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Social and emotional learning (SEL) of newcomer and refugee students: Beliefs, practices and implications for policies across OECD countries

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Abstract

Social and emotional learning (SEL) strengthens students' 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 SEL. The beginning of this paper examines the current situation of refugee and newcomer students in OECD countries, 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.

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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 host to 1.7 million Venezuelans, as reported by the United Nations Refugee Agency (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 must 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 a principle that “ensures that the achievement of educational potential is not the result of personal and social circumstances” (Cerna et al., 2021^[3]). The project has defined two forms of equity. The first is horizontal or the provision of equal 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.

Immigrant: This term refers to a person living in a country outside of his or her birthplace. However, some countries make the distinction that people born outside the country in which they live must also have a foreign nationality to be considered an immigrant. For instance, France does not consider people born outside of the country but having French nationality to be immigrants if they move to France (Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques, 2021^[4]).

Inclusion: Inclusive education is defined by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as an ongoing 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^[5]). 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 provide students with additional supports in the mainstream classroom, such as students with special education needs or those needing to learn the language of instruction. While integration aims to help students fit into the traditional classroom, inclusion seeks to dynamically change the classroom to meet the needs of all students. However, 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, how social interactions occur, and language. Some researchers use this term to refer to arrivals who do not yet have 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^[6]; Oikonomidou, 2014^[7]; Thompson, Umansky and Porter, 2020^[8]).

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 (UNHCR, 1951^[9])”.

Protocol indicates that refugees be processed after they cross the border of their home country. Receiving countries’ governmental security systems process those who are eventually selected for third country resettlement (less than one percent of the world’s refugees). The process requires multiple background and health checks and 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 encountered in regions with violence, terrorism and war.

Social and emotional skills (SES): the OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) defines social and emotional skills as “individual abilities, attributes and characteristics that are important for academic success, employability, active citizenship and well-being. They include individuals’ behaviour and feelings, approach to different tasks, and relationships with other members of the community” (OECD, 2021, p. 20^[10]).

Social and emotional learning (SEL): Social and emotional learning can be defined as the action of learning, acquiring and developing social and emotional skills. These skills include the ability to persist, achieve goals, work co-operatively, and manage one’s emotions. 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. These skills are necessary complements to academic knowledge for success and well-being in life learned in formal school settings, through non-formal learning and in informal settings.

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, the current COVID-19 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^[11]).

The OECD is at the forefront to acknowledge the importance of SEL. In 2021 it published findings from its Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) in nine countries (ten city sites) to provide an understanding of the factors contributing to students' outcomes in this area (OECD, 2021^[12]). This project will provide families, teachers and policy makers with information on both barriers to SEL and ways to promote SEL.

For newcomer and refugee students, SEL is important in helping them to overcome the challenges of migration, disruption to family routines and discrimination (Block et al., 2014^[13]). Specific school-based and non-formal educational interventions can improve the chances for these students to become well-adjusted adults by supporting their mental health, academic success and social inclusion (Block et al., 2014^[13]; Jones et al., 2021^[14]).

All students need not only academic learning in their formal education, but also holistic learning. A holistic approach recognises that learning is multidimensional and that the contexts of students' lives are important to address in order to improve academic success and overall well-being (OECD, 2020^[15]). 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 recognise that cognitive, meta-cognitive, and social and emotional processes are highly interactive, contributing to learning and motivation (Sliwka and Ye, 2015^[16]).

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. Section 1 describes the needs of refugee and newcomer students, leading to a discussion of why SEL is particularly important for these students. Section 2 takes an in-depth look at SEL and specific challenges/strengths of refugee and newcomer students in relation to the skills. Section 3 offers examples of successful SEL policies and practices from OECD countries and provides suggestions on ways to support this important component of learning for refugee and newcomer students in formal and non-formal educational settings.

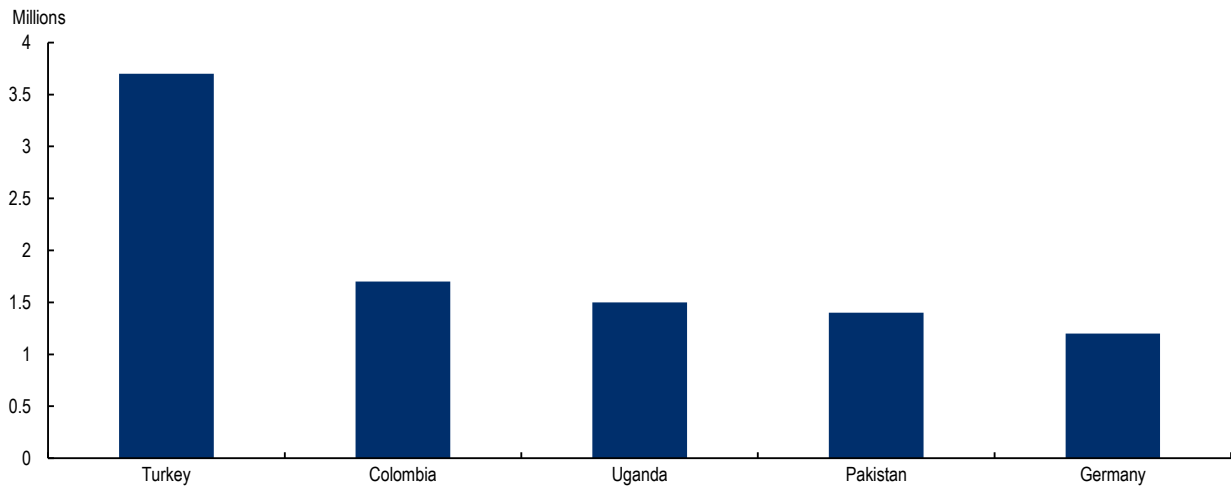
1. Overview

International migration has increased in the 21st century largely 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^[17]). Some migration, however, might be viewed less as a freedom to move and more of a need for safety (Taylor and Ravinder, 2012^[18]). 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 social and economic sense for host countries to learn how to accommodate their needs and provide inclusive education to these students, especially as they are likely to become long-term residents in host countries (Koehler and Schneider, 2019^[19]). 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. Twenty-first century skills encompass not only academic rigour but also social and emotional skills (SES) to work competently with others.

1.1 Ongoing responsibilities of host countries

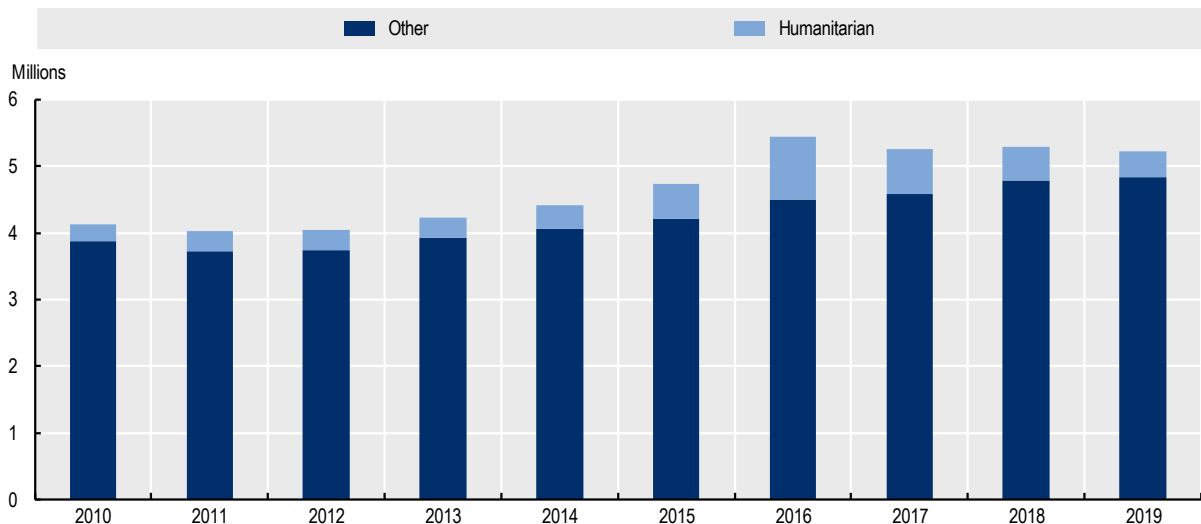
Between 2013-2017, the population of refugees in OECD countries nearly tripled, from 2 million to 5.9 million (OECD, 2019^[20]). This number included over 750 000 students who had to be acclimated into European Union (EU) school systems (Ahad and Benton, 2018^[21]). Although refugee flows to OECD countries 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^[22]; OECD, 2018^[23]). 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^[22]).¹ This number equates to one in every 95 people worldwide who have had to flee their homes. The United Nations International Children’s 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^[24]). 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, 1 million children were new refugees (UNHCR, 2021^[2]).

¹ The remaining numbers are Palestinian refugees under the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) mandate (5.7 million), internally displaced people (48 million), and Venezuelans who are displaced (3.9 million).

Figure 1.1. Top five countries hosting refugees globally (as of mid-2021)

Source: UNHCR (2021^[25]), UNHCR Data Finder, <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/> (accessed on 6 December 2021).

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^[22]). 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^[22]).

Figure 1.2. Permanent migration flows to OECD countries (2010-2019)

Note: Data for 2010 to 2019 is the sum of standardised figures for countries where they are available (accounting for 95% of the total), and unstandardised figures for other countries (except Turkey).

Source: Adapted from OECD (2021^[26]), OECD International Migration Database, <https://doi.org/10.1787/data-00342-en>.

Increasing international migration and ensuing diversity in the classroom present challenges to education systems. An average of 33% of teachers indicate that they lack the ability to cope with multicultural

classrooms, although 17%-30% state that they work in culturally or linguistically diverse schools (OECD, 2020^[27]). Additionally, 30% of teachers indicate that they teach in schools in which at least one percent of the students come from refugee backgrounds, and 21% report working in schools that have more than 10% of students who are migrants and whose first language is not the language of instruction (OECD, 2019^[28]). In addition, 61% of teachers who report working in multicultural schools indicate that their school does not have activities or organisations that support cultural diversity.

