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Language Education for Refugees and Migrants

Postgraduate Dissertation

“Educators' perspectives on inclusive education for Ukrainian
refugee children”

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Supervisor: Sofia Tsioli

Patras, Greece, June 2023

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“Educators' perspectives on inclusive education for Ukrainian
refugee children”

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“I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Sofia Tsioli, for her continuous support and invaluable mentorship throughout this endeavor. I would also like to thank the research participants for their time and contribution. Finally, words cannot express my gratitude to my family and Andreas for absolutely everything.”

Abstract

The unparalleled number of Ukrainian refugees that arrived in Poland led to the urgent issue of attending to the needs of forcibly displaced people. Addressing Ukrainian refugee children's educational needs is crucial as educational access greatly impacts the inclusion of refugees. To this vein, this research project aims to shed light to the perspectives of Polish and Ukrainian educators on inclusive education for Ukrainian refugee children based in Warsaw, Poland. In particular, it aspires to discuss the perspectives of educators on the basis of (language) educational inclusivity viewed through a two-fold lens: First, the needs of Ukrainian refugee children are explored, highlighting the challenges of the refugee experience. Secondly, the access and opportunity barriers to Ukrainian refugees' education are investigated. Finally, possible differentiations concerning Ukrainian refugee girls' needs and barriers to education are searched for and reflected upon. The data for this qualitative study was collected through the conduction of semi-structured interviews with 6 educators of Ukrainian refugee children in formal education, and was analyzed with the method of the Thematic Analysis. The findings of this study first indicated the significant learning, psychological and social needs of the Ukrainian refugee students; namely, the need for maintaining previous connections, establishing an empathetic learning environment, providing Polish lessons and differentiated educational methods, further training teachers, increasing the number of interpreters and bilingual teaching staff, and involving refugee students' parents. Regarding the barriers to Ukrainian students' education, significant barriers arose, including language barriers, Ukrainian children's post-traumatic stress symptoms, Ukrainian parents' attitudes, teachers' frustration, and Polish schools' underfunding due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which led to decreased activities and provided lessons, lack of bilingual staff, and limited resources and infrastructure. Additionally, school psychologists' limited help along with the noteworthy dual school attendance of Ukrainian refugees were highlighted. Finally, regarding the education of Ukrainian refugee girls in Poland, no major differentiations emerged, while slight differentiations noted are restricted within the gender-normative behavioral differences. These findings indicate the need for additional funding of Polish schools and targeted research, oriented towards inclusive refugee education that encompasses a holistic model and interdisciplinary approaches.

Keywords

Educators' perspectives, inclusive refugee education, Ukrainian refugees, educational needs, educational barriers, refugee girls

“Οι αντιλήψεις των εκπαιδευτικών για την συμπεριληπτική εκπαίδευση παιδιών προσφύγων από την Ουκρανία”

Βάια Χριστίνα Κοντογιάννη

Περίληψη

Ο αριθμός Ουκρανών προσφύγων που έφθασαν στην Πολωνία καθιστά επείγουσα την ανάγκη κάλυψης των αναγκών των βίαια εκτοπισθέντων. Οι εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες των παιδιών προσφύγων από την Ουκρανία χρήζουν άμεσης αντιμετώπισης, καθώς η (μη) πρόσβαση στην εκπαίδευση επηρεάζει σημαντικά τη συνέχεια της εκπαίδευσης τους. Σε αυτό το πνεύμα, η συγκεκριμένη έρευνα στοχεύει να αναδείξει τις αντιλήψεις των Πολωνών και Ουκρανών εκπαιδευτικών σχετικά με την συμπεριληπτική εκπαίδευση παιδιών προσφύγων από την Ουκρανία που εδρεύουν στην Βαρσοβία, Πολωνία. Ειδικότερα, φιλοδοξεί να περιγράψει τις οπτικές των εκπαιδευτικών με βάση την εκπαιδευτική ενσωμάτωση των Ουκρανών προσφύγων, υπό διττό πρίσμα: Πρώτον, μέσω της διερεύνησης των αναγκών των παιδιών-προσφύγων από την Ουκρανία. Δεύτερον, μέσω της διερεύνησης των εμποδίων σχετικά με την πρόσβαση και ευκαιρίες στην εκπαίδευσή τους. Τέλος, εξετάζονται και οι πιθανές διαφοροποιήσεις σχετικά με τις ανάγκες των κοριτσιών προσφυγισσών από την Ουκρανία και τα πιθανά εμπόδιά τους στην εκπαίδευση. Τα δεδομένα αυτής της ποιοτικής μελέτης συλλέχθηκαν μέσω της διεξαγωγής ημιδομημένων συνεντεύξεων με 6 εκπαιδευτικούς τυπικής εκπαίδευσης και αναλύθηκαν με τη μέθοδο της Θεματικής Ανάλυσης. Τα ευρήματα κατέδειξαν τις σημαντικές μαθησιακές, ψυχολογικές και κοινωνικές ανάγκες των Ουκρανών προσφύγων. Συγκεκριμένα ανέδειξαν την ανάγκη διατήρησης προηγούμενων συνδέσεων, την δημιουργία ασφαλούς μαθησιακού περιβάλλοντος, την παροχή πολωνικών μαθημάτων και διαφοροποιημένων εκπαιδευτικών μεθόδων, την ανάγκη για περαιτέρω κατάρτιση των εκπαιδευτικών, αύξηση των διερμηνέων και του δίγλωσσου διδακτικού προσωπικού και τη συμμετοχή των γονέων των προσφύγων μαθητών στην εκπαίδευση. Όσον αφορά τα

εμπόδια στην εκπαίδευση των Ουκρανών μαθητών/μαθητριών, αναδείχθηκαν γλωσσικά εμπόδια, συμπτώματα μετατραυματικού στρες των μαθητών/μαθητριών, η στάση των Ουκρανών γονέων, η απογοήτευση των δασκάλων και η υποχρηματοδότηση των πολωνικών σχολείων λόγω της πανδημίας Covid-19, που οδήγησε σε μείωση δραστηριοτήτων και μαθημάτων, έλλειψη προσωπικού, καθώς και σε περιορισμένους πόρους και υποδομές. Επιπρόσθετα, επισημάνθηκε η περιορισμένη βοήθεια των σχολικών ψυχολόγων, όπως και η φοίτηση Ουκρανών προσφύγων σε δύο σχολεία παράλληλα. Τέλος, σχετικά με την εκπαίδευση των Ουκρανών κοριτσιών στην Πολωνία, δεν προέκυψαν σημαντικές διαφοροποιήσεις, ενώ οι μικρές διαφοροποιήσεις που σημειώθηκαν αφορούν στους έμφυλους ρόλους. Τα ευρήματα της έρευνας υποδεικνύουν την ανάγκη για πρόσθετη χρηματοδότηση των πολωνικών σχολείων και στοχευμένη έρευνα, προσανατολισμένη στη συνεκπαίδευση προσφύγων μέσα από ένα ολιστικό μοντέλο και διεπιστημονικές προσεγγίσεις.

Λέξεις – Κλειδιά

Αντιλήψεις εκπαιδευτικών, συμπεριληπτική εκπαίδευση προσφύγων, Ουκρανοί πρόσφυγες, εκπαιδευτικές ανάγκες, εκπαιδευτικά εμπόδια, κορίτσια πρόσφυγισσες

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List of Abbreviations & Acronyms

ADHD	Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder
EECEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based Violence
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

1. Introduction

Just a few months earlier, on the 24th of February, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine resulting in an immense influx of Ukrainians fleeing the country to the EU neighboring countries. Since then, approximately 7.7 million Ukrainian refugees moved across Europe in pursuit of a safer environment, about 8 million remain displaced within Ukraine ("Situation Ukraine refugee situation," n.d.) and it is estimated that 90% of the displaced population are women and children. After the aftermath of World War II, this invasion is Europe's largest refugee crisis and creates a distinctive, unprecedented situation. ("Ukraine situation," n.d.)

Most Ukrainian refugees first reached neighboring countries, such as Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and Romania and by the end of September, the countries that received the highest numbers of refugees were Russia, Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic ("Ukraine situation," n.d.). European Union (EU) countries bordering Ukraine have allowed entry to all Ukrainian refugees, and the EU has invoked measures granting Ukrainians the right to stay, work, and study in any European Union member state for an initial period of one year ("Information for people fleeing the war in Ukraine," n.d.). The overall perception of the surrounding countries and the European Union has been highly positive (Morrice, 2022). Refugees have been housed and transported by civil society and necessary supplies were provided. In addition, great agility was noticed regarding the adaptability of laws and border control policies, which were adjusted to let Ukrainian refugees enter and find employment in the host countries, without having to go through regular bureaucratic procedures (Morrice, 2022).

Among the countries that received significant numbers of Ukrainians is Poland. By the end of July, more than 1.2 million Ukrainian refugees were recorded in Poland, allowed to stay without the need for formal identification documents and regular formalities which would apply to refugees from other parts of the world (Morrice, 2022). Food, accommodation, and other necessities were offered, while organizations and volunteers played an important assisting role. Additionally, legal alterations were, and are still, in action in order to simplify the employment procedures for Ukrainian refugees. According to recent estimations, about 800.000 Ukrainians moved through the capital of Poland, Warsaw, while at the culmination point of the crisis 300.000 people were temporarily

residing in the area of Warsaw. According to the mayor of Warsaw, approximately 170.000 refugees from Ukraine are living in the city at the moment ("Warsaw and its surroundings host 240,000 Ukrainian refugees," n.d.).

The unparalleled number of Ukrainians that arrived in Poland leads to the urgent issue of attending to the forcibly displaced people's needs. One of the most basic needs of all people – after securing one's survival needs – are employment opportunities for adults and proper education opportunities for children. It is estimated that more than 1.5 million of Ukraine's youth have left the country (Malinowski, 2022 as cited in Pacek, 2022), while the Deputy Director General of UNICEF Poland, Renata Bem has mentioned that more than half of the Ukrainian refugees in Poland are children (Bem, 2022, as cited in Pacek, 2022). The above-mentioned data dictate the urgency of dealing with Ukrainian children's need for education, as schooling plays a vital role in supporting the inclusion of refugee children and their families. Therefore, targeted research is required in order to examine the perspectives surrounding the education of refugee students and assess the supports that minimize barriers to learning and promote inclusion.

Refugee children face multiple challenges while settling in a new country. Adapting to a new culture and language is often accompanied by disrupted education, poverty, unstable accommodation, family network disruption, discrimination, and racism (Block et al., 2014). Under these circumstances, the impact of proper education can be determining for children's lives. Children of refugee background often lack engagement, express feelings of disempowerment, and exit school from an early age (Porche et al., 2011; Watson, 2009, as cited in Block et al., 2014). This leads to a vicious circle of disadvantage, exclusion, and marginalization, which along with the resettlement-related trauma, deteriorates children's well-being (Correa-Velez et al., 2010, as cited in Block et al., 2014).

To this end, education plays a fundamental role in effectively supporting these children. The provision of an inclusive education that removes students' obstacles and addresses their multiple needs, can build on their strengths in a positive environment. Such a supportive environment enhances students' confidence, creates a sense of belonging and acceptance, helps students reach their potential, and promotes social inclusion. Consequently, refugee students become armed with resilience and skills to further evolve and succeed in life. Thus, it is crucial not only to support children with their trauma recovery, - but also to facilitate their incorporation into the mainstream curriculum and

classes (National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Refugee Trauma Taskforce, 2005; Steele, 2002, as cited in Block et al., 2014).

Language education for refugee children is of paramount importance and an integral part of their education. It can be a valuable tool for empowerment, and self-confidence through the promotion of interaction and communication, and a medium for increased opportunities and benefits in the target settings of students, allowing for children's social inclusion and ending discrimination and marginalization (Tadayon & Khodi, 2017). To this effect, teachers' perspectives and ideas concerning (language) teaching for refugee children are particularly noteworthy as they greatly impact the formers' teaching practices (Skilton-Sylvester, 2003). The perspectives of educators inform policy planning and shape educational contexts, as well as directly affect the effectiveness of instruction (Ball & Lardner, 1997), thus, they will be central to this research.

Access to proper education greatly impacts the inclusion of refugee children, offering the students opportunities to progress, while meeting, not only their learning needs but their social and psychological ones as well. To this end, there is a need for research that will investigate educators' perspectives on the education provided to Ukrainian refugee children through a rigorous and thorough prism. Such research could effectively determine the special conditions of this newly emerged, ongoing issue, acknowledging its unique characteristics.

Despite the fact that minority education has been thoroughly investigated by researchers throughout Europe, refugee education often appears to be examined either through the prism of refugee migration research or education research, often failing to cater to education targeted to the refugee population. Although there has been growing relevant research in Europe due to the vast, ongoing influx of refugees towards the Mediterranean during the previous years, it used to be a neglected topic in Europe until relatively recently. The countries that were traditionally the most concerned with research on refugee education were the ones with a long tradition of educating immigrant children, such as Canada, Australia, or the USA (e.g., Block et al., 2014; McBrien, 2005; Pugh et al., 2012; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012, as cited in De Wal Pastoor, 2016). Throughout the past years, richer research has been conducted in Europe as well, investigating the refugee flows through the Mediterranean Sea. However, there is still a need for research-based insight into refugee education which is vital in order to provide policymakers, authorities in

education, as well as schools and educators, with trustworthy and applicable information (McBrien, 2005; Pastoor, 2015). Relevant research in this field is a slow process and necessitates reimagining various aspects of education in order to adapt to the current sociopolitical developments through a holistic model and multidisciplinary approaches to refugee education (De Wal Pastoor, 2016).

Moreover, the literature gap regarding the case of Ukrainian refugee children is significant due to the recent and still emergent characteristics of the particular issue. Current sociopolitical events related to the Russian invasion of Ukraine transform daily, directly affecting and shaping the education provided to refugee children and the perspectives around it. A small amount of study has been conducted, mostly limited to the context of reports and journalists' depictions, while academic research is scarce. Another significant limitation is that most reports carried out thus far are quantitative. Thus, they are valuable as they demonstrate the intensity of the examined issue in numbers, yet, they lack interest in the personal stories and fail to discuss the complexity of the examined phenomenon. On the contrary, the qualitative study proposed, among others, achieves to take into account the emotions, challenges, and, first-hand experiences of educators currently working with refugees from Ukraine, raising their voices in a direct and genuine way.

Finally, it is crucial to underline that there are great differences between the Ukrainian refugee issue and other refugee issues. This is corroborated by the unprecedented humanitarian response and solidarity of the EU countries, demonstrating high levels of empathy and connection to the current crisis. According to Morrice (2022), this is due to the "geographical, cultural, religious, and racial proximity, coupled with conformity to the archetypal refugee in the European imaginary" (p.252). As a result, findings on inclusive refugee education of previous research are useful, however, there is a need for new studies that will include the different parameters functioning in this specific refugee issue.

The main aim of this academic endeavor will be to explore the perspectives of educators on inclusive education for Ukrainian refugee children based in Warsaw, Poland. In particular, it will discuss the perspectives and ideas of refugee educators on the basis of (language) educational inclusivity. Teachers' perspectives will be examined based on the supports they utilize to create a space for an inclusive, holistic education, that meets students' needs and attempts to tackle possible barriers. Thus, teachers' perceptions of educational inclusivity will be assessed through a two-fold lens: First, the needs (learning,

emotional, social) of refugee children will be explored, shedding light on the challenges and adversities of the refugee experience. Secondly, the barriers to refugee education will be examined. Finally, possible differentiations concerning Ukrainian refugee girls' needs and barriers to education will be investigated due to the additional challenges and discrimination refugee girls often face on the basis of their gender, which is a crucial, yet, not thoroughly researched topic, especially concerning refugee girls in western countries.

2. Theoretical Concepts and Literature Review

2.1 Refugee Education and Barriers to refugee education

As previously noted, education plays a fundamental role in supporting children of refugee background, as it has the capacity to remove students' obstacles and address their complex needs, within a positive environment (Block et al., 2014). Education for all students, including education for the refugee population, is a fundamental human right (UNCRC, 1989; UNHCR, 2011), enabling every child to reach their full potential and be included (UNICEF, 2016). The integration approach to the refugee-education principles was included by Dryden-Peterson (2011). The number of refugee children arriving in Europe for years highlights the need for a quality refugee education, - and a supportive educational context that prompts resettlement and encourages inclusion in the host country (Block, Cross, Riggs, & Gibbs, 2014; Pastoor, 2015; Rutter, 2003; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). However, it is considerably challenging to improve the quality of refugee education, and, despite its beneficial impact, it is still limited and often low quality, due to a variety of barriers and social-political factors (e.g., the high number of students and the low number of -often untrained- educators) (Dryden-Peterson, 2011). According to Taylor & Sidhu (2012), the assistance models often adopted by agents such as UNHCR focus on temporary emergency relief, compromising the human rights of refugees. This educational disadvantage of refugee children shines through their marginalization from the formal education of host countries.

A variety of obstacles in refugee education, along with socioeconomic discrepancies, leads to performance gaps among non-immigrant and immigrant/refugee students (OECD, 2012). Refugee students frequently come from low socioeconomic status, and their families may lack the language skills and knowledge of the new educational system of the host society (De Wal Pastoor, 2016). In addition, it is common for refugee students to have limited/interrupted prior schooling, while insufficient support, teacher training, and equipment as well as a lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity in host schools further hinder refugee children's academic progress and success (Block et al., 2014; Pastoor, 2015).

According to the aforementioned findings, the inclusivity of refugee education aligns with the deduction of barriers to learning faced by children (Bornman & Rose, 2010). Therefore, a distinction between opportunity barriers and access barriers to participation is useful for this study (Beukelman & Mirenda, 2005). By “opportunity barriers” we will refer in this study to learning barriers that are imposed by external factors, e.g., negative attitudes towards refugees, stereotypes, lack of teacher training, or lack of parental involvement. By “access barriers” we refer to parameters affecting learning that source from within the child, e.g., language literacy skills, resettlement-related anxiety, prior traumatic experiences, and other psychosocial factors (Schoolleidersregister PO, 2016).

According to Dryden-Peterson et al., as described in the report they had reported for UNESCO (2018), barriers to education can be also classified into the broader categories of physical and identity-based barriers. The reference to physical barriers refers to issues related to the resources, facilities or capacity provided. These may be the limited number of school buildings or lack of teaching staff. Contrarily, the identity-based barriers entail the differences in school access and the discrimination faced by refugee students, due to their ethnicity, gender, religion, language of origin, sexuality, or citizenship-status (Lewin, 2009).

2.2 Inclusive education

2.2.1 Fundamental principles and literature findings

Deducting the mentioned barriers can lead to the provision of a refugee education that meets children’s needs and helps learners reach their full potential. This kind of education is called “inclusive” and encompasses individualized approaches, focused support, and collaboration and engagement with children’s families and communities (European Commission, 2020). The term was at first used in reference to the integration of pupils with disabilities in mainstream classrooms, nowadays though, it is used broadly, covering a wide range of diversity within school environments, e.g., cultural, and linguistic (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Thus, inclusive education aims at offering equal and quality educational opportunities to all students, regardless of their different needs, instead of aiming at the ‘special’ education provisions of mainstream schools (De Wal Pastoor, 2016). In order for

this to happen though, education reforms are required, such as changes in policymaking, structures, and educational programs (De Wal Pastoor, 2016).

