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NON - FORMAL EDUCATION: A WAY OUT

The realisation of the right to education of refugees through non- formal education activities in Greece

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Valientes los que sueñan la utopía y se atreven a trazarla.

Abstract

Education is a human right to which any child should have access; yet, the provision of education in emergency situations is particularly difficult and education is often left behind. This holds true when dealing with refugee children´s education as well: for those children, education is a key element that enables their protection and development.

Education goes beyond formal and institutionalized provisions provided by the state. Non-formal education has a great potential to improve the realisation of the right to education. Specifically, in emergency settings it gives a superb response to the particular educational needs of refugee children. The flexibility offered by this form of education and its content based on human rights, reconstruction, provision of life skills and psychosocial rehabilitation, make it a highly suitable tool for the realisation of the right to education of refugee children.

The so-called refugee crisis that Greece had to face in 2015 led to more than 60,000 refugees stuck in the country whose human rights were violated every day and the right to education was not an exception. In this context, non - formal education proved to be the only solution that responded to refugee children´s learning needs. This study aims to highlight the main features of this process and prove non-formal education as a valid option for the schooling of refugee children.

Abbreviations

ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EU	European Union
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GDP	Gross domestic product
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergency
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

I. INTRODUCTION

When dealing with humanitarian assistance, there are many factors which have to be taken into consideration such as nutrition, shelter, health care, water, sanitation or the provision of permanent and secure residence. However, due to the urgent characteristic of the response, the education, instead of being seen as one main component of humanitarian responses, it often falls behind. This fact results in a huge amount of children worldwide, 75 million[1] without access to education for a long period of time. The case of refugee camps, where millions of people keep waiting for months to be allocated, deserves special attention. At this moment, Greece represents the example of a country that has had to deal with a huge wave of refugees for more than two years.

The economic crisis hit Greece hard in 2009. The so-called Troika has issued since then three economic bailouts (May 2010, March 2012 and August 2015), aiming to limit the GDP deficit. Despite these bailouts, the deficit reached 180% of the GDP[2]. The bailouts produced hard economic and social conditions and budget cuts, led to intensive austerity measures and tax increases, specially for the poorest and the most vulnerable people. At the same time, in the last three years and due to the on-going conflicts in the Middle East, Europe has faced a massive displacement of people. To reach the continent of "prosperity", the Mediterranean route, concretely the passing through Greece, has become one of the main paths "towards Europe". At this moment, more than 60.000 refugees are located in the Greece waiting for a response to their asylum petition[3].

In this context, the heavily indebted country has had to face several crisis since then; first of all, the economic crisis that led to the deterioration of the living conditions of the citizens, specially people from the poorest classes, demonstrations in the streets, strikes and a general escalation of anger among the population; secondly, the management of the flows of refugee with scarce economic resources and an unsettled socio - political situation; and finally, the crisis of values in the European zone, which Greece has had to and has already faced fiercely.

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[1] UNICEF, "Education in Emergencies."
[2] Traiding Economics, "Greece Government Debt to GDP | 1980-2017 | Data | Chart | Calendar."
[3] UNHCR, "Situation Mediterranean Situation."

1.1 Methodology, research questions and impact of the study

An honest introduction to the methodology employed in this research would start with the introduction of myself. In order to give a clear understanding of the study, the first clarification, should be a self-reflexive one: I need to position myself and my personal circumstances in this study. Even if every investigation carried out needs scientific rigour, the researcher herself should be put in a central place. Probably, the context, the conditions and ambitions around me took a central position when deciding what I was going to write about. Kirby and Mckenna could not explain it better when they said:

> "*Remember that who you are has a central place in the research process because you bring your own thoughts, aspirations and feelings, and your own ethnicity, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, family background, schooling, etc. to your research*"[4].

Taking this statement into account, five "factors of my life are worthy to be taken into consideration: my age, my gender, my European origins, my activities as a human rights defender, my middle class background. It would be fair saying that my gender condition of woman and the persistence of stereotypes around me force me to adopt a gender based approach. In the same way, it seems obvious that my position of human rights defender obliges me to be extremely critical when dealing with human rights issues, as it is the case of education of refugee children.

In social research the decision to use a concrete methodology is not only deeply personal, but also related to the research itself. Each research method has its strengths and weaknesses[5], however, some research topics are more suitable for a qualitative examination, while others to quantification[6]. The purposes of the social research will always play an important role in determining the methods and techniques to be used. In the light of the range of actors and factors implicated in the current critical situation and that need to be addressed, it would not only be biased, but also difficult from a personal point of view to choose a concrete position. Because of that, any causality form that tried to establish a theory must be rejected.

The main purpose of the thesis is to offer a critical understanding of the educational parameter in the humanitarian crisis in Greece in 2015. I will pay special

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[4] Kirby, Greaves, and Reid, *Experience Research Social Change*, 46.
[5] Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*, 91.
[6] Ibid., 25.

attention to the role of non-formal education as a possible way – out of the deficiency of formal education. Thus, the description or the answering of the questions such as what, where, when, how and why refer to the main purpose of the thesis. Even if the descriptive purpose predominates, the outcome of my analysis is not exclusively offering a descriptive investigation, as references to *the why* serve the explanatory purpose.

In this regard, field research seemed particularly suitable for the study of the situation, behaviours or patterns best understood within their natural context[7], concretely, suitable for the study of a country where multiple factors and actors deal in a critical situation trying to create a reasonable solution. In short, fieldwork was used to make reference to the collection of data using observational methods. This way offersedthe advantage of probing social behaviours in their natural habitat, letting the researcher observe directly subtle communications and other occurrences impossible to anticipate otherwise[8]. As aspects of social life will were observed to discover patterns that could lead to broader principles, it seemed obvious that an inductive method was to be used.

Indeed, this research methodology was suitable for the needs of my research project for a number of reasons. We should always remember Collin´s suggestion for " *a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence*"[9]. In fact, in a case study where the researcher has access to and cooperation with the people involved, fieldwork methodologies are an extremely useful tool. This has been the case of my study.

As Collin argued, the reliability of the case study relies on the trustworthiness of the human instrument or, in other words, the researcher, rather than on the data collection techniques themselves. According to Collin, due to this fact, case study investigators need special skills; first of all, the need for a curious mind that enquires constantly why events happen; secondly, the ability of good listening, which means not only catching the words, but also the mood, the expressions, the context, etc., and the ability of being a good interpreter who grasps the issue; thirdly, the necessity of

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[7] Ibid., 287.
[8] Graziano and Raulin, *Research Methods*, 84.
[9] Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*, 52.

flexibility that prepares the researcher for unanticipated plans; and finally, the lack of bias or the openness to contrary findings[10].

In the design of any case study we have to take into consideration three basic elements: the research questions, the data collected and the conclusion drawn. In this regard, this thesis aims to analyse in a detailed manner five main questions explained below. First of all, the challenges that education faces within humanitarian interventions, the importance of education in emergency situations, the legal, social and political frameworks influencing education in such contexts.

Special attention will be put to the education of refugee children in the international level and the legal obligations related to it. I will also focus to the strategies and the difficulties faced in the implementation of alternative education such as intercultural schools .

In addition, I will play particular attention to the possibilities of non-formal education activities in emergency. Finally, I will assess the potential of these activities ass a way of meeting the learning need of refugee children will be questioned and necessary steps will be recommended in this regard.

After analysing the general situation of the topic of education of refugee children and the role of non-formal education within this context, a case study of the humanitarian crisis that Greece faced in 2015 will be made. Starting with the preceding socio-political situation in the country, an analysis of the given responses will be done: the political, social and the educational one.

The last research question will be related to the outcome that the case of Greece teaches us: the necessity of a formal educational system for refugee children will be argued, yet, the importance of the non-formal education programs as an effective response in emergency settings will be supported. Particularly and through different exemplifications, the benefits that the development of non-formal education programs brings to different age groups will be explained. The final conclusions will deal with the generalization that could be made on the basis of the foregoing: non-formal education as a way-out in emergency situations, concretely, refugee crisis.

Once having decided what it is needed to know, the next step should be where, from whom and how the information will be got, which means the techniques that are

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[10] Ibid., 163.

going to be used in order to collect data[11]. Important is keeping in mind the advantages of combining strategies, as it will be in the current case. As Burguess pointed out, the term field research *"will be used (...) to incorporate different theoretical perspectives and to explore the relationship between a variety of different methods. It covers what is colloquially known as participant observation, unstructured interviews and documentary methods: although depending on the problem at hand other approaches can be used"* [12]. Irrevocably, the combination of strategies provides helpful complementary information that gives varying insights. In the present case, the techniques of observation, field notes, open interviews and bibliographic review were used.

Due to the possible different roles that the researcher could play and the different relations that could establish with the people observed, participant observation technique deserves special attention. In this regard, it is essential to determine the degree of participation of the researcher, being in one extreme the full participant, and in the other, the complete observer. Different situations require different roles, however, the choice on which one adopt is exclusively up to the researcher. Precisely because of that and although there will be some exceptions, the methodology used in the present research was mainly referring to participant observation[13]. This means that I undertook the role of an active participant in the events being studied[14]. Being a genuine participant means volunteering inside the refugee camps in educational activities, talking with the people involved, visiting organisations or even attending the meetings of different NGO´s.

The present thesis is based on my own fieldnotes, taken during my five months in Greece, where I had the opportunity to visit a wide range of NGO´s and organizations working in the field, squads, social centres, schools, and hotspots, including the island of Lesvos and six refugee camps in the north of Greece (Diavata, Vasilika, Eleonas, Nea Kavala, Pikpa, and Polikastro). Furthermore, my volunteering experience in *Antygone* NGO, in the refugee camp of Diavata during 4 months[15], has provided me with useful and necessary details of the situation there and the impact non-formal activities have on refugee children.

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[11] Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, 2nd Ed.*, 152.
[12] Collins, *Creative Research*, 41.
[13] It is important to make a distinction between the term field research and participant observation, as field researchers do not always take part in an active way in what they are investigating.
[14] Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*, 290.
[15] See ANEX 1.

Every enquiry carried out must be guided by ethical considerations and it is important to point out the roles the researcher will play as observer and the relations with the people observed. In the first place, it should be noted that the people studied will confide in the researcher in ways that they would not confide if the researcher was a real participant, so the researcher should bring into question how she should introduce herself; yet, the norms to answer this question remain ambiguous. Reactivity means that when the persons under study know they are being studied, they act differently and modify their common behaviour. Many researchers believe that, as they will act more natural and honestly, the data will be more valid and reliable if they do not know that they are being studied[16]. However, such a view implies a positivistic assumption of "truth" and it is not necessarily correct.

I agree with the statement that the subjects under study act differently depending on who you are. The truth that the persons studied present refers to the status of the person with whom they are talking, yet it does not mean that the answers given in case the researcher introduces herself as a researcher are incorrect. Due to this fact and with the aim of overcoming this main ethical concern, I used to introduce myself exactly as who I am: a volunteer and a researcher. With such a statement, people under study were protected from any kind of deception while being fully informed.

In action research it is essential to keep in mind the protection of the people studied, because of that it falls under my responsibility to make the ethical principles of the research binding and known[17]. Furthermore, a declaration of confidentiality of the personal information provided during the research will be done; however, I will retain in any case the right to report my work.

Because of the multidisciplinary approximation of the thesis in hands, it will trigger a complete academic contribution to this current topic and will bring further knowledge that could be used not only by NGO´s, policy-makers, organisations and academia, but also by the general public.

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[16] Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research*, 290
[17] Patton, *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods, 2nd Ed.*, 91.

II. EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

2.1 The importance of education in humanitarian emergencies

Emergencies are all situations following natural disasters and those caused by international and internal armed conflicts, as well as all situations which impose a threat to the wellbeing of people[18]. Those terrible situations do not only endanger the health and life of individuals and destroy properties, limiting the capabilities and resources to guarantee rights and strengthen social responsibilities, but also undermine or deny the right to education, hamper its development or delay its realization[19]. Since 2000, refugee education has been included in the broader concept of education in emergencies[20].

During this period of emergency or reconstruction, the community, the government and the international bodies try to find mechanisms that respond as quickly and efficiently as possible to the emergency in order to safeguard the safety of the greatest number of people. However, at this early stage, humanitarian aid is concentrated in the three classic actions of food, health and shelter, relegating education to the background. This constitutes a failed attempt to meet anything beyond physical necessities of humans. The response must be based on a rights-based approach which affect people´s fundamental rights at all times respected. At present, humanitarian assistance should be geared to the integral well-being of people, and this means embracing psychological and educational well-being as well: the aid that only provides food and water reduces people to things[21].

Education offers safe spaces for learning, self-expressing and socializing, structures that constitute spaces of protection for children and teachers[22]. It mitigates the psychosocial impacts of conflict and is capable of restoring the identity of children, supporting them to understand the circumstances they are going through, helping them to overcome the trauma and to have a vision of recovery, and giving them a sense of dignity and worth[23]. Simple facts such as having a schedule, a curricula and a person who teaches in a classroom and often acts as a model, attenuate the psychosocial impact

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[18] INEE, "Minimum Standards | INEE - Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies."
[19] Muñoz Villalobos, "Right to Education in Emergency Situations: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education," 18.
[20] S. Dryden-Peterson. *La educación de los refugiados: un estudio mundial.* Toronto, Ed. Instituto de Ontario para Estudios en Educación, Universidad de Toronto, 2011. p. 22.
[21] Vaux, *The Selfish Altruist*, 22.
[22] Burde, "Education in Crisis Situation. Mapping the Field," 21.
[23] Sinclair, "Education in Emergencies," 23.

of conflict and disasters: it gives a sense of normalcy, stability, structure and hope[24].

Education contributes to the development of skills and abilities to survive during any crisis. It disseminates crucial information about security measures, personal hygiene, sexual health, human rights, conflict resolution mechanisms and peace-building. It can also protect people, especially children against exploitation and harm, including abduction, child labour, recruitment of children by armed groups, and sexual and gender-based violence[25]. Schools are indispensable safe spaces for the first identification of children in possible risk of abuse or violence and help them connect with appropriate services that prevent, alleviate or improve the situation.

UNESCO notes that low levels of access to education and high levels of inequality increase the risk of violence and conflict. Having observed this reality for 21 years, it determines that the regions with the lowest rates of schooling are 50% more likely to experience conflict[26]. In the long run, education provides essential tools for social reconstruction, future economic stability, and peace-building. The main reconstruction strategies are short-term and focused mainly on shelter and food for the displaced population, leaving the development of education for later times; however, through the inculcation of new social and democratic values, education can be a strategy for achieving peace and avoiding the resurgence of conflict once the peace has been achieved[27]. According to Buckland, education plays an important role in several of the factors that build resilience of conflicts in societies, teaching new values of peace and dialogue, attitudes, skills and behaviours, as well as promoting new social relations, which could build resilience to the conflict[28]

2.2 Education as a fundamental right

2.2.1 Legal obligation

Education constitutes a fundamental factor that enhances personal autonomy and individual and social development. Thanks to the education process, the human makes herself human and the societies move towards more organised forms of organization.

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[24] Dato, Currea-Lugo, and Loewenherz, *Educación en emergencias*, 23.
[25] INEE, "Minimum Standards | INEE - Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
[26] UNESCO, "Education for People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All," 23.
[27] Education can also aggravate conflicts using biased curricula that enhances the values of a race or religious community to the detriment of others, for instance.
[28] Dato, Currea-Lugo, and Loewenherz, *Educación en emergencias*, 14.

Hence, education has been declared inalienable and fundamental in several international normative instruments, essential for the development of others rights. Education is not only a necessary element for human security, but it also forms the basis for the implementation and training of other securities[29].

In the international sphere, different binding and non-binding documents have been signed and ratified in order to make this right visible and tangible. In 1948 the General Assembly of United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which means that, for the first time, education was recognized as a right by an official text of universal vocation. Concretely, its article 26 of the Universal Declaration gives everyone the right to receive quality, free and compulsory primary education. Nevertheless, this Declaration is not considered binding and it does not generate a legal obligation for the States.

In order to remedy this lack of efficiency, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were elaborated in 1966. The states signing and ratifying the mentioned Covenants are obliged to the realization of the obligations outlined there. Article 13 reproduces what the Universal Declaration of 1948 established the same requirements regarding the right to education and complements the provision specifying the features education should include.

