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Social and emotional learning (SEL) of newcomer and refugee students

Beliefs, practices and implications for policies across OECD countries

Promoting a holistic approach to the integration of refugee and newcomer students: Effective policies and practices
Virtual meeting, 7-8 October 2021

This paper aims to understand how OECD education systems are currently implementing Social and emotional learning (SEL) policies and practices for refugee and newcomer students. It also provides an overview of SEL components and theoretical backgrounds and considers its particular importance for refugee and newcomer students.

This draft working paper is part of Phase II of the OECD Strength through Diversity Project: Education for Inclusive Societies and is meant for comments at the upcoming International Conference: "Promoting a holistic approach to the integration of refugee and newcomer students: Effective policies and practices" on 7 and 8 October 2021. Comments should be provided by 15 October 2021.

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Abstract

Social and emotional learning (SEL) strengthens students' non-cognitive abilities to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviours and to interact successfully with others. There are an array of important social and emotional skills (SES): goal-setting, working to one's potential, resilience, creativity, perseverance, problem solving, and caring about the welfare of others, among them. All students need SEL, but newcomer and refugee students may have particular challenges requiring SES. Moving to a new country typically involves learning a new language and cultural customs that are unfamiliar and potentially uncomfortable. Newcomer and refugee students may face discrimination. They may have less family support as parents and caregivers struggle to adjust to new life circumstances. The beginning of this paper examines SEL, its frameworks and skills and how they apply to newcomer and refugee students. The paper concludes with an examination of SEL policies and practices for newcomer and refugee students in OECD countries.

Glossary and abbreviations

Glossary

Asylum Seeker: Asylum seekers flee to a host country prior to being processed as refugees, and they formally request refugee status from the country to which they flee (Cerna, 2019[1]). Europe has had a large influx of asylum seekers since 2015 due to the war in Syria; violence in Burundi, Eritrea, the Central African Republic, Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo; and the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar. The 2021 takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban is likely to increase these numbers. Colombia is is host to 1.7 million Venezualans (UNHCR, 2021[2]). The United States has also seen large numbers of asylum seekers, including unaccompanied children, fleeing from violence in Central America. Host country policies vary, but in many cases, asylum seekers are forced to stay in reception centres while their claims are processed. If they are not accepted, host countries can choose to send them back to their countries of origin.

Equity: The OECD's *Strength through Diversity: Education for Inclusive Societies* project defines equity in education as systems that "ensure that the achievement of educational potential is not the result of personal and social circumstances" (Santiago and Cerna, Forthcoming[3]). The project has defined two forms of equity. The first is horizontal or the provision of fair distribution of resources across an educational system. The second is vertical, in which additional resources and services are provided based on the need of various disadvantaged groups in an educational system, in order for all students to reach their educational potential.

Inclusion: Inclusive education is defined by UNESCO as an on-going process with the goal of offering high-quality education for all by diversifying and personalising learning experiences "to achieve the highest participation of all students, taking into account their individual needs" (UNESCO, 2009, p. 14[4]).There is a focus on groups that tend to be excluded or marginalised for various reasons.

Integration: In contrast to inclusion, the goal of integration is to allow for students such as those with special education needs or those needing to learn the language of instruction into the mainstream classroom with some provisions to support them. However, integration aims to help students fit into the traditional classroom. Inclusion seeks to dynamically change the classroom to meet the needs of all students. It should be noted that some researchers use inclusion and integration interchangeably.

Newcomer: In general, this term applies to those who have recently arrived in a country that is likely to be different from their homeland in ways that include culture, social interactions, and language. Some researchers use it to refer to arrivals who do not yet have some basic fluency in the primary language of the country in which they reside. There is not a standard definition for "newcomer", even within literature that specifically uses the term as the research population (Guo-Brennan and Guo-Brennan, 2021[5]; Oikonomidoy, 2014[6]; Thompson, Umansky and Porter, 2020[7]).

Refugee: The 1951 Convention related to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol defines refugees as follows: "Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted 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."

Refugees are processed after they cross the border of their home country. Receiving countries' governmental security systems process those who are eventually selected for third country placement (less than one percent of the world's refugees). The process requires multiple background and health checks. It can take years. People flee their countries as refugees not because they want to, but because they must out of fear for their lives. Time as a refugee often includes multiple experiences of trauma that may be encountered in regions of violence, terrorism and war.

Social and emotional skills (SES): the OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) defines social and emotional skills "a subset of an individual's abilities, attributes and characteristics that are important for individual success and social functioning. They encompass behavioural dispositions, internal states, approaches to tasks, and management and control of behaviour and feelings" (OECD, 2021, p. 20[8]).

Social and emotional Learning (SEL): Social and emotional skills can be defined as "individual capacities that can be (a) manifested in consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours; (b) developed through formal and informal learning experiences; and (c) important drivers of socio-economic outcomes throughout the individual's life" (Ikesako and Miyamoto, 2015[9]). SEL skills include the ability to persist, achieve goals, work co-operatively, and manage one's emotions. These skills are necessary complements to academic knowledge for success and well-being in life.

Abbreviations

ASCD Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

CASEL Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

EASEL Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning

EC European Commission

EU European Union

NESET Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training

PISA OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

PSS Psychosocial support

SDG Sustainable Development Goals

SEL Social and Emotional Learning

SES Social and Emotional Skills

SSES Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (OECD)UN United Nations

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Introduction

In the past, both national and international concerns about education emphasised academic cognitive skills such as literacy, numeracy and scientific knowledge. Of course, such knowledge remains of utmost importance, especially as the world confronts challenges of climate change, migration, a global pandemic and rapidly changing technologies. However, there is a growing emphasis on social and emotional learning (SEL) skills and a recognition that SEL contributes to academic achievement in traditional subject matter as well as employment success and life satisfaction (OECD, 2015[10]).

The OECD is at the forefront to acknowledge the importance of SEL. It published findings from its Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) in nine countries to provide an understanding of the factors contributing to students' growth in this area (OECD, 2021[11]). This project will provide families, teachers and policymakers with information on both barriers to SEL and ways to promote SEL.

For newcomer and other immigrant students, SEL is important in helping them to overcome the challenges of migration, disruption to family routines, and discrimination (Block et al., 2014[12]). Specific school-based and non-formal educational interventions can improve the chances for these students to become well-adjusted adults by increasing their mental health, academic success and social inclusion (Block et al., 2014[12]; Jones et al., 2021[13]).

All students need not only academic learning in their formal education, but also holistic learning. A holistic approach recognises that students are multidimensional and that the contexts of their lives are important to address to improve academic success (OECD, 2019[14]). This type of education integrates concerns for physical, psychological, social and creative dimensions of students' lives. Social and emotional learning is an important aspect of holistic education.

Social and emotional learning has a direct impact on academic success. Although students' emotions were once seen as less important, or even barriers to learning, researchers now recognize that cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social and emotional processes are highly interactive, contributing to learning and motivation (Sliwka and Ye, 2015[15]).

The goals of this paper are to define SEL, explain its components and theoretical backgrounds, and consider its particular importance for refugee and newcomer students in Sections 1 and 2. Section 3 will offer examples of successful SEL policies and practices from OECD countries and provide suggestions for on ways to support this important component of learning for refugee and newcomer students in formal and non-formal educational settings.

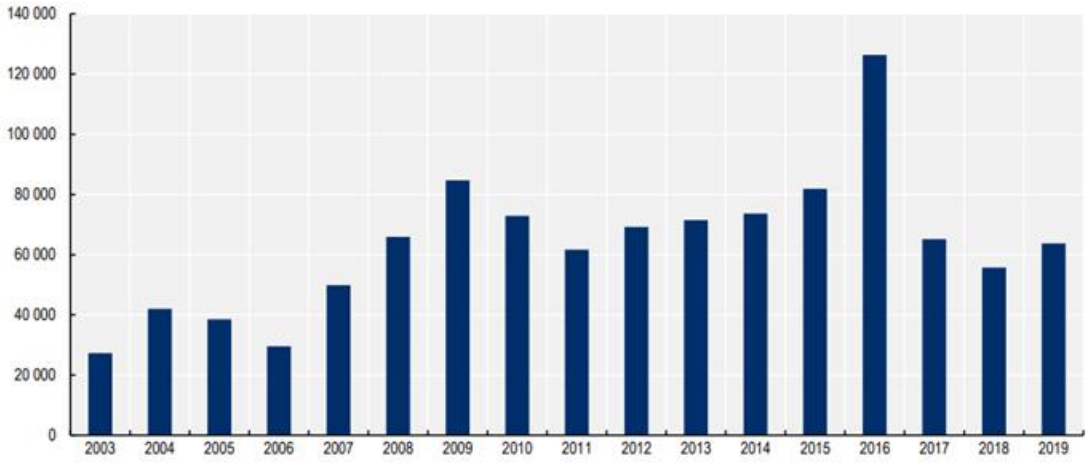
1 Overview

International migration has increased in the 21st century as a result of accelerating globalisation, which can be defined as "the economic integration of different countries through growing freedom of movement across national boundaries of goods, services, capital, and people" (OECD, 2017[16]). Some migration, however, might be viewed less as a freedom to move and more of a need for safety. Forced migration – movement of people due to various forms of human and environmental violence – has seen a dramatic rise since 2015 in increasing numbers of refugees, asylum seekers, irregular or undocumented immigrants and internally displaced persons. Millions of forced migrants are children (UNHCR, 2021[2]). As they make their way to new placements around the world, it makes not only humanitarian, but also economic sense for host countries to learn how to accommodate their needs and provide inclusive education to newcomer and refugee students. These young people are likely to become long-term residents in host countries. If they feel a sense of welcome and belonging, they are more likely to gain the academic success they need to contribute to their new country civically and economically. 21st century education skills encompass not only academic rigor but also social and emotional skills (SES) to work competently with others.

Ongoing responsibilities of host countries

Between 2013-2017, the population of refugees in OECD countries nearly tripled, from 2 million to 5.9 million (OECD, 2019[17]). This number included over 750 000 students who had to be acclimated into European Union (EU) school systems (Ahad and Benton, 2018[18]). Although refugee flows to OECD countries have decreased since the 2015-2016 refugee crisis (see Figure 1.1), worldwide numbers continue to grow, as does the need for relocation (OECD, 2020[19]; OECD, 2018[20]). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported a record high of 82.4 million forcibly displaced people in 2020, 20.7 million of whom are refugees and 4.1 million who are seeking asylum (OECD, 2020[19]). This number equates to one in every 95 people worldwide who have had to flee their homes. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reports that the 2019 figure included 33 million displaced children, 12.6 million of whom are refugees, and 1.5 million who are seeking asylum (UNICEF, 2021[21]). Three of the top host countries – Turkey (at 3.7 million), Colombia (at 1.7 million) and Germany (at 1.2 million) are OECD countries. In 2020, one million children were new refugees (UNHCR, 2021[2]).

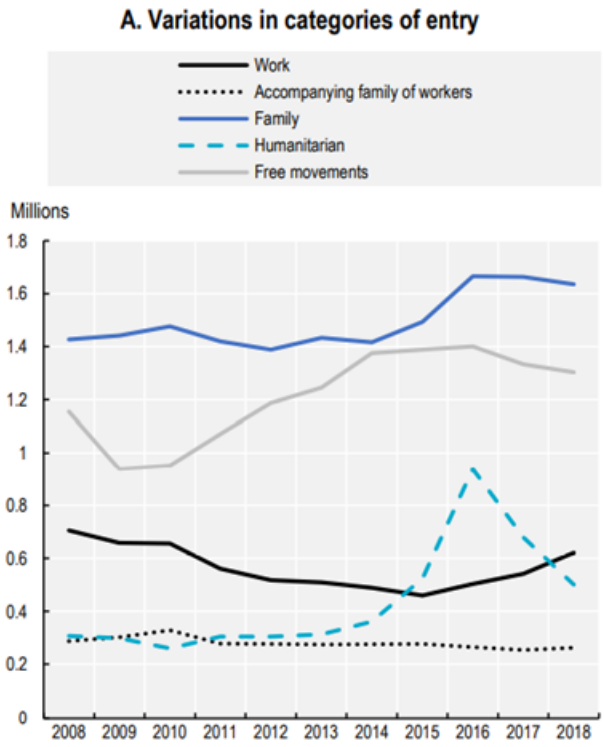
Figure 1.1. Refugees admitted under resettlement programmes in OECD countries (2003-2019)



Note: Figure based on UNHCR data.
Source: Figure taken from OECD (2020[19]), International Migration Outlook 2020, p.40, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/ec98f531-en.