1.1.1 Meeting the needs of refugee and newcomer students

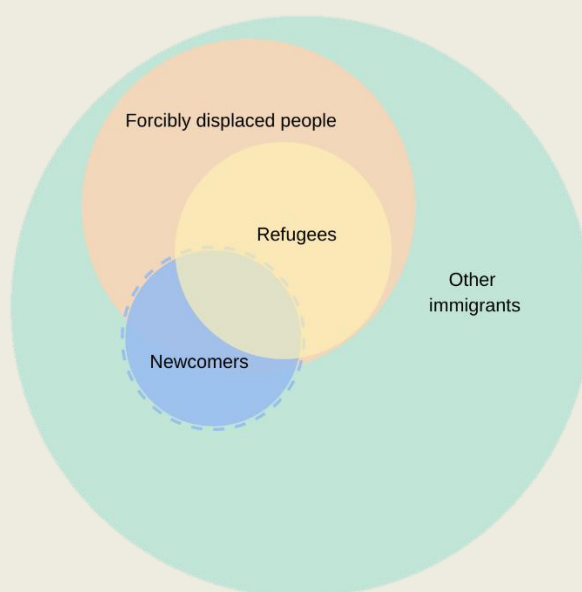
Given the millions of students who fall into the categories of refugees or newcomers, host countries must consider their unique educational needs in order to help them adjust to their new environment (see Box 1.1). Newcomer and refugee students may live with family members or guardians who are unable to provide a sense of security needed by their children due to their own social and emotional needs (Hart, 2009^[29]; European Commission, 2020^[30]). 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 (Sullivan and Simonson, 2016^[31]). These circumstances have implications for SEL that will support newcomer and refugee students to succeed. Even small gestures on the part of teachers can model SEL for these students. For example, teachers can model kindness and empathy when they notice these students being excluded by asking a classmate to “buddy” with the student to introduce them to peers (Shafer, 2018^[32]). Additionally, teachers can learn to say hello in the students’ native language to help students feel welcome (Igoa, 1995^[33]).

Box 1.1. Immigrants, refugees, and newcomers by the numbers

Some reports by social and mass media have citizens believing that refugees and new immigrants are overrunning the native-born populations of their countries. At 281 million in 2020, the total population of immigrants is only 3.6% of the world's population (World Bank, 2021^[34]; United Nations, 2021^[35]). The number of forcibly displaced people was at 82.4 million in 2020, or nearly 29% of the total immigrant population. Refugees are a subset of the forcibly displaced. At 26.4 million, they comprise 32.4% of forced migration and 9.4% of all immigrants. It is not possible to calculate numbers of newcomers worldwide, as definitions of the term vary considerably. Figure 1.3, below, provides a representation of the categories. Those aged 19 or younger make up only 14.6% of the total immigrant population (Migration Data Portal, 2021^[36]), but nearly one-half – 46% - of refugees are below 18 years of age (UNHCR, 2021^[2]).

Although the percentages are small, some locations have higher percentages of refugee and newcomer students than other locations, of course. Unfortunately, these populations that may require medical attention, social services and supplementary education often reside in low socio-economic areas where there is less available support (Cerna, 2019^[1]).

Figure 1.3. World immigrant populations



Note: Shapes represent percentages of all immigrants, forcibly displaced, refugees, and newcomers but are not to scale.

Source: (Migration Data Portal, 2021^[36]), United Nations (2021^[35]), World Bank (2021^[34]), International Organisation for Migration (2020^[37]) and (Cerna, 2019^[1]).

Coordinated efforts among 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 in the holistic model for the integration of refugee students in education developed by Cerna (2019^[1]). Based on this framework, a quick review as applied to both refugee and newcomer students follows.

Academic needs

Some refugee students have attended school in their country of origin, 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 and Wolffhardt, 2016^[38]). When they arrive in a host country, whether they had prior schooling or not, they may have no knowledge of the local language (see Box 1.2), customs or daily school routines (Ahad and Benton, 2018^[21]). Furthermore, some students may need to learn basic skills such as how to hold a pencil or cut with scissors. As a result, newcomer and refugee students present with a wide range of competencies and needs. Koehler and Schneider (2019^[19]) point out that early access to education in the host country increases refugee students' opportunities to succeed. Additionally, they state that equitable education for refugee students will require additional support services to overcome the challenges they have faced.

The diverse academic needs of newcomer and refugee students can challenge and overwhelm their teachers. As such, policies also need to consider the specific development of pre-service teachers during their initial teacher preparation and ongoing professional learning needs of in-service teachers so that they can provide a nurturing, supportive environment for their diverse students.

Initial teacher preparation and professional learning programmes need to provide information and practical experience about the circumstances of refugee and newcomer students and families. As mentioned previously, up to 30% of teachers state they work in culturally and/or linguistically diverse schools that include immigrants and refugees (OECD, 2021^[39]). 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^[40]).

Box 1.2. The challenge of language

Refugee and newcomer students are likely to require intensive assistance learning the language of their host country. 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 (Koehler, Palaiologou and Brussino, Forthcoming^[41]; Igoa, 1995^[33]). 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 education.

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^[33]). Separated classrooms can also be problematic, as they segregate the new students from their host country peers (Fandrem et al., 2021^[42]). 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. A promising, more inclusive practice is to place language mentors in the mainstream classroom to be with children experiencing language difficulties. For example, in Austria, the city of Vienna has an award-winning programme entitled Intercultural Mentoring for Schools that places multilingual university students, themselves from migrant families, in classrooms one day per 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^[43]).

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 multicultural education philosophy that values traditions of newcomer and refugee students. Many democracies have moved away from cultural assimilationist policies in education (OECD, 2019^[44]). 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 (Birman and Tran, 2017^[45]). One potential result of assimilationist practices is that students may fail or choose to drop out of school (Tonogbanua, 2019^[46]). 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 (Sun, 2019^[47]).

Due to the problems caused by assimilationist practices (Berry, 2001^[48]), 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, in the United Kingdom, 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^[49]). For students, Scotland (United Kingdom) has a “Getting it right for every child” policy that incorporates numerous support services in partnership with parents (Baak, 2019^[50]).

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^[51]). 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 (OECD, 2018^[52]).

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^[13]; McBrien, 2005^[53]). 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 additional requirements for medical services, psychological support, language learning and opportunities to increase inclusion within their schools and the wider society. Sullivan and Simonson (2016^[31]) 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 and McBrien, 2021^[54]). They frequently experience discrimination from host country students that deters their ability to feel included by their peers and host community (Cerna, 2019^[1]; European Commission, 2020^[30]). Before they become proficient in the language of instruction, newcomer and refugee students are more likely to be bullied (Peguero, 2008^[55]). Discrimination among students is sometimes categorised 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^[56]). 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^[56]). Given that newcomer and refugee students are often the targets of bullying, teachers need to learn effective intervention strategies when such problems arise (Burton, 2013^[57]).

A major gap in providing for social and emotional needs and promoting SEL involves insufficient teacher training (Schonert-Reichl, 2017^[58]). Based on the 2018 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (OECD, 2019^[28]), 18% - 20% of lower level secondary teachers included in the survey indicate that their schools include 10% of students with an immigrant background, students needing to learn the language of instruction and students coming from lower SES homes. The majority of teachers report that they believe in gender equality and sharing diverse cultural beliefs and behaviours. However, the need for training to teach effectively in multicultural/multilingual environments is the third highest area for professional learning reported by teachers in TALIS 2018 (OECD, 2020^[27]).

Long-term needs

Immediate needs for all immigrants arriving in host countries include housing, employment, access to healthcare and education (OECD, 2019^[20]). OECD data indicate that only 25% are employed five years after arrival (OECD, 2019^[20]). A major cause of low employment is low educational attainment among immigrant groups (OECD, 2019^[20]). 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 or vocational educational training (VET). Although 37% of youth attend university worldwide, only 5% of refugee youth have this opportunity (UNHCR, 2021^[59]).

Finding gainful employment is most often dependent on the successful completion of educational studies. Researchers have found strong connections between academic success and students' needs for autonomy, competence and caring social relationships with their parents, teachers and peers (Song et al., 2015^[60]; Ciani et al., 2011^[61]; Theis, Sauerwein and Fischer, 2020^[62]). These needs correspond to SEL goals. For refugee and newcomer students, they can be difficult to achieve, given their challenges in new schools and societies. Because refugee students' journeys are often fraught with numerous traumatic events, they face even additional challenges that other immigrant newcomer students may not experience

(McBrien, 2016^[63]). For example, they may have lived through experiences of war and witnessed the violent deaths of neighbours or family members (Heptinstall, Sethna and Taylor, 2004^[64]). They may have endured frightening travel with no access to sufficient food, water or shelter. At times, the physical and psychological consequences of such experiences can motivate refugee students to attain educational success (Mosselson, 2007^[65]). At other times, the stress can cause them to give up (Makepeace, 2007^[66]).

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 (Morse, 2005^[67]). Adolescents who find themselves in countries that track students at early ages are often unable to gain competency for higher tracks, which contributes to an increased percentage of dropping out of school (Koehler and Schneider, 2019^[19]).

At the same time, it is important to avoid simply viewing refugee students through a deficit lens (European Commission, 2020^[30]). Many 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 (Häberlin, 2016^[68]). 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^[13]).

1.2 Beyond academic access

Previous international objectives 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^[69]) explains, the emphasis on numbers of enrolments could conceal problems of quality, and enrolment numbers may not match with numbers of students who actually attend school. In contrast, the UN 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, 2015^[70]). Though not specifically targeted to SEL objectives, these goals reach more towards concepts of engagement and collaboration.

Holistic learning and caring for the whole child, and not just students' academic competence, are not new concepts for many teachers. Researchers have found that people enter the teaching profession for altruistic reasons and because they care about helping students to reach their potential (OECD, 2021^[39]; Schonert-Reichl, 2017^[58]; Sen and Ögülmüş, 2020^[71]). 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 decisions, such as a novel the students are reading. They may use play and art to help students work through troubling emotions or anxiety (Russell and Hartzel, 2007^[72]).

In recent years, SEL has been codified as an important instructional domain. For example, the Committee for Children is an international non-profit organisation that has collaborated with government ministries in the OECD countries of Australia (more in Section 3.1.1), Finland, Germany, Japan, Lithuania, Mexico, Norway (more in Section 2), the Slovak Republic and Turkey to create culturally relevant SEL materials

(Committee for Children, 2021^[73]). 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^[14]). 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^[58]). 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^[40]). 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, and they cannot teach and mentor SES unless they have also developed these skills for themselves (Jones et al., 2021^[14]). Skilled, supported teachers will not only help refugee and newcomer students to adapt, but also facilitate interactions between these students and native students.

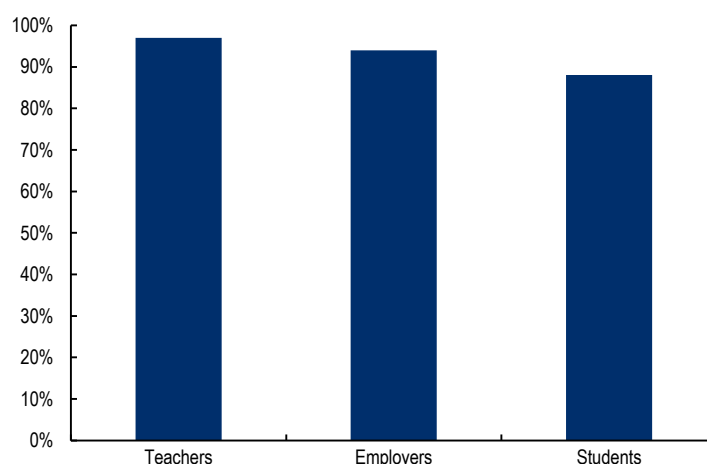
1.3 Why does SEL matter?

