

Refugee Children Education in Greece: A Challenge for the Teachers to Provide High Quality Education



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Abstract

After the recent refugee crisis of 2015, Greece had to provide the right to education to all refugee children who came to the country. For this reason, special pre-integration classes were founded as part of formal education; they were called Reception Centers for Refugee Education (Δομές Υποδοχής Εκπαίδευσης Προσφύγων, Greek acronym: ΔΥΕΠ). These classes started to operate in the school year of 2016-2017 and since then, many teachers have been hired in the positions that opened for these classes. However, it is under question, if these teachers have been provided with the necessary training, educational material, and support to fulfill this hard task of teaching the refugee population. This paper aims to unravel the possible deficiencies and difficulties inside the system of DYEP class, from the perspective of the teachers, and at a second level, to answer the question if these classes operate towards their goal, the integration of refugee students.

Keywords: DYEP classes, education, Greece, refugee students, teachers

Introduction

One of the major challenges that Europe and especially southern European countries like Greece had to face in the last years, was the recent refugee crisis of 2015. This was a period of significantly increased movement of refugees and migrants, coming mainly from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa to the European continent, caused by political instability and war (Vergou, 2019). More than 1.3 million people arrived in Europe asking for international protection, rendering countries such as Greece, Italy, and Spain the entry points due to their geographical location (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR, 2015 & 2017). According to data from UNHCR, the total number of people who have arrived from 2014 to 2021 in Greece reached 1.206,972 in sea arrivals and 61.140 in land arrivals. Greece still bears a large burden of the refugee crisis, experiencing severe pressure on its national asylum system (Pichon, 2021). The Greek government and Ministries have been called to revise and readjust their policies and practices for the accommodation and integration of the refugees. One of the most important goals is that they have to provide education for all the refugee children who are under international protection.

According to Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, States Parties should respect children's right to education, and make primary education mandatory and available to all children (United Nations – UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Moreover, they should develop various forms of secondary education and make them available and accessible to all children (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). States should support these actions in accordance with human rights and fundamental freedoms and with respect to the child's human dignity (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). This means that all pupils, including refugee children, regardless of their legal status and that of their parents, are entitled to access the Greek Education System (Skleparis, 2018).

In this context, the Greek Ministry of Education was called to design and implement an educational plan for integrating refugee children into formal education (Simopoulos & Alexandridis, 2019). This was a crucial issue for the Greek state to handle since the registration of refugee children in the mainstream Greek public schools would raise many administrative and structural issues needed to be addressed. Also, Greek authorities had to build a strong institutional framework, and provide intercultural training to the teaching staff so as to ensure integration, inclusion, and interaction (Simopoulos & Alexandridis, 2019). Eventually, the Ministry of Education, came up with the decision to create, in 2016, a system of afternoon classes within public schools, as part of formal education, which are called Reception Centers for Refugee Education (Δομές Υποδοχής Εκπαίδευσης Προσφύγων, Greek acronym: ΔΥΕΠ=DYEP).¹ The school year 2016–17 was considered as 'pre-integrational' or 'transitional' (Simopoulos & Alexandridis, 2019). This new development had many positive outcomes as the number of the refugee students registered has been increasing

¹ In this paper, the Greek acronym will be used in Latin words, DYEP, as abbreviation. Also, ZEP classes will be later mentioned in this paper; ZEP classes (in Greek: Ζώνες Εκπαιδευτικής Προτεραιότητας) are similar to DYEP ones, but not the same. They are called Reception Classes within Educational Priority Zones and they address students who do not hold the required level of Greek language (including Roma, foreign, repatriate, refugee, vulnerable group students) in order to integrate them into the Greek educational system (FEK, 2016).

since then and reports show the excitement of both refugee children and their parents (Androusou and Iakovou, 2020).

Teachers are a key figure in DYEP classes, by supporting and educating refugee students, providing them with a safe and welcoming environment and making the ground for their school success (Mogli, Kalbeni & Stergiou, 2020). However, this depends not only on teachers' knowledge and practices (Kovinthan, 2016), but also on the institutional framework e.g., educational material provided, facilities and collaborative roles who can support them. It seems that multiple problems and difficulties emerged due to the high adversity of the situation and the lack of state preparation, a situation that directly affected the teachers of these classes. Teachers struggle to fulfill their role and provide the necessary educational framework for the refugee children since they are not adequately trained and prepared for dealing with such a diverse cohort but also due to inadequate school facilities and educational material (Palaiologou et al., 2019; Christelli, 2017). In addition, it is still uncertain if actors such as the Coordinator of Refugee Education, the School Advisor, the Director of the school unit and the Directors of Primary or Secondary Education, who are mentioned in the Government Gazette as roles involved in refugee education (FEK, 2016), facilitate the teaching staff, and help them in the educational procedure. Moreover, it is doubtful if refugee children have access to quality education and if they are given the necessary tools to perform well and integrate to the Greek educational system and later to society (Simopoulos & Alexandridis, 2019).

Teachers should be offered more training, support and help to deal with increasingly multicultural classrooms so that the school responds better to the needs of refugee students (Mogli, Kalbeni & Stergiou, 2020). In this context, this paper will aim to unfold the potential problems that define the refugee education system in Greece, focusing on the work of teachers in Greek public schools. Based on the findings, this paper will try to present a clearer image of the situation, investigating teachers' deficiencies and lack of support. For this purpose, teachers working in DYEP classes of the Greek public schools, will be interviewed. More specifically, the paper will try to answer the following research questions: First, *are teachers who are hired in DYEP classes of Greek public schools adequately trained regarding intercultural-refugee education?* Second, *are teachers who are hired in DYEP classes of Greek public schools provided with the necessary educational material?* And third, *do teachers who are hired in DYEP classes of Greek public schools have sufficient support from other actors involved in refugee education?*

The reason for this specific focus is that research that has been conducted regarding teacher's experiences and challenges in DYEP classes indicates many problems and difficulties; this topic should be studied more thoroughly in order for researchers to propose interventions to policy makers and bring upon changes in the educational system. The situation is recent but not completely new; it is significant to identify the problems and examine in-depth teachers' work in relation to their training, educational material and supporting actors involved in refugee education. Greek state needs to ensure a successful educational mechanism for the refugee students; a mechanism which includes high quality education and achieves refugee students' integration. It is also essential for teachers' health and wellbeing. It is true that training future teachers is one of the greatest challenges of this century and continuously calls for new schemes and ideas (Androusou & Iakovou, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

A. Greek Refugee Education System

In Greece, education is compulsory for children from 5 to 15 years old; it consists of Primary Education where students from 6 to 12 years old are registered and Junior High School of Secondary Education with students from 13 to 15 years old (Crul et al., 2019). Upper High School (or Lyceum) for students from 15 to 18 years old is optional (Crul et al., 2019). Education in Greece is mandatory for all children irrespective of their legal status, while the non-registration of minors can be penalized (Crul et al., 2019). Minors who are asylum seekers can register, even without all the necessary papers, in all the classes of Nursery, Primary and Junior Secondary School and also in the first class of Lyceum (Ministry of Migration and Asylum, 2021). From March 2016, due to the high increase of school age refugee children, special classes have been established in the Primary and Secondary public schools of Greece (Vergou, 2019). These are called Reception Centers for Refugee Education (DYEP) and are part of the formal education offered to refugee students. However, it is important to mention that non-typical, informal education is provided within the reception centers where refugees stay, in parallel, by international organizations and local NGOs who run the state-built facilities.

