

# Challenges and Needs in the Context of Formal Language Education to Refugee Children and Adolescents in Greece

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Anastasia Papapostolou<sup>1</sup>, Polyxeni Manoli<sup>2</sup> and Anna Mouti<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges and needs of teachers' who offer language support to young refugees within the framework of formal education in Greece. In a field where research is limited and at an initial stage, a qualitative inquiry was conducted in a public school, which host classes of reception for refugee students, in the region of Fthiotida, in Greece. In particular, an exploratory case study was conducted through semi-structured interviews and observations in formal educational environments. Five participants were engaged in semi-structured interviews while observations occurred in two of their classrooms. The findings of the inquiry demonstrated that within the framework of refugee teaching environments in Greece teachers faced several challenges regarding practical, sociocultural, religious, ethical and emotional issues. The findings of the study highlight the need for teacher education to help them cope with diversity issues in their classrooms.

**Key Words:** Language education to young refugees; teachers' challenges and needs; teacher education

## Introduction

There has been an influx of refugees and migrants the past few years in Greece since uprooted people from Africa and Asia were forced to abandon their homes due to warfare, violation of human rights, recession and persecution. They have turned to Greece, either being in a state of transition or seeking for permanent residence to have a better quality of life. To be more precise, 173,450 refugees and migrants arrived in Greece in 2016; 25% of whom were children (UNHCR, 2016), while by the end of 2017 about 60.000 refugees remained in Greece (Ministry of Migration Policy, 2017). Under the pressure of radical changes in the field of education and the new educational needs that emerged, Greece was obliged to adopt impromptu measures to address the requirements of these vulnerable groups and offer language education to them. In the light of the above-mentioned educational reality and the special educational needs that have emerged, the official education bodies employed various language education programmes aiming to young refugees' schooling integration and social inclusion. How-

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<sup>1</sup> Hellenic Open University, Greece. Email: anapapostolou@gmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9726-2784

<sup>2</sup> Hellenic Open University, Greece. Email: pegyma@hotmail.com

<sup>3</sup> University of Thessaly, Greece. Email: mouti@uth.gr

ever, their deficiencies along with several issues that arose due to the specific features of the vulnerable refugee population often put teachers in an awkward position, as they were obliged to cope with challenging and demanding situations for which they were not prepared.

Given that the necessities that emerge within the framework of refugee and migrant education constitute an issue that concerns the governments and societies globally, there is an extending body of international research (Aydin & Kaya, 2017; Beacco, Krumm, & Little, 2017; Krumm, 2017). As Beacco et al. (2017) pointed out, in diverse educational settings, the student population diverged in terms of social status, culture and language, which certainly complicated the teaching procedure.

In Greece, however, the research in this field is limited and mostly focused on the challenges and needs of educators and volunteers who offer language support to adult refugees (Kantzou, Manoli, Mouti, & Papadopoulou, 2017; Marouli, 2017; Papapostolou & Manoli, 2018); and teachers' perceptions of intercultural education and classroom diversity (e.g., Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011; Magos & Simopoulos, 2009; Mattheoudakis, Chatzidaki, & Maligkoudi, 2007; Palaiologou, 2004, 2007; Palaiologou & Faas, 2012). In this context, this research seeks to investigate the challenges and needs of educators who offer language support to refugee children and adolescents in formal educational settings in the Prefecture of Central Greece.

With regards to Greece, throughout the academic year 2016-2017, the formal education context featured lack of prepared teachers who were asked to apply the curriculum into classrooms. Namely, teachers lacked training in teaching in highly diverse classrooms. For example, teaching Greek as a second or foreign language to children who had not been formally educated was demanding. To make matters worse, teachers who taught in Reception Facilities of Refugee Education (RFRE) classes were under-qualified to work in highly diverse classes and had access neither to state advisory services nor postgraduate training on handling similar difficulties in the classroom. Within this educational framework, many teachers have either experienced a sense of emptiness or have resigned (Anagnostou & Nikolova, 2017). Kantzou et al. (2017) and Mouti, Kantzou, and Manoli (in press) demonstrated that one of the teachers' greatest challenges was migrant/refugee student diversity. Most of the students had experienced impeded, restricted education or no education at all because of the traumas experienced before their relocation. This affects the teaching process in the new educational environment, highlighting teachers' lack of training. Similarly, Marouli (2017) discussed the perceptions and educational needs of Primary Education teachers who work with refugee students in formal educational settings asserting that most teachers lacked training and experience in intercultural issues and refugee education.

