Meeting the educational and psychosocial needs of refugee adolescents:
The British Council/ UNICEF Learning Centre

Eirini Adamopoulou, Ed.D, NCSP
School Psychologist
National & Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece
eipnvnadams@hotmail.com

Content

❑ The refugee crisis - effect on children and adolescents

❑ Legal and policy framework

❑ The British Council/ UNICEF Learning Centre

❑ Multi-tier System of Supports: Psychosocial & Learning Interventions

❑ Lessons learned

Global Situation

❑ By the end of 2017 over **68.5 million** individuals were **forcibly displaced** worldwide due to fear of <u>persecution</u>, <u>war</u>, and <u>violence.</u>

❑ **24.5 million** persons were **refugees**

❑ On average **50%** of refugees were **under 18's**

(UNHCR Global Trends Report 2017)

The refugee crisis in Europe

❑ **The number of refugees** coming to **Europe** reached staggering proportions largely due to the large <u>humanistic crisis</u> that occurs in the vicinity of <u>Middle East</u> (Hebebrand et al., 2016).

❑ The brunt of the refugee influx has been borne by those countries in <u>eastern, southern, middle</u>, and <u>northern Europe</u> that the **refugees travel through** and **finally settle in** (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016)
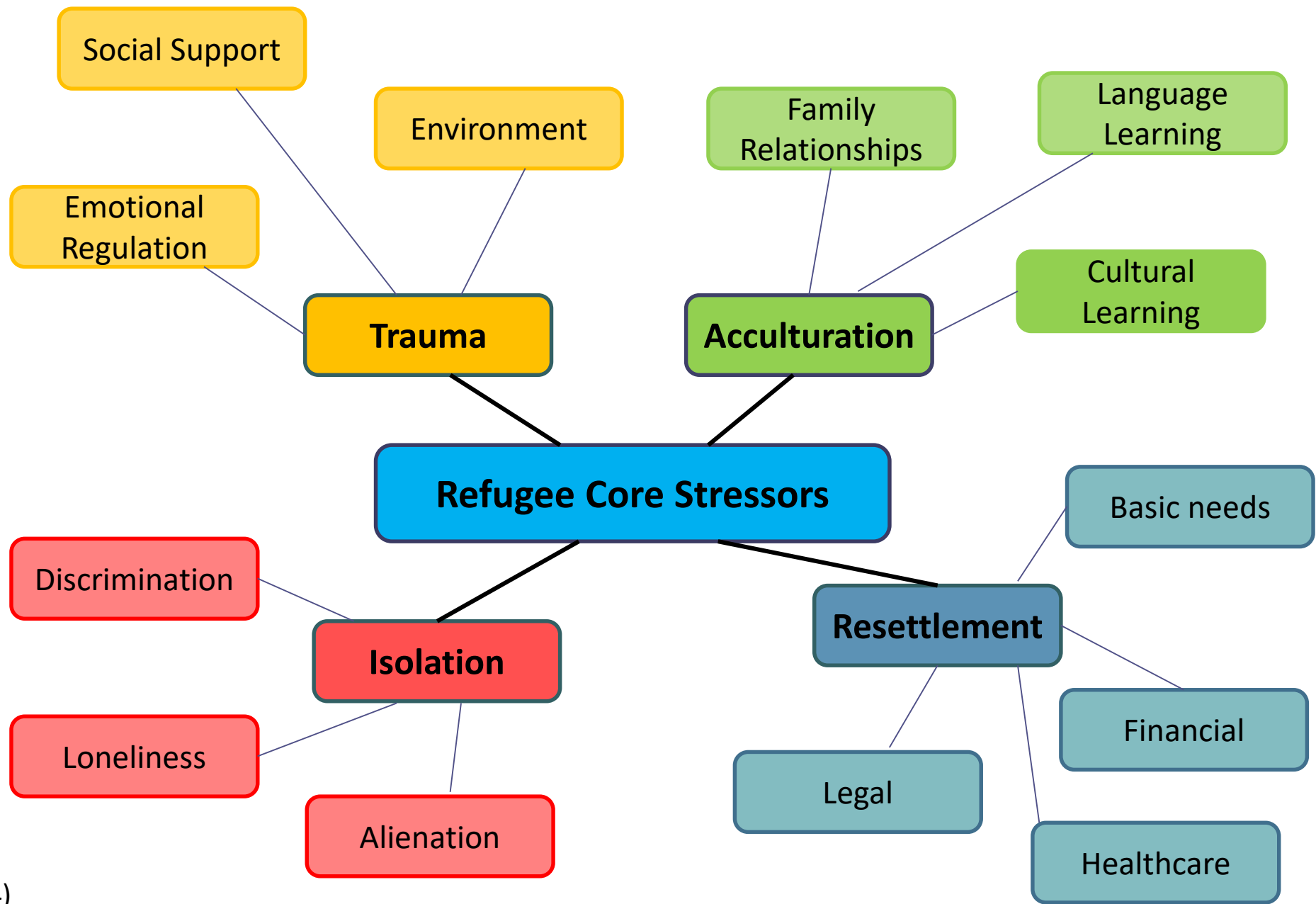
More than half of Syrian refugees are children.

unicef
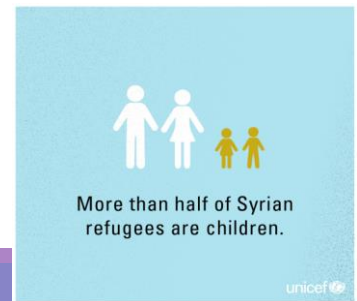
Effect on children and adolescents refugees

❑Children and adolescents refugees are exposed to **many risks pre-flight, during their flight,** and **upon arrival**, which can have a **negative impact on their mental health** (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016; Hebebrand et al., 2016).

❑ They **face unique challenges**, including varying levels of familiarity with and adjustment to Western culture, academic language barriers, discrimination, and trauma exposure that can **increase the risk for psychological, behavioral or emotional problems** (Ruiz et al., 2011; Benner et al., 2018).

Education as a protective factor

❑ Many children and adolescents are **resilient and successfully adjust** to their new lives (Ruiz et al., 2011).

❑ **Experiences at school** can be **protective** and **atmosphere of warmth and stability** can go a long way to restoring security (Craig et al., 2009; McGregor et al., 2015; de Wal Pastoor, 2015).

❑ Thus, it is important to facilitate success for refugee students by developing **educational, social, and emotional supports** (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2016).

Refugee Core Stressors

Trauma
- Social Support
- Environment
- Emotional Regulation

Acculturation
- Family Relationships
- Language Learning
- Cultural Learning

Isolation
- Discrimination
- Loneliness
- Alienation

Resettlement
- Basic needs
- Financial
- Healthcare
- Legal

(SAMHSA, 2014)

Legal and Policy Framework

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**, a legally-binding international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child, regardless of their race, religion or abilities**.**

- Three big important categories most relevant to **child protection** and **School Psychology** (Fiorvanti & Brassard, 2014):
  - Freedom from all forms of **violence** (Article 19)
  - Right to **education** (Article 29)
  - Right **to be heard** and **participate** (Article 12)

Refugee crisis in Greece

- The period **2015-2016**, more than **1 million** refugees and migrants passed from Greece (ECHO, July 2017). Most of them were from **Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran** and **Pakistan**, and **62%** of whom were **women and children.**

- **The EU-Turkey refugee agreement (March 2016)**: Around 60.000 remained in Greece, including 23.000 children (UNHCR, 2016).