According to the Government Gazette (FEK, Issue B, 3049/23.09.2016), Reception Centers for Refugee Children Education (DYEP classes) will operate within the school units that belong to the Peripheral Management Offices of Primary and Secondary Education of the country, within the geographical boundaries of which the reception centers are located. DYEP classes are founded in specific school units of Primary and Secondary Education and administratively, are subject to them (FEK, 2016). Each DYEP class corresponds to one school unit and can include one or more classrooms, depending on the number of students (FEK, 2016). The minimum number of students needed for the creation of a DYEP class is 10 students and the maximum is 20 (FEK, 2016). Operation of DYEP classes is approved upon decision of the Ministry of Education after request of the Peripheral Director of Primary and Secondary Education, following two criteria: a) reasonable distance from the reception center and b) existence of available and appropriate classrooms (FEK, 2016). According to law (article 38 of legislation 4415/2016, A' 159), there is a weekly educational programme of 20 hours in DYEP classes: they operate in the afternoon hours, from 14:00 P.M. to 18:00 P.M. and various courses are being taught including Greek, English, Math, Gymnastics, Communication, and Information Technology (CIT) and Artistic courses like Painting, Music, and Theatre (FEK, 2016).

According to the Government Gazette (FEK, Issue B, 3502/31.10.2016), teachers who are hired in DYEP classes are either permanent or substitute (FEK, 2016). Permanent teachers can work in DYEP classes for one (1) year, after filling their application and they should have specific qualifications such as: general working experience (at least for two years), volunteer work with refugees, specialization (master's degree, for example in Intercultural Education or Teaching Greek as Second/Foreign Language), training in Intercultural Education or Teaching Greek as Second/Foreign Language, working experience in intercultural schools or reception classes and knowledge of foreign languages (FEK, 2016). Substitute teachers can be

hired as well for the same position, and they can be either full-time or part-time teachers (FEK, 2016). Like permanent teachers, they are hired for one (1) year in DYEP classes (FEK, 2016). However, substitute teachers are hired based on their position in the Panhellenic boards of substitute teachers; specialization such as master's degree or Post-doctoral degree in Intercultural Education or Teaching Greek as Second/Foreign Language, is an additional qualification which may be considered (FEK, 2016).

There are also other actors involved in Refugee Education who may act as supporting roles in relation to the teachers. According to the Government Gazette (FEK, Issue B, 3502/31.10.2016), these actors are the Coordinator of Refugee Education, the School Advisor, the Director of the school unit and the Director of Primary or Secondary Education. First, Coordinators do not work in schools but in the Reception Centers and they are in charge of everything that happens in these sites (e.g., identifying the needs of people, providing updates and information to those who are living there or monitoring the non-formal education) (FEK, 2016). In relation to DYEP classes and the teachers, they have an important role because they are responsible for keeping track of all the information of the refugee children who will attend public schools and they report to the Director of the school unit for their enrollment (FEK, 2016). They are a key figure, acting as bridges between school and reception centers (Crul et al., 2019). They are also the ones who speak to the parents of the refugee students (FEK, 2016).

School Advisors are responsible for the planning of the hourly school programme, the allocation of students to classes in cooperation with the Coordinator, the teachers and the Director of the school unit, the creation of subgroups of students or co-teaching classes and the design of various educational activities (FEK, 2016). They are also in charge of the guidance of the teachers and the organization of seminars, but also of evaluating the procedure and proposing changes in schoolbooks and educational material (FEK, 2016). In general, they are responsible for the pedagogic and scientific supervision of the teachers (Paschalis, 2017). It is understandable that their work is directly linked to the work of the teachers and can be proved of vital importance during the school year.

Finally, the Directors of school units should facilitate the work of teachers and Coordinators with the aim of the smooth operation of DYEP classes (FEK, 2016). They are responsible for technical equipment, facilities, cleaning, and safety as well as operating costs of DYEP classes (FEK, 2016). They should also keep track of teachers' absences and approve vacation days for them (FEK, 2016). Moreover, they cooperate with Coordinators about personal information and registration of refugee students and collaborate with Directors of Education for various issues such as hiring of teaching staff in DYEP classes (FEK, 2016). From their part, the Directors of Education are mainly in charge of the hiring procedures of teachers, and they are working together with all the actors, namely the teachers, the Coordinators, the Directors of the school units and the School Advisors for the same purpose of the smooth service of DYEP classes (FEK, 2016). As can be seen, both Directors are important for teacher's work since they are responsible for administrative and procedural issues, always with the intention of regulating and monitoring DYEP classes.

B. Intercultural Education as Integration Tool

Based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, integration through education and provision of education to refugee children are a legal liability for all the states (UN

Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). DYEP classes are the answer of the Greek state towards this obligation with the aim of integrating refugee students into the educational system (Kaila & Katsigianni, 2020). In the case of the refugee children living in urban centers, the aim is their full integration into the regular classrooms of Greek public schools, while in the case of the refugees that are hosted in the reception centers, the goal is the transition from a life in camps to a school reality and finally to a successful reintegration to the school culture, either they stay in Greece or not (Institute of Educational Policy, 2016). The educational target of the aforementioned programme is to meet the educational needs of the refugee children and provide them with the right equipment in order to achieve educational success in the future either in the Greek or any other educational system (Institute of Educational Policy, 2016). School is the basic structure that helps the children return to a state of “normalcy” in their everyday life but also ensures that they do not lose time outside of this basic mechanism through which they socialize and integrate into societies (Daskalaki, Tsioli & Androulakis, 2017).

It is important to mention that, towards the foreign student population, the Greek educational system is focusing on promoting intercultural education; this direction has been institutionalized already from 1990 when the country witnessed the most massive immigration movement in its history (Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019). Nowadays, apart from the migrant students, the Greek educational system, and the teachers within it, are using approaches of intercultural education to address the refugee students as well. Intercultural education can be defined as a pedagogical, inclusive approach to manage the multicultural character of today’s society; it is about meeting different cultures and understanding their mutual interaction (Maniatis, 2014). A teacher with intercultural competence has been taught to respect and accept other cultures, re-evaluate, and possibly discard some ingrained opinions and prejudices and be flexible and open to new learning methods and practices (Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019). Intercultural competence is not a natural talent; on the contrary, it requires methodical, long-term, and in-depth education and training of teachers (Magos & Simopoulos, 2010). The methodology of training and seminars should be based on the principles of intercultural education and so, include activities of experiential learning, linking theory with practice, work in groups, role playing, direct or indirect contact with diversity, collaboration with educators or mentors (Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019; Cranton, 1996). This way, teachers will be adequately prepared to teach and manage a multicultural classroom.

C. Difficulties of Teachers within the context of Refugee Education

In this context, and even if the framework for intercultural education pre-existed, it seems that the Greek educational system has handled poorly and insufficiently the challenges of the refugee crisis (Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019). The effort to give access to school for the refugee children has not yet reached impressive results regarding the integration of these children and the quality of the provided education seems to be decreasing, in content, methods and material (Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019). Unfortunately, the pedagogic and teaching principles of intercultural and inclusive education are often not applied in reality (Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019).

Teachers are inevitably affected by this situation, and they often feel confused and frustrated during their work, since they are not trained sufficiently and do not have support and guidance (Androusou & Iakovou, 2020). The research of Maligoudi and

Tsaousidis (2020) which also takes place within the context of DYEP classes, discusses issues of intercultural readiness and competence of teachers regarding the education of refugee students: There are many difficulties in the educational procedure especially the lack of teaching competence from the part of teachers; teachers feel unprepared and unready to teach in this multicultural classroom, to deal linguistically and socially with the refugee students (Maligoudi and Tsaousidis, 2020). It is true that intercultural training but also methods for second language acquisition lack from part of the teachers (Crul et al., 2019). This is also confirmed in Marouli (2017) who investigated the attitudes and needs of primary education teachers in DYEP classes in Athens and found that most teachers do not feel that they have the skills to teach refugee students. The teachers stated that they are not adequately trained on how to teach Greek as a second/foreign language and want to know more about the culture, educational system and language of their student population (Marouli, 2017). Lastly, Christelli (2017) in her research demonstrates that most of the teachers, even though they have been trained in intercultural education, are not satisfied with their training. The majority of them mentions that a re-orientation of the school in order to meet the needs of a multicultural society, is necessary (Christelli, 2017).