The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs (2017) carried out research exploring Education of Refugee Children in Greece, asserting that, among other critical issues, that the most significant problem related to the function of the RFREs in

Greece is linked to the teachers' needs and more specifically their inadequate training. In the same line, Palaiologou, Fountoulaki and Liontou (2019) discussed the absence of knowledge of proper teaching methods and class management. Additionally, Pappostolou and Manoli (2018) stressed the deficiency of appropriate teaching material in Greece. Tziona, Palaiologou, and Dinas (2018) dealt with the teaching material that can be used for immigrants and refugees at zones of education priority and reception infrastructures pointing out the lack of books created for these students' needs, especially for refugee children. Overall, all researchers highlighted that teachers working in such demanding educational settings should receive special training in migrant and refugee teaching.

The purpose of this research is to explore the challenges and needs of teachers who offer language support to refugee children and adolescents in the Greek context. In particular, it intends to illustrate the specific types of difficulties and necessities that have emerged within the framework of young refugee education in formal educational settings in the region of Fthiotida during the academic years 2016-2018. More specifically, this research intends to shed light on the educators' concerns, highlight the profiles of teachers, explore the teachers' needs and challenges related to the teaching methods and materials. Furthermore, it aspires to evaluate awkward occurrences related to matters of cultural and religious diversity, assess educators' intercultural sensitivity and stress situations like trauma or outbursts of violence that ask for versatility and empathy.

## **Methodology**

A case study, which belongs to qualitative exploratory research, was employed as it allows to explore individuals or organizations through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programs (Yin, 2003. Cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008). A case study was estimated to serve the purposes of the study questions to provide a vigorous depiction and comprehension of the challenges and needs encountered by both teachers and volunteers. Furthermore, it supports the deconstruction and the subsequent reconstruction of various phenomena (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The combination of two research tools to conduct the study and collect information can enhance the data in terms of validity and reliability as well as amplify its interpretation (Zohrabi, 2013).

## **Data collection**

### ***Semi-structured interviews***

Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind participants' experiences because in-depth information can be pursued. Despite the fact that semi-structured interviews rely on predetermined questions, they were mainly chosen on the grounds that they make room for a greater extent of flexibility (McDonough & McDonough, 2014). In this case study, the interviews were semi-structured with prepared

questions that encouraged conversations but also allowed for follow-up questions. All five teachers were interviewed separately, while all the interviews were conducted in public places, according to the interviewees' preference to make them feel as comfortable as possible. Each interview lasted from 30 to 35 and was audio-recorded and transcribed.

### ***Classroom observations***

Observation is a research tool that allows the researchers to capture incidents, discussions and interactions that result in the interpretation of the participants' attitudes. Besides, it allows for the meticulous extraction and interpretation of data within the demanding requirements of real-life backgrounds (McDonough & McDonough, 2014). Observation is employed through field notes, which require a detailed description of the incidents in the field for each individual separately (Helleso, Melby, & Hauge, 2015). More specifically, one of the researchers conducted an observation in a sample of two teachers, a teacher of Greek language and a teacher of English language, who were working in a formal educational setting, a public school with reception classes for young refugees. She visited daily from 19 March 2018 to the end of May, apart from Easter Holidays, conducting an observation through field notes without interrupting the whole teaching procedure. Classroom observations were focused on the teachers' challenges and needs during the class but also the teachers' practices regarding certain difficulties that arose in the multicultural environment they were teaching.

### **Participants**

The participants of the study were teachers who offered language education to refugee children and adolescents (13-18 years old) mainly coming from Syria and Iraq in reception classes of mainstream schools in the Prefecture of Central Greece. The researcher managed to attain the consent of five educators who were working or had worked at public schools of the region of Fthiotida; three teachers of them were teaching Modern Greek as a second language and two of them English teachers as a foreign language. The professional teachers in the official settings (public schools) are all Greek women aged from 30 to 53 years old. Four of them were substitute teachers and only one bore tenure appointment to the position. They all held a bachelor's degree and had graduated from a department with a pedagogical orientation (departments of Greek Philology, English Language and Literature, History and Archaeology, Department of Primary education), but only one of them has both training and experience in intercultural education (see also Table 1 below).

