



HGRA

EnHancing manaGement and studies
on migRation issues in LibyA

The role of educational institutions in reducing the phenomenon of illegal immigration



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ABOUT HGRA

About the project

Migration is an international phenomenon affecting several sectors of both the destination and the country of origin. EU is the most targeted destination for migrants and there are three main routes bringing refugees and migrants to it: the Western Mediterranean Route (usually via Morocco to Spain), the Central Mediterranean Route (usually via Libya to Italy) and the Eastern Mediterranean Route (usually via Turkey to Greece).

The Central Mediterranean Route via Libya is the most active one and accounts for the largest number of people crossing by sea to Europe. In addition, Libya is both a transit and destination country.

The HGRA project is dedicated to enhancing the role of Libyan universities in addressing migration challenges comprehensively. Central to this mission is the empowerment of universities to build capabilities and prepare proficient cadres equipped to tackle migration issues effectively. Through tailored curricula, specialized training programs, and interdisciplinary initiatives, universities play a fundamental role in nurturing professionals with the expertise to navigate migration governance, policy formulation, and societal integration.

Moreover, universities serve as vital hubs for driving scientific research that directly informs evidence-based policymaking and strategic interventions in migration management. By fostering a culture of inquiry and innovation, universities contribute invaluable insights into migration dynamics, socio-economic impacts, and best practices in migration governance. This research not only enriches our understanding of migration phenomena but also equips policymakers with the knowledge needed to devise holistic and sustainable solutions to migration challenges.

In essence, the HGRA project recognizes universities as linchpins for fostering capacity building and scientific research that address migration issues comprehensively, ultimately contributing to the creation of more inclusive and resilient societies.

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Abstract

Universities play a critical role in promoting values of justice and fairness, particularly in relation to the rights of refugees and undocumented migrant students. As academic institutions are grounded in educational and intellectual missions, they serve as vital spaces through which marginalized groups can be supported and integrated into society.

The role of educational institutions in reducing the phenomenon of illegal immigration

1. Introduction

Illegal immigration is one of the most prominent issues facing many countries in the current era, as many young people seek to escape their economic and social conditions in their countries to other places through illegal means, exposing themselves to serious risks. This phenomenon negatively affects individuals and societies alike, as it causes the spread of crime, endangers the lives of young people, and has a significant impact on the stability of families and societies. Refugee and migration issues represent one of the most complex challenges of the modern era due to their legal, humanitarian, and security dimensions. This study highlights the various reasons that drive individuals to seek asylum, such as political or religious persecution, armed conflicts, and natural disasters. It also reviews the rights guaranteed to refugees under international law, relevant legislation, and the responsibilities refugees have toward the host country. The importance of cooperation between countries and international institutions is emphasized in order to ensure refugee protection in a way that balances national security with humanitarian principles. In this context, the importance of educational institutions emerges as a pivotal role in confronting this phenomenon, especially in the stages of basic and higher education, as schools and universities play a very important role in guiding students, raising their awareness of the dangers of illegal immigration, and promoting the values of national belonging and loyalty, which helps reduce the motives for illegal immigration.

2. The first axis: The role of educational institutions in reducing migration rates among students

The main role of educational institutions lies in providing students with the knowledge and skills that help them make sound decisions about their future. With regard to illegal migration, educational institutions can play a pivotal role in reducing it through several main aspects.

1. Raising awareness about the risks of illegal migration: Illegal migration is often an attractive option for many young people due to difficult economic conditions or because of the hope of a better life abroad, but what many overlook are the risks associated with this migration, such as being exploited by smuggling gangs or health risks or even losing one's life. Educational institutions, whether in schools or universities, can play a vital role in educating students about these risks, through awareness seminars, educational programs, and awareness campaigns. Educational institutions can convey this information in a tangible way, which contributes to changing students' concepts towards this phenomenon¹.

2. Instilling national values and promoting belonging: Schools and universities are the ideal places to instill the values of belonging and patriotism in students. If a student feels proud and belonging to his country and is provided with the appropriate educational environment to achieve his

ambitions within his country, this reduces the likelihood of his desire to emigrate. Educational institutions can organize educational and cultural activities aimed at enhancing the sense of national belonging, such as celebrations of national holidays, workshops on the history of the country, and volunteer activities aimed at serving the community.

3. Teaching students life skills that help them build their future: One of the most important functions of educational institutions is to provide students with the life skills necessary to face life's challenges, whether in the academic or professional field. Educational institutions can contribute to reducing the phenomenon of illegal immigration by providing educational and technical programs that enhance students' ability to adapt to the local labor market. If job opportunities are available within the country, the motivation for illegal immigration decreases, as young people find themselves able to achieve their ambitions within their country.

4. Academic and career guidance: Universities are the stage where young people begin to prepare to enter the labor market, and they have many questions about how to build their careers. If they are properly guided during this stage, they can acquire the skills necessary to obtain respectable jobs within their country. By establishing advisory and guidance centers, educational institutions can provide academic and career guidance, allowing students the opportunity to choose academic and practical paths that support the achievement of their goals within the country².

