

THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND
SCHOOL LIFE INTERACTIONS OF THE
RECENTLY ARRIVED REFUGEE CHILDREN
IN THE GREEK PRIMARY SCHOOLS:
TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



Retrieved from: <http://greeknewsdemand.com/2019/09/02/greece-sets-out-emergency-plans-to-tackle-surge-of-migrant-arrivals/>



Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-35854413>

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

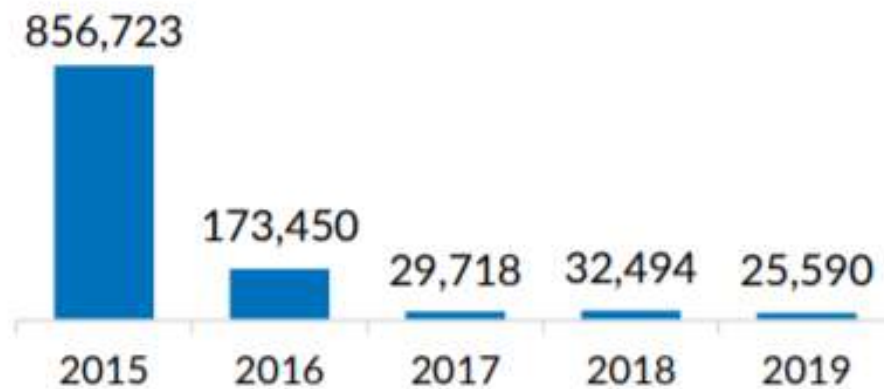
- Background
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BACKGROUND

- The year of 2015 meant to be a significant one for the EU because of the continuous human movements to European countries.
- The European country which received the greatest number of refugees in 2015 was Greece, as more than 800,000 refugees arrived in the Aegean islands (UNHCR, 2018)
- The Greek Government was not ready to handle this situation, as it was completely unaware of how to provide support in emergency conditions (Buchanan and Kallinikaki, 2018; Kotsiou et al., 2018)

SEA ARRIVALS: GREECE

Arrivals from 2015 to 2019



Retrieved from:
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/71287>

LITERATURE

- The violence, the family conditions, and the acculturation in the new society form the psychological conditions of the refugee child (Fazel et al., 2012)
- Most of the refugee children arriving through the Mediterranean routes in Europe have been more than a year out of school. (UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM, 2017)
- Education is a powerful tool which can endorse minors with strength and long-term rehabilitation from the trauma (Dryden-Peterson, 2016)
- The intercultural school should promote a multicultural awareness between the school community, clear goals for the students, collaboration with the parents and a school connection with the community (Kiel et al., 2016)
- The European Commission Education and Training Monitor 2018 mentions that students with immigrant background are linking to lower academic achievements into formal education in the EU Member States (European Commission, 2018).

GREECE AND REFUGEE PRIMARY EDUCATION

- The children with refugee and migrant background who have spread around Greece are estimated to be more than 25,000 as the UNICEF report for 2018 revealed (UNICEF, 2018)
- The law no. 4415/2016 “Arrangements for Greek language education, intercultural education and other provisions” published by the Greek government in order to clarify and endorse the education provision for students with a different cultural background (European Web Site on Integration, 2019).
- The Greek authorities have separated refugee families according to their living circumstances. Therefore, two categories arise: 1) families who are living in refugee camps, 2) families who have found appropriate housing.
- There is no official evaluation of the refugee education in the country as organized in the past two years.

GREECE AND REFUGEE PRIMARY EDUCATION

Educational Infrastructures for Refugees in Greece

“Reception/ Preparatory Classes for the Education of Refugees” (DYEP)	“Reception Classes” in Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP)	Attendance in the mainstream classes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students go to school from the refugee camps by bus • Afternoon school- from 14:00pm to 18:00pm • Maximum 2 years participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are living in apartments with their families. • Located in crucial locations • Providing extra support for the refugee students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students living in apartments with their families. • Inclusion of the refugee child in the native formal education system. • No special support for the refugee students.

GREECE AND REFUGEE PRIMARY EDUCATION

Numbers of refugee students in Greek schools.

	Students in DYEP schools	Students in Reception classes	Students in schools without reception classes	The total number of refugee students
2017-2018	2.026	5.291	700	8.017
2018-2019	4.577	4.050	4.240	12.867