Table 1.  
Teachers' Profiles

	Age/ Gender	Profession/ Studies	Educational Setting Previous experience in refugee education	Average number of refugee students in class	Age of Students	Students' Nationality	Language Education Hours/ Week
T1	44/ Female	Greek Language Teacher	Secondary education school with reception classes for refugee students (12 15 years old)	8 + 4 (April onwards)	12-16	Syrian Kurdish Palestinian	15/week
T2	32/ Female	English Language Teacher	No Secondary education school with reception classes for refugee students (12-15 years old)	12	12-18	Syrian/ Kurdish / Iranian	2/ week
T3	30/ Female	Greek Language Teacher	Yes 1 year in RFRE Secondary education school with reception classes for refugee students (12- 15 years old)	11	17-18	Syrian Kurdish -	15/week
T4	53/ Female	English Language Teacher	Yes, 1 year in REFR secondary school with reception classes of reception for students (16- 18 years old)	5 + 2 (April onwards)	17- 18	Syrian Kurdish Iraqi	2/week
T5	40/ Female	Greek Language Teacher	No secondary school with reception classes of reception for students (16-18 years old)	5 + 2 (April onwards)	17-18	Syrian Kurdish Iraqi	15/ week
			Yes, 1 year in RFRE				

### Data analysis

The data emerging after completing the qualitative research were analyzed using the content analysis method. Such a method is utilized mainly in qualitative as well as in quantitative research as mixed-method research and exploits an array of methods

to bring about findings and contextualize them (White & Marsh, 2006). In this study, the analysis and interpretation of all data were conducted thematically based on three main axes; namely, the analysis and interpretation of challenges and needs related to practical issues (teaching material, teaching practices, training etc.), sociolinguistic and intercultural issues (e.g., language barrier, cultural and religious diversity), which concerned the psychological state of the refugee students and their relationships and attitudes to the new education setting and social environment (e.g., trauma, conflicts with the other students). More specifically, the data which emerged from the interviews were analysed thematically and holistically (Leavy & Ross, 2006, p.81 as cited in Kim, 2015). In the final stage of the data analysis and interpretation, the researcher employed the comparative data analysis method that allowed a thorough outline of the setbacks concerning methodology encountered in research in cross-cultural contexts and centred on data sets that could be compared in nature (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997).

### **Findings**

The present section analyses the data that were collected from the teacher interviews and classroom observations aiming at exploring teachers' challenges and needs in formal educational settings in a region in Central Greece. In the following table, the main thematic categories emerged are presented (see Table 2 below):

Table 2.

#### *Thematic Categories*

<b>Challenges and needs related to training, teaching material and practices</b>
Official Provision and Teachers' Training
Teaching Material and Official Instructions
Teaching Practices
<b>Challenges and needs related to refugee students' sociolinguistic and cultural background</b>
Language Communication Issues
Different Literacy Levels
School Routine
<b>Challenges and needs related to refugee students' relationships and attitudes to the new educational setting</b>
School attitudes towards refugee students and their teachers
Classroom Climate

#### **Challenges and needs related to training, teaching material and practices**

The first responses to questions that were related to teachers' experience, training, teaching materials and practices demonstrated that all educators had limited official support in terms of training and seminars organized by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs and the Institution of Educational Policy. Only one of them had attended some seminars out of personal interest in working with marginalized children. In reply to the researchers' question concerning an official provision for the educators'

consultation and psychological support to deal with these unprecedented educational needs, they all replied negatively. They commented that neither did they receive support by an official body, nor did they participate in social networks for mutual support. In the question, for instance, whether they had attended official training and/or seminars in intercultural studies and training in teaching vulnerable populations organized by the Ministry of Education the responses were all negative.

*T1: Not only had they not made any provision for a training seminar, but, when one such seminar was organized in Fthiotida. and I applied, I was not even chosen.*

*T3: The Ministry did not provide any relevant organized training program. I have participated in all of the training provided by the School Counselors but there was no other serious attempt organized by the Ministry... However, I tried to attend some programs on my own...At the University of Thessaly and at the Centre for the Greek Language, a program for Greek as a second language.*

Similarly, when the teachers were asked about the teaching material and the official instructions that they were given by the Greek official educational bodies, they all responded that they had not received specific instructions; the teaching material suggested by the Institute of Educational Policy for the instruction of Greek as a second language was a textbook, intended for all levels of education including children whose age varied from 6 to 18 years old (<http://iep.edu.gr:8080/index.php/el/prokirixeis/menu-anakoinoseis/2-general/512-ekpaidefsi-prosfygon>). They all used it, but they were obliged to make many adaptations and mostly create teaching material themselves in order to meet the students' needs.

