ESRC-GCRF NETWORK

Photograph courtesy of Francesco Malavolta

The protective role of language in global migration and mobility: language policies and practices in refugee settings

Theo Marinis, Federico Faloppa, Tony Capstick, Doug Saddy, Shirley Reynolds, Tamer Amin, Lina Choueiri, Pantelis Kyprianos, Anna Roussou, Maria D'Agostino, Giuseppe Paternostro, Gabriele Proglio
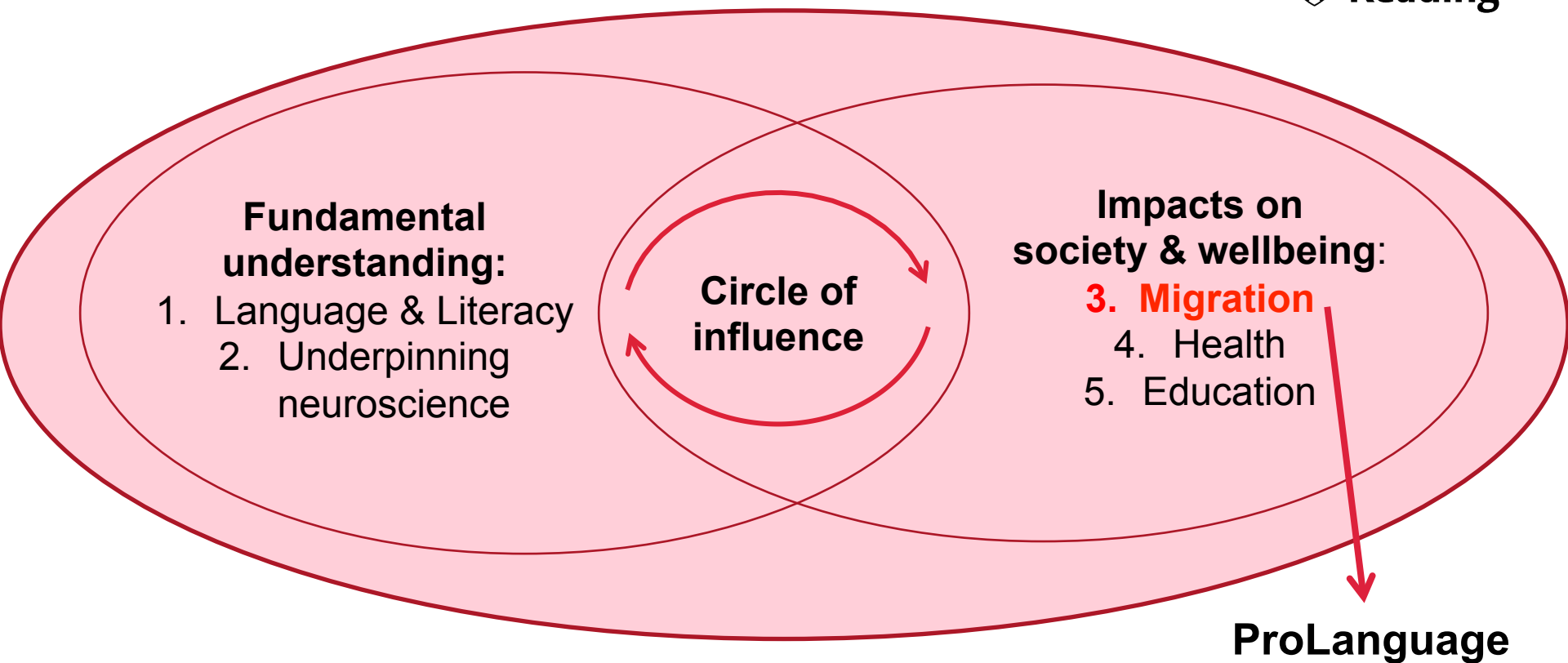
Centre for Literacy & Multilingualism Mission:

- We conduct, coordinate, and disseminate world-leading research on **literacy and multilingualism**.
- Our team includes linguists, psychologists, teachers, speech & language therapists, …
- We address **key global challenges** that **cannot be addressed under a single discipline**.
- We have state-of-the-art **facilities** and provide cutting-edge **training**.
- We **engage with the public** and **bring direct benefits to society**.

Objectives

1. **Research**: Conduct and coordinate **world-leading research across disciplines**.

2. **Co-creation of research agendas**: **Engage** with **academic** and **non-academic audiences** within the UK and beyond to identify and co-create research agendas.

3. **Training**: Establish CeLM as a centre of international excellence for **research methodologies** through the development of and **training** of young researchers in innovative methods, tools, and techniques.

4. **Communication**: Provide a platform to **communicate innovative research outcomes** to the general public.

Research Themes

Fundamental understanding:
1. Language & Literacy
2. Underpinning neuroscience

Circle of influence

Impacts on society & wellbeing:
3. **Migration**
4. Health
5. Education

ProLanguage

Centre for Literacy & Multilingualism

University of Reading

Research and policy context

- Poverty, natural disasters and violent conflicts drive people to **move** in order to **protect** their **health** and **wellbeing.**

- Changes in migration global flows:

  - 1) an **acceleration** of migration from parts of the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and Latin America;

  - 2) migration trajectories have changed and involve **fragmented journeys** with stops in transit countries, such as Lebanon, Turkey, Libya, Greece, and Italy (Crawley et al., 2016).

Research and policy context

- Migration journeys may last for several months or years.

- Migrants from diverse countries of origin may stay in one or more refugee settings.

