Project Review

Non-formal Education Activities for Skaramagas Refugee Camp in Greece

by Marie Delaney,
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The number of children moving across international borders – more and more of them on their own – is skyrocketing. An estimated 30 million children are on the move in the world today. In Europe alone, the number of children seeking asylum multiplied almost 10-fold between 2008 and 2016, while the share of children among asylum seekers grew from one in five to one in three.

Greece, as one of the major entry points into Europe for refugees and migrants, has received over a million individuals since January 2015, 37% of them children. As of 30 November 2017, there remain approximately 60,000 refugees and migrants in the country, out of which an estimated 20,000 are children, with approximately 3,300 unaccompanied children. The main drivers for many refugees and migrants include seeking safety and access to education as well as the fear of grave violations against children committed in these three conflict-affected countries. Some of these children have missed a few years of schooling due to displacement, while others have never been to school and are illiterate in their own mother tongue.

These children come from diverse backgrounds and will follow different paths to their respective futures. Some refugee and migrant children have already moved on, within the European Union’s relocation scheme, while others stay in the country. Even among those children seeking asylum in Greece, many continue to be on the move – from the islands to the mainland or from camps to apartments. In Skaramagas, for example, there are new arrivals almost on a daily basis.

Whether they are staying in Greece or are moving to other European countries, every child needs education. It is essential that children return to school – not only to learn a language, but to build the life skills necessary to carry on with their lives. Education is both a fundamental right and a life-saving intervention for these children.

In order to provide a pathway to education for such a diverse group of children, in December 2016, UNICEF and British Council started a non-formal education project in Skaramagas camp. The project has been instrumental in getting refugee and migrant children back in education and the teachers have faced both challenges and opportunities.

The experience of this project could provide important lessons not only for the future programming in Skaramagas, but also for all education providers working in the same context.

Lucio Melandri
Country Coordinator
Refugee and Migrant Response in Greece
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

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[1] Official government figures estimate close to 60,000, however UNHCR estimates closer to 46,000 in the country as of September 2017.

[2] Countries listed under UN Security Council Resolution 1612. Violations committed include killing and maiming, child recruitment, attacks on schools and hospitals, denial of humanitarian access, sexual violence, and abduction.
The non-formal education project for Skaramagas Refugee Camp has clearly drawn on the experience and skills of many people and all those involved, including the teachers, trainers, psychologists, child protection experts and cultural mediators have tackled a challenging task in a complex environment. The programme they have built together has helped to change the lives of a number of children by enabling them to learn about tolerance and understanding of each other’s cultures while at the same time offering them an opportunity to acquire or improve skills, in English and digital literacy and in other areas, and to use their skills to live a better quality of life and accomplish their ambitions.

The Review outlines the major educational outcomes of the project and highlights how the project serves as a successful model in the creation of resilient learning environments for refugee education. So in that way the project goes much further than its immediate aims, meaning that how it serves as best practice for future similar projects is a core consideration. That is potentially the longer term value of the project as the aim is must be to realise its potential to give increased support to a greater number of refugees both in Greece and beyond Greece.

The Review links the Skaramagas project with the Language for Resilience report (published by the British Council in 2016) which deals with the role of language in enhancing the resilience of Syrian refugees and host communities. Indeed the language learning element of the project reflects a key finding of that report in that the aim has been to promote community resilience by bringing people from different communities together to interact with each other, to learn more about each other and to work together on equal terms. The British Council research also shows evidence that quality language learning can address the psycho-social needs that block the reintegration into formal schooling of children traumatised by displacement. Getting children back in education has been central to the Skaramagas project.

Ever since the British Council was established in 1934 its core mission has been promoting friendly knowledge and understanding between the UK and wider world. With our education partners globally, we are committed to enhancing the knowledge, skills and intercultural understanding of young people in schools, colleges and universities and to raise standards in an increasingly globalised education context. We see that as being at the heart of cultural relations. It is due to the knowledge and experience we have acquired in specific sectors such as the international refugee response, in the context of our work in cultural relations in different parts of the world, that we have had the opportunity to partner with UNICEF. Our approach is to build trust and long term relationships and we are optimistic that the programme in Greece has made a real difference in securing trust for the future benefit of many young people who deserve new opportunities in life.

Tony Buckby
British Council, Country Director
INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM OF THE REPORT
This analytical review was commissioned by the British Council Greece and has been prepared by Marie Delaney, Educational Consultant from the Learning Harbour, Cork. The aim of the document is to describe and highlight the good practice, lessons learned and the way forward for the “Non-formal Education Activities for Skaramagas Refugee Camp” project, which was delivered in 2016-2017 by the British Council Greece and funded by UNICEF through DfID and ECHO. This project takes place in a purpose-built Learning Centre in the Skaramagas Camp, catering for students from 12-17 years of age, and offers a structured curriculum of English Language classes and Life Skills classes in English. This overview also looks at the key lessons learned on this project with regard to the organization and provision of education for refugee and migrant children with complex and diverse education and language needs, particularly those who have been out of school for some time due to displacement and conflict. In addition, the present overview aims to highlight good practices and lessons learned for Greece, and more broadly for the British Council and UNICEF to apply in other emergency contexts.

1.2 METHODOLOGY
The present project review has been compiled by Marie Delaney through a desk-based review of documentation on the project and the current refugee situation in Greece and a field visit of 5 days to the Skaramagas camp. The documents reviewed were:
- Three mid-term reports on the operation and progress of the Learning Center
- All data relevant to the site: population and number of people
- UNICEF’s operational interventions in the Educational Sector around Greece
- Project description and project management plan
- Progress results reports, up to April 2017, on the numbers of students enrolled and attending the Learning Center
- Conceptual framework and Evaluation & Monitoring plan designed by the University of Athens, Department of Psychology
- First Assessment Report, based on research conducted by the Centre for Research and Practice of School Psychology, Department of Psychology, University of Athens.

During the field visit, British Council staff involved in all aspects of the programme were interviewed, lessons across the age groups and curriculum topics were observed, and the general context was discussed with UNICEF’s Refugee and Migrant Response team in Greece (Please see list of interviewees at the end of the document, pg. 40).

1.3 KEY MESSAGES
1. Children who come into a country as refugees from crisis areas are often not in a state of readiness for learning in school. They find it difficult to settle to learn in formal classes and may not have the social and emotional skills to take part in formal education. Education projects for refugee children tend to take place in either non-formal learning environments, where life skills and social and emotional needs are addressed; or in formal host country schools where the focus is on academic learning in a school curriculum. Parallel non-formal systems sometimes lack coherence with government systems and can undermine them.

This project bridges the gap between these two environments. It combines the structure and consistency of a formal school curriculum...
with the flexibility and space to develop the life and learning skills normally provided through a non-formal curriculum. It combines good practice from language programming, education in development contexts and education in emergencies.

2. In formal education, the gap identified with regard to integrating refugee children into the host community education system is usually one of resources and teacher training. The focus of support programmes is therefore, through necessity, on teacher training, curriculum design and building the institutional capacity to cope with the influx of refugees. These types of programmes are of course essential and vital to building the ability of a country’s education system to include as many students as possible in education. These programmes can take a long time to implement, need a large investment in resources and a longer term commitment to inclusion at all levels. This project changes the focus of capacity building to up-skilling the refugee students to cope in their current classes, building their confidence and giving them transferable skills that will enable them, later on, to take part in lessons in another country and language. Thus, the initial focus of this project is on developing the much needed personal resilience to engage in education rather than developing institutional resilience.

3. In line with good practice on inclusion, the project addresses the issue of access and engagement in education by providing children with access to a safe space for learning while working on their skills to be able to engage with the curriculum on offer to them.

4. Young people want to learn English. They see it as an international language that has currency. Learning everything through the medium of English as well as having formal English lessons was a key motivating factor in engaging this age group in formal learning and keeping them engaged over time.

5. The project shows clear links with the Language for Resilience research report published 2016 by the British Council which describes how language learning can enhance the resilience of refugees on a personal and community level.

1.4 SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED

English language learning can be a vehicle for bringing young people from different cultural backgrounds together because it is seen as a motivating factor by young people, regardless of their background.

• An integrated curriculum with a multi-disciplinary approach enhances the learning experience of the students and allows for in-depth work on key life and learning skills
• Life skills can be taught in a foreign language to students of beginner and elementary levels but non-verbal and multi-sensory approaches to teaching have to be used and trainers need support on language delivery from English language teachers
• Learning-to-learn skills and life skills (For example, keeping timetables, following schedules, learning to analyse information, to recognise and manage feelings, to work in teams, to be able to cooperate in a mixed-gender and ethnically mixed classroom) can be learned in the context of a support structure such as the Learning Centre and transferred to other educational settings.
Developers of educational projects for refugee children need to understand the effects of trauma and being out of school on learning and behaviour. Practical activities need to be planned to address this and support for staff needs to be provided by psychologists and/or other trauma-informed mental health professionals.

