that needs collaboration, he often teams up with his friends to strategically divide the tasks among themselves to expedite the completion of the project. However, for smaller tasks that can be handled independently, he prefers to tackle them on his own. This allows him to engage in more individual practice and refinement of his skills. In instances where a Syrian child encounters difficulties in grasping a concept during classroom learning, findings from interviews indicate that teachers actively offer assistance to ensure the students comprehend the material. Yasser elaborated on this, explaining that teachers persist in helping students until they can answer questions confidently, confirming their understanding. Another participant, Anas, affirmed that teachers go to great lengths to facilitate understanding. He noted that they employ various methods, such as sending instructional videos or providing step-by-step guides, to support students in comprehending the subject matter. However, Abdulla, currently enrolled in university, recounted an experience from his secondary school

days involving a teacher who would become agitated when asked to repeat information in class. Consequently, Abdulla opted to remain silent, even when additional clarification was required, to avoid being asked to leave the class. Lastly, differences between schools were also reported. For example, Yasser pointed out noticeable disparities even among schools within Greater Glasgow. When questioned about the specific aspects in which his current school differs from the other one, he elaborated: *'Friends, the people, and the overall environment here is better. This area is better, with more supportive teachers who actively assist you in your studies.'*

6.2.4: Homework

Regarding homework, the majority of Syrian students expressed confidence in their ability to complete assigned homework. Notably, when secondary-stage students encounter challenges, they often seek assistance from their siblings, whereas primary students tend to turn to their parents for help. This pattern suggests that Syrian parents may face limitations in aiding their secondary-stage students, possibly due to language barriers or differences in educational levels.

Fawaz found the homework sessions provided by a local community centre to be valuable for his family. When his children encountered difficulties with homework that exceeded the parents' ability to assist, Fawaz brought them to the community centre for additional support. Aisha utilizes the iPad provided by her school to connect with her teachers through Microsoft Teams in case she encounters challenges with her homework at home. Likewise, Anas reaches out to his teachers either online or in person when he needs clarification on certain aspects of his homework, recognizing that his dad can only assist him with 'the things he knows'. Insights from interviews indicated that Syrian students, especially those in the primary stage, experienced a sense of happiness and pride in their ability to accomplish their homework.

6.3: Bullying and Friendship

This theme combines discussions of bullying and friendship, despite being inherently opposing or distinct concepts. By presenting those two themes together, I aim to explore the relationship between them which can provide a nuanced understanding of social dynamics in settings like schools. As will be discussed in this section, true friendship can mitigate the effects of bullying by providing support and advocacy. In addition, some students might experience both friendship and bullying at the same time.

To foster inclusion in education, it's crucial to value all students equally, promoting mutual respect between students and staff (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). This involves actively combating discrimination and bullying, thereby removing obstacles to learning and participation for all students, Booth and Ainscow emphasised. Furthermore, Nussbaum (2011) emphasizes the inherent right of every individual to be treated with dignity, valued equally alongside others, and protected from discrimination and humiliation. The majority of Syrian students, especially those in the secondary stage, refuted experiencing bullying from their peers at school, with Anas being the exception among the secondary stage students, expressing occasional annoyance when he first arrived in Glasgow. In addition, a primary one student, Maha, shared her personal experience of being bullied in her school. However, Syrian students acknowledged the existence of bullying within their school environment.

Contrary to the situation in Scotland, Syrian students in Allan’s (2021) study faced discrimination from their Jordanian counterparts, leading to approximately 1600 students dropping out of education due to incidents of harassment and violence. Furthermore, Syrian students in Canada, as revealed in Guo et al.'s study (2021), faced ongoing bullying and racism, with reported incidents of ethnic and religious discrimination, and physical assault. Additionally, Syrian refugee students in Lebanon confront substantial issues of discrimination and bullying, as emphasized by Kiwan (2021). Though all forms of bullying can be distressing, the impact of race- and religion-based bullying is particularly disturbing (Guo et al., 2021). I inquired with Syrian secondary students in this study about their approach if faced with bullying. Some indicated a preference for handling the situation

independently, while others expressed their intention to report the incident to teachers, trusting that the matter would be addressed with due seriousness.

One of the primary causes of increased bullying, as highlighted by Visconti and Galb (2018), stems from the heightened tensions directed towards the refugee population due to dwindling resources and strained capacities. This environment of scarcity has triggered incidents of bullying within the refugee community and between refugees and local students, presenting challenges to the well-being and comfort of some students attending school. Diverse responses emerged when Syrian students in this study were asked about the motivations behind some students bullying others. Some students admitted not knowing the reasons, a sentiment deemed understandable given the complexity of the issue. However, one student suggested that, in some cases, bullying occurs for amusement, with individuals believing that by bullying others, they can garner more popularity and be perceived as humorous by their peers. In Aisha's perspective, the bullies choose their victims carefully:

Aisha: there are some people who don't stick up for themselves…In school, So, yeah. They know they're not going to stick up for themselves, so they just bully them…

Researcher: Do you worry about being called names, unkind names at school?

Aisha: Yeah

Researcher: You get worried?

Aisha: Yeah

Researcher: And if you are called unkind names, what would you do?

Aisha: I don't think I would do anything I would just say okay, I don't care…But if my friends are around, they will stick up for me…Yeah, because they know I'm not gonna do anything so they would just speak for me.

Researcher: uh-huh. Are there teachers, or staff that can maybe sort this out?

Aisha: I mean, yeah, if they're around…they would tell them to stop or they would just get them in trouble. Or if you if you go up to them and tell them what happened that would get them in trouble

Researcher: uh-huh. if for example, someone bullied you, would you tell a teacher?

Aisha: No.

Researcher: Why?

Aisha: Because they're gonna call you a snitch and they're gonna keep annoying you even more…

Researcher: So, what, what should you do I mean, in such a situation.

Aisha: Just ignore them. Cuz there's no point.

True friendship can serve as a protective factor against bullying. For example, Aisha's friends can offer support and advocate for her when in situations that she might find herself vulnerable, as she explained above. Thus, true friendship can reduce the impact of bullying. In addition, some individuals might experience both friendship and bullying simultaneously, such as Aisha, who built strong friendships with her peers at school but was still a victim of bullying by some other students.

Recognizing the intricate nature of bullying and its underlying reasons, Anas also offered his insights on this matter:

Researcher: Are there kids that annoy other kids at your school?

Anas: It happens sometimes, but most of the times the teachers deal with it, and they stop the situation as fast as possible.

Researcher: Mm-Hmm... Why do you think they do so?

Anas: Maybe if, the person gets annoyed, if he is different from others or. Say maybe he's not like really, how to say, err he is not. It is hard to explain to be honest but if that person is different from other people, they might take on him, they think it is easy to party with

Researcher: Oh, different in terms of?

Anas: maybe look, maybe language.

Apart from the challenging aspect of bullying, the data revealed a positive trend among Syrian students in developing meaningful friendships at their schools. When questioned about their favourite or closest friends, some mentioned having Scottish or local friends, while others referred to non-Scottish ones. While Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) observed in their study that Syrian refugee students in England were warmly received by their peers in schools, Guo et al.'s (2021) study highlighted the contrary experience, with Syrian refugees in Canada emphasizing the challenges they faced in forming friendships. Many of them lived in neighbourhoods dominated by an Arabic-speaking Syrian population, limiting opportunities to make friends outside their community. In schools, the concentration of refugee students in specialized English classes confined their interactions to peers with similar backgrounds although many 'Syrian' students expressed a desire to interact with 'Canadian' students, seeking a more diverse

social experience. This observation may suggest that Syrian students in my study experience a higher level of acceptance in Scottish schools compared to their counterparts in Canadian schools. Overall, the overwhelming majority of Syrian students in my study expressed positive views about the friendships they have cultivated in their local schools in the Greater Glasgow area.

6.4: Opportunities and Resources Available for Syrian Students in School and Community

This theme explores the resources and support systems in place to enhance the educational inclusion of Syrian students in both their school and community settings. Although not explicitly stated by their parents, Syrian students highlighted the positive impact of iPads on their learning experiences, with a significant number of students frequently citing iPads when asked about available resources that contribute to their learning. Hamza and Yasser noted a distinct contrast in their school experiences in Glasgow compared to their experiences in Syria and Lebanon, particularly in the integration of technology to facilitate learning. Yasser emphasized, *'Here, they have more tools to help you understand, for example, using technologies, you can use translation, you can use apps, you get iPads for your learning'*. In addition, Yasser highlighted that schools in Glasgow go beyond providing iPads; they also offer support for accessing the internet, stating: '*They can give you an iPad, for example, if you struggle with something you can search it if you do not have a phone, even you can ask for help with WIFI, and they will help you'*.

Anas highlighted the Reach program, designed to connect students with universities. The Reach Scotland program, funded by the Scottish Funding Council, aims to broaden access to high-demand professions, as detailed on the University of Glasgow's website. It operates through five universities, including the University of Glasgow, University of Aberdeen, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, and University of St Andrews, each serving a distinct region in Scotland. At the University of Glasgow, Reach facilitates access to professional degrees in Dentistry, Law, Medicine, and Veterinary Medicine. The program engages secondary school students in the West of Scotland, guiding them through the exploration of these subjects from S4 to S6 and supporting their university applications.

Yasser provided insights into the diverse array of classes and activities available at his school, catering to both sports and leisure interests as well as academic support. Abdulla shared an intriguing activity in his secondary school: a student-created wall chart featuring engaging and fun news, quizzes, and other sections. He also mentioned students managing a Twitter account to share updates and information with families and students. Additionally, Abdulla discussed the Pupil's Council at his school, serving as a platform for students to express thoughts, ideas, and suggestions, acting as a mediator between students and school staff to enhance communication and the overall schooling experience. Furthermore, secondary-stage students mentioned the availability of help and support from ‘pastoral care’ if they ever feel unhappy at school. Moreover, an array of classes, activities, and clubs are accessible to students including Syrians, encompassing options such as music classes, football, and basketball activities. A P4 student, Luaai, for instance, has actively participated in Taekwondo sessions at a nearby centre. Additionally, he and his family occasionally received invitations to attend football matches at a local stadium hosted by a second-tier club. Furthermore, gardening was highlighted by one family as an engaging and enjoyable activity that offers their children a refreshing break from the routine of the classroom. Finally, a Syrian family recognized the provision of free bus passes as a valuable service recently implemented, contributing to the enhanced convenience of accessing schools for students. This initiative has been introduced by the Scottish government, in collaboration with schools.

Chapter Seven: Perspectives of School Educators Towards the Educational Inclusion of Syrian Students in Greater Glasgow

The data presented in this chapter emanates from an online survey conducted among educators in the Greater Glasgow area, exploring the educational inclusion of Syrian students within mainstream schools. Comprising four open-ended questions, the survey sought to scrutinize educators' perspectives on refugee students' overall educational experiences, with a specific emphasis on those of Syrian origin. The investigation explored four key facets related to the educational inclusion of Syrian students in the Greater Glasgow area, as perceived by educators. These included examining the extent to which Syrian students are included in Scottish schools and assessing aspects such as access, participation, and achievement. In addition, an examination of the existing services and resources designed to facilitate the educational inclusion of Syrian students in schools was explored. Furthermore, the survey sought insights into potential barriers and challenges faced by Syrian students, which might impede their educational inclusion. Lastly, educators were asked to provide suggestions and recommendations aimed at promoting the educational inclusion of Syrian students in schools.

The six participating educators in this online survey identified themselves across diverse roles, including Headteacher, Principal teacher, Former Headteacher, English as an Additional Language Teacher, and Teacher. The following *Table (7.1)* provides basic information about the educators who participated in my online survey. The forthcoming sections unveil the key findings derived from my online survey. This segment is organized into four distinct themes, delineated by a thematic analysis following the methodology outlined by Clark and Braun (2006), as discussed in *Chapter Four*.

POSITION	WHAT STAGE WERE THE SYRIAN STUDENTS THAT YOU WORKED WITH?
HEADTEACHER	Primary
PRINCIPAL TEACHER	Primary
FORMER HEADTEACHER	Secondary
ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE TEACHER	Primary
TEACHER	Secondary
TEACHER	Primary

Table 7.1: Educators Participating in the Online Survey

7.1: Perceptions of Inclusion and Diversity

Educators participating in the online survey conveyed favourable perspectives regarding the inclusion of Syrian students in their schools. For example, a former Headteacher stated that *'within the parameters of our resources, we are doing well and always looking for ways to include'*. A class teacher explicitly affirmed, *'Syrian children are included in every part of school life'*. Furthermore, two educators highlighted that all children are actively involved in every school activity. Similarly, a principal teacher emphasized that their school adopts an inclusive approach, ensuring that all children are included on an equal basis, irrespective of their country of origin, home language, or background by noting:

> *Our school lives and breathes the school values which underpin all practice at a school wide and class-based level: nurture, achieve, empower and respect. We are a rights respecting school and this means every child has a fair and equitable right to education. We are skilled in supporting children who are new to English and who may have very different cultural and educational experiences.*

Another teacher highlighted their school's commitment to a culturally responsive curriculum, recognizing bilingualism as a strength and incorporating aspects of Syrian culture and students' backgrounds throughout the entire curriculum, not only in regard to the language domain. In addition, one teacher expressed the belief that Syrian students bring valuable contributions to the school community, emphasizing the reciprocal learning that occurs among all students. This aligns with the argument presented by Veck and Wharton (2021) that in order to enhance the inclusion and engagement of young refugees in schools, it is essential to embrace and acknowledge all students as individuals with distinct contributions. While this recognition of diversity is encouraging, it is important to note that the inclusion of refugee children in schools is often contingent on their language proficiency as reported by a teacher. The teacher stated that students who are proficient in English can effectively engage with the curriculum: *'If the child already has good English then their access to the rest of the curriculum, participation and achievement can be very positive'*. Whereas those with limited language abilities may face challenges in accessing the educational content.

7.2: School Support Services and Resources

Survey data indicates that schools employ diverse support mechanisms to assist new families in accessing all facets of school life. These measures encompass the provision of English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers, ESOL classes, iPads, financial resources, and collaborative initiatives with various stakeholders.

In the Glasgow area, numerous schools offer EAL services, where EAL teachers work alongside class teachers to assist refugee and migrant students. These teachers extend support to enhance English language proficiency, including organizing homework clubs. Additionally, schools provide supplementary resources such as ESOL classes to support refugee and migrant students' children, including Syrian. In addition, a specific service called the Young Interpreters Group is reported, involving school students proficient in languages other than English. Typically, from upper primary or secondary stages, these students act as interpreters in situations to enhance communication between staff and newly

arrived students with limited English skills. The utilization of students' abilities to support each other resonates strongly with the Index for Inclusion's emphasis on recognizing and leveraging diverse resources within schools to enrich learning and participation (Booth and Ainscow, 2016, p. 48).

The Scottish government asserts that its education system showcases inclusive practices tailored to newly arrived individuals in Scotland, particularly in fostering language proficiency and overall achievements (Education Scotland, 2015, p.1). A report by Her Majesty's inspectors assessed college performance in ESOL programs, highlighting strengths in inclusive practices supporting learners for whom English is not the first language (Education Scotland, 2015, p.2-3). The report, while noting areas of excellence, also identified needs for improvement, such as inconsistent titles for ESOL programs causing confusion, and limitations in partnerships between colleges and ESOL providers. Data from the online survey showed that some local authorities in Scotland provide resources such as iPads for students, accessible from Primary 5 onward, enhancing learning support. Furthermore, educators highlighted a variety of in-school human resources aimed at fostering student inclusion. For example, one school appointed a Principal Teacher of Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion with a specific focus on supporting young students and families whose primary language is not English. This is particularly crucial, as highlighted by Rutter (2006, p.5), who identified key aspects of good practice in the education of refugee students, emphasizing the importance of addressing their linguistic needs. Implementing an equitable and socially just approach to refugee education demands providing schools with the necessary funding to support refugee students (Tippett et al., 2023). Despite sometimes limited availability, schools allocate funds to support students, with one school maintaining a modest budget for counselling if needed. Another school utilizes the Pupil Equity Fund to recruit a youth worker from Intercultural Youth Scotland, dedicating one day a week to address issues of racism and discrimination.

Rutter (2006, p.5) identified the crucial aspects of good practice concerning the education of refugee children including the significance of addressing the psycho-social needs of children, especially if there are prior experiences of trauma. A headteacher mentioned that all staff in their primary school undergo training in Nurture Practice, which includes specialized training in handling Adverse Childhood

Experiences. Consequently, the entire school staff is well-equipped to respond effectively to children exhibiting trauma-informed behaviours. Additionally, the school has a dedicated Nurture Room that engages children through targeted interventions.

Collaborative engagement between schools and diverse stakeholders is pivotal for enriching the learning experiences of all students (Booth and Ainscow, 2016; Calamak and Kilinc, 2021; Carrington et al., 2023). Data revealed that schools engage in collaborative efforts with various stakeholders to enhance learning support for students. For instance, a secondary teacher highlighted access to additional support through collaboration with Educational Psychology, including Joint Support Team involvement and Staged Intervention Meetings. Another teacher from the survey mentioned the school's practice of directing families to local organizations and charities for broader community support. Moreover, some schools address poverty-related issues by providing assistance with uniforms, meals, and access to curricular events beyond regular school hours for those in need.

7.3: Challenges Associated with the Educational Inclusion

Data collected through the online survey from educators reveals key challenges faced by Syrian students in their schooling in Scotland. These challenges include the English language barrier, limited translation resources, insufficient communication between schools and families, disparities between the educational systems in Scotland and Syria, and lack of training and support for school staff.

Schools in Scotland offer additional support to students who require assistance in their learning, such as those with limited English proficiency or health conditions affecting their learning (Education Scotland, 2023c). This support is a legal right and is outlined in the law (Education Scotland, 2023c). However, insufficient proficiency in the English language was identified as a significant challenge faced by children from refugee and asylum-seeking groups, data from the online survey revealed. For example, one teacher identified limited English language as a significant challenge concerning the educational inclusion of students from refugee

backgrounds in schools. The teacher emphasized the pivotal role of language proficiency in this context, stating that it significantly impacts the inclusion of these students into schools. Students arriving in Scotland with proficient English can smoothly engage with the entire curriculum, positively impacting their participation and achievements in school. Conversely, those with limited English skills face substantial hurdles in accessing the curriculum, particularly at the secondary stage, as noted by the teacher. Expressing concern, a class teacher illustrated the potential risk of exclusion faced by secondary-stage students with limited English language skills upon their arrival in Scotland:

> *But for those who come to secondary school with limited English, they are not fully included and cannot access the curriculum properly. Sitting with Google translate in a science lesson or with someone trying to communicate specific bits of vocab does not enable the pupil to achieve in the long term. It is really sad to see young people who start school with lots of enthusiasm for learning become disillusioned and frustrated by their failure to progress often due to their lack of English language skills.*

Thus, this challenge becomes more pronounced for older children who arrive in the country with limited English language skills, posing additional hurdles to their adaptation and inclusion. This aligns with the research conducted by Ozer et al. (2017) in Turkey, which found that Syrian students encountered greater challenges with adaptation in secondary schools compared to their counterparts in primary schools. The authors observed that younger students tended to adapt more smoothly to both the school environment and language within primary school settings. Within the context of Turkey, adaptation emerged as the one of foremost challenges faced by Syrian students (Ozer, Komsuoglu, and Atesok, 2017; Gokce and Acar, 2018).

