


**Ensuring the right to education  
for refugee children in Greece:  
Challenges & accomplishments of an emergency  
action plan for the education of refugee children**


**Dr. Ira – Iliana Papadopoulou**

*Working Group on the Management, Coordination & Monitoring of the  
Refugee Education*

*Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, Greece*



HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
Ministry of Education,  
Research and Religious Affairs



Since the beginning of  
2015,  
with the war raging in  
Syria for over four years,  
more than **one million**  
refugees crossed the  
Mediterranean Sea to  
reach the European  
shores



# Wrecks at the Aegean islands October 2015 - March 2016



Photos: Reuters / Yannis Behrakis



Photos: Reuters / Yannis Behrakis

**Scientific Committee to assist the work of the Committee of  
Support of Refugee Children**



**Educational actions for refugee children**

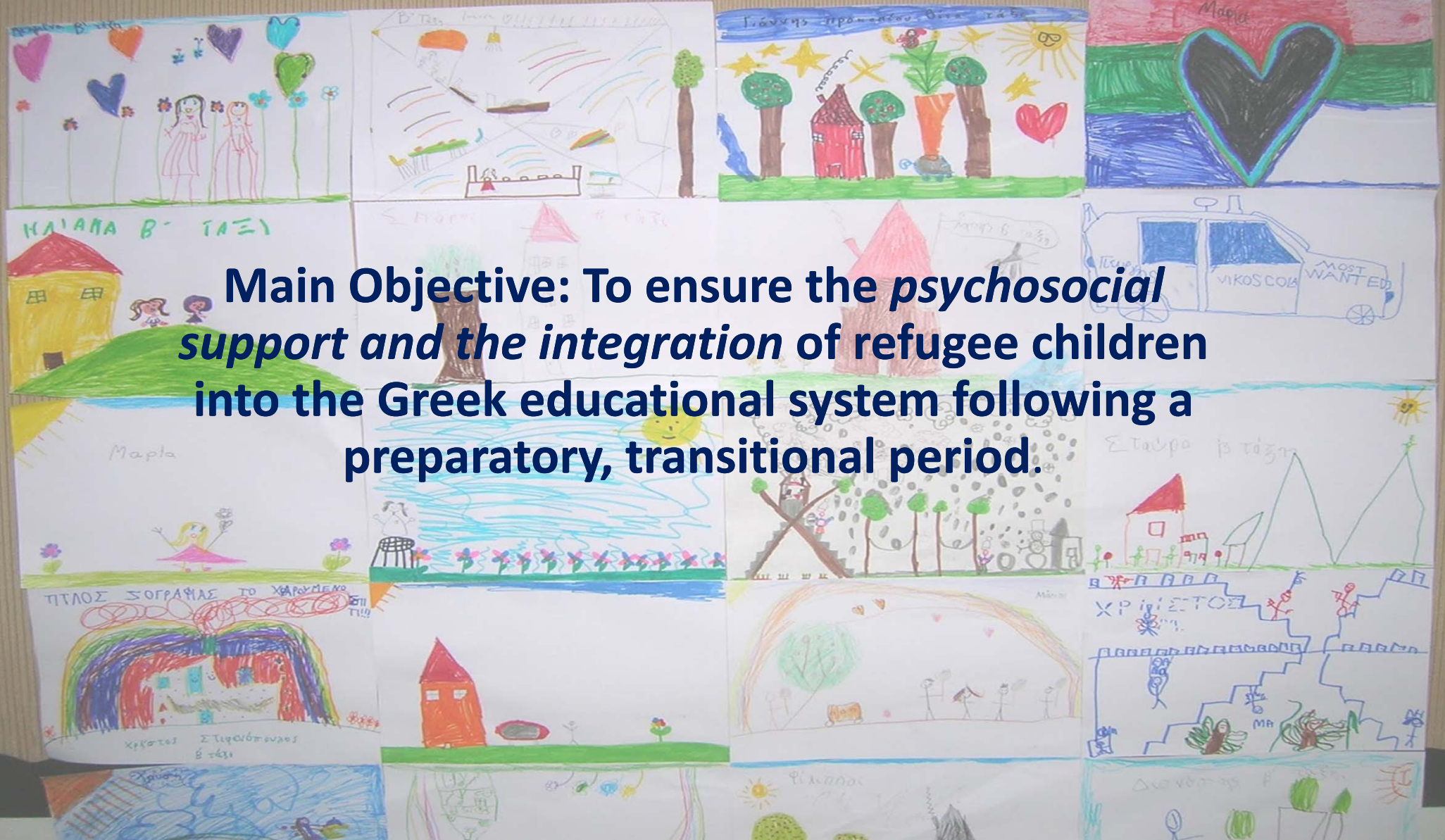
Athens  
June 2016

## The scientific committee for the support of the refugees children

-Volunteer academic personnel to assist the Ministry of Education-

1. Record the educational activities within camps
2. Evaluate the situation
3. Prepare a full educational plan for school year 2016-2017

**Main Objective: To ensure the *psychosocial support and the integration* of refugee children into the Greek educational system following a preparatory, transitional period.**



A group of children in winter coats walking on a paved surface, likely a schoolyard or street. The children are wearing colorful jackets in shades of blue, pink, purple, and red. They are walking away from the camera, and their long shadows are cast on the ground. The background shows a fence and some buildings.

Refugee children in most cases  
have remained *outside the school for several years.*

A small number of children live with their families in apartments & hotels.

The largest number of refugees remain in **Accommodation Centers** and for most the prospect of *relocation to another country* is their basic aspiration and expectation

The *specific learning needs* of refugee children served as a crucial element for the design of the Ministry's education plan.

The specific plan concerns a **preparatory, transitional period** and it is differentiated according to the age groups of the children



