



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH & RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Scientific Committee in Support of
Refugee Children
Refugee Education Project



**A. Assessment Report on the Integration Project of
Refugee Children in Education**

(March 2016-April 2017)

**B. Proposals for the Education of Refugee Children
during the 2017-2018 School Year**

Athens, April 2017

Cover photo:

Event organized by the Municipality of Haidari at the Skaramagas Reception Accommodation Center for Refugee Children

Refugee Education Project

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The original document in Greek is available at:

<https://www.minedu.gov.gr/prosf-ekpaideusi-m/28722-16-06-17-ekthesi-apotimisis-tou-ergou-gia-tin-entaksi-ton-paidion-ton-prosfygon-stin-ekpaidefsi-kai-protasi-gia-to-neo-etos>

Introduction

The right to education is a fundamental human right which is respected, protected and promoted by the Greek state. In line with European and national law, every child has the right to education and, most importantly, any refugee child. Safeguarding the right of young refugees entering the country to education has been a key concern of the Ministry of Education since the beginning of 2016.

This highly demanding project was designed under time pressure conditions and is being implemented in a highly fluid environment on a refugee population that is both heterogeneous in terms of its characteristics and unstable in terms of refugee population numbers, their location and their living conditions in the country. Refugees have come from a variety of warring countries, and have experienced very hard circumstances in their majority, but they do not make up a homogeneous group; these people are individuals of various nationalities with different social and cultural characteristics and different economic and cultural capital. In addition, after the closure of the borders and the agreement between the EU and Turkey, both the legal status and the prospects of resettlement in different countries began to change for the various groups of refugees who are located in mainland Greece and the islands. Finally, refugees' living conditions also show great variations depending on the Accommodation Center and the region in which they were found. In addition, these parameters constantly change over time when refugees move from place to place and from a Reception Accommodation Center (RAC) to other accommodation areas in apartments, hotels, etc.

Within this constantly transforming environment, in March 2016, the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs took the initiative to prepare a plan for the integration of refugee children into education in order to contribute to their wider social integration. On March 18, 2016, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs through the Minister of Education established three committees for the support of refugee children pursuant to a Ministerial Decision (YA ΓΓ1/47079/Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs/18.03.16) reached by the Minister of Education, Mr Nikos Filios, as follows:

- The Committee for the Support of Refugee Children headed by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs and 14 staff members from the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs.
- The Scientific Committee (SC) consisting of 26 professors and scientific associates from Greek Higher Education Institutions, working closely with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs.
- The Art Committee (AC) consisting of 9 members who are artists and professors related to the art departments of HE Institutions.

The members of the three committees worked as volunteers without pay.

The Scientific Committee (SC) has undertaken to formulate and submit proposals on the most effective and most realistic way of integrating refugee children into the education system. The SC immediately began to record data, formulate proposals on refugee children's education, make contacts with international organizations (UNHCR, Unicef, IOM) and promote synergies with the relevant Ministries. The SC's proposals were drawn up by all its members and received their approval. The high mobility and fluidity of the refugee population, the refugees' ignorance of the Greek language and the long-term removal of the majority of refugee children from school education have all been taken into consideration in the final SC report which recommends the gradual integration of refugees in schools after a transitional period. The main proposals of the Scientific Committee for 2016-2017 can be summarized as follows:

- In the summer months of 2016, in view of the start of the school year, preparatory and creative employment actions were proposed within the Refugee Accommodation Centers (RACs). These actions aimed at gradually bringing children back to ordinary life and normality.
- The school year 2016-2017 was described as "pre-integration" year. During this "transition year", the first integration steps were planned to take place with differentiated scenarios to reflect the needs of different regions and age groups. It was proposed to operate preschools within the RACs and to gradually integrate 7-15 year-olds into the Greek educational system in addition to running educational actions for adolescent refugees.

These proposals were formulated in a political environment where, on the one hand, conservative sections of society and organizations had already announced their reaction to the integration of refugee children in schools, while on the other hand, mainly trade union bodies, demanded the immediate unconditional integration of all children into Schools. The SC's findings were widely circulated in the early summer of 2016 and presented at international and national meetings, while they were also translated by Unicef and submitted to authorized bodies of Parliament and the European Parliament.

Shortly after the SC proposals were submitted, the institution of the three committees consisting of 46 members (15 + 22 + 9) proved to be dysfunctional. Therefore, a smaller and more flexible body was formed, which was maintained and operated until April 2017, and was attended by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs, the deputy coordinator of the ES, the President, the Vice-President, a member of the Scientific Committee from Northern Greece and a small number of staff members. This body grew larger when the members of the Working Group on the Management, Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Education joined in after the summer of 2016. This informal group, which was composed as described above, was essentially a counseling and executive body for the policy on refugees at the Ministry of Education under the supervision of the Secretary General; it helped to design new actions, liaise with international organizations and NGOs, and dealt with conflicts regarding refugee education which arose with mayors

and parents' associations during the critical period when the Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFREs) were being set up from October 2016 until March 2017.

Refugee education policy continued in the same context after the change in the ministry's political leadership in November 2016, as the new minister, Kostas Gavroglou, maintained the same strategy and management scheme.

In the early months of 2017, the Minister and the Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs asked the members of the committee and staff members on refugee policy at the ministry to undertake the task of assessing the work of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs (YPETH *in Greek*) on the integration of refugees into education during the 2016-17 school year in the most scientifically documented way possible. This text, which is being drawn up as the 2016-2017 school year is drawing to a close, attempts to evaluate the work of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs on the education of refugees. Furthermore, the assessment is accompanied by the proposals on the Integration of Refugees in Education during the 2017-2018 school year put forward by the Scientific Committee. On the basis of the conclusions of the assessment, the President and the Deputy President of the SC drafted a draft proposal, which was amended and remodeled on the basis of the comments and/or additions made by the members of the Scientific Committee. The SC's proposals, which follow the evaluation report drawn up by a small group, are therefore the product of the collective work of all its members.

The research that preceded the writing of the **assessment report** and its actual drafting were undertaken by the following individuals:

Lina Ventoura, Professor, Panteion University (SC President)

Alexandra Androusou, Associate Professor, National Technical University of Athens (Deputy President of the SC)

Nikos Belavilas, Associate Professor, National Technical University of Athens (ES Deputy Coordinator)

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The researchers of the Urban Environment Laboratory of the National Technical University of Athens, Polina Prentou - MSc (Architect/Urban Planner) and Katerina Christoforaki - MSc (Architect/Urban Planner) contributed as volunteers in the collection and processing of data for needs of the research project undertaken by the Committee.

Polina Prentou was also responsible for the final editing of the tables and charts included in the Report.

The research involved members of the Working Group on the Management, Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Education, who generously provided a lot of the data and supported in a variety of ways the work presented in the Report:

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The Management Working Group has effectively contributed to the research, the assessment and the proposals. The first steps, the setting-up and the coordination of the Management Working Group in 2016 are credited to Mr. Panagos Georgopoulos, who was also responsible for the administrative support of the Scientific Committee. In a second phase until March 2016, the coordination was undertaken by Mr. Nikos Sklavenitis.

Evi Trouki, Coordinator of the “Minority, Intercultural & Expatriate Education and Prison Schools” of the Institute of Educational Policy, Primary Education Councilors, School Principals and Refugee Education Coordinators cooperated in order to collect the data for the Assessment Report.

We wish to thank all of them for their contribution ¹.

All the members of the Scientific committee, which consists of educators and scientific associates from Greek Higher Education Institutions, participated in the formation of the **Proposals**:

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¹ In view of the completion of this round of the integration of refugees into the education system, we wish to thank the political leadership of the Ministry of Education Research and Religious Affairs, i.e. the current Minister, Mr Constantinos Gavroglou, and the former Minister, Mr Nikos Filis, as well as the Secretary General Yannis Pantis, for their continuous support.

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Scientific Committee in
Support of Refugee Children



A. Assessment Report on the Integration Project of Refugee Children in Education (March 2016-April 2017)

Athens
April 2017

Cover photo:

Reception of refugee children on the first day at school. 15th Primary School of Nikea. Photo: Costas Papadopoulos.

A. Assessment Report on the Integration Project of Refugee Children in Education (March 2016-April 2017)

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Influx of refugees (August 2015-March 2017)

The "refugee issue" entered a critical phase from the beginning of 2015 and peaked between August 2015 and March 2016. The flows of refugees in the Mediterranean, towards Greece and Italy, have been particularly marked since the summer of 2015. At that time the bulk of the refugees headed from Turkey to Greece via the Eastern Aegean islands. According to UNHCR official data, 817,175 people crossed the Greek-Turkish border in 2015-2016, 410 drowned and 176 are missing.² The unofficial number of refugees who arrived in Greece is estimated at 1 million people. This population initially headed for Piraeus and then crossed the country towards the border between Greece and FYROM and the passage of Idomeni. Upon the closure of the border and the EU-Turkey agreement in March 2016, some 60,000 refugees were trapped in Greece. Refugee inflows in 2016 were recorded to have declined according to the data of the General Secretariat for Media and Communication³.

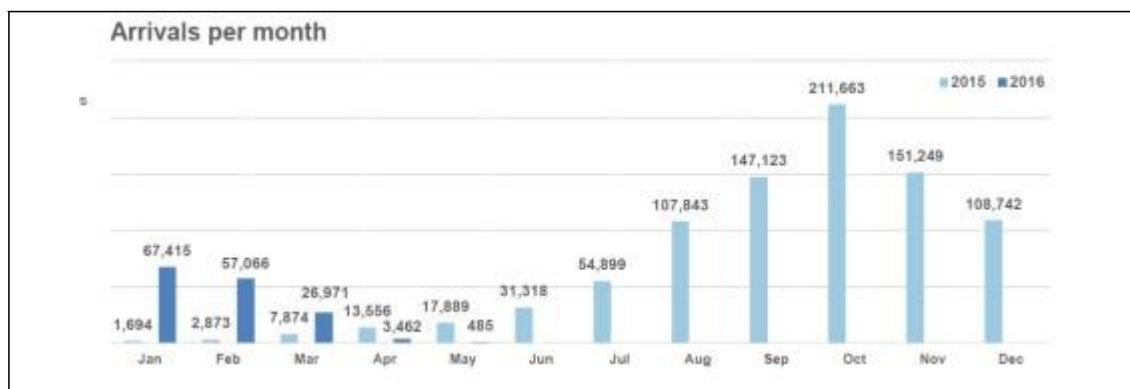


Figure 1. Arrivals of refugees in the Greek islands (2015-2016). Source: UNHCR, "UNHCR Data Portal, Greece- Greece data snapshot, 08 May 2016", 08.05.2016.

The dynamics and fluidity of refugee flows during 2015-2016 has been continuous and alternating, presenting many obstacles in regularly dealing with the refugee issue. Until March 2016, the tactic of letting large numbers of refugees pass painlessly through the country was preferred. Soon after the closure of the borders and the shutting in of

² UNHCR, "Breakdown of Men-Women-Children among sea arrivals in Greece for the period June 2015 February 2016", February 2016.

³ Hellenic Government, General Secretariat for Information and Communication (GSG), "Refugee crisis - Factsheet", December 2016.

thousands of people in Greece, who were pushing to leave for northern Europe, the strategy of managing, protecting and setting up this population in permanent accommodation facilities began to be implemented. Finally, after the EU - Turkey agreement, the figure stabilized at around 60,000 and, according to official data, and remained at that level until February 2017, while since then, despite the small number of arrivals in the islands, it has been decreasing due to the intensification of family reunification and resettlement schemes in other countries. At the same time, the reluctance of European countries to implement the part of the agreement concerning the relocation of a large number of refugees from Greece and Italy has dramatically aggravated the sense of feeling stranded.

As already mentioned in the introduction, the refugee population that entered the country is not homogeneous. According to data from the General Secretariat for Media and Communication on refugee arrivals in 2016, 46% came from Syria, 24% from Afghanistan, 15% from Iraq, 5% from Pakistan and 3% from Iran. In addition, 64% of them are men and 36% are women. A characteristic feature of the refugee population, which is of crucial importance in designing an education program is the fact that there is a very high number of people under 18: 24.5% of men and 31.9% of women are in this category.⁴

2. Refugee reception and accommodation

Gradually, in the last quarter of 2015, the first organized Reception Accommodation Centers were established in order to house refugees in the islands and in mainland Greece. Refugee Reception Accommodation Centers (RACs), at least in the initial phase, provided very few amenities apart from accommodation. They were designed as a temporary stop on the way to Idomeni. With the closure of the border in March 2016, the development of RACs was impressively rapid as they acquired more permanent features and the number of services provided was gradually increased, although in most cases living conditions in the first months were horrendous, and in some cases they still continue unchanged.

⁴ Hellenic Government, General Secretariat for Information and Communication (GGEE), "Refugee crisis - Factsheet", December 2016.

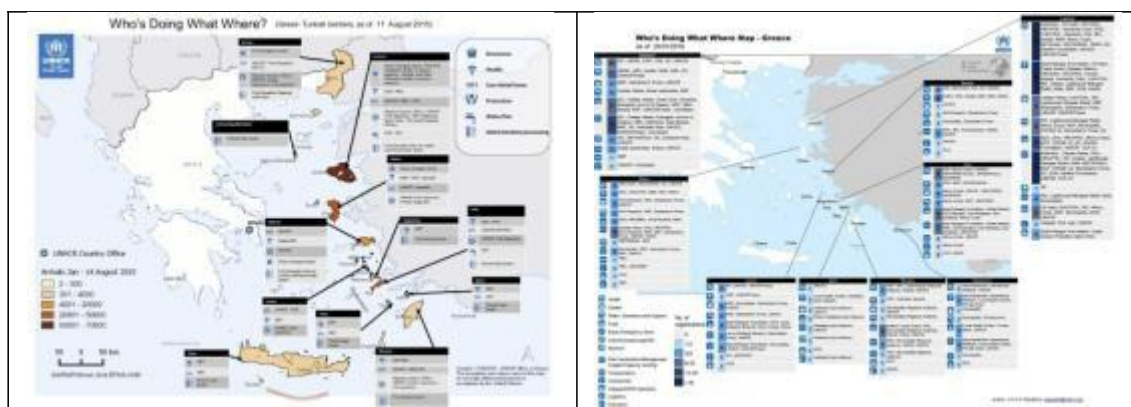


Figure 2 and Figure 3. Gradual development of Reception Accommodation Centers (August 2015 - January 2016). Source: UNHCR, "Who's Doing What Where?", 17.08.2015, 25.01.2016.

Dozens of former military camps were converted by the Ministry of National Defense into refugee camps by putting up tents during the initial phase, and by setting up prefabricated huts in a later phase. Some camps were built by Municipalities and some hostels by the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity. According to data retrieved from the Coordinating Body for Refugee Crisis Management, in May 2016, there were 4 hotspots in operation in the islands, 42 Refugee Accommodation Centers in the rest of the country and 5 unofficial accommodation facilities.



Figure 4, Figure 5 and Figure 6. Evolution of refugee flows and the gradual development of Refugee Accommodation Centers (March - May 2016). Source: Coordinating Body for Refugee Crisis Management, Daily Records of 04.03.2016, 06.04.2016 and 05.05.2016.

Given the peculiarly urgent circumstances under which they were created, there were only few cases where the living conditions in RACs were controlled and of sufficient quality right from the start. The RACs organized by the Municipality of Athens in Eleonas and by the Municipality of Lesbos in Kara Tepe are among them. In these places, right from the very first moment and thanks to the effective involvement of the local authority officials, there were facilities promoting sanitation, health, child care, the protection of women, etc and both the available spaces and everyday living were well and safely organized. In addition, living conditions were relatively good in the RACs organized by the Greek Army and the Greek Navy at Schisto in Perama, and at Lavrio and Diavata in Thessaloniki. Finally, thanks to the initiative of the Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity, a good quality hostel operated in Konitsa, Epirus. On the contrary, the RACs at Koutsochero in Larissa, at

Malakasa in Attica, at Cherso in Kilikis, as well as at the Skaramagos RAC in Attica during the first phase of operation, provided very unfavorable living conditions to refugees.

After almost a twelve-month experience in the operation of RACs, and having a general idea about almost all the facilities across the country, we can now pinpoint the main negative and positive characteristics, not only from a technical but also from an operational point of view.

Negative organizational and operational elements are identified as follows:

- ✓✓ Setting up Refugee Accommodation Centers in remote locations, inappropriate areas, and/or sites with non-existent infrastructure.
- ✓✓ The concentration of RACs in a few regions and municipalities in the country.
- ✓✓ Setting up RACs to host very large numbers of guests. Centers with populations exceeding 1,000 people have encountered very serious problems, despite efforts to improve infrastructures.
- ✓✓ The impossibility of housing refugees in huts; delays in offering accommodation and the stay of refugees in tents exposed to bad weather (summer or winter) for many months.
- ✓✓ Controversial quality or culturally inappropriate food.

Positive organizational and operational elements are identified as follows:

- ✓✓ The involvement of thousands of government officials (mainly military, health, education, local authorities) as well as the continuous supply of thousands of volunteers, who have supported facilities in every way for a long period of time. In particular, in the first few months, the elementary operation of the RACs would have been practically impossible without the presence of volunteers.
- ✓✓ The creative improvisation of a large number of the people involved, which made it possible to compensate for the initial absence of the state, overcoming shortages or organizational problems and, above all, coping with the grueling bureaucracy at all levels of the state machine.
- ✓✓ The involvement of the effective mechanism of the Ministry of National Defense, which provided sites at a time when a lot of mayors refused to accept refugees, carrying out very large housing projects within a few weeks, which would otherwise require months or years if they had been implemented at the usual implementation rate the State is known to operate.

Alongside the network of organized Refugee Accommodation Centers across the country, self-organized, unofficial accommodation facilities were also set up; their common characteristic is their substandard infrastructure and the poor living conditions of refugees. These sites operated in Mainland Greece in the area of Idomeni, at the port of Piraeus and at the former airport in Elliniko. The refugees of Idomeni and Piraeus were relocated to RACs some months ago (June - August 2016), while at the Elliniko site three accommodation facilities are still in operation today (April 2017) at the hockey and baseball courts and the arrivals lounge of the former West Terminal under the responsibility of the Ministry of Immigration Policy. Living conditions at these sites are still too bad.

Another category of refugee accommodation facilities was formed during the same period, mainly in Lesbos, Athens and Thessaloniki. Political groups or movements active in the anti-racism movement and the human rights movement have occupied buildings in which a number of refugees, estimated between 500 and 1,000,

used to live or are still living. The most well-known cases which are also better-organized accommodation facilities still in operation are located at the former City Plaza Hotel in Athens and the former PIKPA facilities in the town of Mytilene. At the same time, volunteer groups have established residential accommodation networks with or without the support of international organizations and NGOs (e.g. OMNES Kilkis).

A significant positive breakthrough in refugee accommodation during the last few months has been the relocation of a significant number of refugees from RACs to apartments, hotels and other buildings (UNHCR, NGOs, etc.). In other words, the programs of urban settlement of refugees in flats with the support of international organizations and Local Authority Organizations have begun to be implemented more intensively (Athens, Thessaloniki, Livadia). In some cases, however, this was not done in a planned and timely manner, resulting in tents covered with snow during the winter months before a suitable refugee housing site could be found. Furthermore, a lot of hotels which offered or still offer accommodation to refugees are located in remote areas, which also lack public transport, thus making everyday life for their occupants and the integration of refugee children in the education system quite difficult. Relocating refugees to apartments, etc is still under way today, but is not done at the necessary pace.

In particular, 47⁵ accommodation hostels have been built and are in operation throughout the country for unaccompanied children, which make up a vulnerable social group and a significant part of the underage refugee population, accommodating approximately 1,000 refugees, while safe zones have been created within certain RACs. It is expected that additional accommodation will be available in Athens and Tessaaloniki to meet accommodation requests that have already been submitted. Hostels operate under the supervision of the State. Seven of these hostels belong directly to the National Center for Social Solidarity and the others operate under the responsibility of NGOs⁶. However, as many authorized bodies have pointed out, a lot of unaccompanied children still continue to live under unfavorable conditions in RACs and elsewhere and are exposed to a variety of risks.

3. The Situation on the Greek Islands

The islands of the Eastern Aegean are a special case. Following the agreement between the European Union and Turkey in March 2016, a peculiar regime was established, with a mandatory stay/blockade of refugees there. As a result, the refugee population on the islands almost quadrupled between March and October 2016. Throughout the crisis, Lesbos and Chios received the largest number of refugees. Since May 2016, there has been a significant increase in the number of refugees in the islands of Samos and Kos.

The principal refugee accommodation facilities of the islands, mainly in Moria of Mytilene and Souda and VIAL of Chios, were and are still are extremely problematic. These accommodation facilities operate as closed Hotspots, but in real fact they operate under a peculiar regime which is sometimes of an “open” and sometimes of a “closed” type of hotspot. Living conditions there are horrendous to this day. However, this is not the case in the “open” accommodation facility [hotspot] organized by the Municipality of Lesbos relatively

⁵ According to the Ombudsman for Children's Report, 54 such units are in operation. *Monitoring mechanism for the rights of children moving to Greece* (July - December 2016), Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children and UNICEF, p. 86 (www.synigoros.gr/resources/20170420--ekthesi-mixanismos.pdf).

⁶ Hellenic Government, General Secretariat for Media and Communication (GGEE), "Refugee crisis - Factsheet", December 2016.

early, the Kara Tepe Reception Accommodation Center, situated north of the city of Mytilene, which is one of the best in terms of living conditions and management of refugee camps in the country.

On several occasions, in the autumn of 2016, in Chios, Mytilene and Samos, violent conflicts within the refugee population took place inside the RACs, and there have been violent racist reactions by small sections of the local communities. Both of these phenomena were extensively exposed in the national mass media, creating an additional problem: a feigned climate of instability and insecurity on the islands purported to have resulted from exposure to the "refugee risk".

Following these developments, the urgent relocation of a large number of refugees into the mainland abated the crisis in part. In the first quarter of 2017 (January - March), the refugee population on the islands showed a declining trend which continues to date. During that time, a large part of the refugee population of the islands (4,292 people) was relocated to mainland Greece⁷. During the same period of time, there was a certainly decreasing, albeit fluctuating number of refugees of around 11,000-14,000 individuals⁸. The majority of these individuals are located in Chios and Lesvos, with Samos following closely behind.

It should be noted that refugee population numbers have been constantly changing while writing this Report.

4. Quantitative data and statistics on refugee population (March 2016-March 2017)

The tables and diagram below illustrate the development and evolution of refugee flows (and RACs respectively) between March 2016 and February 2017. The data comes from the official data of the Coordination Body for the Management of Refugee Crisis. Six typical points in time have been selected, approximately every two months: March 2016, May 2016 (immediately after the evacuation of Idomeni), August 2016 (after evacuating the port of Piraeus), October 2016, December 2016, and February 2017.

		March 2016	May 2016	August 2016	October 2016	December 2016	February 2017
Eastern Aegean Sea	Lesvos (in total)	2,068	3,996	4,919	5,911	6,391	5,673
	Chios (in total)	1,371	2,402	3,238	4,174	3,804	3,445
	Samos (in total)	655	1,082	1,350	2,277	2,286	2,029
	Leros (in total)	0	509	730	843	868	896
	Kos (in total)	0	345	1,242	1,939	2,206	2,274
	Other Islands (in total)	195	68	69	249	383	606
	Total	4,289	8,402	11,548	15,393	15,938	14,923

Table 1. The development and evolution of refugee flows in the Eastern Aegean (March 2016 - February 2017).
Source: Coordinating Body for Refugee Crisis Management, Daily Records of 28.03.2016, 29.05.2016, 27.08.2016, 20.10.2016, 20.12.2016 and 07.02.2017.

⁷ "The number of stranded refugees in the Northern Aegean has decreased" <https://left.gr/news/meiothike--o--arithmos--ton--egklovismenon--prosfygon--sta--nisia--toy--v--aigaioy> (09/03/2017).

⁸ Source: Coordinating Unit of Refugee Crisis Management, Daily Record 13.03.2017.

		March 2016	May 2016	August 2016	October 2016	December 2016	February 2017
Central Greece	Larisa-Kypselochori (Zoga Military Camp)			134	94	0	0
	Larisa-Koutsochero (Efthimiopoulou Military Camp)	1,390	792	0	0	484	819
	Volos (Prefecture of Magnisia)		89	137	96	65	84
	Trikala (Municipality)	194					
	Trikala-Atlantic			272	266	246	225
	Inoi (Inofita) Boeotia		110	680	680	680	680
	Euboea-Ritsona (Air Force Camp)	908	717	690	570	704	679
	Fthiotida-Thermopiles	387	484	488	457	461	510
	Total	2,879	2,192	2,401	2,163	2,640	2,997

Table 2. The development and evolution of refugee flows in Central Greece (March 2016, Feb. 2017). Source: Coordinating Body for Refugee Crisis Management, Daily Records of 28.03.2016, 29.05.2016, 27.08.2016, 20.10.2016, 20.12.2016 and 07.02.2017.

		March 2016	May 2016	August 2016	October 2016	December 2016	February 2017
Southern Greece	Andravida (Municipality)		289	245	202	185	160
	Total		289	245	202	185	160

Table 3. The development and evolution of refugee flows in Southern Greece (March 2016 - February 2017). Source: Coordinating Body for Refugee Crisis Management, Daily Records of 28.03.2016, 29.05.2016, 27.08.2016, 20.10.2016, 20.12.2016 and 07.02.2017.