Increasing numbers of refugees and migrants take their chances aboard unseaworthy boats and dinghies in a desperate bid to reach Europe. The vast majority of those attempting this dangerous crossing are in need of international protection, fleeing war, violence and persecution in their country of origin. Every year these movements continue to exact a devastating toll on human life.

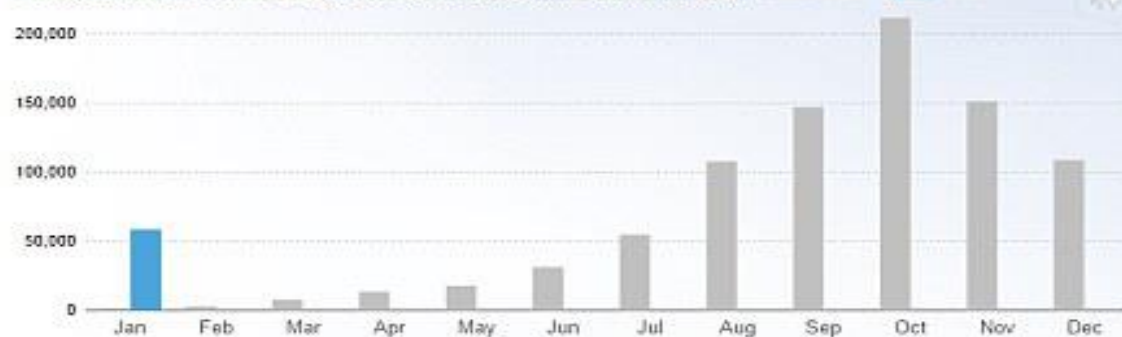**58,547** arrivals by sea in 2016

856,723 arrivals by sea in 2015

91% of arrivals come from the world's top 10 refugee-producing countries
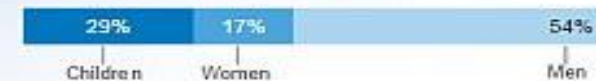
Top-10 nationalities of Mediterranean sea arrivals

Top-10 nationalities represent **100%** of the sea arrivals
based on arrivals since 1 Jan 2015

Nationality	Percentage
Syrian Arab Republic	55%
Afghanistan	25%
Iraq	11%
Pakistan	3%
Somalia	0%
Others	6%

BULGARIA

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

■ Idomeni

⊙ Kavala

◉ Thessaloniki

ALBANIA

ITALY

GREECE

Ionian Sea

Aegean Sea

◉ Izmir

TURKEY

✪ Istanbul

○ Sea arrivals in 2016

→ Main routes through the Mediterranean

✪ Athens

◉ Bodrum

Sea of Crete

Comparison of monthly Mediterranean sea arrivals ▢ 2015 ▢ 2016

200,000

150,000

100,000

50,000

0

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Demographics based on arrivals since 1 Jan 2015

29%	17%	54%
Children	Women	Men

*Serbia (AND KOSOVO): S/RES/1244 (1999)

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
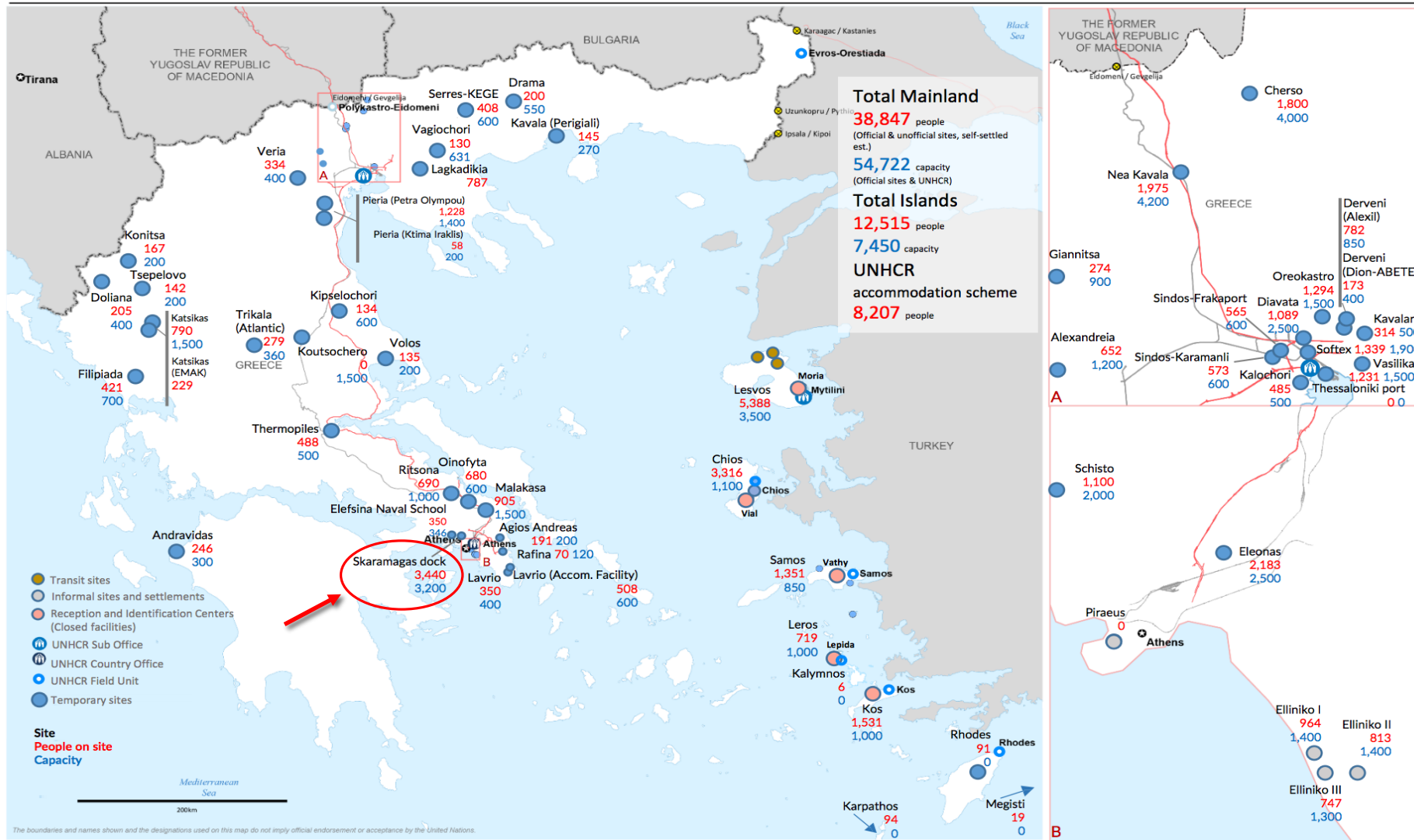
☐ Click here to view sources and disclaimer

© UNHCR

Europe Refugee Emergency

Daily map indicating capacity and occupancy (Governmental figures)

As of 05 September 2016 08:00 a.m. EET

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

BULGARIA

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Tirana

ALBANIA

GREECE

TURKEY

Black Sea

Karaagac / Kastanies
Evros-Orestiada
Uzunkopru / Pythio
Ipsala / Kipoi

Polykastro-Eidomeni
Eidomeni / Gevgelija

Serres-KEGE
408
600

Drama
200
550

Kavala (Perigiali)
145
270

Vagiochori
130
631

Lagkadikia
787

Veria
334
400

Pieria (Petra Olympou)
1,228
1,400

Pieria (Ktima Iraklis)
58
200

Konitsa
167
200

Tsepelovo
142
200

Doliana
205
400

Katsikas
790
1,500

Katsikas (EMAK)
229

Kipselochori
134
600

Trikala (Atlantic)
279
360

Koutsochero
0
1,500

Volos
135
200

Filipiada
421
700

Thermopiles
488
500

Ritsona
690
1,000

Oinofyta
680
600

Malakasa
905
1,500

Elefsina Naval School
350

Athens
346

Andravidas
246
300

Skaramagas dock
3,440
3,200

Agios Andreas
191 200

Rafina 70 120

Lavrio
350
400

Lavrio (Accom. Facility)
508
600

Total Mainland

38,847 people
(Official & unofficial sites, self-settled est.)