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^[74]). 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^[75]; Laboratory, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies and Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning, 2020^[76]). Acquisition of SES equip people to lead healthy, purposeful lives (Durlak et al., 2011^[77]).

Employers are looking for SES as they consider job candidates. As Figure 1.4 illustrates, a 2017 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^[78]). 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 graduates' skills by employers, at 52% not believing the graduates had sufficient SES. There was also recognition by this report that non-formal learning is important in developing SES, but students from disadvantaged backgrounds were 20% less likely to partake in this than their more advantaged peers.

Figure 1.4. The importance of SEL

Percentage of teacher, student and employer respondents to a survey in the United Kingdom who believed that SEL are as or more important than academic skills



Note: The bar graph illustrates that teachers, employers and students believe that SEL are as or more importance than academic skills.

Source: Adapted from Culliane, C.; Montacute, R. (2017^[78]), *Life lessons: Improving essential life skills for young people*, Sutton Trust, London, https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Life-Lessons-Report_FINAL.pdf (accessed 21 September 2021).

The OECD recognises that educational requirements are not simply captured in traditional academic learning (OECD, 2015^[11]). Today's students need academic skills that help them to succeed economically, but also SEL 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 SEL are as important as the traditional information that students acquire in their academic subjects. Negative student behaviours and interactions can cause peers to reject them and later in life, poor SEL can make it difficult for individuals to obtain and keep jobs.

A holistic approach to education recognises that student learning is 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^[79]). 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 SEL, but also reflected an academic achievement gain of 11-percentile points (Durlak et al., 2011^[77]). 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 SEL (OECD, 2019^[20]).

An additional component to SEL that is often overlooked is that of social capital (Morrison, Blood and Thorsborn, 2005^[80]). Scrivens and Smith (2013, p. 9^[81]) 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 in their host countries.

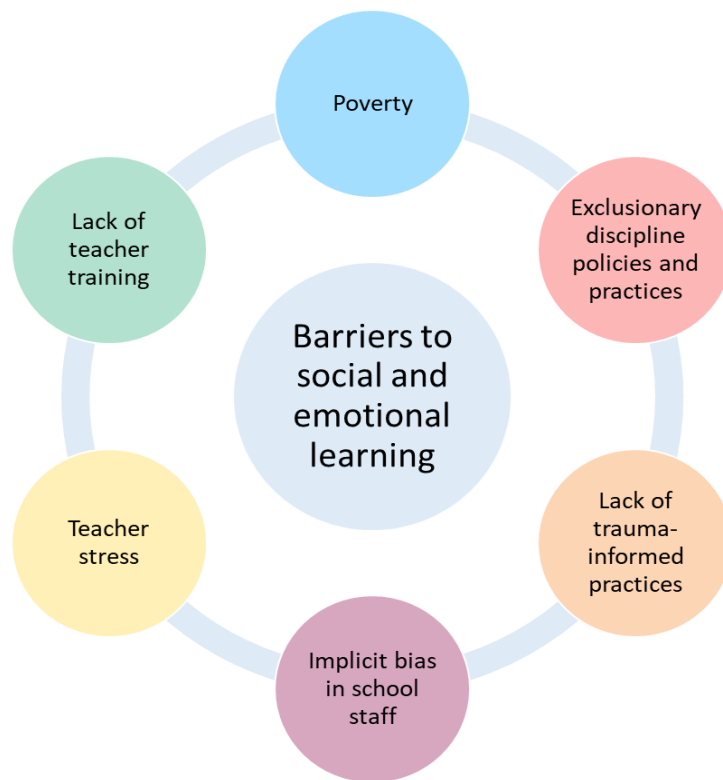
1.4 Barriers to SEL

Social and emotional skills are important for refugee and newcomer students to reach their full potential, because they increase their abilities to self-regulate, engage with their surroundings and interact

successfully with others. However, these students do not always have the support they need to develop SES. A Robert Wood Johnson Foundation study (2018^[82]) identified six major barriers to SEL (see Figure 1.5):

- poverty
- exclusionary discipline policies and practices – disproportionately 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
- lack of teacher training.

Figure 1.5. Barriers to social and emotional learning



Source: Adapted from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2018^[82]), Applying an equity lens to social, emotional, and academic development, <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2018/06/applying-an-equity-lens-to-social-emotional-and-academic-development.html> (accessed on 27 July 2021).

Each of these barriers has implications for newcomer and refugee students. Many immigrant families live in extreme poverty (Thompson, Umansky and Porter, 2020^[8]; UNHCR, 2021^[83]). Newcomer and refugee students are frequently marginalised due to their language, religion, ethnicity and culture (Guo-Brennan and Guo-Brennan, 2021^[6]; Thompson, Umansky and Porter, 2020^[8]). Many refugee students have experienced multiple trauma situations that most teachers are not prepared to manage (Cerna, 2019^[1]). Coping with unfamiliar languages and cultures in the classroom can add to teacher stress. 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^[53]; Cerna, 2019^[1]).

There is little indication of comprehensive teacher training with respect to refugee issues. However, researchers have found that challenges experienced by teachers working in culturally diverse schools correlate with teacher stress and “burnout” as well as with negative stereotypes and expectations (Glock, Kleen and Morgenroth, 2019^[84]). Schonert-Reichl (2017^[58]) 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 and Greenberg, 2009^[85]). Other strategies to prepare teachers include courses focused on stereotypes and how they influence teacher behaviours and pre-service placements in culturally diverse schools (Glock, Kleen and Morgenroth, 2019^[84]).

In spite of challenges, there are some positive examples that indicate the high potential for refugee and newcomer students. For example, in the Netherlands, immigrant students reported at 63% academically resilient, 85% emotionally resilient and 74% socially resilient (OECD, 2018^[86]; Bilgili, 2019^[87]). Many OECD countries have prioritised policies to facilitate the inclusion of migrants students, which encompasses newcomer and refugee students (OECD, 2019^[79]). These steps include providing flexible pathways to education, developing individualised learning plans, promoting language instruction while encouraging the continuation of mother tongue, creating social interaction opportunities and supporting the mental health needs of newcomer and refugee students. In 15 countries out of 34 participating in PISA 2018, immigrant students displayed greater self-efficacy regarding global issues than native students (OECD, 2020^[88]). Across OECD countries, 77% of students felt confident about describing the reasons that people become refugees (ibid). Overall, 85% of students partaking in the PISA 2018 assessment felt that immigrant students should have the same rights to education as native students (ibid). They also show high interest in respecting and learning from people from other cultures (OECD, 2021^[89]). These examples indicate both the capabilities of newcomer and refugee students and a growing acceptance of immigrants.

Recognising the challenges to implementing SEL is an important step in considering how to rectify current limitations. For students to acquire SES, 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

As mentioned, social and emotional learning helps students develop the skills, attitudes and behaviours to successfully and capably adapt, work with others, and live in a dynamic and uncertain world (Laboratory, Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies and Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning, 2020^[76]; Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018^[75]). Additionally, acquisition of SES equip people to lead healthy, purposeful lives (Durlak et al., 2011^[77]). This section provides a brief explanation of SEL and how the skills relate to refugee and newcomer students' needs.

2.1 What is SEL?

Social and emotional skills refer to the abilities to determine and achieve goals, work amicably with others, and understand and regulate one's emotions (OECD, 2015^[11]). Social and emotional learning provides students with skills to process their emotions and understand their environment. Through guidance and modelling by teachers and caregivers, and through play and other interactions with peers, 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. 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, 2021^[90]).

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^[91]). 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 more revealing outfits for physical education classes and sports. These stark changes can be highly stressful for the children and their parents (McBrien, 2011^[92]).

Social and emotional learning facilitates traditional academic learning, as it helps students feel capable and secure (Brackett et al., 2019^[93]). Research indicates that when students feel accepted and welcomed, they perform at higher cognitive levels (Lee and Walsh, 2016^[94]). Social and emotional skills, such as perseverance and collaboration, also increase students' likelihood to succeed in adulthood (Davis et al., 2014^[95]). Importantly, SES are not fixed traits. They can be learned, modified, and increased or decreased based on one's personal and social experiences (OECD, 2021^[10]).

However, literature pertaining to SEL indicates that the field is not well defined. Jones et al. (2021, p. 6^[14]) 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” 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. Additionally, there are few evaluations designed to measure the impact of SEL programmes (Jones et al., 2019^[96]).

2.1.1 Differences between social and emotional skills and academic learning

Social and emotional learning differs from traditional academic education. Learning core knowledge in mathematics, science, history, geography and the like can involve learning from textbooks, primary sources and lectures, as well as student-directed approaches, such as project-based learning and problem solving. Students learn some subjects, particularly sciences, 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^[97]).

Similarly to traditional academic knowledge building, SES building begins in infancy and continues through the life cycle (Pratiwi and Ayryza, 2018^[98]). Infants and toddlers can begin to acquire these skills through nurturing, tolerant interactions with parents and caretakers. When adults respond to children’s behaviours 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^[99]). 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 Ayryza, 2018^[98]). 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.

As students enter formal schooling, peer relationships may strengthen or hinder their SES development. For example, the OECD’s Survey of Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) (OECD, 2021^[10]) found that students who are bullied have lower skills for dealing with stress, are less optimistic, have less control of their emotions and are less trusting of others. This is a concern, as 20% of students surveyed reported that other students made fun of them at least once a week. Students from low socio-economic backgrounds, which is common for many refugee and newcomer students, indicate a weaker sense of belonging and poorer relationships with their teachers than their more advantaged peers. Unfortunately, these less positive experiences correlate with reduced SES (OECD, 2021^[10]).

Although they differ, SES are highly related to academic achievement. The SSES (OECD, 2021^[10]) found that students who rated themselves highly in curiosity and persistence also had higher grades. Trust, a skill negatively associated with bullying, correlated with higher mathematics grades, according to the survey.

2.2 Social and emotional learning for refugee and newcomer students

Social and emotional learning is important for all students, but it may be more difficult for refugee and newcomer students to obtain given their struggles with language learning, typically lower levels of socio-economic status and life experiences that can also affect their mental health (Hart, 2009^[29]). Conversely, developing SES can help them to overcome those same struggles. The migration experience

itself contributes to social and emotional stress (James, Iyer and Webb, 2019^[100]), therefore increasing the needs of these students for SEL.