		March 2016	May 2016	August 2016	October 2016	December 2016	February 2017
Attica	Eleonas	712	2,287	2,415	2,183	2,050	1,966
	Schisto	1,971	1,810	1,100	760	760	933
	Skaramagas Warf		2,900	3,200	3,350	3,251	3,200
	Elefsina (Merchant Marine Academy)			350	298	328	340
	Agios Andreas	135	187	188	180	0	0
	Malakasa	1,050	1,314	755	887	483	483
	Rafina			70	109	106	118
	Lavrio (Accommodation Camp for Asylum Seekers)	381	562	494	529	526	457
	Lavrio (ATEBank Camp)	399	387	367	325	327	334
	Total	4,648	9,447	8,939	8,621	7,831	7,831

Table 4. The development and evolution of refugee flows in Attica (March 2016 - February 2017). Source: Coordinating Body for Refugee Crisis Management, Daily Records of 28.03.2016, 29.05.2016, 27.08.2016, 20.10.2016, 20.12.2016 and 07.02.2017.

		March 2016	May 2016	August 2016	October 2016	December 2016	February 2017
Northern Greece	Cherso Mazaraki Military Camp)	3,900	3,987	1,800	1,077	0	0
	Polikastro (Nea Kavala)	3,520	4,086	1,975	1,275	1,050	870
	Serres (formerly K.E.G.E)			410	511	0	0
	Pieria (Nireas camping site)	468	334				
	Pieria (Orpheas Hotel)		207				
	Pieria (Hercules Estate)	32	182	74	41	38	38
	Pieria (Petra Olympou)		1,122	1,310	1,212	0	0
	Pieria	190					
	Pieria (municipal stadium)	151					
	Veria (Amartolou Kokkinou Imathias Military Camp)	377	395	334	328	287	268
	Alexandria in Imathia (Pelagou Military Camp)		768	715	448	422	429
	Kavala (Perigiali)			156	107	0	0
	Chalkero (Municipality of Kavala)		275				
	Nea Karvali (Municipality of Kavala)	751					
	Drama (Industrial Zone)					0	0
	Drama (Municipality)	479	510	200	200		
	Diavata (Anagnostopoulou Military Camp)	2,280	1,857	1,089	894	506	347
	Oreokastro (Thessaloniki)		1,432	1,332	1,265	1,018	17
	Sindos-Karamanlis Building (Thessaloniki)						
	Kalochori-Iliadi (Thessaloniki)		491	485	450	390	320
	Derveni-Alexil (Thessaloniki)		810	791	650	417	119
	Sindos-Frakapor (Thessaloniki)		572	565	510	441	190
	Vagiochori (Thessaloniki)		9	247	112	65	0
	Kordelio-Softex (Thessaloniki)		1,110	1,381	1,574	950	450
	Sinatex-Kavalari (Thessaloniki)		215	314	286	252	208
	Thessaloniki (Harbor)	346	383	0			
	Kordogianni Estate-Vasilika			1,231	1,271	568	19
	Derveni-Dion ABETE			173	174	187	164
	Konitsa (Municipality)	162	167	167	167	150	150
	Doliana in Ioannina	207	210	205	205	145	145
	Katsikas in Ioannina	1,075	1,009	790	365	196	0
	Tepelovo in Ioannina		143	142	118	0	0
	Preveza-Philippiada (Petropoulaki Military Camp)	660	467	421	330	153	238
	Giannitsa	880	761	295	0	0	0
	Lagadikia (Vogiatzoglou Military Camp) UNHCR		875				

Eleftheroupoli (Municipality of Paggeo)	206					
Kozani (Municipality)	188					
Total	15.872	22.986	17.169	14.029	7.532	3.972

Table 5. The development and evolution of refugee flows in Northern Greece (March 2016 - February 2017).
Source: Coordinating Body of Refugee Crisis Management, Daily Records of 28.03.2016, 29.05.2016, 27.08.2016, 20.10.2016, 20.12.2016 and 07.02.2017.

		March 2016	May 2016	August 2016	October 2016	December 2016	February 2017
Non-organized Sites	Hockey Pitch	1,647	1,279	964	902	809	531
	Arrivals Lounge	1,482	1,374	910	798	771	702
	Baseball Ground	1,186	966	790	701	625	322
	Piraeus Port	5,467	1,407	0			
	Euboea-Rovies		13				
	Idomeni (inside camp)	11,426					
	Evzoni (Hara Hotel site)						
	Evzoni (BP Petrol Station)		1,302				
	PATHE Polikastro-Plaza	1,250	1,752				
	Total	22,458	9,391	2,664	2,401	2,205	1,555

Table 6. The development and evolution of refugee flows in unofficial Accommodation Centers (March 2016 - February 2017). Source: Coordinating Body of Refugee Crisis Management, Daily Records of 28.03.2016, 29.05.2016, 27.08.2016, 20.10.2016, 20.12.2016 and 07.02.2017.

		March 2016	May 2016	August 2016	October 2016	December 2016	February 2017
UNHCR& other NGO Hosting Locations	Apartments			4,368	4,952	7,416	8,218
	Hotels			1,952	2,352	7,235	5,537
	Hosting in families			281	314	279	236
	Hostels for unaccompanied minors/ places for UASC				241	342	382
	Relocation sites			1,213	829	1,734	193
	Civil society organizations-NGO						6,745
	Sub-Total 1			7,814	8,688	17,006	21,311
	Sub-Total 2 (Islands)				432	835	1,344
	Total			7,814	9,120	17,841	22,655

Table 7. Development and evolution of out-of-center Accommodation Centers (March 2016 - February 2017).
Source: Coordinating Body of Refugee Crisis Management, Daily Records of 28.03.2016, 29.05.2016, 27.08.2016, 20.10.2016, 20.12.2016 and 07.02.2017.

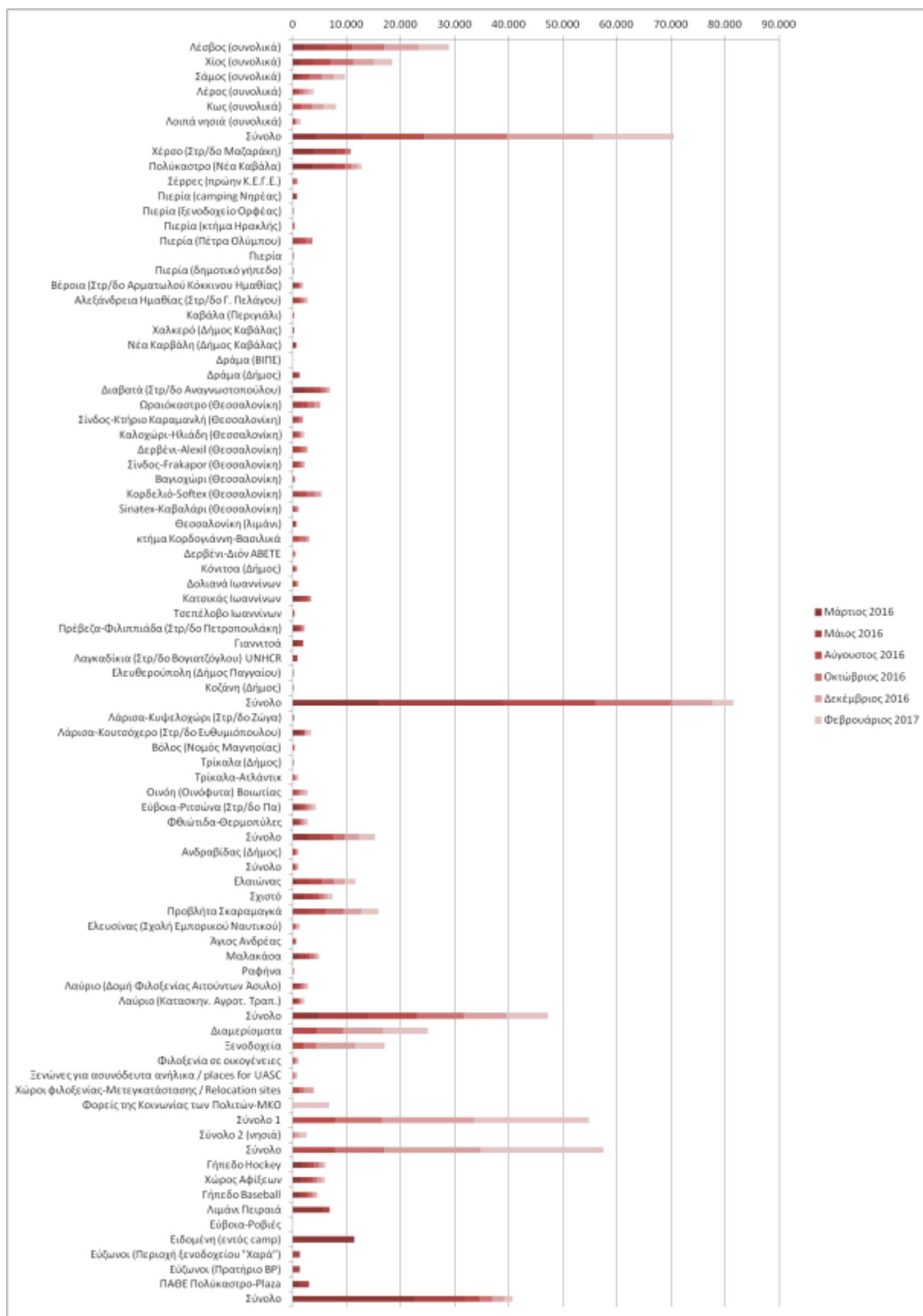


Table 8. The development and evolution of refugee flows as a whole (March 2016 - February 2017). Source: Coordinating Body for Refugee Crisis Management, Daily Records of 28.03.2016, 29.05.2016, 27.08.2016, 20.10.2016, 20.12.2016 and 07.02.2017. Processed by the Scientific Committee.

With regard to the relocation program, by the end of November 2016, 18,448 people had been included in the program, of which only 5,843 had already been relocated to other EU countries. Moreover, 777 aliens of various nationalities were denied refugee status and were returned to Turkey on the basis of the EU-Turkey Agreement (20.03.2016-12.12.2016). Finally, 5,652 people had voluntarily returned to their countries of origin with the contribution of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), irrespective of the EU - Turkey Agreement (01.01.2016-25.11.2016).⁹

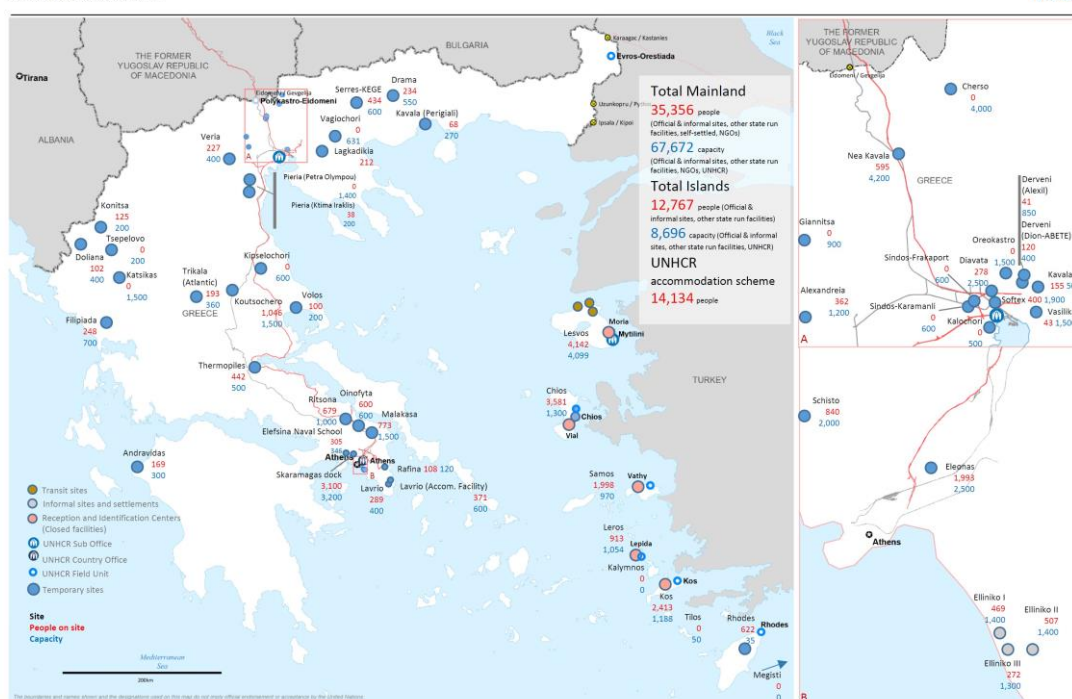
Based on the most recent data from the Coordinating Body for the Management of the Refugee Crisis, on 11.04.2017 the total number of refugees in Greece was 62,257. 3,682 of those were in RACs in Northern Greece, 3,060 in RACs in Central Greece, 169 in RACs in Southern Greece (Andravida), 7,779 in RACs in Attica, 22,056 were housed in apartments, hotels and other accommodation centers provided for by UNHCR and NGOs in mainland Greece, 902 individuals were housed in corresponding centers in the islands, 2,294 were housed in other state facilities, and 1,248 resided at Elliniko. 12,767 refugees still remained in the Aegean Islands (last updated on 11 April 2017).¹⁰

Regions and Accommodation Centers	Refugees
Eastern Aegean Sea	12,767
Northern Greece	3,682
Central Greece	3,060
Southern Greece	169
Attica	7,779
UNHCR & NGO (Mainland)	22,056
UNHCR & NGO (Islands)	902
Elliniko	1,248
Other State Accommodation Centers	2,294
Outside of Accommodation Centers (projected)	8,300
Total	62,257

Table 9. Refugee population distribution based on the Summary of Refugee Flows Chart (11.04.2017).

⁹ Greek Government, General Secretariat for Media and Communication (GGEE), «Refugee crisis --- Factsheet», December 2016.

¹⁰ <http://mindigital.gr/index.php/> SUMMARY OF REFUGEE FLOWS ON 11.04.2017 - TIME 10:00.



Presence and capacity are based on Governmental figures from the Coordination Centre for the Management of the Refugee Crisis, as of 11/04/2017 10:00 a.m. Eastern European Time. Online map with additional information: <http://www.unhcr.gr/sites>

Figure 7. Refugee Population Distribution (11.04.2017). Source: Summary of Refugee Flows/UNHCR.

5. Quantitative data and statistics on the children of refugees (March 2016-March 2017)

The number of refugee children was recorded in May 2016 as part of the findings of the Scientific Committee¹¹. In 40 accommodation centers housing 36,890 refugees across the country, it turned out that minors (0-18 years old) made up 37% of the total population (13,677 individuals). According to the record, 4-15 year-old children (for whom compulsory education is intended as preschool and school education) numbered approximately 8,000-8,500. UNHCR data on Refugees confirm that around 37% of the incoming aliens (January-August 2016) were minors¹².

¹¹ Scientific Committee assisting the work of the Committee on the Support of Refugee Children, "Educational Actions for Refugee Children", June 2016.

¹² UNHCR Mapping of unaccompanied children at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/50768> (23.08.2016). Also, according to the Half-yearly Report on Actions and Findings (July - December 2016) of the Monitoring Mechanism for the Rights of Children moving to Greece, drafted by the Ombudsman for Children/Ombudsman in cooperation with UNICEF, in the year 2016 the total number of arrivals is estimated at about 64,000, of whom 37% are children, while about 17% of the total number of children who arrived here were unaccompanied (www.synigoros.gr/resources/20170420--ekthesi--mixanismos.pdf).

The population of children, as well as the total refugee population, has been constantly on the move to this day. Initially, from unofficial accommodation facilities and the islands towards the RACs of mainland Greece. Later from RACs to apartments and hotels and/or to Europe (process of relocation or reunification of families). In the first months of 2017, after the second crisis in the islands (Autumn 2016), a large number of refugees (about 5,000) with their children were relocated from the islands to mainland Greece. The constant and widespread mobility of the population of refugees has made it difficult, and still hinders to this day, any assessments and forecasts concerning the child population to be integrated into the educational facilities and, consequently, the planning and implementation of the program of the Ministry of Education.

A recent UNICEF report estimates the number of refugee children in Greece at 20,300¹³. This record shows that there has been a decrease in the number of children as their proportion in the general refugee population has fallen from 37% in 2016 to 33%. This decrease is due to relocating refugees in Europe with a priority given to reuniting families and to families with children on the one hand, and on the other hand due to the change in the profile of refugees that was effected after March 2016. After the EU-Turkey agreement, there have been higher rates of young men, while in the previous phase there was a much higher percentage of families with children.

The report entitled "Mechanism for monitoring the rights of children moving to Greece" (July - December 2016) of the Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children (p. 8) reached a similar conclusion: *"... of the approximately 64,000 minors estimated to have entered the country as a whole in 2016, the number of children remaining at the end of December is estimated to be around 21,000. Among them, it is estimated that approximately 7,500 - 8,500 children were housed in the 34 official open accommodation centers which operated in mainland Greece, about 1,000 unaccompanied minors in special hostels in Greece, and about 6,000 children were housed in flats and hotels under the housing program of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees"*¹⁴

A size that has remained totally uncharted is that of children living in solidarity squats, children who have been offered accommodation by families, and children who have found housing on their own. Unicef estimates that there are about 2,000 children in this category outside accommodation centers. However, this number may be exaggerated.

¹³ "Refugee and Migrant Children in Greece by Region", Unicef, 25 March 2017.

¹⁴ *Monitoring mechanism for the rights of children moving to Greece (July - December 2016), Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children and UNICEF* (www.synigoros.gr/resources/20170420--ekthesi--mixanismo.pdf).

Age Distribution	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
0-3 year-olds	2,223	28%
4-5 year-olds	982	12%
6-12 year-olds	2,845	35%
13-15 year-olds	1,024	13%
16-17 year-olds	962	12%
Total	8.036	100%

Table 10. Age and percentage of child refugee population outside RACs across the country (March 2017).
Source: UNICEF. Processed by the Scientific Committee.

According to UNICEF data, there are 8,036 children (0-18 years old) who live in UNHCR-controlled accommodation centers apart from RACs and their distribution age is shown in the table above. These figures do not include children who reside in state or local authorities' accommodation centers (e.g. Andravida in southern Greece).

In particular, with regard to children who do not live in RACs, according to the most recent data provided by the UNHCR¹⁵, on 15/3/2017, there were 8,036 children in total, aged up to 18 years old, living in hotels and other buildings throughout the country. 982 of these children are in pre-school education. Half the child population numbers 3,672 children (48%) all of whom are of school age.

These children are distributed according to the area and type of stay/accommodation as shown in the table below:

¹⁵ "Children report", UNHCR, 15.03.2017.

Region	Type of Accommodation	Total A	Total B	Percentage
Northern Greece	Apartments	1,177	2,252	28%
	Buildings	225		
	Hotels	709		
	UASC	141		
Central Greece	Apartments	187	454	6%
	Buildings	0		
	Hotels	245		
	UASC	22		
Attica	Apartments	3,519	4,869	61%
	Buildings	613		
	Hotels	488		
	UASC	249		
Southern Greece	Apartments	0	0	0%
	Buildings	0		
	Hotels	0		
	UASC	0		
Aegean Islands & Crete	Apartments	169	461	6%
	Buildings	29		
	Hotels	74		
	UASC	189		
Total		8,036	8,036	100%

Table 11. Distribution of the refugee child population residing in non-RACs under the supervision of UNHCR. Source: Processed by the Scientific Committee.

* The zero figure in Southern Greece is due to the fact that the record does not include the state accommodation facility of Andravida.

The geographical distribution of refugee child population is currently remarkably uneven, with 61% residing in Attica and 28% in Northern Greece. Central and Southern Greece have very little or no participation in the project. Finally, a significant proportion (6%) of almost 500 children remain on the islands.

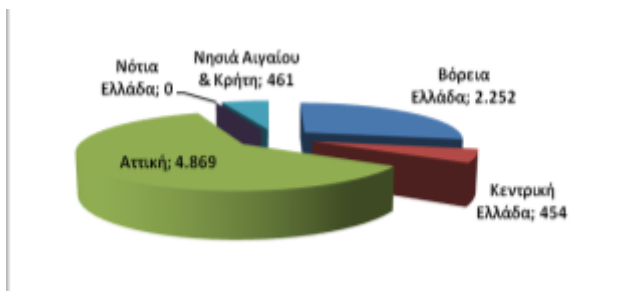


Figure 8. Geographical distribution of refugee child population. Source: UNHCR. Processed by the Scientific Committee.

Distribution according to age, sex, type of accommodation and region:

Region	Age	0-3			4-5			6-12			13-15			16-17			Total
	Type	A	Θ	Total	A	Θ	Total	A	Θ	Total	A	Θ	Total	A	Θ	Total	
Northern Greece	Apartments	152	159	311	87	73	160	236	245	481	64	72	136*	42	47	89	1,177
	Buildings	45	32	77	18	12	30	52	36	88	12	6	18	8	4	12	225
	Hotels	120	92	212	42	55	97	148	108	256	59	30	89	32	23	55	709
	UASC	0	0	0	0	1	1	8	11	19	33	6	39	72	10	82	141
Central Greece	Apartments	21	29	50	16	16	32	44	32	76	7	10	17	8	4	12	187
	Buildings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Hotels	41	32	73	11	12	23	52	42	94	25	10	35	15	5	20	245
	UASC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	19	0	19	22
Attica	Apartments	544	542	1,086	237	231	468	688	607	1,295	230	168	398	144	128	272	3,519
	Buildings	90	78	168	39	25	64	120	111	231	41	46	87	28	35	63	613
	Hotels	88	82	170	39	32	71	95	71	166	34	16	50	18	13	31	488
	UASC	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	3	14	74	5	79	138	18	156	249
Southern Greece	Apartments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Buildings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Hotels	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	UASC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aegean Islands and Crete	Apartments	23	22	45	12	12	24	35	28	63	10	4	14	16	7	23	169
	Buildings	4	6	10	1	2	3	7	8	15	0	0	0	1	0	1	29
	Hotels	11	10	21	3	6	9	23	19	42	0	0	0	1	1	2	74
	UASC	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	5	57	2	59	119	6	125	189
Total		1,139	1,084	2,223	505	477	982	1,523	1,322	2,845	649	375	1,024	661	301	962	8,036

Table 12. Breakdown of child refugee population by age, sex, type of accommodation and area. Source: UNHCR. Processed by the Scientific Committee.

*In the relevant record there is an erroneous entry of figures in two cells. The correct number is shown in this table.

The overall age and gender distribution of the two largest concentrations of refugee children (Attica and Central Macedonia) is shown in the graph:

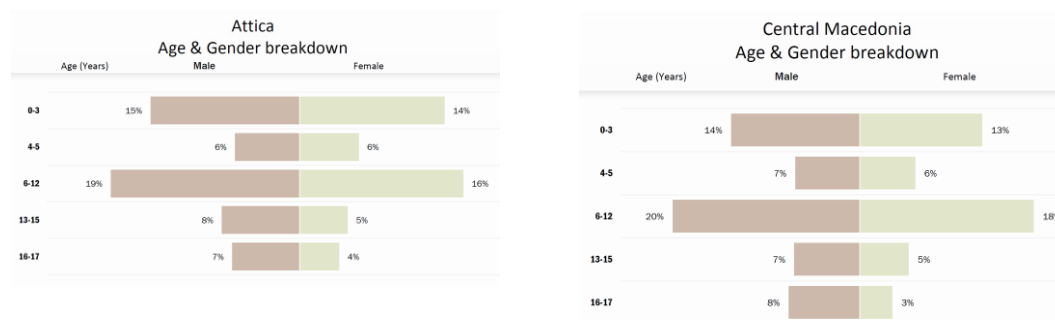


Table 13. Distribution of child refugee population according to age and sex in Attica and Central Macedonia.
Source: UNHCR. Processed by the Scientific Committee.

Families of children living in apartments, hotels and other buildings may be relocated to another European country, and it is not possible to estimate how long they will stay in Greece, or whether they will want to send their children to Greek schools. In any case, UNHCR stresses that, regardless of whether these particular families are relocated or not, the places in hotels and apartments will be made available to other refugees who will be transferred from RACs or elsewhere.

Unaccompanied refugee minors are an important and relatively critical issue. In March 2017, according to the UNHCR¹⁶ the estimated number of unaccompanied minors¹⁷ in the country amounted to 2,100, 92% of which were boys, most of them over 14 years old (main nationalities: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria). 1,362 unaccompanied minors have been or will be placed directly in accommodation facilities. The estimate of these numbers is based on the analysis of referrals to Refugee Accommodation Centers of the National Center for Social Solidarity. 592 of these children up to 18 years of age (249 in Attica, 94 in Central Macedonia and 115 in Lesvos) are living in accommodation centers for unaccompanied children which are cooperating with the UNHCR NGOs, while 171 of these children are 13-15 year-olds and 309 of them are 17-7 year-olds¹⁸.

In conclusion, on the basis of the official data presented above, the general figures, with a deviation of +/- 5%, give a number slightly larger than 20,000 children. It is estimated that around 8,000 of these children reside in RACs and about 8,000 of them reside in accommodation facilities under the auspices of the UNHCR. Approximately 1,300 unaccompanied minors are under the responsibility of the relevant state facilities. Unicef estimates that 2,000 refugee children are hosted or reside with their families in unofficial facilities. This last figure may be exaggerated.

Approximately 48% of the children who reside in UNHCR-controlled facilities are of school age (6-15) and about 12% are of pre-school age (4-5). Thus, 60% of the children mentioned above fall within age groups of compulsory education (pre-school and school). This corresponds to approximately 2,000 pre-school children (1,000 in RACs and 1,000 in UNHCR

¹⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Unaccompanied Minors (UM) in Greece, March 1, 2017, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/54239>.