Similarly, the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees specifically, guarantees the right to education to refugees children. According to its article 22, refugee children have to be treated in the same way the nationals are regarding elementary education. Similar provisions are specified in the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination of 1963 (article 5), the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (articles 10 and 14) and the Convention against all Discrimination in the Field of Education (articles 3, 4 and 5).

With the aim of ensuring a special protection to children, the Convention on the Rights of the Child was signed in 1990 and was ratified by all the States of the world, with the exception of the United States. Articles 28 and 29 of this Convention covered the right to education similarly to the Universal Declaration and the Covenants do; however, it extends the scope of protection taking always into account the best interest

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[29] Dato, Currea-Lugo, and Loewenherz, *Educación en emergencias*, 14.

of the child. As the Committee on the Rights of the Child pointed out, education must never be reduced to the formal schooling of minors and the Convention is related to both formal and non-formal education:

> "*Article 29 (1) not only adds to the right to education recognized in article 28 a qualitative dimension which reflects the rights and inherent dignity of the child; it also insists upon the need for education to be child-centred, child-friendly and empowering, and it highlights the need for educational processes to be based upon the very principles it enunciates. The education to which every child has a right is one designed to provide the child with life skills, to strengthen the child's capacity to enjoy the full range of human rights and to promote a culture which is infused by appropriate human rights values. The goal is to empower the child by developing his or her skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem and self-confidence. "Education" in this context goes far beyond formal schooling to embrace the broad range of life experiences and learning processes which enable children, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, talents and abilities and to live a full and satisfying life within society*"[30].

Thus, the states are obliged to (a) make primary education compulsory, available and free to all, (b) develop general and professional secondary education, ensure higher education accessible to all, (d) make educational information and guidance available to all children, (e) encourage attendance at schools and (f) promote non-formal education programs. Additionally and in order to make it clearer, article 22 expresses the obligation of the states to take the necessary measures to ensure that children seeking refugee status or already considered refugees receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments, which implies the obligation to provide a quick access to the educational system.

To conclude, the right to education is an inherent right of every child, independently of her or his legal status, therefore, achieving the goal of education for everyone is an obligation of every single state. States parties of these international treaties, have the obligation not only to respect, but also protect and fulfil the right in all circumstances, irrespective of state of emergency and even if they lack the capacity.

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[30] Committee on the Rights of the Child, "General Comment No. 1. The aims of education" Art. 29.

2.2.2 Political compromises and responsibilities

States have acquired different international commitments to realize this right, such as those taken at the World Earth Summit held in Rio, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, the Beijing World Conference on Women, and the Istanbul Habitat II Conference; also in the synthesis of the World Declaration of Education for all, and the Amman Affirmation.

The 2000 Millennium Development Goals proposed to achieve universal primary education in the next 15 years. However, neither these nor the subsequent Sustainable Development Goals, agreed on 25th September 2015, use a language of rights and obligations, entrusting the educational goals to a political agenda of development.

The Dakar Framework for Action, adopted in 2000 by 164 Governments, is one of the most comprehensive and ambitious commitments made by the international community. This framework promises to expand the learning opportunities offered to all young people, adults and children, as well as to achieve specific objectives in a number of key areas by 2015, among them, it determines that no state should see frustrated its educational commitments due to a lack of resources of any kind, and if this is the case, the state should obtain the necessary resources for that purpose.

This initiative was followed by the Incheon Declaration, the last world education forum which took place in the Republic of Korea and which establishes the framework for action by 2030. In May 2016, governments, civil society and business met in Istanbul at the World Humanitarian Summit to create the Education Cannot Wait Fund, an initiative aimed at meeting the educational needs of children affected by crises around the world.

In case a state lacks the capacity to ensure the right to education, different actors have to assum this role, among them NGOs, national and international agencies and different donors. These actors, despite having general objectives, act according to their visions and interest. Precisely, the coordination among all the actors involved in this task is complex, which has led to the establishment of qualitative standards and indicators that determine the legal and political framework in which they must operate.

It should be noted that the "Sphere Minimum Standards", first published in 2000, established an international system of humanitarian aid principles, excluded the

right to education. In response to the poor management of many international humanitarian interventions and the lack of educational frameworks, the Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction developed in 2004 by the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) were born. In order to coordinate educational actions within humanitarian aid, the INEE Minimum Standards provide a framework of harmonized principles and forms of action applicable to all actors; in the same way, they promote the adoption of responsibilities.

The UN Special Rapporteur, VERNOR MUÑOZ, believes that the efforts of the international community should be strengthened in this direction[31]. This paper addresses the same necessity. In terms of effectiveness, a long-term commitment to development goals is not useful if what is sought is the prioritization of education as a human right in emergency situations. The increasing attention and progress in the field of education in humanitarian crisis is undeniable, but the adoption of greater international legal and political responsibilities is required.

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[31] Muñoz Villalobos, "Right to Education in Emergency Situations: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education," 26.

III. EDUCATION FOR REFUGEES

3.1 Low schooling level of refugees despite legal obligations

If the provision of the necessary means to realize the right to education in emergency situations is complicated, the provision of such means to displaced persons is not much easier; however, failing to provide education to the 6 million refugees of school age would suppose a great risk not only for the children and their families, but also for society itself, perpetuating the conflict and misunderstanding of the existing problems. It would mean losing the opportunity to establish a lasting peace and sustainable development on a global scale and missing the opportunities of development of those children. Efforts should be made to enable schooling to reach this huge segment of the population as well.

Article 22 of the Convention relating the Status of Refugees says that the Contracting States *"shall accord to refugees the same treatment as is accorded to nationals with respect to elementary education"*. However, the materialization of this article has been subjected to the laws, policies and practices of different moments and contexts: access to education depends on the organizational structure and asylum policies of each state.

Precisely because of that reason, more than half out of the 16.1 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate, are children and 6 million of them are between the ages of primary and secondary education: 3.7 million have no school to go to[32]. According to UNHCR, refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school than non-refugee children. In global level, more than 90% of children have access to primary education, however, only the 50% of refugee children have, 1.75 million. The increase of age increases the risk of impossibility to attend an educational system: globally 84 % of teenagers attend secondary school but only 22 % of refugee do, 500,000 refugees; at a higher level, just 1 % of refugees go to university compared to 34 % of non-refugees[33].

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[32] UNHCR, "UNHCR Global Trends 2015."
[33] UNHCR, "Missing Out."

3.2 UNHCR and UNESCO´s mandate: from scholarships to education systems

Since its origins in 1945, UNESCO has had the global mandate in education, including the education of refugees and displaced people. The fact that prioritises national policies limited its capacity to act in this field, contrary to the decentralised nature of UNHCR. The operations of UNHCR, based on a field-work, placed the organization in a central position to materialise the right to education of refugees[34]. In the mid 1960s, UNHCR started to build capacities inside the institution in order to provide education to refugee children, even if it depended on the technical support of the UNESCO.

Until the 1980s, the budget for education in emergencies was very limited. Education depended on the initiatives of the refugees to build their own primary schools and informal programs. For that reason, since 1966, UNHCR started to allocate the largest amount of education resources in post-primary education in the form of scholarships, and they became the central part of the education program[35]. A revision of the education programs implemented by UNHCR, concluded in 1985 that the scholarship system requires a disproportionate amount of resources in terms of time, employees, and budget, for very few people[36].

Since the end of the 1980s, UNHCR changed its approach from individual scholarships to primary education systems. This shift was promoted by four events. Firstly, immense migratory flows during the 1980s brought a change in the way of dealing with masses of people within humanitarian interventions. The reception countries and the UNHCR replaced refugee settlements among the local population by big refugee camps in order to make simpler the humanitarian assistance, ensure the security of the place, attract international attention and organize faster future repatriations[37]. At the same time, this fact brought the necessity of creating separate schools for refugee children, instead of promoting their attendance to local schools. Secondly, the ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1989 led to the institutionalization of an approach based on rights. Thirdly, the expectations on education became bigger not only among the refugees, but also the international community and population. And finally, the conflicts at Afghanistan, Angola, Liberia,

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[34] UNHCR, "The State of The World's Refugees 2000," 19.
[35] Dodds and Inquai, *Education in Exile*, 10.
[36] INEE, "Minimum Standards | INEE - Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies," 10.
[37] Verdirame and Harrell-Bond, *Rights in Exile*, 287.

Sierra Leona, Somalia, Soviet Union, Sudan, the former Yugoslavia and Ruanda made up the idea that education itself can aggravate or mitigate conflicts.

3.3 Difficulties faced in the schooling of refugee children

There are different factors contributing to the low level of schooling of the refugee population and different actors who face these difficulties. The state, NGOs, teachers, children, even their families, are involved in this difficult task that can only be accomplished if joint efforts are made. Governments need to find physical spaces, such as schools or tents, where the educational system can be implemented for the refugee population, trained teachers and adequate school material. However, the most difficult task could be developing an appropriate curricula according to the needs of these children, a structured plan that promotes integration and avoids the segmentation of students.

Likewise, they have the obligation to promote schooling and to facilitate access to school from the most remote rural areas; in urban areas there are two different options: the creation of schools (formal, non-formal or unofficial) specifically for refugees or, ideally, the integration of refugees into the public school system. In short, an accumulation of economic resources and institutional efforts that, in many cases, the states are reluctant to make.

Teachers, on the other hand, usually find themselves in the situation of teaching in a multicultural environment completely different from their previous experiences[38]. Among the students, there will be children who have seen their homes destroyed and their relatives injured or killed; perhaps themselves have been victims of abuse, of labour or sexual exploitation, or recruited as child soldiers. Some children have their education interrupted for a long period of time, such as months, years, or all their life. According to UNHCR, refugee children loose three to four years of schooling[39]. In many cases, teachers have to deal with the language barrier and need tools which guide them in their work.

Sometimes there is a lack of qualified and trained teachers prepared to deal with this reality, due to their death, displacement or refuge to another state; in other circumstances there is a lack of commitment or of motivation due to the low salaries

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[38] UNHCR, "Missing Out," 57.
[39] Ibid., 8.

they receive[40]. When there is a shortage of teachers, it is necessary to reach the refugee population, train them and give them both the material and the remuneration they need to continue with the task of teaching.

The difficulties that refugee children themselves face in the schooling process deserve close attention. The acquisition of a routine after a long period of time, as well as having to deal with a new classroom environment, a new language, a new culture, and past traumatic situations, are some of the factors that make this period really challenging for the minors. Especially in places where poverty rates are highest, children are often seen as a source of income, working instead of studying in order to be able to help their families. Due to their track, there is a need of recognizing the previous studies of refugees [41]. Ethnic minorities or disabled children face additional discrimination in this regard[42].

In this complicated scenario, a gender perspective should be adopted as well[43]. For every ten boys refugee attending primary schools, fewer than eight girls do. The ratio is even worse at secondary education, with less than seven girls for every ten boys[44]. The existence of a situation of displacement within the life of the girls is aggravated taking into account that they have been historically victims of different forms of aggression and exploitation. The girls are the ones who normally stay at home for cultural and religious reasons. Precisely for that reason, it is essential that the early response makes a greater stress in this sector of the population and develops the school curricula taking into account their needs.

3.4 The necessity of a human-rights and development approach in the education of refugees

In general terms, it has been argued that there are three different approaches that guide the education of refugees in emergency situations:

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[40] INEE, "INEE Guidance Notes on Teacher Compensation in Fragile States, Situations of Displacement and Post-Crisis Recovery," 7.
[41] UNESCO, "Certification Counts: Recognizing the Learning Attainments of Displaced and Refugee Students.," 135.
[42] UNHCR, "La Situación de Los Refugiados En El Mundo: En Busca de Solidaridad.," 15.
[43] Kirk, "Women in the Context of Crisis," 4.
[44] UNHCR, "Missing Out," 8.

- *Humanitarian approach.* It describes the current institutional approach of UNHCR and considers the education a component of the rapid response, which provides immediate protection and prevent from human rights violation to children. In many cases, it does not imply cooperation with national institutions[45].

- *Human-rights approach.* It focuses on education as a human rights that has to be pursued under any circumstances, even in the most serious crisis. Education is defined as an "enabling right" that provides the skills that people need in order to develop their full potential and pursue other rights[46]. In this regard, education can only fulfil that promise if the education provided is of quality, available, acceptable and adaptable. This approach is coherent with UNHCR´s mandate, however, its current performance is far from this goal, especially in quality terms[47].

- *Development approach.* It considers education as an inversion in the future, as a mean that enables the development of the societies. Normally, refugee families and children make mention to this approach[48].

It is highly important to enhance the approaches focused on human-rights and development[49]. First of all, because doing so the protracted nature of conflicts is recognized and the assumption that the education refugee children received is not a temporary measure, but their main chance, is adopted. Secondly, because in this way the form of assisting people is changed. Taking into account the increasing number of refugees in urban areas and the policies attending this reality, integration of refugee children in national schools should be promoted. Thirdly, because with these two approaches the assumption that education can alleviate or exacerbate conflicts is adopted, which means paying more attention to the content and pedagogy used.

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[45] UNHCR, "Missing Out," 11.
[46] INEE, "INEE Guidance Notes on Teacher Compensation in Fragile States, Situations of Displacement and Post-Crisis Recovery," 7.
[47] UNHCR. Missing out. p. 11
[48] Joy Pigozzi, "Education in Emergencies and Reconstruction: A Developmental Approach," 18.
[49] UNICEF and UNESCO, *A Human Rights-Based Approach to Education for All*.

3.5 The necessity of developing intercultural education programs

Before 2015, Europe was highly multicultural as a result of the influx of migrants and refugees throughout its history, yet in the last two years this feature has become stronger; we can therefore assume that diversity in schools has also become an evident reality. Despite the pluralism, the dominant cultures try to impose its values and the political, economic and educational systems. European educational systems are organised on mono-cultural basis; nevertheless, it seems obvious that, as societies become multicultural and unequal, education systems cannot remain focused on mono-cultural and nationally oriented perspectives.

It is crucial to change the ideological orientation and the institutions of the society[50], rethink the existing educational model from an organizational and curricular point of view, in order to give a way out to the wide variety of students, styles, rhythms and learning interests, as well as a response to the coexistence of the existing different cultures.

In the early Report Delors of UNESCO[51], the consideration of education as an instrument of social cohesion and fight against the exclusion of individuals and groups was already at the centre of the debate: schools represent the main institution capable of creating an inclusive society. In this regard, migration fenomena within schools must be seen from a positive perspective and its linguistics and cultural diversity must be perceived as an enriching factor for the education of all, as it can deepen and strengthen pedagogies, skills, and knowledge.

The European Union has addressed the issue of education of migrant and its challenges in several times. The Green Paper: *Migration & mobility: challenges and opportunities for EU education systems*[52] makes reference to the challenges the presence in schools of large numbers of children with a migrant background involves and it remarks positive policy approaches and good practices of the Member States in this regard.

Good practices include: putting in place provisions aimed at acquiring the host language in order to facilitate the integration; promoting learning of the heritage

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[50] Τερζής and Balkan Society for Pedagogy and Education, *Intercultural Education in the Balkan Countries*, 99.
[51] European Commission, "Green Paper. Migration & Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities for EU Education Systems.," July 2008.
[52] European Commission, "Green Paper. Migration & Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities for EU Education Systems.," July 2008.

language, not only as a valuable tool for the culture of the country and for their future employability, but also for the self-confidence of children, specially when an eventual return to the country of origin is possible; and economic and educational support to counterbalance disadvantage; programming second chance education and adult education, as long as it does not become a segregated provision for those who do not succeed; establishing pre-school education with strong efforts on language development, as a way of preparing children for later schooling; establishing integrated educational systems and segregation prevention strategies; increasing the number of teachers from the same migrant background and training the existing ones on how to deal with diversity; and finally, promoting intercultural education, consisting of *"building mutual respect, developing understanding of the negative effects of prejudices and stereotypes and cultivating the ability to take different viewpoints, while increasing knowledge of and seeking respect for the core values and fundamental rights of the host society"[53]*.

Precisely, the European Commission moves away from assimilationist educational models and opts for an intercultural education. In this plural atmosphere, it becomes essential to learn from other cultures and come into contact with different values. It is necessary to organize the school taking into account the diverse forms of diversity: of culture, gender, social class, rural-urban context, etc. and promote the idea that the different cultural forms must be accepted on an equal footing, establishing a critical dialogue and pursuing the progress of all the people involved. In order to realize this aim, the needs of the entire school community must be prioritized and act accordingly, in an integral, participatory and concrete way. Concretely, talking about refugees education, refugee children should be included in the national education rather than pursue parallel programs that are not supervised or certified by the host country[54]. National ministries of education are, in this regard, vital partners.