54,722 capacity
(Official sites & UNHCR)

Total Islands

12,515 people

7,450 capacity

UNHCR accommodation scheme

8,207 people

Lesvos
5,388
3,500
Moria
Mytilini

Chios
3,316
1,100
Chios
Vial

Samos
1,351
850
Vathy
Samos

Leros
719
1,000
Lepida

Kalymnos
6
0

Kos
1,531
1,000
Kos

Rhodes
91
0
Rhodes

Karpathos
94
0

Megisti
19
0

Legend

- Transit sites
- Informal sites and settlements
- Reception and Identification Centers (Closed facilities)
- UNHCR Sub Office
- UNHCR Country Office
- UNHCR Field Unit
- Temporary sites

Site
People on site
Capacity

Mediterranean Sea

200km

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Inset A

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Eidomeni / Gevgelija

GREECE

Cherso
1,800
4,000

Nea Kavala
1,975
4,200

Giannitsa
274
900

Alexandreia
652
1,200

Sindos-Frakaport
565
600

Sindos-Karamanli
573
600

Oreokastro
1,294
1,500

Diavata
1,089
2,500

Derveni (Alexil)
782
850

Derveni (Dion-ABETE)
173
400

Kavalari
314 500

Softex 1,339 1,900

Kalochori
485
500

Vasilika
1,231 1,500

Thessaloniki port
0 0

Inset B

Schisto
1,100
2,000

Eleonas
2,183
2,500

Piraeus
0

Athens

Elliniko I
964
1,400

Elliniko II
813
1,400

Elliniko III
747
1,300

Presence and capacity are based on Governmental figures from the Coordination Centre for the Management of the Refugee Crisis, as of 05/09/2016 08:00 a.m. Eastern European Time. Online map with additional information: http://www.unhcr.gr/sites

Funded by European Union Humanitarian Aid

The British Council/ UNICEF Learning Centre

❑Developed by the **British Council** in partnership with **UNICEF** and funded through the **European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)**
- (November 2016 – May 2018)

❑**Non-Formal Educational Project** with the aim to provide access to education and psychosocial support to adolescent refugees (12-17 years old) at the Skaramagas Refugee Accommodation Centre.

➢ **School readiness:** Offer the opportunity to develop **essential life skills** that help them **adjust** in their newly developed life conditions and facilitate their **integration** into **Greek/European society** and the **school system.**

Non-formal Education Project & Capacity Building for Teachers: Objectives

a. **English language classes** and **life skills activities** for refugee adolescents

b. **"Living Together" capacity-building training seminars** for primary and secondary formal and non-formal education teachers and trainers

c. **Community/ parental engagement**

d. **Raising awareness**

e. **Sharing best practices** through the publication of a non-formal education toolkit in refugee and migrant response

Skaramagas Refugee Accommodation Centre

Theoretical background

❑The initial design of the project was developed in collaboration with the **Center for Research and Practice of School Psychology (CRPSP)** of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

❑The theoretical background of the project integrated literature on promotion of **social justice, crisis response and safe schools, resilience, trauma-informed practices,** and **positive behavioral interventions** and **supports** (Shriberg & Desai, 2014; Brock et al., 2009; Cowan et al., 2013; Masten, 2016; Doll et al., 2014; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017; SAMHSA, 2014; Chafouleas et al., 2015; Walkley & Cox, 2013).
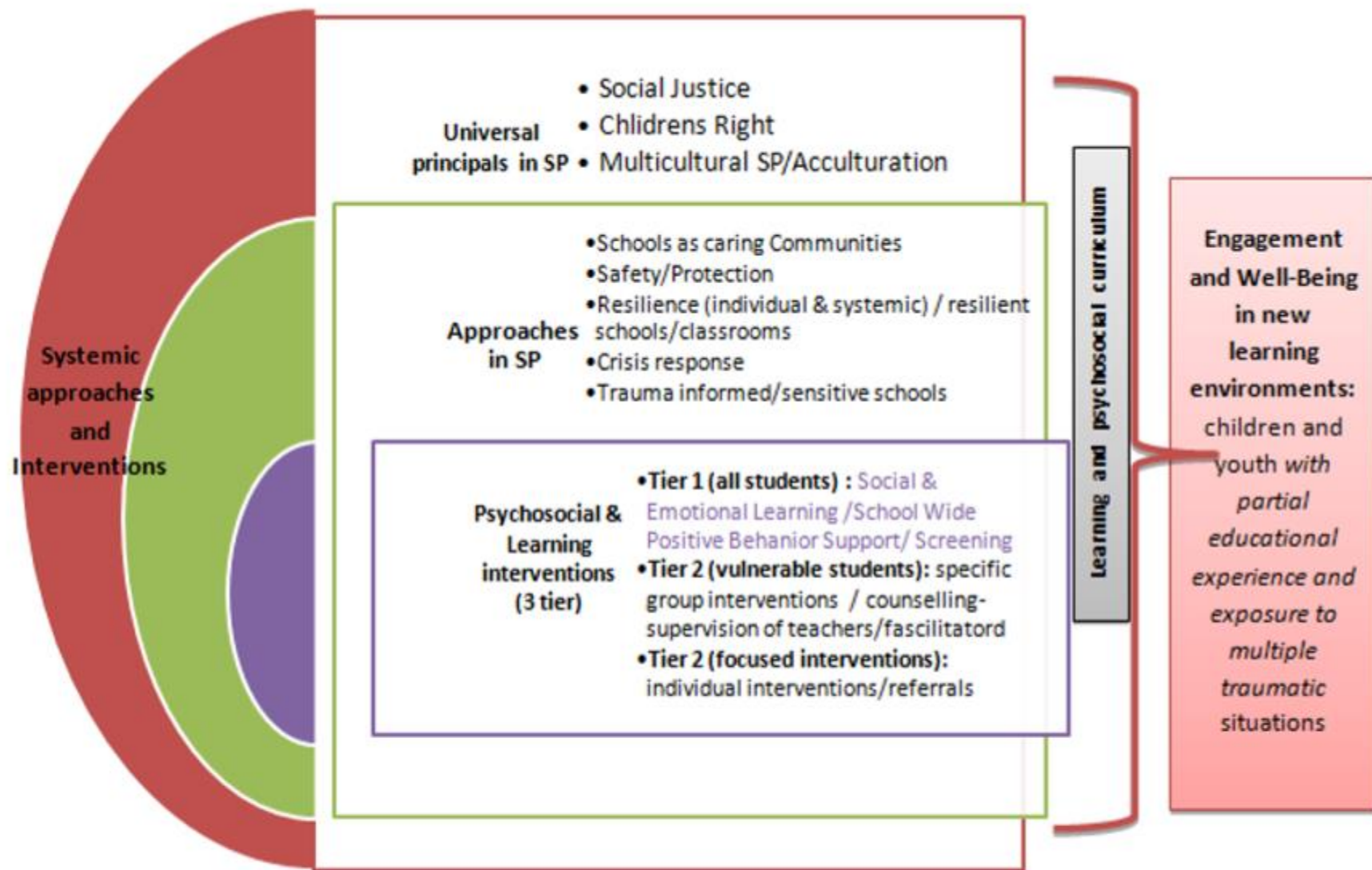
Figure 1. Systemic approaches and interventions for engaging children and youth with partial educational experience and exposure to multiple traumatic situations in new learning environments: the case of refugee children