¹⁷ Unaccompanied minors are also considered those minors who are accompanied not by their parents or individuals having parental responsibility over them, but by their family members (separated).

facilities). Approximately 7,700 children (equally distributed in RACs and UNHCR facilities) belong to the age groups of primary and secondary education.

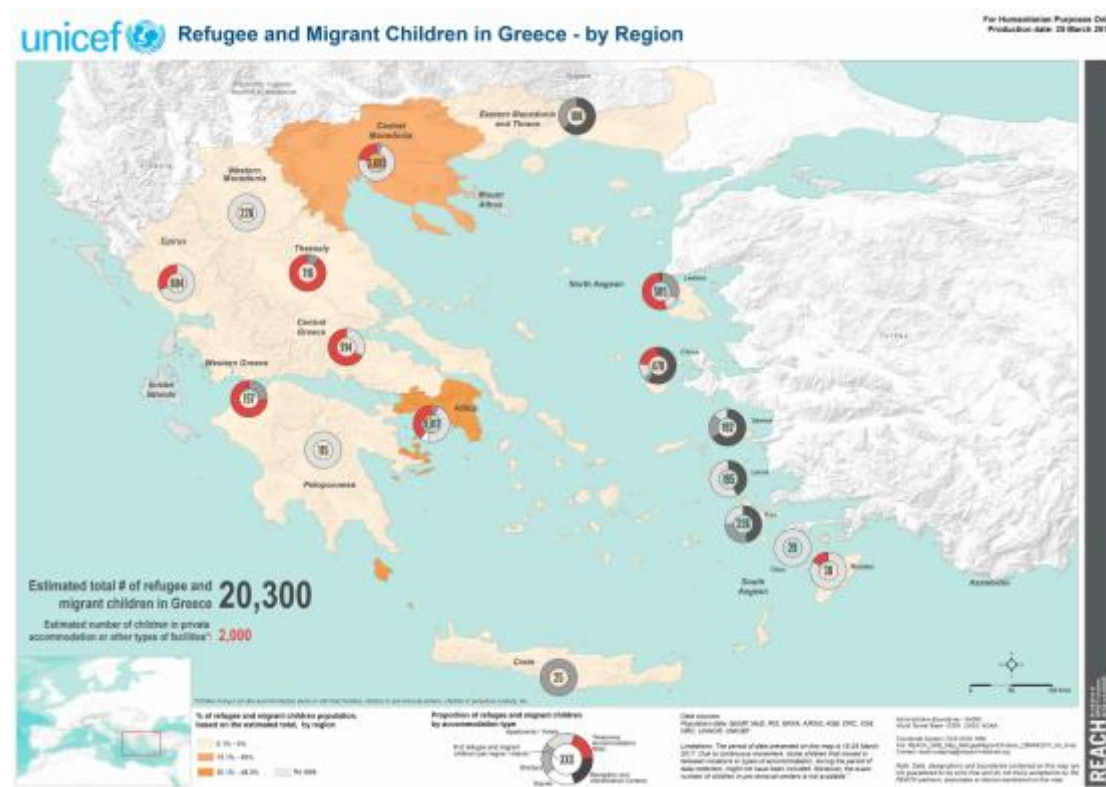


Figure 9. Distribution of refugee children by region and type of accommodation. Source: Unicef, 25 March 2017.

Given the fluidity characterizing the population of refugees and the places where they reside in the country, as well as the lack of complete and reliable numerical data, it is obvious that for the 2017-2018 school year, the design of refugee education by the Ministry of Education is particularly difficult.

The need for early evaluation of the previous period and planning the 2017-2018 school year is highlighted by the report entitled "Monitoring mechanism for the rights of children moving to Greece" (July - December 2016) The Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children in cooperation with UNICEF¹⁹. To be more specific, the proposed necessary measures must also include an "... assessment of the implementation of this year's education program for refugee children and early planning for the 2017-2018 school year, with particular emphasis on the operation of reception classes in the morning school zone". (page 10)

To recapitulate, the uncertainty and the fluidity of the numbers, as well as the intense mobility of the refugee population, are crucial issues that should be taken into account since they created serious gaps in the education of refugee children during the 2016-2017 school year. In this context, it is deemed necessary to increase the administrative autonomy of the

¹⁸ "Children report", UNHCR, 15.03.2017.

¹⁹ Monitoring mechanism for the rights of children moving to Greece (July - December 2016), Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children and UNICEF (www.synigoros.gr/resources/20170420---ekthesi---mixanismos.pdf).

Working Group and the flexibility of the administrative mechanism of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs so that it can respond more effectively to changing circumstances and in order to enable it to organize the work of the Ministry of Education in coordination with the many others entities involved in the refugee reception and integration mechanisms.

II. EDUCATION

1. Proposal on the education of refugee children in 2016-2017.

Administrative and institutional issues.

Based on the experience of the first few months and taking into account the refugee management staffing problem, the EU has proposed a program for the education of refugee children during the 2016-2017 school year which is flexible and multi-leveled, adaptable to the peculiarly changing conditions characterizing the refugee issue. A fundamental prerequisite for the implementation of the program was the creation of **a special office at the Ministry of Education that would organize and support its work in the field of refugee education.**

This proposal was based on the following findings:

- a) The fluidity of the refugee population and the unprecedented challenge of the enterprise demanded - and still requires - continuous surveillance, assessment of changing circumstances and constant adjustments based upon administrative and scientific criteria.
- b) The management of the refugee education project required - and continues to require - the synergy of various departments of the Ministry of Education, sundry ministries, international organizations and NGOs. A supervisory and coordinating mechanism with special scientific knowledge and know-how is, therefore, necessary.
- c) The whole enterprise had – and still has – high political stakes attached to it, requiring quick decisions at an administrative level. It is therefore essential that a structure be in place to make direct recommendations to the General Secretariat [GG *in Greek*] and the Minister himself.

The proposal put forward by the SC was accepted and as from June 2016 this administrative and coordinating mechanism got gradually established at the Ministry of Education, with the formation of the **Working Group on the Management, Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Children** (hereinafter, “Management Group”). The Group was composed of 11 executives in Athens, some of whom were seconded from other Directorates of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs and 5 executives in Thessaloniki, 3 of whom were seconded from the Central Macedonia Region.

At the same time, 62 Refugee Education Coordinators (RECs) were appointed in all the RACs;

these RECs were responsible for the education of refugee children. RECs were appointed in all 50 RACs. In particular, there are 14 RECs in the Region of Attica, 26 in Central Macedonia, 2 in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, 3 in Mainland Greece, 4 in Epirus, 4 in Thessaly and 7 in the Eastern Aegean. Depending on the size of the centers and the number of guests, each center was staffed with 1-3 RECs. RECs are permanent teachers who have applied for secondment to the RECs and have been appointed on the basis of a skills checklist.

The key executive staff, namely the Working Group in Athens and Thessaloniki and the Refugee Education Coordinators, although adequate in number for managing the work of refugee education, and despite their tireless efforts, failed to successfully deal with all the problems that arose, while several failures or delays also occurred due to the rotation of three Head Coordinators and the precarious and unprecedented factors which influenced their work.

Based on the experience gained by the Support Committee and the Scientific Committee over a considerable number of months, the following major problems and defects in the mechanism have been detected:

- ✓✓ Neither the Working Group, nor the Ministerial official mechanism were able to assess their full range of responsibilities in a timely manner in order to establish an appropriate organizational chart for the operation of the pyramid that began to be built in the wake of the refugee crisis. As a result of this, but also due to the rotation of the Coordinators of the Working Group, problems of coordination, overlapping of responsibilities and competition between services have taken place for many months. At the same time, RECs were poorly guided, so they had to improvise, sometimes aptly and sometimes inappropriately.
- ✓✓ These difficulties created pressing and demanding working conditions, but at the same time they produced capable staff with impressive know-how within a short time. The situation is constantly improving and nowadays the Ministry Education Research and Religious Affairs is becoming increasingly mature and effective in dealing with issues in a timely manner.
- ✓✓ The constant changes in the actual location of the RACs and the fact of moving and relocating sections of the refugee population constantly created "black holes" that stalled the whole project, meaning that it took several weeks and/or months for the management mechanism to be reorganized in order to deal with the problems that arose in each case.
- ✓✓ In a number of cases, there have been significant failures in the selection of schools for the operation of Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE). Although the sequence which was observed for the choice of schools and the final siting was apparently the most reasonable one (School Director → Region Manager → Working Group → General Secretary), in reality it was dependent to a great extent on the ability to evaluate proposals at the level of Regional Directorates, as well as on whether or not sufficient communication and coordination with the Local authorities had been established. There were errors at these two levels. The higher officials of the

Ministry of Education rightly endorsed the spatial choices of the School and Regional Directors, as it was not possible to have a picture of the special conditions of 140 schools across the country, or of possible alternatives etc. However, the mistakes of the intermediary links could hardly be corrected when the Ministerial Decision on the locations of RFREs had already been issued and, much more so, after the reactions to specific school choices.

- ✓✓ No kindergartens operated in the RACs. The operation of kindergartens was delayed a lot because of the inability to create or find safe children's premises early enough and because of the frequent movement of refugees from camp to camp. The official technical mechanism governing public tenders took 9 months to complete the formalities for the construction and supply of pilot units for kindergartens, meaning that kindergartens could probably be set up one year after the decision to establish them is made.
- ✓✓ Numerous children who are stranded in the Aegean islands with their parents did not gain access to formal education owing to decisions made by the Ministry for Migration Policy.
- ✓✓ The law that would have allowed Reception Classes (RC) to operate in junior high schools was not activated and as a result a lot of children who lived outside of the RACs did not have an objective opportunity to study given their ignorance of the Greek language.
- ✓✓ It has not been possible so far to find adequate solutions to the problem of lack of evidence proving the completion of high school education (school leaving certificates) and successful methods of matching foreign exams with Greek exams so that children over 15 could enroll in senior high schools or vocational schools.
- ✓✓ Cooperation with the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Health and numerous Local Authority bodies at a municipal and regional level has been effective and in some cases excellent. On the contrary, great difficulties arose in designing and coping with problems at a central and local level throughout this time in matters demanding cooperation with the Ministry of Migration Policy, and it was not possible to set up a functional joint taskforce. For instance, as a result of this co-ordination difficulty, the design and operation of several RFREs was discontinued shortly before they were due to start operating because it emerged that the RACs had been abolished without any informal or formal briefing from the Ministry of Immigration Policy.
- ✓✓ The issue of vaccinations, which was highlighted in the SC's findings, was very effectively addressed by means of forming a small, flexible taskforce which simultaneously carried out vaccinations on children under the supervision of the relevant departments of the Ministry of Health, the HCDP and the National Vaccine Commission, and opened the RFREs. However, since the SC deemed it was necessary to complete vaccinations on refugees before the RFREs opened up, a lot of delays ensued in starting operations in many regions. At the end of the vaccinations cycle, i.e. in February 2017, according to data provided by the Ministry of Health²⁰ 30,000

²⁰ "C. Baskozos: A Gargantuan Project is being carried out - More than 30,000 vaccines were administered to Refugee

vaccinations had been carried out and 85% of the refugee population was covered. Given the fact that a large proportion of the refugees had followed a vaccination program in their homelands or in transit refugee centers (Iran, Turkey), the Ministry of Health estimates that the whole child refugee population is now covered.

- ✓✓ The coordination of the executive and advisory bodies within the Ministry, the designation of Refugee Coordinators and the recruitment of substitute teachers, as well as the establishment and operation of refugee education facilities, were necessary steps in bestowing institutional status on this Project and in materializing it. All these actions were necessarily accompanied by the relevant Joint Ministerial Decisions, Ministerial Decisions and Resolutions of the Secretary General. At the same time, there was a need for a number of other administrative acts (clarifications, interpretations or corrections) and instructions in order to enable the whole educational system to integrate the action of refugee education in its structure. This experience has revealed – to those who were not familiar with bureaucracy – the great difficulty in making decisions and the inability to take creative initiatives in order to deal with everyday problems. Sadly, it became clear that the pyramid of the mechanism suffers from a mixture of hypergiaphobia [excessive and irrational concern of responsibility] and formalism, which often required a circular or a decision made by the political leadership to "cover up" the executives for almost any decision outside the scope of the school curriculum. This actually meant that the Working Group had to draw up and correct draft administrative decisions for months on end about any issue that arose, even about issues that could have been easily resolved through verbal communication.

For the purpose of providing documentary evidence in support of the assessment, **Annex I** lists the dozens of administrative acts that had to be produced, within a few months, for the operation of the RFRE.

The final success or failure of the education program can be seen in the above findings as well and in the detailed evaluation that follows. However, it should be borne in mind that the “bigger picture” of the implementation of the refugee education project in this first pre-integration year is summarized in the report entitled "Mechanism for monitoring the rights of children moving to Greece" (July - December 2016) of the Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children in Cooperation with UNICEF (pp. 8-9): ²¹ ***“Children’s access to education was designed in a timely manner and on the basis of specific planning, but its implementation has encountered many difficulties in practice, resulting in delays in the launching, or in some cases in the closure, of the envisaged Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE). Concerning the integration of children in the early morning reception zone, further problems arose which related to, among other things, the need to respond to increased integration demands due to the presence of a significant number of children in urban areas as a result***

Children, <http://www.avgi.gr/article/10842/7921333/g---mpaskozos---epiteleitai---ena---titanio---ergo---perissotera---apo---30---000---embolia---eginan---se---paidia---prospygon> (21.02.2017).

²¹ *Monitoring mechanism for the rights of children moving to Greece (July - December 2016), Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children and UNICEF* (www.synigoros.gr/resources/20170420--ekthesi--mixanismos.pdf).

of unscheduled transfers from the Reception Accommodation Centers where they previously resided. “

2. The operation of Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE)

The SC’s proposals provided for the attendance of individual refugee children living in non-organized facilities in cities at Reception Classes (hereinafter, “RC”) in the morning program of primary schools and junior high schools as well as at intercultural schools. However, the SC did not manage to gather complete and reliable data about the morning program of public schools and intercultural schools. There is information that there were some schools, individual school principals and teachers who tried to discourage refugees from enrolling by inventing hindrances despite the relevant circulars of the Ministry of Education. It should be noted, however, that the Ministry of Education also failed to ensure a rational distribution of the children in schools by planning for the timely operation of a sufficient number of RCs or their pedagogical support. Finally, on the basis of all the information available to us, it is clear that refugee children were smoothly integrated in those schools where there were only a few refugees.

This assessment focuses on the solution that was chosen in order to facilitate attendance at RFREs for those children who lived in RACs in large numbers.

From October 2016 until March 2017, 107 RFREs were set up and operated in the respective schools in seven of the 13 educational districts. These units were attended by 2,643 schoolchildren (Primary and Junior High School). These figures were slightly different in April 2017. Overall, until the time this Report was being written (April 2017), 111 RFREs were in operation running 145 classes. These covered 37 RACs in all regions of the country apart from the islands.

Operating RFREs are listed in **Annex II** (April 2017).

Maps showing the locations of RFREs are included below.

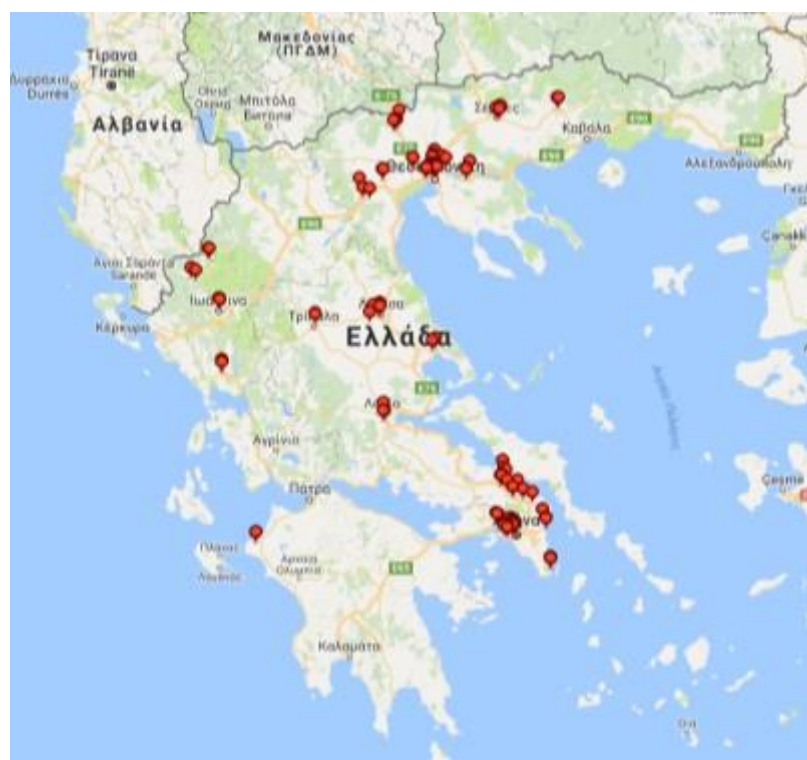


Figure 10. Operating RFRE, Greece (March 2017). Source: Working Group, Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs.

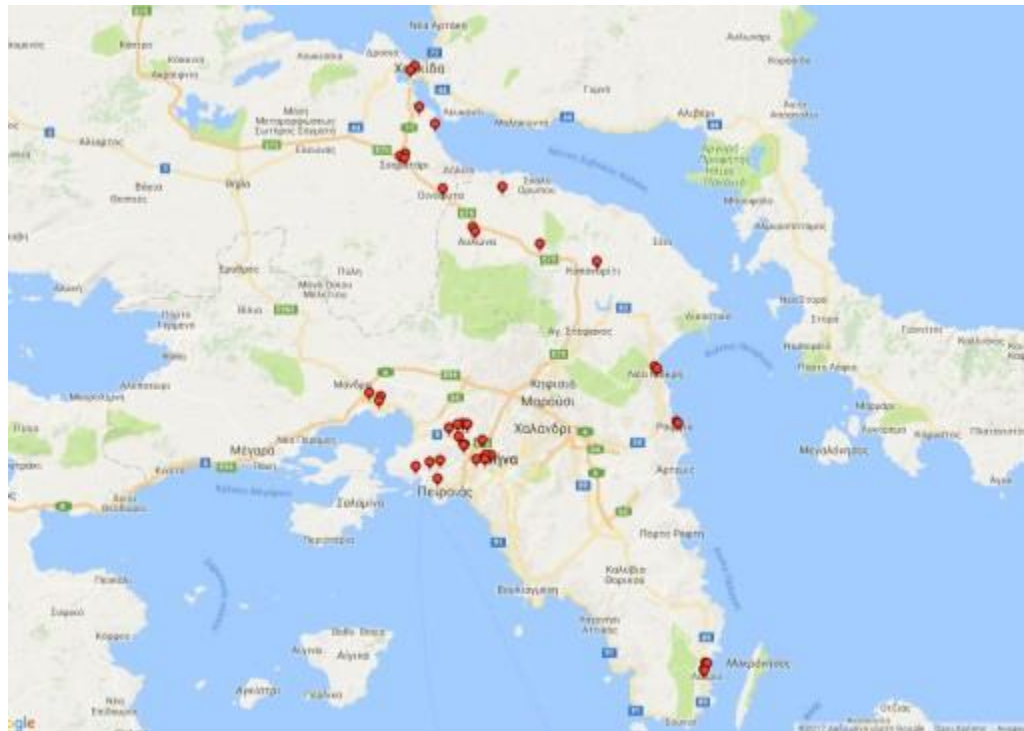


Figure 11. Operating RFREs in Attica (March 2017). Source: Working Group, Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs.

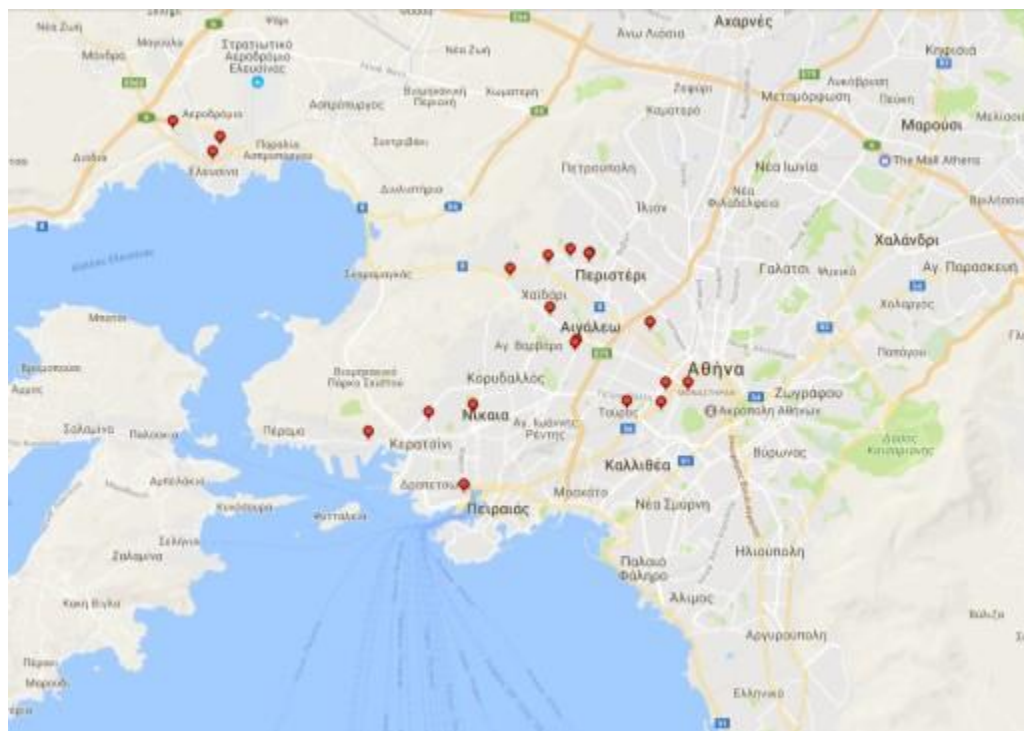


Figure 12. Operating RFREs in West Athens, Piraeus and Western Attica (March 2017). Source: Working Group, Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs.



Figure 13. Operating RFREs in Central Macedonia (March 2017). Source: Working Group, Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs.

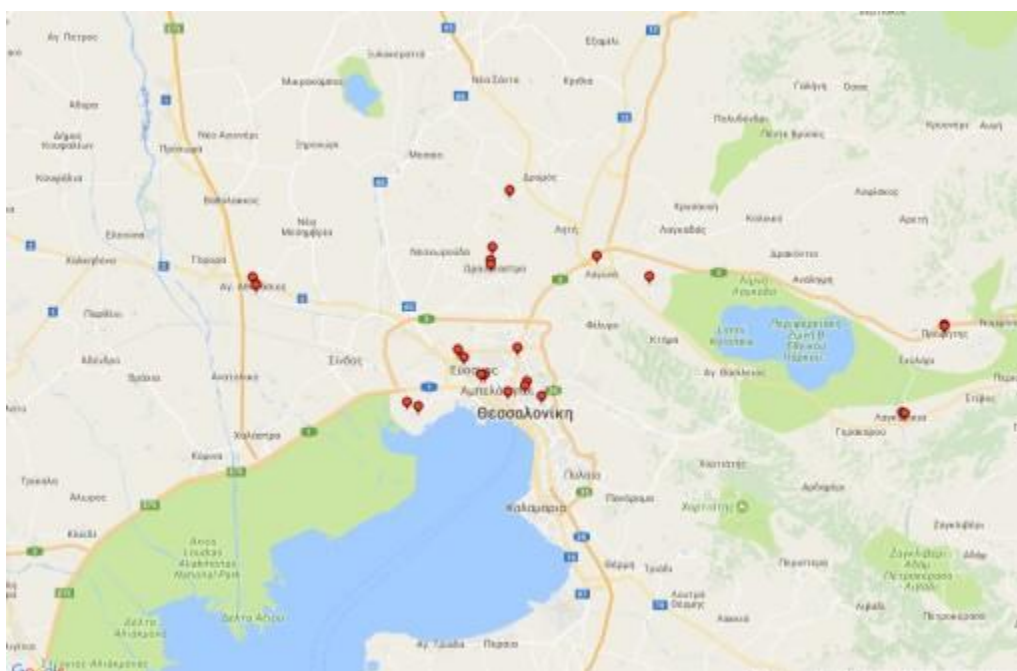


Figure 14. Operating RFREs in Thessaloniki (March 2017). Source: Working Group, Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs.

2.1. Problems in the operation of RFREs

The analysis that follows is based on RECs records, on-site observation of members of the SC, discussions with education officials, teachers, counselors and RECs, as well as on the data collected by the Working Group during meetings with teachers, educators and consultants.

In most cases, despite the difficulties, refugee children have adapted to the educational process and the rules associated with school life, respond to the lessons, are adequately involved, and make progress in learning Greek, mathematics and English. In addition, the

initial difficulties of contact between Greek students and refugees have been overcome in a great number of schools, and joint actions have shyly started to emerge at breaks or inter-departmental exchanges, as well as actions by parents' associations. The assessment, however, highlights the problems and difficulties.

A) Educators

Continuous change of teachers

Educators from the list of substitute teachers were appointed at RFREs on a part-time basis. However, these substitute teachers were later appointed as full-time teachers (on regular school programs), so changes have been made due to the teachers' eligibility. This creates a lot of problems in the educational process, and it also contributes to students dropping out of school. Children have no fixed point of reference and no continuity and regularity is established in the educational process. For instance, in the primary education schools of Athens, changes in teachers were made four times in all 4 RFREs from October 2016 until March 2017. In addition, given the problems in training (see below), only the first and the last appointed teachers were trained at a brief seminar by the IEP.