- Flexibility in applying the curriculum and adapting to learners’ needs is required at all times.
- Relationship building must lie at the heart of any educational project in order to establish safety and trust in the adults so that children can learn.
- When providing an educational centre for refugee children, it was vital to have a clear structure with rules and behaviour policies, a formal timetable and consistency in approach from all staff.
- Language and life skills projects need a project manager and an academic programme manager.

**1.5 GAPS IDENTIFIED**

There is a need for future projects for school-age children who are out of school in urban areas which work in a similar way to the Skaramagas project; working with the official system rather than in parallel to it.

- A progression programme is needed for older teenagers who will not be attending Greek school.
- Learnings from different projects need to be shared among teachers and educators from the formal Greek school system and other non-formal educators wherever possible.
- Literacy materials and approaches need to be developed for refugee children in their home language (i.e. Arabic, Kurdish, Farsi) and the foreign language (i.e. English, Greek).
- There seems to be some value and potential in providing parent-child safe spaces for learning English together but this type of programme needs clear aims, strong management, close links with the community and health workers.
2.1 THE SITUATION IN GREECE
The European refugee crisis started in 2015, but at that time refugee families were usually only passing through Greece, in less than 48 hours, as they made their way to other European countries. Since March 2016, after the signing of the EU-Turkey treaty, refugees and migrants have been stranded in Greece: unable to continue on their way. By the end of 2016, there were 60,000 refugees and migrants in Greece. Responding to their needs is a huge challenge for the country, which has been suffering from its economic crisis since 2010.

For education assistance, the challenges are compounded by a variety of factors: i) many of these refugees are in transit and want to settle in countries outside Greece; (ii) they come from multiple nationalities and linguistic backgrounds; (iii) children have different levels of prior education; (iv) there is continuous movement amongst the refugee population within Greece, as groups relocate or are transferred and, therefore, (v) any class or group activity must accommodate the frequent addition of new arrivals.

Figures from May 2017 state that the refugee population in Greece is approximately 62,730, of whom 20,300 are children. Among them, 2,080 are unaccompanied children (UAC). The majority of refugees in Greece in 2017 are Syrians (39%), Iraqis (18%) and Afghans (7%) and Iranians (5%), with the remainder of the population including a variety of nationalities from South Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

In November 2016, 36% of the refugee population was living ‘off-site’ (for example, in hotels, apartments and self-accommodated). This number grew to around 57% by July 2017. In fact, there is a constant movement of the refugee population away from the camps and into urban areas.

All camp-like facilities are due to be closed by the end of 2018. This means that there is an even greater urgency for children to be prepared to attend formal Greek schools or schools in other European resettlement countries.

2.2 EDUCATION IN GREECE
Greek law stipulates that all children, including refugee children, have the right to education from the age of 5 - 15, and that school authorities should enroll foreign students even if they do not have the necessary documents. The Greek education system started catering for refugee students aged 6 to 15 years old from December 2016. Reception classes were established, where groups of refugee students participated during the afternoon from 2-6 pm. However, the overall educational experience on offer through these classes, which at that time included everything from recreation to studying Greek and English, has been somewhat fragmented. The Skaramagas Learning Center project was designed after UNICEF identified the need to provide a programme focused on structured learning in a safe learning environment. In this context, UNICEF identified the British Council as the most suitable partner for the development of the programme, based upon British Council expertise in English language and Life Skills in Greece and elsewhere.

According to UNICEF, education is a clear priority for children and their parents in Greece. 77% of children surveyed listed going back to school as one of their top priorities. They also voiced a strong desire to continue learning as their top priority, often in the context
of contributing to cultural understanding, engagement and integration, employment and overall wellbeing. The lack of language skills was considered a huge barrier to connecting with new people, whether in Greece or in other European countries.5

2.3 THE PROJECT DESIGN AND AIMS

2.3.1 PROJECT AIMS

The Skaramagas project aims were designed to address the on-going need to support refugee children in accessing and engaging with education. The main aims were

• to create, in the immediate situation, a more stable educational environment for refugee children, encouraging them to access and engage in formal learning
• to offer opportunities for children to develop the essential skills which will facilitate their integration into Greek society, in particular the Greek school system or the school system of any other country in which they might settle in the future
• to create school readiness (for in children who have either not been to school or who have been out of school for a long time) by providing a positive re-entrance or first-time learning experience in a classroom
• to bridge some of the cultural gaps that might be preventing children from accessing education: including the need to participate in multi-cultural and mixed-gender classes
• to offer children the opportunity to develop their English language skills in order to improve their ability to communicate with the international community and build their confidence in learning additional languages.

2.3.2 PLANNED AND ACTUAL TARGET GROUPS

The target groups were identified through consultation with UNICEF and other agencies working in the Skaramagas camp so that educational programmes were not duplicated. The target groups for this project were initially identified as

• adolescent boys and girls aged 12-17 years old
• parents and children from 3-6 years old
• refugees with a teaching background.

The project also provided English lessons for teachers from the Hope school, a school set up by educated refugees within the camp for 5-11 year-old children. It also offered a parent-child English language programme for parents and children from 3-6 years old. Although both these strands seemed to be useful and have potential, the main focus of this overview is describing the successes and challenge of the work with the 12-17 year-olds as this part of the project was more fully developed.
2.4 LANGUAGE FOR RESILIENCE AS THE UNDERPINNING FRAMEWORK FOR THE STRUCTURED EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN SKARAMAGAS

A main focus of the project was the development of language skills, particularly English language and literacy skills in line with the British Council Language for Resilience research report which outlines how language skills can play a vital role in enhancing the resilience of refugees.

The five domains identified in the Language for Resilience report were evident to varying degrees in the structure of the Skaramagas project:

1. Home language and literacy development: creating the foundations for shared identity, belonging and future study through home language use

It was realized early on in the project that students needed support and help with literacy in their home languages, especially slow learners in English. The Language for Resilience report identifies that children need to have opportunities to improve and maintain their understanding of their own home language in order to retain linguistic and cultural links to their home, thus preserving their sense of identity. Moreover, it argued that children and young people’s ability to attain high levels of success at school relates to the language of their education. This is especially the case in relation to the degree to which mother tongue instruction occurs in the early years and how additional languages are introduced in subsequent years. Having a strong foundation in their home language provides a secure base for additional learning. Since many students in Skaramagas missed more than 2 years of schooling and some students have never been to school, these children’s foundation in their home language has been proven weak.

Through collaboration with the Hope School in the camp, lessons in the main home languages of Arabic and Dari were provided for some students. Cultural mediators in the classroom were also part of the team and could provide support when needed for Arabic speaking students. However, it should be noted that many of the students interviewed, particularly the older ones, were not interested in working on literacy in their own languages. Instead, they were more interested in developing their English literacy and language skills.

2. Access to education, training and employment: language competence provides access to, and engagement in, the world of education, training and employment

The development of language skills was seen in the Language for Resilience report as essential in being able to access education systems. Moreover, for the older students, language skills are needed to access further training and work. Learning the language of the host country allows young people and adults to reduce their vulnerability and to contribute to their new communities. The difficulty with language acquisition in the context of refugees in Greece is that many of these children wish to relocate to another country in Europe. Actually, some of those who participated at the outset of the project were relocation or family reunification candidates and some had already left, during the course of the programme, for countries such as Germany, Netherlands and Finland. As the refugee children and their families did not know where they would be going next, their main
interest was to learn English. At the same time, English was already a language which facilitated their communication needs within Greece. For example, students who attended the formal Greek educational system used their newly acquired English language skills to communicate with their Greek teachers. Greek became increasingly popular; especially among the Afghan population who know that they are likely to stay in Greece. Although this project did not provide Greek language lessons, the emphasis on developing learning skills in another language seemed to be viewed by the students as important for their future work and education.

3 a Dignity and life skills: language-learning activities as a basis for developing individual resilience, ensuring dignity, self-sufficiency and life skills

Language is vital for everyday life and interaction with services and support. On a personal dignity level, for those in the camp and outside, knowledge of English in particular helps to facilitate access to medical help and interaction with support and welfare agencies. The integrated curriculum in the Skaramagas Learning Centre helped students to build their life skills, emotional intelligence and confidence. Specifically, language-learning helped students to acknowledge and manage their feelings and to communicate needs and opinions in another language. In addition, many of these students were dealing with the bureaucracy of resettlement and refugee agencies, most of which involved a level of literacy in relation to paperwork and form filling. It was important for them to become confident in dealing with this type of task, so literacy development in the curriculum was essential.