If this type of education is to be promoted, we have to talk about intercultural education. Intercultural education is an educational approach based on the respect and appreciation of cultural diversity. It is addressed to every member of the society, not only to the pupils, and aspires to achieve equality of opportunities for all[55].

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[53] European Commission, "Green Paper. Migration & Mobility: Challenges and Opportunities for EU Education Systems.," July 2008, 12.
[54] UNHCR, "Missing Out," 18.
[55] Council of Europe and European Commission, "T-Kit 4," 15.

Communication and dialogue in classrooms are the basis of intercultural learning[56]. According to ESSINGER[57], four are the aims of intercultural education:

1. Education for empathy: a process of learning to understand the feelings of the "others", migrants or not.

2. Education for solidarity: acquiring a collective conscience that every person has the same value.

3. Education for intercultural respect: achieved through our introduction into foreign cultures and out invitation to the others to participate in ours.

4. Education against the nationalistic way of thinking: which means mutual communication and the elimination of national stereotypes and prejudice.

3.5.1 Concrete interventions in intercultural schools with refugee children

Under the broad spectrum of intercultural education, educational perspectives and models, each with a different and sometimes conflicting conception, are debated. Intercultural education has undergone profound changes and advances and each model has a practical translation into programs or educational experiences. MARIE-THERES, talks about five necessary interventions in the field of intercultural education[58]:

1. Co-education of children with different language and cultural background;

2. 'Opening' of the school curricula towards the minority cultures;

3. The removal of prejudice, stereotypes and images of enemies from the textbooks;

4. Organisation of common projects of students of different cultural origin;

5. Introduction of intercultural principles into teacher education and in-service training.

Selection of curricula content and methodologies

There is agreement that intercultural education obliges to make a critical assessment of the contents offered to the students. Particular attention should be paid to the selection of teaching resources and textbooks. Numerous studies have shown how

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[56] Izquierdo, "Educational Attention to Ethnic and Cultural Diversity," 10.
[57] Essinger, *Schule in Der Multikulturellen Gesellschaft*, 18.
[58] Albert, *Schule in Der Multikulturellen Gesellschaft*, 194.

the information contained in school textbooks is fraught with biases, stereotypes and prejudices. The elimination of them seems a pre-requisite. In the same way, the content must incorporate "the others", their history, their particularities and their achievements as object of study. An intercultural school requires overcoming the most primary ethnocentrisms.

The second modification proposed by intercultural education refers to the methodology. It is considered that knowledge is a process that must continuously be questioned and interpreted and on which the exercise of criticism is necessary. Students and teachers must acquire habits of analysis and debate. At the same time, it is necessary to pay attention to the different learning styles of the students, and promote active methodologies, such as cooperative models.

Teachers training

One of the most urgent tasks in the formation of educators is to promote a new global consciousness and solidarity, a new sense of belonging and a new responsibility on the world stage. For teachers, the aim is to learn, on the one hand, to solve the specific conflicts that accompany multiculturalism inside the school and, on the other, become intercultural education a real project for all. Most of the intercultural curriculum proposals for teacher education include the fields of attitudes and values, as well as cognitive and pedagogical competences.

Reception process

First impressions determine the later attitude of the child who has just arrived to school, so it is very important to take special care of the first impressions that the child could create and make him feel comfortable and accepted by his schoolmates and teachers. For this purpose, it will be necessary to introduce some changes in the school organization that facilitate the process of reception and subsequent integration. In this regard, the tutor of the student must have all his/her information available in order to prepare the reception and the first contact.

Further training: fundamental intercultural values

Consideration should be given to developing competences and social skills with a vision of intercultural coexistence, where everyone can learn from everyone. Different activities have been recommended by experts: weekly assemblies, social skills training,

group dynamics, cooperative learning, dramatization, problem solving, cooperative games, etc. It is about bringing together families from different cultures and the whole educational community, allowing exchanges of information about he cultural characteristics of each country. It should be remembered that this is a complementary measure and it should be avoided falling into folkloric approaches to interculturality and a superficial and trivial perception of cultures.

IV. NON- FORMAL EDUCATION FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN

4.1 Non-formal education´s landscape

If we agree when Durkheim when he said that *"Education is the influence exercised by adult generations on those that are not yet ready for social life. Its object is to develop in the child a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral states which are demanded of him by both the political society as a whole and the special milieu for which he is specifically destined"[59], we have to recognize as well that not the whole education process is carried through institutions, nor is school the only one.

In primitive societies education was given as a process naturally integrated into the whole social life. It was a continuous through which people learnt from the daily life; hence, its first form responded to what today's educational science calls informal education. These informal, non-institutional forms of learning have prevailed to this day in various regions of the world, where they are still the only mode of education available to people living in the area.

It has been increasingly stated that formal schools alone cannot provide quality basic education for all and meet the different needs of the children[60]. Authors have argued that the social mechanics in which we find ourselves lead to the need to establish new educational horizons and new resources through other ways of learning. Towards the end of the 1960s, the use of the expressions "informal education" and "non-formal education" became frequent in the pedagogical literature. The *Faure Report*[61] of the UNESCO in early 1970´s, broadened the scope of education, until then limited to formal schooling. During that period, an increasing interest in non-formal education appeared and three typologies of education were assumed: non-formal, formal and informal education. Both terms, non-formal and informal education, were used interchangeably to refer to education generated outside the school; however, the heterogeneity in the educational sector compels to make distinctions.

Non-formal education is valued for its high flexibility and openness to cater for the learning needs of people in specific context; however, many have doubted the validity of this form of educating, arguing that these programs are normally

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[59] Durkheim, *Educacion y Sociología.*
[60] Yasunaga, "Non-Formal Education as a Means to Meet Learning Needs of out-of-School Children and Adolescents," 4.
[61] Faure, Herrera, and Kaddoura, *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow.*

implemented in the short-term and with limited funding, which can reduce its impact, quality and effectiveness. Furthermore, it has been pointed out that non-formal programs have not always been promoted by broader national policies and because of that they do not encourage people to continue their formal education. These factors lead to perceive non-formal activities inferior to formal education programs.

Despite the critics, the truth is that non-formal education programs have become a policy focus of the international community in the last years. The European Union and the Council of Europe have put strong efforts to promote its use mainly because of these reasons:

- There are many methods and types of non-formal education and precisely because of that they can be adapted to specific scenarios and learning needs of populations. Its elasticity and context-specific approach are essential to fulfil the right to education in difficult situations, such as, marginalised people, people with special needs, or conflict situations, as is the case of refugee children, reaching learners who do not have access to formal education.

- The recognition of non-formal education as an integral part of lifelong learning has made that the states explored the possibility of introducing it into their education systems, as complementary and mutually reinforcing.

- There have been multiple attempts to reform the school curricula across the world and taking into consideration its innovative approach to improve social integration, develop individual´s aptitudes, critical thinking and promote active citizenship, non-formal education has been seen as an optimal choice.

There is a broad consensus on the importance of non - formal education and its potential in the societies. European bodies have put a strong interest in the topic, drafting several documents and policies to promote it. Non-formal education fills the gap that formal education does not. Integrating a participative approach and creating a new scenario of active citizenship, it offers alternative learning methods, settings and possibilities.

4.2 Defining the concept and its features

We cannot find a single and universal definition of non-formal education; on the contrary, different definitions try to contrast the features of this typology with formal

programs and informal learning, taking the triple categorisation already mentioned, which is still widely used.

Coombs and Ahmed gave a first definition of the three terms in question, which is still influential in practice. According to them, formal education is what forms part of the institutionalized, structured and hierarchical education system, normally provided by the state and which ranges from primary school to the university. In the same way, they defined informal education as the lifelong process that every person acquires from daily experiences with the family, friends, communities, mass media, or individuals and by which people gain skills, knowledge and attitudes. Finally, they defined non-formal education as *"any organized, systematic educational activity carried out outside the framework of the formal system to provide selected types of learning to particular sub-groups in the population, adults as well as children"*[62].

However, in trying to mark the boundaries of these three types of education, there have flourished several conceptual disagreements and misgivings. Different ways of conceptualising the term have emerged, according to the changing understandings of "learning". Some authors consider that these three types of education should not be considered as independent entities or compartments, but as "predominant modes", while others consider that there are not fundamental differences between formal and non-formal education[63]. Some experts have moved away from the simplification of non-formal and formal education, in which the second one is considered inferior[64]. Others consider that the tripartite categorisation should be abandoned, taking the most accurate adjectives of "formal" and "informal" as attributes of education[65]. On the other hand, there are those who support the education as a compilation of informal, self-directed, non-formal, and formal learning[66]. Furthermore, the terminology has also been changing and different terms have been used, such as "flexible learning", "alternative learning", "complementary learning", "supplementary education", "second chance education" and "extracurricular activities"[67]. We can agree that these distinctions constitute a way of

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[62] Coombs and Ahmed, *Attacking Rural Poverty; How Nonformal Education Can Help*, 8.
[63] Colley et al., *Informality and Formality in Learning*, 31.
[64] For instance, the first voices valued the role of non-formal education in agriculture and rural poverty. See: Robinson-Pant and UNESCO, *Learning Knowledge and Skills for Agriculture and Improving Rural Livelihoods: Reviewing the Field.* Or Coombs and Ahmed, *Attacking Rural Poverty; How Nonformal Education Can Help.*
[65] Colley et al., *Informality and Formality in Learning*, 16.
[66] Rogers, *Non-Formal Education: Flexible Schooling or Participatory Education?*
[67] Colley et al., *Informality and Formality in Learning*, 15.

distinguishing between different forms of education according to their different methodology and procedure[68].

Taking the International Standard Classification of Education´s definition:

"Non-formal education is the education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned by an education provider. The defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative and/or complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals. It is often provided to guarantee the right of access to education for all. It caters to people of all ages but does not necessarily apply a continuous pathway-structure; it may be short in duration and/or low-intensity, and it is typically provided in the form of short courses, workshops or seminars. Non-formal education mostly leads to qualifications that are not recognised as formal or equivalent to formal qualifications by the relevant national or sub-national education authorities or to no qualifications at all. Non-formal education can cover programmes contributing to adult and youth literacy and education for out-of school children, as well as programmes on life skills, work skills, and social or cultural development"[69].

Instead of giving a concrete definition of non-formal education, the Council of Europe has tried to highlight the main features of this way of learning[70]. It argues that non-formal education is a method that takes place outside the school with creative and alternative methods, which:

- Contains social and moral issues in the curricula: formal educational system has been repeatedly criticised of missing social issues and the real concerns of students. Non-formal educational programs are related to the life concerns.

- Is a participatory learning process, in which the active citizenship takes a central role.

- Is based on a learner centred approach, which means that the task of the person in charge of the activity is not teaching, explaining or evaluating, but facilitating the learning process and negotiating the discourses.

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[68] Lafraya, *La Educación No Formal Aplicada Al Diálogo Intercultural Para La Paz En El Contexto Euromediterráneo: La Formación de Animadores Juveniles Del Programa Euromed Juventud "las Tres Culturas,"* 8.

[69] This international classification reference was developed by UNESCO in order to organise education programs and related qualifications by levels and fields.

[70] Siurala, "Symposium on Non-Formal Education," 12.

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- Turns the learning into a process, not a goal. The evaluation of the activities is done collectively and the judgment on individual success or failure are avoided.

- Is a method of social integration used to combat unemployment, social conflicts, intolerance, violence and social exclusion.

- Is offered by different actors with different interests, such as, public institutions, NGO´s, professional associations, youth groups, community groups, individuals, training companies, etc.

From the above, we can assume that the concept of non-formal education is an umbrella concept covering various typologies of education, which mainly are[71]:

1. Non-formal education that is supplementary of formal education and targets out-of-school children, young and adults who have not finished their schooling.

2. Non-formal education which contains vocational training and skills development features.

3. Non-formal education that is considered innovative because it contains education for sustainable development, education for peace and democracy and citizenship education. In fact, in some cases, this innovation in curricula has been incorporated to the formal system, which constitutes a challenge to the existing traditional concept of education[72].

4. Other typology of non-formal education that includes indigenous and religious education.

4.3 Necessity of non-formal education in emergency situations

Children affected by an emergency situation or in the early recovery stage face the double disadvantage of having seen their education disrupted and dealing with the traumatic experience that the conflict has caused. The disruption of their education process has been due to the lack or abstention of trained teachers, many of whom have fled, have been killed or are afraid of continuing teaching; or the lack of materials and physical infrastructure that have been damaged, destroyed, or turned into warring places. In many other cases, the impossibility to attend school is due to the insecurity

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[71] Hoppers and International Institute for Educational Planning, *Non-Formal Education and Basic Education Reform*, 23.
[72] Romi and Schmida, "Non-Formal Education," 260.

along the way or due to their migration to other places. When functioning, schools are usually overcrowded due to the increasing number of refugee children. All these element, result in the absence of an education system or the existence of one that does not work effectively.

Moreover, the educational needs of children affected by conflict varied enormously depending on their past experiences: some have been attending effective primary schools, while others have insufficient knowledge and skills to enter into the level they should according to their age. For this reason, many children may want to attend school but do not want to do it with younger children. Others may not want to attend primary school, but they would like to gain basic literacy and numeracy skills in order to obtain employment. Apart from that, they will always need psychological programs and support that help them overcome the effects of the conflict and learn constructive behaviour[73].

Non-formal education can help dealing with all these difficulties, filling the gap that formal education does not fill, adjusting to different needs and promoting the psychological recovery of people. Generally speaking, however, these initiatives are marginalized and short-termed[74]. There is a need to consider these programs as a permanent solution for the education in emergency situations. The advantages the flexibility of these programs brings to refugee children are tremendous. Because of that, countries should use this method as a potential tool to reach education for all, concretely, the completion of primary education, the access to vocational and life skills programs, elimination of social disparities and improvement of educational quality[75].

4.4 Types of programs in post-conflict situations: non-formal education for refugees

There is a wide-range of non-formal education programs which act as complementary or supplementary to the formal education system, hence, offered in combination or alone. Different classifications of non-formal education activities have been proposed, different from each other because they respond to different needs, serve to different sectors of the population, are organized by different actors and have

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[73] Sinclair, "Education in Emergencies," 53.
[74] Baxter et al., *Alternative Education*, 20.
[75] Ibid., 27.

different relationships with the formal system[76]. The description provided below should not be considered comprehensive, but indicative.

1. Alternative access programs

These programs are addressed to children and youth who are not enrolled in the schools and are normally directed to concrete age, gender, ethnic or geographically segregated groups. They provide education through other alternative methods and they are normally developed and implemented by NGOs. They constitute a fundamental option to provide education when the state is not fulfilling its obligation due to its lack of capacity, resources or opportunities[77]. Their curricula normally consist of formal content, however, the vast majority of teachers are not trained or have not obtained this recognition by the relevant ministry. Alternative access programs normally use various pedagogical methods such as learner-centred and participatory approaches. We should make a distinction between alternative access programs and create two broad categories:

1.1 *Bridging programs*. Transitional programs usually addressed to children and youth who did not have the chance to go to school or dropped out and which enable them to re-enter the formal system; for instance, accelerated learning programs.

1.2 *Parallel programs*. They might look exactly like formal programs, but they do not take place in a formal school or aim to ensure access to education to marginalized people for reasons of geography, gender, religion, ethnicity or culture; for instance, community schools.

2. Unconventional curricula provisions through non-formal programs

When dealing with refugee children, there are concrete needs caused by the context and environment that need to be tackled. Incorporating special content to the curricula will provide children with appropriate life skills, which is also an important part of the education process and an improvement of the quality of the education. Non-formal education programs can bring particular topics which are necessary to overcome the threatening situations faced by the children, such as preventive programs or the ones designed to treat the psychological consequences of conflict.

Even if these programs include learning activities, they are not usually implemented by trained teachers. Many programs are short-termed and designed for

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[76] Carrón and Carr-Hill, "Non-Formal Education: Information and Planning Issues," 20.
[77] Nicolai, *The Role of Education in Protecting Children in Conflict*, 18.

specific aims, such as landmine awareness, so when that aim is achieved they become unnecessary; others could be incorporated into mainstream curricula as time goes by, such as peace education. Normally state authorities support these initiatives, nevertheless the first effort comes from NGOs, citizens initiatives and international agencies. This category also includes programs that introduce learner-centred and rights-based pedagogies, emphasizing the learning, rather than the teaching. Under this category, a distinction should be made as well:

> 2.1 *Life skills programs.* Prevention programs aimed at improving the current knowledge on certain topics, such as peace and citizenship education, violence and drugs prevention, HIV and AIDS prevention and education, landmine and weapons education, human rights education, environmental education. It has been argued that the education for refugees, as it is commonly known, does not help children establishing connections between the schooling process and their future livelihoods. Life skills programs can actively tackle the issue[78].