At this point, we should draw a distinction between integration and inclusion, as inclusion will be a core concept in this research. Despite the fact that these two terms are often used interchangeably, they bear a difference in meaning. Integration in education is the process of placing diverse students “in mainstream education settings with specialized support on condition that they can fit within the pre-existing environments, structures and attitudes” (UNESCO, 2017, p.8). On the contrary, “inclusion” can be perceived as “a matter of adopting a socio-ecological approach regarding the interactions between students’ capabilities and environmental demands, stressing that educational systems must adapt to and reach all students – and not vice versa” (Amor et al., 2018, p.10, as cited in Mezzanotte, 2022). Thus, inclusion entails a profound level of participation and involvement in mainstream learning settings, where students’ backgrounds are valued and diversity is celebrated (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

As already mentioned the limited financial resources and lack of proper teacher training and expertise in the field of refugee education, among others, result in difficulties in providing quality refugee education for children in the EU context as well as globally (De Wal Pastoor, 2016). The distinctive needs of refugee students, being greatly different from the ones of other migrant students (Arnot & Pinson, 2005; Pastoor, 2015; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012), call for a specialized and focused teaching environment, that moves away from the monolingual, monocultural and Eurocentric paradigm that is detrimental to the achievement of refugee children. On the contrary, it is essential to incorporate research-based data in regard to the supports, approaches, and practices that lead to equity and quality for mainstream-school learners (De Wal Pastoor, 2016). Before analyzing the classroom practices necessary for students’ inclusion, it is vital to describe what characterizes inclusion in refugee education and examine the relevant literature.

Arnot and Pinson’s (2005) study on inclusive school policies and practices is remarkable for its focus on a holistic grounding, based on experience. In addition, according to Rutter (2006), “good practice” literature encompasses a number of factors: the significance of a non-racist, welcoming environment; the need to attend to students’ psychological and social needs; and covering students’ linguistic needs. Moreover, the promotion of refugee students’ academic development and overall well-being is prominent.

As noted, integral part of the process towards refugee students' inclusion is to provide the necessary support for the development of both languages, refugee children's mother tongue and second language, too (Rutter & Stanton, 2001). According to research findings, the acquisition of the host-country language varies significantly as, for instance, "children may be competent at spoken, colloquial English but considerably behind in academic English" (McBrien, 2005, p. 342 as cited in Cerna, 2019). As a result, bilingual students who may be fluent in their second (host-country) language, but perform poorly academically, are often sent to special-education classes or in classes of low academic level, as their low performance and test scores are attributed to deficiency in their cognitive abilities, despite them being highly capable (Cummins, 2001). Such an example has been the researched case of Latino/Latina students in Texas, who were falsely labeled with the restricting label of being "learning disabled" that led them to special-education classes and resulted in them falling further behind in school (Cummins, 2001). Thus, acquiring proficiency in the instruction-language is vital as it enhances refugee children's academic progress and success (Clifford et al., 2013, as cited in Cerna, 2019). It should be highlighted that the often mentioned "language barrier", - implying refugee students' lack of proficiency in the second language (Polish language in our case), - does not denote a "barrier" or a "problem" weighing on refugee students. On the contrary, it indicates the emergence of an issue that weighs on policy-makers and teaching staff, in order to create inclusive learning environments in which, limited knowledge of the second language is not an obstacle for students' learning and well-being. Therefore, it denotes the importance of providing such an education that allows for students' smooth, gradual and non-obstructive adaptation and language acquisition in the new learning environment and celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom.

According to one of the first studies on refugee education in Greece, carried out in 2016, in the framework of project P.R.E.S.S. and funded by the Hellenic Open University, significant is the role of language education as a means for refugee students' further socialization, and as a useful tool for their daily communication in the "transit" conditions, as well as, in their future destinations. In addition, in such conditions, English often seems to be the preferred language to be learnt by refugee children and youth ("Project PRESS: εθνογραφικές προσεγγίσεις της εκπαίδευσης προσφύγων στην Ελλάδα|Διεθνές Συνέδριο για την Ανοικτή & εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση," 2017).

At the same time, refugee children's inclusion necessitates the further development of their first language, too, which can also enhance their capabilities of second-language learning, and create a sense of belonging and stronger bonds within their community (European Commission, 2015). Research by project P.R.E.S.S. (2017) in the Greek context denoted the significance for refugee students to learn their first language, apart from the second language, or English as a foreign language. Learning their first language is vital for refugee students' overall progress,- may it be in an informal setting through family members' interactions, or in non-formal settings, such as within their community, or through the use of digital tools, and media- ("Project PRESS: εθνογραφικές προσεγγίσεις της εκπαίδευσης προσφύγων στην Ελλάδα|Διεθνές Συνέδριο για την Ανοικτή & εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση," 2017).

In addition, Arnot and Pinson's (2005) research stressed that successful interventions share a holistic approach, working to respond to children's psycho-social needs in addition to the learning ones. Having faced war, displacement and trauma, schools can operate as a safe space for the unsettled lives of children (Matthews, 2008). Moreover, research in the Greek context indicated that refugee children experience a sense of normality when they communicate and socialize with their peers and classmates in schools, which is highly empowering for them ("Project PRESS: εθνογραφικές προσεγγίσεις της εκπαίδευσης προσφύγων στην Ελλάδα|Διεθνές Συνέδριο για την Ανοικτή & εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση," 2017). Arnot and Pinson (2005) also advocated in favor of such a model and identified it as one that recognizes the complex character of refugee students' multiple needs.

The UK studies mentioned, examining "good practice" that creates an inclusive education environment, also stress the importance of parental engagement and connections with the general community, while emphasizing "an ethos of inclusion", a "celebration of diversity" and the promotion of positive images of refugee background students (Arnot & Pinson, 2005, p.51, as cited in Taylor & Sidhu, 2012, p.45). According to a report by UNESCO (2018), the term "inclusion" describes the dynamic process of "coming together of refugees and nationals in schools" (p.10).

In this research, we embrace the values and characteristics of inclusive education as they were met in the studies mentioned previously. According to them, inclusive education for refugees is characterized by a balance between supporting the specific needs of refugee

students without “othering” them, a commitment to social justice, and acceptance by schools, which also includes students’ parents. Moreover, a holistic approach to children’s education and well-being that guarantees their equal participation in education and a close bond with the community is crucial. The Tasmanian Education Department (2008, p.1, as cited in Taylor & Sidhu, 2012) notes that inclusive education ensures that all learners, “regardless of their differences, are part of the school community and can feel that they belong. The mandate to ensure access, participation and achievement for every student is taken as given”, abolishing existing stereotypes and misconceptions, as well as, rooted racism and discrimination, which lead to mental health problems and deteriorate children’s learning (Graham et al., 2016).

Consequently, drawing from the findings of the studies examined, we view inclusive refugee education as a kind of education that:

1. provides a curriculum accessible to all children,
2. offers a supportive and welcoming environment,
3. meets all children’s learning, social and psychological needs,
4. creates a sense of respect, belonging, and safety for students,
5. ensures that a holistic model approach is offered, that provides equal participation for all,
6. celebrates diversity and promotes cultural awareness and positive images of the refugee experience.

This set of principles that encompasses the fundamental aspects of inclusive refugee education demonstrates that inclusion is about equal participation of all, unconditionally. It goes beyond mere acceptance of all students, to welcoming and celebrating their diverse backgrounds.

2.2.2 Classroom Practices for inclusive refugee education

To provide quality refugee education and meet refugee students’ complex needs, certain teaching choices must be made regarding the educational materials and teaching methods. Classroom practices should be oriented towards a learner-centric approach within which students’ needs are in a prominent position (Dryden-Peterson, 2011; Pastoor, 2008).

Despite the learner-centric character for an inclusive environment though, educators are the ones in charge of classroom management, thus, teachers must have comprehensive education and ongoing development to successfully respond to the diverse needs of all students (culturally and linguistically) (Dryden-Peterson, 2011).

Inclusive educational practices emphasize participation and student involvement, - while maintaining an interest in the sociocultural aspects of the teaching process. Promoting cultural and intercultural awareness in the curriculum and teaching material is an essential element of an inclusive classroom (DeCapua, 2016). Moreover, suitable teaching resources should be provided to teachers, along with their education on the refugee experience in order to enhance their competence regarding students' academic and psychosocial difficulties and encourage children's rehabilitation and learning (McBrien, 2005; Pastoor, 2015).

Targeted support should be also provided to refugee students when entering the education system, through programs that allow them to take part in mainstream classes as soon as possible (e.g., intensive language courses), while focused psychological support would be helpful for children who have experienced war-related trauma. After-school clubs, events, and activities that promote socializing are also crucial, offering children a sense of safety and belonging and enhancing their confidence through peers' acceptance. Such provisions create an inclusive environment that is beneficial for the education of refugee children in the school setting (World Bank, 2015).

By covering children's various needs and implementing targeted classroom practices like the ones mentioned, diversity is honored, and inclusive education is achieved (Arnot & Pinson, 2005).

2.2.3 The image of the education provided to refugee children

In regard to the image of the education provided to refugee children, there is rich literature depicting the existing conditions. According to Taylor & Sidhu (2012), refugee children face educational disadvantages due to their exclusion or marginalization in the asylum countries' education systems. As Arnot & Pinson (2005) have noted, forcibly displaced children had been ignored by policymakers and researchers, thus, their cultural, social, and economic inclusion was hindered. Sidhu & Taylor (2007) as well as Arnot & Pinson

(2005) have concluded in their studies that the needs of refugee-background students were rarely met with a specific policy. In particular, schools would often address children's needs, - namely social, learning, and emotional -, however, they failed to focus on ways to facilitate students' inclusion within the mainstream curriculum.

Adding to the above-mentioned findings, Rutter (2006) highlights the focus of schools on refugee students' traumatic experiences and the under-addressing of their educational experiences by research and education professionals. Evidently, it is common for refugee education to be dominated by psychological approaches. This medicalization of refugee experience, focusing on prior trauma and therapeutic interventions may ultimately fail to address a wider range of inequality and discrimination (Matthews, 2008, as cited in Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Furthermore, Taylor's study (2008) conveyed the insufficiency of teaching resources and materials which led to shortages in teaching staff, and limited professional development and training, all resulting in difficulties in meeting children's needs (Taylor, 2008, as cited in Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

Moreover, Ganimian and Murnane (2016) emphasize on the systemic failure to improve the quality of education provided to refugee children, attributing it to the prominent approach of providing "more of the same" to immensely expanded groups of refugee students. UNESCO (2018) stresses that national education systems have the capacity to offer quality education for refugee students, however, this is hindered by the interplay among curriculum and pedagogy on the one hand, and school administration and educators' choices, on the other hand. It is crucial to notice that schools function within a wider sociopolitical structure. This denotes that the messages that want to transmit to refugee children and their families about inclusion and belonging, are often constrained by these social and political structures they are involved in (Dryden-Peterson, Under review; Janmyr, 2016). This also highlights the importance of the engagement of refugee communities in policymaking, in order to consolidate that the sociopolitical structures are also linked to their attempts for cohesion and inclusion (Plan International, 2017). Finally, it should be stressed that the studies mentioned above collectively concluded that language support and students' emotional needs received a prominent position in refugee education, while the other learning needs of students were not met adequately (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

At this point it should be added that regarding the perception of Ukrainian refugee children in schools across the European Union (EU), significant fluctuations have been noted concerning the number and the ages of the enrolled students. According to the Eurydice Report issued by EECEA (European Education and Culture Executive Agency), educational EU authorities have issued recent guidance to inform and help local schools receive Ukrainian refugees (Corporate-body.EACEA:European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2022). Regulations and top-level guidance are carried out by most of the EU countries in order to assess the needs and capabilities of the Ukrainian students, with a special focus on the language of learning. However, not as many of the education systems focus on students' psychosocial needs as they do regarding the linguistic ones.

Moreover, according to the same report, most of the education systems of the EU countries promote the integration of Ukrainian refugee students in their mainstream classes, also providing intensive lessons for the acquisition of the instruction language, while fewer systems promote the initial separation of Ukrainian refugee students and their enrollment in non-mainstream reception classes. In addition, most of the European education systems provide valuable support to local schools and encourage distance-learning for the Ukrainian refugee students who want to continue following the Ukrainian curriculum through the provision of digital tools, equipment and space in schools. Flexibility in the laws and processes of hiring additional educational staff has been also established which allows for teachers' collaboration with Ukrainian teachers or teaching assistants in order to enhance refugee students' learning and overall wellness. It should be stressed that some of the EU countries have created material that helps schools and educators support Ukrainian refugee children psychologically, and have implemented teacher-training programs and seminars focusing on mental health issues and trauma faced by Ukrainian students (Corporate-body.EACEA:European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2022).

These measures and guidelines highlight an overall support and positive reception of the Ukrainian refugee students in local European schools, however, emphasis seems to be given on students' learning needs. Learning needs are crucial, however, in order to achieve educational inclusion a holistic approach that caters for the various needs of refugee students is required (Corporate-body.EACEA:European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2022).

2.3 The Polish Integration Policy for Ukrainian refugee children and challenges for the Polish education system

As mentioned, more than 75,000 children became refugees daily since the outbreak of the war ("UNICEF: Co minute Z Ukrainy ucieka 55 dzieci", 2022). According to the Deputy Director General of UNICEF in Poland, Renata Bem, Ukrainian children constitute more than half of the Ukrainian refugees in Poland, while in the official governmental registers there were about 900.000 refugee children ("Renata Bem: Spośród około 2,7 mln uchodźców ponad połowa to ukraińskie dzieci", 2022). These numbers highlight the necessitation for the induction of Ukrainian students to the Polish schools. Due to the clear role of education as one of the main means for social inclusion, introducing educational processes that aim at the integration of Ukrainian refugee children in Poland is crucial. Integral part of integration is the acquisition of the language of the host country, which sets language education for refugee students at the forefront in terms of education policy. It should be stressed that Ukrainian children already constituted a substantial percentage in terms of numbers of foreign students in Polish schools. However, after February, 2022, an unprecedented influx of Ukrainian children has been witnessed, which has different characteristics from the Ukrainian students who used to reside in Poland prior to the Russian aggression.

In particular, according to Stankiewicz & Żurek (2022) both, Ukrainian, migrant students and Ukrainian refugee students, share similarities regarding their cultural differences and (total or partial) lack of knowledge of Polish, while facing uncertainty in a new, unknown environment. However, studies emphasize the differences these two groups share, which in many ways affect and even determine children's openness to their inclusion, their motivation to learning a new language and being part of a new school environment, thus, impacting the success of the educational process. Forcefully migrating, with no prior preparation, and living in unsafe, often life threatening, and uncertain conditions are elements that completely shape the lived experience of Ukrainian refugees.

In terms of the Polish legal framework for children of migratory background, it has been established that all students have the right to study in the Polish education system for free. Specifically, the Act of 7 September 1991 determined the ways of admitting migrant students to the Polish schools, with a planning for the provision of additional Polish

language lessons and induction classes (Pacek, 2022). It has been also laid down that non-Polish citizens have the right to be offered assistance of a speaker of their first language, through the employment of a teacher's assistant by the school's head. In addition, pedagogical and psychological support is provided to migrant students that can address and diagnose their particular needs. Migrant students' admission to Polish schools requires the provision of relevant documents and, often an interview, after having considered students' age and prior years of schooling (Stankiewicz & Żurek, 2022).

The above mentioned information addresses the general pre-existing legal framework in Poland. However, following the current events and the increasing influx of Ukrainian refugee students in Polish schools, legislation changes have been made that can address this new educational reality and help schools' staff adapt to the emerging needs. A significant expansion in schools along with the employment of more teachers is required, as well as, additional needs have emerged in order to accommodate Ukrainian refugee students' distance-learning of the Ukrainian curriculum. Thus, technical support, equipment and tools need to be provided (Pacek, 2022).

The current situation has led to a two-fold course of action, as promoted by the Ministry of Education and Science of Poland; that of "preparatory" (separate) class- attendance and that of "normal" (mainstream) class-attendance (Corporate-body.EACEA:European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2022).

On the one hand, Ukrainian refugee students - especially the ones who are not Polish speakers - can attend preparatory classes in certain Polish schools according to a separation model. In preparatory classes refugee students follow the mainstream Polish curriculum, but they also attend Polish lessons. There used to be up to 15 students in these preparatory classes, however, according to new regulations, this number has risen to 25 students. The Polish language lessons are provided for up to 6 hours per week (which used to be 3 hours prior to war). As noted the general education curriculum is followed, however the teaching content should be adapted depending on students' specific educational and psychological needs.

On the other hand, schools are given the option to follow an integration model, which allows Ukrainian students to join the mainstream classes of Polish schools, attending the regular curriculum as their Polish classmates do. In case of insufficient knowledge of

Polish, students can also attend 6 hours of additional Polish lessons, without though exceeding the number of 15 students in each group (Stankiewicz & Żurek, 2022). As estimated by preliminary evaluations, approximately 90% of the registered Ukrainian students ended up in mainstream classes with Polish students, following the integration model, while the rest of them (about 10%) ended up in preparatory classes (Pacek, 2022). It should be also added that Ukrainian refugee students are given the opportunity to enroll in the Ukrainian schools operating in Poland as well, following the Ukrainian national curriculum.

It must be pointed that, although both languages, the Polish and the Ukrainian, belong to the larger group of Slavic languages, achieving fluency in Polish is a challenging and time-consuming process for refugee students, which is further deteriorated due to a lack of tailored curricula and teaching material that focuses on refugee students' needs (Stankiewicz & Żurek, 2022). In addition, students are rightfully permitted to some extra remedial classes. It should be noted that Ukrainian students who wish to continue their education in their prior school in Ukraine, remotely, do not have the right to enroll to the Polish education system, - in principle to the very least. Moreover, it has been established that all Ukrainian students in Poland are entitled to lessons of the Ukrainian language, for up to 5 hours per week, depending though on school's availability of facilities. Finally, there is the possibility of a mixed- model, which in principle combines features of both, the separation and the integration model. This is though practically non-existent, because of the organizational and administrative challenges it poses (Stankiewicz & Żurek, 2022).

Overall, as it is pointed out, the current framework allows school directors and governing entities to function autonomously, within the infrastructural and occupational limitations they operate. This means that school directors and administrators essentially decide on the adoption of the integration or the separation model of education for their schools, depending on the practical applicability of the required regulations, which depend on various factors (school's staff, funding, infrastructure, etc.) (Stankiewicz & Żurek, 2022). Thus, support should be offered to schools at a systemic level, and organizations with experience in working with refugees should be involved in the decision-making process, in order to facilitate an efficient course of decisions and actions from the school's perspective.