- **Language** has the potential to **enhance the migrants' life and wellbeing** and **improve their chances of staying mobile** (Capstick & Delaney, 2016).

- **WHY?**

Research and policy context

- **Language** can be **a facilitator.** A **key** for:
    - communication, & information sharing,
    - participation in social processes,
    - education, and training.

- It is a **tool:**
    - for accessing cultural and material resources
    - an expression of identity and
    - a factor in strengthening resilience, preventing conflict, and strengthening communities (UNICEF, 2016).

Research and policy context

- **Language** can be a **barrier**:

  - if language policies and a language support system is not in place, making it difficult:

    - for refugees to find their way around,
    - ask for the help and support necessary to meet their needs (Faloppa 2011),
    - and may affect the refugees' mental health (Reed, et al., 2011).

Research and policy context

- **Listening to the voices of migrants** has been of central importance:

  - in attempting to understand the **local conditions** of their **integration**
  - the extent to which **anti-immigration discourse** is an **obstacle** to their belonging (Delanty, et al., 2011).

Pro-language network

- **Aims** to address how **language** and **language policies** in and around refugee settings:
  - can enhance their physical and mental health,
  - act as social protection,
  - enhance their chances for mobility, and
  - facilitate their integration into the destination society.

- This is particularly important for **children** because **early wellbeing** is a crucial **predictor of later outcomes in life**.

Objectives

- 1) explore how language can **facilitate** communication, physical and psychological well-being of refugees;
- 2) identify language **needs** in refugee settings in terms of **education** and **health**;
- 3) identify how language skills can **enhance the mobility chances** of refugees;
- 4) explore how **structures** in refugee camps can support language needs/services and the training of refugees;
- 5) identify the **training** and **professional needs** for people working in refugee camps;

Objectives

- 6) explore how **social media** and **apps** can be beneficial to language teaching, practice and policy, and evaluate the **effectiveness** of **Computer Assisted Language Learning** and **MOOCs** for providing education for hard to reach learners;
- 7) **share good practice** between people working in or outside refugee settings;
- 8) explore whether **book-sharing** activities are suited for children in refugee settings;
- 9) engage with research and policy makers, setup a bidirectional information flow and joint activities for **capacity-building**;
- 10) build on the outcomes of the network in a **joint research grant application.**

Approach

- We adopt a **cross-disciplinary approach**.
- Partners:
    - **Academic** and
    - **non-academic** organisations
- who are supporting refugees

WHY?

- They can:
    - bring their experiences to the table,
    - provide input on the situation,
    - identify good practice,
    - identify priorities,
    - Identify training needs that promise to make a difference.

Network composition
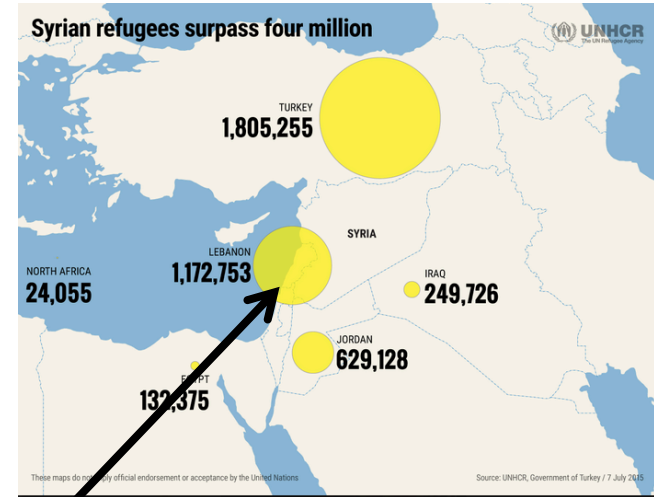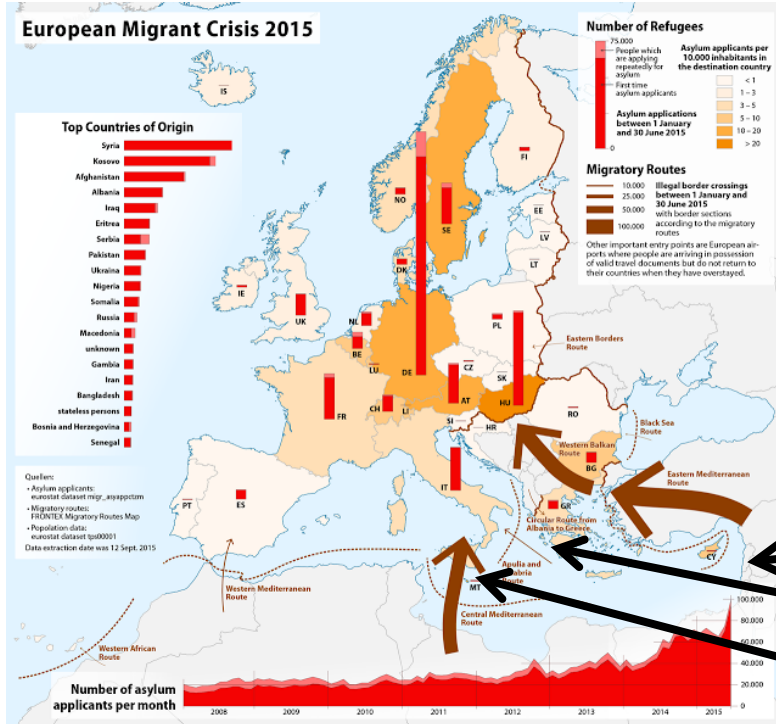
American University of Beirut

University of Patras, Greece

University of Palermo, Italy

NETWORK COMPOSITION

1) *Academic institutions:*
- *University of Reading:* Theo Marinis, Federico Faloppa, Tony Capstick, Doug Saddy, Shirley Reynolds
- *University of Palermo:* Maria D'Agostino, Giuseppe Paternostro
- *University of Patras:* Pantelis Kyprianos, Anna Roussou,
- *American University of Beirut:* Lina Choueiri, Tamer Amin
- *University of Coimbra:* Gabrielle Proglio

Disciplines: Linguistics, Language policy, Education, Psychology, Cognitive Neuroscience.