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically reduced overall migration in early 2020. Many countries suspended or reduced the issuance of visas and permits, and used travel bans, restrictions and lockdowns in an attempt to curb the spread of the virus (OECD, 2020[19]). However, permanent migration was higher in 2019 than in the 2010-2018 time period, at an average of eight newcomers per thousand inhabitants (see Figure 1.2). Applications for asylum also rose in 2019, though not as high as the 2015-2016 migration crisis (OECD, 2020[19]).

Figure 1.2. Permanent migration flows to OECD countries by category of entry (2008-2018)



Note: Figure based on OECD International Migration Database, https://doi.org/10.1787/data-00342-en,
Source: Figure taken from OECD (2020[19]), International Migration Outlook 2020, p.25, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/ec98f531-en.

Meeting the needs of refugee and newcomer students

Given the millions of students who fall into these categories, host countries must consider their unique educational needs in order to help them thrive. Newcomer and refugee students may live with family members or guardians who are unable to provide a sense of security needed by their children due to their own social and emotional needs. As a result, it falls to social systems, including schools, to fill in the gaps. These gaps are diverse: students may require medical health services, psychological support, language learning and opportunities to increase inclusion within their schools and the wider society. These circumstances have implications for SEL that will support newcomer and refugee students to succeed. For example, teachers can model patience and understanding when the students exhibit negative behaviours due to feeling stressed or confused.

Coordinated efforts between teachers, school leaders, and additional social services can provide a holistic experience offering the students their best chance to succeed. An extensive examination of the academic, social, and emotional needs of refugee students is available (Cerna, 2019[1]); a quick review as applied to both refugee and newcomer students follows.

Academic needs

Some refugee students have attended school prior to becoming refugees, and some have been able to go to school throughout their time in transition. However, some refugees have never had the opportunity to

go to school (Huddleston, n.d.[22]). When they arrive in a host country, they may have no knowledge of the local language (see Box 1.1), customs or daily school routines (Ahad and Benton, 2018[18]). Furthermore, some students may need to learn such basic skills as how to hold a pencil or cut with scissors (McBrien, in press[23]). As a result, newcomer and refugee students present with a wide range of competencies and needs. Their diverse academic needs can challenge and overwhelm their teachers. As such, policies also need to consider the specific training needs of teachers so that they can provide a nurturing, supportive environment for their diverse students.

Teacher preparation at university and in professional learning programmes need to provide information and practical experience about the circumstances of refugee and newcomer students and families. Unfortunately, teachers are often ill prepared to instruct students from other countries, and they may have beliefs that are detrimental to their teaching of refugee and newcomer students (Cerna, 2019[1]). For instance, teachers may believe that the students are not capable of high achievement. However, newcomer and refugee students who will reside in host countries for years, or perhaps for the remainder of their lives, are more likely to reach their potential as members of their new societies when they receive an equitable education that is welcoming and holistic (Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019[24]).

Box 1.1. The challenge of language

Refugee and newcomer students are likely to require intensive assistance learning the language of their host country in order to understand the academic curriculum. Language instruction practices vary greatly between countries, ranging from "full immersion", in which students are placed in the mainstream class for most of the day, to separated classrooms, in which a portion of a school building is dedicated completely to students who need to learn the language and may also need to catch up on academic content (Igoa, 1995[25]). In addition, many refugee and newcomer students are behind in knowing academic content because their migration experiences have resulted in months or even years when they had no access to schools.

Immersion techniques can be exhausting and demoralising for students, as they may sit in classrooms for hours struggling to comprehend their teachers and peers (Igoa, 1995[25]). Separated classrooms can also be problematic, as they segregate the new students from their host country peers. Sometimes schools combine these practices by placing students learning the host language into mainstream classrooms for part of the day and pulling them out for language learning at other times. Another promising practice is to include a mentor in the regular classroom to be with children experiencing language difficulties. For example, Vienna has an award-winning programme entitled Intercultural Mentoring for Schools that places multilingual university students, themselves from migrant families, in classrooms one day/week to support and encourage newcomer and refugee students. Jurors of the 2017 Euro Prize for Social Innovation found that this project not only motivates the mentored students; "rather, it strengthens the entire class community" (SozialMarie, 2017[26]).

To maintain their social connections to their homeland culture, it is also important for newcomer and refugee students to maintain their mother tongue. This is encouraged in schools that hold a philosophy of inclusion, or even integration, as both of these practices respect traditions of newcomer and refugee students. Assimilation beliefs, however – the idea that immigrants should give up the language and traditions of their homeland – tend to shame students when they speak in their mother tongue. The results of assimilationist practices is that students may fail or choose to drop out of school (Tonogbanua, 2019[27]). Alternatively, they may lose their mother tongue with the result that they can no longer communicate fluently with relatives and friends from their homeland. Both of these outcomes negatively affect social and emotional well-being.

Due to the problems caused by assimilationist practices, it is important for policy makers to balance the traditions of the host country with respect for languages and practices brought by newcomer and refugee families through inclusive practices. For example, Scotland's 2018-2022 refugee integration strategy has a section on "communities, culture and social connections" that both recognises refugees' needs for connection in Scottish society as well as their rights to exercise their cultural heritage and maintain their mother tongue (Scottish Government, 2018[28]). For students, Scotland has a "Getting it right for every child" policy that incorporates numerous support services in partnership with parents (Baak, 2019[29]).

Social and emotional needs

Newcomer and refugee students' migration experiences vary, with refugees most often encountering traumatic events on their journeys (Tanyu et al., 2020[30]). Chances are that they have said goodbye to close relatives and friends. Refugees frequently must leave most of their possessions behind. Even when previous communities were not safe, they were familiar. New communities and expected codes of behaviour can leave young people feeling lost and alone.

Newcomer and refugee students may live with family members or guardians who are, themselves, overwhelmed or traumatised, and so, unable to provide the sense of security needed by children and young people (Block et al., 2014[12]; McBrien, 2005[31]). Students in these circumstances may not have gained important social and emotional skills in non-formal educational settings such as their homes. Additionally, some refugee youth are unaccompanied by parents or guardians. These challenges can result in requirements for additional medical health services, psychological support, language learning and opportunities to increase inclusion within their schools and the wider society. These circumstances have implications for SEL that will support newcomer and refugee students to succeed. Sullivan and Simonson (2016[32]) noted that educators need to be especially alert to providing refugee students with social and emotional support due to the pre-migration and resettlement experiences they face. For example, teachers can model patience and understanding when the students exhibit negative behaviours due to feeling stressed or confused.

Until students acquire language skills of their host country, they often feel alienated (Paschero, 2021[33]). They frequently address discrimination from host country students that deters their ability to feel included by their peers and host community (Cerna, 2019[1]). Discrimination among students is sometimes categorized as bullying. This kind of abuse may take the form of social exclusion, verbal harassment (such as teasing and name-calling) or physical violence. The 2018 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that measured psychological and social well-being examined bullying (OECD, 2019[34]). The assessment disclosed a relationship between bullied students' emotional states and lower reading scores, for example. Bullying was also associated with higher truancy rates (OECD, 2019[34]). Given that newcomer and refugee students are often the targets of bullying, teachers need to learn effective intervention strategies when such problems arise.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in additional challenges for refugee and newcomer students and their families, as they are more likely than the general population to live in circumstances that preclude safety measures needed to reduce their risks (Danish Institute for International Studies, 2020[35]). Some refugees and asylum seekers live in overcrowded camps without adequate access to sanitation, safe water, and medical assistance. Some countries require government documentation of citizenship, which many refugees do not have (Milko, 2021[36]). Because parents in these populations are frequently unemployed or work for low wages, they often reside in crowded apartments. Lack of access and misinformation about vaccines prevents numerous immigrants from receiving a vaccine (Su, 2021[37]). Those who are not officially documented to be in the host country may resist getting a vaccine for fear of being discovered and deported. Isolation caused by the pandemic increases learning challenges, as many newcomer and refugee students cannot afford online learing technologies. Lack of contact with host country students makes it more difficult to make new friends.

A welcoming, safe environment will contribute to newcomer and refugee students' SEL and towards creating an inclusive learning environment. As is true for teacher training in the academic realm, a major gap in providing for social and emotional needs and promoting SEL involves insufficient teacher training (Schonert-Reichl, 2017[38]).

Long-term needs

Immediate needs for all immigrants arriving in host countries include housing, employment, access to healthcare, and education (OECD, 2019[39]). Research indicates that only 25% are employed five years after arrival (OECD, 2019[39]). A major cause of low employment is low educational attainment among immigrant groups (OECD, 2019[17]). Therefore, it is important to create policies and practices that encourage refugee and newcomer students to complete their education through secondary level and to consider tertiary education. Although 37% of youth attend university worldwide, only 5% of refugee youth have this opportunity (UNHCR, 2021[40]).

Finding gainful employment is most often dependent on the successful completion of educational studies. Because refugee students' journeys are often fraught with numerous traumatic experiences, they face additional challenges that other immigrant students may not experience (McBrien, 2016[41]). For example, they may have lived through experiences of war and witnessed the killing of neighbours or family members. They may have endured frightening travel with no access to sufficient food, water, or shelter. The physical and psychological consequences of such experiences can motivate refugee students to attain educational success (Mosselson, 2007[42]). At other times, the stress can cause them to give up (Makepeace, 2007[43]).

Additionally, students who arrive in host countries as adolescents face greater challenges acquiring needed academic skills for gainful employment than those arriving as elementary school students. For example, vocabulary used in secondary school is more complex than that in earlier grades. In addition, because secondary school subjects build on prior information learned in elementary school, adolescent students often find they have a great deal to catch up in order to be at levels similar to their native-born peers. They often need supplemental learning services to remain encouraged and motivated at school.

At the same time, it is important to avoid simply viewing refugee students through a deficit lens. They demonstrate remarkable resilience through their ability to survive what are often harrowing refugee journeys. They often express gratitude to host countries for providing them with a chance to begin their lives anew in a safe space. However, to maintain a positive trajectory, they need to feel welcomed by the host country (McBrien, n.d.[44]). Such a welcome may involve targeted strategies to assist them with formal learning, support their recovery from difficult journeys, and create enhanced opportunities for inclusion (Block et al., 2014[12]).

Beyond academic access

Previous international policies have called more for access than for holistic education. For instance, the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goal for education was to achieve universal primary education. As Caprini (2016[45]) explains, the emphasis on numbers of enrolments could conceal problems of quality. Additionally, enrolment numbers did not match with numbers of students who were actually attending school. In contrast, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) emphasise equitable and inclusive high-quality schooling. In addition to traditional academic targets, such as literacy and numeracy, the SDG for education includes Target 4.7, which focuses on human rights, gender equality, peace education, global citizenship and an appreciation for cultural diversity. Target 4.1 describes, in addition to access, the goal that education be equitable and of a quality that leads to learning outcomes that are effective (United Nations, n.d.[46]). Though not specifically targeted to SEL objectives, these goals reach more towards concepts of engagement and collaboration.

Holistic learning is not a new concept for many teachers. Researchers have found that people enter the teaching profession for altruistic reasons (Schonert-Reichl, 2017[38]; Sen and Ögülmüs, 2020[47]). On their own initiative, many teachers create spaces in the school day to provide for social and emotional learning. For instance, they may hold morning meetings and times to check in with their students to find out how they are feeling. They may hold discussions within the context of an academic subject about making good decision, such as a novel the students are reading. The use of play and of art can help students work through troubling emotions or anxiety (Russell and Hurtzel, 2007[48]).

In recent years, SEL has been codified as an important instructional method. For example, the Committee for Children is an international non-profit organisation that has collaborated with government ministries in several countries such as Australia, Lithuania and Mexico to create culturally relevant SEL materials (Committee for Children, n.d.[49]). As a result, teachers have access to ready-made curricula to advance what they already attempt to provide for their students (Jones et al., 2021[13]). Opportunities for school districts to purchase SEL curricula and professional learning can aid teachers in their desire to support their students beyond traditional academic learning.

Although most teachers care about the overall well-being of their students, they are challenged with many demands that make it difficult for them to be fully capable of providing a nurturing context (Schonert-Reichl, 2017[38]). Beyond typical issues of negative behaviours exhibited by some students, working with newcomer and refugee students who are struggling with the language and with inclusion can be stressful (Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019[24]). As such, it must be emphasised that teachers need ongoing support to meet the challenges of diverse classrooms. Teachers' competencies are required to optimise opportunities for SEL to occur for all students in their classrooms (Jones et al., 2021[13]). This will not only help immigrant students to adapt, but also facilitate interactions between immigrant and native students.

Why does SEL matter?