> 2.2 *Psychosocial activities.* Activities that provide remedy to psychological consequences through recreational, expressive, sports or cultural activities normally developed by NGOs, youth, church, sports or social groups.

4.5 How to meet learning needs of refugee children through non-formal activities

4.5.1 The importance of elaboration of legislation and implementation of policies

In order to provide quality education, advantage should be taken of all the possibilities available, for that purpose, policy provisions in this field play a crucial role. Policies regarding non-formal education are essential to define the position and role of non-formal education within the national system, to establish its objectives and measures, curricula, materials, modes of provision, professionals, language, etc. Many

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[78] Dryden-Peterson, "La Educación de Los Refugiados: Un Estudio Mundial," 62

countries have developed legislation to ensure the provision of non-formal education; yet, more efforts are required for its real implementation, especially at local level[79].

In other cases, countries develop policies that aim to recognise, validate and certify non-formal and informal education. In the same way, the development of institutional and organisational capacities are required for correct management of policies and concrete non-formal education programs for refugees; however, the strengthening of the capacities of ministries, institutions at local level and non-formal education providers is not always well encouraged.

It can be argued in this regard that there has been a shift towards further integration of formal and non-formal education system thanks to equivalency of contents and development of qualification frameworks. However, there is still a perception of non-formal education as a "second-class" option, which leads to a separation of non-formal programs from formal education system[80] and which constitutes the main obstacle for its realization.

4.5.2 Necessity of a better positioning of non-formal education within national education system: planning and coordination

First of all, an integrated education approach of formal and non-formal education is essential. Refugee children might attend non-formal activities provided by NGO´s, associations, communities, or the state itself. However, outcomes of this process are not recognized in a way that permit children and youth to have access to formal school or institutions. In some places, they have tried to integrate education systems and ensure equivalence between them, by connecting contents and establishing frameworks that lead to the recognition of outcomes of both education systems[81].

Secondly, there is a need of cooperation between different state agencies such as ministries, local authorities, etc. Education alone is not able to remove the barriers that do not allow refugee children to learn properly, for this reason, there should be an effective coordination between different sectors. While a refugee child may need an

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[79] For instance, Honduras's Law on the Development of Non-Formal Alternative Education (1999), Nepal's Education Rules 2059 (2002), Indonesia's Law on National Education System (2003), Thailand's Non-formal and Informal Education Promotion Act 2551 (2008).

[80] Yasunaga, "Non-Formal Education as a Means to Meet Learning Needs of out-of-School Children and Adolescents," 12.

[81] Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Namibia, Mali, the Philippines, Thailand, Uganda and Zambia constitute some examples.

individualised approach that focuses on languages and on overcoming the trauma, opposed to the standardised formal education approach, his family may need social protection as well, for instance.

Thirdly, the coordination of non-formal education activities is a real challenge when numerous small-scale programs are taking place at the same time[82]. Some countries have decentralised their education system, from the ministries to local or regional governments, in order to reflect the local needs in their policies and actions. In fact, a decentralised non-formal education system would ensure a more effective coordination of the wide-range of small community-level activities, which would give more coherence to the system[83]. In the same way, the coordination is needed between state authorities and external organizations, in order to ensure that these programs are not marginalized and are implemented efficiently. UN agencies and NGO´s should also make a greater effort to share their curricula and materials[84].

4.5.3 Needs assessment and data collection

Non-formal education programs have be designed particularly to respond to the current needs of children and youth. Quite often non-formal education programs are proposed without an evidence to support their particular programs need, or they might be the result of a private initiative that has not assessed the concrete needs of the population. It is necessary in this regard to take into consideration the targeted group, their ambitions, their past education experiences and their diverse realities. For that purpose, the perception of children and their families have to be taken into consideration and a communication between different stake-holders has to be promoted.

In general terms, there is a lack of comprehensive data of these kind of programs, specially in post-conflict situations, which is an indicator of the perception about the relevance of non-formal education. Without this data, an evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs is impossible to carry out, therefore, it is also impossible to know if they are good practices or which methodology or content works better.

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[82] Hoppers and International Institute for Educational Planning, *Non-Formal Education and Basic Education Reform*, 83.

[83] Yasunaga, "Non-Formal Education as a Means to Meet Learning Needs of out-of-School Children and Adolescents," 8.

[84] Baxter et al., *Alternative Education*, 171.

Having this information would allow policy makers to design or re-design programs so they meet better the needs of refugee children.

4.5.4 Financial resources

The current investment in non-formal education is insufficient and unequal, despite the efforts of states and other actors[85]. Specially when dealing with refugee children, the budget to non-formal education always gets left behind, and if the crisis situation is placed in developing countries, the scenario gets worse, particularly when the formal education budget itself is not enough. Normally NGOs and the private sectors are the ones dealing with this financial barrier, playing an impressive role in narrowing this budget gap.

4.5.5 Training and recognition of practitioners

Quality teachers and facilitators of non-formal education are essential not only to transfer the knowledge and values, but also to promote the inclusion, the critical thinking and the motivation of refugee children. Depending on their role, sometimes they become real models for the children and youth. The realisation of non-formal education programs would not be possible without them.

Despite their functions and importance, in many cases their status has been under-valued by national systems; for instance, they are normally not paid, consisting primarily of voluntary work. This fact has an impact in the quality and motivation of their performance. Ensuring teachers´ salary helps to raise the professionalism in the sector, providing a quality pedagogy, a good knowledge of content, and a correct rights-based and learner-centred approach. Teachers´ remuneration should not be seen as a high-cost factor, but as an "income-generation" one[86]. Despite the increasing efforts, mainly put forward by NGOs the most concerned ones, further efforts are necessary if their status, capacities, working conditions and development are to be enhanced.

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[85] Yasunaga, "Non-Formal Education as a Means to Meet Learning Needs of out-of-School Children and Adolescents," 14.
[86] Baxter et al., *Alternative Education*, 173.

4.5.6 Follow-up: monitoring and evaluation

Planning non-formal education programs means planning all the way through the end, which also means planning the monitoring and evaluation of the activities. The same should be applied to non-formal education programs. An exam of cost and achievements, which takes into consideration the psychosocial needs of refugee children and the improvement would be an important step in order to justify the implementation of non-formal programs. There should be systematic collection and reporting of data in this regard as well.

V. THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN GREECE

5.1 Flows of people in 2015: a passage through dangerous waters

Due to the fragile political situation in some Arab countries, Europe has become the desired (or simply the possible) destination of tens of thousands of people. Due to its geographical location, Greece has become the main route through which refugees aim to continue their way to northern Europe: since the beginning of 2015, Greece has been the entry point for more than one million people. Before March 2016, when the borders with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRM) were opened, people arriving on the islands travelled to the mainland and from there to the northern border to FYROM, Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia, as well as to other countries of Europe, such as Austria and Germany.

Even if Greece mainland constitutes a safer option to cross to Europe from Turkey, the sea remains yet the most frequent choice. Lesvos has been until now the main reception island, followed by Chios, Kos, Samos, Crete and Rhodes. 57% of the total number of arrivals by sea passed through Lesvos in 2015, an average number of 4,400 people per day in October of that year. According to the existing data, from 2013 to 2014 the fluid movement of people entering into Europe by sea increased in 159.000 people, from 60.000 to 2019.000; however, the next year, the situation became even more dramatic. From January to August 2015, 293,000 new people entered into Europe.

In this scene and giving their geographical location, Greece and Italy constitute the main receptor countries; concretely, in 2015, Greece received 181,488 people. Although the most dramatic situation was faced in 2015, the same increasing pattern was reproduced in 2016: there were 362,753 sea arrivals to Europe. From January 2017 to May 2017 there have been 70,390 sea arrivals[87].

During 2016, 7,872 people lost their lives on sea routes, 5,098 of them (65%) in the Mediterranean while trying to reach the European coast. It is the highest rate recorded so far and is also extremely worrying when compared to previous years: 3,784 people died in 2015 and 3,279 in 2014. The most dangerous routes of the world remains the Mediterranean: from the 1,018 deaths and disappearances between January and March of this year, 525 people died in the Mediterranean[88]. The Europe of values and human rights fades every time another person dies at sea.

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[87] UNHCR, "Situation Mediterranean Situation."
[88] IOM, "Missing Migrants Project | Latest Global Figures."

5.2 The situation in the Middle East: different horror stories

Although the exact data vary from month to month, in 2015, Syrian nationals represented 56,1% of the arrivals to Greece, 24,4% of Afghans and 10,3% of Iraqis, followed by other minorities such as Pakistan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Somalia and others.

Syrian civil war is considered one of the worst humanitarian crisis of our time. After Tunisia, Egypt and the start of the rebellion in Libya, in March 2011, peaceful demonstrations against Bashar al-Assad´s government, whose family had ruled Syria since 2017, took place in order to overthrow his regime. Syrian security forces killed protesters in the first protests and the outrage was spread across the country. The response of the state to this peaceful protest escalated into unprecedented violence and opposition groups started to fight back. Armed opposition groups and rebels organised the Free Syrian Army by July, and suddenly the country was plunged into war. Other fighting groups emerged throughout the territory, such as ISIS, and other religious and ethnic opposition groups. There is no an exact number of deaths, as the UN stopped the count of victims at the end of 2014; by then, the UN talked about 250,000 deaths. In March 2017, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported more than 321,000 killed and 144,000 missing people[89].

Recently the number of Syrian refugees has passed the barrier of five million, according to UNHCR data[90], almost a quarter of the total population of the country, which reflects the hardness of the conflict. The vast majority of refugees are located in the border countries: nearly three million are registered in Turkey, the world's largest refugee country by the end of 2015, according to the UN; a million fled to Egypt, Iraq or Jordan. Lebanon has welcomed more than one million Syrians since the outbreak and has become the country with the highest ratio of refugees per inhabitant (183 per 1,000 residents). Throughout 2016, at different times four neighbour countries (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey) closed the borders to refugees. Israel has never welcomed them.

Similarly, Afghan people escape from a vicious circle: four decades of continuous wars, violence and death. In Afghanistan the war scenario has been perpetuated over time. During the thirty years following the communist coup of 1978 and the invasion of the Soviet Union in December 1979, the country was influenced by different political and ideological forces. The Soviet invasion transformed the country into a Cold War battlefield, and the collapse of the Soviet Union made the state in a new

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[89] McDowall, "Syrian War Monitor Says 465,000 Killed in Six Years of Fighting."
[90] Refugees (UNHCR), "UNHCR Syria Regional Refugee Response."

field for competition. After the withdrawal of USSR army in the late 1980s, the Taliban seized power and established a radical Islamist regime. However, we can simplify the immediate causes of this civil war to the terrorist attack perpetrated by Al-Qaeda on 11 September in New York, for which the administration of George W. Bush implemented a series of foreign policies, the so-called United States National Security Strategy. In order respond to such attacks, the United States increased their political influence in the Middle East and find the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden. The post-war period in Afghanistan has been hard, with the increase of attacks and deaths of military and civilians year after year. The democracy implanted by the US has not been consolidated yet and Afghanistan is considered by many a failed state. The complicated political atmosphere in Afghanistan has forced families to flee their home during decades. Even if, despite the violence intensification, more than 200,000 Afghan refugees have returned to their country in 2016. Many of them still flee the country and find in Europe the best place for starting from scratch.

In 2015, Iraq recorded the highest rate of displaced people in the world. More than three million people have fled their homes because of intense clashes between Iraqi government forces and the Islamic State group. Although some 70,000 people have returned to their place of origin, new displacements continue. 60% of the Iraqi refugees who have sought security in neighbouring countries mention the fear of ISIS as their main reason for fleeing[91]. Since 2014, the Yazidí minority is one of the most persecuted by the Islamic State. At least 5,000 men and boys were killed and more than 7,000 women and girls abducted by jihadists in that year. The situation of this minority did not change in 2016, since it remained being the target of persecution, torture, rape, murder and enslavement of women and girls, many of whom were captured in Iraq and taken to Syria[92].

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[91] UNHCR, "Fuerte Aumento En El Número de Refugiados Iraquíes Que Huyen Hacia Jordania Y Turquía."
[92] Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado, "Informe 2017: Las Personas Refugiadas En España Y Europa", p. 28.

5.3 The response: an out-dated asylum system and political failed attempts to coordinate de situation lead to gross human rights violation

In 2011, the ECHR delivered a decision in the case *M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece*[93], which concerned the case of an Afghan asylum seeker who entered EU via Greece and travelled to Belgium in order to claimed asylum there. That person was returned to Greece under the Dublin Regulation, were he had to renew his asylum. When he was sent back to Greece, he was immediately placed in a detention centre without any explanation, in deplorable conditions and being subjected to brutal insults and harassment from the part of the police officers. When he was released, he had to live in poverty for months, without a place to stay, food, wash and constant fear of being attacked. Living under those conditions constituted a violation of article 3 of the Convention (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment) and Greece was held responsible. At the same time, there were deficiencies during the examination of the application of asylum that amounted to a violation of article 13 of the Convention (right to an effective remedy). By returning the asylum seeker to Greece, the Court also found Belgium responsible for a violation of article 3, as it should have known the detention and reception conditions in the country. In April of that same year, the Court issued another judgment[94] concerning the treatment that an unaccompanied minor, an Afghan asylum seeker who suffered on his arrival in the island of Lesvos, where he was immediately detained pending deportation. The Court found violations related to this decision.

Due to the Dublin Regulation, Greece has born the principal burden of the flows of people simply because of its position on the map; nevertheless, in economic terms, it is the worst placed country of the EU to respond to this huge responsibility. Six years after these judgments and despite the efforts of the Greek state and the progress in some areas[95], Greece still lacks the necessary technical and administrative infrastructure to comply with the needs of the more than 60,000 asylum seekers[96]. The structural

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[93] ECtHR, "M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece, Application No. 30696/09"
[94] ECtHR, "Rahimi v. Greece, Application No. 8687/08."
[95] The Greek Parliament adopted a new asylum law, Law 375/2016 under urgent procedure on 1 April 2016.
[96] Among others, inappropiate system to provide information to asylum seekers; constant barriers to access the asylum procedure; long delays in the procedure; the capacity of the asylum service, including the necessity to open regional offices; and the structure and procedure of the Appeals Authority.

problems in its political and administrative asylum apparatus, in conjunction with its budgetary problems are its main challenges[97].

The political context of the right to asylum in the European Union has undergone drastic changes in the last two years. While its inability to provide a common and homogeneous response to the situation of refugees on European frontiers was confirmed in 2015, 2016 was characterized by the implementation of restrictive policies on the field. The latest Europe's response to the migration crisis has been composed by three main measures:

(a)   First, the closing of the borders with the FYROM. This was a decision coordinated between the states involved without Greece informed in advance[98].

(b)   Second, the imposition of the EU - Turkey Agreement of 18 March 2016.

(c)   Third, the reallocation programs.

In 2015, the European Council and the Council of the EU adopted two binding agreements. The first, signed in July, urged states to relocate 32,256 asylum seekers from Italy and Greece; the second, signed in September 2015, called on states to relocate 120,000 asylum seekers from these same countries. Only the first agreement included a commitment by states, which agreed to host 22,504 refugees who had to come mainly from the three priority regions of North Africa, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. The deadline for reaching these commitments ends in September 2017 and, in May this year, only the 16% had been met.

Since the mentioned agreements took place, every refugee who has crossed the sea from Turkey to Greece, remains in Greece. The closure of borders and the EU - Turkey Agreement have blocked 46,000 refugees in mainland Greece and 8,500 on the islands. Refugees who live in the mainland meet the requirements to apply for international protection. They are obliged to stay in Greece until relocated to another country or until they opt for a clandestine and more dangerous way to travel to other countries; yet, the state´s reception and integration capacity is still insufficient to cope with such amount of people[99]. Those placed in the islands are in the vast majority of cases detained in inadequate conditions and waiting for their application for being processed or for a decision that would send them back to Turkey.