For the implementation of this Education Plan  
***Reception School Annexes for Refugee Education*** are being established, modulating a flexible institutional and didactic intervention scheme into the Greek Educational System.



**Reception School Annexes function in school districts  
which have refugee Accommodation Centers  
and are created within:**





Primary schools for children  
aged 6 to 12 years

Secondary schools for children  
12 to 15 years-old



Children aged 4-6 years will remain close to their parents and will attend preschool educational activities in *kindergartens* the Greek Ministry will establish *within the Centers*

school year  
2016 - 2017



**3.240**

migrant & refugee children were transferred to and from Greek public schools

**2.857**

school kits with pens, pencils, notebooks, etc were distributed to primary school kids



**73** school buses

**100** bus escorts

**32** accommodation centers spread across mainland Greece

The kids were transferred on a daily basis to

**63** primary schools

**30** secondary schools



110 Reception School Annexes for Refugee Education were established for:

34 Accommodation Centers around Greece -covering areas from Attica and Peloponnese to Epirus and Macedonia-

More than 3.000 students

Source: I.O.M / Greece

# Refugee Education Coordinators (R.E.C.)



3 Ministries collaborated for the opening of the Reception School Annexes :

**-Ministry of Health**

**-Ministry of Migration Policy**

**-The Ministry of Education**



Contributions by **International Organizations** (such as the International Organization of Migration and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) as well as **NGOs and volunteers.**

# Challenges :

- The intense mobility of the refugee population and the **frequent reallocation** to various Refugee Accommodation Centers.
- The **difficulty of mapping** and covering all children housed in flats and hotels under various housing programs.
- The significant **delay of kindergartens operation** due to technical difficulties inside the Accommodation Centers.
- Difficulty to deal with **refugees over 15 years old** who lack evidence of previous school certificate and cannot be enrolled at high schools.
- Finally, Parents who refused to allow their children to be taught at the same schools with refugees.



The first Reception Annexes opened  
October 10th 2016





Thank you