This new reality has resulted in a number of challenges for the Polish education system. The vast number of new students necessitates the need for changes in legislation and adaptations in infrastructure in order to accommodate all students. In contrast to Minister Czarnek's claims, research indicates that Ukrainian students who have been enrolled to Polish classrooms cannot speak Polish, but only speak Ukrainian and Russian, which is greatly challenging for the Polish educators (Pacek, 2022). Thus, a significant increase in Polish teachers, Ukrainian-speaking teachers and teaching assistants ("Polish-Ukrainian assistants") needs to be introduced. Moreover, Polish schools should provide additional Polish lessons to develop students' competence, while also focusing on diagnosing students' educational and psychological needs, along with an increase of school psychologists. In fact, students need to be provided with psychological support, however, as Pacek (2022) mentions, the situation in Polish education had already been difficult even for Polish children, especially due to the isolation inflicted on them because of the Covid19 pandemic. The new reality arisen needs to also cater for the psychological needs of Ukrainian refugees, who have faced war-related traumatic experiences, thus, making the need for psychological counseling in schools even more imperative (Pacek, 2022).

Finally, schools should provide Ukrainian lessons for their refugee students and accommodate rooms for this specific purpose, as well as, target at the integration of Ukrainian students in a way that addresses and embraces their cultural differences and manages to effectively resolve intercultural conflicts (Stankiewicz & Żurek, 2022). In regard with the last point raised, the mixed-education model has been deemed beneficial due to the opportunities it offers for the inclusion of Ukrainian students in mainstream classrooms and the encouragement of their socialization with their Polish peers. Specifically, the mixed-model entails the provision of separate lessons for the Ukrainian students, while at the same time, involves shared lessons for all students, e.g. physical education and art lessons. Yet, for a number of challenges faced by Polish schools it is normally not opted for (Stankiewicz & Żurek, 2022).

2.4 An overview of refugee students' educational needs

As already noted, access to education for refugee students can improve students' lives and future prospects and help them gain resilience, independence and self-esteem, while also offering to them employment prospects and reducing poverty (Hanushek, 2013). Thus, inclusion in education necessitates addressing the existing barriers and meeting refugee students' diverse needs (psychological, social and learning). In many national education systems meeting students' needs is mandated by the corresponding policies, however, refugee students' access to schools is often restricted, especially when schools struggle to meet their nationals' needs, too (Bellino & Dryden-Peterson, 2018). It should be mentioned that refugee students, not only have different needs, but different capabilities, too. Many students have developed multilingual language skills due to their numerous relocations and display enhanced intercultural awareness. As a result, their rich and multifaceted experiences can play an important role in helping them become citizens with critical thinking, often difficult to find in our globalized societies (Schleicher, 2015). So what are the main elements regarding refugee students' educational needs that need to be effectively addressed and taken care of?

One of the fundamental needs of refugee children is acquiring the language of the host country. Language barrier can be determining in refugee students' progress, posing a barrier to communication, self-expression, and decreases students' confidence. It leads students to marginalization, isolation, as it keeps them from participating in group activities and hinders their academic progress. It is therefore clear that one of the first needs to be covered is students' knowledge of the language of the host country. This enables them to take part in educational activities and facilitates their further integration. In fact, refugee students' sense of belonging when included in schools appears to be closely connected to their ability to preserve both languages, - their first language and the language of their host country, too. This enables students to communicate with their teachers and classmates, make new friends, and navigate host-country structures. These skills can be crucial for enhancing students' learning and developing a sense of belonging, while also preserving their first language and maintaining their cultural and family bonds (UNESCO, 2018).

In addition, refugee students' psychosocial needs are of vital importance. Forcibly displaced children have often lived traumatic experiences related to war and need

psychological support and counseling. Refugee students, and especially children, need a welcoming teaching environment and empathetic educators, to help them battle feelings of isolation, anxiety and uncertainty (Dryden-Peterson, 2015a). To this end, addressing students' psychological needs, and providing psychosocial services and counseling is crucial. It should be noted that teachers should be trauma-informed and empathetic in order to create a supportive and caring environment for their students. Refugee children might also have specific needs due to possible learning difficulties or disrupted education. These special needs need to be addressed and diagnosed in order to enhance students' development on a holistic level. In addition, providing schooling for refugee children is fundamental as it ensures a sense of normality in such turbulent times, not only for the children, but for the whole family, too, and offers refugee children more time for their integration in the host country ("Project PRESS: εθνογραφικές προσεγγίσεις της εκπαίδευσης προσφύγων στην Ελλάδα|Διεθνές Συνέδριο για την Ανοικτή & εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση," 2017).

Adding to the needs of refugee students, significant is the need for socialization and social integration. The "otherness" of the refugee experience can be isolating and deeply traumatizing, especially for minors. Thus, educators and school administrators need to create an environment that actively encourages intercultural communication, raises cultural awareness, and teaches cultural sensitivity. Cultural diversity in schools should be embraced and celebrated (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012). Additionally, according to Block et al. (2014), there is need for a significant increase in interpreters and bilingual teaching staff in schools. This would positively affect the involvement of parents and caregivers in their children's education, as it has been proven that the mentioned lack of interpretation aggravates teacher/parent communication and can be detrimental to children's further progress (Block et al., 2014). The creation of an overall safe and empathetic environment can also help refugee children suffering from mental health issues heal, and positively affect their learning (Graham et al., 2016).

Other educational needs of refugee children concern the need of examining and validating students' prior learning and credentials or certifications (in case they exist). This practice can facilitate students' faster integration and adaptation in the new educational environment and prevent students' redundant and unnecessary courses. Moreover, refugee students often lack practical life-skills due to constant relocations and disrupted schooling.

Thus, training them with useful practical skills can improve their prospects for employment opportunities and empower them, not only practically, but psychologically as well.

Moreover, the need for school, family and community cooperation as described in Epstein's model of "overlapping spheres of influence" is crucial to address refugee students' various needs. According to Epstein (2018, as cited in Androulakis et al., 2021), apart from the crucial role of parental involvement in refugee education, the role of community is paramount for the development of children, transcending the prior dual interplay of school and family (Epstein, 2018, as cited in Androulakis et al., 2021). Finally, research has shown that the provision of extra-curricular activities, such as choir, sports, games or field trips, can be conducive in strengthening refugee students' bonds with the school and helping them identify with it, hence, meeting their psychosocial needs (Alspaugh, 1998).

Overall, it should be highlighted that refugee students' specific educational needs can greatly vary depending on age, gender, duration of the displacement period, cultural background, the context of the host country etc. Thus, in order to achieve refugee students' educational inclusion and academic progress, targeted educational support and tailored interventions are crucial across the various domains of education, as education,- and language education in particular-, can function as a useful tool for students' communication and further socialization ("Project PRESS: εθνογραφικές προσεγγίσεις της εκπαίδευσης προσφύγων στην Ελλάδα|Διεθνές Συνέδριο για την Ανοικτή & εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση," 2017).

2.5 Educators' perspectives on (language) education and inclusion

Since language is an integral part of refugee education, the ideologies and attitudes surrounding language teaching choices should be emphasized and examined. Educators' perspectives on students' bilingualism, along with the corresponding paradigm followed (monolingual or bilingual), are directly related to the existence or absence of opportunity barriers to refugee education.

Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou's (2011) research in the Greek context, regarding teachers' ideas and attitudes on children's bilingualism, demonstrates teachers' rooted assimilationist views that revolve around "one language for all – equality for all" ideology (p. 598). Children's bilingualism and diversity were viewed as positive in principle, yet burdensome concerning daily classroom reality. Misconceptions, stereotypical views, and ambiguity regarding bilingualism and first-language use by children were detected in educators' perspectives, due to a monolingual view of language function, all of which hinder refugee and migrant students' academic progress and further disempower their identities (Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011). This results in the reproduction of power relations, and inequalities in the classroom (Cummins, 2000), which adversely affect children's inclusion and well-being and call for teachers' open renegotiation of their ideologies.

Moreover, the inclusion of refugee students' first language in the learning environment is predominant in research findings, due to its positive effects on children's linguistic and general development (Baker, 2000; Cummins, 2000). Through first-language use within the classroom, bilingual students develop flexible thinking as well as improve their skills in both, their first language, and their majority-school language (Cummins, 2001). Bilingual instruction is also beneficial for its psychological impact, as it strengthens refugee children's self-esteem, affirms their linguistic and cultural identities, and preserves their bond with their parents who are often not fluent in the host language (Cummins, 2001). Finally, bilingual school practices allow educators and students to fruitfully interact in an environment within which learning of new concepts is not postponed until second-language competence is achieved (Benson, 2004). To this end, educators' ideas and perspectives concerning language education, language barriers – needs, and bilingualism will be central to this study.

2.6 Refugee Girls in Education

As it has been evident refugees all over the world face hardships across numerous aspects of their lives. They are forcibly relocated, facing poverty and life-threatening conditions along with discrimination, racism and social exclusion, among others. This reality is even

more challenging for refugee women and girls who are more vulnerable than men on the basis of their gender.

Women throughout the world often face physical, psychological, sexual, economic, or other kinds of abuse (Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Council of Europe, 2011). This kind of violence, called Gender-Based Violence (GBV) constitutes a human rights violation and discrimination against women, denying them their dignity and equality. GBV can be often indirect as it sources from the rooted stereotypes and prejudices regarding gender, and is reproduced by institutions, and individuals (United Nations, 1992). Thus, structural/institutional factors aligning with the existing patriarchy and the concept of "male authority", - result in sexist behaviors and practices and lead to women's discrimination and violence based on their gender.

This situation is aggravated in the case of refugee women. Refugee girls and women are particularly vulnerable to all forms of violence and discrimination as a result of their "dual vulnerability" (Lombardi, 2017). Research data indicates that more than 70% of women refugees experience violence, while it is estimated that 57% of them have experienced GBV ("experiences of refugee women in the UK", 2019). This means that women of refugee background and, even more young girls, are in a highly disadvantaged position due to their dual identity, as women and as refugees at the same time. Thus, the coexistence of both identities, - both "oppressive labels"- inflicts on them the oppressions they denote and impact women's experience negatively (Pittaway & Pittaway, 2004). Evidently, the interplay of a plethora of different factors (e.g., ethnicity, sexual identity, age, religion), add to the risks. Research indicates that refugee women may face physical, sexual, and psychological violence, which is enforced either by citizens, or by police officers and reception-centers workers, and they all end up with refugee women's further disempowerment (Lombardi, 2017).

Taking into consideration the above mentioned data, the provision of equal learning opportunities for refugee girls is crucial and can be pivotal for young girls' lives. Education, a fundamental human right, is often denied to refugees, further deteriorating their lives. Schooling can play an essential role in "the full development of the human personality", according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, providing refugees with the necessary tools for independence and empowerment ("UNHCR, the UN Refugee

Agency," n.d.). It offers opportunities for social inclusion, employment and academic progress, and uplifts their confidence and self-esteem, arming them with resilience. Moreover, through education girls can be protected from a series of ills, such as illiteracy, exploitation, violence, child labor, forced marriage, and enrollment to armed groups. Yet, millions of refugee girls are deprived of access to education. No access to proper schooling perpetuates the hardships of refugee life, limiting young girls' and women's chances to speak out with confidence, and manage to rebuild their lives. To this end, education for refugee girls is fundamental.

The reality illustrated above affects especially girls who are hosted in developing countries. According to UNHCR, research data indicates a much greater percentage of refugee boys in schools than girls. Research conducted in sub-Saharan countries, particularly in Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, demonstrates that for the refugee girls it is half as likely to access secondary education as it is for refugee boys ("UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency," n.d.). Due to the costs of attending school, girls are often deprived of the opportunity to education. It is common for girls to be excluded from schooling and be urged to assume other tasks related to earning income for their families or being in charge of domestic duties, such as doing household chores, taking care of younger or elder family members, etc. (Spierling & Winthrop, 2015). This is even more prominent in secondary education due to the increased costs of it.

As Hattar-Pollara (2019) highlights in her research on Syrian refugee girls' education, the interconnection of patriarchy, religious practices, and customs and traditions, add to the vulnerability that forceful displacement inflicts on refugee girls, hence, preventing their access to schooling. Due to the predominant gender norms, boys seem to have better future income potential, thus, their education is prioritized over girls' education ("UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency," n.d.). The latter often have to deal with social or cultural conventions that keep them off schooling. For instance, it is typical for many communities to expect of girls to get married (even as children) and get pregnant during their teenage years ("UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency," 2017). In contrast to this, girls' male siblings are encouraged to progress with their education and seem to be more valued within their families, while girls are considered to be burdensome and in need of a husband (Hattar-Pollara, 2019).

Additionally, research findings indicate that refugee girls in Kenya, Turkey, Iran, Egypt and Lebanon face similar vulnerabilities in regard to their access to education. Their access to education is low because of child labor, child marriage and household chores, among others (Hassan, n.d.). As demonstrated by a field study about refugee girls' access to education in Turkey, it was corroborated that Syrian refugee girls' education was undermined due to their early marriages. A field study in Kenya also depicted the same worrying reality for refugee girls from Somalia and Ethiopia, while in Iran it was shown that refugee girls coming from Afghanistan stay out of school, in spite of their ability to attend Iranian schools in terms of eligibility (Hassan, n.d.).

Conclusively, literature data have been congruent that main factors that instigate barriers to refugee girls' education are girls' gender role interlinked with factors such as their social position in the family, the cultural denigration of their education, survival priorities, child labor, and family-honor maintenance leading to early marriage. Girls' previously mentioned gender-based vulnerabilities appear to be sourcing from the continuous physical and psychological abuse they experience within their families (Hattar-Pollara, 2019).

According to the aforementioned research findings, examining refugee girls' position in education in relation to that of boys' and approaching it through a gender perspective can be highly beneficial. It can illuminate girls' multiple challenges and propose ways to resolve them. To this end, this research will investigate, among others, the possible differentiations among refugee Ukrainian girls and boys in the education provided to them and will attempt to shed light on the possible similarities/differences with the education provided to refugee girls from other countries.

As previously noticed, the case of Ukrainian refugees is overall different than the case of refugees from other countries of the world. As Morrice (2022) states, because of the "geographical, cultural, religious, and racial proximity" along with Ukrainian refugees' agreement with "the archetypal refugee in the European imaginary" (p.252), there is an overall positive reception and approach towards Ukrainian refugees which is unparalleled to the other refugee cases. In addition, the position of girls and women in Ukraine is different than that of many girls from countries of the Arab world, or from that of underdeveloped countries. Ukrainian girls had prior access to schooling as in any other European country, and do not face the barriers and limitations to education that refugee

girls from other countries are still facing (e.g. child marriage, child labor). Moreover, due to the unprecedented positive humanitarian response and the EU and governmental facilitations for the case of Ukrainian refugees, school disruption due to lack of documents, financial resources or time-consuming bureaucratic procedures, was significantly restricted.

Therefore, the distinctive characteristics of Ukrainian girls' case are expected to emerge in this research, too, concerning the discrepancies observed in the education of both, Ukrainian girls and boys.

To sum up, throughout the literature findings, the importance of constructing a holistic model in refugee education was identified, - one that recognizes the complexity of refugee children's needs. An ethos of inclusion and the embracement of diversity were considered crucial factors for the operation of successful, supportive programs for refugee students, the so-called "good practice schools" (Arnot & Pinson, 2005). A need for balance between the provision of targeted support for refugee students' needs without "othering" them was highlighted. Also, the acceptance and incorporation of children's first language in refugee education were noted, detaching teaching from the traditional monolingual and assimilationist views. Finally, the significance of inclusive refugee education was stressed, as it ensures access, participation, and achievement for all, and can lead to social cohesion (Arnot & Pinson, 2005).

All of the mentioned studies examine the needs of, and barriers faced by, - refugee students and educators, address existing misconceptions and insufficient approaches regarding the education of refugee children, - and explore successful educational inclusion and "good practices" on refugee education as seen by educators and school members. Thus, their results are valuable to this research.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Scope and Research Questions

As already mentioned in Chapter 1, p. 2-3, access to proper education greatly affects the inclusion of refugee children, offering to them the opportunities to progress, while meeting their needs. In this vein, the main aim of this academic endeavor is to explore the perspectives of educators on inclusive education for Ukrainian refugee children based in Warsaw, Poland. In particular, it aims to discuss the perspectives and ideas of refugee educators on the basis of (language) educational inclusivity. Teachers' perspectives are examined based on the supports they utilize, according to the educational inclusion policies provided by the state, to create a space for an inclusive, holistic education, that meets students' needs and attempts to tackle possible barriers.

Thus, teachers' perceptions of educational inclusivity will be viewed through a two-fold lens: First, the needs (learning, emotional, social) of refugee children will be explored, shedding light on the challenges and adversities of the refugee experience. Secondly, the barriers to refugee education will be examined. Finally, possible differentiations concerning Ukrainian refugee girls' needs and barriers to education will be searched for due to the added challenges and discrimination they often face on the basis of their gender as well.

Consequently, the research questions are formed as follows:

- What are the needs of Ukrainian refugee children concerning (language) education in Poland?
- What are the access and opportunity barriers faced by Ukrainian refugee children in education in Poland?
- Are the needs and barriers differentiated in the case of adolescent girls? If so, how are they differentiated?

3.2 Approach and Worldview

The qualitative approach is used for this research. The word “qualitative” itself denotes a focus on the qualities of processes and meanings that are not experimentally measured or examined. Therefore, qualitative researchers attempt to answer questions emphasizing how social experience is shaped and given meaning, recognizing that reality is constructed socially (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Qualitative research aims at understanding a specific case through in-depth exploratory studies to lead to quality findings (Creswell, 2002).

According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research investigates issues of social concern. Specifically, it allows for constructing a holistic image through an analysis of words and phrases and reports detailed views, usually being conducted in its natural setting. Important advantages of qualitative research as described by Morrow et al., (2001) are the recognition of context as a crucial element of study and the prominent position that the researcher’s process towards self-reflection holds, allowing for their ethos to be illustrated within their research. In addition, qualitative research manages to describe individuals’ meanings, views, and experiences, often to empower marginalized and oppressed groups of people. To this end, such a qualitative methodology in this specific research is expected to provide the researcher with a fruitful ground to explore the perspectives of the educators involved in the teaching of Ukrainian refugee children. The qualitative findings are essential to gain an in-depth insight into educators’ views, expectations, and/or attitudes, allowing for the individual experience to be shared (Creswell, 2013).

The underpinning research paradigm of this study is interpretivism, common in qualitative research, which views the researcher as an observant of the world and sees the reality as unique for each observer, thus, subjective. According to interpretivism, humans cannot be investigated in the same way as physical phenomena are explored and, as a result, social sciences studies should be carried out differently from natural sciences studies, considering a number of differences that shape different social realities, thus, being sensitive to the individual meaning, experience, and contribution (Moustakas, 1994). In this vein, interpretivism is a suitable philosophy underpinned in this study, allowing for the emergence of teachers’ perspectives regarding the (language) education of their Ukrainian students and can lead to valuable findings (Moustakas, 1994).