Program & Activities

English/Greek language

Art

Photography/ Digital Literacy

Physical Education

Drama & Music

STEM

- Each student is assigned a class:
  - **English proficiency (test)**
  - **Age**

- All student attended **2 hours daily**

Non-formal Education Project

Phase 1a: November 2016 – July 2017	Phase 1b: August – September 2017	Phase 2: December 2017 – May 2018
Participants: 298 students		Participants: 100 students

ACTIVITIES

1. English language* **2. Life skills** • Art • Photography • Drama • Physical Education *Mathematics, basic reading and writing skills	**1. English language** **2. Life skills** • Drama • Music • Digital literacy	**1. English language** **2. Life skills** • Music • Art/Photography **3. Learning support** • Greek language • STEM

Skaramagas Learning Centre Venue

8-10 Containers

- 6-8 classrooms
- 1 teachers' office
- 1 office
- Fence and gate

Program personnel

➤ 3-4 English language teachers

➤ 2 Greek language teachers

➤ Life skills facilitators (drama, art, music, photography & physical education)

➤ Cultural mediators

➤ Camp coordinator

➤ School psychologist/ Child protection focal point

➤ Cleaner/ Doorman

➤ Administrative personnel

The staff members came from Greece, UK, Italia, Ireland, Colombia, Tunisia, Algeria & Iraq.

Phase 1a: Learning Centre's Students by Age
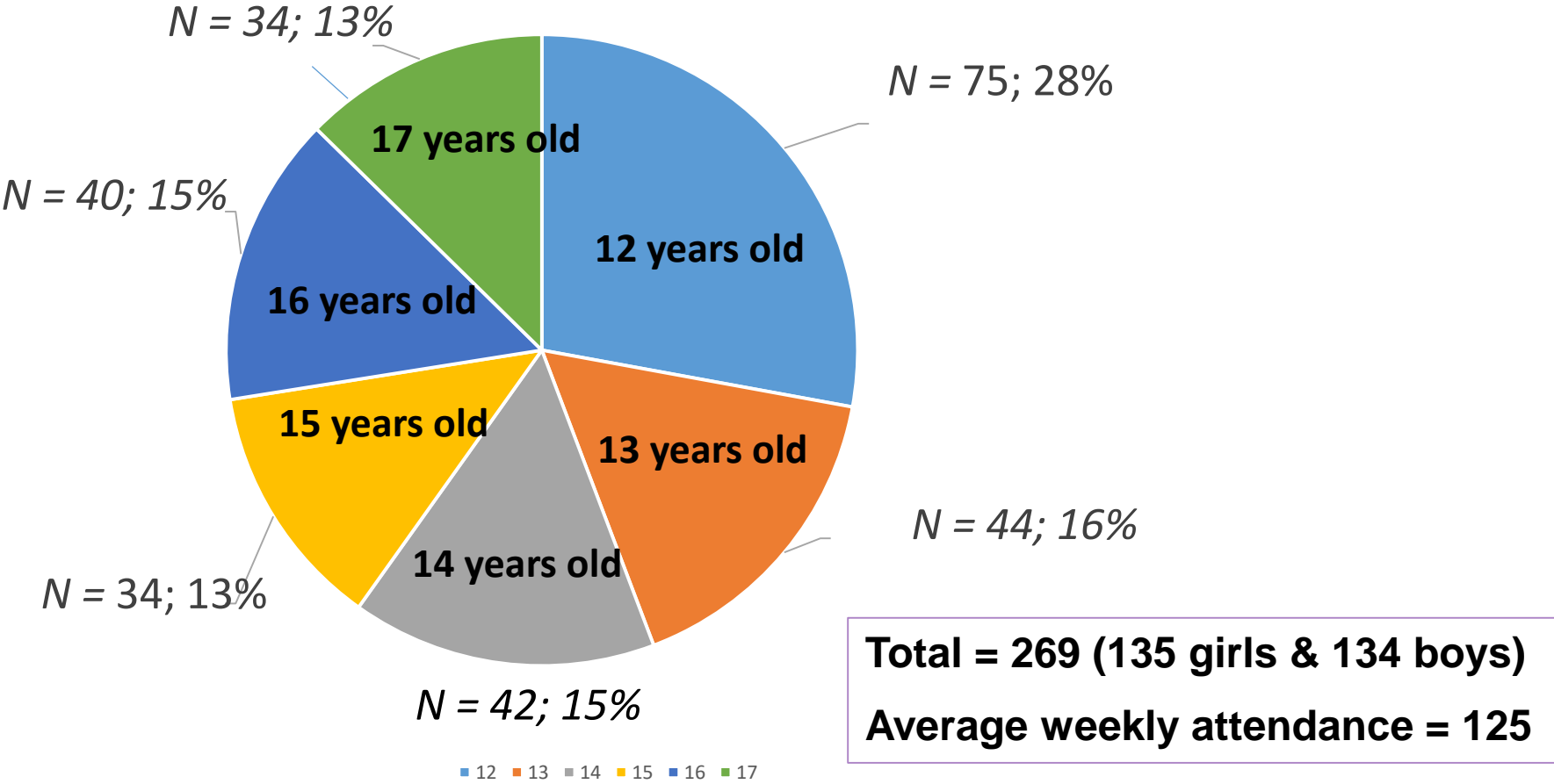
Phase 1a: Learning Centre's students by…
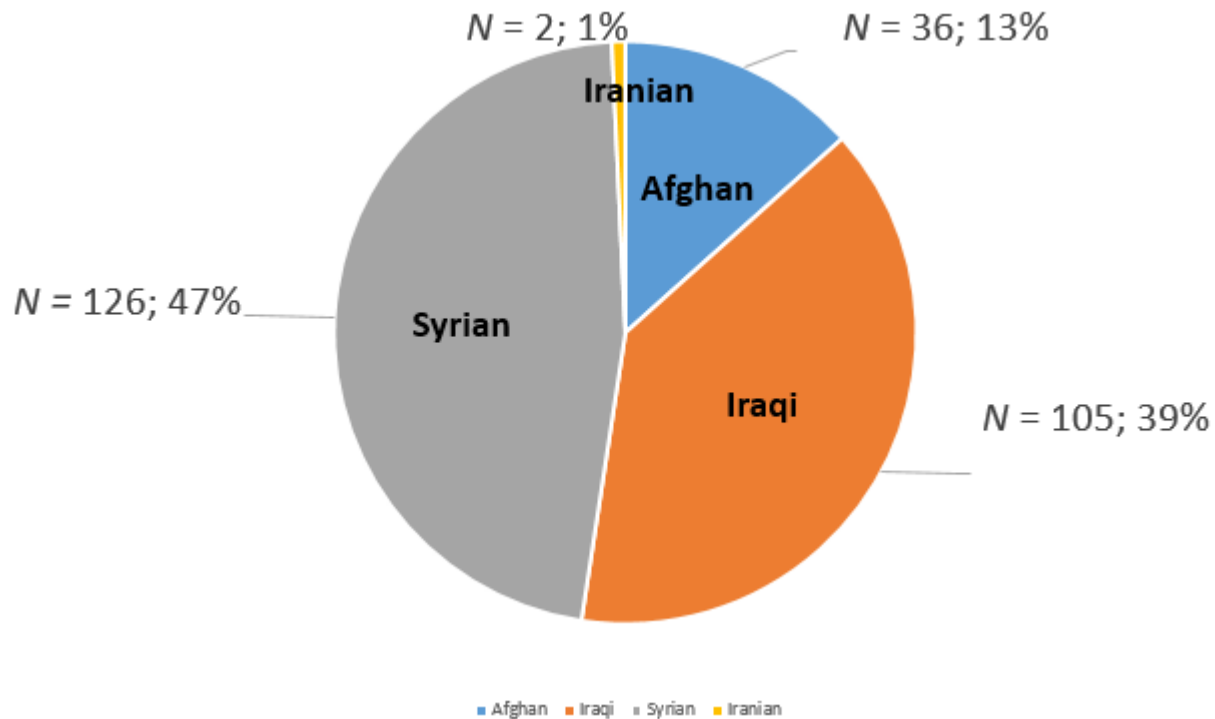
Nationality