3 b Learning together and social cohesion: language-learning activities as a basis for bolstering social cohesion and intercultural understanding

The Language for Resilience report suggested that language learning can promote community resilience by bringing people from different communities together to interact with each other, to learn more about each other and to work together on shared aims. Feeling connected to community and others is key factor in personal resilience and being able to communicate with each other is a key factor in community resilience. This was a strong element of the Skaramagas project. As the students came from different countries and regions, were multilingual (mainly from Syria and Iraq, but also Kurdistan and Afghanistan), were in transition and were not all necessarily going to stay in Greece, English was seen as a vehicle for bringing students together from different cultural backgrounds and providing a shared experience where everyone was learning a new language. The curriculum focused on developing intercultural understanding and group work, especially as there was serious ethnic and cultural discrimination between students of different nationalities and regions. The desire to learn English was a motivating and unifying factor. It was hoped that this would also lay the foundations for students to feel confident in learning another language of a country they would eventually settle in.

4. Language programmes as a supportive intervention and a way to address the effects of loss, displacement and trauma on behaviour and learning

Language classrooms offer students opportunities to improve communication, understand
and express feelings and to tell their stories. Language gives a voice so that stories can be heard and understood. This is particularly important through the use of the creative arts, which allow feelings to be expressed in the indirect third person and through metaphor, and which foster meaningful engagement with language and emotions. The Learning Centre project had a strong creative arts component: using Art, Drama and Photography to work on life skills in a way which gave students a safe means of exploring their feelings and realities. Staff on the project have been supported by the team school psychologist and the framework conceptualised by the University of Athens to understand the value of creative arts in allowing students to express their feelings safely. By learning to understand the effects of trauma on behaviour and learning, staff members were able to view challenging behaviour as communicating something about the students’ needs and to use the curriculum to help those students to settle to learn.

5. Building the capacity of language teachers to create inclusive classrooms and enhance institutional resilience

UNDP identifies the need to support national systems as the core of the resilience-based development response and this has been a central strategy for UNICEF as well. As part of the wider context for the project, the British Council, UNICEF, the Municipality of Athens and the regional departments of the Ministry of Education, provided training for Greek public school teachers, as well as teachers from NGOs working in non-formal education, on life skills and trauma-informed resilient classrooms. This component was not part of the initial plan, but as the context was gradually changing and UNICEF expanded its support to the Ministry of Education, the activities were seen as relevant and the British Council seen as the most appropriate organization to provide such training. The on-going research by the University of Athens has informed the development of training for teachers in refugee education and inclusion. The learnings from this project could also contribute to the further development of such programmes.
3.1 STAFFING
The profiles of the project team members cover a range of experience, disciplines and nationalities. This is a strength of the project because it has allowed them to work in a creative, innovative, cross-cultural and cross-curricular way. The staff team consists of:
- A programme manager
- A site manager
- A school psychologist and child protection focal point
- An English language coordinator
- Three English language teachers
- Five life skills facilitators
- Two cultural mediators, Arabic speakers
- A project coordinator – who mostly provided training for teachers outside the project
- A project assistant
(see appendix 1 for the staff structure)

A key factor in the success of this project was the ability of this team to work together on shared goals, to learn from each other and to react flexibly to situations while maintaining the structure of the programme. The project would however have benefited from an academic manager, who could have documented the evolving curriculum and helped the team to plan on a longer term basis (for more details, see section 5.4.3). With this in place, links between topics and language learning could have been strengthened in a more structured way. It would also have been helpful to have cultural mediators, at least part-time, who spoke the home languages of the students who didn’t speak Arabic (Kurdish and Dari/Farsi).

3.2 STUDENTS
269 children aged 12 to 17 years old participated in the activities of the Skaramagas Learning Centre from November 2016 to July 2017 (See Figure 1). An almost equal number of boys (N = 134) and girls (N = 135) attended the programme. Students came from Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Iran (Figure 2). The mother tongues of the students included Kurdish, Arabic and Dari/Farsi (Figure 3).
Figure 1. Students at the Skaramagas Learning Centre by age

Figure 2. Students at the Skaramagas Learning Centre by nationality

Figure 3. Students at Skaramagas Learning Centre by mother tongue
3.3 THE PROGRAMME CURRICULUM
The programme was delivered in English and had a cross-curricular and interdisciplinary approach with English language classes and Life Skills activities for children from 12 to 17 years old, and joint activities for parents and children from 3 to 6 years old.
The Life Skills programme worked on social and emotional skills through:
• Drama
• Photography
• Art
• Physical Education
• Music through World Voice (for part of the year)
The English Language programme developed the students’ language, literacy and communication skills.
The aims of the activities for parents and children from 3 to 6 years old changed as the project evolved and the main aim became learning English together in a fun way.

3.4 TIMETABLE ORGANIZATION
In February 2017, the Ministry of Education’s refugee education programme started in Skaramagas for children between 6 and 15 years of age, who were transported by bus to nearby Greek schools in the afternoon.
Younger students (12-15 years old) attended the Learning Centre every day from 9:00 -12.00 so that they could also attend Greek school in the afternoon. It was very important that this project did not develop into a parallel project: that it supported the Greek government’s efforts to include refugee children in Greek schools. The timetable was arranged to facilitate this. Students aged 16-17 and above the compulsory age for schooling in Greece attend in the afternoon, from 13:00 to 16:00.

Students were divided into groups according to their English level, based on an initial placement test (for more information, read the section 5.4.3). They were in mixed nationality and mixed gender groups. This was an important and conscious decision by staff to facilitate inclusion and create the conditions students would face in formal schools outside the camp.
Due to the nature of the camp situation, the project also had to manage the continuous enrolment of students.
(See appendix 2 for example of timetable)

3.5 CORE EDUCATIONAL CONCEPTS
3.5.1 INTEGRATION
A core principle of this project is that children need to feel safe and settled in order to learn in a classroom. Unlike other, more non-formal offers, this programme does not separate the life skills component from the academic part of the curriculum: it combines the two. They are delivered as inter-related disciplines. Addressing the psycho-social and emotional needs of students is seen as an integral part of the curriculum: it combines the two. They are delivered as inter-related disciplines. Addressing the psycho-social and emotional needs of students is seen as an integral part of the curriculum in all classes. The classroom is viewed as a safe place where students can develop the social, emotional and life skills, that are an essential part of settling to learn. The life skills being practiced are also ‘learning to learn’ skills (for more details see the section 7): children need them in order to access education and succeed in school.

The project was designed within a conceptual framework from the University of Athens based on the concept of schools as caring communities. The goals of this framework were for the programme to focus on trauma informed practices, emotional skills, resilience, social skills, positive behaviour, communication, safety/protection and multiple intelligences. (see appendix 3 for the conceptual framework)
In practice, the curriculum developed as an integrated programme where the life skills facilitators worked in tandem with the English teachers to create a consistent approach to skills development. The challenges of working with children who have been out of school for long periods of time meant that the team worked mainly on the themes of safety, social skills, positive behaviour and emotional skills. Their expressed aims were to create safety, good attitudes to learning, cultural understanding, empathy, belonging, diversity and self-esteem. (More details in section 7.)

3.5.2 SCAFFOLDING
Learning was scaffolded – both cognitively and emotionally, which means the teachers started from the level of the student and supported them through various stages from dependent to independent learning. Teachers were able to attune to the needs of the students and to adapt their programme accordingly. They recognized, for example, that students might be at a different level emotionally to the level expected according to their chronological age. In this way, a 14 year-old’s emotional reaction to getting something wrong in a task could be viewed and understood as being similar to that of a much younger child and responded to accordingly. Tasks in general had to be broken down in a step-by-step way and the cognitive challenge gradually built up.

3.5.3 COMMON THEMES
Teachers planned a series of lessons based on common themes that could be worked on across subjects and identified in the University of Athens framework. These were:
- Getting to know each other
- Safety
- Goals and Inspiration
- Olympics
- Hope and future
- Self-Care and Hygiene

Teachers had to adapt their planning in the initial stage of the project when it became apparent that the students needed more time spent on safety and working together before they could progress to the other topics.
CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

4.1 CREATING A STATE OF READINESS FOR LEARNING
The project aimed to deliver lessons to children in English in a classroom setting. It became apparent early on that many of the children were not in a state of readiness for learning and were unable to settle to learn in this setting. This was because of practical and emotional reasons.

Asmaa, 13, from Syria said: “This program is great! The people are very friendly. It’s the first time since I arrived in Greece that I’m in a program where I feel comfortable.”

During a Life Skills class focusing on drama, students were asked to define ‘safety’ and what made them feel safe or unsafe. 17 year-old Norran from Syria responded: “Nothing is safe for me. The place where I feel the safest is here (at the Learning Center).”

Narghis, 14, from Afghanistan replied: “Teachers treat us like human beings here, they respect us, I don’t feel like a refugee.”

4.2 PRACTICAL BLOCKS TO LEARNING
On average, the out-of-school refugee children in Greece have been out of school for 2.5 years since they left their countries of origin.