Regarding the worldview, the constructivist worldview has been chosen. As Creswell (2013) noted, constructivism is about making meaning of the world, through the development of subjective meanings of individuals' experiences. Through this prism, the goal of this study revolves around considering the participants' views regarding a specific issue. According to constructivism, people do not find or discover knowledge, - they create knowledge and invent concepts to make sense of the various experiences they encounter (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). As a result, the questions of this study are phrased in a general way to encourage interaction and allow the participants to construct meaning freely. The researcher will start with questions about "how" and gradually ask questions about "why". Based on teachers' expressed views and drawing from their personal experiences and insight, we will try to shape an image of the needs and barriers to the education of Ukrainian refugee children. Thus, teachers' perspectives will be investigated and through the analysis of the gathered data we will try to create new knowledge on the examined issue.

Moreover, according to the constructivist paradigm, originating in "hermeneutics" (Mertens, 2019), "knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process" and researchers have to view the complexity of the lived experience "from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 2000, as cited in Mertens, 2019, p.16). Thus, the generated meaning will source from the social interaction of the researcher with the participants. An interrelationship will be created allowing for both sides' shared worldviews and ethos to shape the research findings (Aksu, 2009).

3.3 Case study

This research entails multiple case studies concerning two different contexts, that of the Ukrainian and Polish schools, aiming at the illustration of teachers' perspectives. According to Yin (2009), a case study is an inquiry that thoroughly examines a contemporary issue within its real-life context. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) also note that qualitative researchers prefer in-depth interviewing deeming it an efficient way to get closer to the participants' perspectives. One of the merits of a case study is its aim, to capture a detailed picture of a specific, self-contained issue, without the need for covering

a broad area (Drever, 1995). Moreover, a case study is impactful as it allows readers to comprehend ideas in a straightforward way, detached from a theoretical presentation (Cohen, et al., 2000). According to Johnson and Christensen (2009), case study research is more varied than other methods, however, "what all pure case studies do have in common ... is a focus on each case as a whole unit (i.e., case study research is holistic) as it exists in its real-life context" (p. 49). Through the utilization of such an approach, different cases are involved, including interviews with 6 educators of 4 formal-education schools operating in Warsaw, Poland. In particular, the different cases entailed concern 3 Ukrainian educators of a Ukrainian public school, 2 Polish educators of 2 Polish public schools, and one Polish educator of one Polish private school. The aforementioned cases will be discussed and described thoroughly in chapter 3.5.

3.4 Research Tool

The research tool chosen for the data collection is individual interviews. The conduction of interviews is a valuable tool as it allows feelings, ideas, experiences, and views to be collected, all of which could not be depicted via observation (Aksu, 2009). Particularly, choosing between the structured, semi-structured, and unstructured types of interviews, the semi-structured interviews (Robson, 1995; Mckernan, 1996), were deemed the most beneficial for this study as they allow the emergence of questions and spontaneous interaction that motivates self-expression with minimum prompting. The participants of our study were given freedom and flexibility, not only regarding the sequence of questions asked, - but also regarding the details and the time that was offered to them for each answer (Aksu, 2009).

In particular, via the semi-structured interviews conducted in this study, the participants' replies demonstrated a high degree of initiative due to the flexibility in the interview layout. The researcher used a number of questions as guidelines, however, there was no absolute set of questions and teachers could freely express their ideas and experiences regarding barriers to refugee education and the needs of Ukrainian refugee children. In addition, the interview questions were general at first, gradually, moving to specific ones. Through open-ended questions and sub-questions, free interaction occurred which

ultimately allowed themes to emerge, creating an understanding of teachers' perspectives (Becker, 1998; Erickson, 1986, as cited in Gkaintartzi & Tsokolidou, 2011).

3.5 Sample and Data Collection

The research sample consists of 6 educators of Ukrainian refugee children in formal education settings, in Poland. Three of them are teachers in a Ukrainian school operating in Warsaw, which, according to the educators and the school's website, has accepted an immense number of Ukrainian students since the war broke out. The rest of the educators are working in mainstream Polish schools, including not only Polish students, - but also Ukrainian and Russian ones, and, have also accepted a large number of refugee children from Ukraine during the previous months.

All the educators interviewed for this research are teachers of formal education, thus, following an official curriculum. Three out of four schools included are public, while one is private. The initial aim was to only involve typical public schools, however due to challenges in detecting and gathering the final sample of participants, this was not feasible. Moreover, it should be added that most of the interviewees are English teachers because of the language barrier which played predominant role during the interview-conduction process, as the interviews were to be conducted in English, not Polish. Many of the teachers in Warsaw are not fluent in English and, thus, expressed an overall hesitation in taking part in this research and conducting an interview. To this end, it was more realistic and attainable to conduct interviews with English teachers who were, not only more open and amenable to participating, but also had the ability to engage in an effective and productive discussion, as they could express their perspectives, ideas and feelings in a more direct and unobstructed way.

The profiles of the research participants are presented in Table 1, as follows.

Research Participants	Schools - based in Warsaw, Poland	School Level	Years of teaching experience	Previous experience with culturally diverse students	Subject	Country of origin
Teacher 1 Ivanna	Ukrainian public school	Elementary	5-10 years	Not applicable	English	Ukraine
Teacher 2 Yulia	Ukrainian public school	Elementary	5-10 years	Not applicable	English	Ukraine
Teacher 3 Nataliya	Ukrainian public school	Elementary	15-20 years	Not applicable	English	Ukraine
Teacher 4 Jan	Polish private school	Elementary	5-10 years	Yes	English	Poland
Teacher 5 Michal	Polish public school	Secondary	<5 years	No	Polish as a second language	Poland
Teacher 6 Katarzyna	Polish public school	Elementary	5-10 years	Yes	English	Poland

Table 1. Research Participants' Profiles

Before the conduction of the interviews, the educators met with the researcher either in person, - or through an online call, in order to familiarize the participants with the scope of the research and create an engaging environment. At the beginning of the actual interview, before the prepared questions were asked, the teachers participating were asked a few background questions related to the profile of the school and their field of expertise/useful

relevant information. The duration of the interviews was slightly differentiated due to their flexible nature, ranging from 20 to 40 minutes.

Some of the interviews were recorded, while others were conducted through detailed note-taking, and actual teachers' quotes were written down in real time, depending on the participants' consent to be recorded or not. The ethical guidelines were respected, and anonymity was guaranteed, in order to protect educators' identities and personal data. A significant advantage noticed in the case of audio recording was the ease and convenience that it offered for the data collection process; however, the main merit of the non-recorded ones was that the educators interviewed demonstrated a highly relaxed and comfortable attitude towards the interview process as they seemed free to express their feelings and ideas without the recording-related fear or anxiety. In addition, although the non-recorded interviews lasted longer, the conversation flew at a more relaxed pace, often offering time for the educators to self-reflect and recollect more experiences and ideas while the notetaking was taking place by the researcher.

The principles of credibility, conformability, and flexibility – crucial for the constructivist worldview (Denzin and Lincoln, 2017) – were integral in this study, guiding the researcher in the process of understanding and analyzing social interactions, allowing the open-ended questions of the interviews to play a decisive role in the process.

Finally, it should be noted that five out of six interviews were carried out in person, in educators' natural settings, while only one of them was conducted through a video call due to strict time limitations. However, the existence of visual connection was an important part of the interviews in both cases, due to the sense of intimacy and directness that it created between the researcher and the interviewees. Facial expressions and gestures played an assisting role in meaning-making. As for the interviews carried out in educators' natural settings, they further encouraged participants to elaborate and convey the most accurate depiction of reality in a genuine way, positively adding to the research procedure.

The initial outlook behind the case selection was to include educators of various ages, statuses, origins, and, backgrounds in order to enrich the research and capture a general view of the educators' perspectives. However, due to the challenging procedure of detecting and gathering participants in a foreign country and within strict time limitations, this was not possible. Thus, the participants were chosen based on availability. In a few

cases, the snowballing approach was utilized and proved to be significantly helpful for sampling generation, as relevant references and recommendations were crucial.

Below follows a presentation of the schools included in this research:

1. Ukrainian School - Teachers 1, 2 & 3 (Ivanna, Yulia, Nataliya)

Ivanna, Yulia and Nataliya (Teachers 1, 2 & 3), are English teachers of a Ukrainian elementary school located in Warsaw, Poland. This particular school has been operating since 2014, implementing the Ukrainian national curriculum for migrant Ukrainian students living in Poland. However, according to the school's website, since the Russian invasion to Ukraine in February, 2022, the number of enrolled students in the school has peaked from about 200 to more than 900 students, the vast majority of them being refugees. This new reality has created arduous and challenging conditions for the school teachers and administrators. It must be stressed that the curriculum followed by the Ukrainian school located in Warsaw is entirely aligned with the Ukrainian education system and complies with the regulations of the Ministry of Education in Ukraine.

2. Polish School - Teacher 4 (Jan)

Jan, (Teacher 4), is an English teacher of a Polish elementary school in Warsaw. This school was the only private school included in this research and encompasses a holistic and alternative approach to learning, focusing on learner-centered processes, and increased teaching time outdoors, instead of the conventional classroom, as mentioned in the school's website. The curriculum followed in this school is the Polish national curriculum; however, it entails slight deviations regarding the teaching methods and approaches. It should be added that this school was already multicultural, as it included Ukrainian as well as Russian students, before the war broke out.

The particular school was completely open to admitting Ukrainian refugee students, many of whom for free, without asking for any financial compensation. However, due to its limited facilities, vast numbers of students cannot be accepted. All Ukrainian refugee children admitted to the school were incorporated in the mainstream classes with Polish students, as the school follows the integration model.

3. Polish School - Teacher 5 (Michal)

Michal, (Teacher 5), is a teacher of Polish as a second language, in a Polish intercultural secondary school, following the national curriculum of Poland. The specific school had already enrolled students of various cultural backgrounds, thus, the teaching staff had prior experience in teaching in multicultural and diverse classrooms. Regarding the education of Ukrainian refugee students in this school, the separation model is followed. By this model, refugee students attend preparatory classes in which they follow the mainstream Polish curriculum, while also attending additional Polish lessons. Thus, according to this model, refugee students of this school are not included in the mainstream classes with Polish students.

4. Polish School - Teacher 6 (Katarzyna)

Katarzyna, (Teacher 6), is an English teacher of a Polish elementary school with integration departments, also located in Warsaw, Poland. The particular school is one of the Polish schools that has accepted a vast number of Ukrainian refugees throughout the past months and includes additional lessons for Ukrainian refugees in their integration departments. The Polish national curriculum is implemented and the integration model is followed, as refugee children are enrolled in the mainstream classes with their Polish classmates, while also attending additional lessons of Polish as a second language. More additional lessons used to be provided in school's integration departments (e.g., Maths, English), but due to underfunding as an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, these lessons are no longer provided to refugee students.

3.6 Educators' attitudes on participating in the study

Overall, Ukrainian teachers were more willing and enthusiastic about participating in this research and sharing their perspectives. They approached our interviews as an opportunity to expose and share their issues, ideas and feelings. In addition, the idea that foreign people research about their needs and barriers, as they admitted, can be comforting and hopeful to them, as they feel that there is an interest in their issues. This made them more amenable to discuss with a "foreigner" (the researcher) and open up. As for the Ukrainian

school, it was not rigid organizationally and bureaucratically, which facilitated the interview-conduction process and did not pose any serious procedural obstacles and obstructions.

On the other hand, Polish educators seemed to be more difficult to approach and more reluctant and distrusting regarding their participation in this study. Polish schools were also more bureaucratic and strict with their procedures regarding interview conduction, and thus, the sample-generation process was particularly time-consuming and challenging (which was also enhanced by the absence of prior connections/network of the researcher in Poland and the significant language barrier). It should be added though that the reluctance of the Polish educators may also denote a responsible and sensitive approach towards the already sensitive issue of refugee children's education.

3.7 Data Analysis

As for the approach to data analysis, the Thematic Analysis was opted for. Thematic Analysis (TA) is a method that can be implemented for detecting, analyzing, and reporting themes within a set of data, going beyond mere description to interpreting different aspects of the examined topic (Willig & Rogers, 2017). Unlike other approaches to qualitative analysis which operate within specific theoretical frameworks, TA is highly agile as it can be met in most theoretical frameworks. Its accessibility, along with the flexibility mentioned, makes TA an ideal approach to data analysis for this research. However, this does not mean that TA does not require theoretical support. On the contrary, any theoretical underpinning needs to be explicit to the reader, as it is not already built-in (Willig & Rogers, 2017). This particular study is situated within a constructivist worldview as mentioned, and, thus, thematic analysis is suitable. Braun & Clarke (2006) have argued that thematic analysis can be a constructivist method that examines ways in which events, meanings, and experiences emerge as a result of the discourses operating within society.

In the process of Thematic Analysis, a few fundamental steps were included in our study, as indicated by Braun & Clarke (2006), and following Tsiolis' (2018) suggestion for the

Thematic Analysis: first, the researcher transcribed and became familiar with the gathered data; then generated initial codes and searched for themes. After the themes had emerged, the researcher reviewed these themes and defined them. In the end, the final write-up of all findings took place which will be presented in the following chapter (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Tsiolis, 2018).

The significance of taking some fundamental decisions before delving into the process of TA has been also emphasized (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Having considered a variety of factors in reference to TA, this research attempts to provide a detailed account of specific themes within the data, instead of presenting the entire data set. Specifically, major themes are identified and then a detailed account of each is offered, along with relevant examples. In addition, the inductive thematic analysis is chosen, which requires the identification of themes from the data corpus and allows coding to be led by this data. Finally, choosing between the latent and the semantic level, themes are identified at the latent level, as it allows the analysis to move beyond the semantic content. The themes require interpretation, and the analysis is not restricted to being only presented. The educators' responses incorporated into the data set are interpreted in order to lead to the construction of meaning. It should be stressed that Braun & Clarke (2006), have noticed that approaches that consider particular aspects of the data at a latent level and are of a constructivist worldview are often grouped together.

3.8 Researcher's Positionality

A crucial part of the research process is for the researcher to acknowledge and, dismantle, if possible, their personal bias and ideology in regard to the researched topic.

First, the researcher of this study as a woman carries an added interest in gender issues and challenges faced by women around the world. To this end, issues such as violence against women, sexism, and other factors that contribute to girls' and women's vulnerability and disempowerment are of significant interest. Thus, it was deemed important to include the distinctive parameter of the case of Ukrainian refugee girls in education, recognizing the challenges that refugee girls face due to their "dual vulnerability": as girls and as refugees, too.

Secondly, having lived abroad, the researcher has first-hand experience with the challenges of working in a foreign country, speaking a foreign language, and trying to be part of a different culture. Thus, it functions as an added lens through which the researcher views the needs and challenges faced by students in an unknown country, without underestimating though that the refugee experience, apart from some similarities, is greatly different from the migrant one.

Thirdly, the researcher herself is an educator and has previous experience working with students of refugee background which could influence the data analysis and presentation procedures due to her own preconceptions and/or stereotypes surrounding refugee education and teaching of minority and vulnerable populations. Particularly, previous teaching positions in schools abroad and in Greece, have illustrated a problematic situation for many students of refugee background that results in refugee students falling behind academically, - while negatively affecting them psychologically and socially, and therefore, can be an important bias for this study.

Having acknowledged the mentioned biases, it is certain that personal worldviews, experiences, and ideologies cannot be excluded from the research process, however, they can be counterbalanced through a thorough examination of the existing literature concerning the researched topic. Thus, the familiarization with the international and national, targeted literature played a decisive role in the formation of the research questions and guided this study.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Considering the ethical implications involved, the participants had been informed in advance about the objectives and aim of the research and were asked to consent. An official document offered by the Hellenic Open University and the supervising professor was demonstrated to the head of the schools, informing them about the specific study, while participants' anonymity and protection of their personal data throughout the research were guaranteed. The participants' names as well as the names and actual locations of the schools were protected, and pseudonyms were used instead. The confidentiality gained through the implementation of these procedures is vital as it leads to an anxiety-free and

comfortable environment for the participants, which positively affects and enriches the research findings (Creswell, 2014).

4. Findings

In this chapter, the results of this research will be presented, as derived from the conducted interviews. All findings are classified according to the prominent themes that arose and are divided in two sections, one referring to the results that emerged through the interviews with the Polish educators, and one presenting the results arisen through the interviews with the Ukrainian educators. This division allows for a more systematic presentation of the results, before delving into the discussion of both sides following in the next chapter.