One more problem is that proper schoolbooks and instruction guidelines are not provided. Research that has been conducted in 2018 from a Greek organization (EΠΙΟΕ) and is analyzed in Stergiou and Simopoulos (2019) has shown that, from a sample of 208 educators from many regions of Greece, 78.8% of them evaluates the lack of proper educational material as one of the most important obstacles to refugee students' integration. Teacher guides and textbooks which are used for the teaching of Greek to Roma children in Intercultural Schools, have been adopted by the Institute of Educational Policy, to support the language courses in the DYEP classes (Crul et al., 2019). This causes problems in the educational process and hinders the work of teachers who have to address not migrant student population, but refugee students, coming from different countries and speaking different languages. This is also confirmed in the research of Palaiologou, Fountoulaki and Liontou (2019), where they argue that the education material lacks cultural and instructional adaptation, the textbooks are mostly out-of-date, and thus, many teachers prepare their class based on sources from the Internet. Finally, the books mostly entail vocabulary and grammar exercises that relate to a more traditional educational approach and address students whose native language is Greek (Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019). Teachers should focus on developing communication and social skills and educational material should have words, phrases, and texts that refugee students could directly use in their everyday life (Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019). Teachers eventually search alone for effective teaching practices and appropriate educational material that can meet refugee students' needs.

Finally, it should be mentioned here as well that these are different and much more difficult conditions, in comparison with economic migrants (Androusou & Iakovou, 2020). Economic migrants in the 1990s and the 2000s moved to Greece with their families, seeking a job and better living conditions; their children, who already had a school experience, learned Greek and attended the Greek schools (Androusou & Iakovou, 2020). On the contrary, refugee children have left their country (which could be in war zones) via various routes, legal and/or illegal, and they may have been outside formal education for at least two years, or they may have never attended school (UNICEF-UNESCO, 2017). Their life history is stigmatized not only by the traumatic experience of relocation, death, and loss, but also by a multitude of breaches and

discontinuities (Androusoy & Kiourti, 2020). Also, in Greece, most of them are living in reception centers and do not know if and for how long they will stay in these centers and in Greece in general, a fact that creates a feeling of temporariness and insecurity (Androusoy & Kiourti, 2020). Because they feel like living in a transit country, sometimes they are not so willing to learn Greek or even attend public schools (Palaiologou, Fountoulaki & Lontou, 2019). Therefore, teachers involved in refugee education come across challenging situations during their work, when they confront students who have irregular living conditions, do not speak the native language, and may face mental issues or show inappropriate behaviors due to traumatic experiences. The situation requires specific training but also specific educational interventions and specific educational materials (Mogli, Kalbeni & Stergiou, 2020).

In conclusion, all these problems and difficulties are most likely to cause frustration and disappointment to the teachers, render them demotivated and influence the level of their work. This paper will try to corroborate or disprove the findings regarding teachers' intercultural training and provided educational material but also to delve more into issues regarding teachers' work in Refugee Education. Lastly, there is not significant literature about the support and help that teachers receive from other actors involved in Refugee Education such as the School Advisor, the Coordinator of Refugee Education, the Director of the school unit and the Director of Education, as described in the Government Gazette. Thus, the second aim of the paper will be to shed more light on these actors and how they affect and facilitate (or not) teachers' work.

Research Design

Qualitative research has been conducted for the purpose of this paper. Based on existing literature and data that have been analyzed on the theoretical background, two hypotheses have been formulated regarding the first two research questions:

H1 for Q1: Teachers who are hired in DYEP classes of Greek public schools are not adequately trained regarding intercultural-refugee education

H2 for Q2: Teachers who are hired in DYEP classes of Greek public schools are not provided with the necessary educational material

We expect that teachers who work in DYEP classes of the Greek public schools neither have sufficient educational training nor the necessary educational material. The questions that were asked for investigating the first hypothesis concerned teachers' previous education (bachelor's degree, specialized education such as master's degree, specialized education such as seminars, meetings, workshops, conferences), duration and methodology of training and education, level of satisfaction regarding previous education, feeling of preparedness regarding teaching in DYEP classes. The questions that were asked for examining the second hypothesis concerned educational material provided from the Ministry of Education, course guidelines with targets and objectives

provided from the Ministry of Education, existence of technical equipment in schools, alternative sources for finding educational material.

In addition, since there was not enough data regarding the amount of support that teachers receive from other roles involved in refugee education, the third question is not accompanied by a hypothesis. However, this paper will try to provide an answer to this question and shed more light on this matter:

Q3: Do teachers who are hired in DYEP classes of Greek public schools have sufficient support from other actors involved in refugee education?

More specifically, the roles of Coordinator of Refugee Education, Director of the school unit, Director of Education and School Advisor were investigated, and teachers were asked to describe their collaboration with each one of them with regards to quality, frequency, and effectiveness. They were also asked if they would desire the presence of additional specialized professionals in DYEP classes of Greek public schools. The aim was to reveal the multiple interactions between the teachers and these actors and to provide answers to the following concern, if their collaboration is fruitful and helpful or if the context within which they are working, needs to be revised, improved, and reinforced.

This thesis uses a mainly deductive approach, especially regarding the first two research questions but it is mostly exploratory with regards to the third research question. Data were collected from in-depth, semi-structured interviews, taken from teachers of Primary and lower Secondary Education in Greek public schools. According to Bryman (2015), semi-structured interviews entail a list of specific questions or topics to be covered, namely an interview guide, but still the process can be flexible, and the interviewees have a lot of leeway in their replies. The same questions and wording were used for all the participants of the interview. The reason semi-structured interviews are chosen is because there is a clear focus and two hypotheses to be proved, rather than a general notion of wanting to research a topic (Bryman, 2015). The questions of the interview guide were open-ended and descriptive sometimes but always within the limits, to avoid the risk of too much data which can move the researcher away from the main focus (Bryman, 2015). Moreover, all questions were connected with the existing data and literature so as to increase the internal validity of the research. Triangulation by data source was carried out; this involved interviewing and collecting information from different teachers and checking the extent to which perceptions were similar, stories were confirmed and elaborated on.

Regarding the context, the location of the study is Greece. Based on FEK (2021), DYEP classes within school units of Primary and Secondary Education for the school year of 2021-2022, are located in Central Macedonia, East Macedonia and Thrace, Epirus, Thessaly, Central Greece, Peloponnese, Attica and in the Aegean islands. There are 52 school units of Primary Education and 27 school units of Secondary Education that have been established for the school year 2021-2022 (FEK, 2021). This study includes the regions of Corinth (Peloponnese), Thiva (Central Greece) and Lesvos (Aegean island). The schools are the 8th primary school of Corinth, 2nd high school of Corinth, 2nd primary school of Thiva, 7th primary school of Thiva, 8th primary school of Thiva and 7th primary school of Lesvos. Regarding the participants,

they were in total (10). More specifically, six (6) teachers from Corinth, three (3) from Thiva and one (1) from Lesvos participated in the interview process. The average time for the interviews was one (1) hour and one (1) minute. The average age of the interviewees is 31 years old with the majority of the teachers being under 30: the youngest is 25 years old and the eldest 42 years old. The majority of the participants were women with only two (2) men out of ten (10) total participants. The courses that the participants teach are Greek language, Math, English language, Gymnastics and Music. Lastly, teachers are all substitute teachers, either full-time or part-time.²