Social and emotional learning involves processes that help students acquire and apply the information, mind-set and skills to understand and regulate their emotions, create and accomplish realistic goals, engender empathy, and make responsible decisions (Dippold, 2021[50]). Social and emotional learning helps students develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours to adapt to their environments, work capably with others, and live successfully in a fast-paced, uncertain and rapidly changing world (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018[51]; Laboratory, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning (EASEL), 2020[52]). Acquisition of SES equip people to lead healthy, purposeful lives (Durlak, 2011[53]).

Employers are looking for SEL as they consider job candidates. A large-scale survey of students, teachers and employers in the United Kingdom revealed that 88% of students, 97% of teachers and 94% of employers believe SES are as or more important in adulthood than academic achievement (Culliane and Montacute, 2017[54]). At the same time, only 50% of teachers surveyed indicated that their schools had a consistent policy on SEL, and 68% of employers surveyed said that students do not have these life skills after leaving secondary school. There was slightly higher belief in university graduate's skills by employers, at 52%. There was also recognition by this report that non-formal learning is important in developing SES, but the students from disadvantaged backgrounds were 20% less likely to partake in them than their more advantaged peers.

The OECD recognises that educational requirements are not simply captured in traditional academic learning (OECD, 2015[10]). Today's students need academic skills that help them to succeed economically, but also SEL skills that help them to achieve successful personal and social competence. These include skills to persevere, interact well with others, and lead in their work environments and communities. These SES are as important as the traditional cognitive information that students acquire in their academic subjects. Though students do not receive formal grades or assessments on SEL, they are likely to be judged on the skills. Negative student behaviours and interactions can cause peers to reject them. Later in life, poor SES can make it difficult for individuals to obtain and keep jobs.

A holistic approach to education recognises that students are multidimensional, and that attending to only one dimension (for instance, academic achievement) without consideration for the contexts of students' lives is unlikely to result in success (OECD, 2019[55]). Social and emotional learning is an important aspect of holistic learning. Additionally, it has a direct impact on academic success. A meta-analysis of over 200 school programmes from kindergarten through high school (primarily from the United States) concluded that the inclusion of SEL not only improved SES, but also reflected an academic achievement gain of 11-percentile points (Durlak, 2011[53]). In an ideal environment, such skills are nurtured from birth. Research on young children indicates the importance of parental and caregiver interactions with their children to develop early SES (OECD, 2019[17]).

An additional component to SEL that is often overlooked is that of social capital (Morrison, Blood and Thorsborn, 2005[56]). Scrivens and Smith (2013, p. 9[57]) define the term broadly as "the productive value of social connections", understanding production both in the sense of labour and of well-being. These

social networks can facilitate access to jobs, education, social services and more. Newcomers and refugees are typically lacking in social capital.

Barriers to SEL

Social and emotional skills are important for refugee and newcomer students to reach their full potential. However, they are not always taught. Empirical studies have identified five major barriers to SEL:

- Poverty
- Exclusionary discipline practices and policies – disproportionally meted out to marginalised youth
- Lack of trauma-informed practices
- Implicit bias in school staff – low expectations resulting in reduced engagement by marginalised students
- Teacher stress – reduces safety and achievement in the classroom (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2018[58]) and
- Lack of teacher training.

Each of these barriers has implications for newcomer and refugee students. Many immigrant families live in extreme poverty (Thompson, Umansky and Porter, 2020[7]; UNHCR, n.d.[59]). Newcomer and refugee students are frequently marginalised due to their language, religion, ethnicity, and culture (Guo-Brennan and Guo-Brennan, 2021[5]; Thompson, Umansky and Porter, 2020[7]). Many refugee students have experienced multiple trauma situations that may include rape, the death of family members, torture, and lack of basic needs during their refugee journeys. Finally, often due to insufficient training, teachers may have low expectations for students who are not fluent in the dominant language of the host country (McBrien, 2005[31]).

There is little indication of comprehensive teacher training with respect to refugee issues. As a result, most teachers are not well equipped to handle the additional challenges that newcomer and refugee students bring to the classroom: issues of language, culture, academic deficiencies, trauma, physical and mental health issues, and integration, among them. Schonert-Reichl (2017[38]) stated that teaching is among the most stressful of occupations, and poor social and emotional well-being for teachers is a risk. In order to promote SEL for students, teachers should also gain strong SES and be prepared and supported (Jennings, 2009[60]).

Recognising the challenges to implementing SEL learning is an important step in considering how to rectify current limitations. For students to acquire SEL skills, teachers need to understand the principles and value of SEL and to receive training in its delivery. They also need to have strong SES themselves to model the behaviours for their students. The remainder of this paper will further describe SEL theories and current successful practices and policies in place internationally that can be adapted in other countries.

2 Understanding SEL and its importance for refugee and newcomer students

Social and emotional learning helps students develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours to adapt to their environments, work capably with others, and live successfully in a fast-paced and rapidly changing world (Chernyshenko, 2018[61]; Laboratory, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning (EASEL), 2020[52]). Additionally, acquisition of SES equip people to lead healthy, purposeful lives (Durlak, 2011[62]). This section explains some of the history of SEL, two major theories that conceptualise SEL, and how these elements relate to refugee and newcomer students' needs.

What is SEL?

Social and emotional skills are commonly known as "non-cognitive skills" that include the abilities to determine and achieve goals, work amicably with others, and understand and regulate one's emotions (OECD, 2015[10]). Social emotional learning provides students with skills to process their emotions and understand their environment. Through guidance and modelling by teachers and caregivers, students can learn how to manage their thoughts and behaviours in constructive ways as they become aware of their emotions and how their thoughts and values shape their actions. Similarly, they learn how to consider and understand the feelings and behaviours of others, including those from diverse cultures. This understanding helps them develop social skills needed to work co-operatively with others and to develop healthy relationships with others. Learning to make responsible and empathetic decisions also increases students' abilities to take care of themselves and others (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2021[63]).

Importantly for refugee and newcomer students, this includes ways to manage stress and uncertainty. As they cross borders and enter countries with different cultural contexts, such social skills are essential for their long-term success (Phillips, 2009[64]). For example, many refugee and newcomer students come from countries that do not allow girls and boys to attend school in the same classroom. As such, they may experience discomfort when first placed in co-educational settings. Girls may move from homelands where they maintained full body clothing to settings in which girls wear far more revealing outfits for physical education classes and sports. These stark changes can be highly stressful for the children and their parents (McBrien, 2011[65]).

Social and emotional learning facilitates traditional academic learning, as it helps students feel capable and secure (Brackett et al., 2019[66]). Research indicates that when students feel accepted and welcomed, they perform at higher cognitive levels (Lee and Walsh, 2016[67]). SEL skills, such as perseverance and collaboration, also increase students' likelihood to succeed in adulthood (Davis et al., 2014[68]).

However, literature pertaining to SEL indicates that the field is not well defined. Jones et al. (2021, p. 6[13]) explain that numerous concepts, among them, "non-cognitive development, character education,

21st century skills, and trauma-informed learning grit, empathy, growth, mind-set, social skills, and more" as well as the numerous methods intended to develop these traits, and where and how they are delivered can bewilder teachers, researchers, and policy makers.

Social and emotional vs. academic learning

Social and emotional learning is fundamentally different from traditional academic education. Learning core knowledge in mathematics, science, history, geography and the like can involve learning from textbooks, primary sources, and lectures. Some subjects, particularly sciences, are frequently learned through experimentation. In contrast, SEL involves attaining both interpersonal skills – ways to collaborate and work with others – and intrapersonal skills – understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses and regulating one's emotions. Interpersonal skills include successful verbal and nonverbal communication, active listening, cooperative work, and the ability to acknowledge others' strengths. Intrapersonal skills include self-discipline and self-confidence, openness, resilience, and persistence. This learning is highly experiential (Cefai, Regester and Dirani, 2020[69]).

This skill building begins in infancy and continues through the life cycle (Pratiwi and Ayriza, 2018[70]). Infants and toddlers can begin to acquire these skills through nurturing, tolerant interactions with parents and caretakers. When their behaviours are met with consistent, affirming reactions, they can gain a sense of trust in their environment and a belief in others. Fair, non-violent discipline can help them to learn self-regulation (Lincoln et al., 2017[71]). Positive adult behaviours and examples provide models for children as they develop their own behaviours. In addition to interactions with adults, peer groups are important portals for SEL skills. Children develop both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills through play with others (Pratiwi and Ayriza, 2018[70]). When they play, children can also be creative. They can explore and discover their own feelings and those of their peers. They can learn to negotiate differences in their play behaviours.

Origins of SEL theory

There is no definitive timeline to trace the beginnings of the SEL movement in education. An early advocate for whole child development was Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori (1870-1952), who constructed classroom settings that provided students with freedom to follow their own interests and to work in groups. To facilitate the development of social relationships, students spend three years in each classroom rather than moving from one to the next each year. She explained that her method encouraged children to be curious, independent, and responsible. In her 1948 book, *What You Should Know about Your Child*, she wrote that good educational procedures resulted in students' happiness.

During a similar time period, Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) was developing his sociocultural theory that focused on learning as primarily social, collaborative interaction. His theories emphasise the role of language and social exchanges through which students learn sociocultural values. An important concept from Vygotsky is the teaching tool of "scaffolding", which involves interactions between a student and a teacher to help the student build advanced skills. As such, social skills and effective communication with language are critical to a student's cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1997[72]). Vygotsky also highlighted play as important to social and cognitive development and self-regulation.

Social and emotional learning theory beginning in the second half of the 20th century was advanced by American James Comer's work at the Yale School of Medicine's Child Study Center (Edutopia, 2011[73]). His psychosocial intervention programme at two low-achieving schools with high populations of minority students brought their academic performance above the national U.S. average in the 1970s. Comer's interventions emphasise the social and cultural connections between schools and homes. Comer and his colleagues created the School Development Program with the goals of helping students feel safe and

valued. The programme requires collaborations between school personnel, parents, community leaders and health care providers that are respectful and open.

In particular, SEL is linked to the "whole child" educational theory, which advocates for not only cognitive/intellectual learning, but also language and literacy development, diverse approaches to teaching and learning, physical well-being, and social and emotional development (Miller, 2010[74]). It goes beyond traditional conceptions of formal education that prioritise test scores and academic achievement to include ways to build students' mental and social competencies. The education organisation Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)[1] launched the Whole Child Initiative in 2007 to include health, safety, engagement, support, and challenge among the indicators of successful education (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2015[75]). Previously, in 1997, the ASCD partnered with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to produce the book *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators.* This book provided SEL strategies for preschool through secondary education teachers (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2021[76]).

In the European Union (EU), the Network of Experts on Social Aspects of Education and Training (NESET) created a SEL implementation strategy with a whole school approach (Cefai, 2018[77]). Their model calls for collaborations between parents and school personnel, training, targeted interventions, and SEL competencies that are embedded in the curriculum in a safe and welcoming school environment. Goals are to establish competent intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies.Social and emotional skills can be defined as "individual capacities that can be: (a) manifested in consistent patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviours; (b) developed through formal and informal learning experiences; and (c) important drivers of socio-economic outcomes throughout the individual's life" (Ikesako and Miyamoto, 2015, p. 2[9]). Socio-emotional learning skills include the ability to persist, achieve goals, work co-operatively, and manage one's emotions. These skills are seen as necessary complements to intellectual knowledge for success and well-being in life.

SEL frameworks

Given that SEL skills are defined as "soft-skills", less academic rigor has been applied to them in terms of academic research as compared to traditional academic subject matter such as reading, math, and science. As the historical models above demonstrate, concepts across theories and practices have common features. They depend on collaborative work between teachers, students, parents, and society. They recognize the interrelations between social, emotional skills and cognitive achievement. Unlike academic progress, they are not measured by assignments and tests. What follows is an overview of two predominant frameworks for defining and conceptualising SES.