4.1 Polish Educators

“Ukrainian Refugee Students’ Needs, according to teachers of Polish schools”

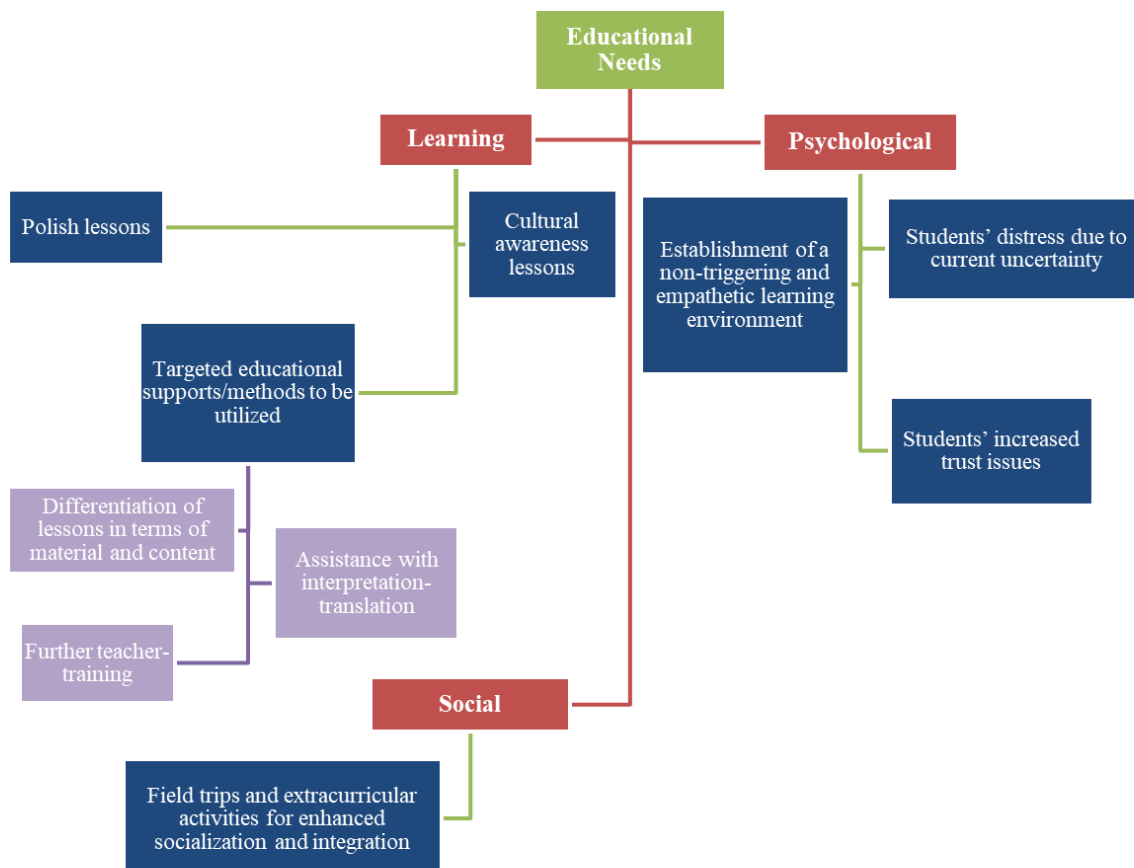


Figure 1

"Barriers to Ukrainian refugee students' learning, according to teachers of Polish schools"

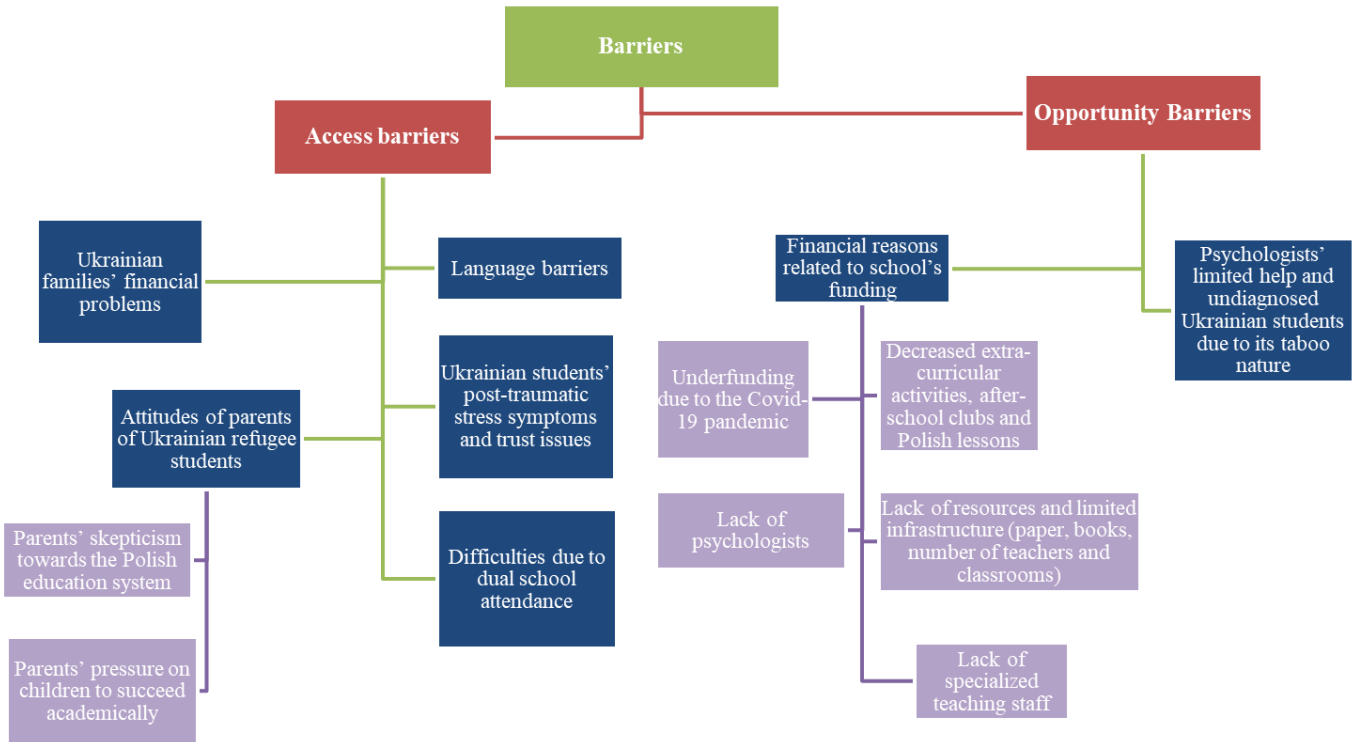


Figure 2

"Ukrainian refugee girls in Polish Education, according to teachers of Polish schools"

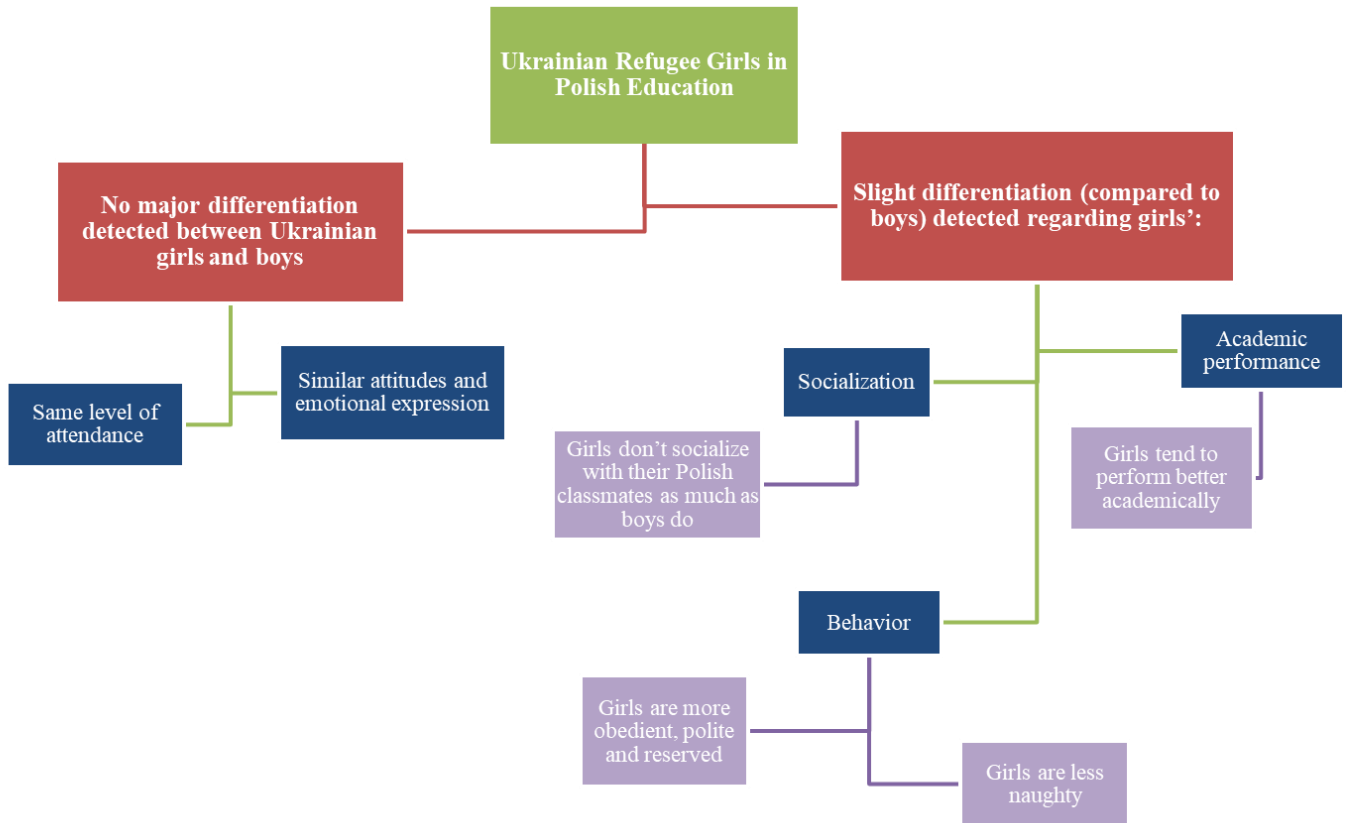


Figure 3

During the conduction of the interviews with the Polish educators, different themes emerged related to the research aims and questions. Ukrainian students' various needs, barriers to learning and possible differentiations among Ukrainian girls and boys in the educational environment, were some of the main themes that were reflected upon. Other major themes that arose were closely related to the relationships among Ukrainian students with their classmates, their teachers' challenges and perspectives, as well as, the attitudes of Ukrainian parents concerning the Polish education system.

The themes that were more prominent and relevant to this research are shown in Picture 1, 2 &3 above. Every theme includes various sub-themes as the latter came up during the interviews. Also, a selection of the teachers' most indicative quotations is provided to illuminate the gathered themes.

4.1.1 Diverse educational methods and supports for an inclusive environment

One of the points that emerged was the significance of Ukrainian refugee students' learning needs. As indicated by the Polish educators, Ukrainian students' specific learning needs require a variety of targeted educational methods and supports to be implemented in the classroom, in order to effectively cater for the learning needs of the refugee students. Thus, lessons need to be differentiated and tailored accordingly.

*"We don't have any specific activities for Ukrainian children. Our goal is to **not make them stick out**... It's like, we want to offer these children a slice of normality." Interview 4*

*"I try to **differentiate a bit my lesson**. For example in some short vocabulary tests, I will not give them Polish words to translate them to English, but **I will give them pictures instead**. Or I will use **Google Translate** during the lessons, or just students who are more advanced will help with translation." Interview 6*

*"Another thing we do is that we offer Ukrainian students **longer times** to finish their tasks. And they do remarkably well looking at their marks!" Interview 6*

In particular, the educational methods mentioned by the interviewees, involve the provision of longer times for the completion of assigned tasks, and easier assignments for some of the school subjects. Additionally, Google Translate is utilized, or students who speak Ukrainian or Russian often assist the teaching procedure with interpreting. However, there was no mention of any distinct, tailor-made activities for Ukrainian students, which, as said, would "stick them out". *Interview 4*

As for the educational supports implemented, first and foremost, Polish language additional lessons are provided (apart from the mainstream curriculum Polish lessons). As for some of the Polish educators of various subjects, such as Math and Science, who speak Russian fluently (due to Poland's Soviet past), they were reported to be helping Ukrainian students with translation and language or cultural awareness issues, thus, transcending their mere academic duties. It should be stressed that some of the additional lessons (English, Math) that used to be provided to migrant students in the past, are no longer available due to underfunding as an impact of the Covid19 pandemic. Thus, the provision of extra lessons is restricted to the second language acquisition lessons as mentioned (Polish lessons). Finally, Polish teachers highlighted their attempts to include elements of the Ukrainian culture and language in the mainstream Polish classrooms, such as the

Ukrainian flag and posters supporting Ukraine, in order to help Ukrainian refugee students feel that they belong.

*“Most of the teachers are very helpful and try to **teach usable Polish** to the Ukrainian students, **no matter what subject they teach**. They don’t think just about their own subject, but they want to contribute in a way, to help.” Interview 6*

*“We try to **include elements of their culture**, their language. For example, I included the Ukrainian flag and a poster for the Ukrainian students so that they feel they belong.” Interview 6*

*“In the past, students were given extra Polish and English lessons, and, also extra Math lessons, on a 1:1 basis with the teacher. Unfortunately this has changed. Now the number of students who need extra lessons is huge and, especially **after Covid**, there is not much money anymore, **we are underfunded**, so children can take only the extra Polish lessons now.” Interview 6*

In addition, the provision of teacher training after the war was mentioned, with a special focus on courses related to the psychological issues of refugee students.

*“We had some training opportunities after war, yes, mostly about **psychological support**.” Interview 5*

*“We also had some psychological courses, during which the psychologist prepared us, showed us games to play with the Ukrainian students at the beginning of the school year **in order to bond, with a focus on play**.” Interview 6*

4.1.2 The psychosocial impact of war on Ukrainian students

The second theme that was paramount throughout the interviews – conduction was the psychological impact that war has on Ukrainian refugee children and the need for activities that promote socialization.

Specifically, the educators reported students’ increased trust issues that source from their forcible displacement and the uncertainty regarding their future. Post-traumatic stress symptoms and the distress detected, highlight the need to cultivate a caring, empathetic and trigger-free educational environment that promotes a sense of belonging and safety.

*“It took **more time** for our Ukrainian learners to **fully trust** our whole staff.” Interview 4*

“Not knowing what the future holds for some of our learners play heavily on their minds. Some of the parents are between Warsaw and Ukraine, which of course impacts the emotional state of these learners.” Interview 4

*“Then, there are all the «refugee issues», so we **don’t want to put extra stress on them, or trigger them** in any way. For example, I have to look for exercises carefully and think of any triggers that may appear, which is something I only now realized! ... For example, telling them as an assignment to write about «My biggest wish is...» is a “no” for refugee students. So there is **this need for extra empathy** with the kids.” Interview 5*

Hence, the way in which the psychological aspects of war and uncertainty weighs on Ukrainian students’ minds, necessitates the need for extra-curricular activities that promote social bonding and boost students’ mood, as noticed by the educators. Such activities, as mentioned, may be field trips, after-school clubs for sports or arts-and-crafts, choir etc.

*“They have some «**projects**» - extra-curricular activities every Thursday. On Thursdays they socialize and work on a project. And there are also some after-school clubs, like **photography or woodwork**. All classes and grades go and work on these together so they can make more friends after school.” Interview 5*

*“And another thing that helps and we do a lot to strengthen the bonds between the classmates is lots of field trips. We go to the **cinema** or to the **park** and play in order to integrate them and as a way to see and understand their needs.” Interview 6*

4.1.3 Access barriers to Ukrainian students’ learning and inclusion

Moving on to the barriers mentioned by the educators in regard with Ukrainian students’ learning, various access barriers emerged. First, the educators in Polish schools mentioned the financial difficulties faced by Ukrainian students’ families, with a special allusion to the affordance of meals, part-taking in school trips, and Ukrainian students’ access to costly resources and additional learning material.

*“First there are **financial needs** for sure. For example when we have school trips, sometimes it is difficult for our Ukrainian students, so we may need extra money from the parents’ committee.” Interview 6*

"Or another example is the free meals. It starts in the beginning of the year, in September, we ask for some of the kids who have financial difficulties to have free meals. This happens for refugees and the same thing existed for the poor Polish students as well. Many of them need this support." Interview 6

Moreover, slight language barriers concerning effective communication were detected, which were often overcome through the utilization of the Russian language between teachers and Ukrainian students, or with the help of Ukrainian teaching assistants who have been recently hired and function as mediators between Polish teachers and Ukrainian refugee students.

"Language can be an issue. Often Russian is used between our learners." Interview 4

*"But the thing is that here, students **are not really ready**, because of the language and the different curriculum here, so it is difficult for them."* Interview 5

*And then there are language barriers, but we have **a teacher's assistant** for the Ukrainian children, helping with that in the regular classroom."* Interview 6

In addition, Ukrainian parents' attitudes were mentioned by all interviewees. Particularly, parents' pressure on their children for academic progress and success were noted as it can weigh on Ukrainian students' progress. Moreover, Ukrainian parents' skepticism and worry regarding the Polish education system were highlighted by all educators as being integrally linked to students' progress. This skepticism derives from the more lenient and often informal nature of Polish schools that comes in contrast to the more old-fashioned, discipline-oriented character of the Ukrainian schools. Thus, Ukrainian parents often express their worry regarding the impact that such a different educational approach would have on their children, especially in such turbulent times.

*"Ukrainian parents stress children to finish school early and be successful at it. They have this mindset. It is not a thing here, but in Ukraine they finish school earlier and parents even now with the war, **they don't want their children to fall behind. They push them** because they want them to finish school on time and pass to the university."* Interview 5

"Ukrainian schools are a bit strict, old-fashioned compared to the Polish ones. So it is a bit different from what they expected." Interview 6

"And sometimes Polish schools are easy on them (children) in a way, because here (in Poland) in the same age, they are an academic year behind, because our education systems are different. Polish schools progress more slowly than the Ukrainian ones. So some parents worry... they want them to succeed." Interview 6

Moreover, another access barrier that was noticed is the detection of post-traumatic stress symptoms for some of the Ukrainian students. It must be mentioned that it was only mentioned by one of the Polish educators.

"From experience, many of the children who have come through (school name) are understandably scared, worried, and alert to any loud noises ... Often these children need more praise to build up confidence... They have the tendency to be very defensive and can lash out when they are threatened." Interview 4

Finally, Ukrainian students' difficulties in school as a result of dual school attendance were unanimously highlighted by Polish educators. It has been common for Ukrainian students of all ages to attend schools of both education systems simultaneously, - the Polish one, and their previous (Ukrainian) school, remotely. This reportedly adds to children's feelings of anxiety and fatigue.

"One of our Ukrainian students still attends online Ukrainian school. He finds it tough as it (the online Ukrainian school) takes place in the evenings and weekends and usually works against the work we do in our school. He tells us that the work is very book-heavy and leaves little space for creative thinking. This is of course understandable, as it is all online." Interview 4

"Most of them, especially the biggest ones are overworked and tired. They all have a lot of work as most of them finished the Ukrainian school online as well" Interview 5

"But I also have another student who does two schools at the same time and it is really taking a toll on him. He is too tired and overworked. His parents were very worried about his progress." Interview 6

4.1.4 Opportunity barriers to Ukrainian students' learning and inclusion

Apart from the access barriers mentioned above, various opportunity barriers to Ukrainian students' learning were also noticed. One of the issues that recurred throughout the

interviews was lack of funding for Polish schools. As mentioned, schools' staff has been dealing with limited funding due to the Covid19 pandemic which carries its implications across different aspects of the Polish education system.

In particular, underfunding has resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of extra-curricular activities, after-school clubs and Polish lessons that used to be regularly provided, thus, depriving Ukrainian (and less-privileged/migrant students) from formerly free educational options.

“But some of the clubs don't exist anymore because of lack of funding, especially after Covid.” Interview 5

*“In the past, students were given extra Polish and English lessons, and also extra Math lessons, on a 1:1 basis with the teacher. Unfortunately this has changed. Now the number of students who need extra lessons is huge and, **especially after Covid**, there is not much money anymore, **we are underfunded**, so children can take only the extra Polish lessons now.” Interview 6*

*“Money as I said before is definitely an issue. **Financial difficulties and the lack of opportunities that comes because of lack of money.**” Interview 6*

Other barriers mentioned are the lack of psychologists, especially during the years of the pandemic, as stressed by one of the educators

*“Then I can think of kids' psychological needs. There is **a lack of psychologists** during the past years with the pandemic.” Interview 6*

Apart from the lack of psychologists, there is an overall lack of resources and limited infrastructure, which hinder Ukrainian students' learning opportunities in Polish schools.

*“In terms of infrastructure we always had problems so «a couple more» students do not make a huge difference! (laughs sarcastically). We need **more space, more classes, books**...and especially now with all these students.” Interview 5*

*“Another **huge issue was lack of books for our Ukrainian students**. We took the books really late because the amount that we needed was so big. The book orders are sent by the schools every June, but this September so many students appeared so the books arrived in December!” Interview 6*

*"And of course we had problem with the **lack of paper** because we had to print everything for all these students. It was very, very difficult until the books arrived. So definitely I would say that lack of funding and sources is a major issue." Interview 6*

Another opportunity barrier mentioned was the lack of specialized teaching staff that could effectively address the needs of students of refugee background and bilingual staff (fluent in Polish and Ukrainian) that could also help with interpretation and translation when required, in and out of the classroom.