Teachers	Age Group	Gender	Course & Type of Employment	
Teacher 1	25-30	Female	Greek & Math	Substitute, full-time
Teacher 2	25-30	Female	English	Substitute, part-time
Teacher 3	30-35	Male	Music	Substitute, part-time
Teacher 4	30-35	Female	Greek & Math	Substitute, full-time
Teacher 5	25-30	Female	English	Substitute, part-time
Teacher 6	40-45	Male	Greek	Substitute, full-time
Teacher 7	25-30	Female	Greek & Math	Substitute, full-time
Teacher 8	25-30	Female	Greek & Math	Substitute, full-time
Teacher 9	40-45	Female	Gymnastics	Substitute, part-time
Teacher 10	25-30	Female	Greek & Math	Substitute, full-time

Snowball sampling was used in this study; snowball sampling is a technique in which the researcher initially samples a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research (Bryman, 2015, p.415). Participants are teachers in three different regions of Greece and teach a variety of courses. Efforts were made to achieve this differentiation and participants were asked if they know teachers of different courses or from different areas than theirs, in order for the sample to be as representative as possible. However, it is true that more regions should have been covered and a teacher of CIT could be a valuable addition.

Interviews were conducted in Greek via Skype, transcriptions were done based on the recordings and translations of transcripts from Greek to English were also realized. The interviews were analyzed using ATLAS.ti by creating and grouping codes within the transcripts that seemed relevant to the intercultural training and education of teachers, the educational material, and the participation of other actors in their work. Ethical issues that arise in relations between researchers and research participants in the course of an investigation were carefully considered (Bryman, 2015). It was ensured that there was no harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy or deception involved (Diener & Crandall, 1978 as cited in Bryman, 2015, p.125). Participants were asked for verbal consent at the beginning of each interview and informed of their right to stop the interview at any time. Names of participants were kept anonymous, and they were ensured that their answers will be confidential and will be used exclusively for the current research.

² Teachers' names were hidden to ensure anonymity of the participants.

At this point it is important to discuss the limitations and biases that should be considered during this interview process and that could harm the reliability of the research. Ten participants are a good number for a master's thesis, but more teachers could have been approached and as already mentioned, more regions and courses could have been covered to ensure the theoretical saturation of the findings. In general, sample sizes in qualitative research should not be so small as to make it difficult to achieve data saturation, theoretical saturation, or informational redundancy (Bryman, 2015, p.417). Nevertheless, in this study, the sampled participants have provided sufficient information and successfully answered the research questions. In addition, the findings are based on perceptions, opinions and personal experiences of the teachers working in DYEP classes. Factors such as age, gender, social class, migrant background, and religion as well as years of working experience could influence teachers' statements and therefore the results. For example, as the existing data and literature indicate and as the sample confirms, there are differentiations between the teachers; some of them are older and have many years of working experience, while others are very young and have limited working experience. Moreover, overall opinions of teachers about the political, social, and economic situation can always influence their answers. However, triangulation of data can help verify the accuracy of information.

Lastly, it is important to highlight that the specific issue of refugee education is very important academically and socially. The research will add more data and information to the existing research. Meanwhile, findings could raise awareness to Greek policy makers; they could set the ground for new proposals and ideas as well as policies and methods in the Education field.

Analysis

A. General Information

As mentioned in the methodology section, teachers come from Corinth, Thiva and the island of Lesbos, they teach Greek, Math, Music, English and Gymnastics and they are all substitute teachers, either full-time or part-time. Teachers were asked about their years of working experience, including working in public or private schools, working independently as private tutor, and working in private afternoon educational centers. The majority of the teachers had limited working experience in teaching (less than 10 years in general and in three cases even less than 5) with the exception of the 3 eldest teachers who have 14, 16 and 22 years of working experience in teaching. What is most important is that for the majority of the sample, it was their first time teaching in DYEP classes. Only three (3) out of ten (10) teachers, had previous working experience with students of refugee or migrant background in DYEP/ZEP classes or reception centers but still, limited (only one (1) previous year). Moving forward with the personal information of refugee students, in primary schools, the ages of the refugee students are between 5 and 12 years old and in high schools, from 12 to 16-17 years old. However, some students may be in high school (in terms of age) but they attend primary school. The number of students is not stable, is fluctuating and it has certainly decreased compared to the start of the year because many refugee children got asylum and moved to other countries (mostly to Germany).

Teachers	Course & Type of Employment		Previous Experience - General	Previous Experience- Migrant/ Refugee Students
Teacher 1	Greek & Math	Substitute, full-time	7 years - 1 st year in DYEP	1 year in ZEP class
Teacher 2	English	Substitute, part-time	7 years, 1 st year in DYEP	-
Teacher 3	Music	Substitute, part-time	14 years, 1 st year in DYEP	-
Teacher 4	Greek & Math	Substitute, full-time	9 years, 1 st year in DYEP	-
Teacher 5	English	Substitute, part-time	6 years, 1 st year in DYEP	-
Teacher 6	Greek	Substitute, full-time	16 years, 1 st year in DYEP	1 year in Reception Center
Teacher 7	Greek & Math	Substitute, full-time	3 years, 2 nd year in DYEP	1 previous year in DYEP
Teacher 8	Greek & Math	Substitute, full-time	4 years, 1 st year in DYEP	-
Teacher 9	Gymnastics	Substitute, part-time	22 years, 1 st year in DYEP	-
Teacher 10	Greek & Math	Substitute, full-time	3 years, 1 st year in DYEP	-

B. First Research Question: *Are teachers who are hired in DYEP classes of Greek public schools adequately trained regarding intercultural-refugee education?*

With regards to my first research question, half of the teachers have not been trained in intercultural education or refugee education and they have been hired to teach in DYEP classes despite this fact. Even for the other half, the teachers who have had a relevant master or seminar, this was not taken into consideration during the hiring process because it wasn't indicated in their application. More specifically, all teachers have graduated with a bachelor's degree in their teaching subject (Primary Education, Music, Physical Education and Sports Science, English Literature) and 8 out of 10 also have completed at least one master's degree. Regarding the master's degree though, only 2 out of 10 have done a master about intercultural or refugee education or something else which is relevant; one has studied "Greek as a Second Language" (but did not include it in the application) in University of Nicosia, Cyprus and another one is studying the current year (2021-2022) "Language Education for Refugee and Migrants" at Hellenic Open University (after being hired). Regarding the seminars, five (5) out of ten (10) have had a seminar or training about intercultural or refugee education and 3 out of these 5 teachers are attending this seminar or training the current year (2021-2022). This means that even if they are now attending educational programmes related to intercultural or refugee education, they did not have adequate prior knowledge to teach in these classrooms and their learning is still in process. Only one teacher has done both a master's degree and a training regarding intercultural education. All the seminars that were mentioned had or have nine (9) months duration.

It is true that four (4) teachers out of these five (5) have paid for these seminars or training. When asked if now that they are hired in DYEP classes, they are provided with free, continuous education and training to improve their performance, only one stated that she attends this current year (2021-2022) a free seminar by UNICEF that was organized for all teachers in DYEP and ZEP classes. Another teacher stated that it was after two (2) months (in December) from the starting date of DYEP classes (in October) that a free seminar was announced to them, and she did not do it as she had already paid and started another one. In other words, there was a delay in announcing the free seminar to the teachers. The others were not aware of any initiative of this kind. Regarding the teachers who have not followed seminars or training, when asked if they

are provided with free, continuous education this current year, only two (2) said that they knew about these complimentary seminars, but they could not participate due to heavy workload this year (these seminars were optional). The rest stated that they are not aware of any continuous, free education provided to them throughout the year. They mostly felt that they were doing everything alone. However, it should be mentioned that a few teachers from Corinth mentioned as an extra help a donation by UNICEF which was tablets to schools.