There is very little research on applying theoretical models for SES (see Annex A) and ways in which they can be taught specifically to refugee and newcomer students. Indeed, the needs of newcomer and refugee students may differ considerably, as refugees are more likely to have experienced multiple traumatic events (European Commission, 2020^[30]; Sullivan and Simonson, 2016^[31]). Hart (2009^[29]) explains that trauma can affect students' ability to form positive relationships and contributes to poor behaviour and reduced self-regulation and motivation. Additionally, their reduced social skills makes many refugee students more likely targets of bullying. Anderson (2004^[101]) proposed school-based interventions to increase resilience, thereby reducing the effects of trauma, including the following:

- creation of a nurturing environment
- self-esteem programmes
- training teachers and counsellors to be aware of refugee backgrounds and needs
- facilitating group projects in classes to aid in developing friendships
- teaching social skills.

One literature review examines social and emotional school-based interventions for refugee and war-traumatised youth, though it focuses more specifically on mental health interventions and psychopathology (Sullivan and Simonson, 2016^[31]). The study reviews creative expression therapies (story writing, drama, drawing), cognitive behaviour interventions and multimodal programmes from Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. However, the authors note that surveys used to measure students' mental health are not normed for immigrant populations. As a result, their validity may be limited. They found that some of the interventions were successful in reducing social and emotional effects of trauma. However, most of the programmes reviewed were not implemented by the classroom teacher (or solely the teacher), but required specially trained therapists to implement the programmes. The authors also concluded that there is a lack of school-based interventions specifically addressing the needs of refugee and other trauma-affected students.

2.3 SEL frameworks and skills

The Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning Laboratory (EASEL) at the Harvard School of Education (United States) identified 40 separate SEL frameworks (Jones et al., 2019^[96]). As their report suggests, many frameworks use different terms, describe different understandings of the terms, and even use terms in contradictory ways. Lack of information about effective frameworks and programmes makes it difficult for school administrators and teachers to select those that are beneficial for their students.

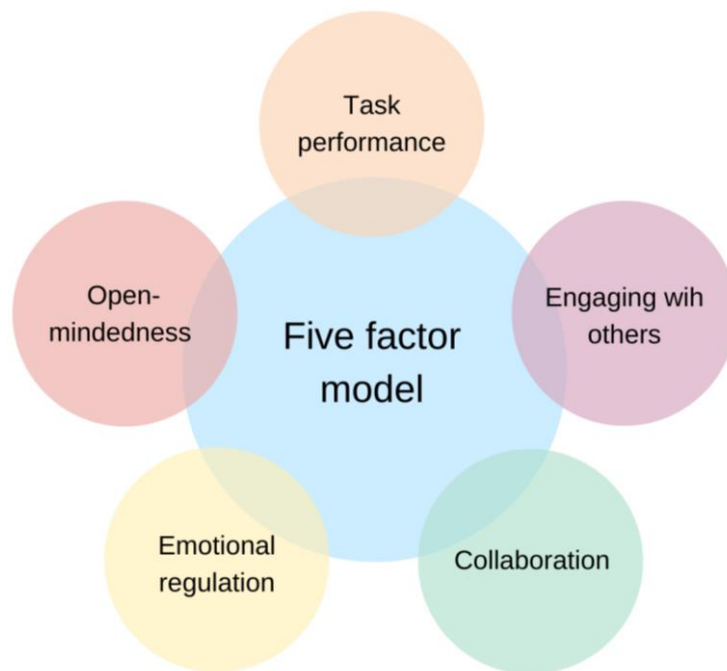
Two of the most researched and cited of the frameworks are the Big Five model (also known as the Five Factor model; used by the OECD) and the EASEL framework. In brief, the frameworks include skills associated with successful ways to engage with others, regulate one's emotions, complete tasks and remain open-minded. The domains into which these skills fall are those of cognition, values, perspectives, sociability and emotions. Annex A (see p. 59) provides a brief history of SEL development and ways in which the two major theoretical frameworks intersect. What follows is a description of the frameworks' theories, major social and emotional categories and how they address challenges and strengths of refugee and newcomer students.

2.3.1 The Big Five model (also known as the Five-Factor model)

Numerous studies (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018^[75]; Jang, Livesley and Vernon, 1996^[102]; John and De Fruyt, 2015^[103]; Poropat, 2009^[104]) have determined that SES parallel 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^[75]). It was used by the OECD to develop its Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (OECD, 2021^[10]). In brief, SES include the following five skillsets:

- **Task performance** – skills grouped in this domain include self-control, organisation, conscientiousness, reliability, persistence and setting high standards for oneself.
- **Engaging with others**– this domain includes one’s tendencies to create and maintain connections with others, assertiveness and positive engagement in life.
- **Collaboration** – this factor involves the quality of interpersonal relations. The trait involves co-operation, caring about the well-being of others and trust.
- **Emotional regulation** – 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.
- **Open-mindedness** – this factor involves intellectual curiosity, creativity, a love of learning and tolerance as well as a tendency to self-reflect (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018^[75]).

Figure 2.1. The Five-Factor model



Source: Adapted from OECD (2021^[10]), “Beyond academic learning: First results from the survey of social and emotional skills”. <https://doi.org/10.1787/92a11084-en>

Initial findings from the OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (OECD, 2021^[10]) reveal important items for family, school and policy attention that could be of particular concern for integrating newcomer and refugee students. For example:

- 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^[10]).

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 (Birman and Tran, 2017^[45]; Cerna, 2019^[1]; Koehler and Schneider, 2019^[19]).

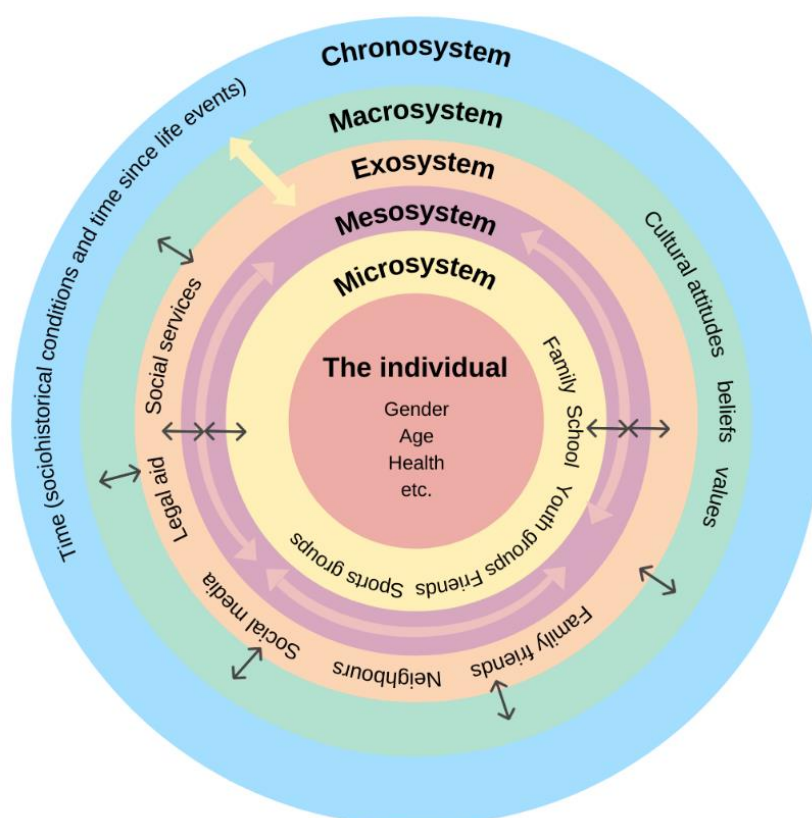
2.3.2 Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning Laboratory (EASEL) Framework

The Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning Laboratory (EASEL) at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in the United States developed another popular model. This team, led by Dr. Stephanie Jones, uses Bronfenbrenner and Ceci's (1994^[105]) 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. 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. A secondary school counsellor, who may encourage or discourage the student from applying to university, may influence an adolescent student.

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, natural disasters or war can displace a student's family. 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^[106]) 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 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 well-being. As such, it is important that teachers learn about the refugee journey to be able to support these students.

Figure 2.2. Bronfenbrenner's Bio-Ecological Systems model



Source: Adapted from Santrock, J. (2008^[107]), *Child Development*. Twelfth edition.

These systems are often stressed in cases of newcomer and refugee students. For instance, parents may suffer from depression because of refugee experiences. Their emotional state may 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 well-being. 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^[108]):

- 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 co-operate, 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^[14]): 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 of 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^[14]). 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 and Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning, 2020^[76]). This research found that the United States has the highest number of tools in use, followed by Turkey.

2.4 Teachers' roles in facilitating SEL for refugee and newcomer students

Teachers have a key role in facilitating student success (Forghani-Arani, Cerna and Bannon, 2019^[109]). Given the challenges faced by refugee and newcomer students, teachers need to be knowledgeable about and sensitive to diverse historical, cultural and political contexts to welcome and support refugee and newcomer students, and to reduce stereotypes and discrimination in the classroom. Teachers must also be reflective about their own attitudes and biases to avoid actions based on prejudices. Glock and Krolak-Schwerdt (2013^[110]) found that student teachers made judgments about students based on their nationalities. They suggest the inclusion of social psychology with content about stereotyping be included coursework in teacher preparation.

An additional challenge both for teachers and refugee and newcomer students is that the SES are contextualised by their particular socio-cultural environment (Hamilton, 2004^[111]). For example, different cultures have diverse values and ways of showing positive behaviours towards others. Again, there is a dearth of research that examines SEL specifically targeting refugee and newcomer students (Sullivan and Simonson, 2016^[31]). Cho, Wang and Christ (2019^[112]) investigated early elementary teachers' perspectives of their refugee students' SES and their pedagogical methods for SEL using the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework (similar to EASEL; see Annex A). They included creating a caring classroom environment as well as using explicit SEL materials. Similarly to Hayward (2019^[113]), they found that teacher perspectives focusing on deficit views resulted in not recognising students' strengths and resilience. Additionally, it affected teachers' instructional decisions that could result in marginalising refugee students. In contrast, when teachers recognised the students' cultural skills and knowledge, they honoured cultural diversity in their schools and helped to preserve their refugee students' integrity.

The Cho, Wang and Christ (2019^[112]) study is small, but important, as there is almost no research explicitly examining teachers' perspectives of their refugee or newcomer students' SES. The study showed that the teachers lacked a multicultural viewpoint, so saw the students' culturally diverse behaviours as deficient. This study indicates the importance of providing pre-service teachers at universities with sufficient multicultural instruction as well as providing ongoing professional learning opportunities for teachers.