The disparities between the Scottish and Syrian education systems were identified as a significant factor influencing the potential redirection of Syrian students towards fewer academic pathways. This disparity may contribute to a lack of understanding among families regarding their children's academic trajectories. As a result, students could be guided into fewer academic pathways that do not align with their career aspirations. A teacher participant in the survey raised an equity concern regarding the Broad General Education (BGE) in Scotland which is '*the phase of learning which lasts from when a child begins early learning and childcare*

through to the end of S3 in secondary school before moving on to the senior phase of the curriculum in S4 to S6' (Education Scotland, 2023a). The teacher emphasized that BGE learners encounter a shortage of weekly ESOL classes, hindering the acquisition of adequate reading and writing skills for progression. The teacher highlighted a notable disparity in their school, where a student in need of English language support might be allocated two weekly classes in French without any corresponding ESOL instruction. This is in contrast with the Swedish approach where newly arrived students receive additional support through the reallocation of teaching hours from other academic subjects to Swedish as a second language during their initial year of schooling in Sweden (Bunar, 2017). Furthermore, there is an increased provision of teaching hours specifically dedicated to Swedish as a second language. The teacher participant in the survey continued by arguing that the combination of limited English proficiency and the lack of essential language support could lead these students toward enrolment in lower academic levels:

> *BGE learners may only get one period a week of ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] teaching so never acquire sufficient skills in reading and writing to achieve N5s and Highers. Their lack of English language skills mean that they end up in lower sets/taking less academic subjects. Often the behaviour in these classes is poor which has a negative impact too.*

The absence of communication between schools and Syrian families emerged as a significant challenge. This is attributed to the fact that some Syrian parents do not speak English, resulting in the exclusion of certain families from essential forms of communication such as report cards and newsletters. A former Headteacher noted:

> *Many parents don't speak English so they are excluded from forms of communication such as newsletters or report cards (or they rely on their child to translate). While text messages can be sent in Arabic (and other languages) this is only a small part of a school's communication.*

The above echoes the argument in Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) that the limited English linguistic skills of Syrian parents inevitably hindered their ability to initiate communication with their children's schools in Nottinghamshire.

Educators acknowledge the existence of translation resources to aid communication; however, one headteacher emphasized that these resources are insufficient and only cover a limited portion of communications. Another teacher added that arranging translators in a timely manner can be a challenge. A primary school headteacher criticized the current online enrolment system for lacking face-to-face communication between families and schools from the outset. The older system, according to the headteacher, was more efficient in establishing crucial relationships, as families had the opportunity to share important information confidentially during the enrolment process. Under the online system, families may overlook sharing essential details about their children, impacting the understanding of their well-being.

The bureaucratic processes linked to immigration matters, including court or lawyer appointments, which require students to miss school, can induce stress in families, data from the survey showed. Furthermore, a headteacher mentioned that due to unclear residency status in Scotland, they had encountered situations where students were awaiting university placements or in some cases students were informed that they were subject to international fees due to ambiguous residency status. The headteacher noted collaborative efforts with the local MP and the local authority to provide support, although they highlighted that many decisions are made outside the jurisdiction of Scotland. Such a situation has the potential to adversely affect both the immediate schooling and the post-school transitions of students from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds, according to the headteacher. Recognizing the uncertain status of many students from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds, a secondary school offers support focused on facilitating smoother transitions to further or higher education.

The data showed that the lack of sufficient training and support for school staff, as well as the absence of resources and equipped personnel, poses a significant challenge in relation to the educational inclusion of Syrian children. This issue is particularly pronounced in certain schools where the necessary human resources with appropriate training are deficient, impeding their capacity to adequately address the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. As an illustration, a headteacher acknowledged the necessity for additional professional learning among education staff in Scotland to enable them to better understand the varied

challenges families face when relocating to and settling in Scotland. The headteacher noted a reduction in available opportunities for staff in Glasgow in this regard. Similarly, an EAL teacher acknowledged that some schools *'don't have access to colleagues with anti-racist and culturally responsive teachers and this would make it difficult to support Syrian families'*. To sum up, while a primary headteacher underscored their school's commitment to respecting the rights of every child and ensuring a fair and equitable education, the majority of educators recognized the distinct challenges encountered by Syrian students and families upon their arrival in Scotland.

7.4: Suggestions and Recommendations to Promote the Educational Inclusion

Educators in Greater Glasgow's mainstream schools offered recommendations for promoting the inclusion of students from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. Suggestions included improved communication between schools and families, increased collaboration across educational boundaries, enhanced resources, prioritizing structured English classes, providing mentoring, utilizing smart applications, and the recognition of diversity.

Educators recommended enhancing educational inclusion for refugee and asylum-seeking students through improved resources, including interpreters and translated materials, along with greater availability of first-language resources. A headteacher underscored the importance of recognizing children's home languages, proposing that the Scottish Qualification Authority consider offering qualifications in Arabic. Such a measure, according to the former headteacher, would communicate the value of first languages, fostering success and a sense of belonging among refugee and asylum-seeking students. Moreover, fostering a sense of inclusion for Syrian students in Scottish schools through the celebration of whole-school community events like Eid was proposed by an EAL teacher. Additionally, a class teacher emphasized the utmost importance of structured and intensive English classes for the student's educational progress. Moreover, data suggested that providing mentoring services from young refugees who have

successfully navigated the Scottish education system could be highly beneficial for Syrian students.

The importance of advance notice for incoming families, proposing the allocation of a staff member for comprehensive inductions, was emphasised by the headteacher as an important factor that can foster a smooth induction. A principal teacher recommended increased coordination between local organizations supporting refugee students and schools. Addressing the potential impact of families' uncertain status on children's learning, a former headteacher suggested fostering collaboration across educational boundaries to enhance the student's sense of security about their future, emphasizing that certainty in status would enable them to concentrate more on learning. Finally, an educator recommended the use of smart applications, like Seesaw, to enhance communication between schools and families.

Chapter Eight: Discussion

This chapter brings together data derived from interviews conducted with Syrian parents and students, alongside insights from the online survey completed by school educators. The gathered data from both interviews and the survey are analysed in the context of the research literature reviewed and discussed in *Chapter Three* of this thesis concentrating on the education of Syrian students in different countries. In addition, it examines the study's findings within the context of the documents and concepts introduced in *Chapter Four*, which establish the explanatory framework for this research.

The chapter first discusses the importance of creating Inclusive Cultures in education (Booth and Ainscow, 2016) and addresses Equity from Below in education (Unterhalter, 2009). The first section provides insights into parental involvement, utilizing a framework that categorises involvement from non-participation to control (Pugh,1985). Then, the chapter discusses the shaping of policies aimed at promoting educational inclusion, focusing on the interplay between policy development and the Equity from Above perspective. The chapter also discusses the educational experiences of Syrian students in the context of evolving Inclusive Practices and Equity from the Middle. Finally, the chapter discusses the educational inclusion of Syrian students in terms of presence, participation, and achievement.

The significance of the Capability approach in advocating for the educational inclusion of Syrian children, through establishing connections with the forms of equity and the dimensions of inclusion, is presented throughout the chapter. It is noteworthy that the Capability approach serves as a comprehensive philosophical framework in this study, supporting operational and policy-oriented concepts of equity and inclusion, as discussed earlier in *Explanatory Framework Chapter*.

8.1: Fostering Inclusive Cultures and Navigating Equity from Below

This section scrutinizes the concept of fostering inclusive environments within educational settings and examines the form of Equity from Below in education. Equity from Below in education involves creating a space for negotiation where concerns are addressed through reasonableness and reflection, valuing each participant's opinion. Likewise, one of the fundamental dimensions outlined in the Index for Inclusion is creating Inclusive Cultures which focuses on fostering secure, accepting, collaborative, and stimulating communities where everyone is valued (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Inclusive values should be shared and promoted among all stakeholders, including staff, students, families, governors, and the broader community involved with the school, Booth and Ainscow stated.

In Scotland, data collected from educators revealed commendable initiatives undertaken by certain schools to address the cultural diversity of students. Notably, one school demonstrated commitment by appointing a Principal Teacher of Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion, tasked with providing support to young children and families whose first language is not English. Additionally, a positive approach towards bilingualism was evident, with the school recognizing bilingual capabilities as a strength. Furthermore, there was a deliberate effort to incorporate the Syrian culture and acknowledge pupils' backgrounds into the broader school curriculum. These instances highlight a proactive commitment to fostering inclusion through linguistic and cultural considerations within the educational framework. On the other hand, the absence of access to *'anti-racist and culturally responsive'* educators in certain schools in the Glasgow area poses challenges for some Syrian families in receiving the necessary help and support, as highlighted by an EAL teacher. Gunporsdottir (2018) underscores the importance of teachers gaining insights into the beliefs and practices of students from culturally diverse backgrounds. This understanding is crucial for creating an inclusive environment where every individual is valued.

Equity from Below in education involves recognizing and embracing a space for negotiation (Unterhalter, 2009). This negotiation encompasses specific concerns of various groups or individuals regarding aspects such as curriculum content and

gender equality. Rather than relying on majority rule or the dominance of one person's viewpoint over another, Equity from Below emphasizes a process of reasonableness and reflection, Unterhalter argued. This process values the contributions of each participant in the discussion and prioritizes the establishment of considerate and fair relationships that foster negotiation, questioning, and discussion.

Interviews with Syrian families revealed that cultural disparities between Syria and Scotland introduce intricacies in the dynamics of schools and education. An illustration of this complexity emerges in the reservations some Syrian parents harbour regarding the inclusion of sex education content in their children's curriculum. One parent explicitly articulated a preference for aligning sex education with Islamic teachings. Undoubtedly, navigating discussions on such contentious aspects of the role of schools and education is a challenging undertaking, I acknowledge. This nuanced dialogue finds resonance in Ragnarsdóttir's (2020) exploration of challenges faced by Syrian families and school staff in the Icelandic context, arising from cultural divergences. An instance highlighted in her research pertains to difficulties encountered by some Syrian girls in mixed swimming classes, leading to their voluntary withdrawal from such sessions. This scenario mirrors, to some extent, the concerns expressed by certain families in Scotland regarding dissatisfaction with sex education classes. Likewise, Şahin and Sümer (2018) shed light on various challenges within the inclusion process of Syrian children in Turkey, notably highlighting issues stemming from cultural disparities. Building upon Bourdieu's notion of habitus, Çelik and İçduygu (2019) sought to explore how schools in Turkey operationalized policies, influenced by their positions within the national education landscape. The distribution of cultural capital among individuals plays a pivotal role and can significantly influence their success or failure (Bourdieu, 1986). Those possessing more cultural capital, which includes knowledge, experience, and social connections, are likely to achieve greater success compared to those with less cultural capital, Bourdieu argued. Çelik and İçduygu' (2019) findings suggested that the institutional habitus of schools in Turkey might generate practices that marginalize Syrian children. The parallels underscore the broader challenge of reconciling cultural differences within the educational framework, necessitating a nuanced and respectful approach to accommodate diverse perspectives.

Nussbaum argued that in certain intricate matters, children may necessitate exceptions in the Capability approach since they may lack the ability to express their preferences. This raises the question of whether girls, for instance, should be granted the option to opt out of certain classes, or if attendance should be obligatory. A parallel dilemma emerges in the context of parents who object to their children participating in sex education classes in Scotland. The pivotal question arises: Who should hold the authority to decide whether students must attend these classes or have the option to abstain—the school, the students themselves, or their parents? That said, the UN Convention on Child Rights (1989) states that the best interests of the child should be the foremost priority in all decisions and actions affecting them, ensuring every child's freedom to express their thoughts and opinions, as well as their right to think and believe as they choose.

It is pertinent to elucidate the reasons behind the reserved attitudes of some Syrian parents towards sex education. Notably, all the Syrian families interviewed adhered to the Islamic faith, which staunchly opposes practices such as same-sex marriage. Current interpretations of various religions explicitly disapprove of homosexual practices, with texts and passages in both the Bible and the Qu'ran interpreted by religious scholars as prohibiting such behaviour (Hooghe et al., 2010). Consequently, individuals who adhere to these religions are more inclined to express anti-gay sentiments, the authors argued, which are illegal in Scotland. It is important to highlight that I did not explicitly inquire about the perspectives of Syrian families on sex education classes. However, some families spontaneously addressed this topic during our discussions. I recognize that I might have gathered more insightful data if I had directly asked families to share their views on this matter. The omission of such questions was unintentional, as it was not initially included in my interview questions.

Equity from Below underscores the importance of fostering an Inclusive Culture with a focus on empowering marginalized groups within communities. Likewise, Nussbaum's Capability approach aims to expand human potential through empowerment. Hamza, a Syrian student critical of the perceived lack of guidance and clarity in the Scottish education system, suggested that teachers should offer

support to secondary students early on, assisting them in exploring various paths toward potential future careers. Hamza's call for early support from teachers to assist students in exploring diverse career paths resonates with Nussbaum's (2011) concept of Capability, which empowers individuals to pursue their aspirations. In alignment with this perspective, a teacher in the survey proposed the idea of mentoring from young refugees who have successfully navigated the Scottish education system, providing valuable insights for those interested in exploring diverse paths. This approach implies that students can gain valuable insights and guidance through mentoring sessions with young refugees who possess concrete experience and information in specific fields of interest. Implementing Equity from Below, characterized by dialogue and discussion regarding the expansion of capabilities from various perspectives (Unterhalter, 2009, p.421), could prove beneficial in these instances. Early discussions with school staff to guide secondary students in planning and pursuing their ambitions would be particularly helpful, addressing the concerns of students like Hamza who feel neglected in school. Hamza faced obstacles in advancing his education and pursuing a university path, finding himself working in a restaurant despite his initial aspiration to continue his educational journey. He attributed this unintended shift to a systemic deficiency in guidance and clarity, as previously discussed.

Based on Nussbaum's (2011) Capability approach, which emphasizes individuals' abilities to pursue their aspirations and potentials, it seems evident that Hamza's experience contradicts the approach's application in practice. Despite Nussbaum's assertion that capabilities provide individuals with boundless potential for imagination and action, Hamza's situation highlights a stark disparity between theory and reality. This case raises questions about the practical implementation of Nussbaum's Capability approach in Scottish schools. Despite the theoretical promise of boundless potential and opportunity, Hamza's experience underscores the importance of addressing systemic barriers that prevent individuals from realizing their capabilities in practice. In Hamza's case, the lack of early guidance and support ultimately hindered his ability to pursue his desired educational and career path, highlighting a gap between theory and the lived experiences of individuals like him. Consequently, while Nussbaum's Capability approach offers a valuable theoretical framework, its practical application requires addressing systemic deficiencies and ensuring equitable access to opportunities for all individuals

including refugees and asylum seekers. Thus, Hamza's case does not align with the principles of Equity from Below and the Capability approach, which prioritizes individuals' social relations in daily life, striving to empower agency and promote procedural freedoms for everyone.

The dimension of creating Inclusive Culture underscores the importance of establishing a partnership between school staff and students' parents built on effective communication (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Pugh (1985) developed a framework for classifying parental involvement in their children's learning in educational settings (See *Figure 8.1*). The author distinguished between six categories of involvement and partnership that range between 'non-participation' and parental 'control' in regard to their children's learning. In the spectrum of parental involvement, the initial phase, labelled 'non-participation,' signifies that parents are largely absent from daily engagement due to factors such as a lack of confidence or linguistic and cultural barriers. The subsequent category, 'being there,' indicates parents who, while responsive and supportive of the institution, refrain from active participation, such as attending events like concerts, open evenings, or holiday parties. Moving towards a more active role, 'co-operation' signifies parents providing practical support to the institution from an external standpoint, under professional supervision. The 'collaboration' phase involves joint efforts between parents and professionals during specific periods, encompassing activities like planning and initiation. Progressing further, the 'partnership' stage denotes an elevated level of involvement where parents seek equal access to information and resources. Finally, in the 'control' phase, parents assume a position of authority and responsibility, actively participating in decision-making and overseeing the implementation of activities. Ultimately, they become accountable for various aspects, including activities, resources, and the selection of staff and children.

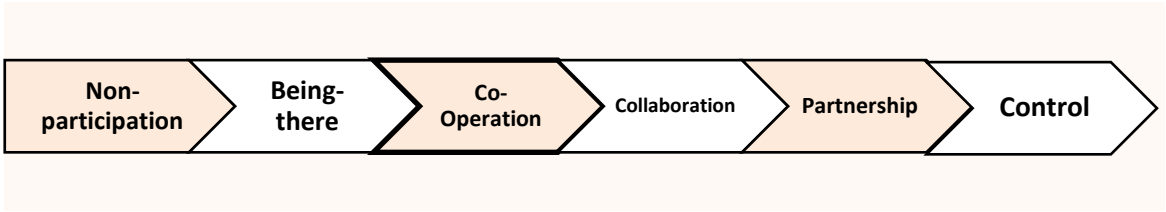


Figure 8.1: Categories of parental involvement and partnership over their children's learning.

Interestingly, from the perspective of Syrian families, most parents expressed satisfaction with their communication with their children's school staff. In contrast, online survey data collected from school educators revealed that constructive communication with Syrian parents is currently limited or not optimal. This limitation can be attributed to the fact that some Syrian parents lack proficiency in English, hindering direct communication with school staff. However, miscommunication or lack of communication may occur at times, although data gathered from Syrian families indicated that schools genuinely attempt to establish communication with families. For instance, a headteacher, as mentioned earlier, criticized the current online enrolment system for lacking face-to-face communication between families and schools. Additionally, some parents identified instances of miscommunication that sometimes arise between families and schools. For example, Mohamed mentioned his inability to contact his child's school to get an update about his child's status when he receives a text indicating the child's absence from school. Another parent, Maher, cited difficulties in communicating with school staff due to a language barrier. Furthermore, technology itself occasionally served as a communication barrier, as highlighted by Kamal, who demonstrated the delayed response of the school system to updates, such as a change in home address, resulting in potential miscommunication and the family missing important correspondence from the school during the prolonged updating process. Consequently, parental involvement in the education of their children among Syrian families appears predominantly situated within the categories of 'Non-participation' or 'Being-there,' as per the framework developed by Pugh. It is noteworthy that the author contends that certain parents may fall into more than one category depending on the situation, and in some instances, parents may align with all categories along the continuum.