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[97] Parliamentary Assembly, "Refugees at Risk in Greece," 26.
[98] Parliamentary Assembly, "Refugees at Risk in Greece," 4.
[99] Ibid., 9.

On 18 January 2017, the European Ombudsman stressed that the political nature of the EU - Turkey agreement does not preclude the European Commission from analyzing its consequences on the rights of the people it affects. He also stressed that no human rights impact assessment was conducted prior to the signing of the agreement[100]. To date, no such analysis has taken place. There are constant violations of human rights and the main victims of this set of measures are the refugees and migrants[101]:

- On Greek islands, asylum seekers are detained in hotspots under questionable legal reasons in conditions that are far from meeting the international standards, in legal limbo, with scarce information about the state of their procedure and in a complete uncertainty. Assembly Resolution 2109 (2016) [102] stated that "*detention of asylum seekers in the 'hotspots' on the Aegean islands may be incompatible with the requirements of the Convention, due notably to procedural failures undermining the legal grounds for detention and inadequate detention conditions*". Since the adoption of the Resolution, there have not been evidence of improvement in the conditions.

- Furthermore, women, children and vulnerable people are placed in these same sites, facing risks of violence, exploitation and abuse. Around 40% of the total refugee population are children[103].

- Asylum seekers placed in the islands could be returned to Turkey under the EU-Turkey Agreement, even if the returns seem incompatible with EU and international law.

- Many of the reception facilities or refugee camps on the mainland are inadequate for that use, are overcrowded and do not comply with international standards. The conditions of the detention centres are under the standards as well.

- Living for long period of time in the reception facilities undermines the capacity of refugees to integrate into the Greek society and promotes the "ghettoization".

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[100] Defensor del Pueblo Europeo, "Decisión de La Defensora Del Pueblo Europeo En La Investigación Conjunta de Las Reclamaciones Contra La Comisión Europea Relativas a La Evaluación Del Impacto Sobre Los Derechos Humanos Del Acuerdo UE-Turquía."
[101] Parliamentary Assembly, "Refugees at Risk in Greece," 3.
[102] Parliamentary Assembly, "Human Rights of Refugees and Migrants – The Situation in the Western Balkans."
[103] UNICEF, "UNICEF Urges Full Hearings for Refugee and Migrant Children Stranded in Greece."

While the media are constantly naming the existing problematic situation "refugee crisis", putting the focus on the refugees instead of on the EU and the member states, I will argue that the crisis did not come because of the number of people entering into the EU and the lack of resources, but because of the failed response given by the states and the EU. A continent of 507 million people, twenty-eight states that are among the wealthiest on the planet, has sufficient resources to introduce 3 million more into their barriers, promote their inclusion and integration and assist them in their necessities. We are dealing with a crisis of reception and a crisis of political will[104]. Thus, the term "refugee crisis" should be avoided.

An important part of the responsibility of this failure lies within the EU itself, which has supported these measures. Moreover and taking into account that the responsibility is to be shared between the member states and that the EU is based on solidarity, cooperation, respect for human rights and the rule of law, it becomes evident that the member states have failed to provide appropriate support to Greece. On the one hand, they have failed to satisfy the request for staff to deal with the huge amount of asylum petitions on the islands; and on the other, the states have not responded in a meaningful way to the agreements on relocation. Despite financial support from the EU, money is not able to solve structural problems if there is not administrative and structural capacity to spend it correctly. It can also be argued that the failure comes from the lack of revision of the Dublin system itself, as it needs to be substituted by a new regimen on the basis of new key criteria[105].

The Migration Agenda of the EU develops a series of fields of action that would guide the EU migration policy; yet, the response is concentrated on border control and security measures, diplomatic and military concerns and EU interests, as it can be seen in the prevalence given to measures against smuggling, removal and readmission of people, or reinforcement of borders: keeping refugees out of the EU seems the main concern at this moment[106].

A holistic, human rights based and multi-sector approach should be adopted, which would guarantee the balance across different fields such as development for cooperation, foreign affairs, economic and social consideration. What is more, the respect for human rights should be in any case guaranteed and the well-being of

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[104] Gilbert, "Why Europe Does Not Have a Refugee Crisis," 533.
[105] Carrera et al., "The EU's Response to the Refugee Crisis," 21.
[106] Ibid., 18.

individuals should be prioritized over any other interest. This is the main condition for preserving the already damaged legitimacy of the EU.

5.4 The reconfiguration of sociality in Greece

As each situation must be understood in its context, the current situation of Greece has to be understood by the several migration flows that have marked its history. In fact, modern Greece is a product of exchanges of population. With the formation of the Greek modern state, two main waves of emigration took place: the first one was fostered by the economic crisis of 1893 and made almost a sixth of the population emigrate mainly to the United States and Egypt; the second one happened after the II World War, which sent more than one million Greeks to the industrialized countries of Europe. Greece is characterized by being not only transmitter, but also recipient of people. Specially, after the collapse of the Central and Eastern regimes in 1989 and due to its geographic location, the immigration to Greece became a massive phenomenon.

According to the existing literature, at the end of the 1990s the Greek civil society was weak and poorly developed in terms of civic participation. Civil society was not particularly active regarding volunteerism in comparison with Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon countries. Prior to this period, the volunteerism did exist, as different works of charity illustrate, however, it cannot be said that it was a generalized character.

At the end of the 20th century policies, surveys and public discourses tried to solve this problem with a growing institutionalization of volunteerism that led to a growing professionalization. States around the world started to provide legal frameworks that regularize the issue[107]. A complex network of processes and agents was created around the volunteerism, concrete methods and principles that brought the institutionalization and professionalization of this subject: legal frameworks, state and EU policies, specialization seminars and courses, supervision of experts, educational

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[107] Rozakou, "Crafting the Volunteer," 84.

processes, etc.[108]Though the Greek policies were directed to the same aim, they resulted fragmentary and incomplete[109].

Volunteerism became not only a systematic feature with new political significances, but also a symbol of Greek modernity. The literature on the topic grew dramatically during that period and it was extended to the media and public events. Being a volunteer represented the new European and Greek citizen[110], the altruistic and disinterested person working for the public good.

The institutionalization and professionalization of volunteerism promoted at the turn of the new century resulted in big non-governmental organizations, shaped by their hierarchical and stratified structure, where members, volunteers, paid employees and board members were strongly differentiated. Despite the proclaimed neutrality and independence of these organizations, they have close bonds with the state, from which they obtain financial support; in return, they support the states in its social services.

Volunteers in these big NGOs are known for being well-trained through different practices and educational processes, such as conferences, training seminars, supervision of their work, etc., which operate as professionalization tools of the activity. Furthermore, people working altruistically in the structure identify themselves as volunteers in an open way and are normally proud of this status. In many cases, they have an ideological background linked to religious movements. At times, the organization itself tries to create an idealistic picture that brings emotional effects and affective reactions within their members, praising heroic or historic figures and sometimes the national duty toward the others.

This regularization and professionalization of volunteerism entailed a new way of governability that was possible exclusively in advanced democracies. The subjects are seen as self-governed and self-regulating participants, whose freedom does not lead to a decrease of the sovereignty of the state, but to indirect and informal governance practices. As Sharma explained, this degovernmentalization of the state implies an even stronger governmentalization of the society in everyday life[111].

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[108] The first legislative act that made reference to "voluntary service activities" was the Declaration 38 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997). The next year, the initiative of a "European Voluntary Service" was created by the Commission. In the Greek sphere, it was the government of Simitis the one who promoted specifically volunteerism through legislative acts and the stablishment of institutions.

[109] Emblematic is the organisation of the "Panhellenic Volunteerism Expo" carried out annually since 2001 or the official "Volunteer Day" regulated by law 2646/98.

[110] Rozakou, "Crafting the Volunteer," 81.

[111] Sharma, "Crossbreeding Institutions, Breeding Struggle," 70.

The most notable example is the Hellenic Red Cross, which constitutes a highly hierarchical, bureaucratized, big organization related to the Christian movement, where its volunteers are known for being well-trained and educated.

When the positivism of economic progress faded away due to the economic crisis and, more precisely, when the new refugee crisis hit Greece, there was, according to experts, a reconfiguration of the sociality in Greece[112]. Refugees had to be provided with a large amount of services and the state was unable to meet the conditions to cope with such situation. In this context, something admirable happened. Greek society started to mobilize in a massive way in order to give response to the humanitarian disaster, being considered the largest mobilization of Greek society since the War in Cyprus in 1974. Volunteers, fishermen, villagers, activists, professors or students contributed in a quick and emblematic way to the response. Thanks to these new ways of participation, the society witnessed the transformation of political action into informal groups and voluntary organizations. Over time, these initiatives converted into something else, small and local organizations, NGOs or even political parties.

In this modern society, the concept of solidarity replaced hospitality, which was exhausted by the history itself. Through this process, solidarity became a politicised domain, a way of engagement with the other who does not have a place in this new society[113]. As Rakapoulos notes, after the big Greek crisis, "solidarity" become a "conceptual bridge" among sociality and the conception of the crisis. With the shift from hospitality to solidarity there was not only a transformation in the forms of interaction with the "other"; but it also entailed putting solidarity within the sphere of segmentary practices. As Greek anthropologists pointed out, solidarity in the current crises organises a concrete response to austerity, a response that is characterized by three main aspects.

First of all, the relationality between solidarity as a response against economic austerity is defined by agonistic features, where solidarity emerged as a wider political mobilisation against the current political system leading to the collapse of the existing bipartisanship.

Secondly, the relationality was programmatic and inside different ideological projects of reconstructing sociality: solidarity took place essentially within the agenda of the left-wing parties. The phenomenon gave to new players the opportunity to re-

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[112] Rozakou, "Crafting the Volunteer," 82.
[113] Papataxiarchis, "Unwrapping Solidarity?," 207.

think the financial crisis without using a neutral language. They projected an alternative understanding of the political that emerged among different competing ideologies, in fact, solidarity acted as an umbrella that covered various different ideological and political projects. The defendants and activists of the solidarity movement found the perfect place to apply their egalitarian agenda.

Finally, the relationality between solidarity and austerity has to be understood as a gift-giving, a symbolic response with historic tracks and different meanings; however, the gift was not only addressed to the refugees, but the humanity: to the present Greeks struggling to keep their social rights and facing the economic crisis, to their 20th century ancestor who were forced to flee their homes and to European community as a tool for the promotion of their dignity against the austerity measures[114]. The massive interest in the gift giving made that political parties, businesses, international agents and others tried to occupy the position of the donor[115].

Thus, parallel to the previous institutionalized large-scale humanitarian organizations, small projects or initiatives run by local voluntary organizations budded. This disinterested solidarity, introduced as self-organized and acts horizontally, anti-hierarchically and against the state and the market, became a core metaphor and grew in popularity, playing a fundamental role at this moment. Volunteerism acquired a generalized and wholesale character with new political significances and connotations, while volunteer a new political subject that symbolized Greek modernity[116]. The acts of solidarity are extended not only to refugees, but also to immigrants, psychiatric patients and minority groups. They are followed by resistance active practices in the main Greek cities (strikes, demonstrations, social and political movements, clashes with the police, assemblies, and so on).

In contrast with the official production of volunteerism, symbol of how people should behave as democratic citizens at the beginning of the new century, this different way of relationality was defined by the polysemic and moral significance given by the participants. Because participants should never be seen as objects of the social processes, rather inventive constructors of meanings of the social trends, and in order to understand the grassroots of these initiatives, it is necessary to listen to the interpretation given by its participants. The parties consider their participation not only

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[114] Agelopoulos, "To whom are the greeks bearing gifts?," 10.
[115] Papataxiarchis, "Unwrapping Solidarity?," 207.
[116] Rozakou, "Crafting the Volunteer," 81.

an act of solidarity, but rather as a form of resistance against the state and an evident challenge to state and European policies. The terms "change", "subversion" and "resistance" emerge over and over again in the vocabulary of people taking part those movements. Their participation is seen as a reaction against austerity measures that aims to improve and make changes in the political system and the power structures.

The principle of self-governance constitutes one of the main features of this new volunteerism. In this new volunteerism, grounded in local neighbourhoods and interrelated to anti-austerity ideologies, spontaneity and informality prevail. They take the spontaneity as a significant principle of sociality, hence, they regret formalized ways of hierarchy inside their organization and paid positions. In order to identify themselves, they use the term social in an open way: social centers, social kitchens, social spaces, social shelters, etc., which represents exactly the principle of sociality.

Besides, they defend unmediated relationships between the volunteers and the receptors of the support. This lack of predetermined social norms allows them to establish closer contact with the people involved. In fact, they do not consider their social work a top-down initiative but a response based on egalitarian principles.

5.4.1 The *Eko project* as an example of activist intervation

Eko project constitutes an ideal organisation for the exemplification of the new volunteerism that emerged from the above mentioned factors. *Eko Project* comes from the informal organization of young volunteers that used to collaborate in Lesvos. Eko volunteers arrived in mainland Greece mainly from Spain, when Eidomeni became the informal crossing point to Macedonia in 2015 and hundreds of thousands of refugees started camping there whle the borders were on the point of being shut. In March 2016 this group arrived to Eko Station, a gas station from which they took the name and that was 20 kilometres far away from Eidomeni. *Eko´*s spirit was founded there. Even if Eko Station was hosting 1.800 people in deplorable conditions, they organized different activities that could bring dignity to the people stranded there, such as a school, a kitchen, a library and other communal areas in which they could prepare different workshops and activities for people of all ages. The authorities had tried for weeks to transfer the refugees in Eidomeni to formal camps in Greece, when on 13rd June Eko Station was entirely evacuated.

The vast majority of people were taken to Vasilika, a military-run camp in an old chicken factory near Thessaloniki, Greece, which did not comply with the minimum hygienic, sanitary and living conditions. The team at Eko project aimed to reproduce in Vasilika the values and the projects which were carried out in Eidomeni, so they found a field of 4.000 square-metre close to the camp. This was the property of a Greek man handing over its use. Thus, they re-established the activities and the distribution of goods again. They performed activities such as schooling, a children's creative space, a women's space, various communal spaces, a cinema, a social kitchen and a library.

When the morning of 10th March of this year I went to visit the place those people have created, I felt surrounded by solidarity. They welcome me in a yellow caravan that represented the symbol of Eko. "*Whoever needs it can use this place. It is normally open and the refugees can come here to sleep, rest or talk. After so many months in the same jail, they need a safe space to feel free.*" – a 21 years old girl member of the group explained to me. They were careful and sensible in their explanations, as if they were developing a theory.

The lack of hierarchy and an organized structure can be seen in the fact that this group of people considered themselves a community, thus *Eko* is not even regarded as an NGO, but a "community space" according to the presentation they make of themselves in their Facebook Group. They repeatedly claim the values of their community and the sense of unity among them.

> "*Eko will continue to be driven by its community (...). Eko will forever be a space where people come and share with each other, and feel connected as a community. Whether that means playing sports, having a chai together, working in the kitchen and conjuring up delicious soups and salads or teaching their children in the school, there is a place for everybody to take part.*"[117]

> "*All these independent projects came together to create a wonderful, unique community, (...) .*"[118]

They established horizontal relations in everything they did. "*We don´t provide services or goods. We work together and in a close relationship. We never work for the people. We work <u>with</u> (emphasis) the people. We construct this together*"- they said in a decisive manner. In the same way, on their Facebook Group:

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[117] https://www.facebook.com/EkoProject/, post of 03/08/2016 (Accessed 16 May 2017)
[118] https://www.facebook.com/EkoProject/, post of 16/07/2016 (Accessed 16 May 2017)

"Eko Project has always been about working horizontally and working together as one entity."[119]

Furthermore, they claimed as one of their core values diversity and multiculturalism, while they considered the different nationalities and cultures of the refugees and of the volunteers a unique experience to learn from each other.

"In the last weeks we have been living an EKO that is more diverse than ever, over ten ethnicities and cultures gathering as one, sharing and proving that humans have no borders."[120]

"It was incredible to see so many people from so many different countries coming together for such a beautiful afternoon. (...) it's very beautiful to see the diversity in EKO."[121]

What really caught my attention during the meeting was the political activism this group of people had adopted. They fight the system. They are not only against the current asylum process and mechanisms, but also against the national and international power structures. The terms "*resistance*" and "*dignity*" emerges in their vocabulary really often and they repeatedly preached slonga "*Open the borders*", "*EU does not represent us*" or "*No human is illegal*", that can be read over the place. The case of Eko project constitutes the perfect example of the transformation of political participation and informal groups to voluntary work[122].