Problems due to the inexperience of the teachers appointed at RFREs

Given the fact that RFRE students do not speak Greek and that most of them have been out of school for many years, teachers need to have special knowledge and/or experience in teaching students of other languages and in managing socially vulnerable children. The fact that teachers were appointed not on the basis of special qualifications but rather from the general list of substitute teachers meant that the education of refugees was undertaken by teachers without special education and without training or particular incentive to address this difficult educational task. This fact, in combination with inadequate training or lack of training, meant that the educational work that was provided did not meet the needs of the population. Moreover, the fact that in many cases there were 20 children in every class made the situation very difficult. The SC and all other parties involved have proposed the creation of a separate recruitment list for RFREs for the same reasons (see Proposals) similar to the one that is in place for teachers recruited by special education schools).

B. Administrative issues of RFREs

Regulation and circulars regarding the operation of RFREs

A lot of problems have been encountered in the operation of RFREs due to ambiguity and contradictions in the circulars concerning everyday school operation issues (registration, transfers, correspondence, issuing certificates of attendance, promotion, excursions, the protocol one should adhere to when a child falls ill at school, etc.) which are rooted in the particular circumstances and the fluidity of the student population (continuous traveling, etc.). In particular, it was found that even though RFREs are classified as school units in operation in the Joint Ministerial Decision, in reality they are neither administratively nor pedagogically connected with the school's morning zone, which creates many problems in

their operation.

My School

The difficulty with enrolling children at My School has been highlighted by RFRE teachers, school principals and counselors (although without always giving exact figures). Particular problems with enrollment at My School are caused by children dropping out (due to being relocated, transferred to another RAC, etc.) and their attendance at both morning and evening schools as there is no connection between the morning zone registration system and the RFRE. It has been reported that only transfers between schools in the same region can be technically settled. It is very important to adapt My School to the needs of the RFREs to get a picture of where the children go when moving from one RFRE to another or from RFRE to RC, especially in view of the next school year since a lot of children are expected to be moved to RCs.

Problems with children's ages

In quite a few cases, which are in fact so numerous as to constitute problems that need to be resolved, the age of children is determined on the grounds of the statement made by their parents or guardians; as a result, children are enrolled in school grades or classes which do not reflect their real age. A lot of difficulties and conflicts have been observed in cases where junior-high-school-aged children attend primary school classes, often making students to drop out. The Ombudsman for Children recommends that children whose birth dates are incorrectly stated in their school registration documents be given the opportunity to have their age corrected by means of an official statement provided by their parents, whereupon the parents must present a copy of their application to the asylum authority in order to change the child's recorded age.

Cooperation between morning school and RFRE

The interconnection of the morning zone with the RFRE is essential, both administratively and pedagogically. Early morning school and RFRE cooperation has proved to be a difficult bet. Teachers and school principals have proposed that RFREs should be an integral part of the school, and that the afternoon program teachers should join the morning zone teachers' team. They have also proposed that the Deputy Principal of the morning zone school who deals with the RFREs and the educator who is appointed as RFRE official should not be moved from their posts ("the problem of teacher movements" as above). It is also important that, in schools where there is an RFRE, the all day school officer not be moved to other posts in order to contribute towards the RFRE's good operation.

2.2. School Dropout

Attendance at RFREs

Before discussing attendance and dropout rates of refugee education in Greece, it is

important to underline that all international reports indicate that a large proportion of children are out of school or have very high dropout rates. For example, in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan, the percentage of Syrian refugee children ranges from 48% to 78%. The reasons given are economic and social, stigmatization, and the lack of funding and infrastructure.²²

In an effort to look at the characteristics of refugee children education in Greek schools, we focused on the breakdown of data from RFREs which operated in five Reception Accommodation Centers. The main selection criteria were: a) the location: these are Centers from different refugee areas in mainland Greece (Attica, Central Greece, Macedonia, Epirus); b) the start time of the courses: in all five cases, lessons started before the end of 2016, so their running time can be considered sufficient to draw conclusions. In particular, these RFREs operated at the following schools:

A. Eleonas (start date: 10 October 2016)

- 1) 66th Junior High School of Athens
- 2) 7th Primary School of Athens
- 3) 81st Primary School of Athens
- 4) 72nd Primary School of Athens
- 5) 2nd Primary School of Tavros

B. Ritsona (start date: 19 October 2016)

- 1) Primary School at Paralia Avlidas
- 2) Primary School of Vathi in Avlida
- 3) 14th Primary School of Chalkida
- 4) 2nd Junior High School of Chalkida

C. Derveni-Elpida (start date: 10 October 2016)

- 1) 67th Primary School of Thessaloniki
- 2) 2nd Junior High School of Stavroupolis

D. Lagadikia (start date: 10 October 2016)

- 1) All-day Primary School of Lagadikia
- 2) Primary School of Profitis Ilias
- 3) Junior High School of Koronia

²² See K. Watkins, S.A. Zyck, *Report. Living on hope, hoping for education. The failed response to the Syrian refugee crisis*, odi.org. 3RP, Regional Strategic Overview, *Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2017-2018 in Response to the Syria Crisis*.

E. Doliana (start date: 21 November 2016)

- 1) Primary School of Kalpaki
- 2) Junior High School of Doliana

The analysis is based on the following:

A) The data of attendance registers kept by the RECs at each Center according to the statements provided by the IOM about the daily transfer of students to schools. Attendance registers contain data on the entire operation time of the RFREs from the beginning until 15 March 2017, but in some cases there are no attendance registers recording student attendance during the first days of operation.

B) Interviews with the RECs at the above Refugee Accommodation Centers. It was considered that RECs could provide the necessary information, since, given their particular role, they have a clear picture of both reference frameworks, i.e. the daily routine of refugee children in RACs and in RFRE schools.

Fluctuations in the rate of attendance

A key characteristic is the fluidity of enrolled students during the operation of the RFREs. In all cases there is permanent mobility, i.e. both deleted entries and new entries: some students left either due to having been relocated or because they were moved to another site (settling in apartments, moving to another region); some others were registered a lot later than the start of the RFREs, and in a few cases the names of children were deleted from the RFREs and were registered in the morning zone school program. The tables below show the numbers of enrolled students at the 3 Reception Accommodation Centers at two different points in time, i.e. at the date when the RFREs started to operate (October 2016)²³ and the present day (March 2017). In the case of Eleonas there is a decrease in the number of registered students, whereas in the other two centers the numbers are stable. However, it should be emphasized that even in the cases where the number of registered students appears to be unchanged (see Tables 15 and 16 below), student mobility still exists. Even though the total number of students may be roughly the same, it should be noted that the individual students were not the same. The stability in these figures is due to the fact that the number of new entries tallies with the number of entry deletions.

²³ It should be noted that there is no mention of the number of registered students in the first week of operation of the RFREs because, due to the many difficulties of that phase, it is significantly smaller than the number that is subsequently steadily recorded.

RFRE	31 October 2016	15 March 2017
87 th Primary School of Athens	70	56
81 st Primary School of Athens	78	58
72 nd Primary School of Athens	64	44
2 nd Primary School of Tavros	71	48
66 th Primary School of Athens	79	70

Table 14. Eleonas. Enrolled students per RFRE.

RFRE	28 November 2016	15 March 2017
Primary School at Paralia Avlidas	21	20
Primary School of Vathi in Avlida	17	16
14 th Primary School of Chalkida	37	36
2 nd Junior High School of Chalkida	19	15

Table 15. Ritsona. Enrolled students per RFRE.

RFRE	10 October 2016	15 March 2017
67 th Primary School of Thessaloniki	30	39
2 nd Junior High School of Stavroupolis	19	19

Table 16. Derveni-Elpida. Enrolled students per RFRE.

RFRE	24 October 2016	15 March 2017
Primary School of Profitis	37	12
Primary School of Lagadikia	44	15
Junior High School of Koronia	35	15

Table 17. Lagadikia. Enrolled students per RFRE.

RFRE	21 November 2016	15 March 2017
Primary School of Kalpaki	28	21
Primary School of Doliana	14	12

Table 18. Doliana. Enrolled students per RFRE.

The main difficulty in calculating attendance frequency is attributed to the following: (a) The number of registered children is constantly changing, and above all, (b) the available data do not always include a specific reference to the number of registered children for each school day. In the 4 camps (Eleonas, Ritsona, Derveni, Doliana), where it was possible to calculate the attendance rate on a daily basis (i.e. how many of the enrolled children attend school each day), the average rate of attendance was later calculated for the entire operating period of each RFRE. This was not possible in the case of Lagadikia.

The following tables (Tables 19-22) show the attendance rate per RFRE. Rates are separately recorded to reflect two time periods, i.e. the initial period of operation of the RFREs (October - December 2016) and the most recent period (January - March 2017), in order to show how attendance progressed.

SCHOOLS	Oct-Dec 2016 ATTENDANCE RATE/ENROLMENTS IN TOTAL	Jan-Mar 2017 ATTENDANCE RATE/ENROLMENTS IN TOTAL
87 th Primary School of Athens	57.96%	45.39%
81 st Primary School of Athens	63.83%	50.17%
72 nd Primary School of Athens	57.40%	46.58%
2 nd Primary School of Tavros	60.53%	53.48%
66 th Junior High School of Athens	54.49%	43.64%

Table 19. Eleonas. Attendance Rate²⁴ per RFRE.

SCHOOLS	2016 ATTENDANCE RATE/ENROLMENTS IN TOTAL	2017 ATTENDANCE RATE/ENROLMENTS IN TOTAL
Primary School at Paralia Avlidas	80.43%	76.23%
Primary School of Vathi in Avlida	82.97%	59.52%
14 th Primary School of Chalkida	58.91%	60.74%
2 nd Junior High School of Chalkida	29.4%	55.13%

Table 20. Ritsona. Attendance rate per RFRE (October 2016-March 2017).

²⁴ The attendance rate has been calculated on the basis of the number of attending students and the number of enrolled students for each day that the RFRE operated.

SCHOOLS	2016 ATTENDANCE RATE/ ENROLMENTS IN TOTAL	2017 ATTENDANCE RATE/ENROLMENTS IN TOTAL
67 th Primary School of Thessaloniki	80.42%	65.56%
2 nd Junior High School of Stavroupolis	62.28%	63.30%

Table 21. Derveni-Elpida. Attendance rate per RFRE.

SCHOOLS	2016 ATTENDANCE RATE/ENROLMENTS IN TOTAL	2017 ATTENDANCE RATE/ENROLMENTS IN TOTAL
Primary School of Kalpaki	80.91%	61.3%

Table 22. Doliana. Attendance rate per RFRE.

An RFRE is also in operation at the Junior High School of Doliana. This school is not included in the table because student participation is considerably limited. Out of the 14 students who were initially registered, 2 students were relocated and only two of the remaining students (Afghans) are attending lessons now. The remaining students (Syrians) do not attend.

The main conclusions drawn from the above tables are:

- ✓✓ The rate of attendance varies
 - a) from area to area (lower in Eleonas)
 - b) over time (it decreases during the operation of the RFRE)
 - c) between primary school and junior high school (it is definitely lower in junior high school)
 - d) between schools in the same region.
- ✓✓ The most significant difference is noted in Eleonas and the other Centers. Eleonas is the most crowded Center of all the 5 centers we are investigating.
- ✓✓ Primary school attendance rates are higher than attendance rates at junior high schools everywhere.
- ✓✓ In **primary schools** there is a downward trend in student attendance during the operation of RFREs (with the exception of one school in Ritsona). In particular: in the initial period (until December 2016) the average rate of attendance was around 60% in Eleonas, 75% in Ritsona, and 80% in Derveni and Doliana. During January-March 2017 attendance rates were around 49% in Eleonas, 65% in Ritsona, 65% in Derveni and 61% in Doliana.

- ✓✓ In **junior high school** the situation is more complicated. There is a decrease in attendance rates (from 54% at the start to 44%), an increase in Ritsona (from 30% to 55%), while in Derveni attendance rate figures are stable at 63%. As already mentioned, only 2 students participated in Doliana.
- ✓✓ In some cases (e.g. Eleonas, Ritsona) there is a difference in attendance rates among primary schools of the same area. In some schools attendance rates are either higher or the rate of decrease is lower.

However, the dominant characteristic is that **the rate of attendance has been unstable**. In most cases, this does not reflect a permanent dropout, but rather irregular attendance. In other words, the rate of absent students may be roughly the same from day to day, but the students who were absent are not the same from day to day. Owing to the fluidity of the number of registered students (i.e. the fact that students have been constantly relocated elsewhere), it is not worth calculating average attendance per student. However, we attempted to produce a general estimate of attendance per student in order to have an overall picture. Rates have been calculated on the basis of the number of attendances per student on the total number of days the RFRE operated. However, a great deal caution is needed when reading these rates because calculations were made on the total number of registered students, meaning to say that those students who left at some time or other were also included. For this reason, only the percentage of those students who had the “longest attendance” are shown below, i.e. those students who attended school for longer than 70% of the total number of days the RFREs operated.

Schools	Rate of Students who attended school for longer than 70% of the RFRE operation time
66 th High School of Athens	23.28%
87 th Primary School of Athens	20.09%
81 st Primary School of Athens	38.35%
72 nd Primary School of Athens	31.40%
2 nd Primary School of Tavros	33.17%

Table 23. Rate of students (of those enrolled) who attended school for longer than 70% of the RFRE operation time. Eleonas (2016-2017).

Schools	Rate of Students who attended school for longer than 70% of the RFRE
Primary School at Paralia Avlidas	58.80%
Primary School of Avlida	52.54%
14 th Primary School of Chalkida	22.98%
2 nd Junior High School of Chalkida	4.17%

Table 24. Rate of students (of those enrolled) who attended school for longer than 70% of the RFRE operation time. Ritsona (2016-2017).

Schools	Rate of Students who attended school for longer than 70% of the RFRE operation time
Primary School of Profitis	16.52%
Primary School of Lagadikia	25.83%
Junior High School of Koronia	17.32%

Table 25. Rate of students (of those enrolled) who attended school for longer than 70% of the RFRE operation time. Lagadikia (2016-2017).

Schools	Rate of Students who attended school for longer than 70% of the RFRE operation time
Primary School of Kalpaki	57.14%

Table 26 Rate of students (of those enrolled) who attended school for longer than 70% of the RFRE operation time. Doliana (2016-2017).

It can be seen that the rate of children registering regular attendance is low. Only in few cases does it exceed 50% (in Ritsona, Doliana and Derveni). However, in cases where attendance rate is low, cautious interpretation is needed. We cannot interpret a low attendance rate as an indication of a less positive response to schooling and, therefore, the reason for irregular attendance. Since, as mentioned above, attendance rates have been calculated for all registered students, meaning to say that students who have already been moved are also included, it is quite possible that the low rate may be linked to the intensity of refugee population mobility in each RAC.

An interesting point for discussion is the difference in attendance rates among schools in the same region. It is worth investigating the qualitative characteristics of schools with a higher or stable attendance rate during the year, because it will be possible to identify which factors have had a positive impact on the educational integration of refugee children.

Factors that affect student attendance and school dropouts

The problems identified by the Refugee Education Coordinators regarding RFREs are in most cases common and can be grouped into two categories: (a) those related to the attitudes of refugees themselves, their aspirations and the particularly adverse circumstances in which they live, and (b) those relating to the organization and operation of RFREs. Naturally, these two categories are not independent of each other but interdependent and intertwined.

A) Factors linked to attitudes and living conditions of refugees

Mapping the big picture that reflects the quantitative participation of refugee children in RFREs can only be useful as an indication due to the high degree of fluidity that characterizes the refugee population. A corresponding limitation also applies to qualitative characteristics. The following is a schematic appreciation of the big picture:

The largest number of 6-15 year-olds living in RACs have been registered at RFREs. However, there is always a percentage of refugees, in some places very small (in small Centers) and in other places higher, which did not participate.

Out of the total number of children who were enrolled, a considerable number discontinued attendance, while out of the total number of children who continue to attend, there are a lot of students who do not attend school regularly. Discontinuing school attendance is mainly due to the fact that the families of these children were relocated: a) to another country, either in the context of officially arranged relocation or otherwise; b) to another town/city in Greece; c) to another site (apartments, etc). There have also been a few cases of children who were moved from RFREs to the morning zone school program of neighboring schools.

The main question, therefore, is why the children who remain at RACs do not regularly attend school (or why some of them do not attend at all). It is obvious that this is not just about the attitude of children, but it is primarily up to the parents and how they integrate education into their everyday lives, and also linked to their short-term goals. A key factor is the prospect of staying or leaving Greece. The greatest dropout rate and discontinuous attendance is seen in Arab-speaking students, mainly Syrians, who are looking forward to getting relocated and hope (irrespective of how well-founded their hopes are) to succeed. Besides, despite their slow pace, relocations do sustain this hope. On the other hand, other groups that do not have such prospects, such as Afghans, have more stable attendance rates.

Those who are about to leave (or hope to leave) do not seem to consider it necessary for their children to go to the Greek school. Their attitude does not depend on whether they generally recognize the value of education or not, but whether they consider that attending the Greek school serves the prospect of relocation. One reason is that learning the Greek language is of little use since they will not be able to use it in the country they want to settle down. They are therefore more receptive to English or German language courses organized by NGOs or other institutions in the sense that these languages are more useful to them. Another reason is also the feeling of impermanence. It is difficult for them to subsume the normality the school has to offer in the state of expectancy and waiting they are in. For this reason, they put that moment on hold until their life is settled in a stable environment. "The child will go to school when we go to Germany," as they say.

Of course, this issue, i.e. the adaptation to normality and school regularity does not only concern those who hope to relocate, but all refugees, especially those who live in RACs. Regular schooling requires stable living conditions and a certain amount of effort to organize children's time, i.e. living conditions that are difficult under the present circumstances. "Parents do not insist," says an REC, "they are very tired of all the problems they carry, they cannot push their children to go to school." While parents generally acknowledge the fact that the Greek state offers education to their children (RECs tell us that parents often say "thank you for school"), the fluidity and the "void" in which they live seem to prevent a lot of them to adapt their daily routine and their children to the rules of regular schooling. For example, children are often absent because their parents had some job to do outside the Accommodation Center and had taken their children with them, or they had to take care of their younger siblings, or the weather was not good, etc. All RECs report that they are making very systematic and continuous efforts to get in touch with the parents of children who are often absent and to convince them of the usefulness of the school, both for reasons of substance, i.e. the value of education regardless of the language in which it is provided, as well as to tell them about the possibility that their children's attendance at school may have a positive bearing in case they have applied for asylum.

Another reason for irregular attendance at RFREs is the parents' concerns about the education provided and its effectiveness. "They do not think of it as regular school; they think it's a school for refugees. They do not think their children get educated." It seems that the essence of these reservations is not so much (or only) about the fact that RFREs work separately from the rest of the school system, but rather about how they perceive 'normal' education. Having the experience of educational systems that are governed by traditional and authoritarian pedagogical logic, they find it difficult to acknowledge the more relaxed pedagogical methods of the Greek school as effective and reliable. It is possible that the work their children bring home, the kind and quantity of their schoolwork, is inconsistent with the education standards they themselves have, and this fills them with reservations about its cognitive effects. Similar difficulties are encountered by children in their adaptation to the pedagogical framework of the Greek school, especially those who have already attended school and, therefore, have a different frame of reference. This view is also supported by the fact that in some RFREs where teachers follow a more traditional teaching model, dropout rates appear to be slightly lower.

It is likely that the parents' reluctance with regard to the effectiveness of the education provided is also reinforced by the behavioral and monitoring problems often encountered at RFREs. One problem reported by the RECs is the difficulty of a large number of children to adapt to school discipline. The intensity (commotion, fights between children, etc.) that is often observed within the school environment, which is difficult to control, is mentioned as a reason that inhibits students' participation in school: "Some children do not come to school because the rest of them are making a fuss or teasing them. At some point or other they get tired of it and do not want to come anymore." The difficulty of students "to follow rules", the "fuss", the "aggression", and "fights" are not difficult to explain. This is undoubtedly the reasonable consequence of both the traumatic experiences they have sustained and their current living conditions. Apart from the psychological parameters, it

seems that the special condition of cohabitation outside school in RACs also adds to the problem, because there is no other "place" where the tension can be interrupted: "At school children are mocking and teasing each other, as is always the case. But here they come back and the fights and mockeries continue, because they live together. If they lived elsewhere in their own homes, no such thing would happen." In many cases it is reported that children bring the tensions and conflicts between the different groups that break out in the RAC to school.

It should be noted that the problem of dropouts or irregular attendance is, in most cases, more pronounced in junior high school. It seems that adolescents find it harder to adapt to school (they are more resistant than young children). Some RECs report that in cases where the RAC is located at a distance from the city, the motivation to go to junior high school is greater because this is an excuse to get out of the Center. However, where access to the city is relatively easy (e.g. in Eleonas) and teenagers have the opportunity to go out on their own, this incentive is diminished.

B) Factors relating to the organization and operation of RFREs

The most important problem that characterizes the operation of RFREs has to do with teachers and concerns both **the way they are selected/placed** and their **inadequate training**. It is well-known that teachers employed on a part-time basis were appointed in RFREs from the list of substitute teachers. However, due to the appointments (for the regular school program) of full-time substitutes that have taken place and the teachers who were hired at RFREs as they were eligible for these posts, there was a spate of changes in teachers. This constant mobility can be seen in almost all cases. In some schools there were up to 12 replacements during the few months when the RFREs operated. As one REC says, *"We and the IOM escorts were the only permanent people as far as the children are concerned. Teachers keep changing all the time."* The only exception to this is schools in remote areas, where substitute teachers from the lower places of the list were placed, who did not have the required credits to apply for another job.

On the one hand, continuous change of teachers implies a discontinuity of the teaching process in terms of teaching, and on the other hand it does not allow a stable relationship to be established either between the teacher and the students or among the teachers themselves. These problems obviously weaken and destabilize any school context. In this specific educational context, however, the negative consequences are even greater, because the school is increasing rather than reducing the instability and fluidity that characterize the lives of refugee children.

It seems, however, that these continuous movements are not only dictated by obvious official and economic reasons (full-time service) but also by the great difficulties of teachers to function within the special conditions of RFREs, to handle both the issue of communication with children and the peculiarities of the open curriculum. In this case, teachers without any specialization were called to teach in one of the most difficult educational environments. The teacher selection procedure did not provide for specific qualifications, such as knowledge or experience in teaching speakers of other languages, but

these qualifications are necessary in these particular conditions.

The difficulty of communication between teachers and students due to language barriers has often been reported. This problem can be mitigated in some cases through the use of English, but it remains central and affects not only the learning process but also behavioral issues in general. One REC, who supports the need for interpreters /cultural mediators at school, says: *"We are facing many behavioral problems, children cannot easily follow rules. Naturally, this is also because they cannot communicate with the teachers. Every time a cultural mediator came to school, the students were quiet as a mouse because they knew someone could understand them."*

Of course, it must be made clear that it is neither necessary nor possible for teachers to speak the mother tongues of their students. There are specific methods and appropriate pedagogical tools for effective teaching to speakers of other languages. There are also many teachers who have special knowledge (studies in bilingual education or intercultural education) as well as experience in teaching Greek as a second/foreign language (for example, in the context of large educational programs that have been implemented in Greece for a number of years), who could have been used if these specific qualifications were taken into account for the appointment in RFREs.

Another key aspect of the problem is the lack of systematic training and support for teachers. Under these unprecedented circumstances that the RFREs maintain in the Greek educational system, training is a key issue. It is a fundamental prerequisite for teachers to acquire appropriate knowledge and working tools for these particular circumstances, and they must also be supported in their mission. But this did not happen. The IEP organized two brief training sessions at a central level (October 2016 and February 2017) for new teachers. At a local level, there have been some auxiliary interventions by school counselors on a more or less regular basis, but these are not enough. Despite the fact that a special training program has been designed by the IEP, which provides for systematic support of teachers at the school level rather than general training, this program has not started yet because its funding has been delayed.

Another reason that makes it necessary to train teachers, apart from the particular characteristics of the specific student population, is the special curriculum of the RFREs that teachers are called upon to implement. It is an open and flexible curriculum, which is based, of course, on specific textbooks, but it allows teachers to adapt both the content and pace of teaching to the needs of the children they have in their classes. This flexibility and adaptability according to the needs of the class is absolutely necessary for the educational framework of the RFREs given the very heterogeneity of students (in terms of language, age, origin, previous schooling, etc.).

It is therefore governed by a different logic and has a different way of organization compared to the official curriculum of the Greek school. Such a curriculum, in order to be effective, requires teachers to work in a way that is completely different from the book-oriented method of teaching. Although the proposed educational materials (produced in the framework of programs for the education of speakers of other languages) and the guidelines have been posted on the IEP website, the fact that many teachers are not

familiar with this logic from their own studies makes it difficult for them to use this material.

These difficulties, coupled with organizational problems, successive teacher changes and inadequate training and support, frustrate and exasperate teachers and fuel negative reactions. It is a fact that the RFRE educational project is difficult. In order for teachers to work effectively, besides having specific knowledge, they need to be sensitive to the particular problems of refugee children and willing to seek new ways of teaching tailored to this particular context. Both of these conditions can be cultivated to a certain extent in the context of appropriate training support.