*T3: They (The Ministry) have recommended the book [name of textbook] and suggested some other books e.g., [name of textbook] ...But these books are not suitable for students' needs, they are rather difficult, they are older and there is nothing new about refugee education...These books have been prepared for migrant education and Roma pupils...There is no clear directive on the education of refugee students...*

In the case of the English language teachers, there was no official suggestion for a textbook. One of them said they were in the middle of the academic course when they were sent a textbook that was not adequate, while the other English language teacher replied that she had to search for material on the internet because there was no provision for a textbook suitable for the refugee student needs.

Regarding the teaching practices that they employed during language education, almost all teachers said that the barrier of language made them to use more traditional methods, while sometimes they used the communicative and hands-on (experiential)



approaches based mostly on arts and body language.

*T3: I started teaching in a more traditional way but when feasible, I tried to do it experientially based on their school routine needs, like scratching their pencil, open their notebooks, go to the toilet, ask to stand up etc... It worked really good...of course they were not able to make a whole sentence... but they used phrases they needed to respond to their immediate classroom needs...*

Only two teachers referred to translanguaging (Tsokalidou, 2017) as an additional aid during the teaching process, mentioning the use of older students or more proficient ones as mediators or interpreters when communication gaps occurred.

*T1: Everyone wanted to write his/her own language on the board. I was writing the Greek word and they were writing in Kurdish, Syrian or Arabic... So, we wrote words in all three languages ((laughing))*

The classroom observation verified most of the above findings. Namely, it was observed that the Greek language teacher had difficulty in using the official book recommended by the Ministry of Education and the Institute of Educational Policy with refugee children, as it required basic knowledge of the target language. Consequently, the teacher seemed obliged to make adaptations to the textbook available and create material herself to meet her students' needs. Regarding the English language teacher, she was trying to help herself by making some research on the internet not only on teaching materials, but also on instructions on teaching the English language to refugee students. She seemed upset and disappointed with this awkward situation because there was no official provision for the English teachers regarding teaching material and guidelines. It was noted that the teacher of the Greek *used pictures from the Internet -clipart, the traditional blackboard with chalks. She only used the book recommended by the Institute of Education Policy in order to teach the refugee students the letters of the alphabet*" (from the fieldnotes).

Simultaneously, the use of translanguaging (e.g. Greek, English and Arabic), gestures, mime, and drawing in an attempt to communicate at a basic level. There were cases that the lesson was based on everyday school routine (e.g. vocabulary related to school supplies: what's in my pencil case) and other days that games like "Hangman", "Guess Who" or Story-telling were used to motivate the students indicating that no particular teaching method was followed by the specific teachers.

### **Challenges and needs related to refugee students' sociolinguistic and cultural background**

In the second section of the analysis, the researchers focused on the issue of diverse languages and cultures co-existed in a class and the difficulties emerging throughout



the teaching procedure. All the teachers admitted that diversity was certainly a great challenge. One teacher commented that especially on the first days she felt she had no teaching role because she could not communicate with the children. Furthermore, they all mentioned that an intercultural mediator would be very useful. The only help they could count on was that some of the children could speak English or know some Greek words.

T2: *“The difficulty was obviously that there was no common language not even English”*

T3: *“There were difficulties, because some children did not speak at all Greek and some did not speak English... There were one or two students who knew a little English better and used it as mediators...”*

Another crucial issue mentioned by teachers was children’s different levels or total absence of literacy as well as the sporadic attendance of classes and the frequent phenomenon of newcomers throughout the school year. The teachers confirmed that there were problems that emerged from students’ different levels or even absence of literacy. They had to make many adaptations to their initial teaching plan, which often stalled the teaching process. Moreover, the students’ sporadic attendance of classes as well as the phenomenon of newcomers who joined the classes even in April, just a month before end of term, made the situation even worse. It caused distraction and frustration among the students and a lot of stress for the teachers. A teacher confessed that there was a period that she had to meet the needs of five different learning groups in the same classroom. She also commented that these students did not value or understand the worth of the Greek school and that is why they did not attend classes regularly.