*"Teachers **are not trained very well** because it is the first time something so big happened." Interview 5*

*"(The teacher assistant) she is Ukrainian and started working here as a secretary at first to help with the number of Ukrainian students, but now works as an assistant. We didn't have other assistants to help. **But she is not a teacher, she is not trained**, so it was difficult at the beginning, but she improves!... **We need more Ukrainian teachers to help**" Interview 6*

Finally, according to the Polish educators, psychologists managed to offer little help to the Ukrainian refugee students as the latter were not amenable to psychological help by a professional. This is speculated to be sourcing from the stigma that, according to the Polish educators, is still prominent in Ukraine. The same approach was noticed by a Polish educator in reference to the high number of undiagnosed Ukrainian students in reference to ADHD or autism. This, as supported by the interviewees, is due to the stigmatized, "taboo" nature of such diagnoses in Ukraine.

*"There is one school psychologist who is Ukrainian, but I don't think it really helped. Children didn't want to talk to her. Maybe it is **the stigma, it is still a bit more of a «taboo» in Ukraine**, so maybe it is because of that." Interview 5*

*"Another issue is that there are a lot of students that arrived in our school who were undiagnosed. **Children with ADHD, dyslexia, some forms of autism were not yet diagnosed**. So, either they (parents) were hiding it, or their previous teachers did not support them with it because it is still a taboo in Ukraine. So now many students went to a psychology center to get diagnosed for these issues, or psychological problems they may face." Interview 6*

4.1.5 Gender-based behavioral differentiation among girls and boys

Another theme searched for throughout the interviews is the potential differentiation among Ukrainian girls and boys (within the limitations of this binary perspective). As noticed, no major psychological/learning differences are prominent between Ukrainian girls and boys.

"...Not that we have found. We haven't spotted any differences between the girls and boys. But it has been too small a case study." Interview 4

"...Not really. I can only say that they are more obedient than boys." Interview 5

However, as it becomes evident through the aforementioned quotations, differentiation was noted between girls and boys with respect to gender-normative patterns of behavior and socialization. Ukrainian girls appeared to be generally more obedient, well-behaved and reserved than boys.

*"I can only say that they are **more obedient than boys**. They question less in general." Interview 5*

"...Boys are generally naughtier, but girls are more polite, nice.....they are absolute angels! But other than that, not that I can think of." Interview 6

*"But there is some division with the girls. They are all friends, but they **tend to group together, the Ukrainian girls on their own**. But with boys there is less division, they all run together, they play together." Interview 6*

4.1.6 Positive relationships among Ukrainian and Polish students

One of the themes that repeatedly emerged during all interviews was the rapport observed among Ukrainian and Polish students. All Polish educators illustrated an image of overall positive relationships and no clear division among Polish and Ukrainian students, while their shared cultural elements, such as similarities in regard to food and religion were noted as important factors.

"We haven't seen any major difference in social interaction with our learners. Language can be an issue, however as our students are from many different countries, many of the children communicate to us in their second or third language... This somewhat creates a

level playing field in the classroom... You know, our Ukrainian learners are amazing and work very hard to be part of the different social groups." Interview 4

*"Many of them are in a group with Polish students and **get along really fine.**" Interview 5*

*"There is no issue among Polish and Ukrainian students. Their Polish classmates are very **positive and welcoming.** It's not that we have any bigger differences. We have **similar food, religion, culture, everything is similar.** So, in the younger classes there are not really any conflicts between the students based on nationalities. The boys might fight for example for football, but not on any other basis." Interview 6*

However, despite the positive relationships among all students, it has been evident that Ukrainian students tend to socialize together, particularly out of the classroom. It should be highlighted that a special mention arose regarding the students of older classes. Specifically, teachers reported a level of division among their Polish and Ukrainian teenage students, as teenagers appear to "keep their own friends and are more difficult on that (: mingling with other classmates)." Interview 6

*"We have found however that our Ukrainian learners are drawn to each other and **generally socialize together.**" Interview 4*

*"...but they (Ukrainian students) often stick to themselves. They have some Polish friends but **their «core»-support group remains Ukrainian.**" Interview 5*

*"They all talk to each other but they have **the strongest bonds among themselves** ...They actually make friendships in their class, but when they are apart, they socialize more on their own (with other Ukrainian students)." Interview 5*

In addition, Ukrainian refugee girls seem to prefer to group together and discuss with each other more than mingle with their Polish classmates, in contrast to Ukrainian boys' behavior who play all together (Polish and Ukrainian). This is due to the fact that girls usually opt for games based on oral communication, while boys choose to play games that depend on physical activity.

*"There is **some more division with the girls.** They are all friends, but they tend to group together, the Ukrainian girls on their own. But with boys there is less division, they all run together, **they play together.**" Interview 6*

4.1.7 Polish educators' positive intercultural perspectives and preparedness

Another major theme that emerged was Polish teachers' prior familiarization with intercultural classrooms which denotes an overall preparedness towards diverse multicultural teaching environments.

*"But teachers are **generally prepared** for that in our school. We always had children from different countries, and we had Ukrainian students, way before the war, too." Interview 6*

*"But we had already **so many foreign students** in our school in the past so most of the teachers were prepared." Interview 6*

Polish teachers also mentioned some training opportunities they were offered after the war, with an emphasis on the psychological aspects of this new teaching environment.

*"We also had some psychological courses, during which the psychologist prepared us, showed us **games to play with the Ukrainian students** at the beginning of the school year in order to bond, with a focus on play." Interview 6*

Finally, while focusing on Polish educators' perspectives as expressed through the interviews, positive perspectives towards bilingualism in the classroom were conveyed. Polish teachers seemed to be highly receptive to a multilingual and multicultural classroom, while their shared Soviet past also facilitates intercultural communication.

*"**Bilingualism is not an obstacle** so I can't think of any reason not to include Ukrainian language and culture in our system. If it functions and it helps them..." Interview 5*

"We try to include elements of their culture, their language." Interview 6

4.1.8 Ukrainian students' satisfaction with the Polish education system

Finally, a crucial theme that emerged during all interviews was Ukrainian students' views of the Polish schools. All teachers denoted the significance of the shared qualities that are met in both, the Ukrainian and the Polish culture. According to the teachers, due to the shared cultural characteristics, social bonding and communication are facilitated.

"The Polish and Ukrainian culture isn't miles apart, which helps in terms of socialization." Interview 4

"It's not that we have any bigger differences. We have similar food, religion, culture, everything is similar. So, in the younger classes there are not really any conflicts between the students based on nationalities." Interview 6

As for Ukrainian students' view of the Polish schools, they appear to be generally satisfied, especially with the non-strict nature of the Polish schools, in contrast to the discipline-oriented nature of the Ukrainian ones.

*"But generally, all children, when they came to our school they had to re-adjust. They saw that **many rules do not exist here**, or for example, that they have to see and find out things by themselves. **Schools were stricter in Ukraine**, more in favor of discipline than it is here, so they found it «**too much freedom**» in the beginning. They liked it!" Interview 5*

*"**The kids really enjoy the Polish school**. They like it because it is more **modern and positive, not so strict** and in favor of discipline, so they are happy with it." Interview 6*

In addition, according to their teachers, Ukrainian students seem to be particularly resilient, with limited mentions of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) symptoms, as mentioned.

*"**But kids are generally more resilient...** With teens I have seen that they don't express themselves so much but haven't had any experience of trauma showing." Interview 5*

*"However, I can say that the **Ukrainian students are handling it surprisingly well**. They are very **adaptable**, kids are so resilient! I don't know, either they are bottling it all in, or they really handle it so well." Interview 6*

To this end, Ukrainian students also appear to perform well academically, despite the existing access and opportunity barriers mentioned.

*"You know, our Ukrainian learners are amazing and work very hard to be part of the different social groups... **They perform very well**." Interview 4*

*"I also have in grade 7 many students who attend both schools at the same time. Especially girls - and these girls are so smart! **They get 5s and 6s, the best marks in the Polish system**, even though they attend two schools at the same time!" Interview 6*

4.2 Ukrainian Educators

"Ukrainian Refugee Students' Needs, according to teachers of the Ukrainian school"

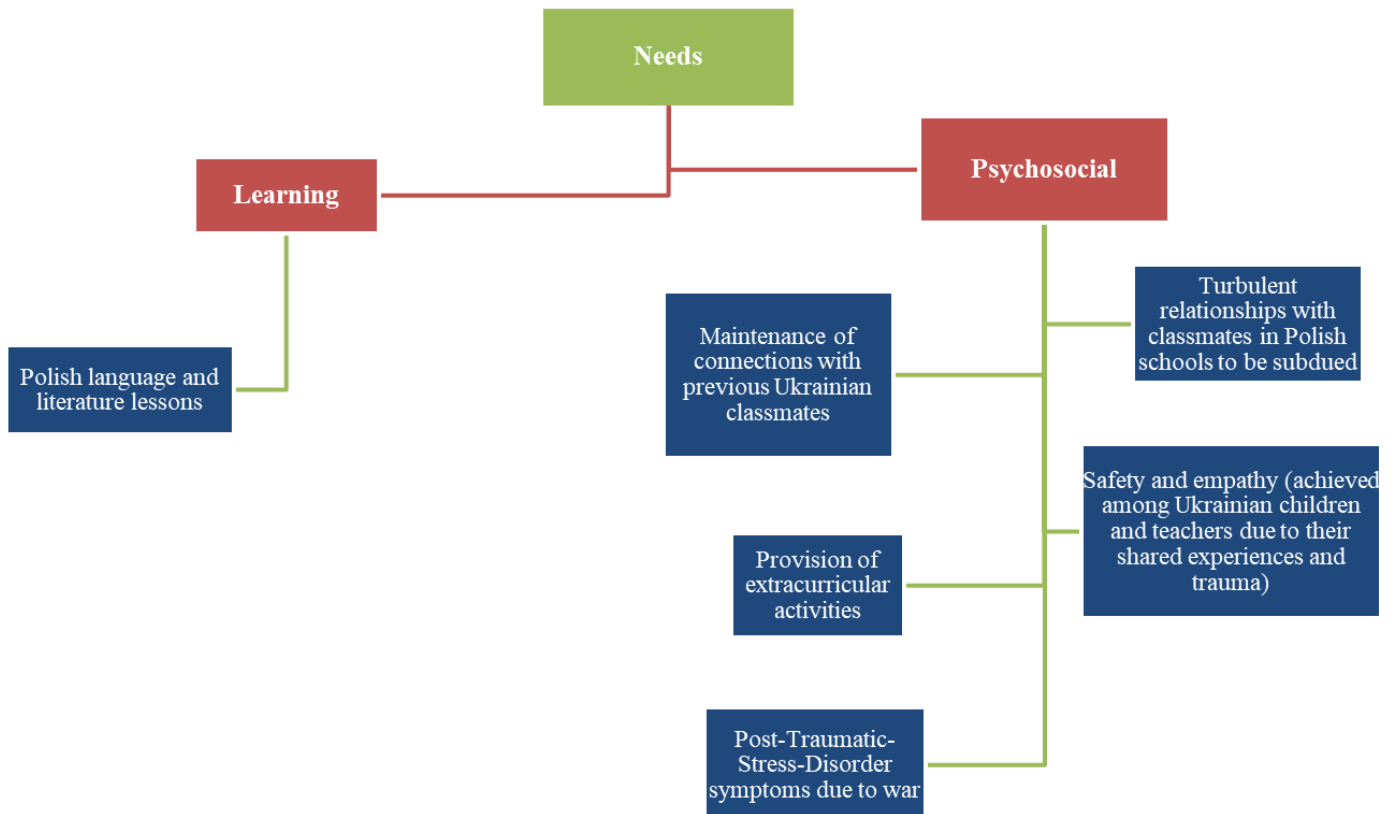


Figure 4

"Barriers to Ukrainian refugee students' learning, according to teachers of the Ukrainian school"

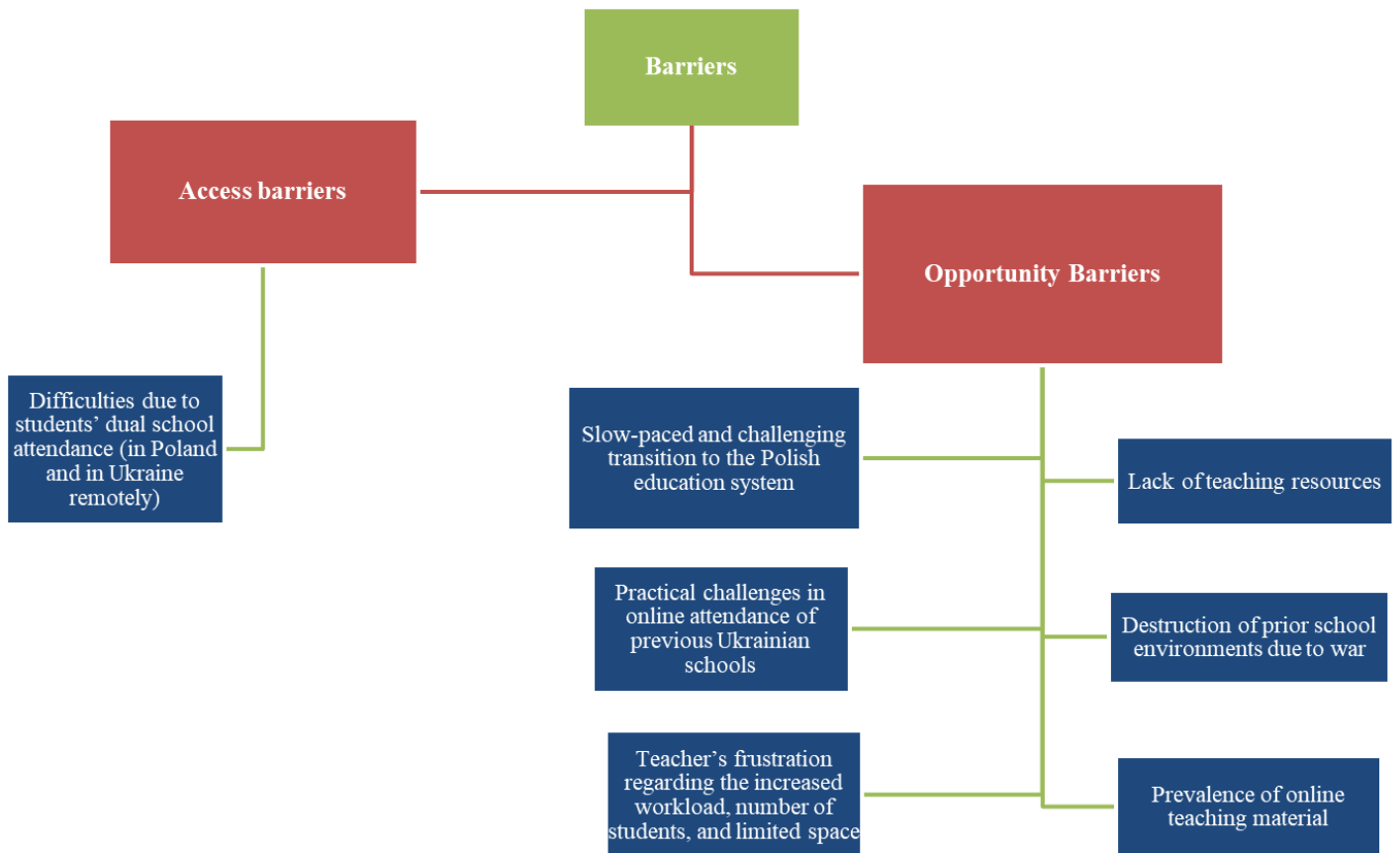


Figure 5

"Ukrainian refugee girls in education, according to teachers of the Ukrainian school"

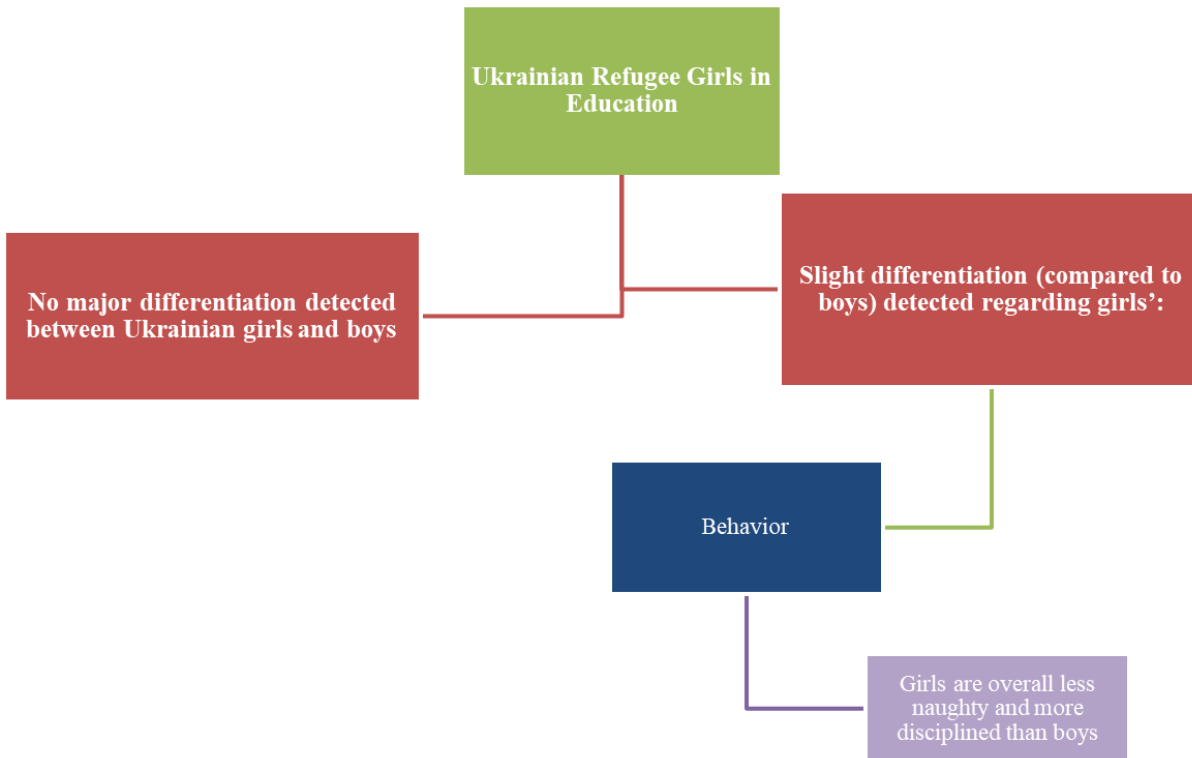


Figure 6

Following the themes that emerged from Polish teachers' perspectives as observed in Polish schools, below there will be a presentation of the major themes arisen by Ukrainian educators who teach in Ukrainian schools based in Poland. The main findings linked to the research questions are presented, as shown in Picture 4, 5 & 6 above.