NETWORK COMPOSITION

2) Non-academic stakeholders as partners:

- *Mothertongue* *(UK):* advise the network on mental health issues
- **StARS** (Egypt): providing legal, education and psychosocial services to refugees, running schools for refugee children;
- *Translators Without Borders*: supporting refugees across the world through translators
- *Al Fanar*: use of the videoconference app
- *The Mukhulu Trust*: scoping work book reading to promote child cognitive and socio-emotional development;
- *Bilingualism Matters* *(UK):* providing public engagement and dissemination.

NETWORK ACTIVITIES

Meetings

Patra → Palermo → Beirut → Final conference

Other small meetings

Interviews

Capacity building
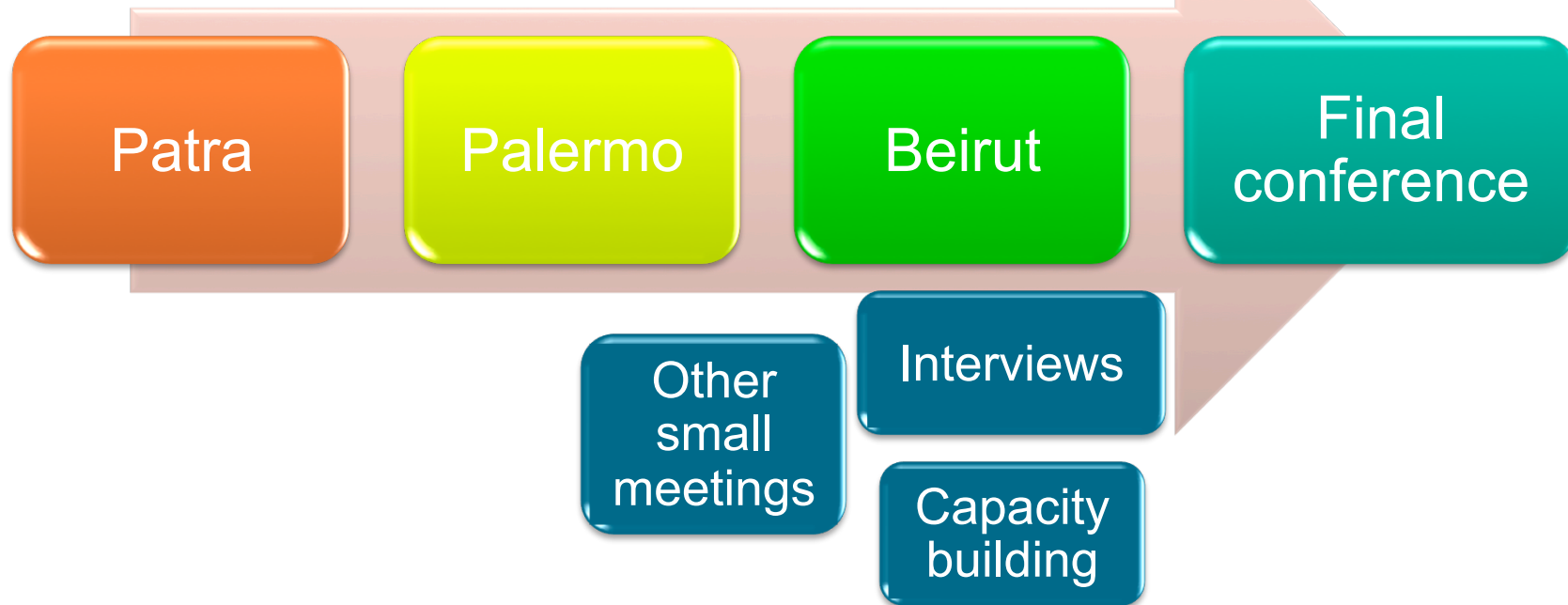
Meeting in Patras

- Participants from Higher Education Institutions in Greece and NGOs;
- One refugee family from Syria;
- Visiting a refugee camp in Greece;
- Presentations mainly on education;
- Presentations of partners from NGOs;
- Discussions with some refugees;

Education

Language teaching

Patras

Activities of Universities

Activities of NGOs
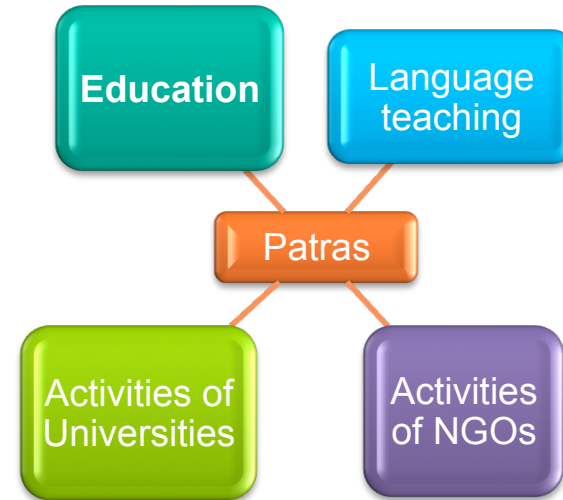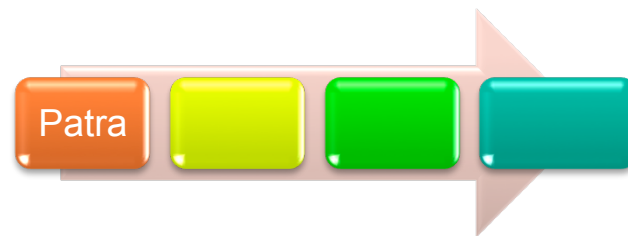
Meeting in Patras