Big Five model (also known as the Five Factor model)

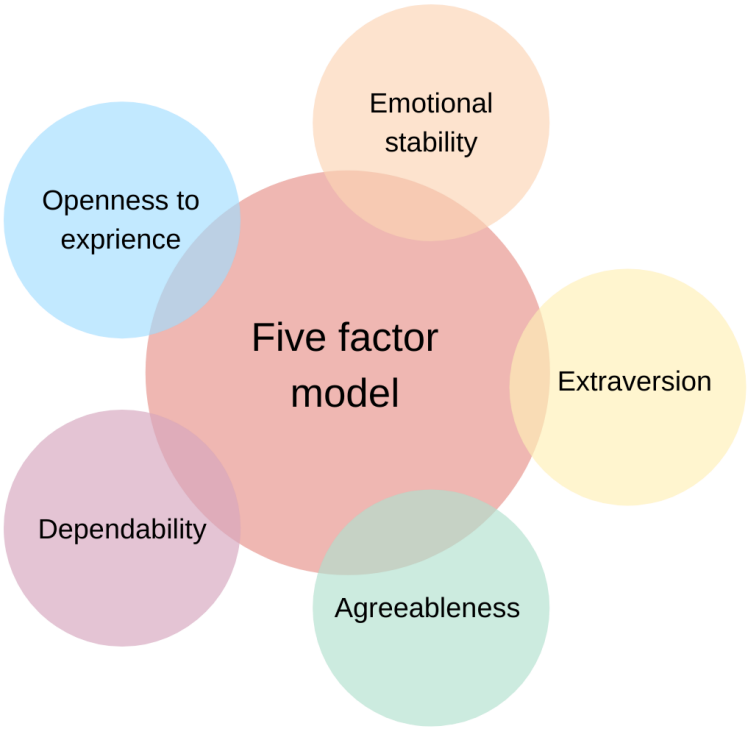
Numerous studies (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018[51]; Jang, Livesley and Vernon, 1996[78]; John and De Fruyt, 2015[79]; Poropat, 2009[80]) have determined that SEL skills are encompassed in the "Big Five" model. This personality model has been derived from numerous consistent studies of language that people use to describe themselves and others (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018[51]). It was used by the OECD to develop its Social and Emotional Skills Survey (OECD, 2021[8]). In brief, SEL skills include the following five skillsets (Figure 2.1):

- **Dependability** – skills grouped in this domain include self-control, organisation, task performance, reliability, persistence and setting high standards for oneself.

[1] The ASCD is an educational organisation founded in 1943 that includes members from over 125 countries.

- **Extraversion** – this domain includes one's tendencies to create and maintain connections with others, assertiveness, and positive engagement in life.
- **Agreeableness** – this factor involves the quality of interpersonal relations. The trait involves co-operation, collaboration, caring about the well-being of others and trust.
- **Emotional stability** – people with this trait have strategies to understand and control their emotions in stressful situations. They demonstrate resilience and are optimistic with a generally positive worldview.
- **Openness to experience** – this factor involves intellectual curiosity, creativity, open-mindedness, a love of learning, and tolerance as well as a tendency to self-reflect (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018[51]).

Figure 2.1. The Five Factor Model



Initial findings from the OECD survey (OECD, 2021[8]) reveal important items for family, school, and policy attention. For example:

- 15-year-olds report lower levels of SES than 10-year-olds
- 15-year-old girls reported lower creativity scores than boys
- Students from advantaged backgrounds reported higher SES than disadvantaged students in all categories
- High levels of SES correlated to a higher satisfaction with life and a sense of well-being (OECD, 2021[8]).

Initial findings also demonstrate a strong relationship between SES and academic achievement. Bullying and a poor sense of belonging at school correspond to lower levels of optimism, co-operation, sociability, emotional control and resilience against stress. Given that newcomer and refugee students are often in disadvantaged schools due to low socio-economic family circumstances, and they tend to report moderate

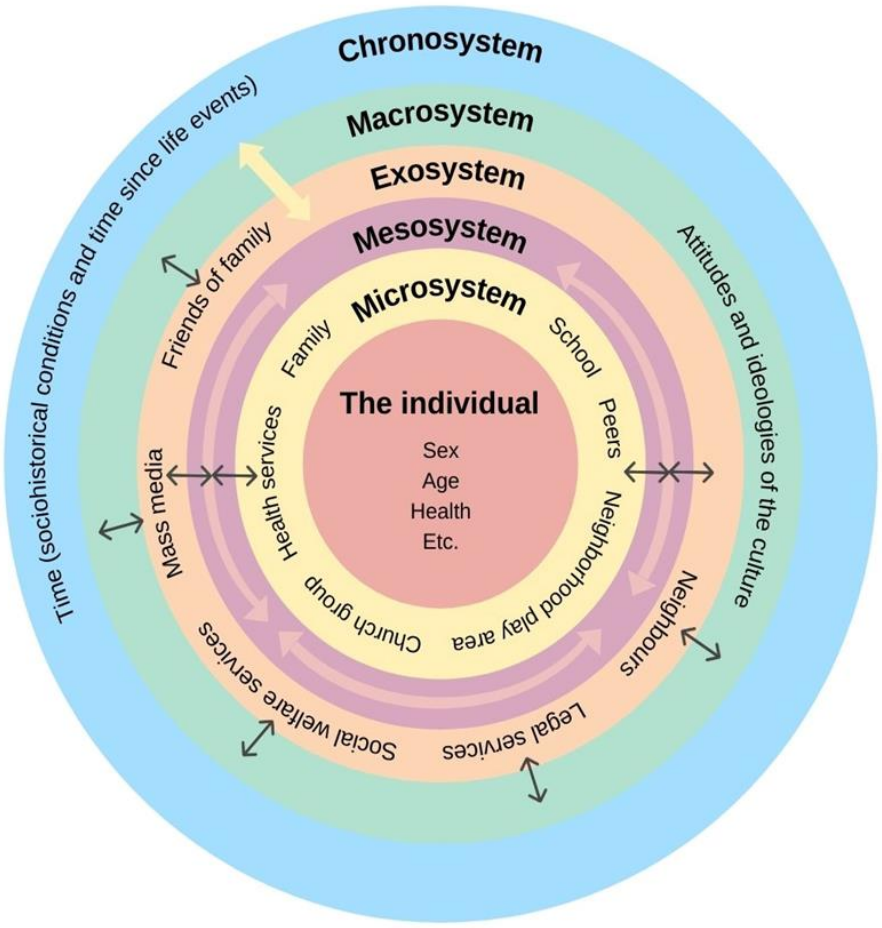
to high levels of bullying and alienation in school, policies and practices to support them are particularly important for their academic and life success.

Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning Laboratory (EASEL) Framework A second model was developed by the Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning Laboratory (EASEL) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the United States. This team, led by Dr. Stephanie Jones, uses Bronfenbrenner and Ceci's (1994[81]) Bio-Ecological Systems Theory, which examines levels of a child's environment (from the most intimate, such as relationships with parents, siblings, teachers and peers to less direct, such as geographic location and historical changes) and the child's interactions with these environments (see Figure 2.2). At the most intimate level is the microsystem, students' closest connections, such as family, friends, and school. For example, children are heavily influenced by interactions with parents and caregivers early in their lives, resulting in many of the values, beliefs, and attitudes they select. Interactions with peers can result in developing positive or negative social behaviours. An adolescent student may be influenced by a secondary school counsellor, who may encourage or discourage the student from applying to university.

Less direct interactions also affect the social and emotional development of the student. The exosystem is a layer in which the interaction is with a place or event that does not play an active role with the individual. For example, a student's family may be displaced by a natural disaster or by war. Though the student was not directly engaged with creating the disaster, he or she can be significantly affected by the event.

Bronfenbrenner's model (1995[82]) also includes interactions at the mesosystem (connections between these close connections, such as the connections between family and school); macrosystem (the role of a culture's attitudes and beliefs); and the chronosystem (the role of socio-historical conditions). The microsystem, being the closest of connections, is typically considered to be the most influential. However, in the case of refugee students, that outer layer of social and historical conditions, such as violence, terror, or war, is highly influential with respect to wellbeing. As such, it is important that teachers receive training about the refugee journey to be able to support these students.

Figure 2.2. Bronfenbrenner's Bio-Ecological Systems model



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These systems are often stressed in cases of newcomer and refugee students. For instance, parents may suffer from depression as a result of refugee experiences. Their emotional state will affect their ability to interact in a positive way with their child, resulting in low nurturance or harsh punishment. Language challenges can prevent parents from communicating well with their children's school, resulting in less support. A parent's workplace may be a negative environment, affecting the parent's emotional wellbeing. This, in turn, affects the parent's ability to engage with the family.

The EASEL framework includes two sets of domains affected by these interrelated systems (Jones, 2012[83]):

- Cognitive, social and emotional domain
- Values, perspectives and identity domain.

Cognitive skills are required to help students direct their attention towards reaching goals and include self-regulation, problem-solving, focus and analysis. Social skills involve interpersonal abilities to cooperate, collaborate, and coexist peacefully. The emotional domain includes skills that help children understand and appropriately express their own feelings. These involve both recognising how situations cause them to feel but also how they cause others to feel. As such, they contribute to social abilities.

The second set of domains comprises a "belief domain" (Jones et al., 2021, p. 16[13]): values, attitudes and beliefs that shape one's understanding of the self and the world. The values component connects to culture

and moral education. Values are competencies and strengths that help individuals become positive members of society: concerns for justice, performing to the best on one's ability, caring for others and being civically engaged. Perspectives involve how one views the world. Positive perspectives include hope, gratitude, and enthusiasm that can help one overcome challenges and difficulties. Finally, identity involves people's ability for self-understanding. When students have positive self-regard, they have more competence to overcome mistakes and frustrations.

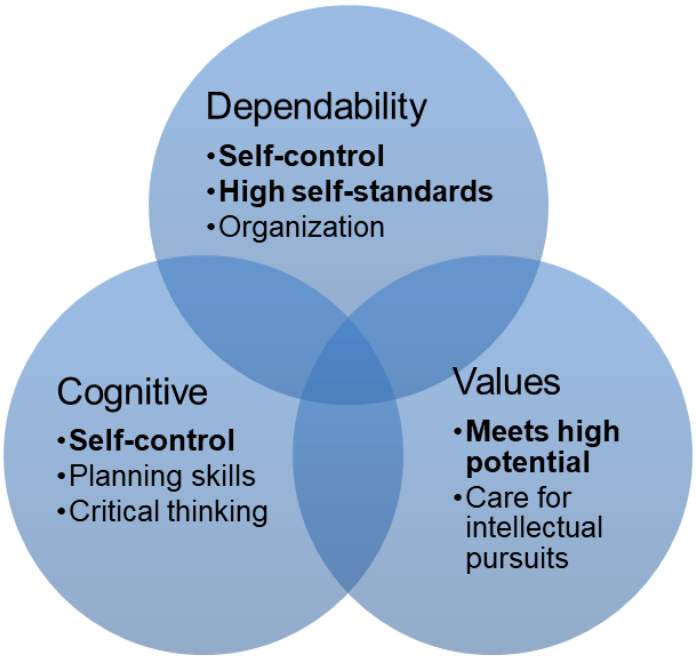
The EASEL framework specifically notes the importance of equitable SEL programmes as those that are "supportive, affirming, and beneficial for students of all cultures, backgrounds, and identities ((Jones et al., 2021, p. 8[13]). It has been used to map and analyse policies, programmes and assessments of SEL and psychosocial support (PSS) internationally, in a project funded by the Porticus Foundation (Laboratory, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) and Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning (EASEL), 2020[52]). This research found that the United States has the highest number of tools in use, followed by Turkey.

Compatibility of the SEL Models

There is considerable overlap between the Big Five and the EASEL frameworks, as the following Venn diagrams illustrate. Bullet points in bold type indicate particular similarities. For example, dependability (see Figure 2.3) from the Big Five model aligns with the cognitive and values areas in EASEL in terms of goals for self-control and meeting highexpectations for oneself. These largely personal skills help students regulate themselves and create appropriate goals to achieve.

Figure 2.3. Emotional skill: Dependability

Compatibility between Big Five and the EASEL frameworks

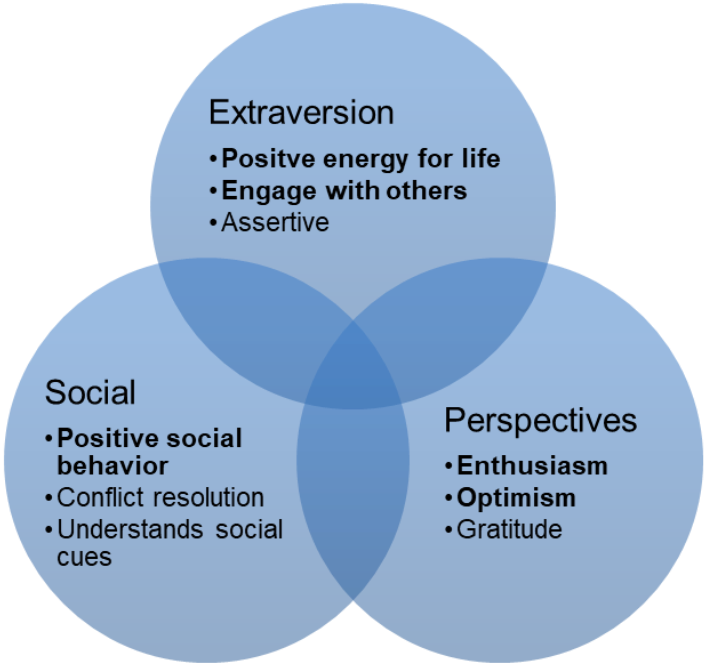


Social skill: Extraversion

The Big Five component of extraversion overlaps with social and perspectives EASEL domains (see Figure 2.4). These are similar in terms of positive life energy that includes optimism and social engagement. The quality of extraversion includes a positive outlook towards life that can be related to enthusiasm. An interest in working in groups aligns with positive social behaviours and a positive regard towards others. These skills can be acquired when teachers facilitate student groups that examine interesting, relevant questions in subject matter, for instance.

