

Book Review

School Leadership for Refugees' Education: Social Justice Leadership for Immigrant, Migrants and Refugees

By: Khalid Arar

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Despite the proliferation of studies exploring refugee education, researchers tend to conduct limited investigations, e.g. exploring such education in one country (Arar et al., 2018; Aydin & Kaya, 2019; Fejes & Dahlstedt, 2020; Richardson et al., 2018; Streitwieser, 2019; Vergou, 2019). While Dryden-Peterson et al. (2019), in their comparative study, highlight the importance of providing quality education for refugees without providing a clear model, Dr. Arar argues in his book that researchers, practitioners, and educators in general need a clear source / guide to help in better understanding of refugees' education and suggests a model to adopt and adapt educational actions and strategies. He describes the importance of his book as follows: "The present book draws largely on empirical



research on educational policy and the practices of educational leaders working to provide equal education opportunities for refugees in the educational systems of several states in the Middle East, Europe and North America” (p.5).

Arar highlights the importance of understanding the types of newcomers, such as immigrants, emigrants, asylum seekers, and first- and second-class citizens. This is a very important point, as many educators and humanists jump to provide support without understanding the needs and the cases they are dealing with. The author emphasizes the necessity of mental health aid for such newcomers, contending that not enough light is being shed on psychological first aid and the important role that schools play by supporting their communities through various programs.

The book includes eight chapters. The introduction paves the way by highlighting the multifaceted and interconnected psychological, social, economic, and educational obstacles refugee children face. Arar clarifies the main terms used for the types of newcomers, such as immigrants, emigrants, asylum seekers, first- and second-class citizens, and he identifies some of the consequences of educators’ lack of understanding of these terms.

The second chapter takes the reader from the refugees’ home countries to the host countries that embrace them. Here, the author presents Turkey’s, Germany’s, Canada’s, and the USA’s respective policies towards refugees. In the third chapter, he gives voice to the challenges of the refugees and their educators, describing those that are related to issues of documentation, resettlements, accreditation, and placements. I found this chapter very enlightening, as it is crucial that both groups are being heard and dealt with.

In the fourth chapter, a systematic review of literature on refugee education is presented and subjected to thematic analysis. Three themes emerge: 1) The implementation of absorption, resettlement and integration policies in the host countries. 2) Research on school-based mental and psychological interventions. 3) Research on educational practices. This chapter will be helpful to every researcher and practitioner interested in refugee education.

The fifth and sixth chapters outline the suggested model for quality refugee education. Arar shows that an educational leader, whether a principal or a teacher, can deal with students from different cultural backgrounds and succeed in building an educational scene that gives all cultures a presence through recognition and participation. The model is considered comprehensive, as it reflects the political and societal discourse while acknowledging the role of community groups in achieving this aim.

More practical frameworks and research, including theories and models from the last decade, are mentioned and explained in the seventh chapter to promote a culture of welcoming refugees and providing equal opportunities to grow in global communities. The last chapter highlights the need to increase the human presence in the educational process, and to go beyond the official speech to a humanitarian discourse prioritizes social justice. In it, Arar emphasizes the importance of developing a discourse that comes from inside refugee communities and that promotes recognition, listening, and building participation circles for students. The diversity of their social backgrounds, and of course their psychological distress and other relevant factors, should be acknowledged.

Although this book is a great contribution to literature, there are several questions that are left unanswered. For example, how



would evaluation of the current model happen? What are the needs for higher refugee education? What about preschool preparation? And how is informal education to be provided? Another element that needs to be considered is the perspective of organizations dealing with education in emergencies, such as Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). There is an urgent call to study what non-citizens face in many countries around the globe, along with the role education systems can play to support these newcomers.

In conclusion, this is a timely, much-needed book. I highly recommend this very comprehensive book for educators, humanists, physiologists, researchers, and school leaders. This book paves the way for educators to reflect on and reconsider their practices, and will help them to humanize their actions and decisions.

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