- Examples of good practice:

  - **University of Ioannina:**
    - informal education from 2 to 15 years – Greek as L2.
    - Development of book tailored for refugee children (Valitsaki = suitcase);
    - Development of teachers' guide and testing material;
    - Module: Greek as L2 – 30 hour programme for refugees who won't stay in Greece.
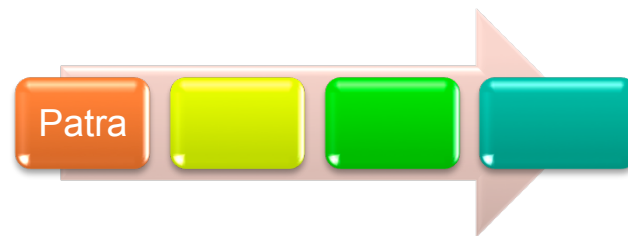
Meeting in Patras

- Examples of good practice:

  - **University of Athens:**
    - teaching Greek & English to adult refugees - Didaskalio;
    - Development of material for this specific population;
    - Training of students to work with this population;
    - Phase 1: refugee camp;
   - Phase 2 & 3: University.
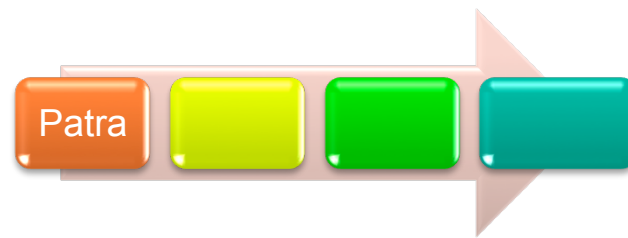
Meeting in Patras

Discussion with refugee family:

- **Protective factor of language:** the refugee family spoke Greek; they could navigate life in Greece, ask for help, talk with lawyers;
- **Challenges**:
    - Unclear what the procedure was to apply for asylum even though they spoke Greek and English due to conflicting information.
   - Language as a barrier when filling in the form requesting asylum even when the asylum seeker can speak Greek because of the **formal register**.
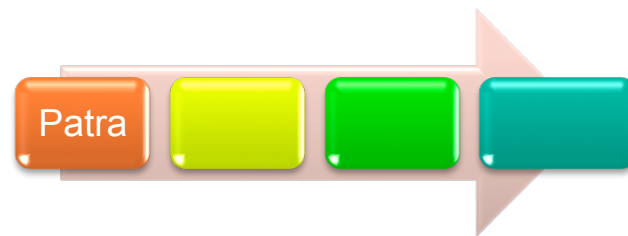
Meeting in Patras

- **Challenges** – **discussion with headteacher of secondary school**:
    - Difficulty to engage with parents to visit the school and talk with teachers;
    - Lack of interpreters and mediators to enable communication with parents;
    - Teachers for afternoon (reception) classes have limited training in contrast to morning teachers (highly trained and skilled);
    - Limited support for the school;
    - Lack of teacher training.
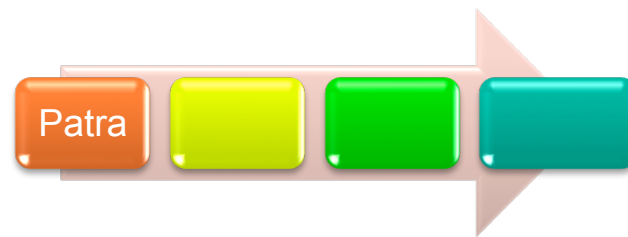
Meeting in Patras

- **Challenges** – **general discussion**:
    - Constant mobility of refugees;
    - Lack of coordination between NGOs, lack of oversight, overlapping activities;
    - Different conditions between settings: camps, apartments, hotels affecting education/schooling;
    - Educational activities designed for literate people;
   - Some NGOs coming with packages for training – not tailored to specific needs;
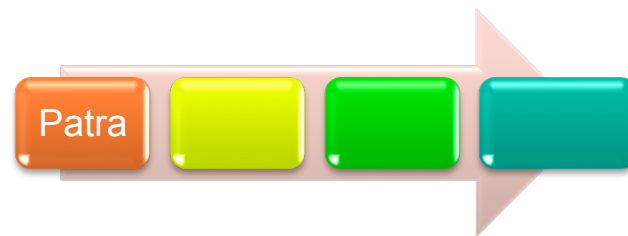
Meeting in Patras

- **Challenges – general discussion:**
    - Lack of participation of communities in designing educational activities;
    - Only internal evaluation of programmes.