Figure 2.4. Social skill: Extraversion

Compatibility between Big Five and the EASEL frameworks

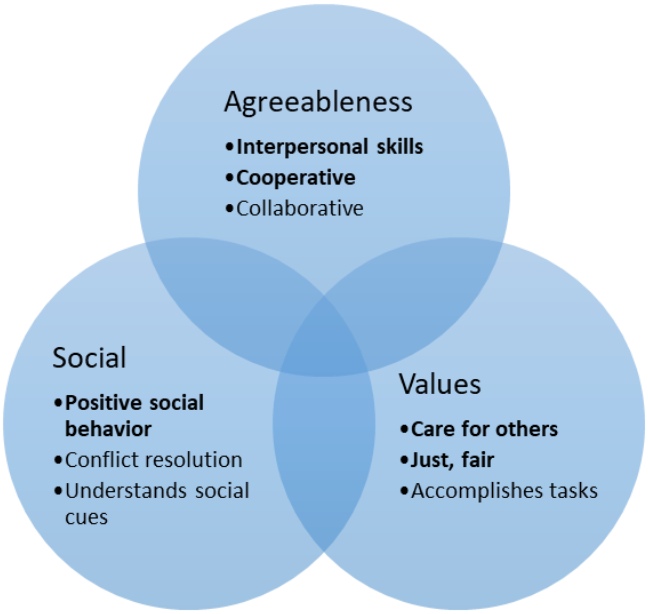


Social skill: Agreeableness

The Five Factor domain of agreeableness aligns with the social and values domains in the EASEL model (see Figure 2.5). This area of social and emotional learning includes positive interpersonal skills, the ability to collaborate and a desire for fairness and justice. This skill is associated with a high degree of cooperation with others. For example, these students may want to engage in peer mediation to help their peers resolve conflicts in nonviolent ways that result in fairness and justice. Volonteer opportunities can enhance these abilities.

Figure 2.5. Social skill: Agreeableness

Compatibility between Big Five and the EASEL frameworks

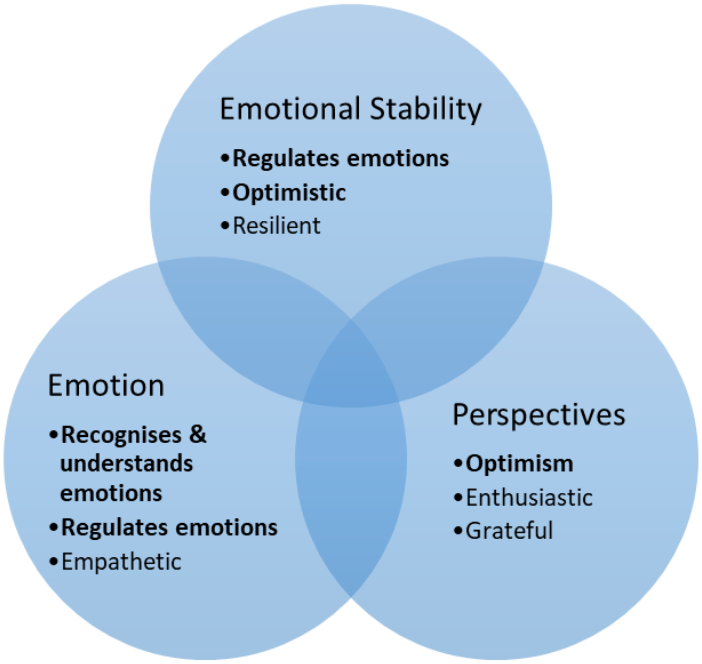


Social skill: Emotional stability

Emotional stability in the Five Factor model relates to the emotion and perspectives components of EASEL (see Figure 2.6). Similarities include the ability to understand and regulate one's emotions. Students with this skill can control their impulses. Another trait in this group is optimism. This skill is associated with altruistic, selfless capabilities of working towards the best resolution for oneself and others' difficulties. An example would be a student who carefully reflects on events of the day and considers ways in which he or she handled an uncomfortable situation.

Figure 2.6. Emotional skill: Emotional stability

Compatibility between Big Five and the EASEL frameworks

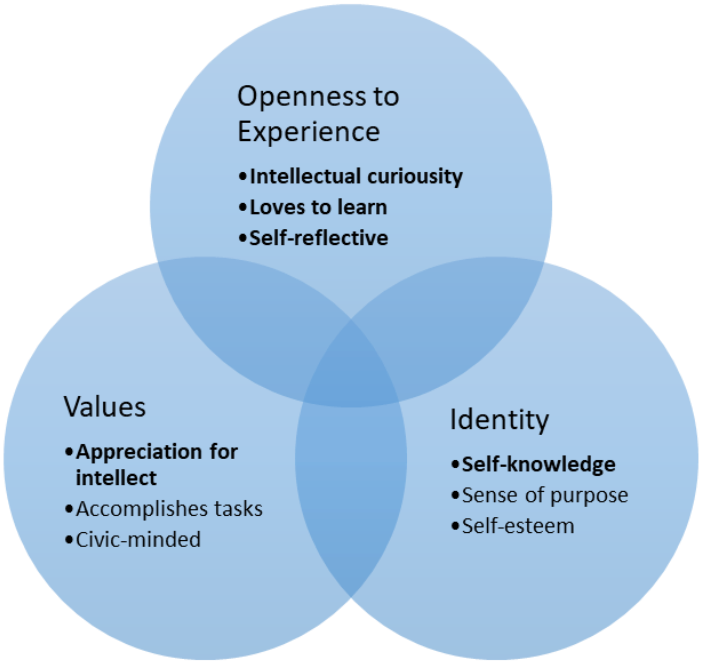


Emotion Skill: Openness to experience

Openness to experience in the Five Factor mode, overlaps with values and identity in the EASEL model (see Figure 2.7). Each of these factors involves intellectual interest and self-knowledge. This factor may be the most related to the more academic, cognitive goals of education, as intellectual curiosity and the desire to learn are related to academic achievement. Students who develop these skills are likely to have a lifelong interest in learning and engaging with new experiences and environments. They are likely to enjoy engagement with cultures and environments outside of their familiar landscapes.

Figure 2.7. Emotional skill: Openness to experience

Compatibility between Big Five and the EASEL frameworks



SEL and social capital

An additional component to SEL is that of social capital (Morrison, Blood and Thorsborn, 2005[56]). Scrivens and Smith (2013[57]) explain that there remains disagreement on the definition of this term. However, important components include four major areas: i) personal relationships; ii) support from social networks; iii) civic engagement; and iv) norms of trust and cooperation (Scrivens and Smith, 2013[57]). These networks can facilitate access to jobs, education, social services and more.

Newcomers and refugees are typically lacking in social capital (Cheung and Phillimore, 2014[84]; McDaid, 2019[85]). Their family networks may have deteriorated as they left their homelands, through violence and other loss of access. New social networks can be difficult to create due to fear and lack of inclusion. Because immigrants typically need to learn a new language and new cultural patterns, it can take years before they can become civically engaged. Given past challenges with authorities, refugees, in particular, may fear and distrust authorities. Because of these obstacles, students with an immigrant background and their families need extra support from schools and social service organisations to build their social capital.

An in-depth look at the Big Five and EASEL frameworks

Social and emotional learning skills are applicable for each stage of learning, and they have been called essential "21st century skills" for workplace and personal success and well-being (Silber-Varod, 2019[86]). In early childhood, these skills include the ability to make friends and play well in groups (OECD, 2020[87]). As children mature, SEL skills increase in sophistication. OECD pilot surveys in Helsinki, Finland; Ottawa, Canada; and Houston, United States, investigated 10 and 15-year-olds' abilities to manage the following:

- Demonstrate self-control and organization; persist and dedicate themselves to personal goals; complete tasks (conscientiousness, cognitive and values domains)
- Find opportunities to connect and spend time, and be comfortable with others (extraversion, social and perspectives domains)
- Care about and co-operate with others, maintaining positive relationships (agreeableness, values and social domains)
- Demonstrate equanimity in stressful situations and hold a positive worldview (emotional stability, emotion and perspectives domains) and
- Remain open to intellectual stimulation and experiential learning (openness to experience, values, and identity domains) (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018[51]; Jones et al., 2021[13]).

Feron and Kankaraš (2019[88]) found that students were more optimistic, confident, socially engaged and trusting if they reported a sense of belonging to their school. Students who stated that they were bullied at school reported lower levels of optimism, cooperation and emotional control along with higher levels of stress. The analysts also found that students who reported a sense of safety ranked higher in SEL skills than those who felt unsafe. The 2021 OECD initial findings on its SEL survey reported similar results (OECD, 2021[8]).

How do children and youth acquire these skills that are so important to their social well-being and success? In fact, SES are constantly learned and refined throughout the life process. Research on young children indicates the importance of parental interactions with their children to develop early SES (OECD, 2020[87]). Notable is the research indicating that children from immigrant backgrounds have lower levels of SES such as trust and prosocial behaviours as reported by teachers (OECD, 2020[87]). This finding indicates the need to support parents and caregivers of newcomer and refugee children to support SEL in the family setting.

As children age, researchers examine their abilities to achieve and to adapt to their environments (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018[51]). These skills are not only important for individual success; they are also essential for healthy societies. The social and economic growth of communities requires residents who work hard to achieve positive goals and who enjoy co-operating with others. Societal development is possible when people care about the welfare of others and take care of their environment. Healthy enthusiasm for life nurtures to desire to find just solutions to life's challenges.

What follows is a deeper examination of the SEL domains, how to promote each domain, and how each relates to newcomer, refugee and other migrant education.

Dependability (cognitive, values)

The domain of dependability is inclusive of cognitive skills and values supporting these learning goals. This domain's goals of self-control, reliability, persistence and high standards are assisted by skills of self-regulation, problem solving, focus, critical thinking, and performing to the best of one's ability.

Trilling and Fadel (2009, p. 12[89]) include these capabilities among those necessary to succeed in the current century. They state that education's goals are to empower us "to contribute to work and society, exercise and develop our personal talents, fulfil our civic responsibilities, and carry our traditions and values forward". They also explain that today's workforce requires the skills of collaboration and innovation (creativity).

Cognitive skills can be promoted in a variety of ways. Children tend to ask many questions, and this can often weary caretakers. However, encouraging children to ask questions – and asking questions of children – can help them to understand the importance of seeking information throughout their lives. This simple activity helps them to think, process information, apply new information and understand their world (Winn et al., 2019[90]). Refugee and newcomer students are likely to need extra help in this domain. They have often experienced a gap in their education resulting in a lapse of practice in critical thinking and problem

solving related to academics. They may not have been challenged to perform to the best of their ability during breaks from school. Frightening experiences with authorities may make refugee students fear to ask questions. At the same time, their life experiences may have taught them a high degree of self-control and persistence. They have had to employ problem-solving skills in daily life situations. When teachers view these students as resilient survivors rather than as victims, they may tap into their students 'strengths more effectively (Hayward, 2019[91]).

Extraversion (social, perspectives)

Extraversion is highly correlated with the social aspects of learning. It involves engaging and getting along with others, finding positive ways to resolve conflicts, and holding an enthusiastic view of life. Parents, caregivers and teachers can teach extraversion skills in many ways. They can model manners that are appropriate to their cultural context while remaining open to manners in diverse cultural contexts (McBrien, in press[23]). They can role-play situations of conflict familiar to students and facilitate conversations to problem solve these scenarios. Stories can provide opportunities to consider prosocial behaviours for addressing conflict. Placing students with partners or in groups can provide opportunities to learn how to get along. Teaching students to set their own goals with prosocial behaviour can help them to become self-sufficient in this domain.