Mother Tongue
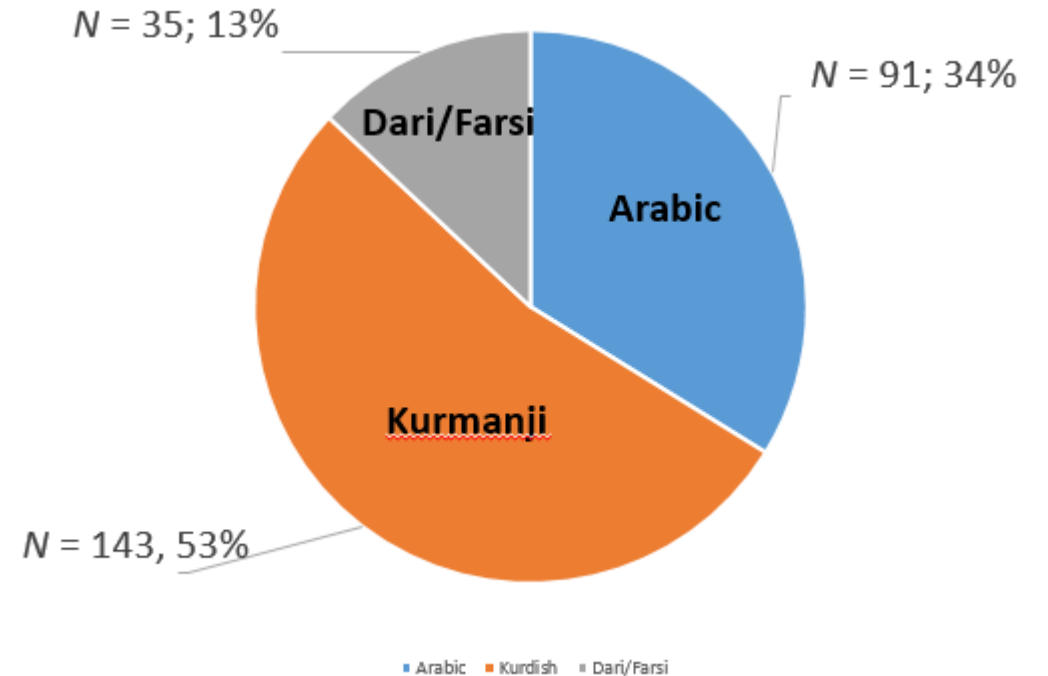
Phase 2: Learning Centre's Students by Age

Phase 2: Learning Centre's students by…

Nationality

N = 1; 1% — Morocco
N = 23; 23% — Syrian
N = 19; 19% — Afghan
N = 57; 57% — Iraqi

■ Afghan ■ Iraqi ■ Syrian ■ Marocco

Mother Tongue

N = 19; 19% — Sorani
N = 20; 20% — Arabic
N = 19; 19% — Dari/Farsi
N = 42, 42% — Kurmanji

■ Arabic ■ Kurdish ■ Dari/Farsi ■ Sorani
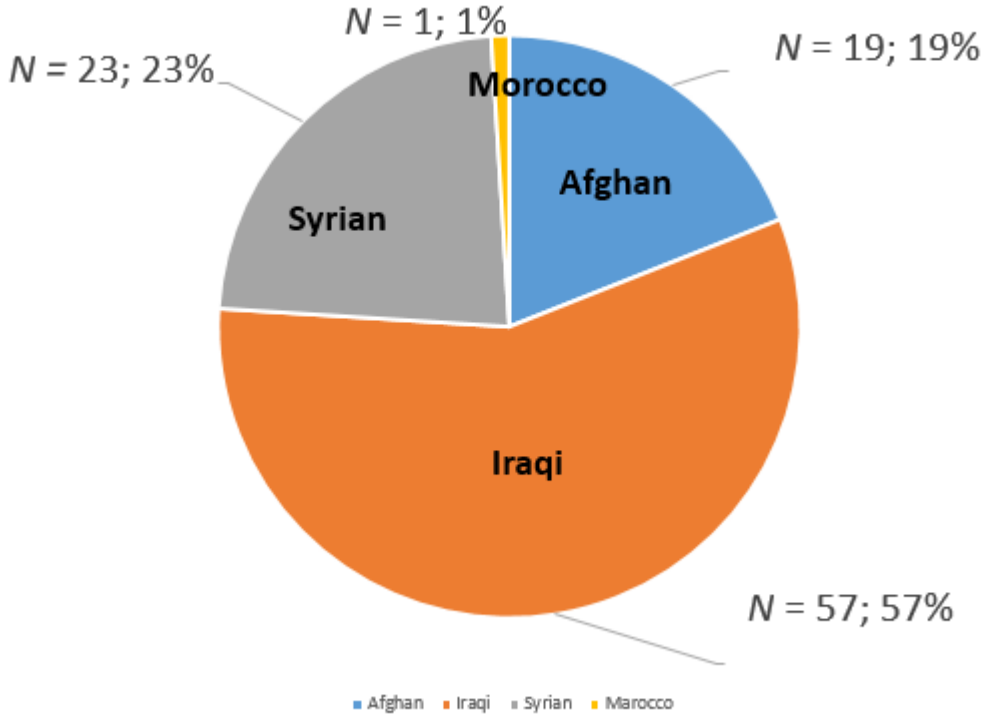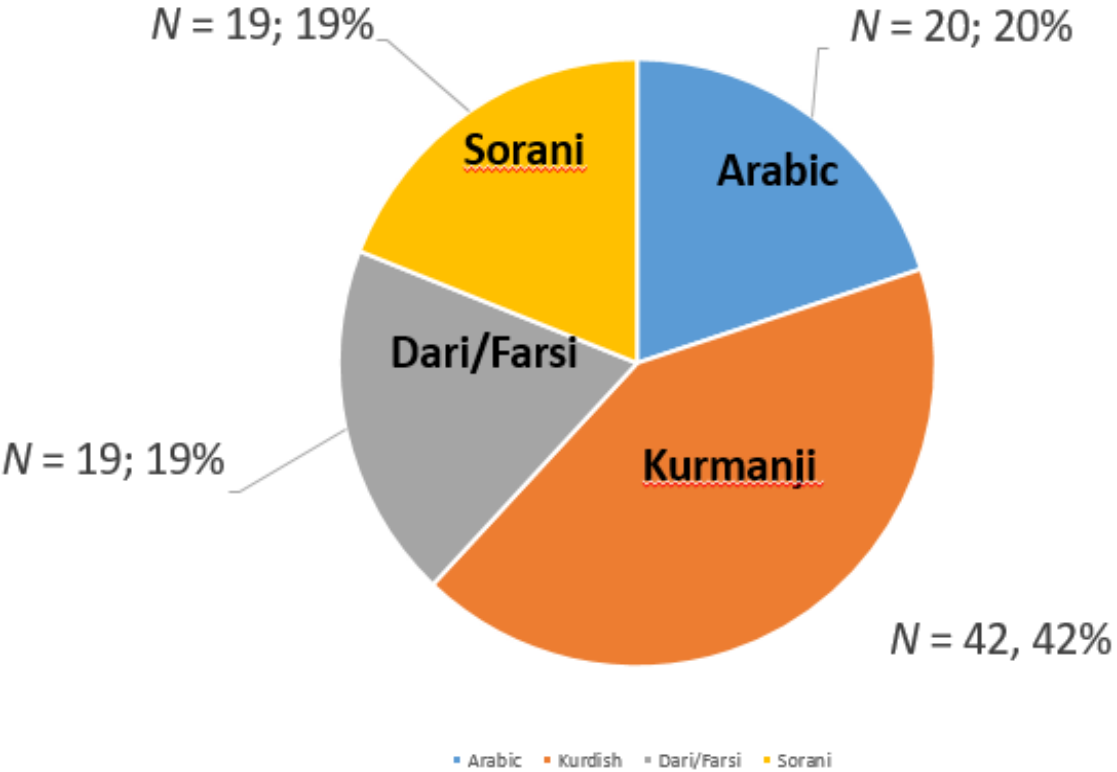
Challenges in the education and psychosocial adjustment of refugee students

