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Abstract

The so-called refugee wave in the summer of 2015 led to an impressive wave of helpfulness in Austrian society. Universities Austria (uniko)—the umbrella organization of the 22 public universities in Austria—set up and launched an initiative called MORE. MORE provides refugees and asylum seekers with additional opportunities and perspectives that go beyond basic tools for survival. All 22 public universities implemented MORE, albeit in different ways. The article draws on a specific case—the MORE initiative—which aims to integrate refugee students into university life and higher education, as well as on data collected within the scope of evaluating the particular cases at hand. Analysis focuses on whether MORE has contributed to integrate refugee students. Drawing on different integration theories, the findings of this evaluation provide an insight as to how integration is achieved and affected by influencing factors such as personal characteristics, the usage of program elements, etc. Hence, the paper gives insight in the applicability of different integration theories and may be helpful for improving MORE or similar initiatives. The results confirmed the assumptions of

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modern sociological integration theories. Universities who offer the MORE program can conclude that they should take care of special, vulnerable groups, and that they should offer more than language classes in order to foster integration. Integration depends on the characteristics of the refugee group, the general societal and political climate, and on the specific attitudes towards the group in question.

(HRK / Abstract übernommen)