In Skaramagas this meant that many children had never attended formal school or had been out of formal schooling for a long time. They had never acquired or had lost the skills for learning in a classroom, being in effect deschooled. They found it difficult to sit still, follow instructions and listen to the teacher. For example, they would talk to each other, stand up and work around when the teacher was trying to explain something. Parents reported that their children had been out of school from 1 to 5 years on average. There was also the uncertainty about how long they would be in the camp and whether it was worth investing their time and energy into a temporary learning experience. They came late to lessons or did not attend regularly, being used to a life with little structure and consistency.

4.3 WORKING IN MULTI-CULTURAL AND MIXED GENDER GROUPS
Students were not used to being in mixed nationality and mixed gender groups. This was a particular problem between the Yazidi and Syrian students, and some male students. They would, in the beginning, just walk out of class, refusing to work together. Staff had to spend a lot of class time trying to deal with conflicts and a perceived lack of mutual respect. The subsequent application of positive discipline practices facilitated the students’ learning and positive social–emotional–behavioral development. Self-responsibility and problem-solving skills were emphasized through class activities and as a response to conflicts. The staff also developed a code of student behavior and disciplinary procedures.

4.4 THE AUTHORITY OF THE TEACHER
Students found it difficult to recognise the authority of the teacher, possibly because they were used to more informal interactions with volunteers and aid agency workers or a more authoritarian, punitive teacher model from their home countries. The boundaries of the teacher-student relationship were at times unclear and staff struggled to get students to follow instructions. Staff reported that students would ignore the teacher and keep talking or get up and walk around the room, not doing the tasks which were set.
4.5 LACK OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
The students generally came in with low levels of English, with some lacking basic literacy skills. This made it impossible at first for the life skills facilitators to use the activities they had planned. Even in cases where students had a better level of English, they often lacked the confidence to participate in group activities or they lacked experience in communicating their needs in English. This led to behavioural problems and refusals to take part in activities at times. It was commonly observed though that, students were generally better behaved in the English language classes; possibly because they were not being challenged so directly on two levels: the social and the linguistic.

7 Education Needs Assessment Greece, Save the Children, May 2016.
SOLUTIONS TO THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS

5.1 MAINTAINING A CLEAR STRUCTURE
Continual staff training and discussion took place on ways to create a clear structure and behaviour policy. The project’s school psychologist worked with staff to develop a school-wide positive behaviour management plan; clarifying the roles and responsibilities of teachers and the child protection focal point in managing and responding to incidents of misbehaviour. Strong policies and procedures (including the use of incident forms) were put in place regarding codes of teacher conduct and child protection.

The importance of students’ attending all lessons on time was continually emphasized by all staff and through meetings with the parents, cultural mediators, child protection focal point and site manager. Through the positive behaviour policy, students were continually rewarded and praised for good attendance and punctuality.

5.2 DEVELOPING ROUTINES
The first weeks of the programme focused heavily on establishing classroom rules and routines across all lessons. Classroom rules, child protection posters and signs about not allowing the use of cameras/mobiles were put in place in all classrooms. Students were continually encouraged to understand and reflect on these rules in different ways in each lesson.
For example, in Drama, students did role plays about appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, and in Photography they took photographs that represented appropriate and inappropriate classroom behaviour. In Art they drew the rules and English language classes they created posters of the rules.

5.3 WORKING TOGETHER
It was made clear that it was not acceptable to refuse to work with someone and if a student walked out, the situation was discussed with them and they were given the opportunity to return when they felt able to. Staff worked on reinforcing the core concepts of respect for all and non-violence.

It was however recognized that students found it very difficult to work together and that they needed time to get used to the idea. Opportunities for collaboration were introduced gradually: first pair work and then small groups. At the same time, students were set classroom activities where they were encouraged to find things that they had in common with each other. For example, classroom posters were developed which highlighted similarities in the group: such as ‘our group’ and ‘we all’. In Drama, non-verbal activities were introduced where students explored the space in the room and did simple mirroring exercises to develop some empathy.

Students worked initially with those they felt comfortable with, but feedback involved sharing ideas with other groups. For example, in Physical Education students selected their partners to practice volleyball and soccer, and gradually participated in bigger groups. These groups were initially of the same gender, but the emphasis was on playing together in teams. This was particularly important for girls as some of them had never played sports before and were very reluctant to participate. Gradually the groups became mixed and, in some cases, students self-organized mixed gender and nationality groups to play outdoor games and sports during recess. (See appendix 4 for more examples of classroom activities)
5.4 ENGLISH LANGUAGE SOLUTIONS
5.4.1 ADDRESSING LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES
Classroom language and keywords were highlighted and introduced in all lessons. Posters of the keywords were put up in all classrooms. In English lessons, functional language and communication was emphasized. The Arabic-speaking cultural mediators supported staff who were having trouble explaining classroom activities in English, and ideas were shared on how to get the message across non-verbally and in simple ways.

5.4.2 ENGLISH ACROSS THE CURRICULUM
English language learning was a key factor in the success of this project and in ‘selling’ it to the young people. In the initial stages, some life skills staff reported that students prioritised attendance at English lessons and did not view life skills classes as being as important. It had to be emphasized that all classes were as important as the formal English language lessons and that students were continually learning English in their other classes as well.

5.4.3 ORGANISATION OF CLASSES
Each student was given an English placement test and assigned a class based on their score as well as their particular age group – the 3 age groups being; 12-13 years, 14-15 years, and 16-17 years old. The placement test was specifically designed for young learners to assess their basic literacy skills as well as their listening and speaking skills. Most students were in the range of Low Beginner to Upper Elementary, with 62% of the students in the initial cohort being assigned to a Beginner class and 38% being assigned to an Elementary class. Of all the students tested, a total of 59% had some basic literacy issues.

The English language classes followed a communicative approach and were aimed at improving the students reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, with extra lessons included to help those students with basic literacy issues. Students seemed to think listening and speaking were the most important.

Finding suitable materials for this context was a challenge. The team decided to use standard course books that they could adapt according to the needs of their groups. New English File, Beginner and Elementary were chosen as the core text books for the 14-15 and 16-17 year old groups, while Oxford Discover 1 was selected for the 12-13 year old age group.

The teachers reported varying degrees of success with the course books and all agreed that they had to develop other material in collaboration with the life skills facilitators.

The students seemed to like using a course book, particularly the older students who had a slightly higher level of English.

English Placement Testing took place twice a week on a continual basis to cater for new students enrolling in the project.
EMOTIONAL BLOCKS TO LEARNING

6.1 EFFECT ON BEHAVIOUR
The effect of loss, displacement and trauma on the brain means that refugee children are often hypervigilant: continually on the lookout for potential danger and in a constant state of ‘fight or flight’. This makes it difficult for them to settle to learn in a classroom, where they need to become absorbed in a task without worrying about what else is happening around them. Children may also find it difficult to trust relationships with peers and adults, because many will have experienced loss and sudden disruptions to relationships.

This affects their behaviour in different ways and defense mechanisms come into operation which affect learning. For example:

- Omnipotence – children have to stay in control of all interactions and cannot allow the teacher to teach them, or they feel that they have to be perfect and not fail, which leads to stress and anxiety.
- Displacement – children have a lot of feelings such as anger, fear and anxiety which they cannot display at home which are displaced onto teachers.
- Transference – children act out relationships which they know and have seen with adults, for example, those who have witnessed violence, often became angry and caused others to become angry very quickly.

Staff saw examples of all of these types of behaviour played out in their classes, particularly at the beginning of the project.

6.2 THE EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER OF LIFE IN A CAMP
The students in Skaramagas are all in transition, waiting to find out where they can move on to. This meant that they would often be preoccupied and affected by events going on outside the Learning Center. For example, if they had to attend an interview about resettlement or got bad news from home, this would affect their ability to settle in the Learning Center. Staff would see powerful feelings of helplessness and anger being played out in class. Teachers reported that the atmosphere in class could suddenly change from positive to negative and be triggered by seemingly small incidents or remarks.

6.3 SOLUTIONS
6.3.1 TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH
The effects of life outside the Learning Center and the psychological effects of trauma were discussed in staff meetings and trainings. Staff worked continually to show that they were able to contain the feelings of their students, to understand what was happening and to manage their own reactions to poor behaviour. Consultations were available with the school psychologist and team meetings were organised in order to share ideas. Staff worked on an emotional literacy curriculum, including devising sessions with the school psychologist, which encouraged the students to learn to recognise and name their feelings.

It was particularly important to provide physical and mental calm, to give students an experience of feeling calm in their body and in their mind. Cross-curricular exercises in Drama, Art, PE provided these experiences and language lessons gave names to the feelings.