When asked if they are satisfied with their education and training, only one teacher (the one who has followed the free seminar by UNICEF) has responded positively. Nine (9) teachers out of ten (10) said that they were either not very satisfied or not satisfied at all. A teacher of Greek reveals: *“During the master, even though it targeted the refugee population and there was a lot of money invested in this programme, there was no connection between theory and practice. They said to us, when we went to teach refugee children as a part of the master’s programme, that we should ignore children’s psychological problems and just design our teaching plan and move forward with that. But it was impossible to ignore these, these were real problems”*. A teacher of Greek also adds: *“Masters and training do not have connection between theory and practice”*. Regarding the methodology of the seminars, apart from the fact that they were all online, they followed a very standardized procedure: there was educational material uploaded online (in the form of PowerPoints or PDFs) and online tests of multiple-choice questions which required a specific score to pass. There were no activities of experiential learning, linking theory with practice, work in groups, role playing, direct or indirect contact with diversity, collaboration with educators or mentors. Comments on the seminars being too theoretical came from many teachers. When asked if they believe that their previous education (bachelor, master, and seminars) have prepared them adequately for teaching in DYEP classes, all responded negatively. A teacher of Greek reveals: *“No, no previous education or training has helped, not even the master’s degree which I am doing now. Because what is being taught does not correspond to what is going on in the class”*. Teachers mentioned that their working experience and also their own character, willingness, and eagerness to help and their love and care for these children, helped them to perform well at their work. An English teacher states that *“Neither the studies nor the seminars; only my own experience as a teacher of foreign language, helped me get in touch with a group of students who don’t speak the language,”* followed by the Music teacher as well: *“It is mostly personal research and study”*. A teacher of Greek language adds: *“I was not prepared to teach refugee children, not at all. But I believe that whatever you do with love, it will bring an outcome”*.

The first hypothesis is confirmed. It is certain that teachers are being hired for teaching in DYEP classes without filling the criteria that are mentioned in the Government Gazette; they have no adequate education or training regarding intercultural or refugee education. Even if they do, this has not been considered during the hiring process, since they haven’t indicated it. For the teachers that have a prior relevant education, most of them are not satisfied with it and feel that they have not learned enough. The methodology of these seminars did not harmonize with the values of intercultural education such as experiential learning, linking theory with practice, work in groups, role playing, and direct or indirect contact with diversity. They were mostly theoretical, and they were following standardized procedures. They were also online, a fact that probably negatively affected the quality of education that was provided. It is important that most of the teachers had to pay to attend seminars,

otherwise they could not receive this training. Even during the current year, many teachers were not aware of training provided for free to them as teachers in DYEP and ZEP classes. Also, many of them do a related master or training only this current year (2021-2022), a fact that also undermines their educational competence. Consequently, teachers cannot perform as well as they would like when teaching in DYEP classes.

In general, all teachers did not feel prepared to teach in DYEP classrooms. This is indicated in a quote from a teacher of Greek: *“When I first took over this class, I felt totally helpless – without interpreters – I couldn’t imagine how we could teach the class since the students couldn’t even understand English”* followed by an English teacher in Corinth who argues: *“I was very worried about how the parents will be like as well as the fact that some children have never received formal education, within a school. Some of them do not know how to behave; there are some breakdowns, frictions and fights, a disorder, a chaos in general. I was very worried and stressed about how I will coordinate this class and how I will impose discipline”*. One teacher was totally clueless what DYEP classes were about: *“I hadn’t understood anything. I didn’t know what DYEP classes are; I thought it was going to be a morning school. When I started teaching, I had a lot of stress, and I was terrified; what were we supposed to do regarding safety and security? What were supposed to do if a child was not feeling well? How would we understand it?... I was feeling that I wasn’t enough, that I won’t do my job well, that I won’t teach them anything and that I am deficient and uneducated”*. Lastly, it is important to mention here that the Greek educational system is organized in such a way that teachers are pushed to apply for positions and roles that they are not qualified for, or they are not fully aware of their requirements, only to be hired and not stay out of the labor market.

C. Second Research Question: *Are teachers who are hired in DYEP classes of Greek public schools provided with the necessary educational material?*

With regards to my second research question, teachers of Greek in primary education are the only ones who are provided with printed books from the Ministry of Education. These books are called “Geia sas” and they are for educators who want to teach Greek as foreign language. Teachers of Greek who also teach Math to refugee students do not have books for this specific course. This is indicated in many statements of the teachers: Two teachers state: *“For Math, I just find material on the Internet, or I prepare exercises on my own. It is time-consuming because you have to find what meets the needs of students”* and *“Regarding Math, I don’t have material. I am facing many difficulties there. I “divide” the whiteboard of the class into 3 parts: different Math for different ages. It is very hard. We don’t have books, not even booklets. The booklets I find on the Internet for Math class are not appropriate; they include exercises whose descriptions refugee students cannot understand. I am having more difficulties in Math than Greek because I don’t know how to approach the issue”*. Moreover, teachers of specialization courses such as English, Gymnastics and Music also do not have books that can base their teaching on. An English teacher reveals: *“We don’t have anything. There are no books that have been distributed to us. They tell us to use the English books of the morning school but the lower level. In other words, if I have the second grade in DYEP, I will use the first-grade English books (of the morning school). In these books, for example in high school, the instructions are written in Greek. These books however target native students – there are the same books for native and refugee students!”*. The Music teacher mentions: *“I don’t have books for music courses. I find the educational material alone because there is neither official educational material*

for my course nor course guideline». The teacher of Greek in the high school (secondary education) does not have books as well, but it is not confirmed if this is an individual case, or it is happening in general, since there was only one teacher in secondary education in the sample. Eventually, these teachers have to either find educational material from other sources or create their own.

Even the teachers of Greek Language do not approve the books that are distributed to them from the Ministry of Education and they usually either prefer other books or they use educational material that they create alone or find elsewhere. The reason for their discontent is, among others, that these books are written exclusively in Greek, they are not culturally adapted, and they do not correspond to the needs and level of students. One teacher reveals: *“The book is written exclusively in Greek. The first time that I used this book, it was in the ZEP class with migrant students who were integrated into society; they would go to the bakery, to the supermarket, they were in the same class with the native students, their parents were working so they could listen to some Greek at home; so, they were more ready to listen and understand Greek – refugee children are in a totally different context. Migrant students were working really well with “Geia sas” while refugee students cannot.... The educational material is not sufficient and helpful. Maybe for migrant students, not for refugees”*. Comments such as *“It is a terrible book. I don’t like it. It does not correspond to the needs of the students. It is old, it is not appropriate and applicable. It does not have themes and chapters for vocabulary – it also contains difficult exercises”* and *“The book “Geia sas” is not helpful at all. I create my own educational material”* were also made from two teachers of Greek language. The last three examples come from all three regions of the sample. There was also one case of a teacher of Greek language who has not received any printed book, only the digital form of two books from the Coordinator of the camp: *“If I didn’t know where to find educational material, the students would not have anything. I am at a school which allows photocopies (however, ten photocopies maximum per week). This fact helps me because I make photocopies for the students. I don’t know what was sent from the Ministry; my Coordinator had sent me some manuals”*.