Similar disengagement of Syrian parents from schools due to language barriers has also been reported in Nottinghamshire, UK (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). This was attributed to limited skills in the English language, as is the case in the Greater Glasgow area. Contrastingly, the situation in Lebanon presented a different scenario, where disengagement was linked to two primary factors. First, the financial burden on parents led to a decreased emphasis on their children's education (Hamadeh, 2019). Second, Hamadeh argued that the higher prevalence of illiteracy or lower educational levels among Syrian parents contributed to limited engagement between Syrian families and schools. Thus, Uyan-Semerci and Erdoğan (2018) emphasized the pivotal role of parental education levels in shaping Syrian children's educational opportunities in Turkey. Notably, financial concerns were not highlighted by Syrian participants in my study, though a few participants were either low-educated or illiterate.

Collaboration between newly arrived families from refugee backgrounds and schools is important to mitigate the cultural and language differences that children encounter in the host country (Yohani, 2013). Yohani underscores the significance of educational cultural brokers in bridging the gap between educational and cultural variances among families and schools. These brokers can take the form of community representatives or specialized personnel. Beyond this, Yohani argues that brokers, in a broader context, encompass various individuals and entities, such as teachers, schools, parents, after-school program staff, and other professionals. Additionally, Yohani presents literature discussing the debate around the importance of brokers sharing a common cultural heritage with the individuals they collaborate with. Considering that most Syrian families I interviewed have arrived in the country in the last few years, the presence of educational cultural brokers becomes particularly advantageous. The practical support and assistance that educational cultural brokers provide, can help newly arrived families to acquire cultural capital, as emphasised by Yohani (2013). Furthermore, the absence of educational cultural brokers (Yohani, 2013), who could provide students, such as Hamza, with practical assistance and counsel on various educational pathways, is evident in this situation. Hamza’s limited cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) was deemed as a barrier that impeded his access to further education.

In education, Equity from Below involves creating a space for negotiation where concerns are addressed through reasonableness and reflection, valuing each participant's opinion. This approach resonates with the Capability approach's emphasis on individual agency and process freedoms. To foster the development of an Inclusive Culture where each participant in the discussion holds a valuable opinion (Unterhater, 2009, p.417), it is crucial to enhance the existing interpreting services in schools, as indicated by findings from survey data. The need for improvement became apparent when a former headteacher explicitly emphasized the necessity for increased investment in interpreters and translation services within educational institutions. This need is particularly pressing, as highlighted by Syrian parent Maher, who reported that certain schools currently do not offer interpreting services for newly arrived families. Furthermore, to foster secure, accepting and inclusive communities where everyone is valued (Ainscow and Booth, 2016), schools should allocate resources and personnel to effectively address and mitigate the potential impact of issues like bullying and racism on students from diverse backgrounds. A Syrian parent emphasized the importance of schools prioritizing and appropriately addressing behavioural issues, recognizing their impact on both the misbehaving student and their peers. Another parent urged schools to adopt strict approaches to adopt bullying, discrimination, and racism.

8.2: Shaping Educational Inclusion: Producing Inclusive Policies and the Role of Equity from Above

This section examines the development of Inclusive Policies and their alignment with Equity from Above. It underscores the dynamic relationship between policy development and overarching equity perspectives, exploring their crucial roles in achieving educational inclusion. Furthermore, it underscores the correlation between formulating inclusive policies, promoting Equity from Above, and enhancing Capabilities.

The dimension of 'producing Inclusive Policies' underscores the organization of learning support for students learning English as an additional language (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Similarly, Unterhalter (2009) stresses the significance of Equity

from Above, entailing the establishment of fair and reasonable policies and rules to accommodate a diverse range of learners and, thus, enhance individuals' capability sets. By ensuring fair and Inclusive Policies, Equity from Above fosters an environment where individuals have equal opportunities to develop their Capabilities.

Equity from Above involves regulating actions based on rules grounded in reason and principles of rights and fairness, which are universally recognized by a wide body of opinion (Unterhalter, 2009). It is founded on rules and concepts of the public good. Diverse perspectives on these rules stress participatory discussion and ethical rationality, reflecting varied beliefs about education. In settings with diverse educational ideologies, establishing fair rules is crucial for nurturing agency and broadening capability sets. During interviews with Syrian families, diverse educational ideologies were apparent in relation to the reservations and concerns some Syrian parents articulated regarding the inclusion of sex education content in their children's curriculum, as discussed earlier. This raises the question of whether parents, for example, should have the option to opt their children out of certain classes or if attendance should be mandatory. As mentioned earlier, the pivotal question then becomes: Who should have the authority to decide whether students must attend these classes or have the option to abstain—the school, the students themselves, or their parents?

Equity from Above involves the establishment of rules and policies by a widely recognised authority that are fair and reasonable for a diverse and wide range of people. Nussbaum argues that in certain intricate matters, children may require exceptions in the Capability approach due to their limited ability to express preferences. Nevertheless, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) asserts that the best interests of the child should be the primary consideration in all decisions and actions affecting them, ensuring every child's freedom to express their thoughts and opinions, as well as their right to think and believe as they choose. Indeed, addressing such questions is no easy endeavour. For instance, determining the fairness and reasonableness of a particular regulation poses a challenge. Similarly, identifying the criteria for what constitutes a widely recognized authority is not straightforward.

During interviews with Syrian families, one parent raised concerns about the current policy in Scottish schools in regard to receiving new students from non-English speaking countries. Instead, they proposed implementing intensive ESOL courses before these students enter mainstream schools. The parent criticized the current practice of including non-English-speaking students directly in mainstream classes, considering it inadequate. This aligns with the argument made by Gokce and Acar (2018) in Turkey, who advocated for a tailored curriculum for Syrian students to address their specific needs, emphasizing education in age-appropriate special classes rather than placing students solely based on their academic achievement. This concern extends to current ESOL classes for refugees and asylum-seekers in Scotland, where age disparities in classrooms could potentially create behavioural issues, as noted by a Syrian parent in the study. The idea of separated English classes, however, raises concerns about potential exclusionary practices. Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) argue for accommodating individual differences among students through a variety of tasks and activities to prevent stigmatization. While this argument may not entirely apply to Syrian students, as suggested by the parent, who proposes intensive English classes from the beginning, the concern remains relevant to ensuring a supportive learning environment for all. In Germany, students typically enrol in preparation or introduction classes for one to two years before progressing to regular classes. Subsequent assistance with German as a second language is provided based on regulations specific to the Bundesland, city, or school, particularly if their proficiency in German requires further support (Crul et al., 2019). In Sweden, previous local policies dictated organizational models, resulting in prolonged periods of separation for certain newly arrived students (Crul et al., 2019). However, legislative changes in 2016 introduced preparatory classes as a new category for such students. These students are no longer placed full-time and are limited to two years in preparatory classes, allowing them some teaching hours in regular classes. The shift to regular classes is designed to mitigate social segregation between newly arrived students and the broader school community (Crul et al., 2019). In certain countries, where segregation has been implemented, such as the Netherlands, it led to problematic outcomes. For example, refugee families may fear stigmatisation associated with students participating in school-based prevention programs (Rousseau and Guzder, 2008). Conversely, Crul et al. (2019) argue that the best chance for students to succeed in school is to include

them in regular classes as early as possible. The authors contend that when refugee children are taught separately in a different school system for an extended period, they often end up leaving school prematurely or not attending at all.

In alignment with the Syrian parent's call for more intensive ESOL classes for refugees and asylum-seekers arriving in Scotland from non-English speaking countries, a teacher from the online survey stressed the significance of implementing structured and intensive English language classes in their school which would be beneficial to many students from refugee backgrounds. This echoes the arguments made by teachers and principals in Turkey regarding the education of Syrian students, emphasizing that the main challenge faced by Syrian students was admission to public schools without access to any language classes beforehand (Aydin and Kaya, 2019). Similarly, a report evaluating college performance in Scotland concerning ESOL programs revealed that part-time students had limited engagement with the wider college and lower success rates compared to their full-time peers (Education Scotland, 2015). This underscores the importance of providing comprehensive English language learning courses.

Syrian parents in this study emphasized the importance of providing intensive language courses first to new arrivals, as they were satisfied with the notion of their children having to acquire essential capabilities like language learning as the initial step. This viewpoint contradicts the expectations of Syrian parents in England as highlighted by Madizva and Thondhlana (2017), who argued that refugee parents, including Syrians, generally hold high expectations for their children's educational achievements. The authors argued that some parents anticipated their children being enrolled in colleges or schools based on their academic performance before arriving in the UK, rather than focusing on firstly giving them the prerequisite capabilities such as learning the English language.

While the online survey conducted with school educators suggests that schools utilize a variety of support mechanisms to help students from refugee backgrounds integrate into all aspects of school life, such as employing EAL teachers, offering ESOL classes, and providing interpreting services for families, a less optimistic perspective emerges on the other side of this issue. The survey data revealed concerns about the current provision of ESOL periods in schools and a notable lack

of adequate English language support provision within the Greater Glasgow area. According to one teacher, the existing support, despite being acknowledged by Syrian families, appears insufficient. An EAL teacher expressed concern that students with limited English proficiency, particularly those entering at the secondary level, would encounter genuine difficulties accessing the curriculum. Another class teacher highlighted the potential for exclusion faced by secondary-stage students with limited English upon arrival in Scotland. This aligns with findings from prior studies that flag up the challenges older students confront due to their limited English proficiency. In Iceland (Ragnarsdóttir, 2020), for instance, teachers noted that older students faced significant hurdles in mastering the Icelandic language and certain subjects, with younger students displaying faster overall progress. The same study revealed that some older students experienced social isolation in schools. A similar scenario unfolded in the Nottinghamshire area in the United Kingdom, where students entering the secondary stage encountered heightened challenges due to the increased demand for English proficiency (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017).

As a result, schools are urged to expand their English class provision to better address the educational needs of students for whom English is not their first language. Inadequate English language support, as indicated by the survey, poses a risk of some students lagging in their educational progress due to limited English language skills, even if they excel in other subjects. This potential inadequacy may contribute to educational exclusion, contradicting the principle that inclusive education is fundamentally about equity (Artiles, Kozleski, and Waitoller, 2011). Hence, language proficiency is identified as a critical skill that schools must cultivate to facilitate students' comprehension of the curriculum, enhance communication with peers, and foster active participation in interactive learning (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). That said, many Syrian parents, including individuals like Omar, Khalil, Maher, and Nisreen, express satisfaction with the English language support their children receive in schools, especially upon their initial arrival in the country. Maher, in particular, commends his children's school for accommodating Nidal, P4, and Zainab, P1, during the lockdown, a crucial support that facilitated the children's progress in learning the English language considering the family's arrival in Scotland just before the pandemic.

Data from the online survey showed that the educational system itself can inadvertently hinder communication between families and school staff. A primary headteacher expressed disapproval of a policy that transitioned the school enrolment process entirely to an online format. The headteacher argued that the previous system, which involved face-to-face interactions, was more effective in fostering crucial relationships with families. In the traditional approach, parents had the opportunity to confidentially share vital information about their children during the enrolment process, enhancing the connection with the school. The headteacher criticized the current online enrolment system for its lack of direct communication between families and schools from the outset. Emphasizing the importance of face-to-face interactions, the headteacher highlighted that the present system may deprive families of the chance to provide essential information about their children, crucial for understanding their well-being. To address potential challenges faced by new arrivals, the headteacher recommended that families notify schools in advance about their children's enrolment. This proactive step would allow schools to assign a staff member to meet the family and deliver a comprehensive induction process aiming for a smoother transition and inclusion for new students.

8.3: Promoting Inclusion through Evolving Inclusive Practices and Equity from the Middle

This section examines various aspects of inclusive education practices focusing on the importance of resources and support for educators. It underscores the necessity for adequate training, resources, and support for educators to address the diverse needs of learners, particularly those from refugee backgrounds. Furthermore, the discussion illustrates how Equity from the Middle, and the dimension of evolving Inclusive Practices are interconnected, also it examines their alignment with the Capability approach.

A key dimension of the Index for Inclusion labelled 'Evolving Inclusive Practices' centres on developing what is taught and how it is taught to align with inclusive values and policies (Booth and Ainscow, 2016, p.50). Evolving Inclusive Practices focuses on transforming educational approaches and adapting strategies to foster

inclusion. In addition, establishing Equity from the Middle is imperative in schools to enhance educational capabilities (Unterhalter, 2009). Equity from the Middle entails implementing practices that establish equitable boundaries on educational opportunities. This involves the movement of skills, ideas, personnel, and material resources that facilitate learning and teaching processes, especially in schools with diverse student populations.

Achieving an equitable and socially just approach to refugee education demands providing schools with the necessary resources and funding to support refugee students (Tippett et al., 2023). Refugee children often confront a broader spectrum of challenges in securing access to education when contrasted with the experiences of immigrant children, as observed by Suárez-Orozco, Bang, and Kim (2011). This distinction in educational experiences underscores the distinctive and intricate challenges that refugee children grapple with within the educational milieu. It emphasizes the imperative for school staff to be adequately equipped to address the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms, recognizing the nuanced requirements that arise from the unique backgrounds and circumstances of refugee students. Furthermore, the professional development of teachers is a vital component of fostering Equity from the Middle in education given the significant role it has in enhancing investments in children's learning (Unterhalter,2009).

That said, in practice, limited training and professional development were reported as one of the main barriers in relation to the education of refugees in different contexts including in Lebanon, Iceland, the UK, and Turkey (Ragnarsdóttir, 2020; Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017; Şahin and Sümer, 2018; Kaysılı et al., 2019; Aydin et al., 2019; Karabacak, 2020; Çelik and İçduygu, 2019; McCarthy, 2018). The data derived from the online survey revealed a mix of perspectives among educators regarding their ability to address the varied needs of learners. While a few educators exhibited positive attitudes, others expressed concerns about being ill-equipped and under-resourced to address the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms. Insights from the online survey revealed that education staff are actively working to enhance teaching methods and content to address various challenges faced by learners. However, a lack of support and training for educators, coupled with insufficient resources and services in some schools, poses obstacles to the inclusion of all learners, particularly those from

refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. This parallels the challenges faced in Iceland, where Syrian parents cited a lack of school services to support their children's learning and adjustment (Ragnarsdóttir, 2020). Likewise, educators in Nottinghamshire, England, expressed concerns regarding the insufficiency of financial and human resources to adequately address the distinctive needs of certain Syrian learners (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). Similarly, the headteachers in McIntyre and Hall's (2020) study about barriers to the inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking children in schools in England expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of resources, particularly in terms of funding. Within the Turkish context, Aydin and Kaya (2019) identified insufficient resources as a notable obstacle affecting the education of Syrian students in Turkish public schools. Such inadequate support and training for educators, combined with limited resources and services in schools pose a significant obstacle to the development of Inclusive Practices in schools (Booth and Ainscow, 2016; UNESCO, 2016; Allan, 2021). This inadequacy is particularly pertinent when considering the inclusion of students from refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds, necessitating a more concerted effort to bridge the gap and ensure a supportive learning environment for all.

Such lack of resources, training, and support conflicts with the principles advocated by the Capability approach, which questions the accessibility of specific capabilities for individuals and evaluates whether the essential resources to attain these capabilities are within reach (Robeyns, 2005). Likewise, Equity from the Middle and the evolution of Inclusive Practices converge on the importance of resources, skills, ideas, and expertise in improving learning and participation. Thus, resources and skills play a pivotal role in the Capability approach, reflecting their importance in promoting equity and inclusion. Yet, the preceding cases underscore the global nature of the challenge concerning inadequate resources and support in schools.

The Index for Inclusion advocates for a proactive approach to addressing barriers to learning in schools (Booth and Ainscow, 2016, p44) as insufficient support from schools can lead to a decline in student engagement, impacting their overall educational experience, as emphasised by Dovigo (2019). Therefore, educators should undergo specialized training customized for the specific context in which

they operate to effectively address the needs of refugee children in their classrooms (UNHCR, 2017). Addressing such resource and service gaps is essential to promoting inclusion and ensuring equitable and socially just education for all students, including those from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.

The Index for Inclusion advocates for high expectations for all students as the standard (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). This is on board with Guo et al.'s (2021) argument that teachers should maintain high expectations for the academic performance of refugee children, despite their diverse backgrounds. However, this principle may not be uniformly applied in some schools within the Greater Glasgow area. A case in point is a situation recounted by a Syrian parent, detailing the initial experiences of one of his children upon arriving in Scotland. The child, lacking full proficiency in the English language, faced automatic placement in the lowest level for other school subjects without any assessment of his abilities through tests or evaluations. Such predetermined low expectations for learners from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds have the potential to impede their aspirations. Notably, the survey highlights a concerning trend where students may find themselves constrained in their academic choices due to these systemic disparities. The parent emphasized that their child recognized this issue and engaged in multiple discussions with teachers. Consequently, the child was reassigned to an appropriate level, particularly excelling in subjects where proficiency in the English language was not a prerequisite, such as Mathematics. The child was eventually enrolled at an advanced level, successfully obtaining an Advanced Higher certificate in Maths—equivalent to A-Level courses in England—while attending secondary school. This success story serves as a powerful testament to the positive effects of confronting and correcting misguided expectations, thereby empowering students to fully explore their academic capabilities and pursue their career aspirations. Nussbaum argued that education has the profound ability to instil a kind of lifelong satisfaction in educated persons (Nussbaum, 2011). Moreover, education serves as a catalyst, granting access to capabilities that might otherwise remain elusive. Unfortunately, the aforementioned example illustrates how a child may be impeded from fully unlocking educational opportunities, potentially hindering the development of their innate potential. In Nussbaum's terms, this limitation could obstruct the child from leading a 'full and creative' life (Nussbaum, 2011, p.185). The father in this case

had the knowledge to fight for his child and not accept the school's decision, which could have a negative impact on the child's future - but other parents may not be empowered to do the same. Likewise, low expectations from teachers in Canada towards refugee students were documented in Guo et al.'s (2021) study, where students were placed at math levels well below their actual proficiency. These low expectations can significantly demotivate children, fostering a sense of inferiority and low self-esteem, Guo et al. argued. The online survey data in my study further validates these insights, uncovering instances where students are steered into limited academic trajectories that deviate from their career goals. This misalignment frequently stems from a lack of comprehension among families regarding the distinctions between the Scottish and Syrian education systems. The lack of understanding of the education system in the host country was apparent in Madizva and Thondhlana's study (2017), where they emphasized a discrepancy between the expectations of parents, including Syrians, and those of teachers or the educational system, as mentioned earlier. The authors argued that these parents often have high expectations for their children's educational achievements, with some anticipating immediate enrolment in colleges or schools based on academic performance upon arrival in the UK, rather than prioritizing essential capabilities like learning the English language.