Example activity: Working on feelings
Grouped by nationality, students looked at photos of people showing different facial expressions and wrote down how each photo made them feel e.g. a baby smiling made them happy. They then compared their feel-
ings with other groups and realized that they had many of the same feelings, even though they came from different countries and spoke different languages. (see appendix 4 for more examples of class activities)

6.3.2 BUILDING SECURE RELATIONSHIPS
For children who have experienced loss and trauma, it is essential to have at least one reliable adult with whom you have a safe, trusting relationship. A key factor in managing the emotional blocks to learning that students were showing, was the ability of staff to demonstrate that they were aware of the students’ feelings, that they were trying to understand what was happening and that they could be trusted to be empathic listeners. The cultural mediators played an important role in helping staff and students to build relationships and to understand cultural differences. Teachers noticed incremental changes in the children on a weekly basis: in their attitude, behaviour and ability to learn and work together, and were able to see that the nurturing of relationships was beginning to bear fruit in small ways. For example, when two girls from different countries came and asked for a ball to play football at break.

6.4 EFFECT ON LEARNING
In class, the students’ ability to learn was also affected by their emotional state and previous experience. They found it difficult to

• do exercises which involved thinking about themselves and their strengths: panicking when asked to talk about something to do with themselves. Simple activities such as ‘my favourite food’ became dangerous and alarming. This was not due to a lack of language knowledge but more an emotional block and lack of space for thinking
• take risks and to be creative. If you have lived in dangerous situations, any risk-taking becomes scary and there is an unconscious need to keep control of situations. This inhibits learning and creativity, particularly the ability to participate in more free and open-ended activities which do not have a right or wrong answer
• have any sense of hopes for the future
• to share information, particularly about their personal situation and their family.

6.4.1 SOLUTIONS
Lesson staging
Staff were continually assessing the students’ learning needs and it became apparent that some had literacy issues in their own languages and that this was adding to their frustration. Literacy activities were then added to the curriculum. Tasks had to be broken down into do-able chunks and students worked together in pairs to help each other. Progression in a topic was planned carefully and scaffolding techniques - such as giving students models to follow before asking them to develop their own - were used.

Staff recognized that they needed to begin with safer topics, for example, ‘my favourite colour’ and animals are safer topics in the beginning than talking about family. They could move to riskier topics when safer relationships had developed in class.
SUMMARY OF CURRICULUM SKILLS

The curriculum evolved over the course of the project and staff showed considerable flexibility in adapting their planning on a weekly basis to meet the emerging needs of the students. It would be useful now to review the curriculum and create a retrospective overview of what worked and what could be used in the future. (See appendix 6 for general suggestions)

In comparing these observations with the initial assessment report by the Center of School Psychology of the University of Athens, it was observed that students seemed to have developed a specific set of skills through the course of the project.

SKILLS LEARNED

Social and emotional
- Understand others’ perspectives
- Ask for and accept help when needed
- Know how to find information and to ask strangers for information/help
- Express emotions appropriately
- Manage good feelings - have an experience of success and fun
- Understand verbal and non-verbal communication
- Present ideas
- Tell a story
- Speak about self

Learning to learn
- Follow instructions/class rules
- Set goals and work towards them
- Manage difficult feelings e.g. frustration, disappointment in learning
- Self-regulate behaviour - wait, share the teacher’s attention
- Focus on a task and work on own task without distraction or disrupting others
- Develop sense of self as a learner
- Look after resources and equipment
- Enjoy and engage in learning
- Become an autonomous, independent learner

Linguistic skills for learning an additional language
- Guessing meaning from context
- Negotiating meaning with another person
- Word attack strategies for reading and literacy
- Functional language for everyday situations
- Understanding how languages work
- Explaining an issue to a teacher who doesn’t speak your language
During the field visit, students in all the classes were interviewed about their experience in the Learning Center. It seemed that the children had settled to learn. They could be seen coming into the Center on time and getting on with learning together. They were confident in class, participated actively, worked together and talked to visitors in English. They seemed to be happy and having fun.

Their remarks below show how they value learning, how they have changed their attitudes towards schooling, how they have become more confident language learners and how they see the value of communicative English and have become accustomed to working in multinational and mixed-gender groups.

**Their views on the value of learning**
‘I learned basketball, English, photography, I’m happy, I want to learn’
‘It’s fun... I’m happy... I can now tell a story, be creative’
‘We learned ...properly… new things’

**Their attitude to the Learning Center**
‘I’m really happy to come to the class, I was sad before...’
‘I didn’t like sport... now I like sport and drama because we can move’

For the younger ones, their attitude to the Learning Center in general seemed to be good because they said ‘we also like Greek school’, ‘we like learning’ and some boys said ‘it’s important to learn Greek in case we stay’

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**8.1 LEARNING ENGLISH**

They seemed to have gained confidence as language learners and to like the fact that they had to listen to and speak in English all the time
‘I didn’t like English in Syria, we had long lists of words to learn, here we speak English’

They were confident when talking to international visitors or when needing to find out information
‘I like English to watch TV and give my opinion’
‘Important to talk to people from other countries’
‘Learning English is very important for talking to people from other countries, going to other countries ...’

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**8.2 WORKING IN DIVERSE GROUPS**

The students learned to work in and recognise the benefits of diverse multicultural groups. They also acknowledged the importance of making new friends from other countries:
‘Now we are friends, in the beginning no... It was strange...’
‘We are friends together’

They have become accustomed to working in mixed gender groups.
One of the older girls said ‘at first it was not usual because girls and boys are not mixed in Iran’, now ‘it’s ok as long as it’s only about work and learning and they don’t annoy us’ (16/17-year-old girl)

They acknowledge the importance of their relationships with the teachers:
‘Teachers only cared about the subject in my country; here they care about the students’
8.3 THEIR HOPES FOR THE FUTURE
In a lesson on hopes for the future, many students had expressed the desire to be a range of professions including:
singer (5)
doctor (10)
journalist (2)
football player (7)
policewoman (1)
teachers (3)
These comments seem to show a hope for the future and perhaps the beginning of a normalization of life as their hopes are indeed similar to many children around the world of the same age.
KEY FACTORS IN SUCCESS

There seem to be some key factors which contributed to the success of this project and which can be considered as good practice for future work.

9.1 SAFETY
The Learning Centre provides physical and emotional safety for the students. This was very important for them and their parents. It was recognized that learning cannot take place if students feel unsafe and emotionally insecure. The project put a strong focus on ensuring physical and emotional safety.

9.1.1 PHYSICAL
The classroom building and compound is safe and secure, with a fence and security guard. This was seen as very important by many parents who were initially reluctant to send their children to a new school in a new country and culture. Meetings between parents, child protection and cultural mediators helped to reassure the parents of the safety of the centre.

Safety was also developed through the policies, the structure of the timetable, routines and rules. As seen above, the rules were shared and worked on in a consistent way with students across the different classes. Clear policies on issues such as Child Protection, Risk Assessment and Health and Safety added to the physical safety of students and staff.

9.1.2 EMOTIONAL
The project took the Caring Schools and Communities framework as a base for its work. It was recognized that children needed to be able to self-regulate and feel calm enough to learn. Initially many physical and non-verbal activities were done which allowed the children to settle physically and be aware of the emotions in their bodies. For example, non-verbal work was done on use of space, personal space, body language and expressing feelings through drama, art and photography. Simple physical exercises and routines in PE allowed children to develop their motor skills and sensory perception.

Wherever possible, students were supported in recognising and naming their feelings and the consequences of their behaviour. In this way, staff had to recognize that developmentally the children were sometimes younger than their chronological age and needed to learn to manage their behaviour in a way that a younger child would.

9.2 FOCUS ON DEVELOPING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS NEEDED IN A NEW CULTURE, COUNTRY, AND EXPERIENCE
The overall aim for the resettlement of the refugees in Greece means that children will be either living and going to school in Greece or another European country. The project in Skaramagas worked across the curriculum to support children in developing the skills needed to do this. The skills identified as transferable to other contexts are

- coping with learning a new language and being taught in a new language
- participating in classes with students from different countries and cultures
- being in mixed-gender classes
- timekeeping and following timetables
- working in an interactive, participatory way, e.g. in groups
- exploratory learning approaches rather than rote learning approaches
• making connections with new people, new ideas and new places
• knowing how to get help and find out information
• acculturation – maintaining your home culture and interacting with the new one to develop a third in that space between the two
• recognising, managing and self-regulating feelings
• resolving conflict through discussions

9.3 LITERACY AND NUMERACY IN HOME LANGUAGE
The project recognized that many children were having problems with literacy and numeracy in their home language. Through a partnership with the Hope School they were able to offer literacy and numeracy lessons but also literacy in English for older students who were having problems. This was very popular, and the teacher is developing good multi-sensory, age appropriate activities to address literacy. There is a need to develop more materials in this area.

9.4 ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION
Students were motivated in their formal English lessons and, like many students, liked the idea of having a course book to see their progression. However, a real benefit to the students’ confidence and language learning also came from the amount of receptive English they were learning; similar to the way a child assimilates a new language outside the classroom. They had a lot of receptive exposure to English and became confident at guessing meaning. This meant that students were continually practicing the communication and learning skills needed in a country where you do not speak the home language, skills such as:

• guessing meaning from context and keywords
• making yourself understood through non-verbal and verbal means
• persevering when meaning is not clear
• negotiation of meaning and message with peers and teachers.