It should be highlighted that all teachers of the sample eventually teach their class with educational material that they find on their own and mostly on the Internet. Their sources are usually Internet (Facebook groups, Pinterest, websites such as the website of the British Council or the website of the Greek Institute of Educational Policy), NGOs, seminars, material for special education, other colleagues. An English teacher confirms: *“I search on the Internet; on the website of the British Council there is educational material for children and teenagers, for younger ages I have used Pinterest as well. I search in Internet and then I print the pages I want. I am lucky because I have printer at home so I can print one photocopy and then print more at school”*. A teacher of Greek adds: *“For Greek, I use educational material such as the digital guidebooks “Gefyres” and “Valitsaki”. “Gefyres” is a guide for bilingual support of the refugees and “Valitsaki” is also a guidebook which is written in Greek, Arabic and Farsi; these are found on the Internet. In general, I use anything else that I can find on the Internet. At the end, transfer the files in a USB and then I print them at school”*. This fact has important implications for their workload and mental and physical health because it means that they have to dedicate extra time for sourcing and organizing this material. Another teacher of Greek explains: *“No, I usually find the educational material by myself. And this requires much personal time. Also, there is*

variety in the ages and literacy levels of the students, so I there is need for tailor-made approach. It is very difficult”.

Regarding the course guidelines from the Ministry of Education, six teachers of Greek and English language stated that these are very general, theoretical, and superficial. Teachers of Greek language reveal: *“The guidelines that are provided from the Ministry of Education are very superficial and not at all practical”* and *“We need more practical support. Because issues arise that we cannot resolve only based on the guideline from the Ministry. We come in a very difficult situation, and we are called to perform 10 jobs, not only the one of teacher”*. Teachers of Music and Gymnastics and two teachers of Greek language stated that there are no official guidelines for their course. The teacher of Gymnastics stated: *“Neither educational material nor guidelines are provided to us from the Ministry of Education”*. This indicates a miscommunication of goals and objectives between teachers. In some cases, teachers had to search on their own to find these guidelines: *“Regarding the guidelines from the Ministry of Education, I searched on my own to find these. They weren’t helpful at all. They were very general. Eventually, the teacher is the one who will design the teaching plan according to the specific class he has and the needs that each student has. This is very difficult since there can be children who are either illiterate or more advanced in the same classroom. This means short-term goals adapted to your class”*, a teacher of Greek language indicates.

Finally, whereas some teachers do not face issues with this specific matter, others have expressed their discontent regarding the lack of technical equipment in the classes; the Music teacher explains: *“We need more tools, more technical equipment. For example, we don’t have speakers; children have to be very quiet to listen clearly to the tablet. There should also be music instruments; I cannot bring my own instruments from my house. We should have a projection room”*.

In conclusion, the second hypothesis is also confirmed. Teachers that are hired in DYEP classes do not have the necessary educational material and in some cases the technical equipment to develop their teaching plan as they want. Teachers of Greek language are the only ones who have books, but they are disappointed with their content, and they do not make use of them; instead, they consult other books and create their own educational material based on other sources. Teachers of Math and specialization courses such as English, Math and Gymnastics are not provided with books. Therefore, they conduct their class with educational material that they have designed on their own based on other sources as well. Also, the guidelines that are provided by the Ministry either are not helpful at all or non-existent for some of the teachers. This means that teachers are mostly alone in this process and apart from the effort that they need to show in the class, they also have to work extra hours at home, during their free time, to provide refugee students with learning material.

D. Third Research Question: *Do teachers who are hired in DYEP classes of Greek public schools have sufficient support from other actors involved in refugee education?*

Regarding the Coordinator of Refugee Education, all teachers mentioned this role as a person who is known, they are in contact with him/her, and he/she helps them mostly in administrative or other issues related to refugee students (registrations, absences, departures, medical cases, inappropriate behaviors). Four (4) out of ten (10) teachers replied very positively about this role. One teacher of Greek language states: *(The*

Coordinator) arranges and manages everything. His contribution is very important because it is essential to know that someone can support you in a difficult case". However, two of these are the teachers who are responsible for DYEP classes (in primary school and high school respectively); a teacher who is in this position is expected to have more direct and daily contact with the Coordinator. The rest of the teachers mentioned that their collaboration and communication is mostly typical but whenever it is needed, the Coordinator always helps them. Two (2) of them implied that their relationship with the Coordinator might not be ideal: *"Theoretically, we would communicate if a child had a problem or an issue and then she would contact the parent. However, I evaluated the situation and I thought that this wasn't effective and efficient so, during a meeting, I asked the parents to give their phone numbers and now I speak directly with the parents through texts"* and *"She tries to help; she does what she can do. However, I feel that no one understands me truly"*. Lastly, teachers who have specialization courses and they are always moving because they have to go to multiple schools, have a rarer contact with the Coordinator. An English teacher reveals: *"My experience is different than the other teachers (IE70: Teachers who teach Greek). I have specialization, I am an English teacher and I feel very insecure—I am in 3 schools – and I cannot have a complete image of what's going in each school- and since I am not at one school all the time I feel like I am losing some things – some activities and seminars that I never learn about or I don't have the opportunity to participate – I don't have direct contact with the Coordinator or others"*.

Regarding the Director of Education or Director of Periphery, this role was mentioned fewer times. Six (6) out of ten (10) teachers mentioned that they have been in contact with him, at least once. The rest either do not know him/her or do not have any contact. Among the first six (6) teachers, there was only one who mentioned very positive comments: that this actor has organized daily educational events with various subjects and that it is the most important role. Others mentioned these initiatives as well but highlighted that they could have been organized earlier, more often and on more crucial and important subjects. One also mentioned that she has met this Director only in online meetings and informative sessions. It is remarkable that none of the teachers knew anything about a School Advisor. They said that either he does not exist, or they are unaware of his existence. Two teachers replied that his role is covered by the Coordinator and the Director of Periphery at the same time. But in general, there was confusion and ignorance regarding this actor.

Regarding the Director of the School, this role was mentioned more times than the Director of Periphery. Six (6) out of ten (10) teachers shared positive comments about this actor as far as it concerns good collaboration and effective communication, resolving behavioral problems with refugee students, practical and daily issues (facilities, infrastructure, hours) but also administrative matters (payments, vacations, sick days, student registrations). A teacher of Greek Language confirms: *"The director is very important; he is responsible for all the operations of the school"*. The rest mentioned his/her effective help but also his absence during the working hours of DYEP teachers. A teacher of Greek language explains: *"If I have an issue, I will address it to the Director of the School who, however, is not around the hours when we teach. At 14:00 o'clock she finishes work, and she goes home...We have a good relationship – it is just that our work shifts don't collide. When we work, the director and the morning teachers have left the school.....We need more security and safety – we don't want to be alone. A principal has to be there; there are students with mental issues– one ran and jumped over the fence"*. This is an issue of vital importance; the

Director of the school has finished work when teachers start working in DYEP afternoon classes (from 14:00 to 18:00 pm). This situation leaves teachers alone and unprotected in an empty school. Some teachers also suggested as a change to assign a separate Director- Principal during these hours at school: *“We need the figure of a director, of a principal, of an authority in the school during our working hours”* and *“I would definitely request a separate Principal/Director in DYEP classes because now the DYEP classes operate outside of the School Director’s working shifts. Both in primary school and high school. Maybe also a vice-principal”* said by English and Music teachers respectively.

What was also mentioned from the teachers is the collaboration with the employers in the NGOs, namely the educators, psychologists, social workers, and interpreters in the camp but also the communication with other teachers in the schools (teachers either in DYEP or morning classes): The teacher of Gymnastics mentions that *“Only the communication with other teachers is something very good and helpful – not the one with the directors”*. A teacher of Greek language also describes the situation: *“We collaborate with the NGO inside the camp and the people who work for this NGO (educators, social workers, interpreters). I would consider the educators and the social workers in the camp as the most important actors in my job. We communicate daily! They inform us about everything that happens in the camp, and it is very important because we are outside the camp, in the school. In general, there is feedback that helps both sides. The Coordinator is also part of this but the feedback I get from the educators is more important for my work. The Coordinator helps me with administrative issues”*. Another teacher of Greek language from a different area specifies: *“I collaborate in an excellent way with the teacher in the other DYEP (of 5th primary school) and we exchange information and knowledge. I collaborate with the teachers at the morning school but to a smaller extent, because we come to school when they have already finished work”*.