Nussbaum (2011, p.24-25) highlighted that 'on the other side of capabilities is functioning. A functioning is an active realization of one or more capabilities'. Functioning involves translating potential abilities one wishes to enact into tangible actions. For instance, when a refugee child is given the chance to learn their mother tongue language in a host country, the opportunity represents a capability, while the act of learning embodies a functioning. In Germany, the utilization of supplementary materials, as well as the quality and quantity of hours dedicated to second language instruction, varies among schools and teachers (Crul et al., 2019). This could also be applicable in Scotland, where variations among schools are not uncommon, as the data from this study showed. In response to the significant influx of refugees in the country, Swedish authorities initiated the Fast-Track programme for teachers in 2016 (Bunar, 2017). This program was launched partially to address the overall shortage of teachers in Swedish schools and, in part, to meet the substantial demand for mother-tongue teachers and bilingual teachers who could provide support to newly arrived students in their native languages. Support

from multilingual staff is beneficial for refugee students to develop the acquisition of the majority language i.e., the language spoken by the majority of the population in a given region or country (Stolk et al., 2023). Supporting the learning of an additional language through mother tongue assistance establishes a foundation for the development of the second language (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). The authors demonstrated that certain schools in Nottinghamshire capitalized on the presence of bilingual teachers and students within the school, utilizing them as valuable resources to support Syrian newcomers. In Guo et al.'s study (2021), numerous Syrian students expressed the belief that having bilingual teachers in the classrooms, who could cater to their language needs, would contribute to their confidence and comfort. Therefore, it is imperative to provide refugee students with the opportunity to learn their mother tongue language in host countries. Prioritizing mother tongue assistance for refugee students not only enhances their capabilities but also facilitates their functioning and inclusion into the educational system. The prospect of schools identifying and supporting bilingualism appears promising. It may be worthwhile for educational institutions in Scotland to explore the possibility of providing students from non-English speaking countries with the opportunity to learn and maintain proficiency in their first language. According to Nussbaum (2011), offering students the chance to learn their first language constitutes a privileged capability. When a child seizes the opportunity to acquire proficiency in their native language, it becomes a functional aspect of their development. That said, recent policy statements and legislation have explicitly elevated the importance of bilingual learners in Scottish educational institutions (Education Scotland, 2023b). Key directives underscore the imperative for local authorities and schools to cater for the specific needs of bilingual learners, emphasizing an individualized, proactive, and inclusive approach (Education Scotland, 2023b).

Data from the online survey showed that students actively participate in diverse activities in schools, regardless of their background, language, or nationality, promoting inclusion. Additionally, a secondary school offers support for smoother transitions, especially concerning further or higher education, considering the uncertain status of many students with refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. The perspectives of Scottish educators, as revealed in the online survey on diversity, show promise, especially when compared to the situation in Iceland

(Ragnarsdóttir, 2020). The aspiration is that these positive viewpoints translate into daily practices, fostering inclusive approaches aligned with values and policies in educational settings (Booth and Ainscow, 2016).

Lastly, Abdulla, a Syrian student who took part in the present study, shared instances of potential exclusive practices within classrooms. He asserted that teachers might display favouritism, neglecting some students and showing preference for those who work diligently. Abdulla observed that students who irregularly attend classes often receive minimal attention. This contradicts the principle of inclusion advocated by the UNESCO document, emphasizing a specific focus on learners at risk of exclusion, underachievement, or marginalization (UNESCO, 2017, p.13). This situation prompts reflection on the principles of equality and equity, and whether teachers should prioritize one over the other, or perhaps both. I contend that equity in education is a crucial principle garnering widespread attention globally. While teachers may not ensure identical outcomes for all students, providing equal opportunities and avoiding neglect, even for those with irregular attendance, is imperative.

8.4: The Educational Inclusion of Syrian Students in Schools in Terms of Presence, Participation, and Achievement

This section discusses the educational inclusion of Syrian students in schools, focusing on three crucial aspects: presence, participation, and achievement (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). The positive feedback from Syrian students in Glasgow regarding their schooling experience is mirrored by educators who took part in an online survey, expressing favourable perceptions about the inclusion of Syrian students in their schools. Notably, a class teacher emphasized that '*Syrian children are included in every part of school life',* while a principal teacher affirmed that these children are treated '*on the same basis as every other child'* in their school. These statements hold promise, at least in theory. In addition, the statements echo the slogan, '*Every learner matters and matters equally'* (UNESCO, 2017, p.13).

However, potential disparities surface, as evidenced by a disconcerting incident involving a Syrian child, Maha P4, whose family shared a negative experience.

According to the family interview, Maha has been persistently subjected to annoyance by some classmates. Dovigo (2019) contends that insufficient support from schools can lead to strained peer relationships and disengagement. While not asserting a lack of support from Maha's school, the persistence of such a distressing experience within the school's premises raises questions. Beyond Maha's case, most Syrian parents conveyed satisfaction with their children's schooling experiences, yet some highlighted concerns such as behavioural issues and cultural differences, which were explored earlier in this chapter. Next, I discuss the three key aspects of inclusion: presence, participation, and achievement.

8.4.1: Presence

Full inclusion in the Capability approach does not necessarily imply that all children and young people must attend the same school; instead, it emphasizes that each individual should be seen as inherently valuable, deserving an education where dignity is closely tied to their abilities and the resources available to help them realize their potential, Hedge and MacKenzie argued. Presence, as defined in UNESCO's (2016, p.13) document, refers to the location of children's education and the consistency and punctuality of their attendance. Insights from interviews with Syrian families indicated that Syrian students consistently attend school without reported issues of absenteeism. On the contrary, the majority of students expressed a positive attitude toward their schools and teachers, conveying a genuine enjoyment of the learning environment.

The accessibility of local schools for Syrian families in Scotland, particularly those under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), was facilitated by the support provided by designated officers, ensuring a smooth enrolment process for their children. In Scotland, asylum-seeking and refugee children are guaranteed access to education, irrespective of their origin, nationality, or immigration status (Scottish Government, 2018). In contrast, interviews revealed that such accessibility was not assured in other Arab countries like Lebanon and Jordan. Amjad pointed out that in Jordan, the focus on children's education was not a priority when survival was at stake, grappling with challenges in providing basic necessities for his family. Similarly, Maher faced obstacles in educating his

children in Lebanon, where access to public schools for Syrians was not guaranteed and enrolling them in private schools was financially burdensome. This is on board with Crul et al.'s argument that Syrian families find it challenging to afford transportation, school supplies, and other expenses associated with schooling in Lebanon. Similarly, Khater (2023) argued that Syrian students in Jordan encounter significant challenges to access education which resulted in tens of thousands of children being out of school. She showed that two-thirds of secondary-stage age students are out of school and that only 3% of them can access university programmes either because of financial barriers and lack of resources or because of the education policies in Jordan that limit refugees' access to education. That said, a concerning trend in the region lies in the disparities among refugees based on socio-economic status (Visconti and Galb, 2018). Visconti and Galb concluded that individuals with financial resources and social capital find it easier to enrol their children in private schools, training institutes, and colleges. This creates an explicit equity issue in accessing education.

8.4.2: Participation

UNESCO (2016, p.13) underscores the connection between participation and the quality of learners' experiences during their time in school, emphasizing the importance of incorporating their perspectives. The positive views expressed by Syrian students toward their schools were evident in their favourable ratings, with most considering their current school as the best in the area, if not one of the best. Such positive views are not always a universal experience in the Arab region. For instance, Khadija, in her interview, highlighted the challenging teacher-student relationships in Iraqi Kurdistan, especially with low-achieving learners, potentially causing reluctance among children to attend school. Aisha, Khadija's daughter, even mentioned instances of students being subjected to physical discipline by teachers in the same area.

The Index for Inclusion advocates a proactive approach to tackling barriers to learning and participation in schools, recognizing that these barriers can manifest within the school environment, as well as in families, communities, and broader societal contexts (Booth and Ainscow, 2016, p.44). It underscores the significance

of embracing Inclusive Practices and fostering collaborative efforts within communities. Survey data indicated that schools are eager to support Syrian families and students, providing various resources and services, such as Young Interpreters Groups, counselling services, EAL teachers, iPads, funds, and ESOL classes. The collaboration between schools and wider community stakeholders, as highlighted earlier in the findings of this study, emerges as a crucial concept in promoting learning, participation, and supporting families in need.

Fostering the inclusion and participation of young refugees in schools necessitates cultivating a culture of attentive listening, wherein all students are embraced and recognized as individuals with unique contributions (Veck and Wharton, 2021). Interviews with Syrian students revealed that their voices are heard and acknowledged in the school environment. A similar attitude was reported by Syrian parents in my study, expressing assurance that their concerns would be taken seriously in the case of sharing issues related to their children's education with school staff. This, somehow, contradicts Guo et al.'s (2021) study on the inclusion of newly arrived Syrian refugees in Canadian schools, where limited evidence of initiatives to amplify refugee student voices in classrooms was found. While Guo et al.’s interviews with Syrian students revealed active engagement in discussing challenges, my study's findings indicated positive perspectives and practices among Syrian students in classrooms. Guo et al. contend that, despite the existence of such challenges, students were hardly given the opportunity to share them with school authorities. In contrast, Syrian families in my study expressed their willingness and ability to discuss any issues their children may face with school authorities.

Cultivating mutual respect within educational environments, among peers and between students and educators, stands as a fundamental principle for fostering Inclusive Practices (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Likewise, the Capability approach underscores the importance of individuals' ability to form meaningful relationships based on mutual recognition as central to maintaining agency and control over one's environment (Nussbaum, 2011). Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) underscored the crucial role of friendships in promoting inclusion. During interviews with Syrian students, friendship emerged as a pivotal element in fostering a sense of inclusion within the school environment, as a majority spoke positively about their

relationships with peers. Furthermore, the positive relationships between Syrian students and their schoolteachers and staff contribute to a high level of participation and are associated with a quality schooling experience. Such a positive relationship between refugee students and their teachers is not universal though. Vigneau et al. (2023, p.1) shared the harsh experience that a Syrian girl, Elham, had in Canada as she was misunderstood and mistreated by her teacher and classmates. For example, the student expressed that her teacher was consistently unkind to her, frequently mispronounced her name and persisted in doing so despite corrections. When the student attempted to address this issue, the teacher responded with a dismissive remark, saying, 'Go back to where your name is from.' Consequently, the student experienced persistent sadness and frequently cried as a result of these interactions. In the Turkish context, the findings of Kaysılı et al. (2019) revealed conflicts between Syrian and Turkish students within schools, stemming from broader social tensions in the community between refugees and host populations, consequently impacting school relationships. Such cases contrast Keddie's (2012) argument that Schools and teachers must create conducive environments that actively address any discrimination or disadvantageous circumstances affecting the educational experiences of refugee students.

The Index for Inclusion (Booth and Ainscow, 2016) asserts that schools should mobilize resources within and beyond the community to support students' learning and participation. Interviews with Syrian families revealed that students actively participate in a variety of classes, activities, and clubs, including music classes, gardening, and sports such as football and basketball. Furthermore, interviews with Syrian families showed that they participate in various activities and programs within the community, such as entertainment centres, swimming pools, Quran and Arabic language learning in local mosques, and homework sessions. The latter proves especially beneficial for families where parents may struggle to provide academic support due to limited education. These social activities are pivotal in restoring a sense of normalcy in the lives of refugee children (Guo et al., 2021). In addition, Syrian students reported positive experiences, highlighting aspects they appreciate about schools in Scotland, including teachers, friends, technological resources like iPads, physical education classes, various subjects, and extracurricular activities.

On the other hand, challenges arise with the language barrier, particularly for Syrian students when they first arrive in Scotland. Older learners are more affected, aligning with similar situations in Turkey (Ozer et al., 2017), England (Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017), and Iceland (Ragnarsdóttir, 2020), where older students face greater challenges in adapting to a new education system and language acquisition. In Scotland, the challenge of limited English skills is exacerbated by a deficiency in support from schools, particularly in the provision of adequate ESOL classes. This insufficiency is evident in the survey data, revealing a gap in the resources allocated to learners, including Syrians, for whom English is not their first language.

8.4.3: Achievement

Madizva and Thondhlana (2017) argued that refugee parents, including Syrians, typically hold high aspirations for their children's educational achievement. Achievement, as defined by (UNESCO, 2016, p.13), '*is about the outcomes of learning across the curriculum, not merely test or examination results'*. In contrast to the challenges faced by refugee children in demonstrating progress in UK schools at the beginning of the new millennium (Rutter, 2006), data from interviews conducted in 2022 revealed positive strides in the learning progress of Syrian students. This aligns with the conclusions drawn by Madziva and Thondhlana (2017) regarding the positive progress observed among Syrian students in schools located in Nottinghamshire, England. To substantiate their academic progress, I inquired about something recent Syrian students had learned at school. Secondary-stage students provided diverse responses, citing topics such as American history, black slavery, discrimination, and the Spanish language. Similarly, primary-stage students mentioned learning about Robert Burns, planets, the Spanish language, handwriting, and Egypt as their recent educational experiences. Moreover, a significant portion of Syrian students, especially in the primary stage, expressed their ability to complete assigned homework independently, seeking parental assistance when necessary. However, some secondary-stage students, encountering occasional challenges, tended to seek help from their siblings rather than their parents. This pattern suggests that Syrian parents may face difficulty assisting their secondary-stage children, possibly due to language barriers or disparities in

educational levels. In contrast, Syrian students in Canada faced difficulty in regard to homework when students expressed a lack of support from certain teachers in assisting them with their homework (Guo et al., 2021). While some students received help from teachers, a significant number reported that when their parents sought additional assistance, teachers asserted that students should handle it on their own. The authors revealed that such an authoritative stance from teachers silenced both parents' and children's concerns.

Syrian parents held varied perspectives on their children's progress and achievement, with the majority expressing positive views, while a few were less optimistic, and some remained uncertain about their children's actual learning progress. As discussed earlier, three remarkable examples emerged from my interviews with Syrian parents regarding their children's achievements and progress in Scottish schools. The first example involved a family's struggle to have their child placed at a higher level in math where the child was automatically placed in the lowest level for all subjects due to limited English proficiency despite his competency in math. Secondly, Syrian parents noted the absence of textbooks in Scottish schools, which made it challenging for them to track their children's learning progress. Lastly, one family felt that if they had remained in Syria, their children might have achieved even greater success, such as becoming doctors. The parent identified his limited proficiency in English as a hindrance to his children's ability to reach their full educational potential. Educators in the online survey appeared to offer pragmatic insights on Syrian children’s achievement and progress. For instance, a teacher from the online survey noted that due to limited English language skills, Syrian learners might find themselves enrolled in fewer academic subjects in lower sets of the curriculum.

To sum up, while most Syrian parents maintained an optimistic outlook regarding their children's educational outcomes, it is essential to approach this assessment with caution, acknowledging the challenges inherent in the educational journey for Syrian students. Acknowledging what the previous research has suggested—that schools' responses to the needs of asylum seekers and refugee students are varied (McBrien, 2005; Baak, 2019)—it is important to recognize that the findings of the current study represent specific cases about Syrian students in particular schools.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

This concluding chapter systematically encapsulates the pivotal elements of the research. It answers the research questions, highlights the distinctive contributions made by the research, presents the implications of the research, and provides recommendations for diverse stakeholders. In addition, the chapter critically examines the limitations inherent in the research and concludes with reflective thoughts and a succinct summary of the thesis.

This research endeavoured to address two primary questions:

1. What are the main opportunities and challenges linked to the educational inclusion of Syrian students in schools?

2. To what extent can Syrian students access, participate, and achieve in schools?

To answer these questions, I conducted 19 semi-structured interviews involving 26 participants, comprising both adults and children from 10 Syrian families. I also conducted an online survey with school educators in the Greater Glasgow area who had experience working with Syrian students.

9.1: What are the Main Opportunities and Challenges Associated with Syrian Students' Educational Inclusion in Schools?

The factors influencing the educational inclusion of refugee children are acknowledged to be 'multiple, complex, and sometimes localized' (Rutter, 2006, p.14). This complexity is pertinent to the current research as variations exist among Syrian families in Scotland regarding their views on their children's education. While the majority express contentment, some harbour concerns, exhibiting a degree of criticism and a desire for increased attention and focus from schools to enhance their children's educational experiences. The experiences of

Syrian refugees in Greater Glasgow offer a focused perspective on broader international refugee issues. The legal and educational challenges these families face mirror larger trends in refugee resettlement and education that impact policies and practices well beyond Scotland. It’s important to note that while the research participants come from diverse regions of Syria with varying linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds, their experiences do not encompass all Syrian families in Western countries or even within Scotland. Furthermore, the findings are somewhat 'localized,' and their relevance may be specific to certain areas and schools within the Greater Glasgow region. In the subsequent discussion, I first address the main opportunities associated with the educational inclusion of Syrian students in mainstream schools in Greater Glasgow, considering perspectives from both families and educators. Subsequently, I explore the primary challenges linked to their educational inclusion.

9.1.1: Current Opportunities that may Help to Boost the Educational Inclusion of Syrian Students

The Index for Inclusion posits that schools should actively utilize resources within the school and the broader community to enhance students' learning and participation (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Through interviews with Syrian students, a diverse array of classes, activities, and clubs have been identified, such as music classes, football and basketball activities, gardening, and the Reach program, aimed at fostering the inclusion of Syrian learners. Notably, iPads emerged as a crucial tool for advancing the education of Syrian students. Parents also highlighted community-based activities and programs, including those offered by local entertainment centres and educational initiatives in mosques, such as learning the Quran and the Arabic language.