- ❑ Previous educational experiences

- ❑ Cultural and language differences

- ❑ Social-emotional blocks to learning

- ❑ The role of parents

- ❑ Transition nature of the refugee camp

- ❑ Integration to the public school system

Multi-tier System of Supports: Psychosocial & Learning Interventions
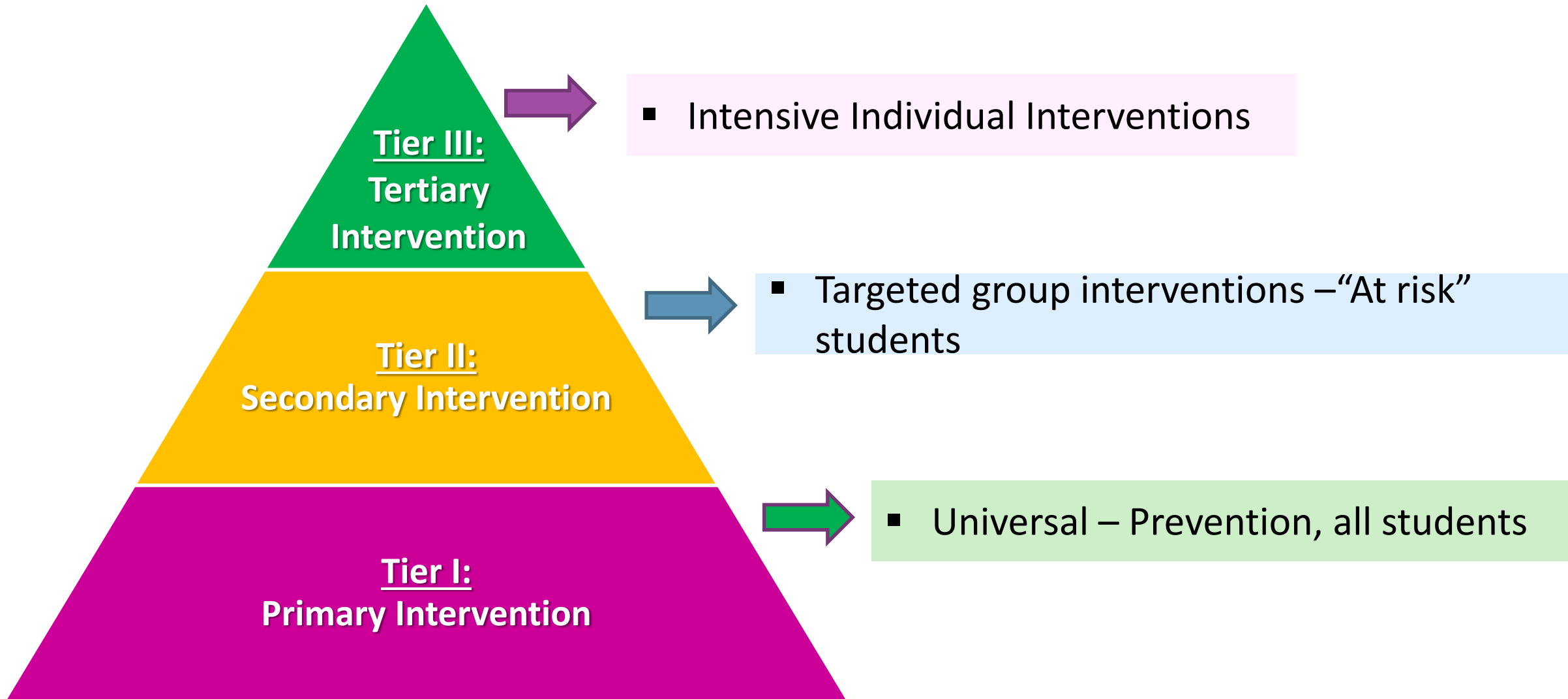
Tier 1: Primary Intervention (Prevention)
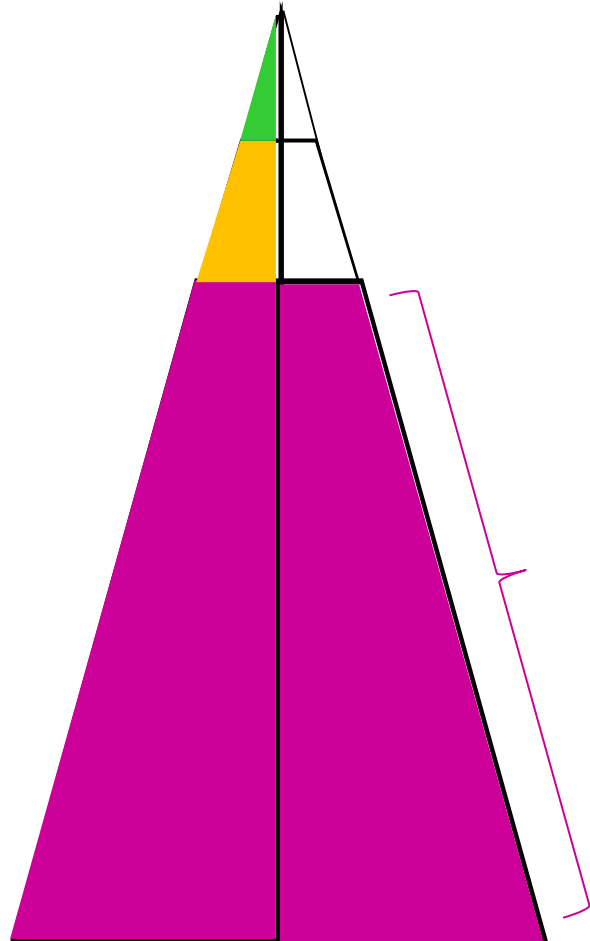
- **Physical and emotional safety**