It seems that problems are less in schools where:

a) there are teachers with experience/knowledge of teaching Greek as a second language, who work as assistants by suggesting appropriate and feasible ways to address teaching problems.

b) An atmosphere of community is created at school among teachers, and there is a connection and communication between the RFREs and the morning zone program. In many cases this connection has not been achieved. The teachers, the students, and the educational activity of both programs operate on different and independent paths without any meeting points. However, in schools where better communication has been achieved, it seems that the results are very positive. In these cases, the active role of the school principal and (in primary schools) the cooperation of RFRE teachers with the all-day school teachers seem to be instrumental.

c) An atmosphere of group mentality is created among children. Naturally, this is rather difficult to achieve when classroom composition is fluid due to student dropouts and irregular attendance. However, in the cases where it is achieved, the results are positive, especially in relation to the frequency of attendance and adaptation to the school context. The available data shows that this "group" parameter is particularly important for junior high school students, where the dropout rate is higher than in primary schools. The only case where the high school attendance rate remains very high, according to one REC, is when "the children are bonded together in a group and have fun at school".

Generally, the educational integration of students in junior high school presents more difficulties than in primary school. It is certain that the issues of adaptation to school rules among adolescents are more pronounced in such a sensitive psychological group as adolescent refugees. Another factor seems to be the greater (compared to primary school) language and cognitive difficulty of the curriculum. Given that they are speakers of other languages, the lesson should be particularly attractive to motivate their interest. Teachers should, therefore, have the appropriate pedagogical knowledge and skills to respond to these particular needs using active learning and diversified teaching methods. It seems, however, that the initial education of secondary school teachers does not offer such a pedagogical background, so they do not have the right tools to deal with these conditions. From this point of view, training and pedagogical support are even more urgent for high school teachers.

Finally, apart from the issues mentioned above, it seems that a factor that affects school

attendance to some extent is the educational activities organized by NGOs or other bodies in RACs, since in some cases they clash with the RFRE timetable. Of course, this is not very common, since there is an explicit limitation, but when it happens, it is pitted against the school program.

2.3. The Role of Refugee Education Coordinators (RECs): Problems and good practices

As already mentioned, the Ministry of Education appointed Refugee Education Coordinators (RECs) to be the liaison between Refugee Accommodation Centers (RACs) and Schools (Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE) -*DYEP in Greek*) to coordinate education actions held by Non-Government Organizations and other bodies. These educators were seconded at camps and were required to play a novel and very demanding role; they were required to get out of the designated school context to function as intermediaries, bring together the refugee population and the Greek educational system and create bridges between the school and society. Their duties include: Explanation of the operation terms of the Greek school to refugee parents and systematic communication with them; communication with RFRE teachers; coordination of NGOs, and finding practical solutions to improve the operation of camps when dealing with issues relating to education. It is no accident that the majority of teachers asking to be seconded at the camps are people with experience or/and studies in refugee and immigrant matters and, in particular, highly motivated for such type of action.

The SC considers the contribution of RECs decisive for the success of the integration venture. Despite the difficulties, the deficient support by the Ministry and the SC, the lack of coordination, feedback and meetings, they have eagerly responded with a high feeling of responsibility to the ongoing challenges. Working in especially adverse conditions, Refugee Education Coordinators developed many innovative actions at RACs as social intermediaries. In most cases, they have exceeded their standard duties, successfully strengthening the integration policy of the Ministry of Education. For this reason, the SC believes that RECs who shall not be seconded at RACs had better undertake the role of consultants at regional education directorates, to further support the integration of refugee children in education.

A) Problems registered by RECs:

- ✓ Work status: Although their post is full of responsibilities, they are not given the relevant benefits; furthermore, they do not have the right to sign. Their travel expenses from RACs to the schools were not covered. The same thing happened with the bills of their mobile phones which they had to use for their work and they had to pay themselves.
- ✓ Work environment: No fundamental work conditions, i.e. work space, desk, access to telephone, computer etc, have been ensured at most RACs even today (April 2017).
- ✓ Cooperation with NGOs: Difficulties occurred in many cases in their cooperation with NGOs. While NGOs ask for many data and request the help of RECs, they do not give them the information necessary for their work.

- ✓ Difficulty in communicating with parents who do not speak English. Everybody has stressed that the lack of interpreters makes their work more difficult.
- ✓ Cooperation with the representatives of the Ministry of Migration Policy: The Ministry of Migration Policy does not provide adequate information about the population at RACs. This means difficulties in the registration of children, as it is not known how many and which families will be transferred to other accommodation facilities. RECs also note that balances at RACs where they work are extremely sensitive, as, apart from the Ministries of Migration Policy and Education Research & Religious Affairs, the armed forces, international organizations and NGOs intervene, and this means that special care on their part is required.
- ✓ There is no institutional framework coverage for RECs if a child needs to return to the RAC because of illness.
- ✓ Vaccination matters, issuing Personal Student Health Cards (*ADYM in Greek*) and presenting the health booklet to School Principals. School directorates and RECs were in many cases under considerable pressure due to extreme phobic reactions of parents that led to the involvement of public prosecutors, sending extrajudicial notes etc. At those difficult times that required extremely dispassionate and sensitive handling, RECs did not have any written instructions about how to react and were not timely informed about the procedures they had to follow.
- ✓ Another element of disruption came from RECs. Problems were continuously arising related to the timely collection of the necessary data (list of names of RFREs students, separation of classes, consent forms) since quite often the staff did not timely fulfill their obligations and, consequently, the entire administrative mechanism was delayed. The above were mainly related to the students' transfer and cooperating with the IOM for their relocation.

B) Good practices of RECs:

A series of good practices developed by RECs during the school year, worthy of special note, are set out below:

Activities with the parents

Involving parents in accompanying their children during their transportation, gives them a role which they fulfill with satisfaction and a feeling of responsibility, while it contributes to defining students' limits. Regular informative meetings with parents. Establishment of parents' associations. Parents' associations visiting RFREs to get to know the teachers and be informed. Holding visits of RFRE teachers at RACs to get to know the parents and inform them about their children's progress, communicate and exchange opinions. Informing RFRE teachers about the concerns and anxieties of the parents. Participation of educators teaching at RFREs in RAC events (i.e. celebrations along with the students' families).

Educational meetings with agencies offering formal or informal education at RACs (UNHCR, NGOs and other civil society bodies).

Coordination and/or participation in courses (i.e. Greek language, foreign languages) held for the parents of students to consolidate a relationship of trust between parents and RECs. Holding activities outside the RACs with the students' families: Visits to museums, archaeological sites, monuments, getting to know the city, attending theatrical plays.

Activities with Children

Outings

Getting to know the natural environment, the city and its history. Using public transport so that children get to know the city and its habitants. Educational visits to activity parks, museums, archaeological sites, monuments, sites of environmental interest. Participation of children in educational workshops, games and experiential activities held at museums, education institutes, libraries. Attending shows without language barriers (i.e. music shows, puppet theater, charades).

Meetings and organization of joint activities with the morning zone classes

Visits of morning zone classes to RACs or of RFRE students to morning zone classes. Joint participation of RFRE students and the morning zone classes in art, sports, and educational activities at RACs or schools. Getting to know the special cultural traditions of the refugees' countries of origin through the participation in celebrations at RACs. Establishment of a school network for communication, cooperation, joint organization of activities. Cooperation with music schools to present music groups to RFRE students and to integrate RFRE students in the music groups of morning zone classes. Participation of RFRE students in student contests.

Relationships with the community/society

Holding open information events - discussions at schools with the participation of parents, teachers, representatives of local authorities and cooperating ministries for the integration of refugee children in schools. Cooperation of RFREs with municipal bodies to organize Art and Acceptance Festivals. Open events - meetings on refugee issues. Presentation of art activities of students to the public (exhibition of children's paintings, showing of documentary created by the students in the framework of a seminar, presentation of music works with the participation of children, creation of e-books from the children's art projects). Contact with universities (Panteion, University of Piraeus, School of Fine Arts) and promotion of the idea of refugees attending courses as observers.

Psychosocial support of children, parents and teachers

Cooperating with social workers and psychologists of the community service program and urging them to be present when parents are met to inform them about their children's education aiming at the more effective and valid transmission of information and at covering the psychosocial support needs of the parents.

Cooperation with Social Services (social service of HCDP, OKANA) to deal with children's delinquent/disruptive behavior at RFREs and to support the students' parents and RFRE teachers.

Support actions for educational integration

Actions for the preparation of children's integration in schools: Creative engagement of preschool children (painting, constructions, music, theater play) in cooperation with teachers and psychologists of the community work program.

Establishment and operation of informal school aiming at children's socialization and their smooth integration in RFREs.

Support actions in parallel with the RFRE operation. Supplementary teaching programs of RFRE students and courses for parents (Greek language, foreign languages, languages of countries of origin) with the cooperation of the NGOs developing educational programs approved by the Institute for Education Policy/Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs, educators of the community work program or refugees who are teachers themselves. Establishment/expansion of libraries with the support of grants. Creation of support educational material for RFREs. Educational seminars for children to acquire skills and knowledge, i.e. intercultural communication, traffic education program.

2.4. RFRE curriculum, educational material and teacher training

The SC's planning for the 2016-2017 pre-integration school year was based on certain findings: Refugee children are in a transition phase from a war situation to normality and, therefore, what they want from education is different. Having lived under difficult conditions with hard experiences, they have acquired survival skills. This means that they are children with adult experiences but with children's needs. They may have more knowledge compared to other children of their age in western societies, they know how to survive, how to overcome obstacles and how to get adjusted but they do not have the knowledge which is positively assessed in schools. The educational system must become flexible and recognize identities under continuous negotiation, a variety of cultural references and different needs in order to help refugee children in their integration process. It is also required to prioritize its educational objectives differently: The first objective is to create a feeling of security and acceptance, develop communication, help with their adjustment to the educational procedure and the institution of school and, then focus on achieving education objectives and school performance. Based on those data, the operation of pre-integration classes was proposed to take place in schools outside of RACs, in special Reception Facilities for Refugee Education, where refugee children could attend afternoon classes. This solution allowed children to get out of RACs to attend school classes, and offered them the opportunity to experience normality through a daily schedule, while at the same time it provided them with the required time to get adjusted to education facilities without experiencing excessive

pressure. Therefore, this proposal was made on the grounds that a big number of refugee children have lived in populous RACs outside the urban fabric. Their attendance of morning Reception Classes required, therefore, their dispersion to many schools, given the lack of an adequate number of classrooms in nearby schools. Furthermore, in most cases RACs are not connected via public transport with schools.

The RFRE solution was accompanied by a special curriculum responding to the particularly heterogeneous student population both in terms of national origin, as well as previous education experience. Under the extraordinary conditions of the refugee issue, it was considered impossible to subject refugee children to a knowledge test to find the accurate correspondence of their knowledge with the one of children attending the Greek school, both for psychological and practical reasons (children from different countries, with many mother tongues; so it is difficult to create reliable exploratory tools in a short period of time). The SC closely cooperated with the staff and the president of the Institute for Education Policy (IEP) during the preparation and implementation of the program. The IEP undertook to design curricula and select educational material and training. The SC, in cooperation with the IEP, proposed Greek language, English language and IT courses. These courses were selected so that the children can acquire the basic qualifications for as much a smooth adaptation as possible, irrespective of whether they will be integrated into the Greek educational system from the next school year, or they will attend schools of another European country. An open curriculum was also created giving the teachers the possibility to change pace depending on the group they were going to teach. Naturally, teachers need to understand the framework, prioritize their objectives and have pedagogic flexibility in order to utilize the freedom provided by the open curriculum. Finally, the IEP proposed the Greek language course school books written in recent years for the teaching of Greek as a second language. The children were proposed to be divided into three levels depending on their age: Younger (7-8), medium age (9-10), older (11-12). Of course, as already mentioned, the ages of refugee children cannot always be accurately determined.

The educational and support material for the RFREs has been posted at: “Refugee Education” portal of the IEP.

<http://www.iep.edu.gr/index.php/el/component/k2/content/5-ekpaidefsi-prosfygon>

The following Open Curricula for Primary and Secondary Education can also be found in the same portal for courses on:

- Greek Language
- Mathematics
- IT
- Physical Education
- Arts Course

The following live and/or distance training sessions for substitute teachers hired at RFREs were organized by the IEP:

- Teachers of Primary and Secondary Education and RECs (total: 24)- 12/10/2016
- Teachers of Primary and Secondary Education and RECs (total: 35)- 15/10/2016

- Teachers of Primary and Secondary Education and RECs (total: 32)- 23/11/2016
- Teachers of Primary Education (total: 25)- 23/2/2016

The duration of the training sessions was four hours each time and included:

- A brief description and analysis of the cultural, social and pedagogic parameters for the education of refugee children
- A presentation of the open curriculum and educational materials with examples
- A presentation of teaching practices by teachers with experience in the integration of refugee children

Due to the complex administrative and financial matters the IEP was facing in connection with its organization and implementation, the training/informative program attended by some of RFRE teachers was not adequate to support them in this novel educational venture. Substitute teachers started working, therefore, at RFREs completely unprepared, inevitably bringing with them stereotypes and biases, while a lot of them did not have the motive required for this position. Furthermore, apart from the pedagogic problems, they also faced many procedural problems related to the operation of the RFREs. The lack of systematic training and on-site support exacerbated the feeling of insecurity and inadequacy they had had due to the fact that they were not familiar with teaching Greek as a second language or with intercultural education. This resulted in a prevailing feeling of frustration among teachers. Many school consultants tried to support the teachers by holding mandatory training sessions during school hours with teachers and IEP associates as trainees. However, this was not systematically or universally applied and, more importantly, it was not applicable from the beginning of the school year. This fact, in combination with the reality of changing teachers all too often affected the effectiveness and quality of the education. Isolated training sessions for RFRE teachers and RECs were also organized by other bodies, i.e. the Hellenic Open University (HOU), in which, as far as we know, the need to ease the stress of the teachers caused by the difficulties they had faced was expressed together with a request for their systematic support by the IEP and the Ministry of Education. Even more difficulties were faced in junior high schools. Secondary education teachers had to deal with adolescence issues as well, etc.

However, despite the described deficiencies and difficulties, the teachers in many RFREs achieved a lot in familiarizing the children with the school environment and its limits; they managed to make their students acquire basic skills and math knowledge and enabled them to communicate in Greek. In certain RFREs, actions were organized in cooperation with the morning zone classes, common breaks and games with the students attending the all-day school, teacher contact with parents, synergies with parents' and teachers' associations, in cooperation with RECs.

The SC proposals lay emphasis on the importance of training and enriching the posted educational material with ideas and good practices.

2.5. The kindergarten issue

Kindergartens, as an introductory step to mandatory education, constitute the first

familiarization step of the refugee children with the Greek language and the limitations and requirements of the school framework. The SC's proposal for 2016-2017 stipulated the operation of kindergartens inside RACs so that the safety of preschool children would not be put at risk and also because it would be difficult for these children to be removed from their parents. Furthermore, kindergartens were stipulated to operate as a place where the mothers accompanying their children could get familiar with the Greek language. Gradually, these mothers would start operating as intermediaries.

However, a lot of conditions need to be met for kindergartens to be safe and appropriate for preschool children inside RACs: The operation of kindergartens inside RACs is a difficult venture due to the special conditions and also because there is no school framework, as in the case of RFREs. The appropriate space must be found, or else be created, and the same applies to furniture, educational material and consumables. Additionally, as communication with young children who do not speak Greek is difficult, it is necessary to appoint more than one kindergarten teacher and ensure the terms for the operation of the kindergartens with differentiated working hours. Finally, to date, it was not possible to guarantee all these requirements so as to establish kindergartens at RACs. Their operation is consequently a first-priority issue for the next school year.

The following actions have been made to date to make kindergartens safe and appropriate for preschool students inside RACs: The Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs assigned the Committee members to define the specifications of the spaces hosting the kindergartens. In September 2016, a plan with specifications for the supply of 50 cabins for the operation of kindergartens in all RACS was submitted. The specifications stipulate space for the operation of two simultaneous classes, an office, WCs for adults and children, storage areas and a safe yard. The tender for the supply of cabins was announced on 01.02.2017, 6 months after the preparation of specifications. It is estimated that the completion procedures of the tender laid down in the law shall have been concluded at the beginning of May. If the procedures are concluded within the stipulated deadlines, the cabins can be installed up to 15 July 2017. The long duration of the procedures for the appropriate spaces housing the kindergartens (September 2016 - July 2017) laid down in the law did not allow the operation of the units. The long delays are due to the financing services outside the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs, which, when checking the tender framework, were all the time requesting changes to be made in the terms of the tender notice.

Given this delay, the Working Group investigated alternative possibilities so that kindergartens could start operating at some RACs at least until the installation of special cabins has been concluded. It examined the possibility of establishing kindergarten branches in buildings that were not used inside some RACs. A group of Committee members and volunteer engineers undertook the certification of the proposed spaces in order to avoid new delays. The technical inspectors for the certification of the suitability of the specific spaces promptly assessed spaces at four RACs, which were considered suitable for the operation of kindergartens:

- FORMER SLAUGHTERHOUSES, KILLINI, PREFECTURE OF ILIA

- KONITSA
- ALEXANDRIA OF IMATHIA (G. PELAGOS MILITARY CAMP)
- LAGADIKIA

Kindergartens can also operate at three more RACs, provided the small problems detected by the technical inspectors are resolved:

- ELEFSINA
- DIAVATA-STR. ANAGNOSTOPOULOU
- KAVALARI-SYNATEX

A Ministerial Decision, No 23895/Δ1/13-02-2017 (OGG 678/issue B'/06-3-2017), has been issued for the above action.

3. Cooperation with Other Bodies

(Ministries , Municipalities, Ombudsman for Children, International Organizations, NGOs)

3.1. Cooperation with Jointly Responsible Ministries

The cooperation with the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Health and the HCDCP was perfect and effective (about the Ministry of Health and the HCDCP see above: Vaccinations). The required cooperation with the Ministries of Labor Social Insurance and Solidarity that would have facilitated the integration of unaccompanied minors in the education system failed to materialize on account of both ministries' shortcomings.

The most important problem, though, was related to the Ministry of Migration Policy. There were many difficulties in the joint planning and management of the problems at a central and local level for the entire period and it was not possible to establish a functional joint taskforce. A particularly big deficit of timely information of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs on account of the services provided by the Ministry of Migration Policy about refugee movement created difficulties in planning and implementing the education project. As an indication, we wish to mention that in some cases RFREs were established, teachers were appointed and, in the end, because the refugees had been moved by the Ministry of Migration Policy without informing the competent staff at the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs, there were no students to attend the schools. Furthermore, the Ministry of Migration Policy prevented the operation of education facilities on the islands. The Ministry of Education met many times with higher officials of the Ministry of Migration Policy to find a solution. The Ministry of Migration Policy has been committed to give an answer about the operation of kindergartens inside RACs.

The cooperation with the Ministry of Citizen Protection on issues relating to the safety of students' transportation and the safety of schools was very good at the level of political leadership and higher officials. Communication was regular and helped both in the daily operation of the schools and the management of emergencies. Unfortunately, though, we

cannot ignore a few significant cases involving policemen, who, in critical moments for the safety of refugee children and teachers, when racist attacks against the schools were unfolding (Ikonio, Kolonos, etc), initially remained “neutral”, clearly avoiding to do their duty until their superiors had to intervene and make them obey orders and adhere to the law.

3.2. Local Authorities

The cooperation with many Local Authorities, at a local and regional level, was effective. The Municipalities in Northern Greece and Attica were invited to a meeting, at the beginning of the educational program of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs, to discuss issues regarding the operation of RFREs. Many municipalities did not, of course, respond; some expressed objections about the fact that only schools in their municipality would bear the burden of RFREs and requested the selection of schools for the establishment of RFREs to be geographically expanded. A standing request of all Municipalities was to ensure the payment of cleaning and heating costs. Finally, after a long delay and thanks to the persistent actions of the Working Group members, the cleaning and heating costs were covered by the sponsorship of the Hellenic Parliament.

3.3. Ombudsman for Children

The cooperation with the Ombudsman for Children was excellent. The Ombudsman supported the work of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs and the SC in a variety of ways, contributed to the drafting and publication of circulars, provided information from visits to RFREs and RACs, protected the children from Mass Media exposure, participated in a number of meetings and events with parents and municipal councils all over Greece, cooperated with the HCDCP to create an informative video informing parents about vaccinations and, in general, actively participated in providing information to students, parents and Greek society in general. The positive contribution of the Ombudsman in managing the reactions against RFREs by parents’ associations was decisive.

3.4. International Organizations

During the first implementation period of the program, the main international organizations with which the staff of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs cooperated were:

- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- Unicef

IOM

The cooperation with the IOM was impeccable and its help in the implementation of the education program for refugee children was decisive. The IOM was a key associate and funder of the transportation of students from and to schools, and provided school equipment for RFRE primary school children. To this day, it has been successfully carrying out the transportation of children to and from RFREs and has covered part of the necessary technical assistance in various occasions. Furthermore, the IOM in many cases ensured the transportation of students for school excursions/visits outside normal school hours.

Furthermore, the IOM offered visual material and technical assistance (photocopies and projectors, laptops, stationery etc) in order to support the educational work and the cooperation with the RECs and the heads of the schools, to the following individual schools and RACs. Support to certain schools was especially extensive (i.e. the 72nd Primary School of Athens received material and technical assistance amounting to €6,500):

1. 2nd Primary School of Tavros
2. 72nd Primary School of Athens
3. 81st Primary School of Athens
4. 1st Primary School of Rafina
5. 9th Primary School of Volos
6. 2nd Primary School of Stavroupolis
7. Primary School of Konitsa
8. 66th Junior High School of Athens
9. 9th Primary School of Avlida
10. Primary School of Vathi
11. 14th Primary School of Chalkida
12. 1st Primary School of Gorgopotamos
13. Junior High School of Moschochori
14. 2nd Junior High School of Drapetsona
15. 15th Primary School of Nikea
16. 1st Primary School of Polikastro
17. 1st Primary School of Axioupolis
18. 2nd Primary School of Axioupolis
19. 4th Primary School of Alexandria
20. Primary School of Neo Ikonio-Perama
21. 4th Junior High School of Lagada
22. 12th Primary School of Neapoli
23. RAC of Schisto
24. RAC of Volos Moza
25. RAC of Chios
26. RAC of Eleonas
27. RAC of Thermopiles
28. RAC of Skaramagas
29. RAC of Softex Mouries

In March 2017, the IOM confirmed that it will also cover the heating costs of RFREs by paying for heating oil. The Organization also requested its funder (DG ECHO) to cover the cleaning costs of RFREs and secured the approval of the required amount. The amount secured by the IOM for cleaning was not in the end used by the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs as the condition set by the funder for private companies to undertake the cleaning of schools could not be accepted. Finally, the problem was solved with funding from the House of Hellenes.

Difficulties in the cooperation with the IOM arose only in the final formulation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2017 and the School Transportation Consent Forms, which were considered absolutely necessary by the IOM and the funder at the beginning of November, but included phrases that are not indicated for the specific population (i.e. *“in case of injury to or loss of life of the minor during the transport, the Organization shall bear no responsibility”*, etc). It was clarified that these “forms” shall be distributed only by the IOM staff at RACs and not by the RECs.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees is closely cooperating with the Scientific Committee and the Working Group. It positively responded to the request of the Ministry to cover the school equipment of Junior High School students and the cooperation in this field was satisfactory although there were some delays in its delivery.

The High Commissioner also made some donations to specific schools:

- Primary School of Lagadikia: 2 desktop PCs, 2 laptops, Video projectors
- Primary School of Profitis Ilias: 3 desktop PCs, 3 laptops
- Junior High School “Koronia - K.Theodoridi”: 5 desktop PCs, 1 Video projector
- 67th Primary School of Thessaloniki: 10 stereo systems (cd, usb, ipod input), 10 basketballs no 5, 10 volleyballs, 10 footballs no 4, 6 sport jackets (blue), 6 sport jackets (yellow), 6 sport jackets (red), 10 big plastic cones, 10 ropes, 1 IWB, 2 video projectors, 3 laptops

Finally, following the signing of a relevant Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), UNHCR gave the Ministry 50 containers to be used as kindergartens and in some cases as offices for Refugee Education Coordinators at Refugee Accommodation Centers that did not have the relevant infrastructure. Due to difficulties in their installation and the delays in getting approval for their installation by the Ministry of Migration Policy, the containers have not yet been used. However, when this report (April 2017) was being prepared, the procedure was accelerated and the first containers are expected to be used at certain RACs.

The UN High Commissioner also responded positively to the request of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs and the SC to give priority to those morning schools where RFREs operate under the umbrella of special educational programs it is now developing with a view to raising awareness for refugee children.

In March 2017, it provided information about the key geographical areas (and accommodation facilities) where refugee families live so that the support of Education Priority Zones (EPZ)/morning reception classes can be planned for next year. However, in the

previous months, the High Commissioner did not always provide the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs with the necessary data about the relocation of populations living in RACs under its management on time, in order to accommodate RFRE operation planning, and information in this field continues to be problematic.

Similarly, a standing request of the High Commissioner during the year was the provision of numerical data by the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs about all cooperation matters. At the beginning of 2017, the Ministry gave the High Commissioner a series of data it had collected on Reception Classes.

Unicef

Unicef's relationship with the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs was formed during the first phase of the program and has been kept active via continuous meetings and communication. The continuous contact with Unicef gave the staff and consultants of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs (Supervisory Council, Scientific Committee and Working Group) an overall view of the international practices and policies relating to refugee children education issues. The cooperation with Unicef is estimated to be positive in this respect. However, there have been no tangible results to date in significant co-operations in this field.

In June 2016, Unicef undertook the responsibility to translate the SC text into English which documented its educational activities and proposals for the education of refugee children for the attention of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs. This helped in the dissemination of the material to international organizations.