5. Universities possess the institutional and human resources necessary to provide higher education opportunities for refugees and undocumented migrants. This can be achieved through scholarship programs, simplified admission requirements, and the provision of psychological and social support. Education serves as a powerful tool for safeguarding human dignity and enhancing development opportunities.

6. Universities can establish research centers and student initiatives focused on monitoring and analyzing the conditions of refugees through scientific approaches. Such efforts contribute to shaping fairer and more equitable policies toward these populations. Academic institutions can also play a role in raising awareness within host communities about refugee rights and in combating stereotypes associated with them.

7. It is essential to integrate migration and refugee issues into educational curricula across various disciplines to enhance students' understanding of human rights and international humanitarian law. Graduation projects and research addressing these topics should be supported, and academic discussions on how to address such challenges should be encouraged.

Finally, universities bear a moral and humanitarian responsibility to defend the right to education as a universal right that should not be diminished due to an individual's legal or national status. From this perspective, universities have a pivotal role not only in protecting refugees and undocumented migrant students, but also in building more just and humane societies.

3. The second axis: The impact of the educational environment and academic support programs on students' decisions to stay in the country

The educational environment is one of the main factors that influence students' decisions regarding illegal immigration. When the educational environment is able to provide appropriate

academic and professional support, this enhances students' ability to succeed in their home country and reduces their motivation to migrate. The importance of the educational environment is not limited to providing academic knowledge only, but also includes providing vocational training opportunities, psychological support, and motivating students towards innovation and creativity. Below we discuss how the educational environment and academic support programs affect students' decisions to stay in the country.

1 - Continuous academic support

The importance of continuous academic support lies in providing an educational environment that encourages students to progress and develop academically. This support includes academic supervision, continuous guidance, as well as providing diverse learning opportunities that are in line with the needs of the local market. When a student finds that his educational institution provides him with the necessary tools to develop his skills, whether through practical training or workshops, this enhances his feeling of positivity towards his future in his home country. Students who receive effective academic support are able to develop their skills and achieve their ambitions in various fields, which reduces their desire to seek opportunities abroad. Moreover, the presence of flexible educational paths that are appropriate to the needs of the local market enhances students' ability to adapt and thrive in their local environment.

2 - Vocational training and job opportunities

Vocational training programs are one of the main pillars that contribute to reducing students' desire for illegal immigration. When educational institutions provide advanced training programs linked to the local labor market, this helps students acquire the skills necessary to enter the labor market and integrate into it smoothly. These programs can include training in multiple fields, from technology and modern industries to handicrafts and traditional professions.

In addition, if universities and schools cooperate with local companies and institutions to provide internship opportunities for students, this enhances their chances of obtaining local jobs after graduation. Accordingly, students have a strong motivation to stay in the country, as they find that there are real opportunities to develop their skills and achieve professional and economic stability within their homeland.

3 - An educational environment that stimulates innovation and creativity

The educational environment plays an important role in motivating students to innovate and create. Through non-academic activities such as entrepreneurship competitions, research projects, and student initiatives, educational institutions can encourage students to think innovatively and create their own projects. This creative environment gives students the opportunity to express their ideas and ambitions, which enhances their desire to contribute to the development of their communities.

When students feel that they have the ability to achieve their dreams and make a positive change in their community through their ideas and projects, this motivates them to stay in their countries instead of thinking about illegal immigration. In addition, entrepreneurship programs provided by universities and academic centers encourage students to establish their own companies, thus motivating them to invest in their country's economy³.

4 - The role of the teacher in guiding students towards making wise decisions

The teacher is one of the essential elements in the educational environment, as he contributes to shaping students' awareness and guiding them towards making sound decisions about their future

lives. Through daily interaction with students, the teacher can guide them regarding the risks of illegal immigration and provide them with opportunities to think about legal and legitimate alternatives.

In this context, teachers can provide personal and social guidance to students, helping them to face the social and economic difficulties that may push them to think about illegal immigration. Curricula can also contribute to discussing topics related to the risks of illegal immigration, which enhances students' awareness and contributes to making informed decisions.

5 - The role of universities in providing educational and career opportunities for students

Universities play a pivotal role in shaping students' decisions about staying in the country. By offering educational programs that are in line with the needs of the local labor market, universities can provide students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their home country. In addition, universities offer advanced training programs and vocational training opportunities in partnership with local and international economic institutions, which enhances students' chances of obtaining respectable jobs within the country.

Through these opportunities, students feel that they have the potential to contribute to the development of their country, which reduces their desire to illegally migrate. When universities are closely linked to the labor market and provide real employment opportunities, illegal immigration becomes a less attractive option.

6 - The positive impact of community programs

In addition to the academic environment, community programs play an important role in encouraging students to stay in the country. Through community activities such as volunteering and participating in social projects, students can feel that they have an effective role in improving the reality of their community, which enhances their sense of belonging and loyalty to their country. This type of activity enhances social values and encourages students to contribute to the progress of their country instead of seeking to emigrate⁴.