Finally, nine (9) out of ten (10) teachers would request the hiring of additional specialized professionals within the Greek public school, in DYEP classes, to help them and facilitate their educational work. These specialized professionals are mostly interpreters, psychologists, social workers and in one case a special education professional was mentioned as well. Many teachers mentioned that there are serious cases of refugee students who have inappropriate behavior or may have mental or learning issues; in such cases they do not have any help and do not know how to handle the situation. Two English teachers said: *“We have students who are misbehaved, mischievous, hyperactive, with attention disorder issues. And we have to face this situation alone.... there hasn’t been a diagnosis”* and *“I would definitely want more professionals in DYEP classes such as social workers, psychologists because there were some crisis incidents. On the 25th of March, which is a national celebration for Greece, some helicopters were flying above the school, and I saw that some children were about to have a post-traumatic stress experience – they started asking if it was going to be a war. In these cases, a psychologist is necessary to help and support the students”*. Moreover, a very important help for them would be an interpreter since until now they are having many difficulties in finding a common language to communicate with the refugee students and eventually teach them. One teacher of Greek language requests the presence of interpreters in her class: *“Yes. I need interpreters in school – it is very important! If not daily, at least once per 15 days, especially for Farsi”*. Six (6) out of ten (10) teachers, when asked in which language the class is conducted, answered body or sign language (along with Greek and English). Some teachers also

have learned some words in Farsi and Arabic, or they use Google Translate or Duolingo. Another teacher of Greek language, from different area, explains: *“The class is conducted mostly in English, in some Greek that they know and in some Farsi that I know, and we are trying to communicate. It is a huge deficiency that we don’t have an interpreter”*. Some others also mentioned that refugee students who have better knowledge help the other students by explaining to them some words. However, there is still a problem when refugee students do not even know their native language since they have never been to school.

In conclusion, from the supporting actors mentioned in the Government Gazette regarding the foundation and operation of DYEP classes, two (2) of them are important and helpful to the teachers: the Coordinator of Refugee Education and the Director of the school unit. The Directors of (Primary or Secondary) Education or Periphery also provide help to the teachers but in fewer cases and the School Advisor is absent. However, even in the case of the first two and most important actors, teachers have stated that their help is valuable mostly in administrative issues and in general procedures and not regarding educational work itself. As far as it concerns their teaching, in reality, they are mostly alone. It is important to mention as well that there were also some teachers who stated that they have only a typical collaboration with the Coordinator and the Director of the school, and they get help only from their other colleagues (teachers in school or in camp). A teacher of Greek language states: *“If something occurs, a more serious issue, I will go to the Coordinator. In school, there is no other person to help me – I am alone. This is regarding my teaching – to improve and facilitate my work – to give me instructions - there is no one”*. However, in many cases, the collaboration with the other teachers and the employees of the NGOs in the camp proved to be of vital importance. There is also an urgent need for more specialized professionals to be hired in the Greek public school, such as interpreters, psychologists and social workers. Lastly, something crucial that emerged from the interview process is that there is an urgent need for the presence of a Principal, Director or Supervisor during the working hours of DYEP teachers with regards to both children’s safety and teachers’ work; that way teachers will not feel exposed, alone, and unprotected.

E. Integration through Education for Refugee Students: *Successful or not?*

Before heading to the final conclusion, it is important to highlight that the teachers were asked two last questions at the end of the interview: if they believe that refugee students receive education of the same quality as native children and if they believe that refugee children eventually integrate into society through formal education. The vast majority (nine out of ten teachers) replied a “strong no” to both questions.

Answering the question of same quality education, two teachers replied: *“Not at all. Even if they had the best teachers, they have fewer courses, they don’t have labs, on many occasions some teachers are absent, they don’t go in the computer room, they have restricted equipment in gym class. All these factors undermine quality”* and *“Regarding time, they have class only for 4 hours and from 14:00 to 18:00 pm; during these hours, children are not so productive. There is no equipment, no books and no formal, well-studied educational guidelines so, it is impossible to do our job as well as how it is done in the morning school”*. Answering to the second question of refugee students’ integration, one teacher of Greek language responded: *“It is very wrong that the classes are happening during the afternoon. This is not a way of integrating these children into the community. It is wrong. Refugee students do not integrate into the school community when they come to an empty building, and they know that all the*

other students are gone” and Music teacher added: “They come at different hours; they don’t interact with native children. Because of society – not covid. There is segregation. Most of the people act like these children do not exist... We should integrate them and not be afraid of diversity. Parents Association do not want these children – only one school accepts them, and it becomes a ghetto”.

Only one teacher answered to both these questions with a “partially yes” but mentioned that refugee students should attend morning school and interact with other students. Most of the teachers expressed this opinion, that refugee students should be in the morning school, in morning classes and join the native students in common activities or in courses like art and gymnastics: *“Refugee children should go to school in the morning, in a separate class with the other students but in courses such as music, drawing, gymnastics, they should be together with the Greek students. This way, they could learn the language easier and also be together with the other children. Like in ZEP classes”* one teacher of Greek language explained.

Conclusion and Discussion

This paper has tried to examine the support that teachers who are hired in Reception Classes for Refugee Children Education (DYEP) in Greek public schools have. It has tried to delve into the difficulties that describe teachers’ work and the deficiencies that define DYEP classes within the Greek educational system. For this reason, qualitative, semi-structured interviews have been conducted; ten teachers of primary and secondary education from the regions of Corinth and Thiva and the island of Lesbos participated in the interview process. Some very important conclusions came up after analyzing their interviews.

First, regarding the education and training of the teachers, all teachers from the sample have been hired for teaching in DYEP classes without filling all the criteria that are mentioned in the Government Gazette; they have no adequate education or training regarding intercultural or refugee education. Even if they do, this has not been considered during the hiring process, since they haven’t indicated it. For the teachers that have a prior relevant education, most of them are not satisfied with it and they feel that they have not learned enough. In general, all teachers did not feel prepared to teach in DYEP classrooms. It should be noted that all teachers from the sample were substitute teachers; some applied randomly for DYEP classes, and one did not even know what a DYEP class is. Second, regarding the provided educational material, teachers of Greek language are the only ones who have books; teachers of Math and specialization courses such as English, Music and Gymnastics are not provided with books. Even for the teachers of Greek who do have books, they are not satisfied with their quality and usually prefer to use other books or educational material. In general, all teachers conduct their class with educational material that they have designed on their own based on other sources. And lastly, regarding the supporting roles that help teachers in refugee education, the Coordinator of Refugee Education in the camp and the Director of the school unit can be valuable but only for some teachers of the sample and in specific cases such as administrative issues. However, the latter is absent during the operating hours of DYEP classes, a situation that causes insecurity to the teachers. Also, the School Advisor is totally absent from all DYEP classes from the sample. With regards to their educational work, teachers feel alone, without guidance and

supervision. Almost all teachers highlighted the necessity of additional supporting actors such as interpreters, social workers and psychologists, in relation to their work.

It should be mentioned here as well that there are some limitations in the present study. More than ten people could have been interviewed, more than three regions could have been included in the sample and more courses could have been added. For example, a Computer Science teacher could be a valuable addition as well as more teachers of secondary education could provide for example, a clearer image about high school books in DYEP classes. It should not be overlooked that findings are based on perceptions, opinions and personal experiences of the teachers working in DYEP classes. Factors such as age, gender, social class, migrant background, and religion as well as years of working experience could influence teachers' statements and thus, results. Briefly, there are many conclusions to be drawn from the findings, but one cannot be sure that all DYEP classes are like those of the selected regions; in other cases, collaboration with Coordinators and Directors may be better (as it is a factor that also depends on the personal character of individuals), a School Advisor may exist elsewhere, and teachers may be more experienced or trained in other schools. However, this does not largely affect this research and its important implications; even if this is the case only in the sampled participants and in the specific context, it is still a significant problem.