In addition, survey data underscores the eagerness of schools to support Syrian families, as well as any other families or students in need, employing various means to ensure their access to all facets of school life. As previously discussed, several resources and services within some schools in Greater Glasgow, including the Young Interpreters Group, counselling services, English as an Additional

Language (EAL) teachers, iPads, financial assistance, and ESOL classes, play a crucial role in minimizing barriers to learning and fostering active participation.

9.1.2: Challenges that may Hinder the Educational Inclusion of Syrian Students

The data derived from interviews and surveys indicates that several key challenges may impede the educational inclusion of Syrian learners in schools. These challenges encompass the English language, a lack of effective communication between schools and families, cultural and educational disparities between Syria and Scotland, lack of resources, and insufficient staff training and support.

Limited proficiency in the English language emerged as a significant challenge hindering Syrian learners from achieving their full potential, particularly noticeable upon their initial arrival in Scotland. Compounding this challenge is the apparent lack of adequate support from schools in terms of providing sufficient ESOL classes, as highlighted in the survey data. Despite the majority of Syrian parents expressing satisfaction with communication channels such as face-to-face meetings, emails, parents' nights, and newsletters; educators participating in the survey cited insufficient communication with Syrian families, especially those lacking proficiency in English. The inadequacy of interpreting services was acknowledged by educators, aligning with Gunnporsdotir's argument (2018, p.61) that the cultural diversity of parents, introducing an additional layer of distinction from their new country of residence, can pose communication complexities for teachers engaging with these parents. Cultural differences between Syrian families and schools also surfaced, notably in the realm of sex education. Some Syrian parents expressed reservations about their children being taught sex education in schools, with one parent advocating for adherence to Islamic teachings instead. Furthermore, the survey data unveiled that a lack of training and support for education staff coupled with inadequate resources pose an additional challenge, potentially hindering the educational inclusion of Syrian, as well as other refugee and asylum-seeking children, in certain Scottish schools.

The literature reviewed in *Chapter Two* unveiled a spectrum of challenges faced by Syrian children in various settings. Particularly striking was the revelation of inadequate resources and a dearth of educator training in countries like Iceland, Germany, and Sweden. Surprisingly, this observation extends to Scotland, where educators highlighted a lack of resources within their schools to adequately support all children, coupled with insufficient training and support for themselves to address the diverse needs of learners in their classrooms. The surprise is compounded by the fact that all the aforementioned countries are regarded as among the most affluent in the world. This observation is not meant to diminish the commendable efforts these nations have made in accommodating diverse learners in their educational systems, recognizing that the needs of certain groups or individuals may surpass the capacity of some schools and educators.

Remarkably, no socioeconomic issues were reported by Syrian families in Scotland. Some participants in this research recounted the significant challenges they faced in the Arab region, mirroring discussions in papers reviewed in the *Literature Review Chapter* relating to socioeconomic issues in Turkey and the Arab region. Consequently, it became evident that the majority of Syrian students and families I interviewed expressed satisfaction with the overall educational experience in Scotland. This satisfaction could, in part, stem from the socioeconomic comparisons they make between their current situation in Scotland and their previous experiences in either Syria or the neighbouring countries in the region.

9.2: To What Extent Syrian Students are Included in Schools in Terms of Presence, Participation, and Achievement?

This section provides a concise overview of the educational inclusion of Syrian students in Glasgow schools, examining three key dimensions: presence, participation, and achievement. Overall, the feedback from both Syrian families and participating educators was positive. However, there were isolated instances of negative experiences, such as the case of Maha, where a Syrian family expressed concerns about their child's treatment by classmates. Additionally, the insufficient provision of ESOL periods in schools and a notable lack of adequate English

language support within schools could negatively affect Syrian students with limited English proficiency. Consequently, they may encounter genuine difficulties in accessing the curriculum. Thus, such limited proficiency in the English language may constrain the number and variety of academic subjects available to Syrian students in the secondary stage, potentially limiting their options, as highlighted by a teacher in the online survey and a parent in an interview.

Examining the dimension of presence, which pertains to where students are educated and their regular attendance (UNESCO, 2016), the data reveals that Syrian students in Glasgow consistently attend school and find their educational experiences enjoyable. Moving on to participation, which focuses on the quality of learners' experiences while at school (UNESCO, 2016), the responses from Syrian learners in this study were encouraging. Most spoke highly of their schools, considering them among the best in the area. Friendships were identified as a crucial element contributing to their sense of inclusion, with the majority expressing positive views about their relationships with peer students and school staff. Interviews with Syrian students also highlighted their active engagement in various classes and extracurricular activities. The third dimension concerning the educational inclusion of Syrian students is achievement, encompassing learning outcomes across the curriculum (UNESCO, 2016). In interviews, Syrian students shared recent materials they had learned, potentially indicative of their learning progress. Primary students demonstrated confidence in completing their homework, while secondary students expressed less confidence, attributing it to language barriers or the advanced level of education at this stage.

Disparities emerged in the perspectives of Syrian parents and school educators regarding certain educational aspects. This mirrors Gunnporsdottir’s (2016) research on refugees, including Syrians, in Iceland, highlighting potential differences in ideas between parents and teachers from diverse cultures regarding the role of schools and education. While most Syrian parents exhibited a positive outlook on their children's educational progress and achievement, there were notable variations in views, with some parents expressing uncertainty.

Now, to what extent are Syrian students included in schools concerning presence, participation, and achievement? I acknowledge that addressing such a

question is a complex task, given the inherent complexities and potential challenges involved. Moreover, I recognise existing research, such as McBrien (2005) and Baak (2019), which suggests that schools' responses to the needs of asylum seekers and refugee students vary significantly. Nevertheless, drawing from my data, I assert that Syrian students can, to a considerable degree, access, participate, and achieve within schools in the Graeter Glasgow area. Despite the challenges inherent in the educational inclusion of Syrian students, particularly those linked to the English language, a prevailing positive sentiment exists among the majority of Syrian students and parents regarding the educational experiences facilitated by schools in Scotland. However, this positive sentiment is somewhat subdued among school educators. While they clearly express tangible efforts to include all students in schools, they simultaneously acknowledge the challenges linked to this endeavour, particularly the evident lack of professional support and allocated resources.

9.3: Original Contribution

The voices of refugee children and their families are often marginalized in research, with limited attention given to their educational experiences, including Scotland’s context (McBride, 2018). Understanding these experiences is vital as education plays a crucial role in their social inclusion within the wider community (Peterson et al., 2017). The current study provided a platform for people from Syrian refugee backgrounds to share their educational experiences in the Greater Glasgow area.

The data generated for this study and their discussions within the wider relevant literature provide an original contribution in relation to the educational inclusion of Syrian students. This case study of Syrian refugees in Greater Glasgow has shed light on the educational challenges and opportunities specific to this region, while also offering broader insights into the inclusion of refugee students in schools. The findings of this research have implications not only for educational practices in Glasgow but also for similar contexts worldwide, where host communities are striving to meet the needs of refugee populations. By considering the voices of Syrian students, parents, and educators, this study contributes to a wider

understanding of how educational systems can adapt to support refugee inclusion, with lessons that extend beyond Greater Glasgow to other global contexts.

Through the concepts and documents forming the explanatory framework, this study underscores the diversity among refugees and asylum seekers and brings attention to certain challenges that are overlooked by influential documents in the realm of inclusion. While relying on two prominent explanatory frameworks—the Index for Inclusion, which evaluates educational inclusion through school culture, policies, and practices, and the two documents developed by UNESCO (2016, 2017) aim at recognizing and eliminating barriers in education—my research identified a crucial factor that was overlooked and not given proper attention by these documents: the housing issues encountered by many refugees and asylum seekers in host countries. The instability and frequent changes in residence experienced by these individuals pose a significant challenge, impacting the overall well-being and, thus, the education of children from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds. Even after being granted leave to remain, many refugees encounter numerous hurdles in securing quality housing, a situation prevalent in many European countries (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 1999). My interview with Syrian families provided insights into how housing issues adversely affect the entire family. It became evident that housing issues faced by refugees in host countries can significantly impede the educational experiences of students when left unattended. However, the two key documents shaping my explanatory framework have a gap in explicitly addressing this crucial aspect of the lives of individuals from refugee backgrounds. Consequently, it is imperative to pay greater attention to this issue in order to implement effective inclusion measures for these vulnerable groups of refugees. By implementing effective inclusion measures, including prioritizing housing stability, we can create environments that support the educational success and social inclusion of refugee children and their families.

It could be argued that the aforementioned documents do not address housing issues given it is not directly related to education. However, the Index for Inclusion promotes a proactive stance in addressing barriers to learning and participation in schools, acknowledging their presence not only within the school environment but also within families, communities, and broader societal contexts (Booth and

Ainscow, 2016, p. 44). It emphasizes the importance of adopting Inclusive Practices and fostering collaborative efforts within communities.

To sum up, this study addresses the significant gap in research regarding the educational experiences of refugee students and their families, particularly in the context of Scotland. The study serves as a call to action for greater attention and resources to be devoted to addressing the multifaceted needs of refugee populations in different educational settings, ultimately contributing to more equitable and inclusive societies.

9.4: Recommendations

The research findings yield recommendations at various levels to improve the educational inclusion of Syrian refugee students. These recommendations encompass guidance for policymakers, suggestions for schools, advice for Syrian families, and insights for future research.

9.4.1: Recommendations for Policymakers

Data from the online survey underscored mostly insufficient training and support for education staff in schools across the Greater Glasgow area. This insufficiency is likely to have adverse effects on inclusive practices within these schools, potentially impeding the educational inclusion of Syrian and other refugee and asylum-seeking students. The absence of support and training for school educators, hindering their ability to address the needs of refugee and asylum-seeking students effectively, stands in contrast to the call in the Index for Inclusion. This call urges schools to respond adeptly to the diversity of students in their locality (Booth and Ainscow, 2016). Gunnþórsdóttir (2018) underscores the importance of teachers possessing insights into the beliefs and practices of students from culturally diverse backgrounds to create an inclusive environment where everyone is valued. Consequently, it is imperative for policymakers to ensure the provision of adequate support and training to educators, empowering them to meet the diverse needs of all students within their classes.

What is perceived as a 'refugee problem' in many countries is actually a result of inadequately prepared institutional arrangements for immigrant children, according to Crul et al. (2019). Instead of addressing this issue systematically, nations often rely on temporary measures, neglecting the need for long-term solutions. The authors emphasize the necessity of systemic adjustments to effectively integrate immigrant children into existing institutions. Migration, whether forced or voluntary, is a persistent phenomenon requiring sustained attention from policymakers and institutions. Failure to address this responsibility results in significant costs such as increased school dropouts and unemployment, leading to a generation with limited prospects. Crul et al. argue that investing in education outweighs these costs, urging countries to adopt long-term, structural measures to tackle the challenges associated with migration.

Teacher education is recognized as a critical element for implementing inclusive pedagogy (UNHCR, 2017). Therefore, as policies are formulated to enhance inclusion, it is imperative to concurrently reassess teacher education policies (UNHCR, 2017). This alignment ensures that system-level goals harmonize with pedagogical practices, thus addressing the needs of the child in a holistic manner. Lastly, it is imperative for policymakers and other community stakeholders to acknowledge and tackle the housing challenges encountered by refugees in host countries. Implementing comprehensive inclusion measures that address housing issues can help reduce barriers to education and social inclusion for refugee families, ultimately fostering their success and well-being in their new communities.

9.4.2: Recommendations for Schools

The study identifies the English language barrier as a significant challenge faced by Syrian students. To tackle language-associated barriers, local authorities should collaborate with schools to provide genuine and practical support in English language acquisition for students arriving from non-English speaking countries. In addition, schools, recognizing the importance of collaboration, should make concerted efforts to engage with other stakeholders in the wider community. This

collaboration can serve dual purposes – promoting learning and participation for all students and providing support to families facing various challenges. Activities and resources tailored for families in the local community should be a central focus of such collaborative efforts, playing a crucial role in implementing educational inclusion both within schools and beyond. Data from Syrian families and school educators indicate a need for more robust addressing of this aspect and an extension of collaborative efforts. Additionally, enhancing coordination between organizations and charities supporting refugee students, working in tandem with schools, is crucial. Increased collaboration across educational boundaries, especially for older students, contributes to a sense of security about their education and future.

Furthermore, external bodies can offer schools support and resources to assist staff in navigating complexities while dealing with refugee students. For instance, organising awareness workshops by independent parties, separate from schools, for Syrian parents on topics like sex education could be beneficial, reducing tension and uncertainty within families. Moreover, collaboration between schools and mosques to discuss potentially controversial issues, like sex education, represents a vital step in creating common ground and fostering better understanding among all parties involved.

If not already implemented, schools should take the initiative to organise interpreters for parents who face language barriers. Additionally, local authorities ought to enhance their investment in translation and interpreting services, along with increasing the availability of first and second-language resources. Addressing the concerns of a Syrian family dissatisfied with the limited exposure to Scotland's landmarks, schools are recommended to consider arranging exploratory trips to key sites across the country. This initiative can help familiarize all students, not only those from refugee backgrounds, with Scotland's rich history and present.

In response to a Syrian student's request for clearer guidance within the education system, it is advisable for teachers to provide support for secondary students early on, assisting them in exploring diverse paths toward potential future careers. In this context, a teacher in the survey highlighted the significance of guidance, proposing that it could be effectively provided by young adults in their

early twenties who have successfully navigated the Scottish education system as refugees themselves. Lastly, schools must recognize that refugee children are not a homogeneous group; they possess diverse needs, experiences, and expectations (Guo et al., 2021). Therefore, Guo et al. argued that it is essential for the school system to understand these differences to effectively assist these young people in settling, regaining stability, and developing new goals and aspirations in their new environments.

9.4.3: Recommendations for Syrian Families

Syrian families are strongly encouraged to actively foster collaborative relationships with schools. The study findings indicate that many Syrian families have limited communication with their children's schools. While language barriers may contribute to this issue, it is crucial for families to recognise their right to request interpreters to facilitate effective communication with schools.

Additionally, I urge Syrian families to be more attentive to all forms of correspondence sent by schools, as these often contain vital information. During interviews, I was surprised to learn that a Syrian parent dismissed the importance of school correspondence, attributing it to a 'cultural' feature. Even if there is some cultural basis for this perception, it is essential for families to adapt to the new educational environment in the host country by paying careful attention to such communications. Understanding and responding to the information provided will contribute significantly to their children's academic success in this new education system.

9.4.4: Implications for Researchers

Researchers working with refugee families, including those of Syrian origin or similar backgrounds, should be mindful of various considerations. As discussed in the *Methodology Chapter*, refugees may approach researchers cautiously, and traditional research procedures like consent forms and audio-recorded interviews may cause uneasiness and anxiety. This could lead to some individuals feeling

hesitant to take part in audio-recorded interviews (Karlsson, 2019). During my research, some families chose to withdraw from participation due to worries about their citizenship applications, despite assurances about the confidentiality and anonymity of their information. This reluctance may stem from cultural experiences in Syria, where signing documents could be perceived as binding. Parents may also worry about their children being interviewed, especially with recorders present.

Furthermore, even when researchers provide project explanations in plain language, they may not always be easily understood by participants. Documents related to the research may be written in technical language, posing challenges for individuals, not least those with lower literacy levels. To address these issues, ethics departments could consider adapting procedures for vulnerable groups, such as waiving the requirement for signed consent forms. Moreover, providing documents in more accessible plain language could also improve comprehension for participants with varying literacy levels.

While the subject of sex education was not explicitly broached during my discussions with Syrian families, some parents spontaneously conveyed reservations about it. Therefore, subsequent research on refugees should probe more profoundly into this aspect to acquire a comprehensive understanding of their viewpoints on sex education. Such exploration could yield valuable insights to shape policies and support systems for refugee communities.

9.4.5: Recommendations and Suggestions from Syrian Families

Certain Syrian parents recommended increased attention and support from schools to overcome language barriers for students arriving from non-English-speaking countries, facilitating their inclusion into both school and the broader community. Another parent suggested the creation of more activities within the local community to enhance children's inclusion. Additionally, there was a call for heightened focus and interest from the school to enhance students’ learning and knowledge. One, surprising, suggestion involved the introduction of a standardized English language in schools, akin to the standard version of Arabic (Al-Fusha) in the

Syrian context. This proposal aimed to unify the various accents and dialects of English. Addressing the perceived lack of homework in the Scottish education system, some parents recommended an increase in homework assignments to benefit students. The need for schools to prioritize and effectively address behavioural issues was also emphasized, as these concerns impact both the misbehaving student and their peers. A Syrian parent advocated for the employment of experts to combat bullying, expressing scepticism about the efficiency of the current approach and highlighting the importance of creating bullying-free environments within school premises. Syrian parents recommended that schools take a strict stance on issues such as bullying, discrimination, and racism.

Surprisingly, some parents struggled to provide suggestions or recommendations even when explicitly asked. For instance, Khadija and Abdulla expressed their inability to make suggestions about their children's school, trusting that schools are better equipped to understand and fulfil their responsibilities. This couple exhibited a high level of trust in schools, including teachers and educators, to the extent that they were hesitant to evaluate their children's educational experiences. In response to inquiries about suggestions or recommendations, their consistent response conveyed confidence in the school's competence, expressing sentiments such as, ‘They know their job… They do their job properly… Everything is fine, there is nothing to add.’

9.5: Research Limitations

A potential limitation of the current research arises from the researcher's gender, possibly restricting the recruitment of female adults, particularly mothers, due to cultural considerations. Consequently, the predominance of male participants (11) over females (2) in this research might be viewed as a limitation, though it was an unavoidable aspect of being a solo researcher.

It is important to acknowledge this limitation; however, it should not detract from the valuable insights gained regarding the educational inclusion of Syrian students in the Greater Glasgow area.

9.6: Final Reflection

This section of the thesis presents personal reflections, thoughts, and insights garnered throughout the entire research process, spanning from the inception of the research question to the conclusion of the study.

My passion for inclusive education, particularly within the Arab region, has been a driving force throughout my academic and professional journey, including during my master's studies. With teaching experience in both Syria and Kuwait, education has always been central to my life. As a Syrian from a refugee background and a parent with children in mainstream schools in Glasgow, I developed a keen interest in the schooling experiences of other Syrian children. This interest led me to investigate the challenges they encounter in inclusive education, the strategies employed by schools and teachers to address these challenges, and the available services and opportunities that support their integration into mainstream education. My motivation for this project arose from a profound curiosity to explore and understand the educational experiences of Syrian students in this context.

