CHILDREN OF REFUGEES IN EDUCATION (CORE): A MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE (MOOC) PROVIDING ACCESS TO OER MATERIALS TO STRENGTHEN TRANSVERSAL SKILLS OF ADOLESCENT LEARNERS

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Abstract

For many children on the run or in refugee camps, their right to education is not being upheld. The UNHR and many NGOs are therefore trying to teach children and young people despite the difficult circumstances. The project Children of Refugees in Education (CORE) aims to support a number of these organizations and adolescent learners directly with a free, easy accessible teaching and learning resource on the themes of life skills and strengthening self-competences. The course covers topics such as identity, self-awareness, fears and hopes, health, living together, reflection on the current situation, one's own interests, career choice and a possible future.

CORE as a teaching and learning resource - build as a massive open online course (MOOC) - also supports the adolescent learner's development of first language competence and therefore is not only available in English but also Arabic and Dari. Other languages might follow. In addition, the project contains supporting materials in form of didactical fact sheets for teachers and social workers on teaching life skills and self-competences with this MOOC.

To design a MOOC, addressing an adolescent group of learners on the move (as a refugee), according to the SDG-4 goals and targets of the UN was challenging. The course is designed for individuals or for learning groups whose composition is constantly changing and whose learning status is extremely heterogeneous. The instructional design enables a completely virtualized, self-organized way of working as well as learning in semi-organized groups or classes. All learning outcomes can be created and saved online in the course. Discussion groups invite learners to present their own artifacts, reflect or give critical feedback. The Open edX user interface (MOOC platform) has been adapted so that the course can also be accessed by learners without in-depth ICT skills on their mobile phones. Animated introductory films and many specially created illustrations support learning in different cultures.

At present, the Zurich University of Teacher Education is engaged in implementing and promoting the contents of the teaching and learning materials in refugee camps in Greece. Other countries are following. The project is supported by the Lottery Fund of the Canton of Zurich (2017–2020). Further projects based on CORE are conceivable, such as research projects on the digital transmission of OER materials in MOOCs or on the learning behaviour of highly mobile learners (refugees). It is also possible to translate the MOOC into other languages.

Keywords: OER, MOOC, Refugees, Transversal Skills, SDG-4, Mobile Learning, Instructional Design, Virtualization, Heterogeneity, Adolescents, life skills, self-competences.