"EKO is the manifestation of all the support, all the courage, the energy, the experience, the rage, the suffering, all the love and all the resistance that all of us have accumulated over the last 365 days. This means you."[123]

"The #rEKOnstruction has been started! We are building near Vasilika all the projects that existed in Eko Station which made it a space of resistance and dignity."[124]

They criticized with hard words how the European Union and the Greek government have tackled the refugee crisis and they claimed for a faster relocation process that gives to the refugees a safe and permanent solution.

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[119] https://www.facebook.com/EkoProject/, post of 16/07/2016 (Accessed 16 May 2017)
[120] https://www.facebook.com/EkoProject/, post of 16/07/2016 (Accessed 16 May 2017)
[121] https://www.facebook.com/EkoProject/, post of 06/04/2016 (Accessed 16 May 2017)
[122] Rozakou, "Crafting the Volunteer," 92.
[123] https://www.facebook.com/EkoProject/, post of 03/08/2016 (Accessed 16 May 2017)
[124] https://www.facebook.com/EkoProject/, post of 03/08/2016 (Accessed 16 May 2017)

"We are fully aware that this is not the final solution for these people, the real need is getting out of here. However, we believe it will be a space for the mutual solidarity that the Eko Community created."[125]

Even if they provided humanitarian aid, they continuously distanced themselves from the big NGOs working in the field and the existing humanitarian aid system. They reaffirm the human values, while critizing the dehumanized way of working of these organizations. They reinforced the values of love, respect and tolerance. *"For them it´s all about money. It´s a market, a business. They don´t care about people. They come here, do their work, earn a lot of money and that´s all. (…) We are the example that things can be done in a more efficient way with much less money."* – explained to me in the old yellow caravan.

"After seven months in Vasilika, and a final week of sub-zero temperatures, the sun finally came out in Thessaloniki and the NGOs returned to work. The UNHCR and other organisations responsible for the camp hadn't been able to make it in due to the 'bad weather conditions' leaving the residents with no running water and none of the vital information they need for the relocation process for over a week."[126]

"Now EKO is far from just a gas station. It is not just a community of people facing this atrocity. Together we have built a model of cooperation, inspired a way of solidarity and finally created a permanent space that in itself proves that things can be done better without fences, but with acceptance, creativity, freedom and love."[127]

Talking about the social kitchen, a space where refugees volunteers cook their own food for the people in the camp, brought two necessary remarks; first, the existing assistentialism that predominates nowadays in any refugee camp and consists just on providing goods; and second, the necessity of empowerment of the community. *"They are fed up of receiving food from big NGO´s. They are all day in the camp without nothing to do. They know how to cook. They want to cook food based on their customs. They don't need assistance, but opportunities."* – the young girl sentenced.

[125] https://www.facebook.com/EkoProject/, post of 07/08/2016 (Accessed 16 May 2017)
[126] https://www.facebook.com/EkoProject/, post of 17/01/2016 (Accessed 16 May 2017)
[127] https://www.facebook.com/EkoProject/, post of 03/03/2016 (Accessed 16 May 2017)

Agree or not with their political ideology, what seems innegable is the admirable work they are doing and they have already done in such a hostile place and how kidnely they related with people.

Summing up and as it has been seen from the above, the era of economic growth was characterized by the prosperous period for the social welfare and the creation of a institutionalized, bureaucratized, hierarchical and professionalized volunteerism, product of modernization mentored by disinterested people working for the common good. However, during the second decade of the 21st century the crisis brought the empoverishment of the middle classes and the loss of legitimacy of the existing political forces and their European project. These facts led to the collapse of the top-down volunteerism and the reformation of sociality with the flourishing and outburst of new solidary initiatives against the existing austerity measures and with a clear political agenda.

VI. EDUCATING REFUGEE CHILDREN IN GREECE

6.1 The rapid response to chaos results in the lack of monitoring and coordination

Due to the wave of refugees that entered Greece in 2015, Greek society, the international community and the affected refugees themselves started to organize activities, giving rise to a complex network of different educational initiatives led by different entities of different nature: NGOs, associations, unions, collectives, universities, solidarity groups, groups managed by the refugees themselves, or public entities. The responses given to cover the educational needs of this population were many and different, however, there was a lack of monitoring and coordination of them.

The beginning of the crisis made that the rapid response devised by the different initiatives put children in the spotlight not only because they were the most vulnerable ones, but also because the long period of time without schooling was affecting their behavior. They started to prepare playful, artistic, creative, musical, theater, sportive, language or school activities. The aims of each activity were very different from each other: while certain groups spoke of the need not to interrupt the educational development of minors, others emphasized the need to have spaces in which they could develop their creativity, personality, feel safe and loved; other times, they targeted parents' need to stay for a few hours free, the empowerment of society, etc.

By order of the Greek Ministry of Education, on 18 March 2016, a Scientific Committee for the support of refugee children[128], formed by different professors and collaborators of the Greek universities, was established in order to gather information about the various pedagogical and educational activities carried out in the accommodation centers or refugee camps, evaluate them, supervise them, and make recommendations.

Two thirds of the initiatives supervised by the Committee were creative activities, games, painting or psychosocial support and only the remaining third were classes as such. The lessons were mainly English classes, followed by Greek, and rarely maths; in some centers classes of Arabic or German were also organized. In very few cases, the activities were organized based on a knowledge of the desires of the refugees.

Although until then many entities described the activities as educational, the quality of the education was questionable. The teachers were mostly volunteers without

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[128]Scientific Committee to assist the work of the Committee of Support of Refugee Children, "Educational Actions for Refugee Children."

preparation; only 35% of these educational proposals had salaried workers and in most cases were large entities. In some centers, there were workshops for the preparation of the volunteers for the best performance of their tasks. Although each entity developed its own curricula, there was not a previous necessity assessment. Not only the number of children, but also the volunteers varied widely from one day to another, which made academic monitoring extremely difficult.

In general terms, there was a lack of educational areas and the places where the activities were developed were not adequate. Most of the activities were conducted outdoors and were therefore subjected to the weather forecast. The conditions of the camps exposed the children to some danger and few of them had classrooms destined solely to the education. There were some recreational areas and swings, however, the supervision was not always assured. There were very few examples of activities developed outside the field, such as visits to museums, cinema, theater, libraries, etc.

Finally, there was a concentration of the supply of these activities in certain centers, while in others where were large amount of refugees were living there were very few or any initiatives.

6.2 Education needs assessment

According to Save the Children´s assessment report of May 2016[129], before the closure of borders with the FYROM, not even one refugee child stranded in Greece was attending the school. The total amount of time that refugee children have been out of school went from one month to seven years, and an average time of one year and a half. Over 1/5 of children, had never been to school. For Syrians the average time out of school reached 25,8 months, while for Afghans 10,8 months. This long period of time without schooling or the total lack of it threatened to have a strong negative impact on the development, wellbeing, and future of children.

Contrary to popular belief, education results a priority for children and their families. For 77% of children, schooling is one of their priorities, followed by family (60%), health (43%), and home (28%). Furthermore, more that 1/3 of the interviewed parents, mentioned education as a key factor for coming to Europe and all of them (100%) agreed on sending their children to school if this possibility existed. When

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[129] Save the Children, "Assessment Report: Education Needs Assessment Greece."

asked, in addition to the time the children have been out of school, parents mentioned the lack of routine and structured life in camps and talked about the importance of education to the safety and future of the children. While children referenced to the importance of education regarding their future, parents were more concerned about the current situation of children. Among the reasons, half of parents determined that the war has been the main reason for children to be out of school.

The learning background of refugee children in Greece varies considerably depending on the country of origin of the children and their previous experiences as refugees in other countries. In general terms, Syrian refugees claimed that their educational system was very good before the war (97% of primary-aged children attended school, 90% of literate people and a raise of 4% on the education budget in the previous five years)[130]; however, when war began more than 4000 schools were destroyed or converted to shelter to the displaced people and the vast majority of teachers fled their towns. The paths to schools were insecure ways were crimes and abuses were committed every day and it was safer staying at home[131]. When refugees have been attending school in a neighbor country, the lack of language support arises as the main barrier to learning, as is the case of Turkey.

On the contrary and probably because of the prolonged nature of the conflict, Afghans considered their previous learning experiences in their country poor and constantly insecure, especially for girls due to the opposition of armed groups to girls´ education[132]. The classes were overcrowded, there was a lack of qualified teachers due to the absence of training, the facilities were in a poor condition, there was lack of material and the quality of instruction was very low. They reported threats of armed groups, bombs, gas attacks, and poisoning. Afghan parents sheltered in Iran before coming to Greece commented on the high expenses they had to pay in that country and the discrimination they suffered.

Given the time spent out-of-school, their different experiences in education and the uncertainty about where they might settle, the needs of refugee children are very diverse. The learning needs of children are as diverse as the number of refugee children, because of that, any kind of education system, formal and non-formal, must take this reality into consideration when developing the curricula. In this concrete scenario and

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[130] UNICEF, "Syria Crisis: Education Interrupted. Global Action to Rescue the Schooling of a Generation."
[131] Human Rights Watch, "Safe No More. Students and Schools under Attack in Syria."
[132] UN Women, "In Afghanistan, Women and Girls Strive to Get an Education."

according to Save the Children, apart from Greek and English languages, it should incorporate first language literacy and numeracy. Almost three quarters of the parents interviewed considered learning English essential.

6.3 Non-formal education programs: the disorganized but necessary opportunities

In order to build my own opinion and thanks to my fieldwork of 5 months, I had the opportunity to visit and to be part of many of the projects the Scientific Committee analyzed in its report along Greece. It would be impossible to express the different feelings, all the people, every interesting conversation or all the beautiful moments that these experiences provided me in this piece of paper. For that reason, I summarize my general impressions and the most decisive conversations and interviews related with the topic of education.

6.3.1 The islands: from informal to non-formal education activities

Before the closure of borders with the FYROM, the situation in the island was quite different. As Omar Al Said, manager of OXY, the first informal refugee camp in the island of Lesvos, told me, at the beginning people stayed in the island for some days and then they used to take a ferry to Athens or Thessaloniki to continue their trip to other parts of Europe. At some moments, with 3,000 people coming to the island per day, the situation was harrowing, disturbing and painful. The generalizations made from the island of Lesvos could be equally applied to any other island, as the situation is very similar.

Taking into account the educational process, first of all, it must be highlighted the crucial experience that supposes for a person taking a boat of dubious quality and putting on a false vest stitched up in clandestine factories in Turkey to escape the war. These events constitute a form of informal education that will mark the development of any child or human. Apart from that, the only educational activities for children taking place at that moment were carried out by independent volunteers that tried to relieve the suffering and go through the terrible experience that had just lived making people laugh and amuse. Omar showed me a video in his phone where I could see *Clowns without*

borders[133], who were performing in the middle of the camp making everybody laugh, sing and dance.

Since the closure of borders, however, the situation shifted from an emergency response to long-term projects and suddenly there were hundreds of NGOs with different features working in the three refugee camps of Lesvos in different sectors. In the island, the refugees highly value the work of small NGOs or initiatives, yet, in general terms, they share a negative view of UNHCR and big organization´s work. It can be stated that the education activities organized by small NGOs or initiatives, in general, receive better valuation from the part of refugees. They are focused on the empowerment of the society and not on the provision of aid. The education activities are developed according to the real needs of children and their families, trying to make them creators and not only recipients of the services. In general terms, non-formal education activities carried out, are the main education the refugee children attend and the most important moment to develop their skills.

I have chosen four of my visits there as representative examples of non-formal education activities carried out in the islands. As it has been already said, the activities varied from a place to another and in some parts there were not educational services at all.

Social, emotional and personal development in Pikpa camp

The refugee camp of *Pikpa* is an open refugee camp in Mytilene run by volunteers, which provides shelter, food, clothes, medical and psychological assistance, social support and educational activities to the most vulnerable people (disabled, sick, pregnant, children, etc.). Contrary to the other two refugee camps in the island of Lesvos, Moria and Kara Tepe, *Pipka* was full of welcoming messages in the walls, swings, grass and trees[134]. I was amazed by the friendly, joyful and peaceful atmosphere there.

When I arrived, children were taking part in a creative workshop in which they learnt to use their body to express feelings. Children were shouting, running, dancing and playing. If anyone had seen the scene, she could have thought that those children had not faced any difficult situation. Erika, the volunteers´ coordinator, explained to me that almost every day they had a creative activity or music therapy: they dance, they

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[133] For further information visit: https://clownswithoutborders.org
[134] Barranco, "Pikpa Camp, El Campo de Refugiados Asambleario Y Horizontal En Lesbos."

play performances, paint the walls, play table games, do sport, etc. Many of the children that have just arrived, are shy and afraid of going out; after a couple of weeks and thanks to the non-formal education activities carried out in this camp, they overcome their fears and developed their potential day after day. *"The progress is hilarious"* – she concluded.

Pikpa camp is a place where children are taught good values as well: solidarity, love and respect. Not only the positive messages in the walls of the place, but also the relationship between residents seemed amazing to me. As Erika told me *"one of the most important values is feeling loved and respected. Children have to learn through all the activities that they have to apply the same values with the others"*.

Overcoming trauma and learning life skills through water activities

I saw the exact same positive reaction when I joined the activities of the Spanish NGO *Proemaid.* The rescue team organized water games and swimming lessons in the Aegean so that the minors could reconcile with the water and cope with the psychological distress caused by the journey[135]. I had the opportunity to join and assist them since the first day.

The first day of activities, some of the children were shaking and not able to put a foot into the water. A couple of them had lost close relatives trying to reach the coast of Lesvos. *"The trauma related to the sea will have an impact in the future and will occur in different forms like anxiety, phobia, depression or any other modality"*, explained to us the Palestinian child psychiatrist and psychotherapist working in collaboration with *Proemaid*. In his opinion, the best treatment for the trauma is to face it step by step, specially when the patient is having fun and enjoying at the same time, as it was the case. These kind of activities are the most appropriate interventions, since they combine all the essential elements of trauma therapy: the place (the sea) and time (very close to the trauma). In addition, swimming also gives a sense of control over a fear that they cannot control.

The truth is that after six days of activities, it was impossible to take them out of the sea, they seemed incredibly happy and having so much fun. They were even making jokes about the water: *"I will arrive to Turkey swimming"* - an Iranian girl shouted. Other than the healing process, it should not be forgotten the acquisition of necessary

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[135] Gutiérrez, "Así Superan Los Niños Refugiados El Pánico Al Mar Tras Arriesgar Su Vida En El Egeo."

basic swimming knowledge. The parents were having a good time as well and sharing those beautiful moments with their children.

Learning languages in Mosaik Support Center

In the island there are lessons of languages and basic numeracy and literacy as well. *Mosaik Support Center* is one of the community spaces in Mytiline, where apart from legal and social support, it provides education activities in the form of creative and physical workshops and language classes. Aiming to enhance the conditions for integration of refugees into the local community, this center helps over 1,000 people, creating participation between both Greek and international volunteers.

When I was there, I could interview one of the teachers, an adorable Greek woman coming to the center every day to give English and Greek lessons. She explained to me the change in the behavior of those children when they start attending the classes: *"At the beginning, they are normally shy and they show fear, but in the end they are children and when they adapt to the class atmosphere their behavior is exactly the same as any other children".* According to her, the most important thing is to teach them with love and in a natural form: *"I know they are different in a way, but I don´t let them know"*, she said. *"If you are a great teacher of Greeks, you will be a great teacher of Syrians. (…) You have to smile, smile and smile, and it will come back. (…) They love coming to this school".*

She also remarked the necessity and facility of refugee children for learning language, despite the difficulties. *"They see in learning languages an opportunity to leave; however, the process is very slow. Children don´t study at home, they don't come everyday, for example, if it is raining they don't come"* – she added.

The self-organized school of *One Happy Family*

One Happy Family is another social center run by the volunteers themselves and coordinated discreetly by the *Swisscross*. They have a large piece of land in a hill where they have constructed a space which counts with a coffee shop, a cinema, a shisha lounge, a communal dinning room, a kitchen, a gymnasium, a boutique, and a playground, that host every day from 300 to 500 people that live in the camps of Moria or Kara Tepe. People from all around the world work and enjoy together; once again, the generosity and respect there amazed me. As the volunteer coordinator, Fabian

Bracher, said "*we work with the people and not for them*", the exact same sentence the people from *Eko Project* expressed.