- **Building positive relationships & promoting social-emotional learning**

- **Development of curriculum & academic interventions**

- **Child protection**

- **Community engagement & collaboration**

- **Cultural awareness**

Physical and emotional safety

- Classrooms **predictable** and **welcoming** (structure, rules, routines, regular activities, e.g., good morning song)

- **School-wide positive behavior support:**
  - **Establishing** and **teaching clear behavioral expectations** (e.g., daily attendance and on time arrival)
  - **Acknowledging "good" behavior**
  - **Consequence-level system**
  - **Data system** (e.g., incident log)

Physical and emotional safety (cont.)

- **Preparation for changes in the routines** – can trigger physical, emotional and behavioral reactions (e.g., teacher absence)

- **Supervision, immediate intervention & report** of conflicts and bullying incidents (e.g. yard duty)

- LC as a **"safe learning environment"**

Consistency & daily strengthening of classroom rules
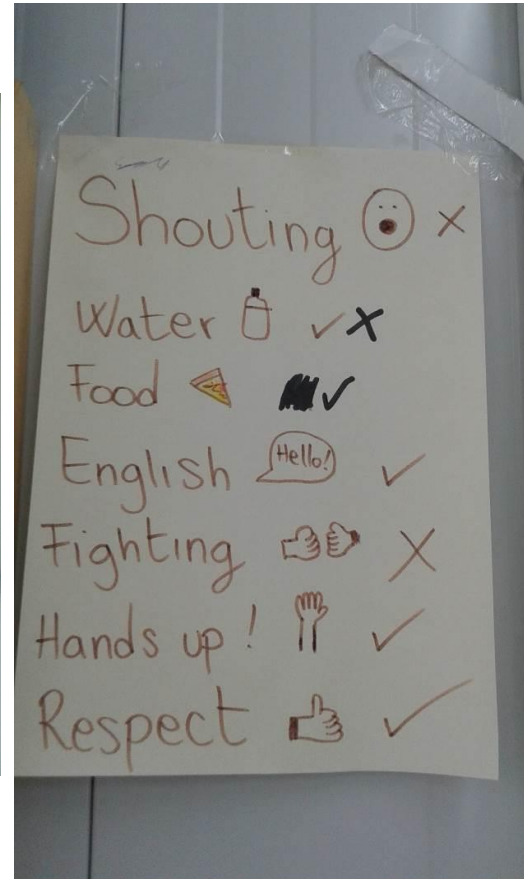
Building positive relationships

- Provide students with a **trusting adult relationship:** Being **available** and **accessible** to the students -> *Connections*

- **Opportunities** for collaboration: Work in **pairs, groups** (e.g., clear roles)

- **Children** the right to **express** themselves, e.g., choices to activities

- Gradual assignment of **responsibilities**

- Avoiding **favoritism**

- **Linguistic & non-linguistic** communication (eye contact)

- **Time in the class**, not out of class (rejection)

- **Buddies** for new students

Artworks of students

13 years old

14-15 years old

16-17 years old

Promoting social-emotional skills

- **Feelings vocabulary:** Identifying and expressing feelings

- **Self-control**, anger, frustration

- **Friendship skills**

- **Collaboration & sharing**

- **Empathy**

- **Conflict resolution**

- **Goal setting**

Development of curriculum & academic interventions

❑ **Development of an integrated curriculum:** English & life skills
▪ Communication, collaboration, safety, positive behavior, social-emotional skills, cultural diversity & human rights

❑**Learning English: Inquiry-based learning method through portfolio**
▪ Globally significant yet locally applicable core values, skills & knowledge (e.g., family, friends, colors, animals, numbers)

❑ **Strength–based approach & differentiation of instruction** (individual aims)
▪ Self-assessment – individual work, student reflection

❑ **Know how to learn:** Demo notebooks – to understand instructions

Development of curriculum & academic interventions (cont.)

❑ **Continuous adaptation of material and activities**
- ▪ Different modalities (e.g., visual, kinesthetic, tactile)
- ▪ Clear instructions, simple language, short sentences

❑ **Structure in learning:**
- ▪ <u>Switching</u> cognitively demanding activities with less demanding
- ▪ <u>Time management:</u> Structure everyday experiences to have distinct phases of activities

❑ **Content-based instruction:** Mathematics, Geography, Science

Celebrating our achievements

Child protection

- **School psychologist/ child protection focal point**

- **Two axis of intervention:**

A. **PREVENTATIVE**
  - **Development and monitoring Child Protection Safe Plan and Risk Assessment** (e.g., training teachers/staff, posters for cameras/mobiles, site supervision, field trips)
  - **Weekly Protection Meeting in the camp** (Actors' Meeting, Community Engagement Meeting)
  - **Enrolment of students** (child protection and rights)

B. **RESPONSIVE**
  - Incident reports & British Council CP reporting system
  - Skaramagas referral pathway

Community engagement & collaboration

- **Outreach** towards families

- **Parental engagement**
  - Parents-teachers' meetings
  - Events

- **Connecting families** with other available resources

- **Collaboration** with other organizations in the camp
(e.g., International Rescue Committee, Red Cross, Danish Refugee Council,
Save the Children, Action Aid, Drop in the Ocean)

Parents-Teachers Meeting & Family Day

Invitation for 12-15 years old

Invitation for 16-17 years old

Culture awareness

- **Cultural competence** in communication, material and lessons (e.g., eye contact)

- Collaborating with the **cultural mediators** (vs interpreters)

- **Collaboration with Hope School** – classes in first language (e.g., Arabic)