- **Needs**:
    - Interpreters;
    - Teacher training;
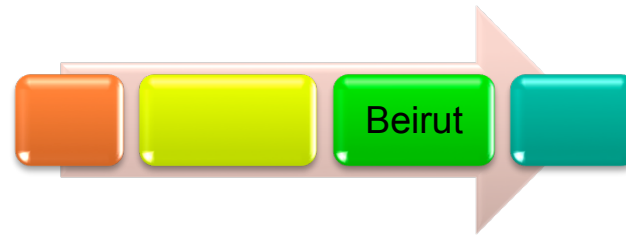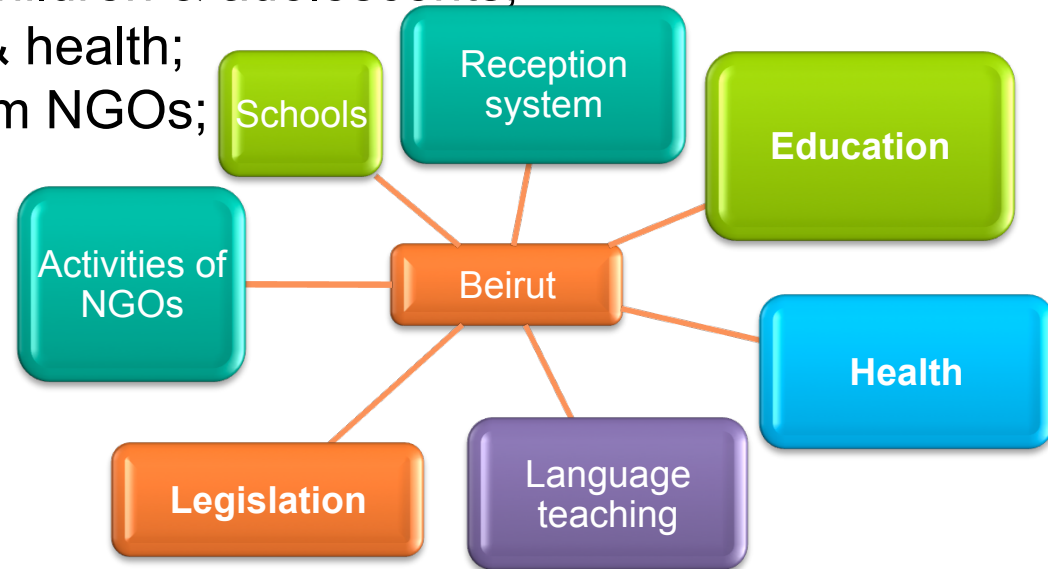   - Coordination;
    - Evaluation.

Meeting in Palermo

- Participants from Higher Education Institutions in Italy, NGOs;
- Unaccompanied minors from Africa;
- Visiting 2 refugee camps in Palermo;
- Presentations mainly on education;
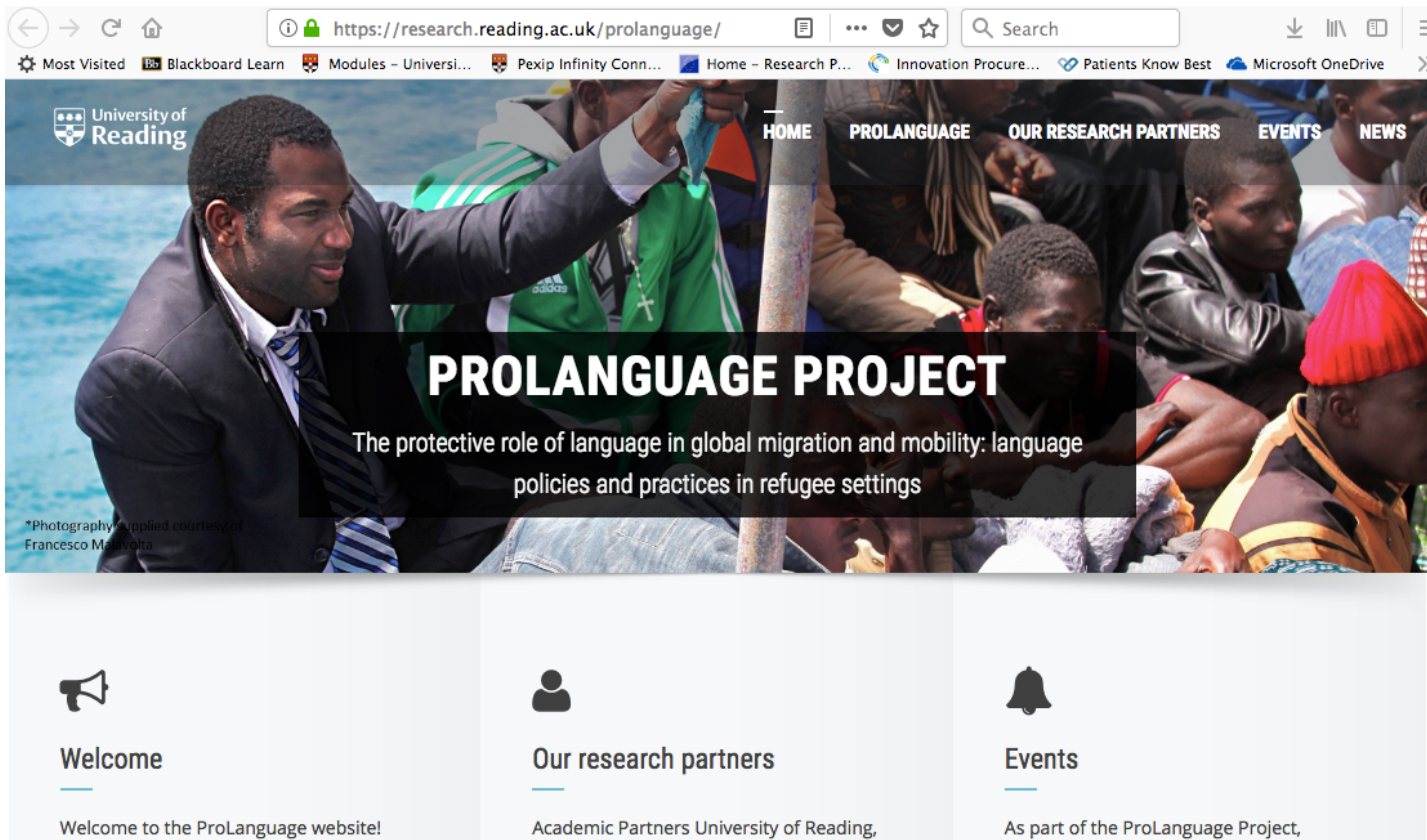- Presentations of partners from NGOs
- Discussions with refugees;