4.2.1 Predominance of Ukrainian students' second-language-acquisition needs

First, predominant position among all Ukrainian teachers held the significance of second language acquisition (provision of Polish language and literature lessons). According to teachers' quotations, being able to speak Polish fluently enables students' mobility to the Polish schools and facilitates their further academic progress. However, the amount of time required for Ukrainian students to achieve a certain level of fluency varies significantly and can be determined on a case-by-case basis, according to teachers' claims.

To this end, a remarkable discrepancy concerning the corresponding time-frames was evident in teachers’ mentions.

*“They **need a few years to manage to learn**, so they have here Polish language and literature lessons, too.” Interview 2*

*“I would say that many children **manage to speak in Polish in half a year**. Some children came here in February and now, in September, they went to Polish schools. It depends.” Interview 1*

4.2.2 The significance of Ukrainian students’ psychological needs

Another major theme that arose was the significance of addressing Ukrainian students’ psychological needs. In particular, all Ukrainian teachers emphasized the importance of providing extracurricular activities as a medium to boost students’ morale.

*“We do a lot of activities together in school and, sometimes, after school. Many times we go to picnics, we organize excursions to the forest, - and eat and play games when we have our Ukrainian holidays. **We try to keep it happy, keep our spirit!** [laughter]” Interview 1*

The educators highlighted students’ need to maintain their connections with previous Ukrainian classmates, while also stressing that the Ukrainian students’ relationships with their Polish classmates in Polish schools can be often turbulent.

*“They need to communicate with their old classmates and teachers. **It is very important for them to keep their connections**” Interview 1*

*“Some families want to return to Ukraine so they are trying to keep their children to the Ukrainian schools –here or online in Ukraine. **They need to stay connected in a way.**” Interview 3*

*“...they had other **conflicts with their classmates**, with their Polish classmates or Russian children in the Polish schools.” (for relationships in Polish schools) Interview 1*

In addition, all Ukrainian educators underlined the role they play in providing a sense of safety and empathy towards their Ukrainian students. As stated, this empathy and mutual understanding derives from their common experiences and collective, shared trauma. Thus, Ukrainian educators transcend their mere academic role and manage to actively support their refugee students psychologically, too.

*“We understand their fear or anxiety because we, some of us, have been through the same experiences. **We have lived the same trauma or have lost our homes, our people.** So we can talk to our students openly about it... discuss it. And they feel safe, understood with us, because **we can really understand, we are one!**” Interview 3*

*“**We don’t just care about their studies and success.** Although they do really well, don’t get me wrong!” Interview 3*

Finally, in reference to the psychological impact of war on children, Ukrainian teachers have particularly addressed the issue of post-traumatic stress symptoms, noticing increased frustration, aggression or petulance. As they stressed during the interviews, such feelings source from war-related trauma, uncertainty regarding their settlement in Poland, school disruption, nostalgia for their former lives and anxiety about their new schools and future academic progress. Under this prism, Ukrainian educators underscore the psychological factor as the most important one, noticing that

*“learning is one thing, it will happen eventually, but **feeling safe and settled after all these experiences is the most important thing** for sure.” Interview 3*

*“**Some children have psychological problems**... they often cry and shout, or they become aggressive (...). It is a similar situation that I see in them. It is that they miss their schools, their life in Ukraine (...). But sometimes especially the older ones, they cry or maybe shout.” Interview 1*

*“**The psychological part is the most important. It is more important than studying I believe...** to be happy here and be social with friends, and feeling safe.” Interview 2*

4.2.3 No major differentiation detected among girls and boys

Regarding the possible differentiation among girls and boys in the school environment, teachers of the Ukrainian schools have not detected any significant social, psychological or educational differences. There was only one mention on the gender-normative depiction of girls as being generally “less naughty”. Interview 3

“I cannot say that I have seen any differences between boys and girls. No, they are all adapting, they are very good, very friendly to each other, because you know, they are all

foreign here, away from their country, so they help each other. They are friends, they meet and play after school..." Interview 2

*"Not really, **I haven't seen any differences, apart from the usual ones.** That girls are generally less naughty!" Interview 3*

4.2.4 Detection of opportunity barriers to Ukrainian students' learning

In regards with the barriers to Ukrainian students' learning, various opportunity barriers arose during the interviews. First, students' difficulties due to dual school attendance were mentioned. Specifically, as noted, it has been common for the Ukrainian students to be attending lessons in two different Ukrainian schools at the same time, - one based in Poland and the other one in Ukraine, remotely. The latter, as described by all Ukrainian teachers is especially challenging: *"...even in the online classes they attend, it is difficult. They don't have always the opportunity, because they don't have light or electricity often in Ukraine because of the war..." Interview 1*

Dual school attendance also implies additional workload and hours of school attendance for Ukrainian students, who have been already in a vulnerable position.

*"it can be hard for them, attending two schools, two classes at the same time. Having **more tests, more homework, more hours every day.**" Interview 2*

*"But it is very difficult for them to study in both- sometimes for example they are not present here because they have a test in their online school back home" (...)This is difficult for them, **very demanding.**" Interview 1*

Furthermore, all teachers underlined students' slow-paced and challenging transition to the Polish education system. They mentioned difficulties regarding Ukrainian students' turbulent relationships with their Polish and Russian classmates, and challenges on passing the mandatory, induction exams of the Polish schools, often hindered by students' lack of fluency in Polish.

*"Some children came here in February and now, in September, they went to Polish schools. But it is not easy. Some children have problems in the Polish schools and came back (in the Ukrainian school). **Some didn't pass their exams,** their tests there, and came back here, or they **had other conflicts with their classmates,** with their Polish classmates or Russian children in the Polish schools." Interview 1*

*"Sometimes these tests are difficult even for the Polish students. So many **feel left out and are afraid to even try to pass this test.**" Interview 3*

Moreover, adding to the barriers mentioned above, substantial lack of teaching resources was highlighted by all teachers, while also stressing the prevalence of online teaching material. Hard-copy books have been hard to find and, in most cases, teachers were only provided with one book, and had to print all chapters separately for all students. This, in turn, led to insufficiency of paper, thus, forcing students to make use of the online material provided, almost exclusively.

*"...but there are **not many books** for all lessons. In some subjects, children have books, in other subjects the books are **only online.**" Interview 1*

*"Having equipment and books is difficult. Some books come from the children, other books were found because teachers from here contacted their colleagues from Ukraine and they sent their books... We have some books but mostly we have electronic material. We have an **online platform and books with free access because it is very difficult to find books for so many children.**" Interview 2*

*"We don't have many books, we had a **big problem with our resources.** And then we had to print everything on our own so **we couldn't find extra paper...** Most of the students study through online material and we usually have only a couple of books to provide." Interview 3*

Finally, all interviewees expressed their frustration as an impact of the increased workload, huge number of students, limited classroom space and lack of resources they have been facing.

*"...But we, the teachers, found it more difficult to adapt to this. It is a great opportunity working here and helping, but it is very difficult now, comparing to the situation before war, because of the huge number of children. The children now are much more, so the time for work is more. **More lessons, more classes. I had lessons from 9-4 today, all day, so it gets very difficult.**" Interview 2*

The aforementioned barriers, as supported by the Ukrainian educators, shape and hinder not only the learning, but also the psychological and social realities of Ukrainian refugee students. According to teachers' direct quotations, Ukrainian refugee students face lack in resources and infrastructure, are taught by overworked educators and often attend two schools simultaneously, while also facing war-related trauma and fundamental changes in all aspects of their lives.

4.2.5 Ukrainian students’ positive attitudes towards the Ukrainian school

Concerning Ukrainian students’ attitudes towards the operation of Ukrainian schools in Poland, students seem to express their positive perspectives. In particular, all educators have noted that students easily adapted to the Ukrainian schools in Poland and managed to cultivate a positive rapport with their Ukrainian classmates. As emphasized, students in the Ukrainian schools enjoy being with their new Ukrainian friends and feel included and safe. Teachers also noticed that the children’s positive attitudes are related to the fact that they are attending their regular Ukrainian curriculum, while in Poland.

*“They are very good, very friendly to each other, because you know, **they are all foreign here, away from their country, so they help each other.** They are friends, they meet and play after school...” Interview 2*

*“Children get along so well here. **They are all like a team,** they help each other, they play and talk all the time together. They need to be with Ukrainian friends. They feel more like home” Interview 3*

4.2.6 Ukrainian parents’ attitudes towards their children’s education

Finally, the attitudes and perspectives of Ukrainian students’ parents held a prominent position during the interviews. Ukrainian parents are said to be generally satisfied with their children’s attendance of the Ukrainian schools in Poland, as it provides them with a sense of stability and safety.

“We have a very good communication with most of the parents. They are really happy that their children can continue their studies here in the same way as back home, with the Ukrainian system.” Interview 3

However, parents’ overall satisfaction does not come without feelings of worry regarding the academic progress of their children, as conveyed by the operative phrase “equal opportunities”.

*“But they want their children to learn Polish at the same time, and have **equal opportunities.** They don’t want their kids to have gaps in their education... they worry about their future.” Interview 3*

Moreover, Ukrainian families’ willingness for a permanent settlement in Poland was a recurrent theme throughout all interviews. Parents’ intent for a permanent stay shapes their

needs regarding children's acquisition of Polish, attendance in Polish schools and activities related to socialization, as means for Ukrainian children's educational and social inclusion.

*"Children learn Polish here and then, when they have managed to learn, they move to Polish schools. They want to continue. Many of **the children and their parents want to attend Polish schools and have Polish education** because they want to stay here in Poland. They have home and work here, so they want **to stay permanently.**" Interview 2*

*"Parents, families want their children to **learn to speak Polish, to socialize,** - because many want to stay here permanently." Interview 2*

5. Discussion

5.1 The bidirectional needs of refugee children and educators

First, regarding the learning needs of Ukrainian refugee students, there was an overall alignment between the literature data and the findings of this research. In particular, the role of second language acquisition as integral part of integration was noted by all educators interviewed. Teachers from both, the Ukrainian and the Polish schools, highlighted the students' need for additional lessons of Polish language. Polish teachers also emphasized the need for the provision of intercultural lessons that can raise cultural awareness among students and promote an ethos of cultural sensitivity and mutual respect. In addition, the need for targeted educational supports and methods emerged, that asks for differentiating the provided lessons in terms of content and material.

Offering second language education to refugee students is a valuable tool for students' empowerment and self-esteem as it encourages communication and enables their socialization. As a result, acquiring the language of the host country can greatly benefit refugee children by enhancing their social inclusion and putting an end to their discrimination and isolation (Tadayon & Khodi, 2017). The "otherness" of the refugee experience can be traumatizing, especially for minors. The "othering" of refugees as well as migrants, often comes from ignorance about a different culture, lack of relevant experience or awareness as well as from perceiving "others" as a threat against host country's interests (Žagi, 2021). As Žagi (2021) points out, negative attitudes of many European countries have been noticed, leaving migrants and refugees marginalized in various aspects of everyday life. This perspective was shared by the interviewed educators in this research, who indicated the need of integrating Ukrainian refugee students in such a way in the classroom that helps them be included and not separate or "other" them. The importance of covering students' linguistic needs has been also noted by Rutter's findings (2006) regarding "good practice" in education. According to the research participants, targeted support should be provided to refugee students, including programs that can accelerate students' participation in mainstream classes, most noted of which are the intensive language courses (World Bank, 2015).

In our study, Polish educators emphasized the existing language barriers that hinder the learning procedure, and noticed more forms of barriers than the Ukrainian teachers did, as the latter focused more on the psychosocial impact of war on Ukrainian children. As indicated, it was evident that the level of Polish of many of the Ukrainian students who were inducted in the mainstream Polish classrooms is not always adequate. Many Ukrainian students have been attending mainstream classes without though being linguistically ready, thus they are in need of translation and interpretation and/or tailored learning material that meets their language needs. However, due to time and resources' restrictions this is not always possible.

The case of some of the older Polish teachers was also stressed regarding the language barrier, as due to Poland's Soviet past, many of the older Polish teachers speak Russian. Thus, they can better communicate with the Ukrainian refugee children and help them, not only academically, but provide them with overall support as well. This is an especially important parameter as teachers' fluency in a shared language - Russian in our case - can make meaning possible and help in overcoming the language barrier, as well as, help refugee students gain a sense of belonging and mutual understanding through the shared linguistic and cultural elements.

This is also linked to the importance of an increase in interpreters in Polish schools, along with the need for an increase in Ukrainian teacher's assistants who are fluent speakers of the Ukrainian language. The interviewed teachers of Polish schools noted a significant deficiency in bilingual teaching staff and Ukrainian-speaking teaching assistants who would help with interpretation (and translation) when needed in the classroom. A number of interpreters/bilingual staff, according to the participants of this study, would not only assist the teaching procedure, but also allow for Ukrainian students' expression and, thus, help with meeting their various needs.

5.2 Empathy

Two major categories that emerged in this study are students' psychological and social needs. In fact, these two categories appeared to be interconnected throughout teachers' interviews. According to this research, students' psychological and emotional state is

interwoven with their socialization and personal bonds and connections with their old as well as current peers, friends, and teachers. Thus, the interplay of Ukrainian students' psychological and social needs will be discussed and reflected upon under the broader term of psychosocial needs. This term describes the combined impact that psychological factors as well as the surrounding social environment have on students' overall wellbeing (Woodward, 2015).

Literature findings have highlighted that the role that the psychological factor plays in refugee education is crucial. Refugee students have often faced traumatic experiences and disruptions due to war, been separated from their family members, forcibly displaced and exposed to persecution and violence. Adding to these, they may also face exclusion, discrimination, bullying and racism in the host country and suffer from psychosocial distress and anxiety (Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan, 2019). Thus, schools, as small but powerful communities, constitute crucial settings for refugee students' development and wellbeing. In schools, refugee children have the potential to form friendships with their peers, become independent and confident, and grow within a supportive community, built for them by their teachers, school staff, classmates, and school psychologists, that empowers and helps them reach their full potential. As a result, addressing refugee students' psychological needs can lead to their academic and personal growth and promote their success, resilience and well-being.

In our study, both, Polish and Ukrainian teachers, labeled psychology as the most important factor shaping refugee students' provided education. Polish teachers stressed that establishing an empathetic and non-triggering teaching environment is paramount in order to promote learning and meet their refugee students' complex needs. This is particularly essential due to Ukrainian students' distress and anxiety sourcing from their current uncertainty as well as their increased trust issues as an impact of war and their forceful displacement. Ukrainian teachers also highlighted the role of psychology as the most determining for students' overall development and progress. Particularly, they mentioned that students' academic progress cannot be achieved without having first improved refugee students' psychology and dealt with their stress symptoms, anxiety and/or depression that come from war-related traumatic experiences. Additionally, according to the Polish participants, Ukrainian refugee students often indicate post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. They appear to be more irritable, overly

sensitive and anxious, while they also need more time to trust their new teachers and school members of the Polish schools. Trust issues though were not noticed in the Ukrainian school, where there was noted an environment of mutual support, trust, and emotional help among all students and teachers. This fact highlights the significance for refugee students to be able to stay connected with their culture, language and roots as integral part of their well-being and growth. Moreover, the psychological implications of war on refugee students emphasize the need for a safe and empathetic learning environment, which was also underscored by all educators as crucial for refugee students' education. A welcoming teaching environment and educators with empathy and intercultural awareness are determining factors in helping students overcome feelings of isolation, anxiety and uncertainty (Dryden-Peterson, 2015a).

It needs to be stressed that an empathetic and safe environment is actually achieved in the Ukrainian school in Warsaw, since teachers and their refugee students have often experienced the same trauma and thus, have a unique sense of understanding and empathy. These findings bear a remarkable connotation as refugee students are not normally taught by refugee teachers, much less from refugee teachers of the same nationality as theirs. Thus, the specific bond and connection formed between teachers and students in the Ukrainian school constitute a notable situation that needs to be further investigated and discussed.

Similar findings have been noted in a study led by Sarah Dryden-Peterson in 2016, which analyzed the paths of Somali refugees in Kenya who have been academically successful. According to this study, nationally trained Kenyan teachers (not refugees) could effectively help refugee students with the Kenyan curriculum (curriculum of the host country). However, educators who were themselves refugees could provide stronger psychological support and empathy, even long after school completion (Shafer, 2018). This further stresses the importance of shared experiences - especially traumatic ones - as a unifying and bonding factor that can be significant and determining in regard to refugee education. To this end, the role of refugee teachers in refugee education and their impact regarding the teaching outcomes and students' well-being could be further explored and researched.

A remarkable point raised by Polish educators was also the limited help that school psychologists could offer to Ukrainian refugee students. As Polish teachers claimed, many

of the Ukrainian students (even adolescents) who were enrolled in Polish schools arrived to Poland undiagnosed. These claims imply that their former educational environment, teachers, and/or children's parents, did not proceed with a diagnosis by a specialist, which according to Polish educators is due to the stigmatized and taboo nature that such a diagnosis still holds in Ukraine. Teachers mentioned examples of Ukrainian refugee students with behavioral disorders and mental health issues, - namely, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning Disorders, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)-, who were successfully diagnosed after arriving to Polish schools. However, they emphasized that there are still many cases of Ukrainian students who have not been diagnosed, as students and their families approach the matter as a taboo issue and do not co-operate or comply with school psychologists' advice.

Thus, our study demonstrated that there is a need for further sensitization and awareness-raising of the Ukrainian families concerning mental health and behavioral disorders in order for the rooted stigma and misconceptions to be dispelled and allow refugee students to receive much needed support, counseling, and treatment.

5.3 Connections

Adding to the importance of shared experiences mentioned above, the need for maintaining personal connections was prominent in our research. This was denoted by Ukrainian refugee students' need to maintain their connections with previous Ukrainian classmates and continue with their dual school attendance, in Poland as well as in their previous school in Ukraine, remotely, despite the challenges that dual attendance poses for them. According to our participants, preserving connections and regularly contacting former classmates and teachers has been particularly helpful for Ukrainian refugee students, offering to them a sense of intimacy and belonging, as well as, helping them experience some kind of normality. A similar point was raised in the Somali refugees' case, which conveyed that close-knit relationships with family, friends, and teachers, not only in person, but also virtually, offer the required encouragement and mentorship for refugee students' educational success and progress (Shafer, 2018). Thus, it aligns with our

findings, which also conveyed the significance of preserving the previous school connections (from Ukraine), even in virtual form, and the beneficial effect it has on Ukrainian refugee students' emotional state.

Another aspect that arose regarding Ukrainian students' psychosocial needs was the importance of refugee students' positive rapport with their classmates in the mainstream Polish classes. Ukrainian teachers noted the turbulent relationships of Ukrainian students with their classmates in Polish schools that need to be subdued. Conflicts and misunderstandings were mentioned, which further deteriorate Ukrainian students' psychological and emotional state and should be addressed and resolved. Refugee students need to bond and form new friendships, especially when they have already lost their old friends and may feel alienated due to language and cultural differences. Thus, there is a crucial need to help students resolve their disagreements and conflicts and smooth their relationships. This can lead refugee students to a profound and much-needed sense of belonging (Nakeyar, Esses and Reid, 2017).