2.5 SEL needs and factors that affect acquiring those needs

Cerna (2019^[1]) developed a holistic model to understand the academic, social and emotional needs of refugee students that also demonstrates how their needs and the factors affecting the acquisition of those needs relate to policies and practices. Drawing from this model, ways in which social and emotional needs and factors overlap become evident (see Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3. Overlapping social and emotional needs and factors

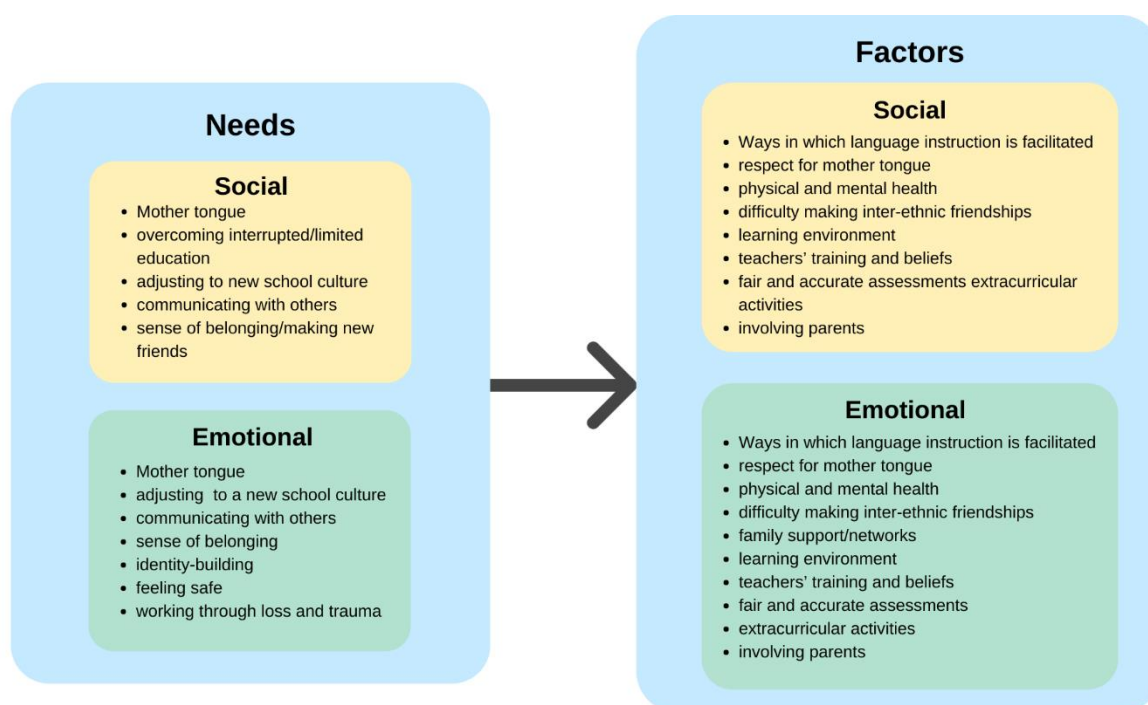


Figure 2.3 shows that the same needs and factors can overlap with social and emotional issues for students. Academic learning figures into the overlap as well. For example, the need to maintain and develop one's mother tongue involves both social and emotional needs and factors (Sun, 2019^[47]). This skill is important to maintain social connections with others from one's country of origin, including those who are also residing in the host country and might not have acquired the local language effectively. Maintaining the mother tongue will also tend to increase one's emotional well-being, as it allows for connection and a sense of belonging (Erasmus+, 2021^[114]). Language development is also a cognitive skill affected by opportunities students have to increase their learning in this area. Cumins (2001^[115]) points out that strong skills in one's mother tongue facilitate learning the language of the host country. Teachers' training and beliefs can partly affect whether or not students maintain their mother tongue. For instance, if teachers punish students for using their native language in the classroom, students may feel shamed and alienated (Hurwitz and Kambel, 2020^[116]).

Learning the host language is also an academic skill that will affect refugee and newcomer students' social needs to communicate, make new friends and feel like they belong. Accomplishing those social goals can positively affect students' emotional well-being as they come to enjoy new friendships, fit into the school culture and gain a stronger sense of belonging.

Fair and accurate assessment in education settings will also affect students' social development, as unfair assessments can discourage students and increase their drop-out rates, affecting their ability to succeed in society (Berliner and Kupermintz, 2009^[117]). Fair assessments can provide opportunities to place students into appropriate learning settings and can affect emotional development. Unfair assessments can cause a student to feel ashamed. Academically, they can limit students' opportunities for advanced education.

2.6 Intersecting diversity

In line with the framework developed by the OECD Strength through Diversity Project, intersectionality can be understood to mean that “a person can embody multiple dimensions of diversity and as such, be exposed to the different types of discrimination and disadvantages that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities” (Cerna et al., 2021^[3]). As explained, being a refugee or newcomer involves a number of challenges. However, intersecting identities that can further complicate their acculturation into host country schools and societies (Bešić, Paleczek and Gasteiger-Klicpera, 2018^[118]). For instance, they may have physical or psychological needs that further limit opportunities. The non-profit organisation Theirworld reported that tens of thousands of Syrian children have a physical impairment that restricts their mobility because of injuries suffered from the war (Theirworld, 2018^[119]). The report adds that these children face exclusion, neglect and stigmatisation, especially if they are unable to receive needed services. More generally, immigrant and ethnic minority students are more likely to be diagnosed with special education needs and placed into special education settings (Brussino, 2020^[120]) and are more likely to suffer from mental health conditions (Bronstein and Montgomery, 2011^[121]).

Gender (or a non-traditional gender identity) may create additional barriers to overcome. For example, traditional expectations of parents may prevent girls from participating in sports or following ambitions into careers traditionally considered male occupations. Those identifying as LGBTQI+ (a commonly used acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other sexual identities) often face additional forms of discrimination. Ethnic identity or religion may subject refugee and newcomer students to exclusion (Johnson, 2018^[122]). These challenges increase the need for SES, not only for the students themselves, but also for their peers in order to increase resilience and decrease discrimination.

3 SEL policies and practices

As SEL has become more prominent 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, 2021^[73]; Jones et al., 2021^[14]). Additionally, an increasing number of countries are including SEL in educational policy. For example, Jones and colleagues (2021^[14]) 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 (Miyamoto, Huerta and Kubacka, 2015^[123]). However, even though over 30 European education systems indicate measures to include holistic learning needs that include SEL, most do not assess students' SEL (Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019^[40]). Most programmes are intended for all students and not specifically designed for newcomer and refugee students. A 2019 analysis of European countries' educational policies found that only Austria, Finland, Spain and Sweden offer educational psychosocial support targeted towards immigrant students (Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019^[40]). This section will highlight practices that are either specific to refugee and newcomer students or that have been evaluated with diverse student populations in mind.

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 SEL (see also Box 3.1). This section will consider how various OECD countries have implemented SEL under these themes. The majority of the examples included have been externally evaluated. Selections primarily come from countries currently hosting large numbers of newcomer and refugee students. However, very few SEL programmes specifically target refugee and/or newcomer students and those found are included in this mapping section. Programme and policy limitations will be noted.

3.1 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 SEL. 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.

3.1.1 Be You, Australia

Australia offers the national education initiative “Be You”, which was launched in 2018 in pre-primary education, kindergartens, day care centres, primary and secondary schools to promote positive early learning experiences and social and emotional development (Be You and Beyond Blue, 2021^[124]). The Australian Government Department of Health supports the initiative and Beyond Blue, with delivery partners Early Childhood Australia and headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation leading the programming. Be You uses a culturally adapted version of the Second Step programme developed by the Committee for Children (Committee for Children, 2021^[73]). It provides accredited, free professional

instruction for teachers and others working with students 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 and natural disasters).

In 2016, the Australia Bureau of Statistics found that suicide was the primary cause of death for children between 5 and 17-years-old (Be You and Beyond Blue, 2021^[125]). The Be You initiative contributes to reducing these figures through the promotion of SES. The programme allows individuals to sign up for learning opportunities, but also encourages the creation of a whole learning community approach and provides consultants. The initiative includes comprehensive assessments of each of its five target emphases.

The Be You initiative continues to develop diversity and inclusive programme resources. One case study on the Be You website describes an elementary school that includes students from Aboriginal families as well as diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds (Be You and Beyond Blue, 2020^[126]). A key to the success of Be You at the Thornbury Primary School was hiring a well-being co-ordinator to lead the programme, who began with addressing the well-being of teachers. Using a holistic approach, teachers and staff added learning programmes for the students that incorporated Aboriginal language, an Indigenous Studies programme, health and well-being programme with an Aboriginal focus and an anti-bullying programme. The school is also inclusive of programmes in art therapy, music well-being and gardening programmes to increase the school community's SES. The success of Be You in a culturally diverse school suggests that the programme can also be adapted to welcome and include refugee and newcomer students.

Evaluation

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 (Be You and Beyond Blue, 2021^[124]). 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
- regular programme evaluation.

Additionally, successful programmes supported the needs and values of students with respect to autonomy, competence and belonging (Be You and Beyond Blue, 2021^[125]). They helped students use positive language for problem solving and taught them to become mindful of their own and others' feelings. They also helped students to broaden their social networks. There was insufficient evidence on family partnerships due to a low number of active family involvement in interventions. As a result, there are currently no evaluations examining family-school partnership strategies, although the website stresses the importance of these partnerships (Be You and Beyond Blue, 2021^[125]).

3.1.2 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 developing SES in both students and teachers. The programme was piloted in elementary schools in 2003 and adapted for secondary schools in 2005. The 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. An appointed SEAL co-ordinator receives a budget to ensure that resources are available to all school staff for professional learning and programme implementation. In addition to professional learning opportunities for all staff, 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^[127]). This means that school staff are encouraged to explore approaches that fit their context, rather than being required to follow a single model.

SEAL is designed for all students and teachers. However, features of the programme demonstrate that it is inclusive of refugee and immigrant students. The SEAL website is robust, and includes specific materials for teaching about diversity, difference, conflict, refugees and immigrants in its member resources (SEAL, 2021^[128]). For Refugee Week², SEAL provides teaching materials and activities for elementary and secondary students (Belgeonne and Brown, n.d.^[129]). The materials include a brief explanation of Refugee Week, learning outcomes for elementary and secondary students, reasons to teach students about the refugee experience, “circle time” activities to help students understand challenges faced by refugees, a “Journey to Safety” board game and more. The programme’s website includes a book, “My Name is not Refugee”, to teach about the refugee experience (SEAL, 2021^[128]).

Evaluation

A mixed methods evaluation of 22 secondary SEAL schools was somewhat inconclusive. Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth (2010^[127]) 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, Focused and Explicit (SAFE) principles and with an allowance for robust staff training. They also suggested that parents/caregivers be more involved in the programme implementation.