Unicef also contributed to the costs for the vaccination program of refugee children.

In March 2017, Unicef responded to the repeated requests of the Ministry to send a specific MoU draft, and at the same time, in cooperation with Save the Children, it submitted a proposal to support the organization of a Conference of European Ministries of Education on Refugee Education. The MoU draft and the support proposal for the Conference are still being discussed with Unicef.

Finally, there was cooperation with the Hellenic National Committee for UNICEF in some students' awareness projects (i.e. posters showing children's rights, contests with collages and drawings, etc).

3.5. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

Numerous international and Greek NGOs started working in the field right from the start of the refugee crisis, initially on the reception islands and later in mainland Greece. Their involvement ranged from improvised short-lived initiatives to systematic and organized long-term actions. In many cases, their actions were related to the creative engagement and education of refugee children. Some NGOs were active in improvised actions in these fields without having any experience and scientific support. Others were more experienced in the specific object and created facilities for this purpose (tents or small makeshift houses) but often, despite their numerous personnel, only a small number of children was engaged (see

record of NGO education activities in the SC's findings for 2016).

As of the spring of 2016, when the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs officially assumed the responsibility for the formal education of refugees, all NGOs involved in the field of creative engagement and education were invited to be certified by the IEP/Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs, by submitting proposals of specific programs to a single registry. At the same, the NGOs were informed about the terms of being active in the field of formal and informal education. This approach partly regulated the initially "out of control" landscape of NGO actions, albeit without achieving universal success. The approval procedure of NGO educational programs was delayed but many NGOs were certified by the IEP/Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs, and there are also some cases in which certification is still pending, while some applications were rejected. Irrespective, however, of the approval by the IEP/Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs, the allocation and concession of space and time within RACs requires the cooperation of the Ministry of Migration Policy. In recent months, the Ministry of Migration Policy created its own platform/registry for the registration and inclusion of all NGOs (irrespective of the scope of their work) and has requested that all NGO registries of all Ministries be merged and that their legal and financial solvency be checked. All Ministries have raised objections with regard to the technical dysfunctions and delays of such a venture and this proposal is still under investigation.

Another problem concerns the fact that it is not clear which Ministry should evaluate and approve the work of some NGOs (i.e. NGOs offering drama, dance, movement, psychotherapy programs inside RACs without having informed the Ministry of Health). Problems were finally observed due to the inability to remove some non-approved NGOs from RACs when their Administrators do not help, and also in enforcing the decision of the Ministry of Education that no educational activity should take place in the RACs without its approval.

In general, it is also noted that no substantial relationship was created with the NGOs at an executive level. There were, of course, some cases of cooperation locally in various RACs with positive results. Finally, the answers of the bodies participating in the Attica Education Working Group meetings about whether they shall adopt the proposals of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs for the development of cooperation with the Ministry are still pending.

Finding a way to evaluate the approved educational programs developed by the NGOs and other bodies for refugee children and improving the link between formal and informal education are still pending.

4. Local communities and the education program of refugee children

The wave of huge social solidarity witnessed in 2015-2016 on the islands and in mainland Greece – which peaked on the island of Mytilene, Piraeus and Idomeni – abated at the end of the spring of 2016 when refugee flows stabilized. During that critical period, it is estimated that more than 10,000 volunteers and citizens expressing their solidarity provided

assistance in Greece filling in the huge gaps of the state mechanism. The few racist reactions of intolerance – such as the notable cases of opposition raised against the establishment of accommodation centers in Schisto or Veria – did not last long.

However, the fact that a significant part of the refugee population was trapped in the country as a result of the EU-Turkey agreement affected part of the Greek society and, as a result, when the first RFREs started operating (October 2016) and despite the fact that they operated in different hours from the morning zone classes, there were some reactions from parents or out-of-school local agents (Kolonos, Profitis, Oreokastro). The initial reactions, although not numerous, received a lot of public attention. The role of some TV channels (Mass Media) and social media is considered to have been very negative. They intensively aired the reactions of a few small groups for a long period or, in extreme cases, they created a confrontational climate, even by disseminating false news.

These reactions, wherever they occurred, caught the mechanism of the Ministry of Education unprepared. In the end, they were successfully dealt with, but only after they had occurred and had caused problems to local societies and schools. Two decisions that were made, i.e. the persistent refusal to change the schools (RFREs) because of the reactions and the initiatives of high profile executives in the fields of education and medicine to inform the public as much as possible decisively contributed towards a positive change. Unfortunately, the experience of October 2016 did not help in launching a timely extensive awareness campaign which would reduce the emergence of similar phenomena in the future.

Furthermore, the positive approach of some local authorities, such as the Region of Attica, the mayors and deputy mayors of Athens, Tavros-Moschato, Thessaloniki and Lagadas, and almost the entire education world, played a decisive role in the smooth commencement of operation of the first RFREs. Furthermore, the contribution of the Ombudsman for Children, Mr G. Moschos, was significant since, in many cases, Mr G. Moschos participated in meetings with parents and teachers, as was the contribution of Professor T. Panagiotopoulos (National School of Public Health and Science, Officer of the Department of Epidemiological Monitoring and Intervention of the HCDCP).

Later, in January 2017, immediately after the publication of the Ministerial Decision on the new RFREs (09.01.2017), reactions broke out again by the Parents' Associations in many regions of the country (Ikonio, Keratsini, Madra, Elefsina, Larissa, Oreokastro, Filippiada and elsewhere). These reactions seemed to get out of hand after the attack launched by an MP of the Golden Dawn Party (Chrysi Avgi) against teachers at the Primary School of Neo Ikonio, Perama, on 17 January 2017. The General Secretary of the Ministry of Education, the Working Group, SC members, local education staff, the Mayors of Perama and Keratsini-Drapetsona, the Regional Vice Governor of Western Attica, and many other members of the local authorities, higher officials of HCDCP and the Ombudsman for Children, with numerous volunteers, mainly teachers and students, tried to reverse the climate and activate the local communities to guard the right of refugee children to education for many weeks by going from one school to another and from one parents' meeting to another. All RFREs where reactions occurred managed to operate²⁵.

²⁵ The SC wishes to personally thank all those mentioned above, both those individuals with institutional roles and the ordinary citizens who helped to combat the intolerant campaign against the education of refugee children.

It seems that this last phase of reactions was the result of an organized plan which promoted standardized arguments on the risks for public health and public safety and anti-Islamic speeches and pursued standard reactions (extrajudicial notices, abstentions from school, etc). It is estimated that the increased visibility (refugee children at schools and in the cities) and the realization of the long stay of the refugees in the country brought this wave of reactions, which was exploited by Golden Dawn. The dynamic involvement of the member of racist and Nazi groups in all cases, and of prestigious attorneys supporting this particular political party reinforces speculations about the existence of this organized plan which failed but could appear again at any time. The methodology pursued by the State with its unyielding stance regarding the operation of RFREs and the right of refugee children to education, and the delayed but widespread dissemination of information and presence in parents' and municipal councils' meetings was correct, and this time, it reversed the negative climate. This is proven by the way refugee children were welcomed at schools with celebrations and events, and the positive manner adopted by the majority of Mass Media when covering the opening of RFREs. The successful outcome of the last phase of the program does not reverse the serious failure in anticipating reactions and preparing parents, teachers and, generally, local societies via the appropriate provision of information. Furthermore, the fact that the reactions were dealt with in this phase does not mean that they will not emerge in the future. A characteristic example is that the parents' associations have filed petitions and extrajudicial notices demanding explanations about the way the schools were chosen, the health of refugee children, the decisions of the Ministry, etc. An action was even brought before the Council of State. All these prove that there is quite a lot of reluctance, there is fear, intolerance, biases and stereotypes in certain groups of society which are expected to increase when refugee children start attending the morning zone classes. For this reason, the SC lays a lot of emphasis on the need for raising awareness in the education community, local societies and the public, especially in view of the integration of refugee children in Reception Classes in the morning zone next year.

Conclusions

Since the beginning of 2016, safeguarding the right of refugee children recently arriving in the country to education has been a major concern of the Ministry of Education. In March 2016, the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs timely took the initiative to set up a Support Committee/Scientific Committee and empower it to form a plan for the integration of refugee children in education in order to facilitate their broader social integration. This plan was drawn up by the SC and was implemented by the Working Group, the administrative mechanism of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs, RECs and teachers with the assistance of other ministries, international organizations and agencies.

This extremely demanding project was prepared under conditions of time pressure and implemented in an especially unstable environment with a refugee population quite heterogeneous in terms of their characteristics and versatile in terms of their number, location and living conditions in the country. Furthermore, after the closing of the borders

and the European Union-Turkey agreement, the legal status and the relocation prospects to another country of the various refugee groups in mainland Greece and on the islands started to change. Finally, it was observed that there were continuous transfers of the refugee population from place to place and from Refugee Accommodation Centers (RACs) to other accommodation facilities, i.e. flats, hotels etc, in urban centers.

The Evaluation Report, assessing the integration venture of refugee children in the educational system for the 2016-2017 school year, has detected mistakes and omissions, inconsistencies and difficulties, without ignoring the significant achievements of the policy for the integration of children in education.

The basic omissions concern the non-implementation of the SC proposals for the operation of kindergartens and non-mandatory education programs (15+). The failure to timely set up kindergartens is mainly due to the bureaucracy of the administrative and funding mechanisms outside the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs. The Ministry very properly focused on organizing mandatory education. With regard to the non-mandatory education of refugee children 15+, however, the Ministry did not manage to find solutions to the problem that arises when children do not have junior high school leaving certificates so that they can enroll in the existing facilities or to implement alternative programs to integrate them in education facilities.

The organization and operation of RFREs faced many problems, weaknesses and delays. The long period (September 2016-March 2017) that was required to open all RFREs is mainly due to the need to vaccinate all children. Furthermore, there was a relatively high percentage of dropouts, while irregular attendance was observed mainly in schools in mainland Greece (although these were similar to the those observed in other countries), mainly due to the unstable and adverse conditions under which refugees live, which are intensified by institutional and educational omissions and deficiencies. More specifically, the absence of special criteria in the recruitment of teachers, their continuous substitution and their insufficient training and support created many problems in the RFRE operation and the fulfillment of their pedagogic role. The numerous children stranded with their parents on the Aegean Islands did not have access to RFREs owing to a decision made by the Ministry of Migration Policy. Finally, there was inadequate and delayed information and sensitization of the education community and local societies and, as a result, there were few, but vociferous local reactions which were reproduced by the Mass Media.

A new parameter that made the Ministry's work difficult after September 2016 was the mass transfer of refugees to flats, shelters or hotels in urban centers without receiving timely information from the Ministry of Migration Policy and the UNHCR to enable the organization of RFREs. As it is anticipated that the transfer of refugees from RACs to accommodation spaces in the cities will also continue in the next school year, the following are necessary: a) to ensure that the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs is timely informed about the number of transferred refugees and their accommodation; and b) the administrative mechanism of the Ministry must carefully plan the space and organize reception classes and/or RFREs.

Due to the increased administrative and organization requirements of the integration

project of refugee children in the Greek educational system, the operation of the Working Group on the Management, Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Children in future is considered absolutely necessary. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Working Group should become more autonomous and be empowered to make decisions and implement them if the education of refugee children is to be improved. It is also considered necessary to support and expand the role of Refugee Education Coordinators (RECs).

In laying the foundation for school attendance and social interaction, the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs took the first step for the social integration of refugees. Although in some cases, the presence of refugee children at schools caused strong reactions and conflicts, the parents who objected to the entry of refugee children in schools gradually stood back and all RFREs finally started to operate and circumstances have now arisen that give us the opportunity to achieve better results and more comprehensive changes next year.

In conclusion, the social and political bet of getting refugees out of the ghetto of camps, returning children to normality, making them familiar with the school and making refugees more visible in the Greek society has been won to a great extent. All this has occurred against a difficult background, if we look at the current wider European and international reality. These achievements are important given the limited opportunities for the social integration of refugees and their meeting with the Greek citizens. They are also of great significance because they became a starting point for the greater acceptance of the rights of refugees and their integration in the Greek and European societies.



Scientific Committee for the Support of
Refugee Children



**B. Proposals for the Education of
Refugee Children in
the 2017-2018 School Year**

Athens
April 2017

Cover Photo:

Refugee children on their first day at school 67th Primary School of Thessaloniki:

Source: ANT1 TV

B. Proposals for the Education of Refugee Children in the 2017-2018 School Year

Introduction

Due to the high degree of instability that is still the main characteristic of the refugee population in terms of its size, its demographics and other features, its location, its living spaces and conditions (see relevant analysis in the Evaluation Report), our recommendation is that the 2017-2018 school year should be seen as **one more transitional year** during which the integration steps will be concluded by applying different scenarios per region/camp, city and age group. The submitted proposals necessarily include **alternative scenarios** and options for the 2017-2018 school year too so that, whatever the situation in September 2017, a plan will be in place for the children whether they live in cities (i.e. flats) or Refugee Accommodation Centers (hereinafter “RACs”) or they are integrated in schools in neighborhoods, reception classes or afternoon zone classes, etc.

Refugees have not chosen to be in Greece and, fully aware of the fact that it is almost impossible to find work here, they hope to be relocated in another European country. Being stranded in Greece causes insecurity either because they are waiting for an answer to their request for asylum or relocation or because those refugees who cannot look forward to these solutions are looking for other ways to escape. A part of the refugee population has started to come to terms with the fact that they shall stay in Greece for a long period and try to find decent ways of living (accommodation, work, etc). We are talking about a population that has either not accepted that they will live here or they are in an unstable transitional adjustment phase. Under these conditions, the refugees’ relationship with formal education is ambivalent. The feeling of precariousness is intensified by the fact that a significant percentage of refugees still live in Accommodation Centers and, what is more, they are frequently moved from one to another. Many refugees have been moved for some months now by the High Commissioner or other agencies to flats, hotels and shelters in Athens, Piraeus, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Kilkis, Arta, etc. (See *Evaluation Report for the Integration of Refugee Children in Education*). The Ministry of Migration Policy aims at expanding the accommodation program in such urban facilities and decreasing the number of refugees living at Accommodation Centers. This, obviously, shall continue to change the distribution of refugees in the country. As mentioned in detail in the Evaluation Report (*ibid*), the exact number of children that will stay in Greece is not clear; neither is their period of stay or their living locations and conditions. Therefore, the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs must be prepared for multiple scenarios in terms of the population of refugee children and their location. The insecurity and instability of the situation must be seriously taken into account. An additional feature making planning difficult is the fact that the children who will probably stay in Greece belong to different legal status categories: There are children who are governed by the refugee status; others that are waiting for relocation or family unification without being sure about their departure or without knowing the departure date. There are children whose families have submitted an application for asylum

that is yet to be considered, others who live on the islands, unaccompanied minors etc. With the exception of the first category of children, it is impossible to predict if and when the status of the others will be regulated, or if, when and how many children will be relocated. However, given the fact that we are talking about children, the needs of the entire potentially existing population must be provided for and covered. Furthermore, as shown by a number of studies, the trend in the migration and asylum policies of the EU is the long stay of the immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers under a quasi-precarious regime.

Owing to wars and migration, a significant percentage of refugee children have been out of the school environment for at least two years, and many children have never attended school, although they are of school age. Many children are additionally burdened by psychological traumas: terror, death experience, bereavement. Last year, the Scientific Committee (SC) believed that refugee children are experiencing transition from a war situation to normality and that they have different needs and objectives as a result. Having lived under difficult conditions with hard experiences, they are children with adult experiences but with children's needs. They have knowledge, they know how to survive, how to overcome obstacles and how to get adjusted, but they do not have the knowledge that is positively assessed by the educational system. As a consequence, the educational system was requested, and it still is, to prioritize its objectives differently and adopt differentiated pedagogic practices to help refugee children. In the initial phase, emphasis needed to be laid on adapting to and getting familiar with the institution of school, since cognitive targets presuppose a feeling of security, communication and acceptance. This transitional phase was also considered necessary as the children did not speak the Greek language and had to cover gaps in their education due to their long absence from the schools of their countries.

For the next phase, in assessing the integration of refugee children in the educational system in the 2016-2017 school year, the SC underlined mistakes and omissions, contradictions and difficulties in the ***Evaluation Report for the Integration of Refugee Children in Education*** but also highlighted the good practices and solutions found by teachers. Some of the main weaknesses are:

1. No kindergarten operated at Accommodation Centers. The operation of the kindergartens was very much delayed due to the inability of the administrative mechanism to be timely supplied with cabins or find safe places for infants at RACs. Furthermore, the frequent movement of refugees from RAC to RAC caused additional problems related to planning.
2. It has not been possible up to now to find acceptable solutions for the problem of refugees who do not have a junior high school leaving certificate and how to tally foreign school leaving certificates with the Greek ones so that children over the age of 15 could enroll in senior high schools or vocational schools.
3. The numerous children stranded with their parents on the Aegean Islands did not have access to formal education owing to a decision made by the Ministry of Migration Policy.
4. The organization and operation of RFREs faced many problems, weaknesses and delays

(recorded in detail in the relevant Evaluation Report, as above). Solutions are proposed below for the improvement of various parameters; however, it is stressed that RFREs constitute a provisional measure for pre-integration education, serving specific needs and cannot constitute a long-term solution.

Nevertheless, we believe that the social and political bet of getting refugees out of the ghetto of camps, returning children to normality, making them familiar with the school and making refugees more visible in the Greek society has been won to a great extent. These achievements are important given the limited opportunities for the social integration of refugees and their meeting with the Greek citizens. In laying the foundation for school attendance and social interaction, the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs took the first step for the social integration of refugees. Although in some cases, the presence of refugee children at schools caused strong reactions and conflicts, the parents who objected to the entry of refugee children in schools gradually stood back and circumstances have now arisen that give us the opportunity to achieve better results and more comprehensive changes next year.

In order to achieve the targets of the Ministry of Education, to implement the SC proposals and achieve the gradual integration of refugee children in the educational system, it is considered absolutely necessary that **the Working Group on the Management, Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Children (hereinafter “Working Group”)** should continue to operate in Athens and Thessaloniki and the administrative mechanism of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs should be systematically engaged with the education of refugee children next year as well. The Working Group was organized in view of the first phase of the integration of refugee children in education and effectively responded to its work, overcoming the dysfunctions and inflexibility of a mechanism, which traditionally operates at a very slow pace.

Taking into account the experience of the current school year, the SC’s proposals for next year try to give answers to problems and facilitate the expansion of refugee children attendance both in preschool and in non-mandatory education. The education of children aged 15-18 is particularly emphasized.

The key points of the SC proposal that will be later developed in detail are as follows:

1. Children living **in the urban fabric of the Greek cities** (flats or other places) should attend kindergartens or Reception Classes at the schools of their neighborhood, depending on their age.

It is proposed that children with a satisfactory knowledge of the Greek language be integrated in normal classes reflecting their age, in accordance with current law and as the circumstances of each school to enroll children permit, while at the same time these

children should attend extra Greek language courses.

2. Children living at **large Refugee Accommodation Centers**:

a) It is proposed that children **of preschool age** should attend kindergartens in Accommodation Centers.

b) It is proposed that children **at the age of attending mandatory education** (primary and secondary) should enroll on Reception Classes (RC) in the morning zone, insofar that there are available classrooms at nearby schools, provided these schools are not burdened with an excessive number of immigrant children and they are easily accessible by public transport. Otherwise, they should attend RFREs provided that their transportation costs are covered by the International Organization for Migration, which successfully implemented the 2016-2017 program, or by another organization.

3. It is proposed that **children who live on the Aegean Islands** be integrated, in consultation with the Ministry of Migration Policy, in the refugee children education program of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs starting from the 2017-2018 school year. Last year, the Ministry of Education appointed Refugee Education Coordinators (RECs) on the islands of Lesbos and Chios to operate kindergartens inside RACs and prepare the ground for the operation of RFREs. This target was not achieved due to the objections raised by the Ministry of Migration Policy. For the next school year, our proposals include the timely cooperation with the Ministry of Migration Policy, the appointment of RECs on the islands hosting refugees, the operation of kindergartens inside RACs and RFREs in schools, or if this is not feasible, inside RACs. Moreover, a relevant report of the Ombudsman for Children underlines the need to operate formal education facilities on the islands (see <https://www.synigoros.gr/?i=childrens-rights.el.dpnews.424870>).

4. The activation of the law allowing the **establishment of Reception Classes (RC) also in junior high schools** (<https://edu.klimaka.gr/arxeio/nomothesia-fek/fek-1789-1999-idrysi-leitourgia-taxeis-ypodochis-frontistiriaka-tmimata-klimaka.pdf>) and the **enactment** of the possibility to establish **RCs in senior high schools**. The enacted and established RCs must be flexible and versatile.

5. Due to the highly demanding job of teachers working in schools with refugee children, the SC proposes **to second, on a voluntary basis, experienced teachers who are interested**, and if the posts in the schools are not covered by volunteers, to hire substitute teachers. If this is not possible, the SC proposes to create a **separate list with the names of substitute teachers to be hired** in Reception Classes and RFREs. They should be recruited on the basis of advanced qualifications by applying procedures similar to the ones used when hiring special education teachers.

6. **The training of educators**, especially of substitute teachers and secondary education teachers, is considered absolutely necessary in order to enable them to teach children speaking various languages and provide psychological and cognitive support to refugee children.

7. The enactment of the institution of **Refugee Education Coordinators (RECs)** and their posting at Accommodation Centers was successful and must be **strengthened** further.

Equally necessary are the following:

- a. To intensify **efforts to raise awareness and sensitize the educational community**, prepare the administrative education mechanism more systematically, and avoid negative reactions against the participation of refugee children in the Greek educational system, in general.
- b. To intensify **efforts to inform refugees** about the Greek educational system and the opportunities it offers their children for a better future.
- c. To continue to **cooperate with the Ministry of Health and the HCDCP** via the current successful cooperation regime (joint taskforce with few members) and provide information to teachers, parents and staff working in Local Authority Organizations about the vaccination of refugee children and continue to successfully **cooperate with the Ombudsman for Children**.

Like last year, the SC underlined the importance of two matters, given the vagueness about the country the refugees will live in the future:

1. Special care should be given to children who are very likely to return to their countries to **learn their mother tongue**. Furthermore, the current linguistic and pedagogical bibliography underlines that the necessary condition for all children to learn a second or foreign language (in this case the Greek language) is to learn their mother tongue. Teaching children's mother tongue is, therefore, the main objective. However, for obvious reasons, we believe that it is extremely difficult for the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs to organize the courses, or supervise their content, etc. Given the fact that refugees come from various countries of origin, it is necessary to provide for the teaching of more languages (Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish, etc) and, of course, find the necessary teachers and required financial resources. The SC's proposal at this point is, therefore, limited to providing mother tongue courses by teachers from the refugee community or other native speakers of the children's mother tongues who have the required qualifications (i.e. Arab speaking teachers living in Greece for many years, students of the Foreign Language Teaching Center of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, etc) and should be preferably supervised by an international organization.
2. It is a good idea for children who are very likely to be relocated to another European country soon to attend **courses in another European language**. These courses must be provided by some recognized agency ensuring at the same time the teaching of the Greek language. Attending courses at foreign-language and/or private schools in Greece should be attempted for all children who wish to enroll and who are accepted, and for that matter scholarships are strongly recommended or an initiative recruiting sponsors willing to grant such scholarships. In any case, it is considered absolutely necessary to **teach other European languages** to refugee children, as in the case of native children, and there are many foreign language teachers who could be used, while the experience of the Higher Education Foreign Language Institutes could also be utilized.

Given the continuing financial difficulties of the Public Sector, it is obvious that the implementation of the proposals or part thereof shall depend on whether they can be funded or not.

It is obvious that at the end of the 2017-2018 school year, the situation should be evaluated again and that a new plan for the further integration of refugee children in the Greek educational system should be in place which will reflect the circumstances that will have arisen. It is proposed to systematically monitor and evaluate all educational solutions that will be adopted in the 2017-2018 school year in order to have valid data at hand for next year's plan.

1. General objectives and principles

The objective of the state is to ensure psychosocial support and to integrate refugee children in the Greek educational system following a period of preparation and, at any rate, as soon as possible, without burdening schools with an excessively large number of children who do not speak Greek and have not been appropriately prepared to attend a Greek school. The objective, therefore, of the Ministry is the gradual integration of children into schools. However, as this step faces many difficulties and the experience from the 2016-2017 school year showed that the synergy of all parties is required to be successful, the transitional phase is proposed to be expanded for one more school year with differentiated interventions to gradually create more appropriate conditions.

The integration in the Greek educational system must be designed in such a way to strengthen the possibilities of success of refugee children so that they stay at school and do not abandon it early. To achieve the integration and stay of refugee children in the Greek educational system the following conditions must be met:

- a. learning the Greek language;**
- b. organizing intensive courses for those children who have not attended school for a long period of time and have many gaps in their knowledge, as well as for illiterate children;**
- c. supporting refugee children integrated in the morning zone courses;**
- d. organizing a certification mechanism and procedures for the knowledge required to get a junior and senior high school leaving certificate and the corresponding level of Greek language knowledge for those children who do not have the necessary school leaving certificates (or whose certificates do not correspond with the Greek school leaving certificates).**

2. Plans for the summer months (June-August 2017)

It is necessary to create a supervised creative engagement responding to the psychosocial and learning needs of refugee children, aged 3-12, during the summer, inside and outside RACs, so that they can acquire a feeling of normality, continuity, stability and hope. The prompt operation of kindergartens inside RACs is proposed, wherever possible, with the exceptional recruitment of kindergarten teachers for the summer either through OAED (Manpower Employment Organization) programs or with funding from the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs. Furthermore, literacy courses should be organized in Greek and, perhaps, in English. This can be done not only through traditional courses but also through creative activities. It must be pursued to get refugee children out of the Accommodation Centers either accompanied or on their own, depending on their age. The activities may include visits to museums, archaeological sites or sports facilities, ecology parks, etc.