Art

Reception system

Education

Activities of NGOs

Palermo

Health

Legislation

Language teaching
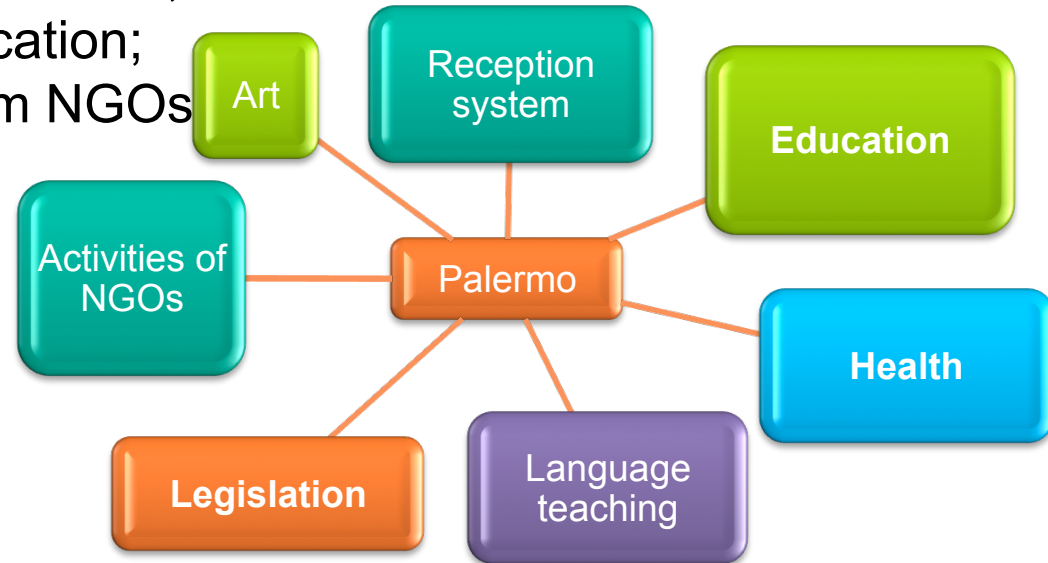
Meeting in Beirut

- Participants from Higher Education Institutions in Lebanon, NGOs;
- Refugees from Syria;
- Visiting schools for refugee children & adolescents;
- Presentations on education & health;
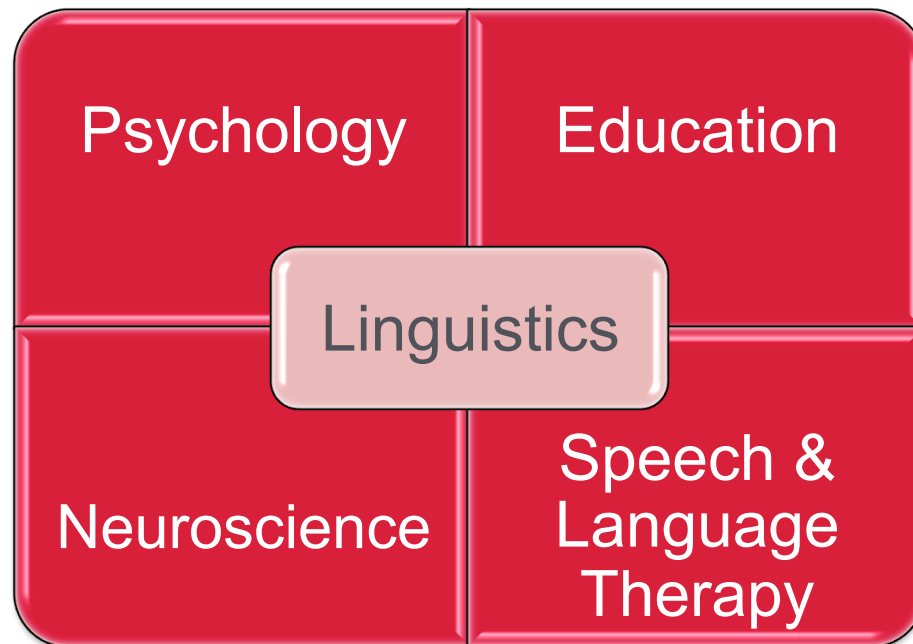- Presentations of partners from NGOs;
- Discussions with refugees.