Extraversion can be especially challenging for newcomers and refugee students. As explained in Section 1, they are often intimidated to speak up because they are not fluent in the language. They are frequently the brunt of discrimination and bullying, making them uncomfortable to be assertive. They may be more comfortable with customs and manners from different cultural contexts. Teachers can help these students by encouraging them to speak, understanding their diverse cultural contexts, and monitoring for bullying by native students.

Collaboration (social, values) The domain of collaboration also falls under social skills. It has to do with the quality of social relationships. These skills are often taught by modelling interpersonal skills such as listening carefully to others, being kind, working cooperatively, and showing genuine concern for others' wellbeing. Students skilled in this trait go beyond their own self-interests. They will tend to intervene if they believe that a peer is being treated unfairly.

Refugees often demonstrate a remarkable affinity for agreeableness. For instance, those who are resettled can demonstrate great gratitude for their host country and aim to become excellent citizens (McBrien, in press[23]). During their journeys of escape, many refugees take on unaccompanied children and provide heroic acts to save one another. At the same time, when placed into a new social context, newcomers and refugees can become frightened and overwhelmed by the newness of their environments and lack of welcome by some residents of the host country. Teachers can facilitate this domain by modelling kindness, care, and fair behaviour. They can use appropriate conflict resolution strategies when there are problems in the classroom.

Emotional stability (emotion, perspectives)

This domain is an essential component of emotional learning and includes the ability to recognise, understand, and label one's emotions, as well as being able to do the same for others (Jones et al., 2021[13]). An important skill in this domain is the ability to regulate one's emotions. Traits that facilitate these skills are resilience, empathy, optimism, and gratitude.

Emotional stability is another domain of difficulty for newcomers and refugees. They may have suffered through multiple traumas on their journey to safety. They may be enduring ongoing discrimination. And they may be experiencing cultural confusion as they navigate a new language and new cultural mores. At the same time, they may exhibit strengths of optimism and gratitude for a chance to rebuild their lives in relative safety.

Once again, modelling is an important method for teaching emotional stability (CASEL, 2021[92]). Teachers can talk about how they are feeling and what they are doing to control difficult feelings. They can use stories to discuss feelings and actions of characters and how they are prosocial or not. Teachers can encourage emotional management by "catching" students when they control their emotions and complimenting their behaviour. They can model empathy.

Openness to experience (values, identity)

This final domain is comparable to Maslow's final stage of self-actualization in his hierarchy of needs theory (OECD, 2020[93]). It involves traits such as a love of learning, creativity, self-reflection and a sense of purpose. Such attributes are typically achieved only after one acquires basic needs and a sense of safety and belonging. These traits include a curiosity about and exploration of one's life. People who are open to experience also enjoy learning about other cultures. They may aspire to travel to other countries and learn other languages. They tend to see education as a personal lifelong adventure rather than something segregated to the formal years in school. Of course, newcomer and refugee students can have these traits at any stage. However, they are not likely to be able to pursue them before their immediate needs are met. Governmental policies and supports from non-governmental bodies can bridge gaps to help these students move from survival needs to self-actualization. As newcomer and refugee students and their families progress, they are better able to contribute to their host countries in terms of social and economic progress.

3 SEL practices and policies

As SEL has taken on more prominence in the past two decades, there are a growing number of SEL curricula available for teachers and schools to enhance SEL development (Committee for Children, n.d.[49]; Jones et al., 2021[13]). Additionally, a growing number of countries are including SES in educational policy. Jones and her colleagues (2021[13]) note that SEL concepts have been included into education accountability metrics in the United States. The 2014 OECD informal Ministerial meeting on *Skills for Social Progress* noted unanimous agreement on the importance of teaching SEL skills (Miyamoto, Huerta and Kubacka, 2015[94]). However, even though over 30 European education systems indicate measures to include holistic learning needs that include SEL, most do not assess students' SES (Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019[24]). Additionally, most programmes are not specifically designed for newcomer or refugee students, but are intended for all students. A 2019 analysis of European countries' educational policies found that only Spain, Austria, Finland, and Sweden offer educational psycho-social support targeted towards immigrant students (Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019[24]). This section reviews national SEL policies, curriculum frameworks, and non-formal learning opportunities across OECD countries.

Methodology

There are many variables that affect students' cognitive, social and emotional learning. These include regional demographics, family diversity, income equality, level of parental education and paid parental leave for new-borns and adoptions among them, as well as factors resulting from migration (OECD, 2020[95]). These diverse factors result in a variety of student needs to help them gain SES to succeed in education and their adult lives.

Research on SEL has uncovered the following benefits:

- It increases SES, positive social behaviours, and mental health
- It can reduce anxiety, depression, drug abuse and antisocial proclivities
- It correlates with higher academic achievement
- It serves as a protective factor for at-risk students from minority backgrounds
- It contributes to lifelong well-being
- It results in economic benefits and
- It raises the confidence and satisfaction levels of teachers (Cefai, 2018[96]).

An examination of empirical studies and organisations that promote SEL revealed that educational practices fall under three major themes: countrywide approaches to SEL, curricular examples selected by schools, and to a smaller extent, non-formal educational activities developing SES (see also Box 3.1). This section will consider how various OECD countries have implemented SEL under these themes. Selections come from countries currently hosting large numbers of newcomer and refugee students. Programme and policy limitations will be noted.

Systemic countrywide approaches

Systemic approaches are those that are implemented throughout a country, generally as a result of governmental policy. They take into account more than specific lessons in SES. Systemic approaches consider the whole environment, including interactions with parents and sometimes with other schools and community services. Policy approaches are important, as they can provide consistency, funding, and requirements for implementation. However, for them to be effective, they need robust evaluations and revisions based on the evaluations. They also need sufficient funding commensurate with their importance.

Be You, Australia

Australia offers the national education initiative "Be You", which was launched in 2018 in preschools, kindergartens and day care centres to promote positive early learning experiences and social and emotional development (Blue, n.d.[97]). The initiative is supported by Early Childhood Australia and the Australian Government Department of Health. Australia envisions SEL as a part of mental health support, included in the Mental Health in Education initiative. The programme has increased its reach to primary and secondary schools across Australia. Be You provides accredited, free professional training around the themes of creating mentally healthy communities, partnering with families, teaching resilience through SES, early intervention for mental health issues and managing "critical incidents"—those outside the range of normal experience (such as death, natural disasters and violence).

In 2016, the Australia Board of Statistics found that suicide was the primary cause of death for children between 5 and 17-years-old (Be You, n.d.[98]). The Be You initiative is designed to reduce these figures through the promotion of SES. The programme allows individuals to sign up for learning, but also encourages the creation of learning communities and provides consultants. The initiative also includes comprehensive assessments of each of its five target emphases. With respect to the Mentally Healthy Communities domain, research found that educators feel well informed about mental health literacy, and there are multiple levels of support within the learning community (Blue, n.d.[99]). Evaluations of the resilience component found success when educators included the following:

- Sequenced, active and focused procedures that targeted SEL skills
- Age and culturally-appropriate SEL materials
- Provisions for support and training for those implementing SEL
- Utilisation of a strengths-based approach and
- Regular programme evaluation.

Additionally, successful programmes supported the needs and values of the students with respect to autonomy, competence and belonging (Blue, n.d.[99]). They helped students use positive language for problem solving and taught them to become mindful of feelings of themselves and others. In addition, they helped students to broaden their social networks. Family partnerships, unfortunately, are not well evidenced due to a low number of active family involvement in interventions. There were no evaluations examining family-school partnership strategies. A particular gap in the policy and programme is the absence of diversity strategies. Indigenous students are included in programme information, but there is no mention of newcomer or refugee students.

Cross-thematic curriculum, Greece

The Hellenic Ministry of National Education in **Greece** implemented a cross-thematic curriculum (CTC) for preschool through secondary to address recommendations by the Council of Europe to include SES in order to enhance students' opportunities to succeed in school and through their adult lives (Tsolou and Margaritis, 2013[100]). A goal is to embed SEL throughout the educational experience and includes

cooperative project-based work to develop students' social capabilities. Additional goals include engaging students to recognise their own emotions and the impact of their emotions and behaviours on others. Such self-assessments also encourage students to consider alternatives in terms of controlling and managing their emotions for different outcomes. Social skills lessons include the ability to support and sympathise with others and to develop effective relationships. The CTC curriculum stresses critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication. It also emphasises multicultural learning, which can teach students to consider diverse perspectives and become open to other cultural beliefs and customs. The initiative also intends to bring parents into the educational process.

Evaluation

Researchers assessed the SEL components of the CTC by randomly selecting 11 schools throughout the country (Tsolou and Margaritis, 2013[100]). Nearly equal numbers of boys and girls (271 boys and 270 girls) ages 11-13 and 145 teachers participated in the survey. Questionnaires measured social skills, emotional support, self-management and self-awareness. Results showed moderate effect sizes. Teachers, additionally, indicated that their training on the CTC curriculum and teaching methods were inadequate. However, girls reported higher scores in recognising and managing their own and others' emotions. Primary school students reported higher levels of emotional support from their teachers than upper level students. Neither result is surprising, as girls tend to score higher in general on the measures described, and older students often feel less support because they have different teachers for each subject so have fewer opportunities to bind with them.

There are promising aspects of SEL in the CTC, and girls reported that they found curricular materials and teaching methods supported SEL. The details of the assessment could be used to revise SEL training, as the assessment clearly indicated that need. Other important findings that could improve the delivery of SEL in the CTC include more opportunities to involve and inform parents. The researchers also recommend comprehensive community support such as the inclusion of psychologists, educational leaders, and all stakeholders.

Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), United Kingdom

The **United Kingdom** provides the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme as a comprehensive approach to providing SES for both students and teachers. The programme was piloted in elementary schools in 2003 and adapted for secondary schools in 2005. SEAL provides curricular materials for secondary school in three themes:

- Learning to be together: making and sustaining friendships, engaging in effective conflict resolution, working co-operatively, valuing differences between people
- Keep on learning: being self-motivated, being effective students
- Learning about me: managing strong feelings, promoting calm states that promote goal achievement, engaging in effective problem solving.

Features of the programme include a holistic approach and continuous involvement by senior management staff. A SEAL co-ordinator is appointed and allocated a budget to ensure that resources are available to all school staff. Professional learning is available to all staff, and parents are aware of the programme. A feature highlighted by researchers is that SEAL is envisaged as a "loose enabling framework for school improvement" (Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth, 2010[101]). This means that school staff are encouraged to explore approaches that fit their context, rather than being required to follow a single model.

Evaluation

A mixed methods evaluation of 22 secondary SEAL schools somewhat inconclusive. Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth (2010[101]) found that SEAL implementation varied considerably, with some schools focusing on particular aspects of the curriculum rather than a comprehensive approach. There was a perception among those surveyed that the curriculum did not achieve its goals. At the same time, there were positive narratives about school climate (such as increased inclusion) and improvements in behaviours, interpersonal skills, and relationships. To improve success, the evaluators suggested that the SEAL programme be provided in a consistent manner that adheres to Sequenced, Active, Focussed, Explicit (SAFE) principles and with an allowance for robust staff training. They also suggested that parents/caregivers be more involved in the programme implementation.

Second Step, Norway

In 1997, **Norway** instituted a National Core Curriculum that explicitly called for the teaching of social skills in the curriculum. More than 60% of Norwegian primary schools selected to adopt the programme Second Step", developed by the Committee for Children. Originally, a U.S.-based curriculum, it has been widely adapted in other countries, including **Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, Estonia** and **Japan**. Second Step offers holistic programmes in SEL for early learning through adults as well as bullying prevention and child protection (Second Step, 2021[102]). The organisation uses Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory in its strategies and promotes a holistic approach that includes not only formal education, but also home and community environments. It suggests the need for SES in not only academic spaces in the school, but also in places such as the lunchroom and the playground; and it includes an emphasis on teacher education (Committee for Children, 2021[103]).

Second Step now offers a digital programme for K-8 grades. Lessons include discussions on how to state problems without blame, how to state one's wants or needs respectfully, how to ask others about how they are feeling, how to communicate during a conflict and how to engage in positive self-talk. Lessons are interactive and have discussion that addresses the students 'environments.

Evaluation

A 2008 evaluation of Second Step in Norway found modest positive effects in social competence and a reduction of external problem behaviours (Holsen, Smith and Frey, 2008[104]). However, the evaluators noted that the lessons were not taught as frequently as is recommended in the United States (they were taught once a week or every second week). By the second year of implementation, some teachers were only using the curriculum once a month or less. Some also made changes to the programme elements. In comparison, a study conducted in **Germany** on the German version of the programme (not implemented nationwide) found that teachers more faithfully followed the lesson instructions (Schick and Cerpka, 2005[105]). Evaluators found that the curriculum significantly reduced aggressive behaviours and negative internal issues (such as anxiety and depression), decreased discrimination, and increased social competencies such as empathy and adaptability. Both teachers and parents reported favourably on the curriculum, with teachers stating they would like to use it again. As a result, as was the case with the SEAL programme in the United Kingdom, SEL may be improved by more carefully following the curriculum as recommended.