Initially, my focus centred on interviewing Syrian parents to gain insights into their perspectives on their children's education. However, through extensive discussions with my supervisors, the emphasis shifted to include the children themselves, recognizing them as the primary subjects of the study. Subsequently, we broadened the scope to encompass school educators, seeking to comprehend their perspectives on the matter. The decision to collect data from three distinct sources— students, parents, and school educators—was motivated by the belief that this multi-faceted approach would enhance the richness of the study.

Syrian refugees are unique due to the unprecedented war's heinous nature. It is not uncommon to find a Syrian family where all members have been victims of war and violence, potentially causing complex traumas, especially for children. Despite expectations of addressing such issues during interviews with Syrian families, none of the participants mentioned traumas or war-related concerns. That might, or

might not, be attributed to the fact that it often takes a few years for refugees to be willing to discuss mental health issues (Chopra and Dryden-Peterson, 2020).

One significant challenge I encountered during my research involved typing in non-English languages, specifically Arabic and Kurdish. Since I transcribed interviews in the original language, I initially purchased an Arabic keyboard for this purpose. Unfortunately, it turned out to be less than ideal, with some letters having confusing secondary functions. To address this, a colleague recommended using Arabic stickers on my existing English (Original) keyboard, which proved to be a successful solution. Additionally, another colleague suggested that I hire transcription pedals from the School of Education to expedite the transcription task. Despite following this advice, technical issues arose with the device's software, and efforts to resolve the problem with the assistance of IT personnel proved unsuccessful. While an alternative software was downloaded, it too presented issues. Consequently, I opted to forgo the use of pedals and manually conducted the transcription, a process that proved to be time-consuming.

Regarding the methodology and research methods, I adopted a qualitative case study research design, utilizing qualitative approaches for data collection, which included conducting semi-structured interviews with Syrian students. Reflecting on the process of interviewing students, I am uncertain if it was the most effective way to gain a detailed and in-depth understanding of their educational experiences. Some students exhibited shyness during the interviews, providing brief answers without delving into details. Therefore, for future research, especially with younger students, it might be worthwhile to explore more child-friendly methods.

The current research experience has significantly contributed to both my personal and professional growth. I have acquired valuable knowledge and skills, enabling me to conduct research critically and systematically throughout my Ph.D. program, shaping my academic and career trajectory. Looking ahead, my future research plans are centred around inclusion and refugee education, albeit possibly in a different setting and context. I am intrigued by the prospect of investigating education in the northeast area of Syria, commonly known as Rojava. The radical changes in recent years, including the shift in the curriculum and language of

instruction in schools from Arabic to Kurdish, motivate my interest in exploring the educational landscape in this region.

The educational inclusion of Syrian refugees is a complex topic that may warrant a more comprehensive investigation than this research allows. Despite its ambitious scope, the study manages to touch upon some aspects, achieving a measure of success by reaching a few noteworthy points. In aiming for the moon, it does manage to hit a few stars. Overall, as my convenor aptly noted during an Annual Progress Review, a PhD is about asking questions, not all of which necessarily have answers; I hope that this thesis, at least in some respects, addresses the questions it raised.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Full list of the 41 studies that were excluded at stage two:

Author/s	Title	Reason of exclusion
Greaves, Morten **Nabhani, Mona** **Bahous, Rima**	Tales of resilience and adaption: a case-study exploring the lived-experiences and perceptions of Syrian refugee teachers in Lebanon	Not about children' education
Vidur Chopraa and **Sarah Dryden-Peterson**	Borders and belonging: displaced Syrian youth navigating symbolic boundaries in Lebanon	Participants were adult
Maurice Crul, Frans Lelie, Özge Biner, **Nihad Bunar** **, Elif Keskiner** **, Ifigenia Kokkali** **, Jens Schneider,** **Maha Shuayb,**	How the different policies and school systems affect the inclusion of Syrian refugee children in Sweden, Germany, Greece, Lebanon and Turkey	Not empirical

Rouba Al-Salem	A new link in the chain? Arabic-language citizenship education courses and the integration of resettled Syrian refugees in Canada	Not empirical
Hristo Kyuchukov, and William New	Peace education with refugees: case studies The study presented three case studies: Youth Bosnian in Chicago, Adult male Bosnian in Belin, and Syrian and Afghani youth in Leipzig	Not clear sample and methodology The study was excluded because it did not present enough information about Syrian participants. In addition, methodology adapted was not clear in terms of data collection, data analysis, and sample of the study.
Melike Ünal Gezer	Looking Through the Multicultural Glass: Re-Examination of Syrian Refugee Children Education in Turkey	Not empirical
Rouba Al-Salem	A New Link in the Chain? Arabic-Language Citizenship Education Courses and the Integration of Resettled Syrian Refugees in Canada	Not empirical.
Louisa Viscontia and Diane Gal	Regional collaboration to strengthen education for nationals & Syrian refugees in Arabic speaking host countries	Not empirical.
MARY CLAIRE WOFFORD, And SANA TIBI Florida	A human right to literacy education: Implications for serving Syrian refugee children MARY	Not empirical.

Lorraine Charles, **And** **Kate Denman**	Syrian and Palestinian Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: the Plight of Women and Children	Not empirical
Tareq Z. Albakri, **And** **Rabih Shibli**	How to improve sustainability: the critical role of education for Syrian refugees	Not empirical
Fares J. Karam, Christine Monaghan & Paul J. Yoder	The students do not know why they are here': education decision-making for Syrian refugees	Not about formal education
Elliott, James A. **Das, Debashish** **Cavailler, Philippe** **Schneider, Fabien** **Shah, Maya** **Ravaud, Annette** **Lightowler, Maria** **Boulle, Philippa**	A cross-sectional assessment of diabetes self-management, education and support needs of Syrian refugee patients living with diabetes in Bekaa Valley Lebanon	Focus on diabetes education, and self-management
Lynn Schneider	Access and Aspirations: Syrian Refugees' Experiences of Entering Higher Education in Germany	Focus on higher education
Sanaa Ashour	Access for Syrian refugees into higher education in Germany: a systematic literature review	Focus on higher education

Armağan Erdoğan and M. Murat Erdoğan	Access, Qualifications and Social Dimension of Syrian Refugee Students in Turkish Higher Education	Focus on higher education
Marianne Hattar-Pollara	Barriers to Education of Syrian Refugee Girls in Jordan: Gender- Based Threats and Challenges	About non-formal schooling in refugee camps
Gottardo, Alexandra **Amin, Norah** **Amin, Asma** **Al-Janaideh, Redab** **Chen, Xi** **Paradis, Johanne**	Word reading in English and Arabic in children who are Syrian refugees	About reading skill (phonology and morphology)
Ahmed Cagri INAN	THE CRISIS ON THE BORDER OF TURKEY: AN ANALYSIS OF SYRIAN REFUGEES' EDUCATION, SHELTER AND HEALTHCARE	Not empirical
Deane Shelley	Syria's lost generation: Refugee education provision and societal security in an ongoing conflict emergency	Not empirical
Essam Mansour	Profiling information needs and behaviour of Syrian refugees displaced to Egypt: An exploratory study	

Mirey Alfarah, **And** **María Alejandra Bosco**	THE ROLE OF ICTS IN REBUILDING EDUCATION IN AREAS OF ARMED CONFLICTS: THE SYRIAN CASE	Not about formal education
Zeena Zakharia, and Francine Menashy	Private participation in the education of Syrian refugees: understanding the roles of businesses and foundations	Focus not on refugee lived-experiences of education
Melek El Nimer	EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE IN LEBANON	Not empirical
Sarah Kenyon Lischer	The Global Refugee Crisis: Regional Destabilization & Humanitarian Protection	Not empirical +Focus not on education
Olivia Paul	The complex needs of refugee background children in early childhood education: A brief review of the literature	Not empirical
Cathrine Brun, **and** **Maha Shuayb**	Exceptional and Futureless Humanitarian Education of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon: Prospects for Shifting the Lens	Not empirical

Akar, Sevda **Erdoğdu, M. Mustafa**	Syrian Refugees in Turkey and Integration Problem Ahead	Not empirical +Focus not on education
Anja van Heelsum	Why migration will continue: aspirations and capabilities of Syrians and Ethiopians with different educational backgrounds	Focus not on education
Elsafti, Abdallah Mohamed **Van Berlaer, Gerlant** **Al Safadi, Mohammad** **Debacker, Michel** **Buyl, Ronald** **Redwan, Atef** **Hubloue, Ives**	Children in the Syrian Civil War: the Familial, Educational, and Public Health Impact of Ongoing Violence	about the impact of Syrian ongoing violence on internal displaced Syrian
Naima Ahmad Al-Husban, **And** **Sameera Mahmoud Alshorman**	Perceptions of Syrian student refugees towards blended learning: Implications for higher education institutions	participants are university students
Ersoy Erdemir	Uncovering Community Cultural Wealth Through an Early Intervention Program: Syrian Refugee Children Speaking	About a preschool intervention program

Unknown author	Promoting healthy integration of Syrian children into schools CCDR	Not journal article
Almasri, Nada **Tahat, Luay** **Terkawai, Laila Al**	How Can Technology Support Education in War – WarAware Education Platform for Syria	About education in refugee camps
Ersin Uygun	The Life Condition of Syrian Asylum Seekers in Turkey and the Effect of These Conditions on the Desire to Migrate to Europe	Focus not on education
Vanessa Braun	Standpoint Theory in Professional Development: Examining Former Refugee Education in Canada	
Ahmet İçduygu, **And** **Doğuş Şimşek**	SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY: TOWARDS INTEGRATION POLICIES	Not empirical
AbuJarour, Safa'a **Wiesche, Manuel** **Andrade, Antonio Díaz** **Fedorowicz, Jane** **Krasnova, Hanna** **Olbrich, Sebastian** **Tan, Chee Wee** **Urquhart, Cathy** **Venkatesh, Viswanath**	ICT-enabled refugee integration: A research agenda	Not about education of Syrian refugees

Omar Reda	Caring for Syrian Refugees in Portland, Oregon	Not journal article
Sirin, Selcuk **Plass, Jan L.** **Homer, Bruce D.** **Vatanartiran, Sinem** **Tsai, Tzuchi**	Digital game-based education for Syrian refugee children: Project Hope	not about formal education
Lirondel Cheyne-Hazineh	Creating New Possibilities: Service Provider Perspectives on the Settlement and Integration of Syrian Refugee Youth in a Canadian Community	Participants were not Syrian refugee's children

Appendix 2: Excluded studies at stage Three

Authors/s	Title	Year / publication	Theme/location	Reason of exclusion
Paradis, Johanne Soto-Corominas, Adriana Chen, Xi Gottardo, Alexandra	How language environment, age, and cognitive capacity support the bilingual development of Syrian refugee children recently arrived in Canada	2020 Applied Psycholinguistics	Canada The study examined the bilingual development of Syrian refugee children who recently arrived in Canada	Excluded as it focused mainly on language development of Syrian children
Mohammad Muhaidat, Ali M. Alodat, Qais I. Almeqdad	Inclusive Education Practices for Refugee Children with Disabilities in Jordanian Schools	2020 International Journal of Early Childhood Special Education	Jordan Identify inclusive education practices offered to Syrian refugee students with disabilities in schools	Removed because it investigated inclusive education practices in 10 schools inside two Syrian refugee camps in Jordan, Za'tari and Azraq.
Kiselev, Nikolai Pfaltz, Monique Schick, Matthis Bird, Martha Pernille, Hansen Sijbrandij, Marit de Graaff, Anne M. Schnyder, Ulrich Morina, Naser	Problems faced by Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Switzerland	2020 Swiss medical weekly	Switzerland The study investigated the problems that Syrian refugees and asylum seekers face in Switzerland.	Excluded because participants were adult
Ziaian, Tahereh Miller, Emily De Anstiss, Helena Puvimanasinghe, Teresa Dollard, Maureen Esterman, Adrian Barrie, Helen Stewart-Jones, Tamara	Refugee Youth and Transition to Further Education, Training, and Employment in Australia: Protocol for a Mixed Methods Study	2019 JMIR RESEARCH PROTOCOLS	Australia identify the barriers and facilitators to refugee youth successful transition	Removed because Syrian refugees are not the focus. + About youth refugees aged 15-24
Arran Magee And Tejendra Pherali	Freirean critical consciousness in a refugee context: a	2019 Compare	Jordan	Excluded because it is not

	case study of Syrian refugees in Jordan		about social and emotional wellbeing of Syrian refugees in a non-formal education setting.	about formal education
John Walker and Daniyal Zuberi	School-Aged Syrian Refugees Resettling in Canada: Mitigating the Effect of Pre-migration Trauma and Post-migration Discrimination on Academic Achievement and Psychological Well-Being	2019 Journal of International Migration and Integration	Canada Resettlement of Syrian refugees	Removed because it is not empirical
Judith Ann Cochran	Jordan's solution to the refugee crisis: idealistic and pragmatic education	2020 British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies	Jordan About the Jordanian response to the education of refugees	Excluded because the Focus is not on Syrian refugees' education

Appendix 3: Letter of Ethical Approval

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences

College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

12 December 2021

Dear Munther Nouraldeen

Project Title: Refugee education in the UK: The case of Syrian families in Greater Glasgow

Application Number: 400210045

The College Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application and has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. It is happy therefore to approve the project, subject to the following conditions:

- Start date of ethical approval: 12/12/2021
- Project end date: 01/09/2023
- Any outstanding permissions needed from third parties in order to recruit research participants or to access facilities or venues for research purposes must be obtained in writing and submitted to the CoSS Research Ethics Administrator before research commences. Permissions you must provide are shown in the *College Ethics Review Feedback* document that has been sent to you as the **Collated Comments Document** in the online system.
    - The data should be held securely for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project, or for longer if specified by the research funder or sponsor, in accordance with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research: (https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_490311_en.pdf)
- The research should be carried out only on the sites, and/or with the groups and using the methods defined in the application.

Any proposed changes in the protocol should be submitted for reassessment as an amendment to the original application. The **Request for Amendments to an Approved Application** form should be used:
https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/staffandpostgraduateresearchstudents/

Yours sincerely,

Dr Muir Houston College Ethics Officer

Muir Houston, Senior Lecturer
College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer
Social Justice, Place and Lifelong Education Research
University of Glasgow
School of Education, St Andrew's Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow G3 6NH
0044+141-330-4699 Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Appendix 4: Ethics Documents

University of Glasgow
College of Social Sciences

Participant Information Sheet

Researcher

Munther Nouraldeen Email:xxxxxxxxx@student.gla.ac.uk

Degree Title

PhD in Education

School

School of Education

Project Title: Examining Inclusion: Opportunities and Challenges for Syrian students in Scottish Schools

Supervisors: Ines Alves (ines.alves@glasgow.ac.uk);

Marta Moskal (Marta.moskal@glasgow.ac.uk)

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask the

researcher/s if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take some time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this research is to investigate the educational experiences of Syrian refugee children in mainstream schools in Greater Glasgow. In order to do this, if you are a Syrian child/parent I will conduct a 30-minute interview with you where you will have the opportunity to express your views and perspectives on this issue. If you are a schoolteacher/headteacher I will invite you to fill in a survey questionnaire about your perspective in related to the education of Syrian students.

You have been chosen for this research project because you are either:

- A Syrian refugee age-school child/parent who lives in Grater Glasgow
- An educator including (schoolteacher/headteacher/deputy teacher/teacher assistant) who has/had engagement with Syrian students in school setting

Do I have to take part?

You are not compelled in any way to take part in this study unless you wish to do so. You are also free to withdraw from the project at any time without the need to provide a reason for doing so. In the event of withdrawal all your existing, already provided data will be fully eliminated and disposed. Your confidentiality will be strictly maintained.

Is the information that I provide Confidential?

Please note that confidentiality will be maintained as far as it possible, unless during our conversation I hear anything which makes me worried that someone might be in danger of harm, I might have to inform relevant agencies of this. Please be aware that confidentiality may be impossible to guarantee in some situations, for example due to relatively small size of sample, and specific location—Greater Glasgow. In addition, in the event of a joint or group interview, confidentiality may be impossible to guarantee.

Should you wish to take part in this PhD research project you will be asked to read and sign a consent form.

Any information that you provide will be anonymised and kept strictly confidential and anything that can identify you will be removed from any write-up, of any kind, arising from this project. All written and recorded information will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and all electronic files stored on the computer systems will be password protected. At the end of the research period, October 2023, all paper documentation will be shredded, and any voice recordings will be deleted.

How will the information that I provide be used?

The information provided by you through interview will be used in my PhD project submission in October 2023.

Has the research project been reviewed and approved?

This project has been considered and approved by the College of Social Science Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for further information

For further information on the review and approval process and to pursue any complaint, please contact the College of Social Sciences Ethics Officer:

Dr Muir Houston, email: Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider the above information.

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Child Plain Language Statement

Title of project and researcher details

Title: Examining Inclusion: Opportunities and Challenges for Syrian students in Scottish Schools

Researcher: Munther Nouraldeen

Supervisors: Ines Alves/ Marta Moskal

Course: PhD in Education

You are being invited to take part in a research project into Syrian refugee education. A research project is a way to learn more about something. You are being asked to take part because you are a Syrian child living and going to School in Greater Glasgow.

Before you decide if you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Please take time to read the information on this page carefully and discuss it with others and your parents/carers if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What will happen if you take part

The purpose of this study is to find out about the educational experiences of Syrian children in schools.

If you decide to take part, I will ask you some questions about your day-to-day school routines. You do not have to answer any questions that you don't want to. This will take

about 30 minutes. I will record your answers on a voice recorder so that afterwards I can listen carefully to what you said.

I will be finished gathering information after about three months.

You do not have to take part in this study. If after you have started to take part, you change your mind, just let me know and I will not use any information you have given me.

Keeping information confidential

I will keep the information secret and safe in a locked cabinet or in a locked file on my computer.

When I write about what I have found out, your name will not be mentioned. If you like you can choose another name for me to use when I am writing about what you said. No-one else will know which name you have chosen.

However, if during our conversation I hear anything which makes me worried that you might be in danger of harm, I might have to tell other people who need to know about this.

Please be aware that confidentiality may be impossible to guarantee in some situations, for example due to relatively small size of sample, and specific location—Greater Glasgow. In addition, in the event of a joint or group interview, confidentiality may be impossible to guarantee.

The results of this study

When I have gathered all of the information from everyone who is taking part, I will write about what I have learned in a thesis, which is a long document, which I have to complete for the course I am studying on. This will be read and marked by my teachers at university.

If you would like, I can tell you what I have found out in my project. I will destroy all of my notes and recordings when the project is finished.

Review of the study

This study has been reviewed and agreed by the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, University of Glasgow.