Fed up of the paternalistic approach that leads the activities inside the camp organized by big NGOs and attending to the social needs of children, they organized an educational center that works as a real school: they have a curricula, teachers from the refugee community, meetings, calendar, schedule, and exams.

As an Iraqi professor said, children prefer going to that school instead of attending the lessons inside the camp, run by Save the Children. The classes inside the camp of Kara Tepe are taught in English, a language that the children do not know properly. Teaching children in their mother tongue constitutes the basis for obtaining good results. Besides, teachers in *One Happy Family* are teachers from the refugee community, hence, the empowerment is enhanced. A volunteer from Israel could not explain it better when she asked rhetorically: "*Why would I come here to teach them Math if there are mathematicians in their community?*".

In the school of the center children feel free, valued and normal. "*They feel secure, and most important, they feel they are children again (...) We try to transmit them good values; for example, they have to learn that all of them are equal. The only black child that was attending the school was starting to be marginalized by the children and we can´t allow that* " – the Israeli woman said. The fact that the teachers are from the refugee community, hence, that they are taught in their mother tongue is the main factor that make them love going to this informal school.

6.3.2 Essential activities in Mainland Greece

In mainland Greece, it must be taken into consideration that two different situations exist regarding provision of non-forma education activities: first, the provision of activities inside the camp, for which any organization needs a permission from the Ministry of Education; and second, the activities organized by social centers, NGOs, individual initiatives or communities outside the camps, in the cities. In the present piece of paper I explained two of the activities, one inside the camp of Diavata and the another one in the city of Thessaloniki, taking place at this moment and in which I have been involved.

Antygone creating a healthy environment inside the refugee camp of Diavata

Antygone[136] (information and documentation centre on racism, ecology, peace and non-violence) is one of the NGOs that prepares games and activities inside the camp of Diavata some evenings of the week. During four months of volunteering in the organization, I could see the evolution of many of the children and the dynamics inside the camp. The activities changed from week to week, however, they mainly consist of handicrafts, table games and popular games. At this moment, *Antygone* is implementing a human rights non-formal education program through which they teach values.

First of all, inside the camp, the space of *Antygone* itself constitutes an important feature that needs to be mentioned. The camp of Diavata, in terms of conditions, is one of the best camps I have visited: the basic needs are covered, the environment is not that hostile, is quite clean and the containers where families live have two rooms, a fridge, air conditioning and heating and a cooker. However, it cannot be forgotten that is a refugee camp hosting from 500 to 1,000 people that have been stuck in Greece for many months waiting while their applications are being processed. The atmosphere and conditions will never be good enough for children that have lived the journey, specially taking into account the ghettoization that is taking place there. In this scenario, it is essential for the development of the children to have safe spaces where they can just be children. *Antygone* develops its activities in a container that is always decorated with nice children´s colorful drawings and pictures, giving the sense of being in a peaceful place.

During my stay in Diavata, I could observe the disorders that living in a refugee camp cause to children. It is necessary to say that children living inside the camp were much more aggressive than the refugee children participating in activities in social centers or NGO´s in the city. In general terms, it was more difficult to them to concentrate in simple activities and obey the rules. They were more noisy and trying to catch the attention of the instructors all the time.

At the beginning I found very difficult coping with the violence inside the camp. Children were fighting between them all the time and they used to play with imaginary guns or throw stones to each other. Besides, due to the hostility between Afghan and Syrian refugees, they were usually insulting each other and they did not want to share the materials neither play together. *Antygone* adopts educating in values one of its main

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[136] For further information visit: http://www.antigone.gr/en/

aims. They try to create a respectful and peaceful atmosphere where all are equally treated. The activities carried out have the capacity of bringing children of different nationalities and ages together despite their differences and it is beautiful to see how, while *Antygone* develops its activities, they are all playing together, laughing and having fun.

In this task, the coordinator, Nikos, plays a crucial role. Loved by every single child in the camp, he tried to promote the reconciliation and the sharing of these values between them. Probably Nikos and many of the volunteers are children´s role models, so they way we treat them in the camp is crucial. "*You have to hug them and pay attention to them. They have to feel loved and valued. (…) Say "Bravo!" to them all the time and teach them to respect each other (...) At the same time we have to have rules and be strict when they don't behave properly"*- Nikos told me my first day.

The progress in the children is slow. When new children come to the activities they are usually shy and quiet. I could not see any difference in the first two weeks, but I could after a couple of months: children normally taking part in the activities shared the material, play together, and say "thank you" and "please" to each other; they still fight, but again and again we tray to teach them and, step by step, they change their behavior. Educating in values is an everyday work.

With the exceptions of a few human rights non-formal education programs, non-formal activities in this NGO are not about content or methodologies, but about simple games that make the children feel children again. They create a respectful atmosphere were they feel free to play and enjoy. We teach them values in a subtle way and what we receive back is worthy.

Music and dreams in *Alkyone Refugee Center*

The therapeutic potential of music is undeniable for anyone, and on countless occasions its ability to overcoming trauma has been proven. In *Alkyone Refugee Day Center* of Thessaloniki, a group of independent volunteers organise percussion and music lesson once per week to refugee children. When I participated in the activities, everybody was enjoying, parents included, while learning music.

Generally speaking, the mentioned distress in children living in the refugee camp was not that present in the behavior of children living outside the camp. In the music activities carried out in *Alkyone*, refugees paid all their attention to the lessons.

After a performance of body percussion, a Syrian boy shouted "*I will be a musician*", and I understood that everything was about bringing their dreams and ambitions back.

In the same way, in *Eko community*, through non-formal education activities they try to develop the professional ambitions of the teenagers living in the camp of Vasilika. Two Syrian boys, 16 and 18 years old, told me how they had learned to knit and repair their own clothes, one of them told me how they had built a small library thanks to the carpentry workshops, while the other trusted me that he loved helping in the kitchen every day that he wanted to become chef.

6.3.3 Recovering hope, values and childhood through non-formal activities

What I found in all these initiatives run by small NGO's dealing with non-formal education was not about professionalization of the sector or evaluation of the learning outcomes. It was much simpler. They were giving the children a sense of being valued, loved, normal and respected. From my point of view, this means bringing their dignity back. In the activities the child is always in a central place and from a human rights point of view, this humanism can only be considered positive, especially when the empowerment, capacity building, healing or development of the subject is sought. Besides, the relationship between the staff of the NGO's, the volunteers and the refugees is normally horizontal.

In these activities, values are taught with tacit methods: they try to create an inclusive and participative environment, where the refugee children can be part of the Greek society and were all of them are equally treated. In many cases, the process was healing; in other cases, it was about bringing the dreams and hope back. Sometimes it was just both of them. From what I could see and experience and what volunteers, staff and parents of the refugee children told me throughout this period, in all cases the impact of these initiatives on the minors´ behavior was positive: from fear to confidence, from shyness to openness, from a sense of lost to dreams or from tears to joy.

As the Scientific Committee pointed out, non-formal education activities did not have a common curricula, its coverage was limited to certain areas, the teachers were mostly volunteers without preparation, there was no needs assessment and the attendance to these programs was not on a regular basis. Yet, it is to be recalled that,

despite the disorganized and unprofessional way, they give access to a non-formal way of education: this altruistic and self-organized initiatives constituted the only education response to the humanitarian crisis and the only option the refugee children found to develop their potential.

6.4 The proposed educational actions for refugee children by the Scientific Committee

The closure of borders with the FRYOM forced thousands of refugees to remain in Greece. They had to interrupt indefinitely their desire to travel to other European countries. Obliged or not, Greece ceased to be a country of mere transit and became a country of destination, where refugees and their families had to wait for months until their registration, asylum applications and petitions for relocation and reunification were processed. In this situation, non-formal education activities taking place were not enough and the Ministry of Education was in front of the urgent necessity of establishing an effective educational system that would enable and realize the right to education for all refugee children. This was an opportunity not only for authorities, but also for NGOs, donors and initiatives to promote the schooling of children and coordinate the existing initiatives.

By order of the Ministry of Education, the Scientific Committee to assist the work of the Committee of Support of Refugee Children was established in order to assist the Ministry in the difficult task of bringing refugee children to Greek schools. Based on the study of international literature on the education of refugee children and from the discussion with officials of the Ministry of Education, international organizations and Greek bodies specialized in refugee and education issues, the Scientific Committee sent its proposal.

In the proposal first of all, the Scientific Committee establishes three basic priorities for effective implementation of the recommendations. It emphasizes as primordial the seeking of funding methods and the creation of a group within the Ministry that is in charge of identifying forms of financing and formulating economic agreements, since the implementation of the recommendations depends on the possibility of financing it. Secondly, special mention is made to the necessary cooperation and synergy with different entities, including ministries, municipalities and

regions, universities, teachers, international organizations and other bodies. Finally, it alerts the necessity of alternative scenarios, due to the high fluidity of refugee population and the lack of data on its demographic characteristics, their age distribution, the social and educational profiles of families, the educational cultures, or any social mobility expectations achieved through education.

It defines as imperative the direct and systematically involvement of the Ministry of Education in the education of refugees and believes that their gradual integration into the education system should be implemented as soon as possible. It considers awareness raising activities fundamental in order to avoid negative reactions within the society.

6.4.1 The plan: from adaptation to schooling

The main objective of the state is to ensure psychosocial support and the integration of refugee children into the Greek educational system. For this, a period of preparation of an academic course is established, 2016 - 2017, which should be implemented as soon as possible. The overall aim of the Ministry is the gradual integration of children into school structures and not their ghettoization within the camps; however, this great step might not be welcome by the local society and the refugee community and might lead to reactions and tensions. Due to this fact, the Scientific Committee proposes a transitional phase within which different interventions are proposed in order to create the conditions for the success of the schooling process.

Language teaching is always a controversial issue in refugee education. It is considered essential that children learn their mother tongue, especially when the child has a great possibility of returning to their country of origin. Similarly, the modern linguistic and pedagogical literature determines that the teaching of the mother tongue is a necessary prerequisite for teaching a second or third foreign language (as in this case would be the case of Greek, English, German). However, it is extremely difficult for the Greek state to carry out the task of organization of lessons, content, monitoring, evaluation, establishment of qualifications, etc.; in addition, the different nationalities of refugees make it necessary learning not only Arabic, but also Farsi, Kurdish and other minority languages.

For these reasons, the most appropriate option is that the mother tongue classes are taught by teachers of the refugee community who have the necessary skills, together

with the monitoring of these activities by an international organization and, in case it is not possible, by staff of the Ministry's Directorates for Refugee Children Education. Children need to learn Greek and adopt an educational routine as soon as possible. Likewise, the studying of other European languages should not be ruled out in the case of children who have high chances of relocating soon to another country; however, these programs must be certified by an accredited body.

All the educators who are part of the program should take into account the possible traumatic experiences that children have gone through, as well as seek to achieve their educational needs, promote an education based on respect for differences in cultures, critical thought and social cohesion. Both communities, refugee and local, should be involved in this long task.

Many families do not have the required documents, such as birth certificates or school titles, and the permanent movement of families through the country makes it complicated to know the exact number of refugees in each area; nevertheless, the Ministry must assure the fluent enrolment of all refugee children into the Greek educational system, even in these circumstances.

Summer 2016

The plans for the summer of 2016 consisted of non-formal education activities, creative and supervised activities inside and outside the camps, aimed at children between 3 and 12 years old, which responded to their psychosocial needs and which would give them a sense of normality, stability and hope. Attention should also be paid to adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18, organizing cultural and sporting activities, using technology and English and Greek classes.

For that purpose, the committee suggested three different options. The first one consisted of creative activities during the summer, which included visits to museums, archaeological sites, sports sites, ecological parks, etc. A second scenario consisted of intensive Greek courses, supported by the use of new technologies, during the three months of summer. The third scenario was the most ambitious of all, suggesting the realization of summer camps for the refugee children, where they would go with their parents or with the authorization of them. For the three options, collaboration with different entities and NGOs and a selection of educators / motivators was necessary.

School year 2016 – 2017

Firstly, the Committee stressed the need for a detailed database with information not only on the number and age of children, but also on other issues such as their prior education, whether there are children with special needs, their educational needs and their wishes in this area, places where they can be accommodated, identification of educators who are familiar with the teaching of foreign language children and wish to work in this context, and a study on the possibilities of relocation of refugees or whether are going to stay longer. Furthermore, continuous cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Migration Policy on accommodation structures, the characteristics of each field and their needs is required.

In the same way, the Committee pays specially attention to the parents of the children. In many cases, the parents think that they will move soon to another country and because of that they do not find useful learning Greek or attending the school. This is the reason why there should be a dialogue with their representatives and explaining why is worthy enrolling their children in the Greek educational system, highlighting the useful future skills for their children.

In this regard, it is essential to assure them that the studies are internationally recognized and that it will be useful in the future. For that purpose, the Greek education system needs to provide children with a certification of their knowledge at any time and valid in any country. Furthermore, it is necessary for the integration of children, that the parents also learn Greek and develop cultural programs with the families.

Discriminatory and racist behaviours are dangerous in any democratic society and it will remain in this way as long as those involved in the education of refugee children address this topic as a problem. So there should be training not only for the educators, but also the education officials, the pupils, the parents, local authorities and communities, based on the history of refugees and their religion, their rights their manner of inclusion, the intercultural school, etc. The educators of refugee children will need systematic and permanent orientation and support in their tasks and there is a need for identifying and training educators among refugees, not only for teaching the mother tongue, but also for shaping cultural mediators.

In all the activities special attention must be paid to illiterate children, children who are older than that corresponding to their knowledge and learning skills due to their impossibility to attend school at their country, girls in case there are cultural barriers, and children with special needs.

The plan was divided in different age groups:

- Children aged 0 – 3: they will remain under the responsibility of their parents.

- Children aged 3 – 7: they are not easily remove from their parents and they need to keep improving their native language, so all the alternatives that the Committee suggested were located inside the camps. The first option consisted of informal kindergartens at the places where they live, organized by the community of refugees, which would facilitate the teaching of the native language. The second scenario took into consideration that was the Greek state itself organizing kindergartens where Greek is taught and where intermediaries or mothers could aid. The third option assumed that international organizations, under their responsibility, were the ones who organized educational activities. The last possibility is addressed to children whose parents resided in cities or villages where typical kindergartens operate; in that case, they would have the opportunity to attend them.

- Children aged 7 – 12: A limited number of these young refugees, the ones who had an elementary knowledge of Greek and were living in city apartments would join the morning program with Greek students. The rest of the children, for being able to join the Greek schools in the next academic year, would need activities or lessons during the afternoons at the school and support classes (Greek, English, knowledge of the history, politics, social and cultural life of the host country). In parallel, the organization of cultural and sporting events is highly desirable.

- Higher education: aware of the importance of finishing higher education as an important component of successful integration of children into their new society and labour market, the Committee considered necessary some previous measures in order to facilitate the enrolment in higher education. Among other measures, it considered necessary the establishment of intensive studying programs for learning Greek, facilitate the enrolment of students who lack documents, funding scholarships, summer schools about this topic, allow them to be part of the Erasmus+ program, and monitoring and coordination activities.

6.5 Implementation of the plan: a wall of difficulties

Implementation of the plan was debated among Greek society. Many were suspicious about their children sharing school with the refugee children and tensions started to be created between the proponents of inclusion and those who did not. In some villages of Greece, parents' reaction to the educational plan for refugee children was positive and the first day of school children were welcomed with enthusiasm and gifts[137]. However, in other occasions, the first reception was aggressive and hostile; many parents received refugee children in schools with protests in front of the building, while holding Greek flags and shouting racist slogans. In other schools like in the village of Profitis, the staff found the doors of schools padlock and had to deal with some parents rejecting to send their children to school while refugees were there. While among the protesters there were many supporters of the political party Golden Dawn, many others denied being racist and claimed that they were just taking care of the education and health of their children.

Indeed, the vaccination of refugee children proved to be one of the major obstacles in promoting the rapid inclusion of refugee children in schools. Medical organizations, like Doctors Without Borders, promoted the vaccination of children arguing that, due the fact that the war in their countries led to the collapse of health care systems, many of the children have not been immunized and they are not protected against deadly diseases[138].