RECs should be invited to discuss with the agencies organizing creative activities and

educational programs for refugee children to plan, in the best possible way, how the summer period can be utilized to teach the Greek language and, in general, to help in the children's psychosocial development and learning progress.

The following are also proposed: a) establishing mobile units equipped with the appropriate educational material to meet the needs of small or remote Accommodation Centers, hotels and other accommodation locations and also transport teachers - cheerleaders; b) utilizing all mobile libraries of the Municipalities or other bodies to give children access to books in many languages and games; c) requesting RECs to propose ideas and good practices for the summer.

Special care must be given to adolescents (13-18 years old-olds) by organizing: Intensive literacy courses, sports and art activities, activities and games using new technologies, Greek and English language courses, etc. Some children can go to camps where they can participate in activities and courses. The possibility of cooperating with the Archbishopric/Missionary and the Greek Guiding Association and Boy Scouts must also be investigated since they have long experience in organizing day camps, a national network and material appropriate for the creative engagement of refugee children.

It is finally proposed that **the Working Group of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs design and implement the necessary steps for the next year.** Special care must be given, in cooperation with the Ministry of Migration Policy and the UNCHR, to the timely planning of the number and location of Reception Classes for children living inside the urban fabric of the Greek cities. It is also necessary during the summer to train education staff and teachers and to provide information about the integration of refugee children into the Greek educational system to students, parents, local authorities and societies.

3. Scenarios for the 2017-2018 school year

3.1. Scenarios for the education of children 5-6 year-olds (preschool education)

Kindergartens comprise a decisive stage for the smooth integration of preschool children into the educational system. Children 5-6 years old must therefore attend some kind of preschool education.

Alternative scenarios include:

A. Kindergartens at Accommodation Centers: The administrative department of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs must make the necessary preparation during the summer to set up kindergartens at RACs. Given the adaptation and communication difficulties (because of the language) of infants, the procedure applied for RECs is proposed to be adopted for the teaching staff: To invite any permanent kindergarten teachers wishing to submit a secondment application to work at RACs to ensure that there is experienced staff able to manage the pedagogical and social difficulties of this venture. The operation of kindergartens inside camps needs special and ongoing support to be successful. Efforts must, therefore, be exerted to have two teachers in every 20-children class at RACs, to provide flexible teaching hours and, where there is a large number of preschool children, to operate two shifts. Wherever possible, it is also proposed that the supervision of RAC kindergartens be undertaken by Preschool Education Departments, via the Practice Network, in order to offer placements to students who need to complete their practice and to support them scientifically as well.

B. Children whose parents live in urban environments where there are kindergartens must be given the possibility to attend them. The number of children that do not know the Greek language must not exceed 25% of all children in the class in the kindergartens receiving refugee children. Wherever possible, an extra kindergarten teacher or cultural intermediary should be appointed or the work of the teachers should be supported by the students of the Departments of Preschool Education wishing to complete their practice there.

Wherever there are no available positions for the enrolment of refugee children in the morning zone of kindergartens, afternoon classes are proposed to operate.

The Working Group, in cooperation with the directorates of primary education and preschool education consultants, needs to timely make a list of the spaces in kindergartens in quarters where there are flats/hotels/shelters accommodating refugees and plan the distribution of children. Wherever spaces are not adequate, the possibility of using schools in the afternoon and/or day nursery buildings should be explored, in cooperation with the Municipalities.

3.2. Scenarios for the education of 7-15 year-old students (mandatory education)

With regard to planning the next school year, the proposal of the Scientific Committee to the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs is oriented towards the integration of all refugee children in flats, hotels or shelters in cities either in reception classes or, if they speak the Greek language to a satisfactory degree, in regular classes in elementary and junior

high schools of their neighborhoods. This requires: a) creating many additional reception classes, Levels I and II; b) updating the circular “Instructions and directions for the establishment and operation of EPZ Reception Classes (RC) for the 2016-2017 school year; c) the support of refugee children who shall attend courses with Greek students providing them with extra tuition of the Greek language. We recommend that only those children who are still living in large or remote camps should continue to attend RFREs if their transport to and attendance in RCs run in morning schools or intercultural schools cannot be organized.

More specifically:

1. Refugee children with an adequate knowledge of the Greek language should be integrated in formal morning classes along with Greek students in the primary and junior high schools of their neighborhood. The number of children who do not speak the Greek language should not be more than 25% of the enrolled students for each class. **Extra tuition** of the Greek language for these children should be provided.
2. The law allowing for the **establishment of Reception Classes at junior high schools** should be activated (<https://edu.klimaka.gr/arxeio/nomothesia-fek/fek-1789-1999-idrysi-leitourgia-taxeis-ypodochis-frontistiriaka-tmimata-klimaka.pdf>).
3. An adequate number of **reception classes** should be established in the morning programs of primary and junior high schools in areas with a large concentration of refugee population. The institution of RCs has been tested in the Greek schools for some decades now and is considered successful. Based on the problems that were found in the evaluation, some additional support actions are considered necessary to be able to respond to the current extraordinary conditions: The IEP should redesign **the curricula and enrich the educational material of Level I and II RCs** for primary and junior high schools, design **tools to explore Greek language knowledge and classify students** in RCs and formal primary & junior high school classes with a view to including both the children who have attended RFREs and those who have not.
4. Provisions should be made to increase **intercultural school classes** (in particular in secondary education) and/or establish branches of intercultural schools to enable more refugee children to attend. Plans should be made to use the schools’ own school busses to transport children.
5. For children over the age of 15 **without a high school leave certificate, flexible and multiform reception classes** must be organized, with crash and intensive courses providing refugee children with the possibility to attend a grade for a brief period of time and then move on to the next in order to graduate. This means that special crash courses in the reception classes (of one school-year duration) must be established in day and evening schools and intercultural schools that will lead to high school leaving certificates. For **illiterate** children, over the age of 15, a similar type of attending special reception classes is proposed but for three school years. The IEP should design **flexible and open curricula and appropriate educational RC material** for children over the age of 15 and also design **tools to explore Greek language knowledge and classify students** in RCs and formal non-mandatory secondary education classes so that both the children who have attended RFREs and those

who have not may be included.

6. **The financial or material/technical support of the schools** (visual media, stationery, etc) and the appointment of additional **specialized staff** (psychologists, social workers, cultural intermediaries) is recommended in schools where refugee children attend. Wherever this happened, the results were very positive (i.e. primary school of Ikonio - Perama). Cooperation with the Municipalities which have this staff available (eight-month work subsidized by OAED) is also recommended.

7. **RFREs should only operate in places where there are still large accommodation centers or centers without access via public transport and where it is impossible to organize the transportation and attendance of children to RCs in morning or intercultural schools. In any case, refugee children must attend RFRE for more than two school years.** Large RACs accommodating a lot of children need a great number classrooms to house RCs. Furthermore, the dispersion of refugee children to a large number of schools more distanced from RACs is needed so that the nearby schools are not burdened with an extraordinary number of students speaking foreign languages. Finally, the location of certain RACs in isolated places not serviced by regular public transport excludes children living in them from going to nearby schools. Consequently, in the case of RACs not serviced by regular public transport, if children are to go to morning zone classes, the Ministry should explore the possibility of their transport being organized either by the IOM or special buses in line with the agreement of the local authorities (see **Annex III** Record of transportation services by local public transport from RACs to nearby schools).

8. The IEP should prepare **distinct attendance levels at RFREs** and the corresponding Curriculum and education materials to enable children who will attend them for a second year to develop their knowledge. The IEP should also design **diagnostic tools** for the classification of new students and for those who will be attending RFREs for a second year. The **proposed educational materials should also be enriched for RFREs** as well; dictionaries, math exercises and material for the Information Technology course should also be posted on the IEP website where good practices should also be described.

9. **Programs familiarizing students with life in Greece and the Greek and European history and civilization** should be included in all reception classes of all education grades.

10. **Language should be taught in all school subjects.** Teaching the Greek language should be the pursuit of teachers of all subjects; similarly the most frequently used terms used in the other subjects should be included in the teaching of the Greek language. This issue should be included in the training of teachers of all school subjects and the appropriate educational material for the education of refugee children should be posted on the IEP platform.

3.3. Scenarios for children aged 15 or over (non-mandatory secondary education: Senior High School - Technical and Vocational Training, etc)

The Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs should lay more emphasis on the integration of children over the age of 15 in education facilities.

We propose the following:

1. Literacy courses, **crash Greek language courses**, and vocational orientation for the summer.

2. **User licenses should be acquired by a specific number of refugees for various distance learning programs of the Greek language** that already exist on special Internet platforms.

3. The possibility of setting up **reception classes in all non-mandatory secondary education forms should be enacted and their flexibility and multiformity should be institutionally stipulated** (in General and Technical - Vocational Senior High Schools, day and evening schools, OAED apprenticeship schools, vocational schools, etc). **Flexible and multiform reception classes** with crash and intensive programs should be organized in order to give the opportunity to refugee children over the age of 15 to pass a grade on short regular periods and get a senior high school leaving certificate (by increasing classes in intercultural schools, establishing intercultural school branches, and establishing special RCs in senior high schools and other forms of non-mandatory education). A number of similar reception classes for working refugee children should also operate in evening schools, where there is experience from similar social and cultural categories and ages. Another solution could be to establish Second Chance Schools to provide education to children aged 15-18 and also to Greek students who have left school. The same is also proposed by the Ombudsman for Children. It has proposed that special educational programs be created and/or the institution of the school of second chance be expanded with a legal provision to cover primary education for these age groups. Until this provision is adopted, it is recommended to integrate older students in reception classes.

(<https://www.synigoros.gr/resources/docs/08-oikogeneia.pdf>).

4. **The correspondence of junior high school leaving certificates** with those of foreign schools should be organized for those children who have school leaving certificates.

5. **Examinations for the certification of the knowledge required for the acquisition of junior high school leaving certificate and the corresponding Greek language level** should be organized at the end of August at a national level (whether students have attended RFREs or not) so that successful students can attend senior high school or technical and vocational schools. If this is not possible, it is recommended that **special school committees be set up in every educational region, which will use special diagnostic tests or exams to certify** if refugee children of a similar or older age can attend educational institutions of non-mandatory secondary education.

6. **Programs of vocational orientation and special programs to familiarize students with the life in Greece and the Greek and European history and civilization** should be included in all reception classes.

7. **Language should be taught in all modules.** Teaching the Greek language should be the pursuit of teachers of all subjects; similarly the most frequently used terms used in the other subjects should be included in the teaching of the Greek language.

8. **Pilot programs of technical and vocational education** should be organized by Agricultural Universities, Technical Universities, etc. The administration of Sivitanidios School, and the Agricultural Universities of Athens and Thessaloniki have already agreed to create model

programs of vocational training for refugee children.

9. **Special programs of formal and informal education** (general and technical - vocational) for refugee children should be organized in **facilities outside schools**, such as labor centers, Institutes for Vocational Training, Vocational Training Centers, etc and should give refugees the opportunity to participate in training programs held by various agencies (OAED etc).

10. **Special music and art education programs** (workshops on photography, animation, painting, pottery, design, etc) should be organized for refugee children at Conservatoires, Schools of Fine Arts, etc.

11. The timely and full **training teachers** – in particular those working at **secondary education** – is a must for the improvement of the school performance of refugee children. Crash courses are particularly required in the case of teaching children who speak other languages.

3.4. Scenarios for young people over the age of 18

Young people over the age of 18 wishing to continue some form of education/training:

1. Crash courses for **young adults to learn the Greek language** during the summer and the next academic year for those wishing to attend, especially for those wishing to proceed to tertiary education.
 2. More classes (and special classes, wherever necessary) should operate at the various branches of the **Schools of Second Chance (SSC)** and young people over the age of 17 should be able through a legislative provision to enroll in SSCs even without certification of prior knowledge.
 2. At the end of August, **exams for the certification of the knowledge necessary to acquire a senior high school leaving certificate and the corresponding level of knowledge of the Greek language** should be organized all over Greece so that those who succeed can compete for a place in tertiary education or training and Life-Long Learning programs. **Special exams must be provided for entering tertiary education** along the lines of the model that applies for foreign students or Greeks living abroad, or TEI/Universities should be allowed to accept a limited number of refugees using their own special criteria.
 3. TEI and Universities **should facilitate the enrollment of** students without documents if they have successfully passed the certification procedures.
 4. The Directorate of the Ministry of Education which is involved with foreign students and has experience in enrolling them in universities **should provide information** to refugees about the **conditions and procedures of enrollment in tertiary education** for individuals who have the required documents.
- In the case of University students who have attended part of tertiary education in their countries but do not have the necessary certificates, cooperation with the Ministries of Education of EU member states is needed in order to establish an EU certification system per university discipline and level of education so that students may be able to continue their studies.
5. The Hellenic NARIC should provide refugees with information on further education and the required certification procedures for diplomas, etc.
 6. The State Scholarships Foundation and TEIs and Universities should be asked to provide **scholarships**, positions in halls of residence and meals for refugee students. The possibility of securing scholarships from sponsors must be pursued.
 7. **Tertiary education distance learning programs in English** should be found or designed on specific studies and young people should be given organized information about the existing possibilities.
 8. **Pilot programs of post-senior-high-school technical and vocational education** should be organized by Agricultural Universities, Technical Universities, Chambers, etc.
 9. Special programs of **formal and informal education** (general and technical - vocational) for young refugees should be organized in labor centers, Institutes for Vocational Training, Vocational Training Centers, etc, and the opportunity to participate in training programs

held by various agencies (OAED General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and the Young, etc) should be made available).

4. Sport activities, art activities and activities using technology for *all phases and all ages*

Getting familiar with new technology

Getting children of all ages familiar with the use of new technology is a significant incentive for them to be integrated in the educational system. New technologies can be used to facilitate access to special educational material or distance learning courses for most children. Moreover, apart from communicating with relatives and friends, which is of vital importance, and getting information about what is going on in their countries or elsewhere, or about their rights, etc, getting familiar with the use of new technologies can facilitate mother tongue learning, certification, course attendance in English or the completion of a higher education qualification through distance learning, etc.

Organizing programs to familiarize students with new technologies in all education levels and all ages is recommended.

Finding or creating digital games to support language learning and other learning modules is recommended.

Sport activities

Sport activities support the development of personal and social skills, strengthen social ties, and enhance team spirit and cooperation. They are important for the physical but also psychosocial development of children.

- Therefore, synergies with physical education teachers' associations, University Schools of Physical Education and Sport Science and mainly neighborhood and local teams and clubs must be pursued.
- Participation in sports, especially participation in football clubs and the co-existence of Greek and refugee children in them could decisively help towards integration and acceptance.

Art activities

Music, dance, theater, fairy tales, poems, movies and visual arts help overcome traumas and fears; they can be used to spot children in need of special assistance, support the development of personal and social skills, strengthen the imagination, and facilitate the expression of feelings and creativity, while they also enhance team spirit and cooperation. They play an important role in the physical and psychosocial development of children.

The programs organized in the previous period were isolated and ran inside Accommodation Centers (organization of art events) or outside when visiting museums, music concerts, etc and were particularly successful.

- Design and organization of art activities.

5. Training of teachers and education staff, and informing parents, etc

1. Due to the highly demanding job of teachers working in schools with refugee children, the SC proposes **to second, on a voluntary basis, experienced teachers who are interested**, and if the posts in the schools are not covered by the volunteers, to hire substitute university students. The procedure chosen for RECs is proposed to be adopted for the teaching staff: Only permanent teachers should be invited to declare whether they wish to be seconded to kindergartens/primary schools/high or senior high schools etc, where refugee children will attend, either in or out of Accommodation Centers to ensure that there is experienced staff able to manage the pedagogical and social difficulties of this venture. If this is not possible, the SC proposes to create a **separate list with the names of substitute teachers to be hired** to work in Reception Classes and RFREs. The relevant list should include teachers with special qualifications (teaching of Greek as 2nd/foreign language, experience in similar facilities, training, etc) and they should be hired on the basis of these **advanced qualifications** using procedures similar to the ones for hiring special education teachers. To make this possible, a Committee should be set up at the IEP under a relevant legislative provision which should define these special criteria. Furthermore, as there were cases of teachers who wished to stay at the RFREs where they worked, but they were transferred to other schools without being able to refuse the new post, teachers should be given the opportunity to refuse without suffering any negative consequences which usually apply in such cases. Finally, in view of the difficulties of recruiting substitute teachers with special qualifications and the experience gained in the 2016-2017 school year when the training of substitute teachers was delayed, it is proposed that substitute teachers be hired, by order of priority, in schools where there are gaps following the voluntary secondment of permanent staff to schools with refugee children so that they may acquire the necessary experience before undertaking to teach classes with students who do not speak Greek well.

2. **Teacher training** is of decisive importance. Teachers, especially, newly-hired substitute teachers without experience, need systematic support in their pedagogic work, mainly with regard to teaching students speaking foreign languages. Special emphasis should also be given to the training of secondary education teachers in teaching refugee children. The organization of intensive training in teaching foreign students is proposed for all teachers who will work in RCs of all education levels or at RFREs or other education forms for refugee children.

The training must: a) focus on matters of educational practice and on matters that the teachers themselves are concerned with; b) highlight “good practices” and propose solutions to teachers about what to do in practice, in each case and problem in hand; c) raise awareness among teachers about the various forms of discrimination, help them detect cases of racist behavior at school and learn how to deal with it; d) provide directions about the management of psychosocial and learning problems of refugee children and the language and cultural differences in school classes; e) provide knowledge about the

background of the war and the reasons the refugees came to Greece but also about the history and the civilization of the countries of origin of refugee children.

It would help to prepare a **special website** informing teachers about all related matters.

Cooperation with the High Commissioner and UNICEF about teacher awareness on matters related to refugee children. The High Commissioner has great experience and the appropriate material and could cover a wide range of schools and educators.

3. The **training of the education staff** (regional directors, school principals, consultants, heads, etc) is equally important as it is impossible to make extensive interventions in the education of refugee children without their synergy.

4. Teachers must be **supported by other professional teams**, such as school psychologists, social workers, etc. Teachers must also be informed about the existing social services at RACs and the cities where refugees live and urge them to closely cooperate with school consultants, the municipal social services, etc.

5. Planning how to **inform and prepare students, parents and local authorities and societies** about the integration of refugee children in the Greek educational system, about the refugees' history and religion, their rights, the way of integration, the intercultural school, etc. For as long as those involved in the educational system consider the education of refugee children to be a problem, the possibility of discrimination and racist behavior shall be higher.

6. Special care is required in cooperation with the High Commissioner, the Municipalities and competent NGOs for the **information of refugee parents living in flats and other accommodation facilities in the cities** about formal education in Greece and the enrollment procedures for their children.

7. The close cooperation of RECs with the High Commissioner and the Ministry of Migration Policy in providing information to refugee parents about formal education and about transfers and arrivals, etc is deemed necessary.

6. Special Issue: Refugee Teachers

It is necessary to find, certify the degrees and train refugee teachers. It is absolutely necessary to use kindergarten teachers from the refugee population to teach the mother tongue, etc and in order to create **cultural intermediaries**. This will also help the social integration procedures for the refugees.

Cultural intermediaries are particularly needed in secondary education.

Refugees with language skills (mother tongue, Greek and/or English language) can be trained and participate as **auxiliary personnel** in the teaching procedure.

7. Actions for the parents of refugee children

Information: It is necessary to inform refugees about the Greek educational system and the opportunities given by education to their children for their future.

Creation of a special **website of the Ministry** with the necessary information about the education (of all grades and types) of refugee children (in Greek, English and the languages spoken by refugees). More specifically, information about the education of refugee children should be posted on the Ministry's website, i.e. enrollment procedure in Universities-TEI, heads of tertiary education institutes, courses offered in English, scholarships for refugees, accommodation, meals, etc.

In order to achieve the integration of the children, it is necessary for the parents to **learn the Greek language** and to establish **cultural intermediaries**.

8. Certification issues

As discussed above, it is a top priority to establish a **system and procedures of certification** for the integration and progress of refugee children in the various levels of the mandatory and non-mandatory education (senior high school and various forms of technical and vocational education). Certification procedures are required both for the children who have attended RFREs and for those who have not, and they are necessary to ensure access to tertiary education. Establishing a system and **procedures of certification of the junior high and senior high school leaving certificate** is of major importance.

The possibility of **certifying technical and vocational knowledge** by EOPPEP (National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance) in cooperation with the chambers and CEDEFOP must be explored.

9. Administrative issues

1. In view of the fact that the planning of the education of refugee children is especially complicated, since it requires fast and effective management of unknown factors and sudden changes, involves numerous agencies and is a sensitive matter, it is absolutely necessary that **the Working Group on the Management, Coordination and Monitoring of Refugee Children of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs should continue to operate in Athens and Thessaloniki**. During the 2016-2017 school year, the Working Group acquired huge experience and deep knowledge of the complex and special features of the education of refugee children that can be now utilized in an effective way for the next school year. The Working Group must determine the **cost** for the education of refugee children and **seek funding** from public, international and European resources and private sponsors. In the operation framework of the Working Group, based on the experience of the 2016-2017 school year, **a communication and information sector** comprising, *inter alia*, experts on communication issues is extremely important to be set up. Such a sector using all indicated communication means and modern approaches must provide reliable information to the interested communities about the objectives, prospects and conditions for making educational interventions. Finally, given the need that all the above must be undertaken by the Working Group and the need to expand the program of the Ministry of Education

Research & Religious Affairs to include refugee children in all education grades, it is necessary to support it with additional staff.

2. RECs also acquired valuable knowledge and experience during the 2016-2017 school year that can be utilized in the most effective way in the next school year either by working at RACs or in cities, outside the accommodation facilities. For as long as the Accommodation Centers continue their operation, **the Refugee Education Coordinators who wish to continue working** at the them should do so as representatives of the Ministry. RECs are specialized education staff who can be used in various ways by the Ministry to improve the education provided to refugee children at RACs and other facilities. We propose that the possibility of appointing those RECs who will not be posted at RACs (and desire to work in the regions as special consultants for refugee education matters) be explored administratively.

Based on the experience of the current school year, it is required: a) to better clarify the duties and competences of RECs and the terms and conditions of their job; b) to explicitly determine the competences of RECs relating to the supervision and coordination of the educational actions of NGOs and other organizations in informal education and the criteria of approving and assessing their actions (submission of lesson plans, educational material and degrees, defining the number of students, etc); c) to provide everybody at the work place (office) with telephones and computers; d) the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs should cover the staff's communication costs with the schools as well as transportation costs from the Accommodation Centers to the schools; and e) to be timely appointed – up to 1/9/2017 at the very latest – in order to have time to prepare for the beginning of the next school year.

10. Special issues

Special care is required:

a) In the case of **unaccompanied minors**: In cooperation with the Ministry of Solidarity and the Ombudsman for Children, all unaccompanied minors living in hostels, RACs, etc must be entered in a register, and all neighboring schools must be mapped and be included in next year's planning.

b) In the education of girls, when obstacles of a cultural nature exist.

c) In the case of **children with special needs**: RECs are proposed to refer children with special needs or problems to KEDDY (Center for Differential Diagnosis, Diagnosis and Support) or to certified medical-pedagogical centers to have their special needs diagnosed and then, if deemed necessary, to refer them to integration classes. The Special Education Directorate of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs should compile the required procedures for refugee children and seek to respond to the need for teaching refugees the Greek language by making appropriate interventions.

d) Last year, on the basis of an invitation by OAED to cover existing vacancies, staff were hired and distributed to RACs and were successfully utilized in education. Continuing OAED's special program and institutionalizing this staff under the general responsibility and

guidance of RECs would help to implement many of the SC's proposals.

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- UNHCR, "Who's Doing What Where?", 17.08.2015. UNHCR, "Who's Doing What Where?", 25.01.2016.

UNHCR, “Breakdown of Men-Women-Children among sea arrivals in Greece for the period June 2015-February 2016”, February 2016.

UNHCR, “UNHCR Data portal, Greece-Greece data snapshot, 08 May 2016”, 08.05.2016.

UNHCR, Mapping of unaccompanied children (23.08.2016),
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/50768>.

UNHCR, “Children report”, 15.03.2017.

Unicef, “Refugee and Migrant Children in Greece-by Region”, 25 March 2017.

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ANNEX I. Legislative and administrative acts

1. Circular concerning enrollments:

Ministry of Education, Reg. No.: 108457/Δ204/07/2016

2. EPZ - RFRE

“Provisions for Education Priority Zones (EPZ) - Establishing Reception Classes of EPZs - Supporting Tutorials of EPZs and Reception Facilities for Refugee Education of EPZ (EPZ RFRE) in primary education schools”, OGG 2687/B/29.08.2016

3. Joint Ministerial Decisions for RFRE

Joint Ministerial Decision 152360/ΓΔ4/2016-OGG 3049/B/23.09.2016

Joint Ministerial Decision 180647/ΓΔ4/2016-OGG 3502/B/31.10.2016 (replacing the above decision)

4. Recruiting Substitute Teachers

Recruiting part-time substitutes for all specialties with the exception of kindergarten teachers, OGG 3168/B/03.10.2016

Recruiting full-time substitutes also for other specialties apart from part-time, OGG 3988/B/13.12.2016.