4. Third axis: The Libyan legal framework

Libya has taken important steps to reduce illegal immigration, by issuing laws aimed at combating illegal immigration and enhancing internal stability. One of these laws is Law No. (19) of 2010, which deals with combating illegal immigration. This law punishes many activities related to human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and facilitating illegal immigration, including the recruitment of illegal immigrants and assisting them in their transition⁵.

Although the law primarily focuses on reducing illegal immigration, it indirectly refers to the importance of a stable internal system, including providing local educational opportunities that can be an alternative to immigration. Educational institutions can align with this legal framework by ensuring that students who wish to continue their education have the means and support to remain in the country without feeling that immigration is the only option.

In addition to Law No. (19), there are several provisions in Libyan law related to the entry and residence of foreigners, such as Law No. (6) of 1987 on the regulation of the entry and residence of foreigners in Libya. These laws regulate the movement of foreigners and aim to create a more organized environment for educational and employment opportunities within the country⁶.

The challenge for educational institutions is to work alongside these laws by providing a supportive and attractive educational environment that serves as an alternative to migration. These efforts can include educational reforms, increased academic mobility, and cooperation with international bodies, while at the same time complying with the legal framework related to migration⁷.

5. Fourth axis: Case studies and practical examples

The Moroccan model in the field of migration is one of the most prominent examples that highlight international and regional efforts in addressing migration issues. This model is distinguished by being a bold step towards enhancing engagement in international work and providing structural solutions to a complex and sensitive issue at the regional and international levels. In this context, Morocco has developed a national strategy for migration and asylum that is in line with the requirements of the Moroccan constitution, the orientations of international law, and the international obligations it has adopted in this field.

One of the most prominent programs related to this strategy is the migrant integration program, which aims to grant legal settlement to irregular migrants within the national territory. This program reflects Morocco's commitment to providing social and economic rights to migrants and refugees, which contributes significantly to enhancing social and economic stability in the country. This program is part of the state's efforts to enhance the social and economic integration of migrants and refugees.

At the international level, the Global Compact for Migration was adopted in Marrakesh in December 2018, marking a turning point in addressing the issue of migration globally. This compact, which was prepared after 18 months of intensive discussions between member states under the auspices of the United Nations, aims to address all dimensions of international migration in a comprehensive manner. Morocco played a pivotal role in this compact, not only by hosting this international event, but also through its commitment to activating South-South cooperation with African countries to address common challenges in this area. The National Strategy for Migration and Asylum developed by the Moroccan government was developed based on royal directives, and is an embodiment of Morocco's international commitments in the field of human rights. This strategy aims to improve the social and economic integration of migrants through 11 basic programs covering diverse areas such as education, health, employment, vocational training, and combating human trafficking. These programs have contributed to the regularization of the status of more than 28,000 migrants in Morocco, reflecting the state's commitment to addressing the humanitarian and economic

challenges associated with migration. In terms of international cooperation, cooperation with international organizations, European countries, and countries of the South is one of the major successes of the Moroccan model. These partnerships aim to promote peace and sustainable development in Africa, and focus on providing economic and humanitarian solutions to combat irregular migration. In addition, Morocco's return to the African Union in 2017 contributed to strengthening its regional and international role in addressing migration issues. Economic challenges are among the most prominent factors that push young people to migrate⁸, as confirmed by studies conducted in Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Sudan. However, Morocco remains the only country that has developed practical programs to address this issue by improving the

quality of life and providing job and education opportunities for migrants, which encourages them to stay in the country. Thus, the Moroccan model in addressing migration reflects a remarkable development in public policies that take into account the human rights and social integration of migrants. Despite the economic and political challenges, international cooperation and the state's commitment to providing social justice and education represent the cornerstone of addressing the phenomenon of migration⁹.

6. Fifth Refugee Rights According to International Law

International agreements, foremost among them the 1951 Geneva Convention, have outlined a set of rights that ensure refugees are provided with legal and humanitarian protection. These rights aim to safeguard the dignity of refugees and provide a minimum level of stability in the host country. These rights include:

- **Non-Punishment for Illegal Entry or Stay**

A refugee is exempt from legal responsibility for entering the host country illegally if they entered in a non-regulated manner to escape an imminent danger.

- **The Right to Non-Refoulement**

This right is one of the most important principles in international law, preventing the deportation of a refugee to their country of origin if they would face real danger to their life or freedom there.

- **The Right to Housing**

This right ensures the provision of appropriate accommodation for refugees, either through temporary shelters or housing assistance provided by the state or international organizations.

- **The Right to Education**

The host country is obligated to provide basic education opportunities for refugees, especially for children, considering education as a fundamental human right.

- **The Right to Work**

Refugees have the right to work under the local laws of the host country, which helps them achieve economic independence and contribute to the host society.

- **The Right to Obtain Documents**

It is essential for refugees to obtain official documents such as identity cards and substitute passports, enabling them to lead their lives normally.

- **The Right to Non-Discrimination**

Refugees should be treated equally to citizens in terms of fundamental rights, regardless of their origin, beliefs, or cultural background.

- **The Right to Access to Justice**

This right grants refugees the ability to resort to the national courts of the host country, either to protect their rights or to file complaints, ensuring justice and preventing impunity for any violations they may face.

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