Beirut

Schools

Reception system

Education

Activities of NGOs

Beirut

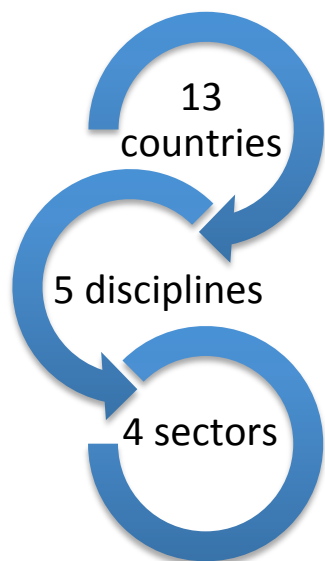Health

Legislation

Language teaching

FUTURE

- **Final conference** in Summer 2018 open to scholars, NGOs, educators, health professionals, and policy makers – call for papers;
- Identify **research agendas** on the role of language in global migration and mobility.
- **Apply for collaborative research grants** to address these research agendas.
- Action for **maintaining contact with the participants** after the grant ends:
  - the network web-site,
  - emailing list, and
  - social media.

'The Multilingual Mind (MultiMind)'
Horizon 2020 – Innovative Training Network
2018-2022

13 countries

5 disciplines

4 sectors

Psychology	Education
Linguistics	
Neuroscience	Speech & Language Therapy

Non-academic Secondments:
- Health
- Education
- IT
- Publishing

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Pie chart segments:
- Multilingualism in migration and refugee settings