Full of difficulties, the implementation of the education plan proposed by the Scientific Committee to the Ministry of Education was very slow and debated. On 26th May 2017, I had the opportunity to meet Dr. Ira Papadopoulou, staff member of the Office for the Education of the Refugees at the Greek Ministry of Education, in order to know more about the implementation. According to her numbers, at that moment, there were 2,674 refugee children living in the camp and 2,000 living in other type of accommodation attending afternoon classes.

First of all, she remarked that the system of afternoon reception classes is a period for adjustment to the normal system, a period that enables children to have a routine again and a sense of normalcy. *"Some of them have been out of the school for more than three years; they need a phase before entering into the real system. They*

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[137] Pappas, "Thessaloniki Students Welcome Refugee Students to Class. The Pappas Post. 10 October 2016."

[138] Doctors Without Borders, "Greece: MSF Denounces High Price of Vaccines for Refugee Children."

need a period of adaptation."- she said. She emphasized that the program had not been fully implemented, but that a large part of it was in the process, even if it was slow. She remarked in the same way that the Ministry was putting all its efforts to make this happen in the next academic year (2017 - 2018), in order to give due access to education to all refugee children without exception; however, in May 2017, there was not a plan for the integration of refugee children into the morning schools for September. As the system constitutes a phase before entering into the real school, the children have their own curricula composed by few subject.

Dr. Papadopoulou explained to me that they were facing many difficulties in order to implement the plan. She highlighted the failed attempt to establish a system of kindergartens. This system was adopted very late and was organized only in three centres. It did not work because of factors that the Ministry could not control, giving as example how late the children wake up in the refugee camps because of the lack of a routine, which led to the impossibility to install this program in the morning, as there would be no assistance. Dr. Papadopoulou hopes that this system works better in the summer period.

Another important barrier for the implementation of the system was the transfer of refugees from the refugee camps to educational centres. The transportation mechanism seems huge and the great cost in logistics that transferring all the children living in refugee camps to the centres implies is a burden; however, Dr. Papadopoulou was determined in this respect: *"The most important thing is the school, and we have to take them. It does not matter where they are. It has to be compulsory for us to take them there"*. So far, this task had been adopted by different organizations, such as IOM.

When I suggested that not enough effort was being put on the education of teenagers, she argued that they were working on that, however, she reminded me that Greek compulsory education is up to 15 years old. They are implementing a pilot program in this regard, in order to see how it works in practice. Moreover, they are planning to establish an agricultural educational program, which will start in the coming year.

The main problem regarding older teenagers is the lack of a certificate that assesses the level of their knowledge. Dr. Papadopoulou seemed worried about the necessity of finding a mechanism that could measure the previous knowledge and that could give the children direct access to the educational system. "*How can they prove that they have finished the school if they have been moving from a place to another for*

such a long time?", she said. Although they are trying to develop a mechanism that could work in all the states, working as an educational passport, they have not found a solution yet. She was totally right: the Syrian boys in *Eko Project* had plenty of motivation and desire to pursue their dreams, yet they lacked a title that would help them in this achievement.

The necessity of learning Greek is not clear among many NGOs or international initiatives; for instance, only a few local organisations, such as the Greek NGO *Antygone*, were promoting in an active way the learning of this language. In general terms, international initiatives, such as *Open Cultural Center* in Polikastro, *Eko Project* in Vasilika, *One Happy Family* or *Pikpa camp* in Lesvos were not concerned about this topic and in some cases they show rejection.

Dr. Papadopoulou was determined about that: *"everything starts and ends with the language. They have to learn Greek for their education and for their integration into the society"*. As she stressed, refugees think that they will move to another country soon; however, this process could last more than one year or could not happen, which would suppose another year without schooling. The language constitutes a barrier also for the state, every day they need translators of very different languages (Farsi, Kurdish, Arabic, etc.).

The woman finds crucial raising awareness among the refugee community: *"They have to know that the Greek state welcomes any refugee in their classrooms. We have to spread the word within all NGOs, we have to send translating letters to the parents explaining the educational system in their own language (…) The state made a huge effort to let everyone know the system they would establish: NGO´s, association, communities, refugee camps, hotels, apartments, etc. had to know about the schooling of refugee children. (…) The word had to be spread everywhere"*. From all my visits, only in *One Happy Family*, the volunteers neither knew the possibility nor promoted the attendance to Greek schools: *"We are a real school"*- an Israeli volunteer in charge of the educational centre determined.

According to an Iraqi professor in this same space, the fact that children attend the classes depends on the cultural level of the parents and on the nationality; for instance, Syrians and Iraqi people, in general terms, do not pay much attention to the schooling of children, as they find possible moving to another country soon. According to Dr. Papadopoulou, as they are not planning to stay in Greece, the schooling is not a priority in many cases. As she explained to me: *"We give them the opportunity to go to*

school, but it´s them deciding". In fact, during my visit to Eleonas refugee camp in Athens, the person in charge of the representation of the Ministry of Education inside the camp highlighted that, even if all the children have the right to go to the school and even if a large amount of children were enrolled in the public schools, many of them were not attending the school indeed. From an average of 200 children, only 40 were going to morning classes with Greek students.

Dr. Papadopoulou knows the great labour that some of the organizations and NGOs have been doing in Greece, however, in many occasions this has led to conflicts of interest with the state regarding the education of refugee children; for instance, some NGO´s were in favour of the schooling system inside the camp. *"It is more convenient for them doing shorter programs inside the camp run by their own staff, but what about the integration process?"* – she asked.

My interview with the civil servant gave me some clue about the existing clash between formal and non-formal education activities and the consideration of non-formal activities as a "second-hand" chance. Dr. Papadopoulou was reluctant about the impact the system of non-formal and creative activities had had on children during such a long period of time, basically, since they arrived to Greece. The fact that the refugee children have been involved only in non-formal activities for a long time, has affected their behaviour in class. *"When they arrived to school, children were used to other different way of learning, a funny way; however, a teacher cannot be an animator. They have to be in a chair and learn content as well."* In her opinion, *"children are tired of those activities"*.

During my visit to Eleonas refugee camp in Athens, the person in charge of the representation of the Ministry of Education inside the camp exemplified not only the situation but also this reluctant view toward non-formal education activities: *"If the NGOs offer them to play football at 3 p.m., it is reasonable that the children won´t want to go to school, even if it´s good for their psychological development."*. In response, the state forbade the implementation of activities from 2 to 6 p.m. According to his opinion, *"there is a lot of supply of non-formal education activities, with an ambiguous structure. This makes everything more difficult at school. It does not help to organize a scheme of life."* He raised the question: *"At this moment, are we looking for temporary entertainment or schooling?"*.

The economic hardship faced by the country also emerged in the conversation with the nice woman. She told me that many people were against the schooling of

refugee children due to the increasing of expenses for the school. *"Some schools were finding difficulties to pay the heating expenses during the winter, but those were doubled due to the afternoon classes, as they had to pay the heating and the electricity in the afternoon as well"*.

Working for the state, the public servant Dr. Papadopoulou is committed with the need of providing a good education system that facilitates the integration and the learning process. *"This is not a normal situation. I was shocked when I saw how they were living in the camps. They need an apartment and do a normal life. (...) However, I believe that, compared to what it was offered before, we are trying our best, providing the opportunity and chances to have education",* - she concluded. At the end of the meeting she showed me, very proud and touched at the same time, a video on her phone about the opening ceremony of one of the school that was welcoming refugee children. The local children were clapping, welcoming and giving presents to the refugees. *"We are trying our best and I think, in general, we are doing quite well"*.

6.6 The lost potential of non-formal education?

The experiences described in this chapter are an example of the importance of non-formal education in the development of any child. Particularly in a post-conflict scenario and taking into account the traumatic situations of refugee children and the needs created by this situation, non-formal education activities are an essential element for their growth, as they provide them with security, trust, hope, the feeling of being valued and loved, life skills, knowledge and laugh.

Until the closing of borders with the FYRM, the activities were centered in relieving the suffering in short - term, with activities such as clown performances, games, painting, etc., in which children took part for some days, until they moved to another places of Europe. After the closure of borders, however, the activities started to be more organized and taking place on a regular basis, both in the islands and in mainland Greece. Despite the fact that by April 2016 the Scientific Committee found the existing educational activities disorganized, not professionalized and insufficient and it rightly urged the Ministry to establish a schooling system for refugee children, it cannot be forgotten the admirable work these small NGOs, private initiatives and communities were doing in terms of non-formal education provision, with scarce

resources, during more than a year and a half since this humanitarian and political crisis began.

Aware of the importance of non-formal education as a key element for the development of children, the Scientific Committee recommended a set of guidelines for the good schooling and education of refugee minors, including non-formal education in different ways, from cultural activities, to sports and summer camps. Very sadly and due to the clash between formal and non-formal education and the latter's consideration as a second option for the education of minors, in the implementation of the plan these activities have been relegated to the background, being formal education the main focus of action. Hopefully, the provision of non-formal education has not been totally left behind, as different NGOs and initiatives have put strong efforts to cover this need while the schooling of refugee children was taking place.

Taking into account the difficulties encountered in implementing the educational plan proposed by the Scientific Committee, non-formal education should be considered as an alternative and necessary complement to formal education. After conducting different interviews, fieldwork and bibliographic review, I consider that neither the Greek state nor the EU have put enough efforts to develop legislative and political frameworks that enhance, coordinate and monitor non-formal education activities as a powerful mechanism for the education of refugees.

Hence, we are loosing the chance to exploit the opportunities offered by this alternative, critical and necessary way of educating. Quality education for refugee minors can only be achieved if joined efforts are made. Children need education that is not restricted to formal education, but in which there is complementarity and synergy with non-formal education.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Conclusions

Education is a human right to which any individual should have access regardless of their status and the circumstances surrounding her. Education in emergencies, despite being a pillar often left behind within humanitarian aid, is a key element for the protection and development of minors. In this regard, various political commitments have been adopted by the international community in recent years. However, in order to make the right to education fully realised, the provision of education should not be viewed from a purely political standpoint, but states should take legal responsibilities as well.

In the context of an emergency, refugee children´s education deserves special attention. Despite the legal obligation, 3.7 million refugee children do not have a school to go to. In this scenario, UNHCR and UNESCO perform a leading role in this process, having the mandate in the education of refugees. Despite the many difficulties that post-conflict contexts create, the right to education must be continuously promoted and implemented. There is at the same time a prevailing need to implement a human rights-based approach and the development of intercultural schools that facilitate the integration of refugees.

Yet, education goes beyond formal and institutionalized provision commonly provided by the state. Non - formal education proves to be a necessary complement to the right to education, as it provides flexibility, dynamism and a critical view of the educational content. In the analysed context and remembering the difficulties that the provision of education to the refugee community poses, it is essential to take this model as an effective alternative. Concretely, alternative access programs, life skills and psychosocial programs suppose a superb option adapted to the needs and rights of refugees. In order to achieve this objective, a better positioning of non-formal education within national education systems should be promoted, fostering legislative elaboration and the formulation of concrete policies, planning and coordinating the activities, training and recognizing practitioners and monitoring the outcomes.

The so-called refugee crisis that Greece had to face in 2015 led to more than 60,000 refugees stuck in Greece when the borders with FYROM were closed in March 2016. Despite the term "refugee crisis", the crisis lies in the terrible response given by

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the EU and Greece, which led to gross human rights violations. Contrary to the bitter taste that these policies left in the citizenship, the crisis caused something admirable as well: the reconfiguration of sociality, through which thousands of solidarity initiatives took place along the country.

Indeed, thanks to the reconfiguration of sociality, the only educational offer for refugee children came from small NGOs, communities or initiatives. Spontaneously, an amalgam of non-formal education activities was created, which in practice, filled the gap the formal educational system could not fill, providing a spontaneous system in different places and in different forms. Due to the characteristics of the crisis itself, these activities were considered uncoordinated, disorganized and non-professional; however, the positive impact they had on the refugee children they reached was admirable, especially given their special educational needs.

In order to effectively meet the legal obligation of providing quality education to the huge refugee community trapped in Greece, the Greek state found it necessary to implement the educational plan designed by experts and start the schooling of refugee children. Currently, implementation of the plan is slow and full of obstacles. In this context, non-formal education activities carried out by NGOs and private initiatives continue to be an alternative and complementary route to the education of refugee minors.

In the present case, the potential of these programs is not only reflected in the possibility of implementing the activities in the future, as supportive of formal education system, but is also evident from its involvement in the past, with the example that they were the only educational activities. Taking into account the special educational needs of children in a post-conflict situation, the flexibility offered by this form of education and its content based on human rights, reconstruction, provision of life skills and psychosocial rehabilitation, non-formal education results a suitable means for the realization or improvement of the right to education of refugee children.

Due to the existing consideration of non-formal education as inferior to formal education, when implementing the educational plan, the state is not paying enough attention to non-formal education, relegating this role to different NGOs. Neither the development of specific policies in this regard nor the professionalization of the sector is being promoted, and very sadly, the potential of the sector is being lost and the important work that it could do in the education of refugees is being ignored.

Nonetheless, within this atmosphere of solidarity created by the reconfiguration of sociality, hopefully, NGOs and the different private initiatives working in the sector of non-formal education, will continue to carry out their work effectively, bringing hope, role models, vocation, illusion, confidence, remedy and fun to refugee children in Greece.

7.2 Scope and limitations of the thesis

This thesis aims to contribute to the academic reflections about the need to further promote non-formal education in emergency settings. Through the case study of Greece, the purpose of this paper has been to exemplify and show how non-formal education turned out to be an alternative means for the provision of education for refugee children and it supports its latter promotion, professionalitation and development in the still existing crisis.

If the aim of turning non-formal education into an achievable and attainable option to all the minors, especially the refugee population spread throughout Europe, the reassessment of this instrument within state structures is needed. This implies the elaboration of legislative instruments that develop the model, the preparation of professionals, the provision of funds and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

In no case, there has been an intention to place non-formal education in a higher position than formal education, rather, support their complementarity. Likewise, it is necessary to emphasize and bear in mind that, despite the current economic crisis, Greece is a developed country, placed within the European security context and with sufficient resources to provide education to its nationals. What is extracted here would be difficult to apply in other post-conflict contexts where the infrastructure and capacity of the state were damaged or destroyed or where civil society was not politically so active.

7.3 Beyond the paper: a call for action

Beyond academic purposes, this thesis intends to send a message for change to the various actors that play a role in the education of refugees in Greece and overseas.

First, to the international community, which has proven to be crucial in the adoption of political measures and in the management of the flows of refugees.

Contrary to what is happing at this moment, migration policies must be guided solely by the protection of refugees and migrants, the respect and fulfilment of their human rights and the promotion of their inclusion and integration. In the same way, the provision of quality education for refugee minors must be considered an immediate priority and efforts should be strengthened in this direction.

Second, to the Greek state authorities and political actors, responsible for promoting reforms through political will, not only in education, but also in the infrastructure of asylum and the model of reception of refugee camps. As mentioned regarding the international community, the rights of refugees must be respected at all times and their needs must be met under any circumstances, including education. In addition, the state is responsible for promoting measures aimed at the social inclusion of such persons and the existing reception model, based on refugee camps, does not seem adequate for this purpose. The main educational model that has been adopted globally so far, formal and institutionalized, by itself, does not conform to the reality or the real needs. In this sense, a change is needed in the consideration of the huge value non-formal education has and in its reconsideration as a tangible alternative in crisis contexts.

Last but not least, a key message must be sent to civil society organisations, as the role they have played in the management of this crisis and in the provision of education to refugees has been undeniably decisive. They have the power of generating an atmosphere for social change; therefore, they have to keep on defending the rights of the refugees and of the children actively in practice. If refugee rights are not perceived as a priority by citizens, the violation of human rights will persist. Of immediate importance is to create greater awareness among the society, so that they perceive refugees rights as their own and defend them against the existing restrictive measures.

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IX. ANEX 1

- Volunteering in the Greek NGO *Antygone*, in the refugee camp of Diavata
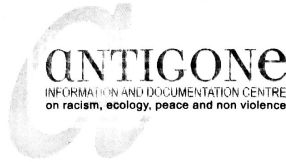
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Thessaloniki, Greece, ...2017

Certificate of Participation

We confirm that ...Raquel Gonzalez............... participated voluntarily in the actions of the NGO 'ANTIGONE - Information and Documentation Centre on Racism, Ecology, Peace and Non Violence' , during the period ...., implementing recreational activities for children at the Refugee Camp of Diavata and participated, also voluntarily, in other actions of the organization.

Legal representative of ANTIGONE
Prof. Alexandros Georgopoulos

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