Contact for further Information

If you have any questions about this study, you can ask

me, (xxxxxxx@student.gla.ac.uk);

or my supervisor, Ines Alves (Ines.alves@glasgow.ac.uk);

or the Ethics Officer for the College of Social Sciences at Muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this.

End _____

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Consent Form

Title of Project: Examining Inclusion: Opportunities and Challenges for Syrian students in Scottish Schools

Name of Researcher: Munther Nouraldeen

Name of Supervisor: Ines Alves / Marta Moskal

I confirm that I have read and understood the **Participant Information Sheet** for the above research project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is **voluntary** and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I consent/do not consent (circle your answer) to interviews being audio-recorded.

I wish/do not wish (circle your answer) to see a copy of the interview transcript.

I acknowledge that participants will not be identified by name in any publications arising from the research:

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymized.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- Unwanted material will be destroyed once the project is completed.
- Interview transcripts will be anonymized and will be kept for 10 years after completing my PhD.

I agree/do not agree (circle your answer) to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Researcher: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Child Consent Form

Title of Project: Examining Inclusion: Opportunities and Challenges for Syrian students in Scottish Schools.

Name of Researcher: Munther Nouraldeen

Name of Supervisor: Ines Alves / Marta Moskal

Child (or if unable, parent on their behalf) /young person to circle all they agree with:

Do you understand what this project is about?

Have you had the chance to ask all the questions you want?  

Have you had your questions answered in a way you understand?  

Do you know that participation is voluntary?  

Are you happy for the interview to be audio-recorded?  

Are you happy to take part?  

If you answered any question with '**No**' or you don't want to take part anymore, **don't** sign your name!

Write your name below only if you **do want** to take part.

Your name: _____

Date: _____

The researcher needs to sign this form too:

Name of Researcher: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you very much for your help

Appendix 5: Interview guides for adults, primary students, and secondary students

Interview guide/adult

Method of Data Collection: Semi-Structured Interview (30-60 mins duration) **Topic**: Refugee education in the UK: The case of Syrian families in Glasgow

Children education to date:

Can you tell me about your children's previous education until now?

1-Have they learned in any other countries? If yes, what differences and similarities are there between their previous and current overall education?

2-What are your personal thoughts and views on your children's overall education since their arrival in Scotland?

Access/Beginning

3-Tell me about your child's first day/s at this school? Were your child/ren made to feel welcome at their current school? Were your child/ren were helped to settle into the school?

4-Did you receive any information when your children started school? How was the information you received when your children started school?

5-How did you choose which school your children would attend?Was this school your first choice for your child(ren)?

6-Did your child(ren) want to come to this school? Do your child(ren) enjoy being at this school?

Parent's involvement:

7-How is your relationship with the school? 7-What are your thoughts about school teachers/staff?

8-Do you feel that all families are equally valued whatever their backgrounds?

9- In your experience, do you think before changes are made in the school parents are asked for their views? Do you feel involved in the school?

10-Is there a school newsletter? Have you read it? Do you feel it's useful to keep you up-to-date with changes at the school?

11-Do you know who to contact when, for example, you are concerned about your son's/daughter's progress at school?

12-If you tell staff of concerns you have about your child(ren)'s progress, Will you be confident that your views are taken seriously?

13-Does the school provide interpreters if needed?

Participation and Achievement:

14-Tell me about your children's learning at school? Are you satisfied with your child/ren's learning?

15- What may boost their learning?

16- Are they progressing with their learning? Are they achieving in your point of view?

17-Do you think the school keeps you well informed about your child(ren)'s progress?

18- Do you feel that the school provides clear information about how you can help your child(ren) with their school work at home?

19-Do you think staff at this school encourage all students to do their best, not just the most able?

20-Do your children regularly join in with clubs and other activities taking place in the lunchtimes and after school?

Challenges/barriers to their education/inclusion:

21-Are there any barriers that hinder your child/ren's education? If yes, what are they? And how can they be overcome, in your understanding?

22-Stereotypes prejudices are sometimes linked with refugee people, have you/ your children experienced anything like that?

23-Do you think all students are equally valued in school?

24-Do you think staff seek to remove barriers to learning and participation in all aspects of the school?

Opportunities, resources, and services to promote education~~/ inclusion:~~

25-What opportunities, resources, and services are available for your children that can promote their education in the school ~~as well as in the wider community?~~

26-What are the things you like it most about your child/ren's education in Scotland? What are the things you do not like about your children`s education in Scotland, if any?

27- What services/ procedures need to be in place to ensure that your children have quality and inclusive learning environment in their schools?

Bullying and discrimination

28-What are your thoughts about bullying and discrimination in this school?

29-Do you feel that the school strives to minimise all forms of discrimination?

30-Do you feel that Teachers favour one group of children and young people over another?

31-Do you think the staff work harder to help some students than others?

32-Have you come across any issues of bullying? Do you think it is a problem at the school?

33-Do you think everything possible is done to stop bullying?

Finishing the conversation/Further suggestions to promote education

34-To what extent your child/ children have been successful in their education?

35-What suggestions can you make about the school which might help to make it a better place for your child(ren).

Community/society

36-What opportunities, resources, and services are available for you/your family to facilitate your inclusion?

37What are your/your family's experiences with the community/the society? Have you faced any issues/challenges?

Do you want to add anything about your children's educational experience or any other issue that I have not tackled?

Munther Nouraldeen September 2021**Note:** Some questions and themes are quoted or adapted from `Index for Inclusion`(Booth and Ainscow, 2002); ` A Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education` (UNESCO, 2017); and ` Reaching Out to all learners: a Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education Training Tools for Curriculum Development` (INTERNATIONAL BUREAU OF EDUCARION, 2016).

Student's interview guide/ Primary

Some of the following questions and statements will be used to start conversations with the child about various of topics and themes in relation to his/her education. Further questions that are relevant to my research will be asked according to their responses.

Primary

Setting the scene: Introducing myself and have an informal general chat with the child. For example, Asking about his/her favourite hobby. Ask the child about the kind of programmes he likes to watch on T.V.

Access/Beginning

1-Ask some general questions about the child's school? How do you get there?

2-Do you remember your first day/days in school? How was it?

3-Do you think this is a good school?

My teacher:

4-Do you like your teacher?

5-Do you like being at school?

Likes and dislikes:

6-What are the two things you like best about you school?

7-What are the two things you like the least about your school?

8-If you could change one thing in your school, what would it be?

Achievement

9-What was the last thing that you learned at school?

10-Do you get homework? Do you understand what you are supposed to do?

11-Are you able to do your homework? Anyone helps you with it?

12-Do you parents help you if you need help with your homework?

13-What do you feel when you finish a piece of work? (Happy, pleased, proud)

Participation:

14-Does your teacher, sometimes, let you choose what work to do?

15-Does your teacher make lessons easy to understand for you? Does your teacher make lessons easy to understand for everyone?

16-Do your teachers help everyone who has difficulties with lessons?

17-Are there activities arranged outside of lessons which interest you? What activities do you like to do? Are there activities arranged outside of lessons which interest everyone?

18-Do you help your friends with their work when they get stuck? Do your friends help you with your work when you get stuck?

19-Does your teacher like to listen to your ideas? Example?

20-Does your teacher like to help you with your work?

21-When you feel unhappy at school, is there an adult who looks after you?

Friendship

22-Do you have friends at school? What's their names?

23-Who is your favourite friend? Why do you like him/her most?

Bullying and discrimination

24-Are there kids that annoy other kids at school? If yes. Why do you think they do so?

25-Are there kids that annoy you at school? If yes. Why do you think they do so?

26-Are there children in your class that call others by unkind names?

27-Do you sometimes get bullied (annoyed deliberately and regularly) in the playground?

Community/society

28-What opportunities, resources, and services are available for you/your family to facilitate your inclusion?

29-What are your/your family's experiences with the community/the society? Have you faced any issues/challenges?

Do you want to add anything about your educational experience or any other issue that I have not tackled?

Note: Some questions and themes are quoted or adapted from `Index for Inclusion`(Booth and Ainscow, 2002); ` A Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education` (UNESCO, 2017); and ` Reaching Out to all learners: a Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education Training Tools for Curriculum Development` (UNESCO, 2016)

Students's interview guide/ Secondary

Secondary

Setting the scene: Introducing myself and have an informal general chat with the child. For example, ask about his/her favourite things to do. Ask the child about the places he/she likes to visit in Glasgow.

My teacher/s

1-Do you like your teacher?

2-Do you think the teachers work hard to make the school a good place to come to?

Opportunities and services:

3-What things/services/tools are there that help you to learn?

4-Do you ask the teachers for help when you struggle with your work?

5-Are the staff at this school friendly to you?

6-Do you have some good friends in this school?

7- Do you like being at school?

8-Do you sometimes join in clubs or do sports practice at lunchtimes?

9-Do you sometimes join in clubs or do sports practice after school?

10-When you feel unhappy at school, is there an adult who looks after you?

Challenges and barriers

11-What do you wish to have in your school that is not available now?

12-What two/ changes would you like to see at the school?

Likes and dislikes:

13-What are the three things you like best about you school?

14-What are the three things you like the least about your school?

15-If you could change one thing in your school, what would it be?

Access

16-Ask some general questions about the child's school? How do you get there?

17-Do you remember your first day/days in school? How was it?

18-Do you think this is a good school?

19-Was this the school the one you wanted to come to when you left your primary school? Why?

20-Do you think this is the best school in the area?

Participation:

21-Do you often work with other students in pairs and small groups during lessons?

22-Are your teachers interested in listening to your ideas?

23-Does your teacher sometimes let you choose what work to do?

24-Does your teacher make lessons easy to understand for you? Does your teacher make lessons easy to understand for everyone?

25-Do your teachers help everyone who has difficulties with lessons?

26-Does your teacher like to help you with your work?

27-Are there activities arranged outside of lessons which interest everyone? *What activities do you like to do?*

28-Do you help your friends with their work when they get stuck? Do your friends help you with your work when you get stuck?

Achievement

29-Do you enjoy your lessons?

30-Do you learn a lot in this school?

31-When you are given homework, do you usually understand what you have to do?

32-Do you get homework? Do you understand what you are supposed to do?Do you usually do the homework you are given?

33-Are you able to do your homework? Anyone helps you with it?

34- Do you parents help you if you need help with your homework?

35-What do you feel when you finish a piece of work? (Happy, pleased, proud)

36-What was the last thing that you learned at school?

Friendship/relationship

37-Do you have friends at school? Who is your favourite friend? Why do you like him/her most?

38-Are there kids that annoy other kids at school? If yes. Why do you think they do so?

39-Are there students that annoy you at school? If yes. Why do you think they do so?

Bullying and discrimination

40-Do you feel that some teachers like certain students more than others**?**

41-Do you worry about being called names at school?

42-If anyone bullied you, would you tell a teacher?

43-Are there children in your class that call others by unkind names?

44-Do you sometimes get bullied (annoyed deliberately and regularly) in the playground?

Community/society

45-What opportunities, resources, and services are available for you/your family to facilitate your inclusion?

46-What are your/your family's experiences with the community/the society? Have you faced any issues/challenges?

Do you want to add anything about your educational experience or any other issue that I have not tackled?

Thank you very much for your time

Note: Some questions and themes are quoted or adapted from `Index for Inclusion`(Booth and Ainscow, 2002); ` A Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education` (UNESCO, 2017); and ` Reaching Out to all learners: a Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education Training Tools for Curriculum Development` (IUNESCO, 2016)

Appendix 6: Initial List of Codes

- Activities/Clubs/Support/Resources SEC
- Bully/Discr/Issues /School attitude towards them SEC
- Bullying/Discrimination SEC
- Community issues/opportunities SEC
- Community/Non-school SEC
- DAD Achieving and Progressing
- DAD Activities/Clubs/Support/Resources
- Dad Challenges /Barriers Language Issue
- DAD choosing school
- DAD Community/School Bullying/Discrimination
- DAD Community positive things Integration Inclusion ETC
- DAD Cultural Religious Differences /Issues
- DAD First days
- DAD HALAL Food
- Dad Here and There
- DAD Relationship/Communication/INVOLVING with school
- DAD Suggestions/Recommendations
- Dad View on Learning/Schooling/Inclusion
- Dad Views on (choosing)School/Staff
- DAD views on equality, equity, diversity, inclusion
- DAD What I like about education here
- DAD+MUM Hindering/Challenging issues
- Dad/Mum Other
- DAD+MUM SEX Education/Relationship
- Do You like being at School SEC

- Do you like Your Teacher SEC
- Do you think this is the best School in the area SEC
- Family views on school SEC
- Favourite Friends SEC
- First Days SEC
- Friends SEC
- Having fun and being happy SEC
- Hindering+ Challenging Issues SEC
- Homework SEC
- Language Barrier at the Beginning SEC
- Learning at school and Classroom SEC
- Local School Comparison SEC
- My views on School/Staff SEC
- New Node
- Pastoral Care SEC
- PR 2 things I DONT like about my school
- PR 2 things I like about school
- PR attitude towards teacher+ Teacher attitude towards me
- PR Bullying/Discrimination/Issues
- PR Changes I want
- PR Classroom Learning
- PR Community Inclusion/Integration
- PR First days
- PR Friendship
- PR Homework
- PR Last thing I Learnt
- PR My school/My teacher
- PR Other
- PR pair work
- PR School activities/Clubs/Resources/Support
- Relationship with Teacher SEC
- Scotland VS Our countries SEC
- Teacher`s Description SEC

- **Teacher`s help + students help each other SEC**
- **Teachers Attitude/ Fairness SEC**
- **Things I do not like at school SEC**
- **Things I like at my School SEC**
- **What wish to have at School+ Add-Ons SEC**
- **Why and How you choose school SEC**
- **Work in Pairs/ Groups SEC**

Appendix 7: List of codes after making changes:

~~Community/Non-school SEC~~
PAR Community negative things
PAR Community positive things
~~DAD Community/School Bullying/Discrimination~~
~~DAD Community positive things Integration Inclusion ETC~~
PAR Challenges/Barriers ~~Language Issue~~ about schools
PAR Language Issue
PAR Achieving and Progressing
PAR Activities/Clubs/Support/Resources in schools
PAR Choosing school
PAR Cultural/Religious Differences~~/Issues~~
PAR First days
PAR HALAL Food
PAR Here and There
PAR Relationship/Communication with school
PAR Suggestions/Recommendations
PAR Views on Learning/Schooling~~/Inclusion~~
PAR Views on ~~(choosing)~~School/Staff
PAR views on equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion
PAR What I like about education here
PAR Hindering/Challenging issues
PAR Other
PAR SEX Education/Relationship
PR 2 things I DONT like about ~~my~~ school
PR 2 things I like about school

PR attitude towards teacher~~+~~/Teacher attitude towards me
PR Bullying/Discrimination/ Other Issues
PR Changes I want at school
PR Classroom Learning
PR Community Inclusion/Integration
PR First days
PR Friendship
PR Homework
PR Last thing I Learnt
PR My school/My teacher
PR Other
~~PR pair work~~ Combined in Classroom Learning
PR School activities/Clubs/Resources/Support
Activities/Clubs/Support/Resources SEC
~~Bully/Discr/Issues /School attitude towards them SEC~~ combined with Bullying and scrimination
Bullying/Discrimination SEC
Community positives/negatives ~~issues/opportunities~~ SEC
Relationship with Teachers SEC
~~Scotland VS Our countries SEC~~
Here and There SEC
~~Teacher`s Description SEC~~
~~Views On Teachers SEC~~ combined with My Views on …
Teacher`s help + students help each other SEC
Teachers Attitude/ Fairness SEC
Things I do not like at school SEC
Things I like at ~~my~~ School SEC
~~What wish to have at School+~~ Add-Ons SEC
~~Why and How you choose school SEC~~
Choosing School SEC
~~Work in Pairs/ Groups SEC~~
Classroom Learning SEC

Pastoral Care SEC
Community/Non-school SEC
Do You like being at School SEC
Do you like Your Teachers SEC
Do you think this is the best School in the area SEC
My Family views on school SEC
~~Favorite Friends SEC~~ combined with Friends
First Days SEC
Friends SEC
Having fun and being happy SEC
Hindering/Challenging Issues SEC
Homework SEC
Language Barrier at the Beginning SEC
~~Learning at school and Classroom SEC~~
Learning SEC
Local School Comparison SEC
My views on Teachers/School/Staff SEC

The new list of codes at this stage looked like:

PAR Community negative things
PAR Community positive things
PAR Challenges/Barriers about schools
PAR Language Issue
PAR Achieving and Progressing
PAR Activities/Clubs/Support/Resources in schools
PAR Choosing school
PAR Cultural/Religious Differences~~/Issues~~
PAR First days
PAR HALAL Food
PAR Here and There

PAR Relationship/Communication with school
PAR Suggestions/Recommendations
PAR Views on Learning/Schooling
PAR Views on School/Staff
PAR views on equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion
PAR What I like about education here
PAR Hindering/Challenging issues
PAR Other
PAR SEX Education/Relationship

PR 2 things I DONT like about ~~my~~ school
PR 2 things I like about school
PR attitude towards teacher~~+~~/Teacher attitude towards me
PR Bullying/Discrimination/ Other Issues
PR Changes I want at school
PR Classroom Learning
PR Community Inclusion/Integration
PR First days
PR Friendship
PR Homework
PR Last thing I Learnt
PR My school/My teacher
PR Other
PR School activities/Clubs/Resources/Support

SEC Activities/Clubs/Support/Resources
SEC Bullying/Discrimination
SEC Community positives/negatives
SEC Relationship with Teachers
SEC Here and There
SEC Teacher`s help + students help each other
SEC Teachers Attitude/ Fairness

SEC Things I do not like at school
SEC Things I like at School
SEC Choosing School
SEC Classroom Learning
SEC Pastoral Care
SEC Community/Non-school
SEC Do You like being at School
SEC Do you like Your Teachers
SEC Do you think this is the best School in the area S
SEC My Family views on school
SEC First Days
SEC Friends
SEC Having fun and being happy
SEC Hindering/Challenging Issues
SEC Homework
SEC Language Barrier at the Beginning
SEC Learning SEC
SEC Local School Comparison
SEC My views on Teachers/School/Staff