Head Start, United States

In the **United States**, the "Head Start" programme has been a national early learning intervention provided by the Department of Health and Human Services since 1965. The programme is intended for children from birth to age five and families living below the poverty level to improve family relationships; increase the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of preschool children; and provide a foundation for cognitive

skill building. Head Start serves over one million children and families annually. The programme is free to eligible families and includes access to health screenings, nutritious meals for enrolled children, and medical, dental, and mental health services. There are also programme services to strengthen family well-being. There is also a special Head Start programme available to migrant worker families, as many of these families move throughout the year to various locations to harvest crops.

Evaluation

Head Start has resulted in many benefits for the children who can attend, both in cognitive development and SEL. Evaluations of the programme indicate that Head Start students have improved social skills and impulse control. Negative behaviours such as aggression are reduced (Aikens et al., 2013[106]). Benefits continue into the K-12 school years in terms of cognitive and SEL skills. Head Start increases the chances that the students will graduate from secondary school and attend at least one year of university (Deming, 2009[107]). Parents of Head Start students complement the positive outcomes by becoming parents who read more to their children and physically punish them less as they learn positive parenting practices (Bauer and Schanzenbach, 2016[108]). They spend more time teaching their children and providing nurturing attention.

Although the programme targets social, emotional, and initial cognitive work with students in need, there are programmatic flaws. Poverty level numbers in the United States are unrealistically low, with the result that many students who could benefit from Head Start are not eligible. Additionally, wages for Head Start teachers are far lower than those of their peers teaching in formal elementary school settings (Chron, 2020[109]). As a result, highly qualified teachers are less likely to apply for these jobs. Although this is a long-standing and important programme in the United States to fight poverty and help disadvantaged students reach their potential, sufficient resources have not been allocated to insure greater success.

Box 3.1. SEL work of international organisations

Intergovernmental organisations also play a role in development and evaluation of SEL programmes. As mentioned previously, the OECD has produced a survey on social and emotional skills that provides insightful knowledge about supports and barriers to students in acquiring these essential skills (OECD, 2021[8]).

The **World Bank** has described the importance of SEL not only in mainstream school settings but also in contexts of violence and conflict (World Bank, n.d.[110]). It advises that most effective programmes are holistic, school-wide approaches. As parts of the approach, students need to feel safe and valued; teachers need training and development of their own SES, and the school community needs opportunities to practice the skills. The organisation also recommends national strategies for SEL.

The World Bank created a SEL programme called Step by Step that is available online (World Bank, 2018[111]). Rather than grounding the programme in specific theory, the website explains that that it was created with external contributors to focus on SES of self and social awareness, self-regulation, communication, determination, and decision-making (World Bank, 2018[111]). The website describes the lessons as teaching students to become socially responsible, autonomous, and resilient. Teacher guides and student workbooks are freely available online for Grades 1-11 in English and Spanish.

The European Union (EU) **Erasmus** programme in Spain provides a 5-day training for teachers to learn to implement SEL strategies in their classrooms to promote self and social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and positive decision-making (Erasmus+, n.d.[112]). The weeklong course is offered for 490 euros and includes motivational activities, simulations, and networking. Evaluations were not available.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (**UNHCR**) provides an online guide called "Teaching about refugees" that includes information for teachers about working with stressed refugee students (UNHCR, 2019[113]). Instead, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) offers a SEL for Youth capacity-building programme specifically intended to prevent violent extremism (UNESCO, n.d.[114]). Not targeted towards helping students acquire generalised skills in SEL, it targets the reduction of extreme behaviours through SEL. The initiative offers activities, though not a thorough curriculum (Youth Waging Peace, n.d.[115]).

Save the Children recognises the importance of SEL and prioritised it in its Education for Emergencies (EiE) strategy as a way to increase resilience. It acknowledges SEL as an important educational programme for all children. However, Save the Children recognises its acute need in addressing students' psychosocial wellbeing in crises such as forced migration (Save the Children, n.d.[116]). Save the Children does not rely on one SEL programme. Rather, the organisation suggests several depending on whether the situation is a non-crisis, acute crisis, or protracted crisis. It suggests the importance of teacher training, community action, and assessment. Additionally, Save the Children information suggests the importance of cultural sensitivity.

The organisation **NaTakallum** hires refugees and other displaced persons to provide individual or small group cultural exchanges (NaTakallam, n.d.[117]). Their work enhances teachers' and students' multicultural understanding. In online sessions, participants learn personal stories from the displaced person about the refugee journey and human rights issues. Such individualised learning offers the opportunity to broaden the school community's perspectives about this population. Sessions are offered in English, Arabic, Armenian, Kurdish, French, Persian, and Spanish. Because it is an online offering, it is available to all countries. The website includes positive comments about the service by students in Australia, France, Yemen, Turkey, and the United States.

Curriculum

Countries with and without national initiatives have an array of curricular materials and approaches available to schools and individual teachers. A challenge is that it can be difficult to know which to select, as they vary widely in the theories that frame their approaches. Only 13% of teachers surveyed in Great Britain reported that they knew where to access appropriate materials (Culliane and Montacute, 2017[54]). To be meaningful, the lessons need to be age-appropriate and meet the developmental level of the students. As Denham (Denham, 2018[118]) explains, appropriate methods that a 4-year-old could use to resolve a conflict with a peer would be irrelevant to a secondary school student. Social and emotional learning also needs to be appropriate to the local and cultural contexts of the students and teachers (Shafer, 2017[119]).

Evaluations of large numbers of SEL curricula have been United States-centric, although some of the programmes evaluated have been adjusted for use in other countries. Jones et al. (2021[13]) provides an overview and evaluation of 33 SEL programmes targeting pre-school through Grade 5 students in the United States available for formal, pre-school and out-of-school educators. It includes programmes that also address bullying, character education, physical wellbeing, the arts, and community service as part of comprehensive SEL programmes.

The Jones et al. (2021[13]) guide focuses on curricula that involves skill building, while it notes that other approaches are also valid, such as adult SEL training and systemic change of a school culture. The programmes reviewed engage an array of instructional methods. These include various ways to engage students in discussions, didactic lessons, stories that illustrate elements of SEL, vocabulary that can help students express their emotions, writing activities, artistic activities, songs, role plays, games, and computer technologies. The researchers remarked that relationships are key in SEL environments and are characterised by safe and trauma-free environments. Although they do not focus on programmes that provide educator training, the researchers recognised the need for teachers and other adults to gain social and emotional competence in order to model and teach these skills to students. Additionally, and inclusive of equity, they noted the importance of recognizing cultural diversity as a part of teaching SEL skills.

The EASEL website lists 40 different international SEL frameworks (EASEL, n.d.[120]). They are inclusive of learning from infancy through adulthood with school, home, non-formal education, workplace, community, university, and crisis/conflict settings. This is not an all-inclusive listing. EASEL bases its selections on widely adopted programmes that represent numerous disciplines and include defined attributes. Clearly, it can be challenging for schools and other organisations to sift through so many possibilities to determine a programmatic fit.

A European Commission (EC) report examines 16 curricular practices that address non-cognitive skills; in particular, resilience, creativity, and active citizenship (Donlevy, van Driel and McGrath, 2019[121]). What follows are examples of curriculum used in several OECD countries.

MindUP, Canada and Ireland

“MindUP” is a programme founded in 2003 that implements the concept of mindfulness, meditation and growth mindset that intelligence and abilities can be developed through persistence and learning from mistakes. This programme has been used in schools in **Canada**, **Ireland** and the **United States** and is available in Spanish. Curriculum is available for students ages 3-14. There is also a programme for families. Professional training is robust, beginning with an onsite workshop by a certified MindUP consultant followed by mentoring sessions after one-month and two-month implementation. Between 3-5 months after implementation, another site workshop brings a MindUP consultant to observe and make reccommendations. This visit includes a family workshop. After seven months, a MindUP consultant reviews assessment plans with school leaadership, and together they consider next steps.

For each level (PreK-Grade 2, Grades 3-5 and Grades 6-8) there is a 15-lesson series based on neuroscience, social and emotional learning, positive psychology and mindful awareness. Sessions are based on four themes: Getting Focused, Sharpening Your Senses, It's All About Attitude, and Taking Mindful Action. Students learn about their brains and learn mindful breathing techniques that help them to reduce stress, add focus, and feel self empowered. Activities include community service projects and ways to be kind to one another.

Evaluation

Two Canadian evaluations indicated promising results for MindUP. The first evaluated 246 students in Grades 4-7 10 weeks after baseline measures were obtained. An East Asian first language was reported by 23% of the students. The reviewers found that student participants showed significant increases in optimism, prosocial behaviours and academic beliefs, and a reduction in aggressive behaviours (CASEL, 2021[122]). A 2007-2008 study of 100 Grades 4-5 students from four schools in Canada evaluated changes after the programme was implemented for a year (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015[123]). In this assessment, 35% of students reported diverse first languages, including Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, and Russian. Schonert-Reicl et al. concluded that the four-month program indicated positive results in wellbeing and pro-social behaviour a year after implementation.

Nurture Groups, United Kingdom

The Nurture Groups programme in the **United Kingdom** draws from the theory that young children who are deprived of consistent, warm support from caregivers may fail to form secure attachments from which they develop SES (Sloan et al., 2020[124]). Without these skills, students are likely to have more difficulty in school as they have difficulty managing stress, behaving positively in social situations, and controlling their emotions. Lack of attachment to caregivers is attributed to causes often associated with the refugee experience: family separations, death, violence and social exclusion and marginalisation. The Nurture Group programme takes children deemed to be experiencing difficulties with SES out of the regular school programme for short periods every week for a year to provide an environment of predictable routines, support and care.

Evaluation

Studies since the late 1990s in the United Kingdom indicate that this programme is successful in improving students' social, emotional, and behavioural skills (Sloan et al., 2020[124]). There were 2,000 of these groups in the United Kingdom in 2019 and 32 in **Northern Ireland** (United Kingdom) in 2016. The intervention could certainly be of benefit to refugee and newcomer children who have experienced violence or social exclusion and marginalisation. However, since this programme targets children determined to have attachment problems, it could leave out others also in need of increasing their SES.

School Support Programme, Victoria, Australia

As mentioned in Section 1, a major challenge with SEL is a lack of teacher training. When teachers receive specific training, they feel competent to infuse non-academic skills into the curriculum. This was the case with the "School Support Programme" used in Victoria**, Australia**, that organised networks between schools and agencies to provide a holistic, inclusive model to meet the social and emotional needs of refugee students (Block et al., 2014[12]). The programme emphasised teacher and administrator training to gain understanding of refugee lives and a focus on inclusion and cultural diversity. Schools electing to participate in the programme agreed to create a Refugee Action Team inclusive of school staff and leadership to receive intensive training, audit their schools' strengths and weaknesses in addressing refugee needs, and create develop a school-wide action plan to meet objectives based on the audit

findings. They were also to lead and engage all school staff in professional learning. Eighteen months after the creation of the action plan, the teams reviewed the plans to assess successes and challenges resulting from implementation.

The five major areas for consideration included the following:

i. School policies and practices
ii. School curriculum and programmes
iii. School organisation and environment
iv. Partnerships with Refugee Parents
v. Partnerships with Agencies (Block et al., 2014[12]).

Evaluation

Researchers evaluated changes to school policies and programmes, increased awareness of refugee issues by school staff and improved partnerships. Overall, the School Support Programme was successful. Members of the school teams shared information and felt less isolated than they had prior to their participation. School staff discovered that there were far more resources to support their work than they previously realised. Their increased knowledge of refugees increased their empathy, and training provided them with more successful ways to engage both refugee students and parents. Many also stated that the work helped them be more successful with non-refugee students as well. Teachers indicated that the intensive training increased their skills and feelings of competence.

This programme speaks to the critical importance of a whole community approach to supporting students' social and emotional needs. Where the programme broke down in some cases was due to the extra time involved and lack of engagement from administrators. In order to provide SEL to newcomer and refugee students, teachers must be supported and given time for training.