5. Part-time substitute teachers at RFREs:

A part-time substitute teacher at RFRE can leave since there are the following options:

- Part-time substitute teachers who are hired (and employed) at RFREs pursuant to this decision (No. 210616/E2) shall be available to be recruited-upgraded on a full-time basis at the relevant RFRE (not any RFRE, like the teachers already employed on a part-time basis), as well as in general education, pursuant to Ministerial Decision 112158/E2/08.07.2016 (OGG 2133/B/11.07.2016) (see Part B-Chapter D -Section 2 - par. 1 and 2).
- Substitute teachers who were serving on a part-time basis before 13.12.2016 shall stay available to be hired on a full-time basis, excluding General Education and RFRE positions of another region because they were exceptionally given the opportunity to modify the already existing application, to be hired/upgraded on a full-time basis only at any RFRE (according to Section 2, Chapter B of the Ministerial Decision).

6. Funding to hire substitute teachers

Primary Education - Substitute Teachers: “Integration of vulnerable social groups in primary schools - Reception Classes, 2016-2017 school year” of the O.P. “Development of Human Resources, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020”. NSRF

National Part of Public Investments Program 143465/E2/06.09.2016. Education Regional Directorate

Secondary Education - Substitute Teachers: Initially, State Budget. Later: “Integration of

vulnerable social groups in primary schools - Reception Classes, 2016-2017 school year” of the O.P. “Development of Human Resources, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020”. NSRF

7. Number and specialties of substitute teachers to be hired

After the last recruitments (March 2017), the total number of substitute teachers at RFREs is 234.

TEACHERS-PART-TIME PE70	32
TEACHERS-FULL-TIME PE70	49
LANGUAGE TEACHERS PART-TIME PE02	6
LANGUAGE TEACHERS FULL-TIME PE02	20
MATH TEACHERS PART-TIME PE03	9
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS PART-TIME PE06	51
ART TEACHERS PART-TIME PE08	4
PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS PART-TIME PE11	33
INFORMATION TEACHERS PART-TIME PE19/20	22
THEATER TEACHERS PART-TIME PE32	8
TOTAL	234

Table 27. Employment of substitute teachers at RFREs Source: Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs

8. Ministerial Decisions for the employment of substitute teachers

- Ministerial Decision 09.09.2017:

Employment of 31 teachers of sectors PE70-Teachers, PE06-English Language, PE08-Art Teachers, PE11-Physical Education, PE19-20-Information Technology and PE32-Theater Studies as temporary substitutes, full- and part-time teachers in the implementation framework of the Action “Integration of vulnerable social groups in primary schools-Reception Classes, 2016-2017 school year” of the O.P. “Development of Human Resources, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020”.

Employment of 13 full-time and part-time teachers of sectors PE03 and PE06 for Reception Facilities Refugee Education (RFRE) in the implementation framework of the Action “Integration of vulnerable social groups in primary schools-Reception Classes, 2016-2017 school year” of the O.P. “Development of Human Resources, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020”.

- Ministerial Decision 10.10.2016:

Employment of 38 teachers of sectors PE70-Teachers, PE06-English Language, PE11-Physical Education, PE20-Information Technology and PE32-Theater Studies as provisional part-time substitute teachers in the framework of implementation of Action “Integration of vulnerable social groups in primary schools - Reception Classes, 2016-2017 school year” with code no. OPS 5001966 of the O.P. “Development of Human Resources, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020”.

Employment of 19 teachers of sectors PE06-English Language, PE08-Art Teachers, PE11-Physical Education, PE19-PE20- Information Technology and PE32-Theater Studies as provisional full-time and part-time substitute teachers with a fixed-term labor relationship governed by Private Law for school year 2016-2017.

Employment of 16 part-time substitute teachers of sectors PE02 and PE03 for Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE).

- Ministerial Decision 26.10.2016:

Employment of 5 teachers of sector PE70-Teachers as provisional part-time substitute teachers in the implementation framework of the Action “Integration of vulnerable social groups in primary schools-Reception Classes, 2016-2017school year” with code no. OPS 5001966 of the O.P. “Development of Human Resources, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020”.

- Ministerial Decision 09.11.2016:

Employment of 21 teachers of sectors PE70-Teachers, PE06-English Language, PE08- Art Teachers, PE11-Physical Education, PE19-Information Technology as provisional part-time substitute teachers in the framework of implementation of Action “Integration of vulnerable social groups in primary schools - Reception Classes, 2016-2017 school year” of the O.P. “Development of Human Resources, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020”.

Employment of 6 part-time substitute teachers of sectors PE02, PE03 and PE06 for Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE).

- Ministerial Decision 17.11.2016:

Employment of one (1) part-time teacher of sector PE02 for Reception Facilities Refugee Education (RFRE) in the implementation framework of the Action “Integration of vulnerable social groups in primary schools-Reception Classes, 2016-2017 school year” of the O.P. “Development of Human Resources, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020”.

Employment of 7 teachers of sectors PE70-Teachers, PE06-English Language and PE11-Physical Education as provisional part-time substitute teachers in the implementation framework of the Action “Integration of vulnerable social groups in primary schools-Reception Classes, 2016-2017 school year” of the O.P. “Development of Human Resources, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020”.

9. Transfer of RFRE teachers from Primary to Secondary Education

It is possible to transfer substitute teachers of common specialties between the two education levels (PE06-ENGLISH LANGUAGE, PE19/20-INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, PE08-ART TEACHERS, PE32-THEATER, PE11-PHYSICAL EDUCATION) from one level to the other by force of a decision of the Regional Director.

(See decision below:

Transfer of provisional substitute teachers of common specialty from the Primary to Secondary Education of Euboea to complete her teaching hours)

10. Covering working hours of substitute teachers with co-teaching

All RFRE teachers, apart from operation officers, teach to neighboring RFREs in order to complete their teaching hour schedule. If the teaching needs of their subject are covered in neighboring RFREs, they complete their mandatory working hours as prescribed under aa' of case a' hereof:

a) co-teaching with the tutor teaching the lesson at the time or joint-teaching sub-groups of students to satisfy the education needs of the student population in the best way possible, following the relevant guidance given by the School Consultant of Pedagogic Responsibility in charge.

Co-teaching needs approval by the School Consultant:

b) the decision for setting-up sub-groups of students or joint teaching as prescribed under aa, case a' and case d' paragraph 5, article 6 hereof, in order to satisfy the education needs of the student population in the best way possible. (Article 11, case c, Joint Ministerial Decision 180647/ΓΔ4/2016-OGG 3502/2016/B/31-10-2016)

11. Instructions for the Department of Substitute Teachers on how to declare gaps

The operational gaps of RFREs shall be declared at OPSYD (Integrated Staff Management Information System) exclusively by the Regional Directors of Primary & Secondary Education who should cooperate with the other officials [Education Directors (article 6, par. 2 of the above JMD), Refugee Education Coordinators (article 7, par. 4 of the above JMD), competent School Consultants (article 11 of the above JMD) etc].

More specifically as regards the education sectors:

1. PE70 & PE02, the needs for full-time competent teachers should be stated/included (see article 6, par. 5 of the above JMD).
2. PE06, PE08, PE11, PE32-PE18.41 (*needs of Primary Education are exclusively stated in sector PE32 and are considered either as PE32 or PE18.41*) and PE19-PE20 the needs of Primary Education should be grouped with the needs of Secondary Education [if grouping them together is possible (based on the timetable, RFRE geographical location etc)] and be recorded in the corresponding field as secondary education needs, wherever there is a higher need. Otherwise, operational needs will be recorded separately per education level.

Operational gaps that cannot be declared at OPSYD [i.e. 1 to 8 teaching hours of PE06 (which cannot be grouped with the other teaching needs in the same or different level in order to

hire a substitute teacher) and/or further information that you believe we should know about this e-message, must be stated (apart from the declared gaps at OPSYD) also exclusively by the Regional Directors via an e-message to our Services.

12. Transfer of Substitute Teachers to another RFRE of another PYSPE (Regional Primary Education Council)

Due to the fact that the operation of Serres RFRE was suspended, substitute teachers without teaching hours were found. According to the JMD, the following options are available:

“2. Substitute teachers placed at RFREs can be transferred, on the basis of the needs that may arise in the school year, from one RFRE, where they were first appointed, to another RFRE: a) belonging to the same PYSPE or PYSDE (Primary or Secondary Education) as may be decided by the competent Education Directors on the recommendation of the Regional Council; b) belonging to another PYSPE or PYSDE of the same Regional Directorate as may be decided by the Regional Primary and Secondary Education Director on the recommendation of the Senior Regional Council”.

The General Directorate of Human Resources of the Ministry of Education Research & Religious Affairs sent a document asking to explore the following employment possibilities:

- a) at Serres RFRE and, in particular, whether there are (or there will soon arise) relevant operational needs involving children who are going to attend Serres RFRE;
- b) at a RFRE of another PYSPE or PYSDE of the Regional Primary & Secondary Education Directorate of Central Macedonia

B) was chosen as shown in the relevant documents:

Part-time substitute teachers were transferred to RFREs from another PYSDE under the jurisdiction of the Regional Directorate of Central Macedonia Education in order to ensure their smooth operation

Transfer of NSRF part-time substitute teachers to RFREs from another PYSPE under the jurisdiction of the Regional Directorate of Central Macedonia Education in order to ensure their smooth operation

13. Employment of substitute teachers inside and outside RFREs

Substitute teachers at RFREs cannot be employed in the morning zone. All Ministerial Decisions regarding recruitment explicitly state that:

Teachers with a fixed-time labor relationship governed by private law will exclusively be employed at schools where Refugee Facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE) near the corresponding refugee accommodation centers will operate.

14. Setting up a reception class for refugee education by transferring a permanent teacher

By virtue of a decision made by the Regional Education Director of Central Macedonia, upon relevant request, a Reception Class was set up on 14-12-2016 which necessitated the transfer of a permanent teacher. The Regional Director invoked, *inter alia*, a circular of 2012-2013 on the “Basic directions and instructions for the establishment and operation of Reception Classes (RC) Levels I and II of EPZ and EPZ Supporting Tutorials for the 2012-2013 school year” stipulating that the RCs of EPZ Levels I and II can employ: a) permanent teachers (PE. 70)...

The decision stipulates the following:

We set up one (1) EPZ Reception Class (RC) Type I, at the 11th Primary School of the Primary Education Directorate of Pieria where refugee children from Syria attend courses and where a permanent teacher will be employed in the 2016-2017 school year.

<https://edu.klimaka.gr/leitoyrgia-sxoleivn/diapolitismika/548-katalogos-sxoleia-diapolitismikis-ekpaideyhs.html>

15. Refugee Education Coordinators

Invitation of permanent teachers of Primary and Secondary Education to submit secondment applications for the appointment of Refugee Education Coordinators (REC) at Refugee Accommodation Centers for the 2016-2017 school year. Applications were open from 26/9 until 28/9.

Invitation of permanent teachers of Primary and Secondary Education to submit secondment applications for the appointment of Refugee Education Coordinators (REC) at the Refugee Accommodation Center of Inofita for the 2016-2017 school year. Decision date: 23/12/2016

16. Secondment to Coordinator positions

- Secondment of Primary and Secondary Education Teachers to positions of Refugee Education Coordinators in Refugee Accommodation Centers for the 2016-2017 school year: Reg. No. 166612/E1/Marousi, 7-10-2016
- Revocation of secondment and new secondment of teachers: Reg. No. 179784/E1/Marousi, 26-10-2016
- Revocation of secondment and new secondment of teachers: Reg. No. 189607/E1/Marousi, 09-11-2016
- Revocation of secondment and new secondment of teachers: Reg. No. 206949/E1/Marousi, 5-12-2016

17. RFRE staffing with permanent teachers

To staff RFREs please apply the provisions of article 8 of the JMD No 180647/ΓΔ4/2016 (OGG 3502/issue B/31-10-2016)

“Establishment, organization, operation, coordination and education program of Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE), staffing criteria and procedure of said facilities”.

More specifically, special invitations of interest must be issued on the same day (09-01-2017) so that interested teachers at the disposal of the competent PYSPE and PYSDE and those who do not complete their teaching hour work schedule can submit applications for the schools wherein RFREs operate, schools where the branches set up in the accommodation centers belong to, under the jurisdiction of the corresponding Primary and Secondary Education Directorates. The deadline for submitting applications is 10-01-2017 (i.e. tomorrow).

The disposal or completion of RFRE teaching hours is carried out in line with the procedures stipulated in the applicable provisions after taking into account the qualifications of par. 3, article 8 of the above JMD.

18. MySchool

The OS myschool implemented MD 152360/ΓΔ4/19-09-2016 (OGG 3049/issue B'/23-9-2016) on the "Establishment, organization, operation, coordination and education program of Reception Facilities for Refugee Education (RFRE), staffing criteria and procedure of said facilities".

This implementation makes it possible to set up classes for "RFRE" from the relevant options SCHOOL -> Management of Classes; it also makes it possible for refugees to enroll (as in their statement) and be allocated a place in these classes. Finally, the Assignment of Courses to the Teachers of these facilities must also be pursued.

ANNEX II. List of operating RFREs (April 2017)

Region	ACCOMMODATION CENTER	SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF CLASSES	STARTING DATE	Comments
ATTICA	Schisto	PRIMARY SCHOOL OF NEO IKONIO	80	4	02/02/2017	
		5th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF KERATSINI			01/02/2017	
		15th ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF NIKEA - MIKIS THEODORAKIS			31/01/2017	
		2nd DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF DRAPETSONA	30	2	17/2/2017	
	Eleonas	72th ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF ATHENS - ANDREAS KALVOS	35	3	10/10/2016	
		81st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF ATHENS	44	3	10/10/2016	
		87th ALL-DAY INTERCULTURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL OF ATHENS	35	3	10/10/2016	
		2nd ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF TAVROS	43	3	10/10/2016	
		66th DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF ATHENS - "ARISTOKLIO"	31	4	10/10/2016	
	Agios Andreas	1st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF NEA MAKRI	7	1	05/04/2017	
		1st DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF NEA MAKRI	5	1	05/04/2017	
	Rafina	1st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF RAFINA	40	2	14/11/2016	
		1st DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF RAFINA	14	1	14/11/2016	
	Malakasa	1st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF AVLONAS	60	1	28/03/2017	
		PRIMARY SCHOOL OF MALAKASA		1	27/03/2017	
		PRIMARY SCHOOL OF SYKAMINO		1	05/04/2017	
		1st JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF AVLONAS	22	2	27/03/2017	
		JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF KAPANDRITI			It will open after the junior high school of Avlonas	
	Lavrio - Camp of the Ministry of Agricultural Development (former Agricultural Bank)	1st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF LAVRIO	32	2	10/10/2016	
		2nd PRIMARY SCHOOL OF LAVRIO	10	1	10/10/2016	
		3rd PRIMARY SCHOOL OF LAVRIO	10	1	10/10/2016	
		2nd DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF LAVRIO	17	2	10/10/2016 (Operating in the morning as reception class)	
	Skaramagas	3rd PRIMARY SCHOOL OF EGALEO	250		20/02/2017	
		10th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF EGALEO			20/02/2017	

		5th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF HAIDARI	100		17/02/2017	
		9th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF HAIDARI			17/02/2017	
		13th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF PERISTERI			21/2/2017	
		33rd PRIMARY SCHOOL OF PERISTERI			21/2/2017	
		4th DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF HAIDARI			21/2/2017	
		8th JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF PERISTERI			20/02/2017	
	Elefsina	30rd PRIMARY SCHOOL OF MANDRA	21	2	27 03 2017	
		10th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF ELEFSINA			27/03/2017	
		4th JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF ELEFSINA	5	1	28/03/2017	
CONTINENTAL GREECE (STEREA ELLADA)	Inofita	1st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF SCHIMATARI	62		06/04/2017	
		2nd Primary School of SCHIMATARI			06/04/2017	
		3rd Primary School of SCHIMATARI			06/04/2017	
		JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF INOFITA	14		06/04/2017	
	Thermopiles	1st EIGHT-CLASS PRIMARY SCHOOL OF GORGOPOTAMOS	42	2	14/11/2016	
		DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF MOSCHOCHORI IN FTHIOTIDA- JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF MOSCHOCHORI AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES	26	2	14/11/2016	
	Ritsona	PRIMARY SCHOOL OF VATHI IN AVLIDA	16	1	19/10/2016	
		ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL AT PARALIA AVLIDAS	20	1	16/10/2016	
		14th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF CHALKIDA	36	2	19/10/2016	
		2nd DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF CHALKIDA, EUBOEIA	15	2	19/10/2016	
THESSALY	TRIKALA - ATLANTIC	25th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF TRIKALA	36	3	17/01/2017	
		2nd JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF TRIKALA	12	1	17/01/2017	
	Volos Moza building	9th ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF VOLOS	15	1	18/01/2017	
		10th DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF VOLOS	3		18/01/2017	
	Larisa Koutsochero	26th ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF LARISA	20		01/02/2017	
		7th ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF LARISA				
		30th ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF LARISA			To open soon	
		ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF KILADA LARISAS	34		05/04/2017	
		TEN-CLASS PRIMARY SCHOOL OF TERPSITHEA	20		31/01/2017	

		3rd DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF LARISA	12		27/01/2017	
CENTRAL MACEDONIA	Derveni DION	67th ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF THESSALONIKI	33	2	10/10/2016	
		2nd DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF STAVROUPOLIS, THESSALONIKI	15	1	10/10/2016	
	Lagadikia	ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF LAGADIKIA	92	4	10/10/2016	
		PRIMARY SCHOOL OF PROFITI-EGNATIA		3	10/10/2016	
		DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF KORONIA "KOSTAS THEODORIDIS"	53	2	10/10/2016	
	Serres (Former Agricultural School)	6th Primary School of Serres	97		05/04/2017	
		12th Primary School of Serres			05/04/2017	
		13th Primary School of Serres			05/04/2017	
		Music Junior High School of Serres	37		05/04/2017	
	Diavata (Anagnostopoulou Military Camp)	1st PRIMARY SCHOOL OF AGIOS ATHANASIOS	89	5	17/02/2017	
		2nd ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF AGIOS ATHANASIOS IN THESSALONIKI			17/02/2017	
		1st JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF AGIOS ATHANASIOS	36	2	17/02/2017	
	Oreokastro					
	Sindos (FRAKAPOR)	1st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF MENEMENI	56	3	The population to be transferred	TO BE EVACUATED
		1st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF ELEFTHRIO - KORDELIO				
		1st ALL-DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF MENEMENI OF THESSALONIKI - IFIGENIA CHRYSOCHOOU	17	1		
	Kalochoi (Iliadis Estate)	1st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF KALOCHORI	23	3	18/01/2017	CLOSED DOWN ON 13/2/2017 - HOWEVER THE STUDENTS OF KALOCHORI WILL ATTEND VERIA RFRE
		2nd ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF KALOCHORI			18/01/2017	
		3rd DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF ELEFTHRIO KORDELIO IN THESSALONIKI	5	1	18/01/2017	
	Mouries of Eleftherio Kordelio (Former Softex)	10th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF NEAPOLI	78	3		In suspension due to a decrease in the number of children
		12th ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF NEAPOLI		2	25/01/2017	

		1st DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF SIKIES - ODYSSEAS FOKAS	17	1	25/01/2017	
	Vagiochori	Primary School: A class will be set up at Profitis school	17			IT HAS BEEN EVACUATED FOR THE TIME BEING
		JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF EGNATIA	4	1		
	Vasilika (Kordogianni Estate)					
	Derveni (ALEXIL)	PRIMARY SCHOOL OF MELISSOCHORI	3	-		3 CHILDREN WILL ATTEND AGAIN
		4th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF OREOKASTRO				
		1st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF OREOKASTRO			17/02/2017	
		1st JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF OREOKASTRO	-2	2		
	Kavalari (SINATEX)	ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF KAVALARI	51	3	27/01/2017	
		4th JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF LAGADAS	18	1	27/01/2017	
	Polikasro (Nea Kavala)	1st ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF POLIKASTRO	150	12	27/01/2017	
		1st PRIMARY SCHOOL OF AXIOUPOLIS			27/01/2017	
		2nd PRIMARY SCHOOL OF AXIOUPOLIS			27/01/2017	
		JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF PLATANIAS	39	5	27/01/2017	
	Pieria (Hercules Estate)					
	Alexandria of Imathia (G. Pelagou Military Camp)	5th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA	59	4	01/02/2017	
		4th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF ALEXANDRIA			01/02/2017	
		JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF KAVASILA	12	1	10/02/2017	
	Veria (Military Camp of Armatolou Kokkinou, Imathia)	PRIMARY SCHOOL OF AGIA VARVARA	20	2	27/03/2017	
		JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF VERGINA	5	1	27/03/2017	
EAST MACEDONIA AND THRACE	Drama	14th PRIMARY SCHOOL OF DRAMA	23	2	14/11/16 In temporary suspension due to population transfer	
		2nd DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF DRAMA	15	1		
	Perigiali of Kavala					
EPIRUS	Doliana	ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF KALPAKI	26	2	21/11/2016	
		JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF DOLIANA, IOANNINA	14	1	21/11/2016	

	Katsika	9th ALL-DAY INTERCULTURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL OF IOANNINA – INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION	15	2	18/01/2017	CLOSED DOWN DUE TO LACK OF STUDENTS
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		3rd ALL-DAY INTERCULTURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL OF IOANNINA - MAROUTSIO	15	2	18/01/2017	
		2nd JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF IOANNINA, INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION		2	18/01/2017	
	Filippiada	1st 12-CLASS ALL-DAY PRIMARY SCHOOL OF FILIPPIADA - GENERAL EDUCATION EAEP	45	1	03/04/2017	
		2nd PRIMARY SCHOOL OF FILIPPIADA		1		
		3rd 6-CLASS PRIMARY SCHOOL OF FILIPPIADA		1		
		1st JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF FILIPPIADA	29	1		
		2nd JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF FILIPPIADA		1		
	Konitsa	1st PRIMARY SCHOOL OF KONITSA	26	2	10/10/2016	
		DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF KONITSA IOANNINA	19	1	10/10/2016	
WESTERN GREECE	Myrsini, Andravida (Kyllene)	PRIMARY SCHOOL OF NEOCHORI	45	3	13/01/2017	
		DAY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF NEOCHORI, ILIA	18	1	13/01/2017	

ANNEX III. Record of transportation services by local public transport from RACs to nearby schools

ACCOMMODATION CENTER	Urban Fabric	Access to Public Transport
REGION OF ATTICA		
Schisto	3 km from Perama, Keratsini	YES. Good access to public transport. Bus stop servicing Keratsini exactly outside.
Eleonas	YES	YES Good
Agios Andreas	NO	NO. KTEL service quite far away from the RAC
Rafina	NO	NOT good 1.5 km on foot and then KTEL service for Pallini IOM has provided 2 buses for Athens, twice a week.
Malakasa	NO	NO. Only train (15 minutes' walk), every 2 hours KTEL service at 4 km
Lavrio AGROTIKI	NO 3 km from Lavrio	NO
Skaramagas	NO 3 km from Aspropirgos-Haidari	YES good Buses to Metro, Ag. Marina
Elefsina	NO 4 km from Elefsina center	NOT good. One KTEL service outside the Camp NGO runs a bus once a day for Athens
CENTRAL MACEDONIA REGION		
Alexandria	YES	YES. Next to the city (500 m)
Veria	NO	YES. Urban and KTEL bus stop
Derveni DION	NO	YES. Bus stop, frequent urban service
Diavata	NO	YES. Municipal bus service per hour
Kavalari SINATEX	NO	YES. On the provincial road Urban and KTEL service
SOFTEX Mouries	YES	YES. Bus stop for urban service, 15' minutes away from the town center
Lagadikia	NO	YES. The village has bus service
Pieria HERCULES ESTATE	NO	YES. Urban and KTEL bus stop
***Serres	NO	NO. Efforts are beingmade. KTEL Serres shall start using a pilot service
Nea Kavala	NO	NO. 2km distance from Polikastro
EASTERN MACEDONIA & THRACE REGION		
***Drama	NO	YES. Urban bus stop every 15 mins
Kavala Perigiali	YES	YES. Bus stop for urban service near the town

MAINLAND GREECE (STEREA ELLADA) REGION		
Inofita	NO	NO KTEL service far away
Thermopiles	NO	NO KTEL service for LAMIA. Very difficult to go to schools of nearby villages
Ritsona	NO	NO
EPIRUS REGION		
Konitsa	YES	YES. KTEL service for Ioannina 4-6 times per day
Filippiada	NO	KTEL service
Doliana	NOT (near Kalpaki)	YES. Services with hired coaches of the Municipality for Junior High School children. There is infrequent KTEL service. OXFAM for Ioannina
Katsika	NO Suburbs of Ioannina 6 km from Ioannina center	YES. It is feasible (when they return to the camp) Urban bus service
THESSALY REGION		
Trikala - Atlantic	YES Very near	YES. Urban bus 2-3 times per day (bus stop on high traffic road without protection)
Volos Moza building	NO	NO. Only DRC buses
Larisa Koutsochero	NO	NOT good. Only Trikala KTEL service (services for the camp run every 2 hours)
N. AEGEAN REGION		
Lesvos Kara Tepe	NO - 2 km from Mytilene	NO. Bus service for specific destinations ONLY once per day in winter
Moria	NO Next to Moria village	NO. Bus service for specific destinations Problem in winter
Samos	YES	YES. At the city border. 10' from the center
VIAL Chios	NO	NO. High Commissioner has provided 10 buses from hotels to VIAL. Very problematic Situation
WESTERN GREECE REGION		
Myrsini, Andravida (Kyllene)	NO (3 km the nearest village)	NO. No urban bus service