T1: *“The last month, especially when four new students came in the class, we faced a situation, hmm more difficult. The other students refused to participate in the learning procedure.”*

T5: *“I remember a period that I had 5 groups of students with different levels of literacy in the same class. The students with whom we had made progress then got bored and frustrated because I had to spend more time with the newcomers.”*

Classroom observations revealed some teachers’ issues of classroom management, as each session lasting 45 minutes seemed to be exhausting for refugee students who experienced boredom and distraction but at the same time for the teachers who could not take advantage of the time provided. For instance, the English teacher could never complete the second teaching hour of her two-hour weekly English class.

*I was given the impression that the teacher was rather forced to teach refugees. She felt lost. She never managed to finish her 2-hour class (according to the school programme). The refugee students used to spend the*

*second hour of their English class at the computers' classroom listening to music (from the fieldnotes)*

This became more evident from the 17 April onwards when two new refugee students joined the class; their arrival created a more demanding situation for the teachers in the sense that more challenges emerged because of language and cultural diversity.

*The English teacher seemed to have a problem in her interaction with the students. The barrier of the language was evident. She was trying to communicate but she soon gave up. (from the fieldnotes)*

The refugee students in this class were Arabs, Kurdish and Iraqi; consequently, not only were there language and cultural barriers in their communication with their teachers but also among them. Furthermore, the teachers had to cope with the problem of different literacy levels and the total absence of literacy in the case of the Iraqi student and the students' sporadic attendance. All these issues caused problems which hindered the teaching process and led to stagnation. The teachers could not avoid having at least three different groups in class with which it was impossible to deal with at the same time.

*Students did not have the same level of literacy! Furthermore, one of the schoolgirls had to deal with problems of written and oral speech, which made the situation in class even more difficult. (from the fieldnotes)*

Additionally, the observation revealed refugee students' different perception of daily routine, which had an impact on the learning process. Namely, it was impossible for students who lived in a refugee camp to be consistent with their schedule; they often missed classes, as they had not incorporated school into their daily duties. Furthermore, during Ramadan, which is their most important religious celebration followed by strict fasting, they seemed exhausted and distracted. Thus, the teaching procedure lagged behind, and the teachers needed to show more understanding towards their students' cultural and religious customs and their psychological and physical fatigue.

*Two out of the five students, as I was informed, came to school this week after almost one month of absence (22/3/2018). (from the fieldnotes)*

*Today, only one student showed up (21/04/2018). (from the field notes)*

### **Challenges and needs related to refugee students' relationships and attitudes to the new education setting**

The last section of the interview investigated the impact of the refugee children relationships and attitudes towards the Greek school and teachers. The teachers' and principals' attitudes, towards the refugee children was explored as well. The teachers highlighted the lack of interest and support by the principals of the schools and the rest

of the teachers. In some cases, there were few educators who had a reserved, negative and dismissive attitude towards refugee children and their teachers. In another school, the principal promoted a policy of discrimination between Greek students and refugees, while, at the same time, he discouraged any common action, such as celebrations and excursions. In another school, the principal refused to cooperate with teachers, was indifferent and even hindered the teachers' work. Only in one school, the principal was very supportive and tried to create a school of inclusion for all children.

*T1: I feel that the children understood that they were not welcome. Not by the other children but by the Headmaster 's reaction... so this is what I think has been the most difficult for me this year...*

When teachers were asked about violent and traumatic incidents between the children, almost all teachers replied that they had witnessed incidents of violence between the refugee students for religious or political issues. The teachers had to call the educational Coordinator many times to ask for advice and help because there was no provision for a psychologist or a social assistant at school. Similarly, regarding the traumatic incidents, almost all teachers agreed that they had experienced challenging situations (e.g., children who had recently lost their parents or children with emotional outbursts). This put them in a difficult position because they did not know how to handle this without any professional help.

*T2: "The families in the camp have had conflicts, the children then brought them to school"*

*T3: "There are days that they are sad for no reason, or for no obvious reason"*

Incidents of violence among the refugee students have not been observed, but there was a case with a child that seemed exhausted because he had to share his room with other eight people and thus, language class was the last thing he was interested in. An opposite case was also observed, as there were some children who came at school not only for the classes, but for the friendly classroom climate and they just wanted to spend some time with the teacher who was trying to show them that she really cared about them.

## **Discussion**

Despite the huge number of migrant and refugee populations, intercultural education in Greece remains a deficient and demanding field as it presupposes training beyond the teachers' initial teaching degrees. The results of the study suggested that, though these teachers in the formal education setting were qualified holding bachelor's degree and having teaching experience, they lacked training in teaching refugee populations, which concurred with the findings of previous studies (Kantzou et al., 2017;

Mouti et al., in press; Palaiologou et al., 2019; Papapostolou & Manoli, 2018). Marouli (2017) also maintained that refugee teachers in formal educational contexts lacked training and prior experience linked to issues concerning interculturality and refugee education. The results of relevant research indicate that training or a series of counselling sessions should be offered so that teachers can become familiar with the teaching methods used to teach this vulnerable population.