International Baccalaureate Organisation (IB)

The curriculum of the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IB), a non-profit organisation that provides educational programming in 150 countries, focuses on developing students who are respectful, responsible, and internationally minded throughout the primary and secondary school years (EASEL, n.d.[120]). The organisation offers webinars, presentations, and trainings that explain SEL as well as skills for global learning and personal/social well-being. IB values for students include curiosity, conceptual understanding, critical thinking, communication, justice, open-mindedness, care, independence, balance and reflection (International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2017[125]). Learning approaches are based on inquiry, conceptual understanding, global contexts, teamwork and collaboration, inclusion and assessment. It is included here as a potential goal rather than a current example, as this programme is not readily available to newcomers and refugee students. Its goals and values could serve to enhance inclusion of these students.

Non-formal education

Although there are numerous materials available for teaching SEL in the traditional classroom, non-formal educational settings provide many opportunities for students to practice SES. Because non-formal learning does not assess students or lead to formal qualifications, the settings are often more comfortable and less stressful for students. Opportunities are planned, but highly student-centred, drawing from students' experiences. The European Commission includes the development of hobbies, art, music, theatre and sports in the category of non-formal education (European Commission, n.d.[126]). These subjects are also

often included within a school's offerings as exra-curricular activities. Unlike academic subjects, however, these are elected by students on a voluntary basis.

Non-formal SEL opportunities are largely absent from published reports and articles. What follows are some examples of non-formal and extra-curricular SEL opportunities in OECD countries.

The Cultural Rucksack, Norway

Created in 2001, the "Cultural Rucksack" programme in Norway is a collaboration beween the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education anda Research, designed such that all students in primary and early secondary school have the opportunity to attend professional cultural arts performances throughout the year. It is intended as a supplement to the formal compulsory arts programmes taught in the schools. Opportunities are to include a wide variety of artistic expressions and are included during regular school hours. It is available to all students regardless of their socio-economic status. A report from the Cultural Rucksack states that "appreciating art and culture plays a significant part in the development of the individual's personality and quality of life" (Christophersen et al., 2015[127]). In a reporting of 2013 statistics, nearly 100% of Norwegian students available for the programme were included.

Evaluation

Chriśtophersen et al. (2015[127]) assessed the outcomes of the programme in four urban and four rural municipalities, interviewing students, teachers, artists, and cultural administrators. One of the goals is to increase students' creativity. Students described the best encounters as experiential ones where they were active participants. Teachers interviewed indicated their beliefs that the programme contributes to students' personal and social growth and development. They equated the experiences with the concept of holistic learning. Overall, the Cultural Rucksack receives high praise and expectations for SES traits such as improved coping skills, increased social cohesion and integration and a democratisation of culture.

Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competencies (DICE)

The Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competencies (DICE) was a two-year project conducted in 11 EU countries to measure how effective a drama and theatre programme was on promoting student competencies in communication in their mother tongue; learning skills; interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic skills; entrepreneurship; and cultural expression, five of the eight lifelong key competencies described by the Lisbon European Council (European Parliament, 2006[128]). The report includes an example in which students are watching a dramatic narrative between a refugee girl and a boy in an abandoned railway station. They are both tense. A 7-year-old girl in the audience who is typically quiet nudges an adult facilitator and says, "I know what the problem is" (DICE Consortium, 2010, p. 7[129]). The girl shares her observation with the actors and the audience that both the girl and boy in the drama have similar stories but are unaware of the fact, deepening the understanding of all the participants and providing space for the girl's voice.

The DICE project was mindful of Europe 2020 strategies to raise employment rates, reduce the dropout rate, and increase the percentage of students completing tertiary education (DICE Consortium, 2010[129]). It differentiated between theatre as an event viewed by an audience and drama as a participatory event in which actors and audience interact.

Evaluation

Research on DICE examined outcomes on these competencies among 5 000 students in the countries, from children living in high socio-economic background families to those who were disadvantaged refugees (DICE Consortium, 2010[129]). Groups of students aged between 13 and 16 who engaged regularly with theatrical and dramatic exposure (at least 10 occasions in four months) were compared to control groups

who had no exposure. All groups were either from the same schools or schools with similar environments. Findings showed significant differences, with the group engaged with theatre and drama feeling more confident with communication skills, creativity, empathy, problem-solving, tolerance, civic engagement, coping with stress, innovation and entrepreneurship. Overall, this group was found to engage more in social activities than those who did not have the exposure to theatre and dramatic arts.

A summary of factors supporting this intervention included engaged teachers and administrators, the support of NGOs and theatre companies and various financial subsudies. Barriers included low motivation of some teachers, decision-makers, and municipalities; a predominance of traditional teaching methods and topics; and low quality of teacher training courses.

Yoga and Sport with Refugees

An important method of non-formal SEL results from **sports participation**. Sutherland and Parker (2020[130]) found that physical activity provides opportunities for SEL in ways that traditional academic learning does not. Some students who may struggle with academics can excel in sports and gain a sense of belonging as a result. A sense of belonging can motivate them to aspire in their academic learning. Some sports, such as hiking and kayaking, can help to reduce psychological stress, increasing mental well-being. Team sports can help students develop group and leadership skills.

On the **Greek** island of Lesvos, the NGO "Yoga and Sport" has helped to empower and improve the lives of over 7 000 refugees since 2017 (Yoga and Sport with Refugeees, 2021[131]). The organisation combines the competitiveness and partners derived from numerous sports activities with the calming effects of yoga breathing and positions to help refugee youth and adults gain a sense of community, motivation and well-being. Yoga and Sport with Refugees also communicates with a human rights focus, teaching refugees that they are worthy of dignity and respect.

A 2019 literature review of 88 international physical education and sports programmes for youth ages 6-18 (23 in physical education, 62 in sports, and 3 combined) found positive relationships between student engagement in sports and multiple SES: goal-setting, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, cooperation, making friends, leadership and prosocial behaviour (Opstoel et al., 2020[132]). Unfortunately, the extensive literature review does not include country-specific practices.

Music education

Canada has two promising programmes that connect refugee and newcomer students with music. Newcomers to Notes" was started by a group of university students who grew up learning and loving music (Newcomers to Notes, 2021[133]). They wanted to contribute to their community and partnered with the British Columbia (BC) Newcomer Camp to create a programme to teach piano to refugee students. The founders were concerned that beginning this programme during the challenge of COVID-19 would be problemmatic. Instead, they found that the refugee students were very happy to receive these lessons, and that the time offered them new opportunities to learn, to interact with the peers and to play piano for one another.

A music programme called "Music from Hope"was started in Toronto, Canada, by two Syrian immigrants (Toronto Arts Council, 2021[134]). They worked with the Neighbourhood Arts Network (NAN) to meet other newcomer and refugee artists. Their music programme for refugee students is more about discovering musical instruments and "having fun". The founders said that they watch the young students progress from shyness to forming friendships. The programme received NAN's Arts Access Award in both 2018 and 2019.

Research on connections between SEL and **music education** are significant. Jacobi (2012[135]) found that music education offered a natural opportunity to build students' SEL skills to reduce at-risk behaviours. In **Germany**, Hille and Schupp (2013[136]) analysed data from the German Socio-Economic Panel Goals on

students who took music lessons outside the classroom from at least ages 8-17. A specific programme was not evaluated; rather, the researchers used the German Socio-Economic Panel study (SOEP) to consider social and emotional outcomes of learning to play a musical instrument over a number of years. They found that adolescents are more open, ambitious, and conscientious because of music education. They explain that group music training, such as being a member of an orchestra, provides different contexts for peer interactions than the classroom. For instance, to execute a good performance, musicians have to take the perspective of others in the group. They need to work together rather than compete. This also enhances the sense of belonging. Music lessons include embracing diversity through listening to many cultural styles of music and rehearsing together as diverse students.

Online learning

The Dream Academy (TDA) is a 10-week intensive course for LGBTQIA+ (a commonly used acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual plus other sexual identities) refugees that has been piloted in **Greece** in 2021 and will be continued in other European countries, **Mexico**, and **Colombia** (Safe Place International, 2021[137]). The course is provided by Safe Place International (SPI), an NGO that provides safe living spaces and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ and single-mother refugees in numerous countries, including Greece and Colombia. The Dream Academy is a collaborative effort of academicians, social and emotional experts, artists, and global companies intended to help refugees heal from trauma, learn about their rights and gain practical business skills that can help them create sustainable futures. It provides students with opportunities to meet with people who can help them form career pathways. It also provides ongoing support for students after the 10-week course is completed. A survey of students at the end of the pilot provided the following assessment:

- 94% stated that their confidence increased
- 100% gained leadership skills
- 97% felt prepared to take next steps towards decisions to sustain themselves through jobs or further education; and
- 97% gained the ability to trust.

An extensive evaluation of TDA is in process in 2021-2022.

Evoke, an online educational game funded by the World Bank, is designed to help young players understand 21st century problems and use SES to collaborate and create solutions. Groups of students in over 100 countries have played it. It has been widely used in different countries including **Colombia** and **Turkey** to develop students' SES. Players are challenged to address ten missions over ten weeks, confronting social issues such as poverty, hunger, health, climate change, and human rights in collaboration with others online (Hawkins, 2010[138]). The game designer, Jane McGonigal, indicates that this game is not a simulaiton. Rather, it challenges players to make real social changes in their lives that promote solutions to the problems they encounter in the game. EVOKE game "powers" include collaboration, courage, creativity, and vision. McGonigal noted in 2011 that over 50 new social enterprises were launched by gamers. However, there is no research evaluation of the programme to date.

Conclusion

International educational policy developments since 2018 have moved away from “learning to know” with a greater emphasis on “learning to be”, “learning to do” and “learning to live together” (Donlevy, 2019[139]). These goals place an emphasis on SES and active citizenship. In order for refugee and newcomer students to have the best opportunities to succeed not only with academic learning, but also with social capital and well-being, they need a firm grounding in SES. Refugee and newcomer students tend to be in a deficit situation with respect to language, culture, and academic learning. As such, it is important that they have support from teachers and their communities regarding a sense of welcome and the elements of SEL.

The EU recognises that education needs to include far more than academic knowledge. A European Commisson 2019 technical report described the importance of learning non-cognitive skills of SEL and active citizenship required for social inclusion, employabiliity and self-fulfillment to strengthen Europe during a time of significant change (European Commission, n.d.[140]). Competencies include cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, and cultural understanding. The Council of Europe and UNESCO additionally see self-fulfillment as a key educational strategy (European Commission, n.d.[140]). The EC recognises that an increase in migration flows and xenopobia and nationalism contribute to the need for SEL. Many social and emotional challenges affect today’s students: bullying, social inequality, consumerism, media, isolation and migration, among them (Cefai, 2018[96]). The EC finds that successsful SEL includes sequential and active learning, focusing on skill building and empathy.

Numerous international models offer promising opportunities to implement SEL into the classroom and to consider ways to create school-community models to extend SEL for all students. However, in spite of countries’ recognising the importance of SEL, practice is lagging. Current evidence indicates that teachers continue to feel unprepared to address the social and emotional needs of newcomer and refugee students. For SEL to be effective, training must be a core part of educational studies in universities and ongoing professional learning for teachers. This seems to be a place in which policy implementation falls short.

Research indicates that schools that embed SEL school-wide are more effective than those that only provide selective opportunities for SEL. School-wide programmes tend to engage school administrators, and this is associated with better results (Holsen, Smith and Frey, 2008[104]). Additionally, non-formal education offers important pathways to SES. There is a need for more evaluations of non-formal learning so that successful local practices can gain recognition and be scaled up.

Although SEL is recognised as an important need for newcomer and refugee students, there is a dearth of research examining its value for these populations. This may be because the majority of SEL programmes do not specifically address newcomer or refugee students. Evidence is clear that SEL helps individuals progress in academic, personal and workplace skills. Given the particular challenges of newcomer and refugee students, SEL can help students to defend themselves against discrimination and motivate themselves to overcomes the challenges of language, academic and cultural difficulties of migrating to a new country.

In spite of these acknowledgements, there remain challenges to improve the transmission of SEL to newcomer and refugee students. Key policy pointers include the following:

- Implement school-wide SEL policies
- Ensure that school administrators are engaged in the implementation of SEL
- Investigate ways in which SEL might be differentiated for newcomer and refugee students
- Insure that SEL includes family members and community resources
- Assess SEL programmes and make modifications to programmes based on the findings and
- Provide anti-bias and anti-racist SEL curiculum.

Newcomer and refugee students need to be seen as resources, not deficits, in educational systems and their new places of habitation. A welcoming strategy that helps them not only gain language and cultural knowledge but also SES can help them to succeed personally and contribute to their new country of residence. Attaining these goals leads to satisfaction for newcomers and refugees as they settle into new environments. Additionally, it leads to greater acceptance among host populations as they witness ways in which newcomer populations contribute to their countries.

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