Although the course books were used as a structure, the actual English curriculum reflected functional tasks which it might be useful for students to be able to carry out in English, such as giving and receiving information to complete a form (including name, age, address, phone number, etc.) (See appendix 5 for examples of functional tasks)

9.5 TEAMWORK
9.5.1 MULTI-DISCIPLINARY AND INTER-DISCIPLINARY
The project followed an integrated curriculum where staff worked on common themes and core concepts in different ways. The synergy between life skill facilitators, English language teachers, the project school psychologist and the cultural mediators created an approach which allowed children to flourish and for behaviour to be understood in a meaningful way.

9.5.2 WORK WITH THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST
A project working with children who have been through trauma requires the support of a qualified psychologist/mental health professional in order to address the children’s needs, but also to support the staff in their understanding of the effects of trauma. This was another core concept in the project which added to its success. The school psychologist was responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the British Council child protection policies through the development of a comprehensive Child Safety Project Plan and Risk Assess-
ment. The school psychologist consulted with teachers and families, provided direct support and interventions to students, and collaborated with other organizations in the camp to coordinate needed services. A special focus was also given to ongoing child protection awareness trainings for the staff focusing on child abuse, trauma and resilience, positive discipline and bullying.

9.5.3 WORK WITH THE CULTURAL MEDIATORS
The project had two Arabic speaking cultural mediators. The role of the cultural mediator was to help with any intercultural misunderstandings, to support the teachers if needed and to link with the local community. Staff and students seem to have found the work of the cultural mediators useful in supporting working together and with the community. However, the lack of Dari or Kurdish speakers meant that some staff preferred to not have the cultural mediators in class as they felt it prioritised the group of Arabic speakers over others in the class. While cultural mediators play an essential role in a project like this, it would seem prudent to ensure all languages are represented if possible in the team.

9.5.4 WORK WITH PARENTS AND CHILDREN AGED 3-6
As part of the project, classes were set up for parents to learn English with their children aged 3-6 years. An interesting class was observed on the field visit which showed that the adults and young children were enjoying learning together and that the children already knew some routines and classroom rules. This idea seems to have some potential for future work. However, it had proven difficult to explain the concept to parents in the camp and would need a lot of support from experienced family workers to get this model working effectively. It would need to be clear to what extent the activities were aimed at learning English and to what extent they were aimed at helping parents to develop bonds with their children, which in the context of families in crisis can be difficult.

The staff at the Learning Centre tried to address the challenge of meaningfully engaging parents through cooperating on workshops with other actors in the camp, such as health staff and social workers from the International Red Cross as well as the support of the Child Protection Focal Point at the Learning Centre.

9.5.5 CLASSES FOR TEACHERS FROM HOPE SCHOOL
Hope School is a non-formal education programme set up by refugee teachers in the camp and providing education for the primary aged children. As part of the project, the British Council provided English language lessons for the Hope School teachers and in return the Hope School provided literacy and numeracy teachers in the students' home languages for the Learning Centre. This seemed to be a good example of sharing expertise and working together collaboratively. It had been envisaged that the British Council would also provide some methodology training for the Hope School teachers, but their level of English was low. In addition, as is the case in many other refugee camps, the people working as teachers in the Hope School were often not teachers by profession and their own interest was in improving their English for future work opportunities. Child protection awareness sessions were organized for the Hope School teachers who taught literacy and numeracy lessons in the Learning Centre.
9.6 SKILLS DEMONSTRATED BY THE STAFF
The attitude and skills of the staff on this project seems to have been a key factor in its success. For future projects it would be useful to consider the skills needed to make them successful, which are:

**Personal skills**
- ability to create relationships with students, keeping good boundaries and modeling good relationships with other adults, for example with other staff and cultural mediators
- ability to work within a structure and be consistent but to have a flexibility of approach within that structure
- perseverance and ‘bounce back’ ability in the face of problems and unexpected challenges

**Teaching skills**
- ability to maintain high expectations of students whilst remaining aware of the practical and emotional challenges which could inhibit learning
- ability to grade own language accordingly and get messages across simply when working with students in a foreign language
- ability to strike a balance between support and gradually handing over responsibility to students
- ability to deal with conflict and challenging behaviour in class.

**Lesson planning skills**
- ability to plan and work on meta cognition, social, emotional, logic and problem-solving skills as well as the content of a lesson
- ability to understand the need for a mixture of right- and left-brain activities along a continuum of safe – risk taking activities
- ability to link themes and work across curriculum areas within a team from different disciplines and backgrounds.

9.7 USING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
The project benefited from working within the conceptual framework of schools as caring communities and following a holistic approach to promote positive development, adjustment and support of refugee children and adolescents in the school and in the family. The Center for Research and Practice of School Psychology of the Department of Psychology of the University of Athens is undertaking a separate evaluation of this component of the project. Specifically, the University of Athens is in charge of evaluation and progress monitoring and for the delivery of three assessment reports based on their communication with the staff, the teachers and the trainers. However, there were some problems in the implementation of this framework: initially, it was envisaged that the university would monitor the progress of the project’s stated aims and then develop workshops and more activities based on the needs observed. Due to the short time frame of the project and the initial challenges in the first months of operating, this was not possible. Staff needed immediate feedback and support on how to deal with the challenging behaviour of students. The action research cycle of the University model could not work in the same timeframe.

**Recommendation**
It would seem advisable not to mix the roles of project evaluation and practical interventions based on action research. The University role would be best served as one of evaluation rather than ongoing monitoring to affect change. As already mentioned, an academic manager who was on –site could have taken the role of supporting staff with the immediate challenges of the classroom and the curriculum.
9.8 WORK WITH TEACHERS FROM FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION OUTSIDE THE PROJECT

It is recognized that many teachers are struggling to teach children whose home language and culture differs from that of the school. The project has tried to address this by providing training and workshops with experiential, participatory activities for formal and non-formal teachers in Greece based on the Living Together education pack (for formal education teachers) and the Life Skills manual (for both formal and non-formal educators) and delivered by experienced British Council trainers. A session was also delivered on Child Protection and Creating a Resilient Classroom. The activities help to raise awareness amongst teachers of the issues facing refugee children. The Living Together training sessions took place in three major cities in Greece (Athens, Thessaloniki, Ioannina), involved around ten organisations, engaged four formal educational institutions and gathered 145 participants with a background in formal and/or non-formal education. Most participants felt that these workshops were beneficial in raising their awareness but wanted to have further training on experiential learning methodology, introducing life skills in class and practical ways to further inclusion. The materials themselves require a level of proficiency in Greek or English which the students do not have. It would be useful therefore, for the project to put together the details of their lesson planning for students with lower levels of language proficiency and to share this methodology with state school teachers.
THE WAY FORWARD - BRIDGING THE GAP

In Skaramagas, it is planned that the afternoon reception classes will continue: transporting children from the camp to nearby schools. This is likely the case for larger camps throughout the next school year 2017-2018. Meanwhile, the Greek government is planning for all refugee and migrant children aged 6-15 living in urban settings (hotels, apartments and self-accommodated) to be registered with their nearest Greek public schools, where additional morning reception classes (ZEP) will be established. This ZEP scheme is considered to support better integration of the refugee children into Greek schools as they will have more interaction with Greek students. More than 500 such classes will need to be established. It is likely that many of these children will have similar problems to those exhibited by the children in the Learning Centre, in that they may have been out of school for a long time and find it hard to settle to learn; needing support in acquiring the social and emotional skills for learning in a classroom. In Skaramagas and elsewhere, efforts need to be made to share information about students’ cognitive and socio-emotional difficulties and their progress in class among formal and non-formal teachers on a regular basis, in order to inform the development of more coherent approaches that support students’ continuous learning and progress.
11.1 ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN WHO ARE OUT OF SCHOOL

There are two ways in which the work of the Skaramagas project may be helpful in developing future projects to aid the integration of refugee children into Greek schools.

- Replication of the model of combining lessons from non-formal education with formal education to create a learning experience which helps students to settle to learn when they have been out of school for a long time. UNICEF recommends that a stronger concerted synergy between formal and non-formal education providers is required so that school enrollment and retention can be supported through a coherent, integrated pedagogical approach. The British Council and UNICEF could look at providing this period of settling to learn in areas outside the camps, such as urban community centres, to support more children in returning to formal education and integrating into the Greek school system.
- Further work with the 16-17 year olds who are not in school and not of compulsory school age. This group may benefit from a vocational programme in English and/or Greek that focusses on the development of skills such as digital literacy, media studies, or preparation for working with NGOs; perhaps as cultural mediators.

11.2 ENHANCING THE CURRENT CURRICULUM PROVISION

The project is now in a different stage of development and needs to consider the next steps for the students.