- Language learning, cognition, and creativity
- Language processing and the multilingual brain
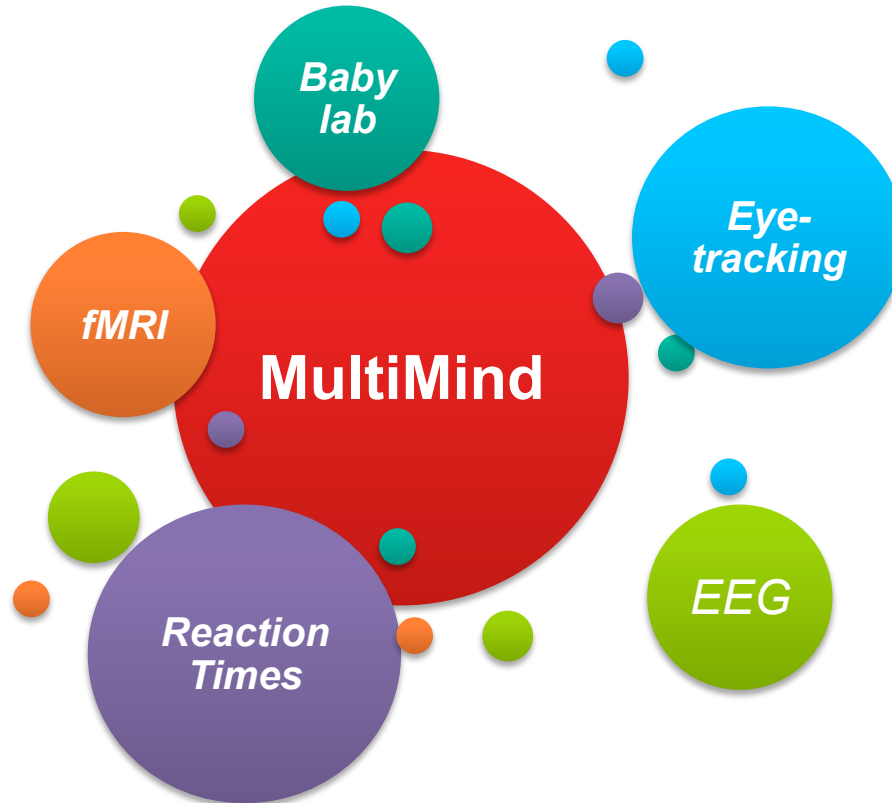- Multilingual cognition and society
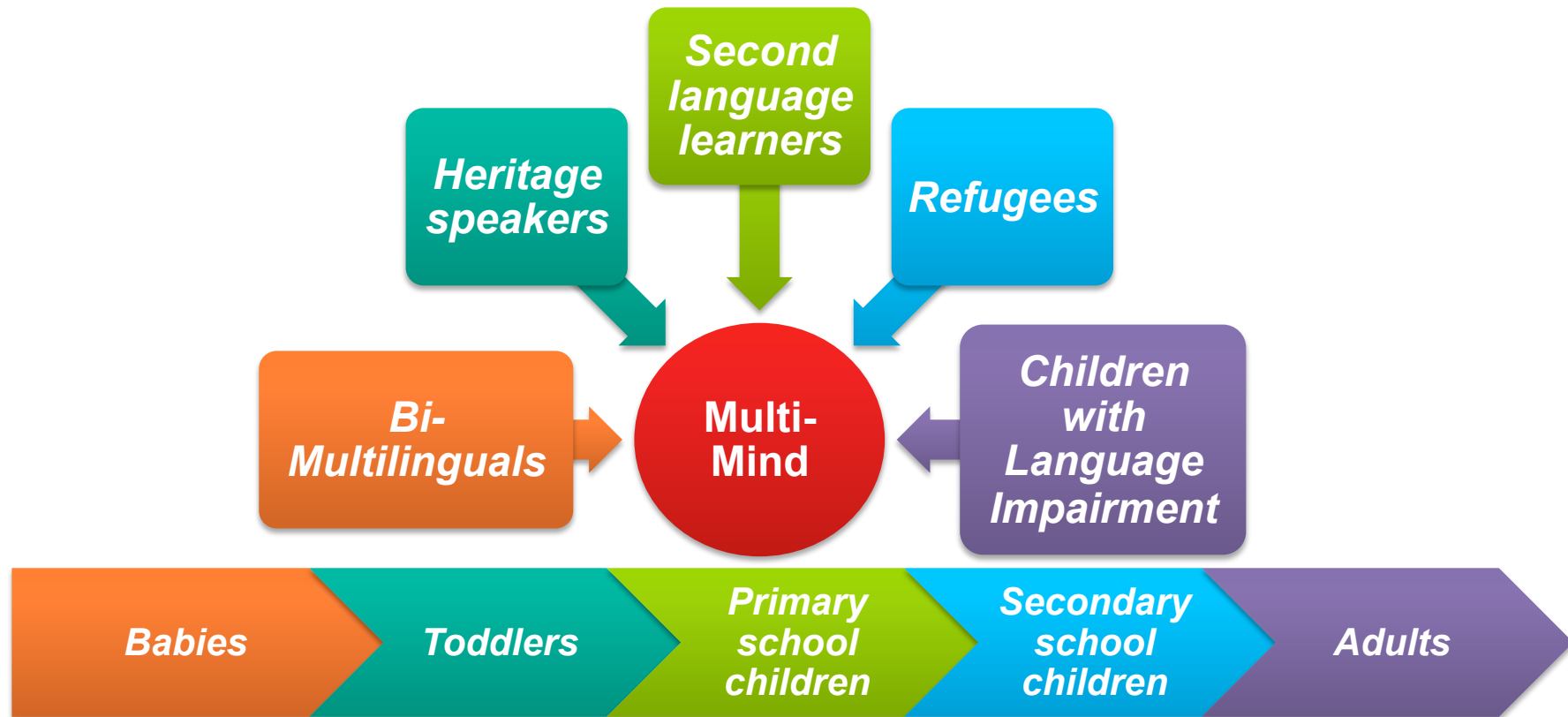- Language impairment in multilingual children
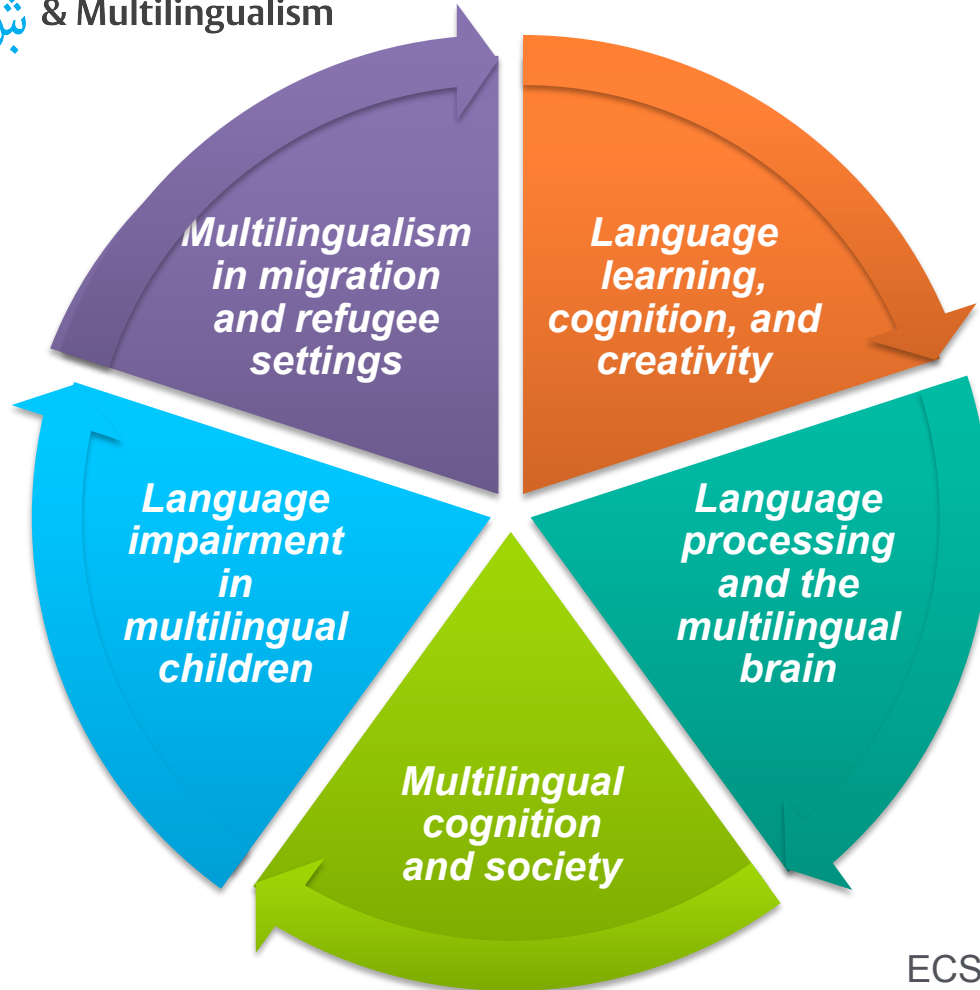
Main Institutions:
- University of Reading
- University of Konstanz
- University Milano Bicocca
- University Pompeu Fabra
- University of Leiden
- University of Geneva
- Jagiellonian University
- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- University Putra Malaysia
- Instituto Scientifico Eugenio Medea
- Centro Provinciale per l'Istruzione degli adulti Palermo1

Methods

Populations

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Second language learners

Heritage speakers

Refugees

Bi-Multilinguals

Multi-Mind

Children with Language Impairment

Babies | Toddlers | Primary school children | Secondary school children | Adults

Training