Furthermore, it was found that there was no official provision for suitable teaching materials for the young refugees aged from 16 to 18. This issue, which was also underlined as the most significant problem of the function of RFREs, according to Anagnostou and Nikolova (2017), still remains unsolved and constitutes the basis of the teachers' awkwardness towards the new educational reality. Similarly, the issue of deficiency of adequate teaching material for refugee students was identified as a challenging situation in both educational settings. It was similar in English classes because, according to the participant English teachers, neither a textbook nor guidelines for teaching goals were provided.

In addition, the issue of language diversity and the problems it evoked to communication between educators and refugee students undeniably affected the teaching process. The biggest challenge, however, was the barriers of the student's different levels of literacy, which constitute a common attribute among the refugee students as well as a thorny problem. This acknowledgement correlated reasonably with the confirmations of Wachob and Williams (2010), which was identified as a common belief among all the participants in these studies. It was also confirmed during the observation that the different levels of literacy among the refugee students, along with their sporadic class attendance and the constant arrival of new students in classes, made the situation even worse for both the teachers and students, especially for those who had made progress but now are obliged to remain at the same level. These findings were in accordance with Aydin and Kaya (2017) who identified the same problem in Turkey where the refugee populations were even larger.

As far as the issue of intercultural sensitivity is concerned, in Greek schools the reactions towards the refugee student diversity varied. It seems that the teachers who spent more time with them, namely the teachers of Greek language, were more culturally sensitive. On the contrary, the teachers spent less time with them, or just belonged to the broader school context are somehow indifferent and sometimes offensive towards them. Such attitudes and stances have also been reported in previous research by Mahon (2006), Simopoulos and Magos (2009), who talked about stereotypical and insulting attitudes of some teachers towards certain national groups of migrants, which indicated an absence of intercultural competence.

Thus, the research findings validated the usefulness of teacher education. Moreover, a guide that would serve as a counsellor for educators in terms of behavioural issues that often emerge was suggested. In addition, the presence of a psychologist or

a social assistant for the children's support and their counselling would be necessary.

### **Conclusion**

This research aimed to explore the difficulties that occurred in multilingual and multicultural educational contexts that seem to have been affected by the refugee crisis. Qualitative research was conducted aiming to explore the challenges and needs, which have emerged in the context of refugee education in central Greece. The findings indicated that the necessities that have arisen in the demanding field of refugee education are related to practical, sociocultural, religious, emotional and ethical issues. It was demonstrated that teachers in official teaching environments experience challenges and anxieties mainly due to their lack of training in intercultural education and teaching experienced in highly diverse classes. Lack of adequate teaching material, the absence of knowledge of proper teaching methods and class management were reported as the major deficiencies. However, the absence of guidelines and an informative curriculum was for educators one of the greatest challenges they experienced. In addition, issues related to students' linguistic and sociocultural background seemed primarily to preoccupy all the participants of the research. Furthermore, the difficulties originating from this vulnerable population's psychological state, and the relationships that are created with the broader environment of the public schools in Fthiotida were also recorded as challenging situations for all the educators engaged in refugee education.

It is evident that the results of the research had shed light on many queries and concerns related to the extent of efficiency of the refugee education programmes that have been implemented during the last years in formal teaching environments because of the refugee crisis and the demanding role of the teachers. Nevertheless, the most important feature of this research is that it has been conducted in the field with teachers who offer language education to refugee children and adolescents in the Greek context. This reinforces the originality of this study given that in Greece the above-mentioned research field and the relevant studies are rather limited, while the role of volunteers within the framework of young refugees education constitutes an unexplored area.

Nevertheless, the research was conducted in a specific educational environment restricted to the limits of the region of Fthiotida, in the Prefecture of Central Greece including a rather limited sample. In the light of the above-mentioned limitation, this research is expected to give rise to further studies exploring teachers' challenges and needs that offer language education to refugee children and adolescents in schools situated in every corner of Greece from the biggest region of the mainland to the most remote island. Consequently, it is expected that the findings of this research will pave the ground for large-scale studies in this rather unexplored area.

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