The SEAL website lists six evaluations conducted on the programme (under National Resources; available to members only) (SEAL, 2021^[128]). The webpage highlights one study conducted in 49 elementary and secondary schools. Results indicated that the whole-school approach of the SEAL programme resulted in a positive school culture, improving peer relationships, reducing school absences and increasing academic success.

3.1.3 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 US-based curriculum, it has been widely

² Refugee Week is a festival founded in 1998 in the United Kingdom and held every year around June 20, which is World Refugee Day. Events that take place during Refugee Week include arts, cultural, sports and educational programmes. The goal is to help refugees share their experiences and for people from different backgrounds to connect and understand the challenges of displacement.

adapted in other countries, including **Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Japan, Lithuania, and Sweden**. Second Step offers holistic programmes in SEL for early learning through adults as well as specific bullying prevention and child protection features (Second Step, 2021^[130]). The organisation uses Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory in its strategies (see Figure 2.2) and promotes a holistic approach that includes not only formal education, but also home and community environments. It suggests the need for SEL 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^[131]).

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' local environments.

Second Step offers an online alignment of trauma-informed practices and Second Step resources (Second Step, 2016^[132]). The introduction explains that students who experience trauma may include refugees, immigrants and victims of poverty or violence, among others. The alignment includes how to use Second Step to create safe learning environments, implement SEL, train all staff, prevent bullying and protect students.

Evaluation

A 2008 evaluation of Second Step in Norway found modest positive effects in students' social competence and a reduction of external problem behaviours (Holsen, Smith and Frey, 2008^[133]). 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 to twice per month; US recommendations are to teach the programme every morning). 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^[134]). 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, following the curriculum as recommended could improve SEL. A gap in the research is that it does not specifically examine results with respect to categories of students, such as refugees or newcomers.

3.1.4 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 their families living below the poverty level to improve family relationships; increase the physical, social and emotional well-being of pre-primary school 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 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 for example. As a result, the children of migrant families may be newcomer students in many schools.

Head Start began working with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in 2007 to consider ways in which the organisations can work together to provide services to the refugee population (Head Start/Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, 2021^[135]). Goals were to provide knowledge about refugees and other newcomers to teachers and to enhance knowledge of teaching strategies for recently arrived

populations. Local Head Start programmes that are including refugee students are encouraged to engage their families in numerous activities to teach about respect for cultural diversity, celebrate cultural customs and create friendships. They also ask parents to teach words to all students in the Head Start programme such as greetings in their mother tongue and to tell stories and play games from their country of origin. This develops a sense of belonging.

Evaluation

Head Start has resulted in many benefits for the children who can attend, both in terms of 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^[136]). Benefits continue into the elementary and secondary school years in terms of cognitive and SEL skills. Young students who attend Head Start are associated with higher chances that they will graduate from secondary school and attend at least one year of university than children from low social-economic situations who did not attend the programme (Deming, 2009^[137]). 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^[138]). They spend more time teaching their children and providing nurturing attention.

There is not a study at present that examines the results of Head Start programmes with refugee students. However, a 2017 study investigated the effectiveness of the programme with migrant populations (primarily Hispanic) (OPRE, 2019^[139]). Twenty-eight percent of the parents in the Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Study (MSHS) reported that their children exhibited problems with social and emotional skills, including behaviour problems. Over two-thirds of the Head Start teachers in the programme had been teaching for over ten years; most were Hispanic/Latino, so were an ethnic match for the young students with whom they worked. They also indicated high rates of collaborating with local elementary schools for transitions from the programme to public school and high rates of providing professional development to their teachers. However, over 50% of MSHS teachers requested additional training in delivering curriculum, working with special needs students and bilingual language development. Furthermore, programme directors reported high staff turnover and challenges recruiting qualified staff. Unfortunately, this study does not examine student achievement.

Although the programme targets social, emotional and initial cognitive work with students in need, there are programmatic flaws. The income range to qualify as “poverty level” in the United States is unrealistically low, with the result that many students who could benefit from Head Start are not eligible (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2020^[140]). Additionally, wages for Head Start teachers are far lower than those of their peers teaching in formal elementary school settings (Chron, 2020^[141]). 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 ensure 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^[10]).

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, 2018^[142]). 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 World Bank created a SEL programme called Step by Step that is available online and provides practical lessons and support materials on core SES for students ages 6-17 (World Bank, 2018^[143]). Goals are to help students become socially responsible, autonomous and resilient. Rather than grounding the programme in specific theory, the website explains 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^[143]). The website describes the lessons as teaching students to acquire the targeted skills described. Teacher guides and student workbooks are freely available online for Grades 1-11 in English and Spanish.

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^[144]). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**), through its Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) offers a number of courses for elementary, secondary, higher education and teachers to develop SES while also learning about global issues (UNESCO MGIEP, 2021^[145]). The free, engaging courses use games, simulations and interactive exercises. SEL for Schools and Global Citizenship are courses that offer certificates upon successful completion.

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. Save the Children has developed an activity package of materials on SEL for preschool, elementary and secondary students that can be used for distance learning through radio and audio formats (Save the Children, 2020^[146]). In addition to SEL content, lessons include learning literacy and numeracy skills. The website’s free downloadable materials include important information for teachers who may be teaching children from various cultural backgrounds and may also be in need of psychosocial support.

3.2 Curriculum

Some countries with and without national initiatives to promoting SEL 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, and there might be barriers to accessing these materials. For example, only 13% of primary and secondary teachers surveyed in the United Kingdom reported that they knew where to access appropriate materials (Culliane and Montacute, 2017^[78]). To be meaningful, lessons and curricular materials need to be age-appropriate and meet the developmental level of the students. As Denham (2018^[147]) 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^[148]).

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^[14]) provide 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 well-being, the arts and community service as part of comprehensive SEL programmes.

The Jones et al. (2021^[14]) guide focuses on curricula that involve 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 rely on 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 recognising cultural diversity as a part of teaching SEL skills.

There are many different SEL frameworks internationally. For example, the EASEL website lists 40 of such frameworks (EASEL, 2021^[149]). 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 SES; in particular, resilience, creativity and active citizenship (Donlevy, van Driel and McGrath, 2019^[150]). Some refugees have well-developed resilience skills, as they have typically managed to endure and overcome significant hardships during their pre-flight and journeys to a host country. At the same time, both newcomer and refugee students need to maintain and possibly further develop their resilience to acculturate successfully in a new society. Citizenship skills are also especially relevant for these groups as they are likely to prepare for eventual citizenship.

What follows are examples of curriculum used in several OECD education systems.

3.2.1 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^[13]). The programme emphasised teacher and administrator training to gain understanding of refugee lives with 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 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^[13]).

Evaluation

Researchers evaluated changes to school policies and programmes, increased awareness of refugee issues by school staff and improved partnerships with parents and agencies (Block et al., 2014^[13]). 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. Teachers need support and sufficient time for training in order to provide SEL to newcomer and refugee students.

3.2.2 MindUP, Canada, Ireland and the United States

"MindUP" is a programme founded in 2003 that implements the concept of mindfulness, meditation and growth mind-set that intelligence and abilities can be developed through persistence and learning from mistakes. Schools in **Canada, Ireland** and the **United States** have implemented this programme, and it is available in English and Spanish. Curriculum is available for students aged between 3 and 14. There is also a programme for families. Professional training for teachers 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 recommendations. This visit includes a family workshop. After seven months, a MindUP consultant reviews assessment plans with school leadership, 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. Although the programme is designed for all students, evaluations summarised below indicate that students from non-native language groups and immigrants have participated. However, there is no specific data on refugee or newcomer students.

Evaluation

Three Canadian evaluations indicated promising results for MindUP with respect to language-diverse, low income and immigrant student populations. The first evaluated 246 students in Grades 4-7 ten weeks after obtaining baseline measures. Twenty-three percent of the students reported an East Asian first language. The reviewers found that student participants showed significant increases in optimism, prosocial behaviours and academic beliefs and a reduction in aggressive behaviours (CASEL, 2021^[151]). 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^[152]). In this assessment, 35% of students reported diverse first languages, including Korean, Mandarin, Spanish and Russian. Schonert-Reichl et al. (2015^[152]) concluded that the four-month programme indicated positive results in well-being and prosocial behaviour a year after implementation. A study published in 2020 examined results in 23 kindergarten classrooms from 10 schools that included high social risk indicators such as low employment, low income, language diversity and immigration (Crooks et al., 2020^[153]). Results showed gains in adaptive skills and mental processes such as memory, focus, organisation and self-control. The students also displayed reductions in behaviour problems and internalising problems.

3.2.3 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^[154]). Without these skills, students are likely to have more difficulty in school with 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.

Educational psychologist Marjorie Boxall founded Nurture Groups in the 1960s in socially and economically deprived areas of London to address observed social, emotional and behavioural problems in early childhood (Sloan et al., 2020^[154]). The Nurture Group programme targets children deemed to be experiencing difficulties with SES. It takes them 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^[154]). Sloan et al. reviewed six studies demonstrating that students show an increase in self-esteem, coping skills and social behaviours. Additionally, students who attended Nurture Groups indicated gains in basic literacy and reading readiness. The study conducted in Northern Ireland followed 384 students from 30 schools who were involved in Nurture Groups during 2014-2015. They compared these students to a control group from 14 schools who did not receive the intervention. Interestingly, the control group had higher numbers of students from ethnic minorities and non-native language backgrounds. Results for the intervention group were positive. The students demonstrated significant and consistent improvements in social and emotional skills, and they indicated that they enjoyed school more than the control group.

There were 2000 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. The Sloan et al (2020^[154]) study suggests that there are students from linguistically and ethnically diverse populations (that could potentially include refugees and newcomers) who could benefit from Nurture Groups. However, since this programme targets children determined to have attachment problems, it could leave out others also in need of increasing their SES that would include newcomer and refugee populations.

3.3 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 avoid test anxiety, so may be 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, 2020^[155]). These subjects are also often included within a school's offerings as extra-curricular activities. Unlike academic subjects, however, students select these on a voluntary basis.

Non-formal SEL opportunities are less frequently described and assessed in research than formal SEL programmes. Additionally, refugee and newcomer students are underrepresented in non-formal programmes for various reasons (Cherng, Turney and Kao, 2011^[156]). They may lack transportation, be unable to pay fees required by some non-formal programmes or have home responsibilities that prevent them from enrolling (Solis, 2016^[157]). They may also feel unwelcome due to discrimination (Garrison, 2016^[158])

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 three 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^[159]). However, the extensive literature review does not include country-specific practices nor how such programmes may be of particular help to specific categories of students, including newcomer or refugee students.

What follows are some examples of non-formal and extra-curricular SEL opportunities in OECD countries that either target or clearly include refugee and/or newcomer students.

