The Refugee Information Hub
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In 2016, the UN Refugee Agency, released a report that showed that more than half of the 6 million school-age children under its mandate had no school to go to. Some 1.75 million refugee children were not in primary school and 1.95 million refugee adolescents were not in secondary school. “This represents a crisis for millions of refugee children,” said the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. “Refugee education is sorely neglected, when it is one of the few opportunities we have to transform and build the next generation so they can change the fortunes of the tens of millions of forcibly displaced people globally.”

Of these, the Syrian refugee problem appears to be the most critical: There are 1.5 million school-aged Syrian refugee children living in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, but approximately half of them do not have access to formal education. Host countries have tried to assist them by enrolling them in “second shifts” at schools in the late afternoons and early evenings. But barriers such as child labor, enrollment requirements, language difficulties, and a lack of affordable transportation are keeping children out of the classroom.

To create a future for those refugee children it is necessary to integrate them into society, by educating them, and giving them the skills not only to survive but also to thrive. Education also reduces the risk of young refugees falling victim to criminals, terrorists, and those making a living out of exploiting the poor and the ignorant.

My paper will discuss an approach to this problem that proposes the creation of a “Refugee Information Hub” (RIH) the role of which would be to facilitate and streamline the process of providing education to refugee children, and serve as a transparent coordination and information resource for relief organizations, technology companies, and major donors. It would also serve as a resource on refugee stories, and an archive of information about their countries of origin.