- **Cultural empowerment:** Recognize and celebrate students' culture

Tier 2: Secondary Intervention
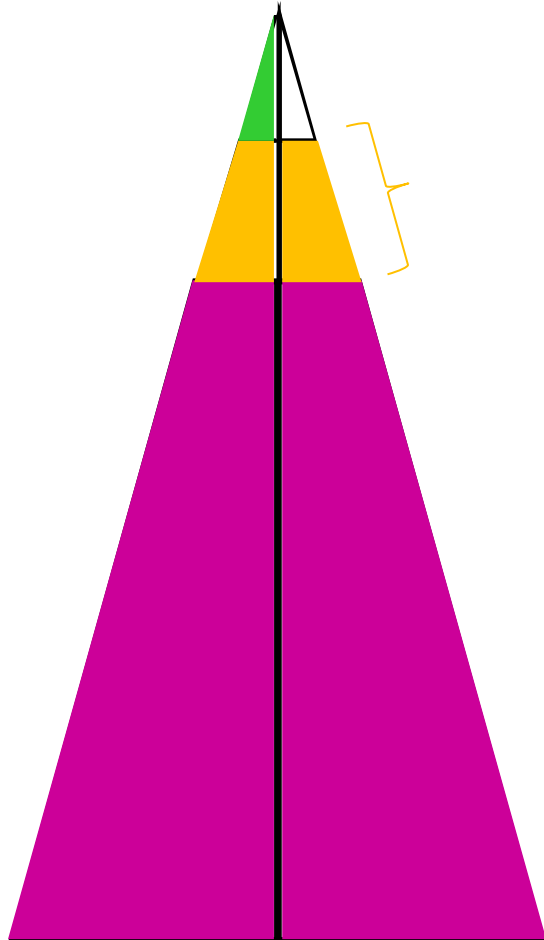
- **Classroom/ group interventions: Consultation with school psychologist**
  - **Literacy class:**
    - Building reading and writing skills starting with controlled handwriting and practice, recognition of letter, words and sentences
    - Social context- function in society, e.g., how to fill a form, how to read medicine labels, etc.
  - **Social-emotional interventions, classroom management**

- **Collaboration with other organizations**
  - Ministry of Education, public schools
  - Humanitarian organizations (e.g., Greek and Spanish Red-Cross)

Tier 3: Tertiary Intervention
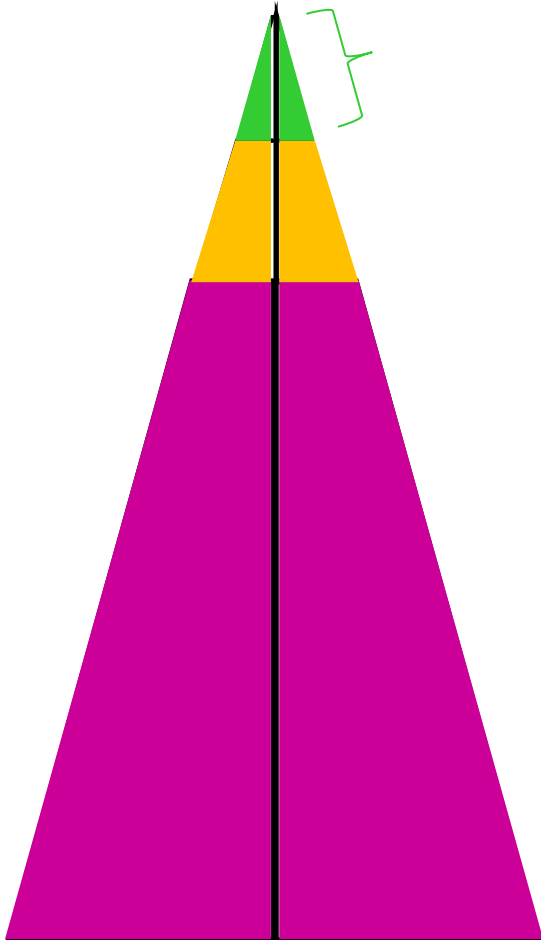
- **Individual sessions with students, parents**

- **Individualized intervention plan**

- **Referral** – Providing access to mental health supports as needed

- **Supporting the staff – burnout** (external support)

Evaluation

A. **Process** and **outcome evaluation** of program effectiveness (e.g., progress monitoring)

B. **Quantitative methods** (e.g., teacher questionnaires, English placement tests)

C. **Qualitative methods** (e.g., focus group)

Phase 1: Quantitative methods

❑ **Instruments**

▪ Wellbeing of the staff -> **Perceived Stress Scale** (Cohen et al., 1983)

▪ Adolescents' school adaptation and psychosocial skills -> **Questionnaire** developed by the CRPSP of the University of Athens

▪ School climate -> **California School Staff Survey** (2016)

➤ The information gathered was all of a **self-report** nature

❑ **Analysis:**

▪ **Contextual information** from the questionnaires was extracted (qualitative and quantitative data):

➤ Collaboration, educational and socio-emotional needs, cultural issues, student engagement, difficulties and copying, goal setting, cooperation
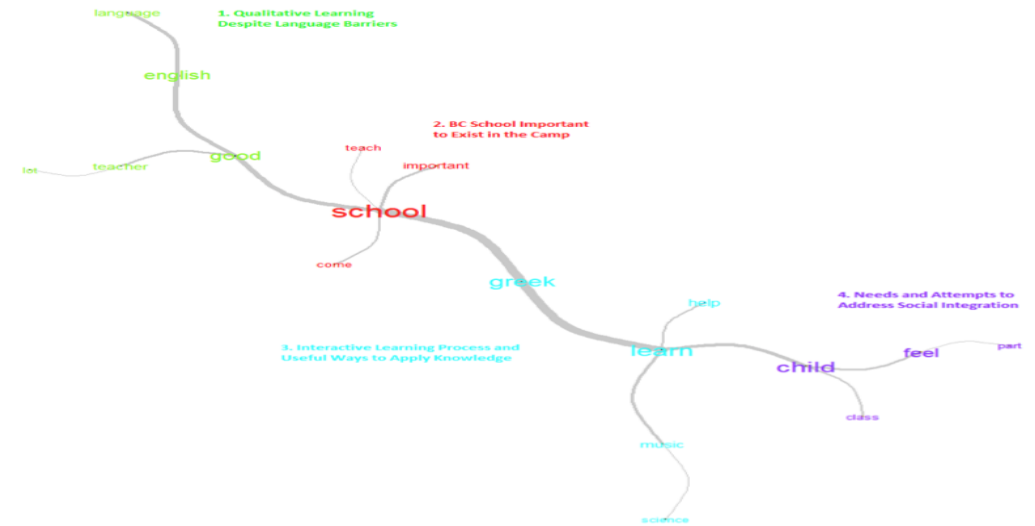
Phase 2: Qualitative methods

▪ **Focus groups**
  a. Parents
  b. Teachers
  c. Students

▪ **Analysis**
  • Word networks based on similarities - used Iramuteq (Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires) (Ratinaud & Dejean, 2009)

Lessons Learned

✓**Stability** and **regularity** in students' lives (18 continuous implementation)

✓**Resilience**
- Learning a new language (Language for resilience)
- Teachers-students' relationships (the cornerstone of the learning centre)

✓**Theoretical framework** and **evaluation**
- Prevention and development of interventions

✓**Cultural sensitivity** and **competence**
- Avoiding clinical symptoms from a Western perspective -> psychopathology

Lessons Learned (cont.)

✓**Need for flexibility**

  ▪ Continuous evaluation & ready to change goals, policies and procedures, curriculum

✓ **Assessment**

  ▪ <u>Tools</u> that are <u>sensitive</u> in monitoring change & inform practice

✓ **Importance of team building** and **continuous training for staff**

  ▪ Interdisciplinary approach

Current needs of refugee and migrant students

- **Enrolment** and **full inclusion** in the Greek public schools and society

- **Supporting students** to stay at school/ avoid drop-outs

- Building **academic language** and **content** (e.g., training of teachers)

- **Improving the socio-economic conditions of** refuge and migrant children

- **Raising awareness** in the school community (teachers, parents, students) -> Promoting **positive school climate**

Thank you!