- For some students, it will be important to develop leadership skills, and those who are preparing to leave will need to be able to identify their strengths, skills learned and how to apply these in other situations. The students need to become more involved in setting their own goals and learning independently.
- All the students need to take an end of year placement test so that actual language progress can be recorded.
- The programme on offer to those who are of school age and staying on at the Learning Centre could align itself with more content from the Greek school curriculum in order to give even more real life school experience.
- Now that most students have settled to learn and are engaging with school, the staff and project psychologist should be able to recognise which students have greater needs than were expected and who therefore require a more focused intervention to address their difficulties. This kind of assessment was impossible in the early stages of the project when many students seemed unable to learn.
11.3 RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
There is a lack of appropriate resources adapted to the needs of teaching children in this context. In particular there is a need to
• develop a set of resources for further work on literacy in English and in the students’ home languages
• map the existing integrated curriculum in detail in order to provide schemes of work for future cohorts
• consider developing a tool to measure school readiness and to assess life skills.

11.4 TEACHER TRAINING
In line with the need highlighted by UNICEF for continuous teacher training in intercultural education (covering both special pedagogical approaches and sociocultural themes), the curriculum and approach used in this project could be developed as a model for raising awareness amongst and upskilling Greek educators who work with newly arrived refugee students.
In particular, the learnings from the project could be used to inform the development of future teacher training initiatives that seek to align themselves with the sort of recommendations put forward in the Language for Resilience report, namely:
• Contribute to a change in teachers’ attitudes towards refugee children by helping them to understand the impact that a prolonged absence from school, a lack of language skills and their diverse life experiences may have had on a student’s ability to integrate into school life and settle to learn
• Raise awareness - generally, amongst all teachers of all subjects - about the importance of valuing home languages, and provide strategies to help them support students whose home language differs from that of their schooling
• Promote the use of the creative arts as a vehicle for learning languages in class and encourage schools to form partnerships with creative arts organizations
• Help teachers to understand the psycho-social impact of displacement and loss and help language teachers in particular to create safe and supportive opportunities for exploration and expression in the language classroom
The following people were interviewed for the preparation of this analytical overview:
Niki Xenou, British Council Education & Society Programmes Manager
Maria Nomikou, British Council Project Manager
Eirini Kareta, Project Coordinator
Vanessa Pirandello, Site Coordinator
Eirini Adamopoulou, School Psychologist/Child Protection Focal Point
Matthew Cannon, ELT Coordinator
University of Athens Psychology team
Life Skills Facilitators
Emmanouil Adamakis, Phaedra Tsalababouni, Christina Chatzinikolaou, Anna Toldo, India Nuran
English Teachers
Laura Cesaro, Duncan Wallis, Paola Valencia
Claire Steele, Senior Teacher
Naoko Imoto, Chief of Education, UNICEF Refugee and Migrant response
Students from Life Skills and English Classes in the Skaramagas Camp
13.1 APPENDIX 1
13.1.1 PROJECT MANAGEMENT ORGANIGRAM

Niki Xenou, British Council Education & Society Programmes Manager

Project Coordinator
Eirini Kareta

Site Coordinator
Vanessa Pirandello

Project Assistant
Victoria Kyriaki

Psychologist/Child Protection Focal Point
Eirini Adamopoulou

ELT Coordinator
Matthew Cannon

Facilitators
Emmanouil Adamakis,
Phaedra Tsalababouni,
Christina Chatzinikolaou,
Anna Toldo,
India Nuran

Cultural Mediators
Mohamed Halitim & Rahma Henchiri

English Teachers
Laura Cesaro,
Duncan Wallis,
Paola Valencia

Line Manager
Cliff Parry
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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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13.3 APPENDIX 3
13.3.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT

The conceptual framework for the project was developed by the Centre for Research and Practice of School Psychology, Department of Psychology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Scientific Director: Chryse Hatzichristou, Professor of School Psychology

Scientific Team: Panagiotis Lianos, PhD in School Psychology
Theodora Yfanti, PhD in School Psychology
Vasiliki Stasinou, PhD Candidate in School Psychology
Danai Athanasiou, PhD Candidate in School Psychology

The activities in Skaramagas were planned according to this conceptual framework of social justice and schools as caring communities (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.
13.3.2 EXPLANATION OF THE MODEL
UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES IN
SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

Social Justice
• Social justice as a construct includes three specific but not always distinct, ecological system qualities that promote educational success and psychological wellbeing: access to necessary and appropriate resources, experiences of being treated with respect, and fairness (North, 2006).

Children Rights
• The UN Convention of Children’s rights, denotes the ‘entitlement of all children to have requisite physical, psychological, spiritual, social and cultural needs met to ensure optimal growth, development, physical health, psychological well-being, and learning’
• Development, learning, and psychological well-being are particularly important to schooling and education.

Multicultural School Psychology/Acculturation
• Acculturation refers to the changes in cultural attitudes, values, and behaviours that result from intercultural contact and is considered to be one of the resilience factors that may help refugees deal with traumatic experiences

13.4 KEY APPROACHES
IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

Schools as Caring Communities
• Ensuring equity for all the members of the school community by caring equally for each one
• Going beyond the core content of the taught curriculum to address the psychological and social well-being of the students
• Promoting a sense of belonging/school engagement amongst the students

Safety/Connectedness
• Adopting a comprehensive school-wide approach that facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration and builds on a multitier system of supports
• Balancing the need for both physical and psychological safety
• Creating safe, orderly and welcoming learning environments that support children and young people in achieving their highest potential and contributing to society
• Providing a team-based framework to facilitate effective coordination of services and interventions
• Providing relevant and ongoing professional development for all staff members
• Outlining standards for district-level policies to promote effective school discipline and positive behaviour
• Integrating a continuum of services, ranging from general support facilities for all students to more intensive and personalised services for individual cases, in order to effectively address school safety and student mental health (multitier system of supports)
**Resilience**
- Understood to be the capacity for successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances
- A concept that applies to both individuals and systems
- The characteristics of resilient classrooms: academic efficacy, academic self-determination, behavioural self-control, caring and authentic teacher-student relationships, ongoing and rewarding relationships between classroom peers, strong home-school collaboration

**Crisis response**
- This is defined as a situation that psychologically destabilizes the individual such as a threatening incident that cannot be avoided or resolved by the individual’s usual problem-solving skills
- The stress of experiencing a crisis leads to various associated challenges in familial and school settings
- With effective support, victims of crisis are able to overcome their sense of helplessness, to adjust and find new coping strategies

**Trauma informed/sensitive schools**
- Are schools where all students feel safe, welcomed, and supported
- Are schools that put recognising and addressing trauma’s impact on learning at the heart of their educational mission and operating strategy
- Are schools that provide clear guidelines to all members of their community regarding the identification of behaviours that may be reactions to traumatic events and the appropriate course of action when referrals and additional services are required

**Psychosocial & learning Interventions**

**Multitiered Systems of Support**
Multitiered Systems of Support are implemented holistically in order to integrate efforts to target academic, behavioural, social, emotional, physical, and mental health concerns.

**Social & Emotional Learning**
- A fundamental prerequisite for the well-being of the members of the school community and for the children’s positive adjustment
- Involves the acquisition and effective application of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for emotional understanding and management; positive goals-setting; expression of empathy, building positive relationships and making responsible decisions

**Schoolwide Positive Behaviour Support**
- Effective, positive school discipline: (a) functions alongside efforts to address school safety and climate; (b) is not simply punitive (e.g. zero tolerance); (c) is clear, consistent and equitable; and (d) reinforces positive behaviours.
- Promotion of socially acceptable behaviour by providing instruction and feedback for improving behaviours while reinforcing appropriate student performance
- Implementation of positive stress management techniques to help children deal with past or current causes of stress or traumatic events and to enhance their skills at handling similar situations in a positive manner
- Schools that implement positive behaviour support strategies exhibit fewer discipline problems and better academic outcomes

**Screening**
- Identification of the student population’s needs and capabilities, in order to attend to them accordingly
- Identification of individuals or groups that might benefit from specific intervention strategies
13.5 ENGAGEMENT AND WELL-BEING IN NEW LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Student engagement
• An active involvement in school life is an important factor in a student’s adjustment to the educational setting (i.e. dropout intentions, absenteeism, homework frequency and educational aspirations)
• Behaviour engagement refers to participation in the learning environment, and although defined in different ways, has often been used to refer to the effort and persistence involved in participating in learning activities
• Emotional engagement refers to students’ affective reactions in the classroom which, to engage them in learning, requires positive or negative emotional experiences.

13.6 EVALUATION AND PROGRESS MONITORING

The University proposed that support for children in new learning environments would be provided through 4 equivalent components: management (e.g. shared governance, accountability), learning & psychosocial support (e.g. curriculum, mental health services, social and emotional activities), organizational consultation (e.g. linking theory & practice), and progress monitoring (e.g. database, evaluation, assessment). Training, curriculum (learning & psychosocial) and child protection policies are implemented in order to achieve the specific goals of the program (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Model of Comprehensive Integrated Services for supporting refugee children and adolescents: development, implementation & evaluation
13.7 APPENDIX 4
13.7.1 EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE FROM LESSONS

Routines

Example of a classroom entry routine in English
Every child in the class has a number poster on the wall. They get stars for good behaviour which are put on their number each day.