It is very important that only teachers with prior working experience and adequate training and education about intercultural and refugee education should be hired for DYEP classes. And fulfilling these criteria, continuous training and seminars shall be organized for free before and throughout the school year from the responsible actors for all the teachers of all courses and specializations, but also with respect to their workload. Training and seminars should match the principles of intercultural education such as activities of experiential learning, work in groups and contact with diversity; this way, teachers will gain in-depth knowledge and understanding and will be truly prepared to handle a multicultural classroom. Moreover, teachers of all courses should be provided with the relevant educational material in printed form. Books that are already distributed (the books "Geia sas") should be reviewed, revised, and maybe replaced to fit the standards and the needs of the target population who are refugees. Teachers cannot teach refugee students with books that are exclusively written in Greek; they need books which are easily read, culturally adapted, and include languages such as Arabic and Farsi for example. Technical equipment should also be added in every DYEP class since technology can definitely improve the process and quality of an interactive class such as this and more initiatives like the tablets of UNICEF should be encouraged and realized.

The School Advisor must be present in DYEP classes since his role is fundamental in relation to teachers' work. Based on the findings, teachers stated that they are unsupervised and unguided regarding their educational work, they are unsatisfied with the educational material and some of them are completely unaware of current seminars and training. School Advisor is responsible for exactly these areas: guidance of the teachers, organization of seminars and evaluation of schoolbooks. Their presence is essential and must be compulsory. Moreover, units should be framed with additional specialized professionals such as interpreters, psychologists, social workers, special education experts to facilitate teachers' work and provide solutions to problems that teachers cannot resolve alone, for example when a refugee student has learning difficulties and needs to be diagnosed and helped. There also should be a Principal

during the afternoon hours as well for safety and supervision reasons; teachers cannot run the school department by themselves. In general, a stricter and more formal framework should be established, regarding the relations and collaborations between the actors involved in refugee education. That would also solve the situation where teachers have not heard of their Coordinator or Director, or they have rare contact. Lastly, encouraging communication between all teachers in the Greek school (morning teachers should communicate frequently with DYEP teachers), and fostering collaborations and common initiatives between the Greek public school and the NGOs in the reception centers will be very beneficial. Bringing refugee students' parents closer to the teachers in Greek school is also something that was implied by teachers.

Finally, these are some serious suggestions that the Ministry of Education and the educational policy practitioners in Greece should take seriously into consideration in order to improve the system of DYEP classes, provide more help and support to the teachers and increase the quality of education that is provided to refugee students. However, there is a very important remark from the teachers about the meaning of DYEP classes. Eventually, DYEP classes do not fulfill the purpose which they have been founded for, which is the integration of refugee students into society through education. The vast majority of the teachers do not approve this system as a way of integration since refugee students do not interact with the other students and end up being isolated. Maybe this is an important implication for policy makers that they should implement a totally different system; a system of morning classes where refugee students can be taught Greek and English alone but join the native students in the rest of the courses such as Music, Drawing and Gymnastics. This co-existence and interaction will maybe indeed lead to integration and help refugee students have better education and social life. This, however, will imply raising awareness to everyone involved in this situation; morning teachers and parents of native students should be informed and educated regarding diversity and inclusivity, in order to avoid racist behaviors.

“The right of children to education is not ensured only with the access to formal education but also presupposes the right to high quality education, equal to the one the rest of the children receive, while the failure of the State to provide it, consists of discrimination under any conditions” - European Court, 2008 as cited in Stergiou & Simopoulos, 2019

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APPENDIX

A1.

Interview Guide

1. How old are you?
2. What course do you teach?
3. What is the name of the school?
4. How many students are in the class?
5. How old are they?
6. Are you a Permanent or a Substitute teacher? Full-time or part-time?
7. How many years of working experience do you have in general?
8. How many years of working experience do you have in teaching students with refugee/migration background?
9. What is your bachelor's degree -if any-?
10. Do you have any kind of specialized training or education in the form of master's degree?
11. Do you have any kind of specialized training or education in the form of seminars, meetings, conferences, or workshops?
12. If yes, did you have to pay for this training?
13. What was the duration of these seminars and were they held online or face-to-face?
14. What was the methodology used in these seminars?
15. Are you satisfied with the education/training that you have received?
16. Do you believe that all the education/training that you have received has prepared you adequately for teaching in DYEP classes?
17. Is your education/training continuous now that you are hired as teacher in DYEP classes?
18. In which language is the class conducted?
19. Do you believe that cultural diversity stands as an obstacle to a class?
20. Do you think that you have developed flexibility and adaptability during your teaching in DYEP classes?
21. Do you focus more on vocabulary and grammar or on the development of interpersonal and communication skills?
22. What educational material is provided to you from the Ministry of Education, which language is it written in and under which form (printed or digital) is it provided?
23. Do you think that the books are culturally adapted?
24. Is the educational material provided by the Ministry of Education sufficient and helpful for your teaching?
25. What other educational material do you use and to which resources do you mostly refer to?
26. Do you think that the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education are sufficient and helpful?
27. Is there technical equipment in your class?
28. What other actors work with you?

29. How is the Coordinator of Refugee Education's (SEP) work related to yours? Is your collaboration frequent? Is your collaboration good? Is your collaboration effective?
30. How is the Director of the school unit's work related to yours? Is your collaboration frequent? Is your collaboration good? Is your collaboration effective?
31. How is the Director of Peripheral Education's work related to yours? Is your collaboration frequent? Is your collaboration good? Is your collaboration effective?
32. How is the School Advisor's work related to yours? Is your collaboration frequent? Is your collaboration good? Is your collaboration effective?
33. Which actor is the most important for your work?
34. Do you think that the aforementioned actors make your work easier?
35. Would you desire the framing of school units with additional specialized professionals?
36. How did you feel when you first took over this class?
37. Do you think that you were adequately prepared to teach refugee children?
38. What would you suggest as change so as for the educational process to be improved?
39. In your opinion, do refugee children receive an education of the same quality as native children?
40. In your opinion, do refugee children eventually integrate into society through formal education?

A2

CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Jennifer A. Holland, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Master Thesis

Name, email of student: Paraskevi Kotoula, 626151pk@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Tom Emery, tom@odissei-data.nl

Start date and duration: 21/01/2022 - now

Is the research study conducted within DPAS

YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. **YES** - NO

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? YES - **NO**
Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. YES - **NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). YES - **NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES - **NO**
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES - **NO**
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - **NO**
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants?
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.). YES - **NO**
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES - **NO**
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? YES - **NO**
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? YES - **NO**
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES - **NO**
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? YES - **NO**
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES - **NO**

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

_____NO_____

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

Answer: In Greece

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

Answer: 10 participants

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

Answer: Teachers who work in the Reception Classes for Refugee Education (ΔΥΕΠ in Greek) in the school units of Primary Education and Secondary Education for the school year 2021-2022. The exact size of the population is not know; it is estimated around 100 teachers.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

Answer: I will keep the data on my private computer, I will delete them immediately afterwards and I will be the only one responsible.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

Answer: I will be the only one responsible.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Answer: Every time that I will work on the dataset.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

Answer: I will anonymize the data using codes.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Paraskevi Kotoula

Name (EUR) supervisor: Tom Emery

Date: 19/06/22

Date: 19/06/2022



APPENDIX I: Informed Consent Form (if applicable)