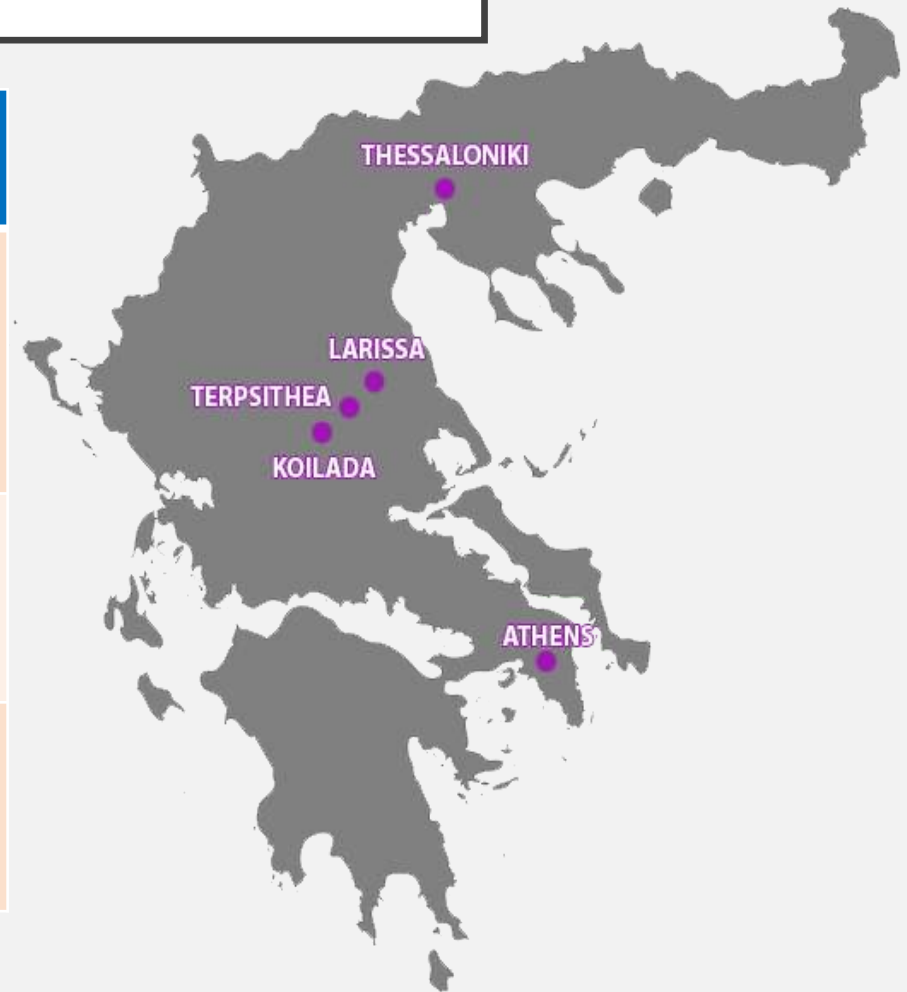
**Numbers retrieved from www.minedu.gov.gr*

METHODOLOGY

- Empirical study
- Qualitative approach
- Semi-structured interviews
- Ethics and data protection

METHODOLOGY

Type of educational Infrastructure	Number of participants	Information
“Reception/ Preparatory Classes for the Education of Refugees” (DYEP)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 from Terpsithea’s DYEP school• 1 from Koilada’s DYEP school
“Reception Classes” in Zones of Educational Priority (ZEP)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 from a primary school in Thessaloniki.• 2 from a primary school in Athens.
Mainstream classes in primary schools	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 from a primary school in Thessaloniki.



LIMITATIONS

- The present study examined the children's status through their teacher's voice.
- Small scale research given that the number of the participants is restricted to nine teachers.
- No participants from the Greek islands and as a result this research is unable to present the existing situation in the whole country.
- The education actions for unaccompanied minors was not be included in this study.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Goals & Achievements



- Greek language acquisition
- Students' language achievements
- Teaching methods and material that teachers use
- Teachers' training

AS A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE:

“Hmmm, there is **no specific material or guidelines** about what to teach and how to teach it. So, I am practically doing whatever I feel that is useful and can help my students. I try things! When a material or a teaching method works, I repeat it. If it does not work, I change it. This is the way we are working, while there is not specific training, guidelines or material from the MoE.”

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Academic achievements

Positive factors	Negative factors
Children's personal motivation	Probability of special education needs
Start school in a young age in the host country	School starting at the senior grade
Previous school experience	Stress factors
Family circumstances	Family circumstances
Provision of reception class	Teachers' limited awareness of the policy

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

School life interactions

Positive factors	Negative factors
Refugee students' motivation	Students' emotional instability
Supportive school environment	School environment and classmates
Teachers' positive role	Language barriers
School rules	School life participation

TO CONCLUDE....

- Gaps in educational policy
- The students' age, their previous school experience and the limited records are predominant issues in all three educational infrastructures.
- Teachers' training
- The adequacy of the teaching material
- Quantity vs. Quality

A LOST GENERATION???

“Placing the refugee child in a class with students of the same age but not of the same educational level, reveals the need for a full extra learning support for the child. There are cases where **the refugee student is sitting as a “flower pot” in the classroom** while he is not able to follow and understand the lesson.”

“The Greek government is following some important steps for refugee children’s entrance in primary schools. However, the MoE is still trying to find a suitable plan while the refugee education was organized on a rush. The absence of evaluation in the Greek educational system makes everything more difficult. Especially when the child is entering the mainstream school. The assessment of this child seems impossible for now and **the child is lost** in the classroom.”

“These children will **not be able to achieve the education level that national students will at the age of 18**. Teaching a refugee child according to its age and not its actual education level cannot bring positive results. The child cannot have the progress we wish.”

THANK YOU!

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