3.3.1 Yoga and Sport with Refugees

An important method of non-formal SEL results from **sports participation**. Sutherland and Parker (2020^[160]) 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 higher 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 Lesbos, the NGO "Yoga and Sport" has helped to empower and improve the lives of over 7 000 refugees since 2017 (Yoga and Sport with Refugees, 2021^[161]). The organisation combines the competitiveness and teamwork 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 and motivation and to support well-being. Yoga and Sport with Refugees also communicates with a human rights focus, teaching refugees that they are worthy of dignity and respect.

3.3.2 Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competencies in Education (DICE)

Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competencies in Education (DICE) was a two-year project conducted in 11 EU countries (including OECD countries the **Czech Republic, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Sweden**, and the **United Kingdom**) to measure how effective a drama and theatre programme was in 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^[162]). The programme was targeted at all students, but it included a key drama involving a refugee situation.

The report about the programme 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^[163]). 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 that fact, deepening the emotional impact on the audience and providing space for the girl’s voice. The research indicates that thousands of students ages 13-16 involved in the programme changed their attitudes towards the least accepted minorities in their countries in a three-month time period as a result of attending educational theatre and drama programmes.

The DICE project was mindful of Europe 2020 strategies to raise employment rates, reduce the drop-out rate and increase the percentage of students completing tertiary education (DICE Consortium, 2010^[163]). 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^[163]). Researchers compared groups of students aged between 13 and 16 who engaged regularly with theatrical and dramatic exposure (at least ten occasions in four months) to control groups who had no exposure. All groups were from either 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 engaged 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 subsidies. 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.

3.3.3 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^[164]). They wanted to contribute to their community and collaborated 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 problematic. 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 their 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^[165]). 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” than about teaching structured music lessons. 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^[166]) found that music education offered a natural opportunity to build students’ SES to reduce at-risk behaviours. In **Germany**, Hille and Schupp (2013^[167]) analysed data from the German Socio-Economic Panel Goals on students who took music lessons outside the classroom from at least ages 8-17. Researchers did not evaluate a specific programme; rather, they 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.

3.3.4 Online learning

The Dream Academy (TDA) is a 10-week intensive course for LGBTQI+ refugees that has been piloted in **Greece** in 2021 and will be continued in other European countries, **Mexico** and **Colombia** (Safe Place International, 2021^[168]). Safe Place International (SPI), an NGO that provides safe living spaces and advocacy for LGBTQI+ and single-mother refugees in numerous countries, including Greece and Colombia, provides the course. The Dream Academy is a collaborative effort of academics, social and emotional experts, artists and global companies intended to help refugees heal from trauma, gain confidence by building SES, learn about their rights and gain practical business skills that can help them create sustainable futures. It provides students with social capital 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% reported that they gained leadership skills
- 97% felt prepared to take next steps towards decisions to sustain themselves through jobs or further education
- 97% gained the ability to trust (Safe Place International, 2021^[168]).

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

“Evoke: A crash course in changing the world”, is an online educational game funded by the World Bank. The game 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**, OECD countries with high populations of refugees, 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^[169]). The game designer, Jane McGonigal, indicates that this game is not a simulation. 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 gamers launched over 50 new social enterprises (Hawkins, 2010^[169]). However, there is no research evaluation of the programme to date.

Conclusion

Since 2018, international educational policy developments have moved away from “learning to know” by including an emphasis on “learning to be”, “learning to do” and “learning to live together” goals that incorporate SES (Donlevy, van Driel and McGrath, 2019^[150]). In order for refugee and newcomer students to have the best opportunities to succeed not only with academic achievement, but also with active participation in society 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 European Commission recognises that education needs to include far more than academic knowledge. An EC 2019 technical report described the importance of learning SES and active citizenship skills required for social inclusion, employability and self-fulfilment to strengthen Europe during a time of significant change (European Commission, 2019^[170]). Competencies include cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and cultural understanding. The Council of Europe and UNESCO additionally see self-fulfilment as a key educational strategy (European Commission, 2019^[170]), as does the OECD (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018^[75]). The EC recognises that an increase in migration flows and xenophobia 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 et al., 2018^[171]). The EC finds that successful SEL includes sequential and active learning, focusing on skill building and empathy.

Many variables affect students’ academic, social and emotional learning. These include regional demographics, family diversity, income equality and level of parental education, as well as factors resulting from migration (OECD, 2020^[15]). 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, all highly important for newcomer and refugee students:

- 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
- it raises the confidence and satisfaction levels of teachers (Cefai et al., 2018^[171]).

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

(Cerna et al., 2021^[3]). 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 holistically are more effective than those that only provide selective opportunities for SEL. Successful holistic SEL programmes described in this paper include Be You, Australia (see 3.1.1); SEAL, the United Kingdom (see 3.1.2); and the School Support Programme in Victoria, Australia (see 3.2.1). School-wide programmes tend to engage school administrators, and this is associated with better results (Holsen, Smith and Frey, 2008^[133]). Additionally, non-formal education offers important pathways to SEL. There is a need for more evaluations of non-formal learning so that successful local practices can gain recognition and be scaled up. As creative interventions have also been found successful for increasing refugee students' social and emotional well-being (Sullivan and Simonson, 2016^[31]), there is also a need to increase these opportunities (Cherng, Turney and Kao, 2011^[156]).

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 (Sullivan and Simonson, 2016^[31]). 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 overcome 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. The OECD Strength through Diversity project has identified five policy areas that work to increase equity and inclusion for traditionally underserved student populations: governance; resourcing; developing capacity; school-level interventions; and monitoring and evaluating.

Based on the evidence included in the paper and the mapping carried out, key policy pointers to address SEL for refugee and newcomer students include the following:

- Governance:
 - Commit to creating school systems that are welcoming to ethnic and linguistic minority students (these categories are typically inclusive of newcomer and refugee students).
 - Provide anti-bias and anti-racist SEL curriculum.
- Resourcing:
 - Fund opportunities for newcomer and refugee students to participate in non-formal sport and learning opportunities (Opstoel et al., 2020^[159]).
- Developing capacity:
 - Increase opportunities for pre-service and ongoing teacher learning (Schonert-Reichl, 2017^[58]), as well as more time to allow teachers to get to know their newcomer and refugee students and families.
 - Investigate ways to differentiate SEL for newcomer and refugee students.
- School-level interventions:
 - Implement school-wide SEL policies (European Commission, 2020^[30]).
 - Ensure that SEL includes family members and community resources (Humphrey, Lendrum and Wigelsworth, 2010^[127]).
 - Ensure that school administrators are engaged in the implementation of SEL (Block et al., 2014^[13]; DICE Consortium, 2010^[163]).
- Monitoring and evaluating:

- Assess SEL programmes and make modifications to programmes based on the findings (Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019^[40]).

Newcomer and refugee students need to be seen as resources, not deficits, in educational systems and their new places of habitation (European Commission, 2020^[30]; Hayward, 2019^[113]). They bring new ideas and skills to host countries and they stimulate the economy (Borgen Project, 2021^[172]; OECD, 2016^[173]). 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. Ultimately, successful SEL implementation for newcomers and refugee students enhances social and economic prosperity for host countries.

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Annex A. A brief SEL history and models compatibility

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 socio-cultural theory that focused on learning as primarily social, collaborative interaction. His theories emphasise the role of language and social exchanges through which students learn socio-cultural values. An important concept from Vygotsky is the "Zone of Proximal Development", identified as the space between what a student can do independently and what they can learn to do when guided "(or "scaffolded") by a teacher or advanced peers (Vygotsky, 1978^[174]). This technique 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 (Rieber, 1997^[175]). 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^[176]). His psychosocial intervention programme at two low-achieving schools with high populations of minority students brought their academic performance above the national US 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^[177]). 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 educational organisation Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) 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^[178]). Previously, in 1997, the ASCD collaborated with the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to produce the book *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators*. This book provides SEL strategies for preschool through secondary education teachers (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2021^[179]).

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 et al., 2018^[171]). 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.

Gaining and using SES

Social and emotional 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^[180]). In early childhood, these skills include the ability to make friends and play well in groups (OECD, 2020^[15]). As children mature, SES 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 organisation; persist and dedicate themselves to personal goals; complete tasks (conscientiousness, cognitive and values domains).
- Find opportunities to connect, 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).
- Remain open to intellectual stimulation and experiential learning (openness to experience, values and identity domains) (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš and Drasgow, 2018^[75]; Jones et al., 2021^[14]).

Feron and Kankaraš (2019^[181]) 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 SES than those who felt unsafe. The 2021 OECD initial findings on its SES survey reported similar results, established on ten participating cities (OECD, 2021^[10]).

How do children and youth acquire these skills that are so important to their social well-being and success? In fact, people constantly learn and refine SES throughout the life process. Research on young children indicates the importance of parental interactions with their children to develop early SES (OECD, 2020^[15]; Ulferts, 2020^[182]). 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. This finding indicates the importance of supporting parents and caregivers of newcomer and refugee children to enhance 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^[75]). Social and emotional 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 the desire to find just solutions to life’s challenges. The OECD Survey on Social and Emotional Skills indicated that immigrant students are more tolerant than native-born students (OECD, 2021^[10]). This skill could help them not only in school settings, but also in society at large.

Compatibility of the SEL models

Although the models differ in their theoretical frameworks, 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, task performance (see Figure A A.1) from the Big Five model aligns with the cognitive and values areas in EASEL in terms of goals for self-control and meeting high expectations for oneself. These largely personal skills help students regulate themselves and create appropriate goals to achieve. What follows is a discussion of how the models complement one another.

Task performance (cognitive, values)

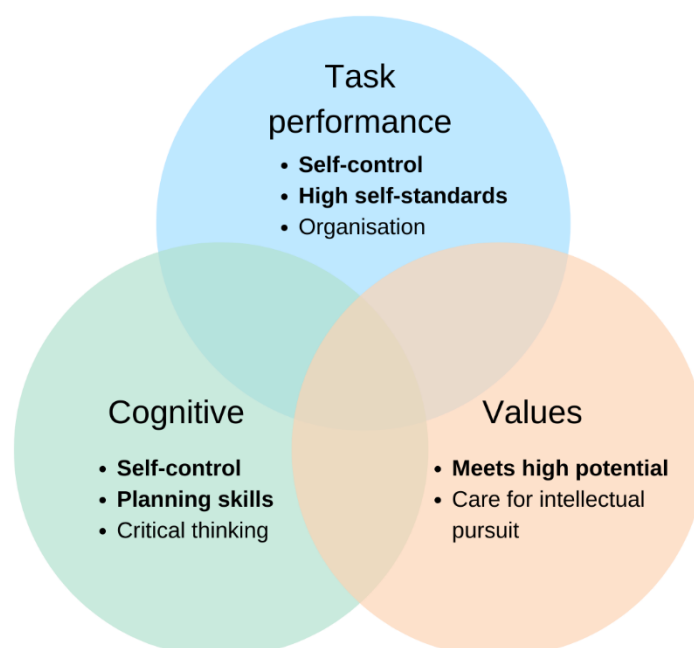
The skill of task performance, called “dependability” in some models, is inclusive of cognitive skills and values supporting learning goals. The goals of self-control, reliability, persistence, conscientiousness and high standards are assisted by skills of self-regulation, problem solving, focus, critical thinking and performing to the best of one’s ability to accomplish tasks consistently.