Appendix 8: Code List Revisions Following a Thorough Review of the Data Set

~~**PAR Community negative things**~~ **combined with *PAR Community Positive ings***
~~**PAR Community positive things**~~ **Changed to *PAR Community positive and egative things***
PAR Challenges/Barriers ~~about schools~~
~~**PAR Language Issue**~~ **To be combined with *Challenges/Barrers***
~~***PAR Achieving and Progressing***~~ ***Combined with other codes***
PAR Activities/Clubs/Support/Resources in schools
PAR Choosing school
PAR Cultural/Religious Differences/Issues
PAR First days
PAR HALAL Food
PAR Here and There
PAR Relationship/Communication with school
PAR Suggestions/Recommendations
PAR Views on Learning/~~Schooling~~ Changed to Progressing
PAR Views on School/Staff
PAR views on equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion
~~**PAR What I like about education here**~~ **Combined with other codes**
~~**PAR Hindering/Challenging issues**~~ **combined with *Challenges/Barrers***
~~**PAR Other**~~ **Combined with other codes**
PAR SEX Education/Relationship
PR 2 things I DONT like about ~~my~~ school
PR 2 things I like about school

~~PR attitude towards teacher+ /Teacher attitude towards me~~ combined with y school/My teacher
PR Bullying/Discrimination/ ~~Other Issues~~ Etc.
~~PR Changes I want at school~~ Replaced by Things I wish to have/change
PR Classroom Learning
PR Community Inclusion/Integration
PR First days
PR Friendship
PR Homework
PR Last thing I Learnt
PR My school/My teacher
~~PR Other~~ Combined with other codes
PR School activities/Clubs/Resources/Support
SEC Activities/Clubs/Support/Resources
SEC Bullying/Discrimination
SEC Community positives/negatives
SEC Relationship with Teachers
SEC Here and There
~~SEC Teacher`s help + students help each other~~ Combined with other odes
SEC Teachers Attitude/ Fairness
SEC Things I do not like at school
SEC Things I like at School
SEC Choosing School
SEC Classroom Learning Changed to SEC Learning/Classroom Learning
SEC Pastoral Care
~~SEC Community/Non-school~~ Combined with *SEC Community ositives/negatives*
SEC Do You like being at School
SEC Do you like Your Teachers
~~SEC Do you think this is the best School in the area~~ Combined with *SEC y+My Family views on school*

~~SEC My Family views on school~~ changed to *SEC My+My Family views on chool*
SEC First Days
SEC Friends
SEC Having fun and being happy
~~SEC Hindering/Challenging Issues~~ Combined with other codes
SEC Homework
~~SEC Language Barrier at the Beginning~~ Combined with other codes
~~SEC Learning SEC~~ Combined with *SEC Learning/Classroom Learning*
~~SEC Local School Comparison~~ Changed to School Comparison
~~SEC My views on Teachers/School/Staff~~ Replaced by SEC My+My Family iews on school

The following codes have been added at this stage:

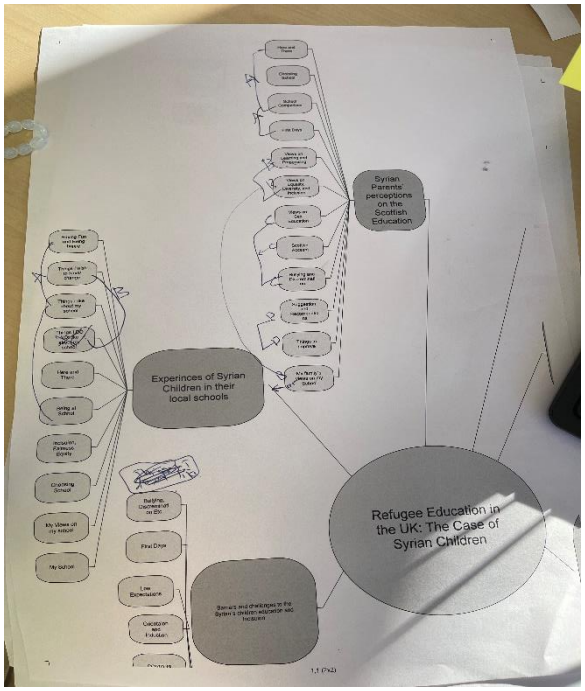
PAR Bullying, Discrimination, Etc.
PAR Scottish Accent
PAR Covid 19
PAR Sex Education
PAR Orientation, Induction
PAR Low Expectations
PAR Things to Improve
SEC Inclusion, Fairness, Equity
SEC Things I wish to have and/or Change
PRIM Things I wish to have and/or Change

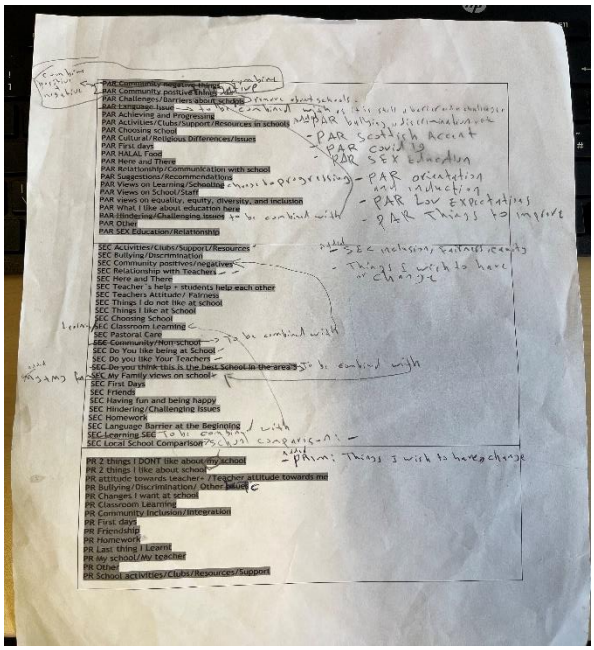
Appendix 9: The final version of codes

PAR Here and There
PAR Challenges+ Barriers
PAR Cultural, Religious Differences/Issues
PAR Suggestion, Recommandations
PAR Views on equality, diversity and inclusion
PAR Activities, Clubs, Support, Resources In schools
PAR Choosing School
PAR Views on School+ Staff
PAR First Days
PAR Relationship+ Communication with School
PAR Views on learning+ Progressing
PAR Halal Food
PAR Community Positive+ Negative things
PAR Bullying, Discrimination, Etc.
PAR Scottish Accent
PAR Covid 19
PAR Sex Education
PAR Orientation, Induction
PAR Low Expectations
PAR Things to Improve
PRIM First Days
PRIM 2 Things I DON'T Like about my School
PRIM My School, My Teacher
PRIM Friendship
PRIM Last Thing I Learnt
PRIM 2 Things I like about school
PRIM Classroom Learning

PRIM Homework
PRIM Community Inclusion, Integration
PRIM School Activities, Resources, Clubs, Support
PRIM Bullying, Discrimination, ETC
PRIM Things I wish to have and/or Change
SEC Homework
SEC Learning+ Classroom Learning
SEC Activities, Clubs, Support, Resources
SEC Do you like your Teachers
SEC Teacher`s Attitude+ Fairness
SEC Choosing School
SEC Things I Like at School
SEC Do you like Being at School
SEC Things I don’t Like at School
SEC Pastoral Care
SEC Bullying, Discrimination, ETC
SEC Friends
SEC Relationship with Teachers
SEC Here and There
SEC My/My family`s View on School
SEC Community Positives+ Negatives
SEC Having fun and Being Happy
SEC First Days
SEC School Comparison
SEC Inclusion, Fairness, Equity
SEC Things I wish to have and/or Change

Appendix 10: Printed and cut codes:





Appendix 11: The resulting themes and subthemes at this stage.

1-Syrian parent`s perceptions on the Scottish Education

Arriving in Scotland and choosing my children`s school
Views on Learning, inclusion, and diversity
Views on Sex Education, Bullying and Discrimination
Suggestions and things to improve

2-Experiences of Syrian students in their local schools

Having fun at school
Things I don't like and want to change

3-Resources and support available to foster the educational inclusion of Syrian students in their school and community

Positive things
Negative things

4-Learning and making friends at my school

5-Parents and children`s relationship and communication with teachers

Children`s relationship
Parents` communication

6-Barriers and challenges to the Syrian students' education and inclusion

Bullying and discrimination

Cultural differences

Language Barrier

Appendix 12: Changes applied to themes and subthemes.

1- Syrian parent`s perceptions on the Scottish Education

A- Arriving in Scotland and choosing my children`s school

B- Views on Learning, inclusion, and diversity

C- Views on ~~Sex education~~, Bullying and discrimination

D- Suggestions and things to improve (Shall I move it to theme 6 and add /address low expectations, orientation and Induction and first days codes of theme 6 with this) or see new theme 7 and its note: That may be better than the suggested point here

2- Experiences of Syrian students in their local schools

A-Having fun and making friends at school

B-Things I don't like and want to change

3-Resources and support available to foster the educational inclusion of Syrian students in their school and community

A-Positive things

B-Negative things

4-Learning ~~and making friends~~ at my school

5- Children`s relationship and Parents `communication with teachers

A-Children`s relationship

B-Parents` communication

6-Barriers and challenges to the Syrian students' education and inclusion

A-Bullying and discrimination *(Overlapping and repetitive, see above 1.B)*

B-Cultural differences *(sex education has moved to here)*

C-Language Barrier *(children and parents)*

7- Suggestions and recommendations: *(Shall I include things I want to change-have) + Bring 1.D to here+ Low expectations & induction can be discussed in both themes 6 as barriers and then in theme 7 as suggestions*

Appendix 13: codes emerged during first stage:

- Intensive ESOL
- Limited English Language Skills
- Contributions of Syrian Students
- Bilingualism
- EAL Teachers
- Academic Choices
- Access to Curricular Events
- Better Resourcing of Interpreters
- Inclusion of Syrian Children
- Coordination with Local Organizations
- Counselling Services
- Cultural Events
- Culturally Responsive Curriculum
- Early Enrolment
- Educational Psychology Liaison
- Enhanced Transitions
- Academic Paths
- English Proficiency
- ESOL Classes
- Funding Support
- Higher Education Support for Uncertain Status Students
- Immigration-Related Bureaucracy
- Language Proficiency for Inclusion
- Insufficient ESOL
- iPads
- Lawyer Appointments
- Inclusion in All School Activities
- Inclusive Approaches
- Career Aspirations
- Challenges Faced by Syrian Students
- Collaboration Across Educational Boundaries
- Nurture Practice
- Collaboration with Charities

- Collaboration with Stakeholders
- iPads for Students
- Joint Support Team
- Lack of Communication
- Young Interpreters
- Language Competence
- Training in Nurture Practice
- Trauma
- Limited Translation Resources
- Nurture Room for Targeted Intervention
- Online Enrollment System
- Qualifications in Arabic
- Referrals to Local Organizations and Charities
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Anti-Racist and Culturally Responsive Teachers
- Rights Respecting School Principles
- School Community
- Scottish Education
- Lack of Training and Support
- Syrian Culture
- Language Barriers
- Support for Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion
- Syrian Students' Contributions
- Thorough Induction Process
- Translating Resources
- School Values
- Uniform and Meals Support
- Smart Applications
- University Placement
- Stressed Families
- Students with Limited English Skills

Appendix 14: List of Revised and grouped codes.

- EAL Teachers
- iPads for Students
- ESOL Classes
- Collaboration with Stakeholders

- Funding Support
- iPads Provision
- Counselling Services
- Youth Initiatives

- Young Interpreters Group
- ESOL Classes
- Inclusive Approaches
- Scottish Education
- Language Competence

- Support for Enhanced Transitions
- Higher Education Support
- Nurture Practice
- Trauma-Informed Care

- Training in Nurture Practice
- Adverse Childhood Experiences

- ❖ Nurture Room

- ❖ Educational Psychology Liaison
- ❖ Joint Support Team
- ❖ Intervention Meetings
- ❖ Local Organizations and Charities

- ❖ Uniform and Meals Support
- ❖ Access to Curricular Events
- ❖ Poverty-Related Issues

- ❖ Limited Translation Resources
- ❖ Lack of Communication between Schools and Families
- ❖ Online Enrollment System challenge

- ❖ Limited English Language Skills
- ❖ Broad General Education
- ❖ Insufficient ESOL Hours
- ❖ Challenge Academic Paths and Subjects

- ❖ Immigration-Related Bureaucracy
- ❖ Lawyer Appointments and Attendance
- ❖ University Placement Uncertainties

- Gaps in Understanding Academic Pathways
- Academic Choices
- Career Aspirations

- Lack of Training and Support for Staff
- Need for Professional Learning
- Anti-Racist and Culturally Responsive Teachers

- Challenges Faced by Syrian Students
- Equity in Educational Inclusion

- Inclusion of Syrian Children
- Inclusion in All School Activities
- Inclusive School Practices
- Supporting Inclusion
- Rights Respecting School Principles

- Support for Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion
- Culturally Responsive Curriculum
- Bilingualism as a Strength
- Syrian Culture in the Curriculum
- Contributions of Syrian Students in Schools

- Language Proficiency for Inclusion
- English Proficiency
- Limited English Skills
- Language Barriers

- Syrian Students' Contributions
- Positive Contributions

- Suggesting Early Enrolment
- Suggesting Induction Process

- Suggesting Coordination with Local Organizations
- Collaboration with Charities

- Suggesting to Adress uncertainty
- Need for Certainty

- Suggestion to improve Language Support
- Suggestions for Interpreters
- Suggestion for Translating Resources
- Suggestion for First Language Resources
- Diverse Cultural Events

- ❖ Suggest for Intensive English Classes
- ❖ Suggest for Smart Applications

Appendix 15: Generating four themes.

1- Educational Support Services available for Syrian children

2- Challenges for Syrian Students including Language and Communication Barriers

3- Positive Perceptions and Inclusion

4- Suggestions and recommendations from School Educators

EAL Teachers iPads for Students ESOL Classes Collaboration with Stakeholders	Educational Support Services available for Syrian children
Funding Support iPads Provision Counselling Services Youth Initiatives	
Young Interpreters Group ESOL Classes Inclusive Approaches Scottish Education Language Competence	
Support for Enhanced Transitions Higher Education Support Nurture Practice	

Trauma-Informed Care Training in Nurture Practice Adverse Childhood Experiences Nurture Room	
Educational Psychology Liaison Joint Support Team Intervention Meetings Local Organizations and Charities	
Uniform and Meals Support Access to Curricular Events Poverty-Related Issues	

Limited Translation Resources Lack of Communication between Schools and Families Online Enrollment System challenge	Challenges for Syrian Students including Language and Communication Barriers
Limited English Language Skills Broad General Education Insufficient ESOL Hours	

Challenge Academic Paths and Subjects	
Immigration-Related Bureaucracy Lawyer Appointments and Attendance University Placement Uncertainties	
Gaps in Understanding Academic Pathways Academic Choices Career Aspirations	
Lack of Training and Support for Staff Need for Professional Learning Anti-Racist and Culturally Responsive Teachers	
Challenges Faced by Syrian Students Equity in Educational Inclusion	

Inclusion of Syrian Children Inclusion in All School Activities Inclusive School Practices Supporting Inclusion Rights Respecting School Principles	Positive Perceptions and Inclusion

Support for Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion Culturally Responsive Curriculum Bilingualism as a Strength Syrian Culture in the Curriculum Contributions of Syrian Students in Schools	
Language Proficiency for Inclusion English Proficiency Limited English Skills Language Barriers	
Syrian Students' Contributions Positive Contributions	

Suggesting Early Enrolment Suggesting Induction Process	Suggestions and recommendations from School Educators
Suggesting Coordination with Local Organizations Suggesting Collaboration with Charities	
Suggestion to Address Uncertainty Need for Certainty	
Suggestion to improve Language Support Suggestions for Interpreters Suggestion for Translating Resources Suggestion for First Language Resources Diverse Cultural Events	
Suggest for Intensive English Classes Suggest for Smart Applications	

Appendix 16: Privacy Notice

PRIVACY NOTICE

Privacy Notice for Participation in Research Project: Refugee education in the UK: The case of Syrian families in Glasgow.

Researcher*:*

Munther Nouraldeen

Your Personal Data

The University of Glasgow will be what's known as the 'Data Controller' of your personal data processed in relation to your participation in the research project 'Examining Inclusion: Opportunities and Challenges for Syrian students in Scottish Schools'. This privacy notice will explain how The University of Glasgow will process your personal data.

Why we need it

We are collecting basic personal data such as your name and contact details in order to conduct our research. We need your name and contact details to potentially follow up on the data you have provided.

We only collect data that we need for the research project and de-identified data (i.e. a reversible process whereby identifiers are replaced by a code, to which the researcher retains the key, in a secure location) will be used. Please note that your confidentiality may be impossible to guarantee due to the size of the participant group and the location. Please see accompanying **Participant Information Sheet** for more details.

Legal basis for processing your data

We must have a legal basis for processing all personal data. As this processing is for Academic Research we will be relying upon **Task in the Public Interest** in order to process the basic personal data that you provide. For any special categories data collected we will be processing this on the basis that it is **necessary for archiving purposes, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes**

Alongside this, in order to fulfil our ethical obligations, we will ask for your **Consent** to take part in the study. Please see accompanying **Consent Form**.

What we do with it and who we share it with

All the personal data you submit is processed by: Munther Nouraldeen who is a PhD student at the University of Glasgow in the United Kingdom. In addition, security measures are in place to ensure that your personal data remains safe: such as pseudonymisation, secure storage, and, encryption of files and devices. Please consult the **Consent form** and **Participant Information Sheet** which accompanies this notice.

We will provide you with a copy of the study findings and details of any subsequent publications or outputs on request.

What are your rights?*

GDPR provides that individuals have certain rights including: to request access to, copies of and rectification or erasure of personal data and to object to processing. In addition, data subjects may also have the right to restrict the processing of the personal data and to data portability. You can request access to the information we process about you at any time.

If at any point you believe that the information we process relating to you is incorrect, you can request to see this information and may in some instances request to have it

restricted, corrected, or erased. You may also have the right to object to the processing of data and the right to data portability.

Please note that as we are processing your personal data for research purposes, the ability to exercise these rights may vary as there are potentially applicable research exemptions under the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. For more information on these exemptions, please see UofG Research with personal and special categories of data.

If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please submit your request via the webform or contact dp@gla.ac.uk

Complaints

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact the University Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter.

Our Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotectionofficer@glasgow.ac.uk

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) https://ico.org.uk/

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved via the College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee or relevant School Ethics Forum in the College.

How long do we keep it for?

Your **personal** data will be retained by the University only for as long as is necessary for processing and no longer than the period of ethical approval (10 years). After this time, personal data will be securely deleted.

Your **research** data will be retained for a period of ten years in line with the University of Glasgow Guidelines. Specific details in relation to research data storage are provided on the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form which accompany this notice.

End of Privacy Notice