A set of topics is on the wall e.g. weather, feelings. Each day, at the beginning of the lesson as the students come in, they pick up words off the table and stick them on the wall into topic groups. This provides a calming, logical left brain start to the day.

Example of routines in Physical Education
The main daily lesson plans included structured activities for motor skill development and enhanced physical activity opportunities. Routines that all students should follow included: jogging around the Learning Centre’s courtyard, making groups of 2-4 students and performing running activities, and stretching exercises. This procedure lasted between 20 to 30 minutes. Afterwards, students practiced football or volleyball techniques in teams of 4-5 children.

Shared ownership
Classrooms were decorated on the inside and outside by the students, which contributed to the feeling of a shared space and belonging. Displays and completed work covered the walls of the classroom in a bright welcoming way. Group activities were celebrated, for example, in one class there were photos taken of the group’s hands and feet together in a circle, under the heading – Our Group.

Shared values and ethos
Teachers had worked together to develop rules which related to the ethos of the centre and the learning experience. One poster had the following:
In our classroom, we respect each other, we try our best, we are a team, we learn from mistakes, we create, we celebrate each other’s successes.

Group bonding
Drama trust games - students work in pairs with one student closing their eyes and the other guiding them around the room. This was done in drama class and in English class to practice basic directions.

Classroom maps on the wall – the teacher used maps which only showed physical features across continents and did not show country borders as she did not want to emphasise differences.

A class poster with pictures from different places in the world and statements which were true of all the group i.e. we may have different skins, we may have different voices, we may be from different countries...but we have one heart and the same smile and we all cry and we all laugh - We are all children of the world.

Scaffolding
In Drama, students found physical work and movement challenging and were not willing initially to take part in physical activities. Through the use of activities such as trust and mirroring games, they became more accustomed to the idea of physical theatre and eventually were able to perform in a spring festival show for parents and friends in the camp.
In Physical Education, students initially had difficulty in following routines and rules and often dropped out from the activities. Through the use of encouragement, trust and individual and group participation students felt more confident in their newly acquired skills. This was particularly important for some girls who had never participated in sport activities.

13.7.2 CONNECTING TO WIDER ISSUES
A lesson working on children’s rights
The teacher showed the students pictures and visuals of the UN convention on children’s rights. The students and teacher then discuss the rules and responsibilities of the centre. Students make a list of agencies in the camp, walk around and photograph what is on offer for children and young people. Students then make up questions to ask agencies in the camp about the services they offer for children and young people. They make appointments and interview staff from the agencies. They display the results as a poster, as a video or report.
As a follow up activity, they create the perfect NGO to help children in the camp and draw out the type of camp it would be.

Exploring identity
The students created a large picture of a person which was a group creation with everyone contributing something from themselves. One group of girls drew a chained woman to represent a lack of freedom of expression for women in Arab countries, others created a girl from Syria who wanted to go to school and whose parents would not let her.

Hopes for the future
In their English class and photography class, students worked on future hopes by having their photo taken standing in front of the whiteboard with the sentence: When I grow up, I want to be. and holding up a piece of paper with their answer on it.
These photos were then put up around the room. There was an array of answers: singer x 4, doctor x 8, journalist, football player x 7, policewoman, teachers x 3

Cultural Diversity week
The team worked together on the implementation of a Cultural Diversity Week.

Examples of activities included:
• A variety of stories focusing on respecting diversity were told to the younger age groups (12-13). These culminated in the creation of a poster illustrating the ocean and highlighting the diversity of creatures that live in it. The students used different prime colors; mixing them together and witnessing the result of these “mixes”:
• Students were placed in a circle and asked to reply to 5 questions about themselves (name and age, nationality, things that make them happy, what they like about school and what they want to be when they grow up) in order to create a “group video”.
The aim of the video is to promote diversity but at the same time to show the children that even if they come from different countries, they have things in common and they all share similar goals
• “Starting a new: Planet Zero”. This activity was used to initiate discussion about diversity and, ultimately, human rights. Students began a journey to an unknown planet, decided what to take with them (needs and wants = rights) and then upon arriving, had to interact with the aliens who are already living there. The activity was addressed at the 14-17 age groups and implemented by English Language teachers and a Life Skills Facilitator.
### 13.8 APPENDIX 5
### 13.8.1 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TASKS FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

a) English Language – Beginner tasks for monitoring and evaluation

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>1) Can say and write the alphabet</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Can count from 0-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Can say the days of the week and months of the year</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Can give and receive information to complete a form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(including name, age, address, phone number, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Can talk about different kinds of food and drink</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>and say what they have for breakfast, lunch and dinner.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6) Can ask for different items in a shop. Can ask and understand prices</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) Can ask and tell the time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8) Can write about their daily routines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) Can talk about what they like to do in their free time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10) Can ask and give directions</td>
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<tr>
<td>11) Can write a letter describing themselves, including age,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical appearance, likes and dislikes</td>
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B) English Language - elementary tasks for monitoring and evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASK</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) Can give and receive personal information to complete a form</td>
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<tr>
<td>(including name, age, address, phone number, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Can count from 0 to 100 and say the days of the week and months of the year</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Can ask and answer questions in writing about their typical weekday</td>
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<tr>
<td>4) Can describe different kinds of clothes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5) Can understand prices and buy clothes in a shop</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6) Can order food and drink in a café</td>
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<tr>
<td>7) Can ask and answer questions about their hobbies and interests</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8) Can write a letter to a penpal describing themselves, their hobbies,</td>
<td></td>
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<td>their interests and routines etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9) Can ask and give directions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10) Can ask and answer questions about they did yesterday, last weekend etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11) Can write about what they did last weekend</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12) Can talk about their future plans and dreamsw</td>
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### 13.9 APPENDIX 6
### 13.9.1 INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Life skills activities</th>
<th>English Course book: New English File Oxford Picture House Oxford Discovery</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routines and ground rules</td>
<td>To familiarize students with rules and to create safety in group</td>
<td>Drama – spatial awareness, walking in different ways Body awareness, shapes from bodies Non-verbal communication PE - following basic routines, developing motor skills, stretching, warming up, fitness exercises Art - icebreaker with colours, posters of rules Photography - photos of student following/not following rules</td>
<td>Classroom rules, numbers, time, colours, days of week, simple present, modal verbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting to know each other, what we have in common.</td>
<td>To begin to build empathy in the group and encourage social cohesion</td>
<td>Working in pairs rather than bigger groups Drama - Copying and mirroring activities Trust exercises Active listening exercises PE - working in small groups, following routines, specific skills Art - pattern my name, literacy work on letters Photography - photos of a peer and writing about 'This is my friend' - similarities and differences</td>
<td>Communication about self and others - I'm.. this is.. Classroom language... Have you got... It's your turn... etc. Adjectives to describe people Countries Food Likes/dislikes Project: we are the same and different For some students - literacy work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Working together with others from different cultures and genders | Working in bigger groups  
Joint Event; Inclusion day  
Drama - creation of a drama character as a group  
PE - structured volleyball and football training, apples games  
Art - matching painters and pictures, painting containers  
Photography - photos showing different emotions - how do we all react to them?  
World Voice - using music to work together | Functional language  
Asking for information  
Asking for clarification  
Giving instructions/directions  
Describing pictures |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Developing awareness of self and others  
Identity  
Self-motivation | Emotions - showing them non-verbally and verbally  
Drama - role plays  
Art - talking in the street, art and emotion, resource management: looking after equipment  
PE - playing games, self-organizing, practicing Stop Technique to analyze difficult situations.  
Group meetings to change the game and design a new activity.  
Photography - photos of self and family | Naming emotions  
Talking about interests  
Talking about family  
Functional language for everyday situations e.g. body parts - at the doctor’s |
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| Developing creativity and risk taking | Joint event: Spring Festival  
Drama - different kinds of conflicts which arise in theatre  
PE - designing own group activity  
Art - using songs as stimuli for painting,  
Photography - poems and photos | Creating a new spaceship to a new planet  
Writing stories - past tenses  
Responding to songs and poems |
| Goals and Hopes for the future | Drama - image theatre, statues  
PE - fitness plans  
Art - masks  
Photography - photos of self with wishes for the future | Talking about future plans and Hope  
Vocabulary of jobs/careers |
| Helping others and leadership | PE - creating own teams and organizing matches  
Drama - performing a play  
Art - Piper and Me - fear and success  
Photography - taking photos of INGOs in camp and interviewing on children’s services provided | Talking about children’s rights  
Asking questions/interviewing INGO staff  
Poems and pictures on children’s rights |