Trilling and Fadel (2009, p. 12^[183]) 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 additional SES of collaboration and innovation (creativity).

Cognitive skills can be promoted in a variety of ways. 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^[184]). 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 extended gaps from school. Frightening experiences with authorities may make refugee students fear asking questions. At the same time, their life experiences may have taught them a high degree of self-control and persistence. They have likely 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^[113]).

Figure A A.1. Emotional skill: Task performance

Compatibility between Big Five and the EASEL frameworks



Engaging with others (social, perspectives)

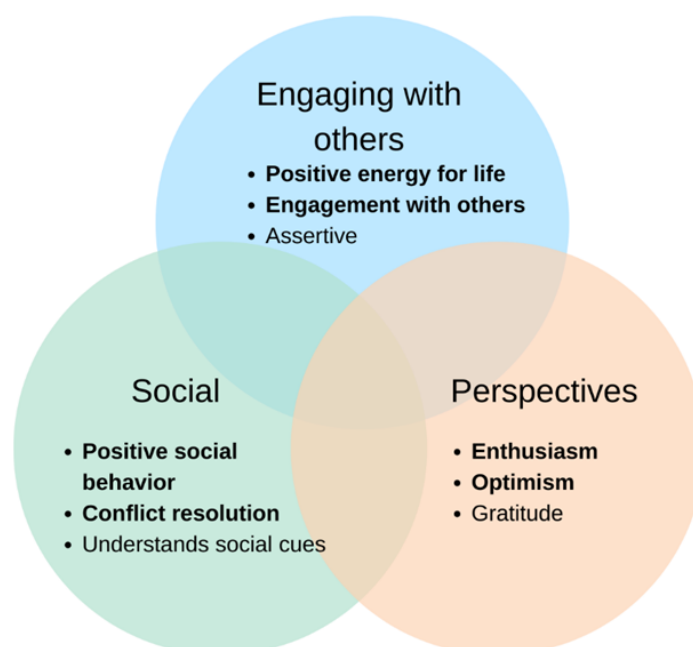
The Big Five component of engaging with others overlaps with social and perspectives EASEL domains (see Figure A A.2. These are similar in terms of positive life energy that includes optimism and social engagement. The quality of extraversion includes a positive outlook towards life related to enthusiasm. An interest in working in groups aligns with positive social behaviours and a positive regard towards others. Students may acquire these skills when teachers facilitate student groups that examine interesting, relevant questions in subject matter, for instance.

Engaging with others is highly correlated with the social aspects of learning. It includes getting along with others and finding positive ways to resolve conflicts. 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 of diverse cultural contexts (Committee for Children, 2021^[131]). They can role-play situations of interpersonal conflicts 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.

Engaging with others can be especially challenging for newcomer 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 participate in class, understanding their diverse cultural contexts and monitoring for bullying by other students.

Figure A A.2. Social skill: Engaging with others

Compatibility between Big Five and the EASEL frameworks



Collaboration (social, values)

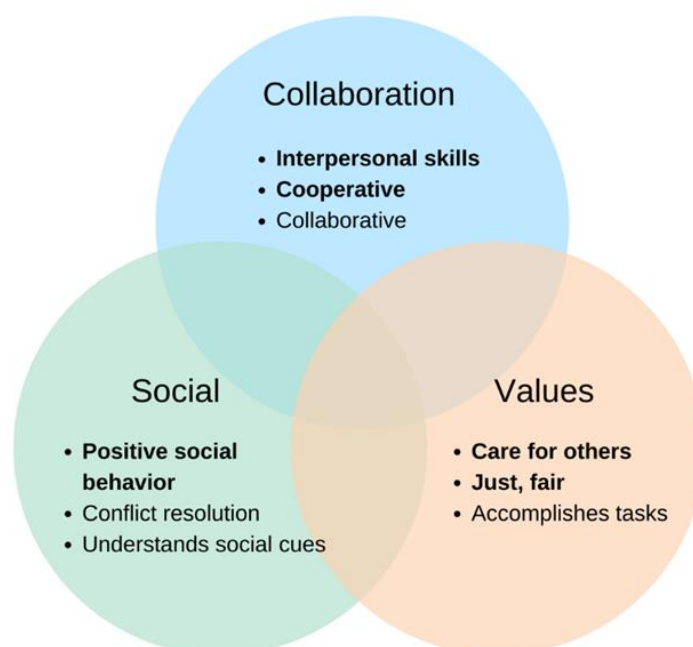
The domain of collaboration also falls under social skills. It has to do with the quality of social relationships. Modelling interpersonal skills such as listening carefully to others, agreeableness, being kind, working co-operatively and showing genuine concern for others' well-being helps to teach these skills. Students skilled in this domain go beyond their own self-interests. They will tend to intervene if they believe that someone is treating a peer unfairly, for instance.

The Five-Factor domain of collaboration aligns with the social and values domains in the EASEL model (see Figure A A.3). 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 non-violent ways that result in fairness and justice. Volunteer opportunities can enhance these abilities.

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 upstanding citizens (Häberlin, 2016^[68]). 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 (Brussino, 2021^[185]). They can also facilitate collaboration by placing newcomer and refugee students into group projects with native students who are welcoming.

Figure A A.3. Social skill: Collaboration

Compatibility between Big Five and the EASEL frameworks



Emotional regulation (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^[14]). Related skills include resilience, empathy, optimism and gratitude.

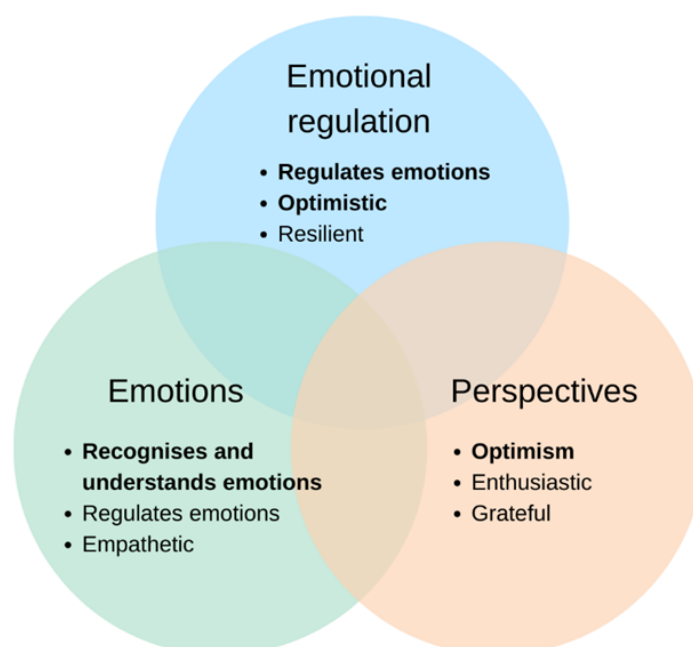
Emotional regulation in the Five-Factor model relates to the emotion and perspectives components of EASEL (see Figure A A.4). Similarities include the ability to understand and regulate one's emotions. Students with this skill can control their impulses. Another trait in this group is optimism. This 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.

Emotional regulation is another domain of difficulty for newcomers and refugees. They may have suffered multiple traumas on their journey to safety (Bronstein and Montgomery, 2011^[121]). 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 (European Commission, 2020^[30]).

Once again, modelling is an important method for teaching emotional regulation (CASEL, 2021^[186]). 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 by actively showing concern for refugee and newcomer students' feelings.

Figure A A.4. Emotional skill: Emotional regulation

Compatibility between Big Five and the EASEL frameworks



Open-mindedness (values, identity)

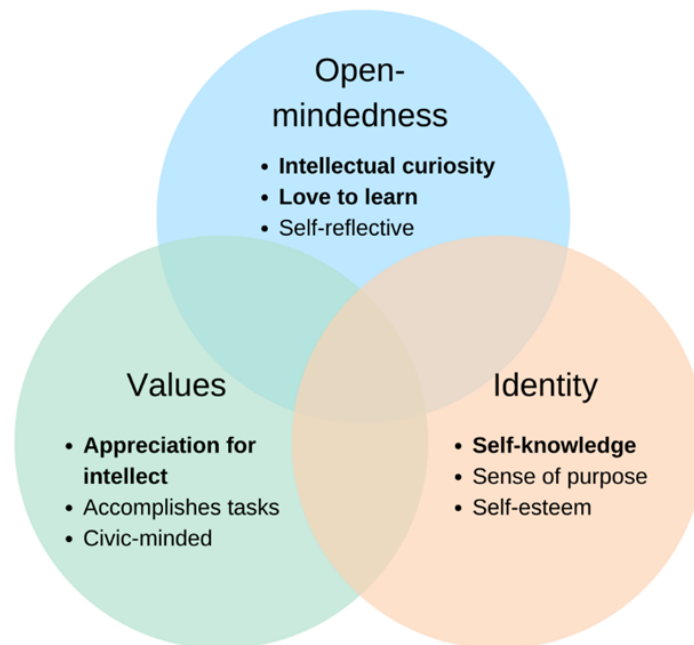
This final domain involves traits such as a love of learning, creativity, openness to experience, self-reflection and a sense of purpose. These traits include a curiosity about and exploration of one's life. Such attributes are typically achieved only after one acquires basic needs and a sense of safety and belonging. People who are open to experience also enjoy learning about other cultures, potentially aspiring 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.

Open-mindedness in the Five-Factor model overlaps with values and identity in the EASEL model (see Figure A A.5). 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 highly 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.

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, such as adequate housing, nutrition and health, are met. Governmental policies and supports from non-governmental bodies can bridge gaps to help these students move from survival needs to self-actualisation. 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. As the OECD SSES found, immigrant students tend to be more tolerant and interested in learning from people who come from other countries and cultures (OECD, 2021^[10]).

Figure A A.5. Emotional skill: Open-mindedness

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^[80]). Scrivens and Smith (2013^[81]) 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^[81]). These networks can facilitate access to jobs, education, social services and more.

Newcomers and refugees may have had social capital in their homelands, but are typically lacking it, at least initially, in their host country. However, social capital is an important asset to gaining access to advantages such as good schools, higher education and good employment opportunities (Cheung and Phillimore, 2014^[187]; McDaid, 2019^[188]). 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. 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.