It should be noted though that the depicted reality was differentiated when presented by Polish teachers, who tended to emphasize the overall positive relationships among all students in the mainstream Polish classrooms. Contrarily, Ukrainian teachers approached students' relationships with a more mordant and discerning eye and described Ukrainian students' transition to the Polish schools as more challenging and slow-paced. This is another indication that the Ukrainian educators focus more on the psychosocial impact of war on refugee students, while the Polish educators were more vocal in students' learning needs and educational barriers.

The provision of extracurricular activities to refugee students was also noted as a decisive factor on meeting students' psychosocial needs. Such activities as mentioned by the interviewees can be field trips, additional workshops in music and art, sports clubs and choir. According to teachers' perspectives, students' participation in such activities boosts their mood and contributes to their socialization and integration. The enhanced socialization and self-confidence that come from participation in extra-curricular activities, lead to students' improved mental health and overall wellness. This is why refugee students should be encouraged to be active in a school that promotes their participation, not only in the learning process, but in relevant school-clubs and hobbies, which can help them feel like actual school members.

However, the provided number of extra-curricular activities, after-school clubs, and Polish lessons, have been recently decreased in Polish schools due to restrictions in schools' funding. Such a decrease can deteriorate Ukrainian children's socialization and emotional state as it deprives them of the opportunity to meet and befriend new peers, regain their confidence and independence, and heal through creative, artistic activities and physical exercise. Thus, it obstructs students' stronger identification with the school that could lead to belonging and inclusion (Alspaugh, 1998). To this end, the need for additional school funding is crucial and should be prioritized by policy-makers, school staff, and students' parents. In the meantime, Ukrainian refugee students should be encouraged to be involved in other groups (e.g., spaces of the public sector, NGOs, community spaces) that can function as socialization agents and foster their smooth inclusion in the Polish society.

Additionally, a remarkable point that emerged in our study was the role of dual school attendance in Ukrainian refugee children's development, which is also linked to their need for maintaining connections. However, attending two different schools simultaneously, in the Polish/Ukrainian school in Poland as well as in the old Ukrainian school, remotely, poses serious challenges for many of the Ukrainian refugee students. According to our study, students appear to be overworked, distressed and anxious about dual school attendance. In contrast to other cases of refugee students, who do not have access in proper schooling (often disrupted schooling, or no schooling at all), Ukrainian refugees, not only had had access in education in Ukraine, but also continue to have access in two schools at the same time since the war has started.

In principle, Ukrainian refugees are not allowed to be enrolled in the Polish education system if they have been already attending the Ukrainian education system virtually. However, this is not practically the case as Ukrainian families are worried about their children's progress and do not want to let war negatively affect their children's future and academic development. Many of the Ukrainian families are still uncertain concerning their settlement, - whether they will return back to Ukraine, or stay permanently in Poland. To this end, it is common for Ukrainian refugees to attend the Polish and the Ukrainian curriculum (remotely), at the same time, in order to be prepared regardless of what the future holds for them. This decision may be prudential and far-seeing, it can be though detrimental to Ukrainian refugee children, who have been already psychologically affected and traumatized by war. Especially for the Ukrainian adolescents, who are getting

prepared for their inductive exams for the university, dual school attendance can be particularly challenging and demanding, furthering their distress.

It should be highlighted that dual school attendance creates new needs in regard to the resources and equipment required that will allow Ukrainian refugee students to access remote education. The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science created a new platform during March of 2022 which allowed Ukrainian students to attend real-time online lessons and have access to online textbooks and educational material. This highlights the need for Poland to provide specific equipment, IT support and infrastructure in order to ensure and facilitate Ukrainian students' remote learning (Pacek, 2022).

5.4 Financial difficulties

Polish educators also emphasized the financial difficulties that many Ukrainian families are facing. Despite the unprecedented humanitarian support and aid by Poland as well as by the European Union and other countries worldwide, Ukrainian refugees still face financial problems that can obstruct Ukrainian refugee children's education. Examples mentioned by the educators were in regard to children's participation in school trips, as they sometimes cannot afford the trip fee or ticket, their access to resources and additional learning material, or even their ability to afford school meals. As noted, school meals used to be, up until recently, free for families with financial difficulties (of Polish, or any other nationality). However, this has changed due to schools' limited financial resources. The same has happened for some of the additional lessons that used to be provided for refugee and migrant students (e.g. Math, English). These findings resurrect the need for additional schools' funding, as financial reasons prove to be central to addressing the needs of Ukrainian refugee students.

Adding to the financial issues faced by many Ukrainian refugee families, more opportunity barriers are inflicted on Ukrainian refugees' education in Poland, as schools are being more and more underfunded as an impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected the facilities and provisions of Polish public schools. Teachers have been expressing their intense frustration sourcing from a significant lack of resources and limited infrastructure. Paper and hard-copy books for the vast number of refugee students who enrolled in new schools were (and in cases remain)

limited, while the number of teachers and classrooms have remained the same in many cases. Until December, 2022, this situation was far more challenging for both, Polish and Ukrainian educators, who had to work overtime while also being as diligent and resourceful as possible in order to overcome the numerous insufficiencies and shortages. Moreover, schools' underfunding led to a significant lack in school's personnel, especially school psychologists and specialized teaching staff. Lacking psychologists when accepting numerous students of refugee background can be detrimental to addressing students' needs and helping them be included in a new school environment. In addition, lacking specialized teaching assistants trained in working with refugee students and fluent in Ukrainian, can be a serious disadvantage for students' academic progress and psychosocial growth. Finally, the number of provided extra-curricular activities, after-school clubs, and Polish lessons have been decreased, adversely affecting Ukrainian children's socialization and well-being as it deprives them of the opportunity to socialize, regain their confidence, and heal through fun and social activities, aligning with other refugee cases and the limitations detected in them regarding limitations in infrastructure, resources and activities provided (De Wal Pastoor, 2016).

During the Covid-19 pandemic schools needed to apply measures to avoid spread of the virus as well as support students to continue learning on a remote basis. Enhanced cleaning processes were applied, additional support staff was hired, school staff's social distancing had to be enabled, special protective equipment and additional resources and supplies for students working remotely had to be purchased (Julius et al., 2020). All the new needs that emerged during the pandemic required more funding in order to support schools and guarantee students' learning and safety.

According to research concerning the funding of schools in England, the additional costs that arose regarding extra staffing and school resources marked an increase in expenditure of one-fifth for an average primary school (Sharp et al., 2020), while during the year 2020/21 schools lost a significant amount of their income due to costly, additional expenditures related to the pandemic. According to the same research, not only the additional funding provided to schools was not sufficient to cover Covid-19 related expenditures, but there were also higher risks affecting disproportionately schools that had already been underfunded. In addition, combined with the pressure of the inflation during the previous years - still ongoing - it was even harder for schools to meet the financial

responsibilities. Especially for schools with a deficit or limited surplus, the disadvantage was perpetuated, as they could not afford even the smallest amounts of the required Covid-19 expenditures (Julius et al., 2020; Strauss, 2020).

After more than three years, schools worldwide are still facing the financial aftermath of the Covid-19, many of whom have not recovered financially. This was depicted in the situation of Polish schools, too, which has led to a number of opportunity barriers to many, and, particularly, to refugee students' learning, as described above. Thus, it is crucial for the affected schools to be offered additional financial support that will allow all students and especially the ones from disadvantaged and under-privileged backgrounds, to have equal opportunities in education (Julius et al., 2020). Social divide is generally prominent in education and financial factors still determine the learning opportunities provided, despite the fact that access to education is a fundamental human right. Students of minority, disadvantaged or refugee background should be the first to be protected from such financial implications, instead of being the most affected ones. This would provide them with equal opportunities to progress in life and help them reach their potential.

5.5 Ukrainian parents' perspectives and involvement in the Polish education system

Another factor that was mainly met in Polish educators' perspectives, and could hinder Ukrainian students' learning, are Ukrainian parents' attitudes and perspectives towards the Polish education system. Ukrainian parents seem to express an overall skepticism towards the Polish education system as they find it more lenient and slow-paced than the Ukrainian one, and, thus, they are worried about their children's academic progress and success in a less traditional and disciplined environment. According to our study, Ukrainian parents tend to view children's discipline and submissiveness in school as mandatory prerequisite that fosters students' academic success and good behavior. A study conducted in Greece regarding refugee education has depicted similar findings concerning refugee parents' perceptions. Specifically, it has shown that refugee parents often express their preference for a less lenient and more strict and discipline-oriented school environment. This was noted particularly by parents who have prior schooling experience ("Project PRESS:

εθνογραφικές προσεγγίσεις της εκπαίδευσης προσφύγων στην Ελλάδα|Διεθνές Συνέδριο για την Ανοικτή & εξ Αποστάσεως Εκπαίδευση," 2017). On the other hand, Polish educators in our study appeared to perceive Ukrainian parents' skepticism as outdated and anachronistic.

This divergence of opinions between parents and teachers bears significance as it can lead to the demotivation of Ukrainian refugee students, and avert them from regularly studying and participating in the Polish education system. Adding to that, it could also demotivate teachers and affect their attempt to wholeheartedly include Ukrainian students in the mainstream Polish classrooms if they feel that Ukrainian parents underestimate their way of teaching and do not value their work. As it was mentioned above, teachers, refugee students, and their families, all play a catalytic role in refugee students' education, and cooperation and collaboration of all sides are needed to abolish pre-existing stereotypes and misconceptions. The perpetuation of misconceptions, pre-assumptions, and stereotypical views can result in a lack of mutual understanding and - even- respect. Thus, a communicational gap can be created, the sufferers of which will be the students themselves, as communication between parents and teachers, especially in refugee education, is key.

To this end, it is crucial for refugee children's well-being and progress to foster a systematic and productive communication among their teachers and parents. Such communication can bring forward the battling views and ideologies involved, and provide fruitful ground for them to be explained, discussed and, ultimately, dispelled.

The above raised point about teacher-parents' communication, calls for a more systematic teacher-training, too, that can make teachers more adaptable, sensitive and aware of the reality faced by refugee children and their families. Teachers should be trauma-informed, inter-culturally aware, and empathetic, as well as, capable to detect refugee students' special needs which may come from disrupted schooling. Teachers' contribution is crucial in creating a warm and supportive teaching environment, and also transforming language policies, as long as they gain insight into their sociopolitical role as teachers in refugee education. To this end, their further specialized training and continuous development are required to help them measure up to their standards. Research has indicated that many teachers do not feel confident and knowledgeable enough to teach students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Guo-Brennan & Guo-Brennan, 2019). In fact, the

more negative attitudes regarding students' inclusion tend to come from the educators who have limited training (Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2000), and, therefore, do not achieve the empowerment of their students (Bernard, 2001), while further trained teachers demonstrate more positive and welcoming attitudes towards students of refugee background. Our study was congruent with the importance of teacher training, as Polish educators expressed the limited training opportunities they had had at the beginning of the school year (2022-2023), which mainly focused on bonding activities that would promote Ukrainian refugee students' socialization.

It should be mentioned that Polish educators appeared to be confident that they had been already familiar with the suggested teaching practices for refugee students, due to their prior teaching experience. The mentioned teaching experience involved teaching students of migratory background; however, none of them had previous experience of working with refugee students. The experience of migrant life may bear some similarities with that of the refugee one, yet they are fundamentally different in core aspects. Therefore, teachers demonstrated lack of awareness in regard to the complex needs of refugee students and seemed to oversimplify these needs narrowing them to the same needs with the ones of migrant students.

To this end, teachers' training and development on a professional level is required to enable them to become "active agents in minority children education" (Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011). The ones in charge of regulating refugee education and policy-making need to develop programs that educate teachers of refugee background students about cultural and linguistic diversity and can make the former more sensitive concerning their role as teachers and the ways they perceive refugee education politically and ideologically (Gkaintartzi & Tsokalidou, 2011).

The need for further teacher-training and better communication between teachers and refugee parents is also linked to the previously mentioned need for an increase in interpreters. When interpretation is possible in schools, it becomes easier for refugee children's parents to be more involved and effectively communicate with their children's teachers. This involvement enables an open communication among parents and teachers, or other staff members of the school (e.g., school psychologists) and can add to the enhancement of students' academic performance as well as personal growth.

The significant role of parents in refugee education that was noted in our research is also corroborated by numerous studies. According to Arnot and Pinson's (2005) "holistic model", there is a need for a fresh understanding of the refugee experience that views refugee background students and families with a profound empathy and understanding of their needs. Family engagement and parental involvement can be crucial as they promote successful learning and inclusion; hence, various practices that engage parents need to be implemented. Block's et al. (2014) research underlines that an increase on interpreters results in increased engagement of caregivers and parents, which allows teacher/parent interviews and fruitful discussions regarding children's needs and academic performance. As a result, the use of interpreters in schools essentially minimizes the language barriers and allows parents to play a more active role in their children's education, especially during their primary years (Block et al., 2014). This also allows teachers to understand their students' background and even learn about the psychological issues and traumatic experiences refugee students may have faced, which often leads to "ruining" teachers' perceptions of refugee families.

Abolishing rooted perceptions, misconceptions, and stereotypes that used to obstruct teachers-parents' interaction can pave the way to honest communication and thus, to designing programs "to better meet their (students') needs emotionally, socially and educationally" (Block et al., 2014, p. 1352). It should be added that the described "good practice" in other research findings, not only stresses the importance of parental engagement, but is also celebrates the need for creating connections with the general community (Arnot & Pinson, 2005, p.51, as cited in Taylor & Sidhu, 2012, p.45). The vital role of community for the development of refugee children is also described in Epstein's (2018) model of "overlapping spheres of influence" as previously mentioned in Chapter 2.4, p. 20. Literature has been unanimous that successful and effective education offered in schools is maximized when families, community, and the overall society work together towards a supportive context (Bernard, 2001).

However, it must be underlined that the role that the general community plays in refugee children's growth was not met in this research and did not emerge in any of the conducted interviews, in contrast to the parents' role and attitudes, which held a predominant position throughout all interviews. Moreover, teachers' communication with the parents of the Ukrainian refugee students often needed some help to be effective; however, it was often

feasible, in contrast to findings about parental involvement of refugee parents of other ethnicities who face more severe language barriers and communicational difficulties. It should be added that effective interpreting services are crucial in refugee contexts, however, it has been shown that refugees' experience with interpretation is often negative to them, while there is also lack of interpreters. Providing an interpreter per each refugee as regulated is not the case. An example for that is the case of the European Union and the agency Frontex which, during the Syrian refugee case, asked for 400 interpreters but the governments offered only 22 instead (El País, 2016).

Finally, it was shown that Ukrainian parents appear to play an active role in their children's education and show significant willingness to be engaged and informed about their children's academic progress. This involvement aligns with Ukrainian parents' expressed perspectives and skepticism as previously discussed as well as with its connotations and possible implications.

5.6 Refugee girls in education

Refugee girls and, especially, refugee girls hosted in developing countries, face numerous challenges on the basis of their gender and are often deprived their access to education. According to UNHCR, research data has shown a greater percentage of refugee boys in schools than girls. Particularly in sub-Saharan countries, research demonstrates that it is half as likely for refugee girls to access secondary education ("UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency," n.d.).

In addition, studies about refugee Arab girls have indicated that Muslim Arab refugees and, particularly girls, face more severe discrimination than Christian refugees, which also affects and hinders their acculturation process. Factors such as religion, experienced discrimination, family flexibility, country of origin, and gender, affect refugee Arab girls' acculturation process and their access to education (Awad, 2010). It should be mentioned though that defining shared characteristics that apply to all groups of refugees within the Arab World is especially complex, since each ethnic group presents differences concerning their practices, ideologies, and values (Awad, 2010).

Concerning the educators' perspectives on Ukrainian refugee girls' education in Poland, there was a remarkable contrast with the research findings regarding refugee girls from other parts of the world. The access to education for refugee girls in countries of the developed world was entirely different from that of refugee girls in developing or under-developed countries. Refugee girls in western countries have access to proper schooling in terms of existing policy framework and infrastructure, despite the barriers and insufficiencies that may exist. Thus, for many of the cases, it depends on refugee families' flexibility, beliefs and ideas to decide on girls' education and academic progress. In contrast to that, in many countries of the Arab World or Sub-Saharan countries, refugee girls are deprived of access to education often on the basis of their gender. Boys' education is prioritized, while girls are urged to take care of the housework, get married and give birth, often as minors themselves. The interplay of a variety of factors leads to refugee girls' exclusion from education (especially secondary education).

However, even in the western and developed countries, many refugee girls do not access education equally. The variables of ethnic origin, religion, family ideology and values, cultural background and language of origin also affect the access of refugee girls to education. Even when, in theory, refugee girls have the right to proper education in the host countries, the reality is different. Depending on the factors mentioned, girls will use their right to education or will be still deprived of it. Moreover, apart from factors coming from within the family and its background, external factors, such as discrimination, racism, and language barriers, push refugee girls away from schooling (Awad, 2010).

In our study, the depicted reality was entirely different. Ukrainian refugee girls' education and inclusion appear to demonstrate no differentiation than that of Ukrainian refugee boys. Both, Polish and Ukrainian educators highlighted that Ukrainian girls access schools equally and display similar attitudes and expression of their emotions with boys. In fact, Ukrainian girls seem to perform better academically than Ukrainian boys, as their grades at their new schools are higher and they are usually more diligent and studious. Ukrainian parents and the corresponding societal views are supportive of girls' education. In fact, as noticed, Ukrainian parents can be even pressing regarding girls' academic performance and progress.

According to our research, the only differences noted among refugee girls and boys from Ukraine, apart from their remarkable academic performance, are behavioral differences.

Girls demonstrate gender-normative behaviors, associated with femininity, as they are generally more obedient and disciplined and less naughty than boys. On the same wavelength, Ukrainian refugee girls often prefer to group and discuss with each other rather than mingle with their Polish classmates. This comes in contrast to boys' behavior who prefer to play all together (Polish and Ukrainian ones) as their games are usually physical, not oral and communicative dependent on discussion and self-expression. These behavioral differences are linked to refugee students' gender identities and gender norms of behavior. They are social principles that govern girls' and boys' behavior, restricting gender identity into what is deemed proper and appropriate. Thus, these behavioral differences are based on gender norms, stereotypes, and gender role expectations, and are not attributed to war-related factors.

Nevertheless, these gender normative behaviors can be oppressive for all girls, much less for refugee girls. Stereotypes, expectations and social norms of what is deemed "proper" gender behavior can be highly restricting and urge refugee girls to assume gender roles that limit their freedom. The expectations and ideas of femininity press girls to conform to specific expectations in regard to their behavior, interests and appearance, among others. In addition, discriminative negative stereotypes, which often dictate girls' "weakness" and decreased capabilities, can be self-fulfilling and deprive refugee girls of their autonomy.

To this end, even though the differentiations in Ukrainian girls' case, as presented in our study, were not related to war, gender normative behaviors and their role need to be emphasized. The "usual" depicted behavior of Ukrainian girls as being more disciplined, studious, and submissive, and, as mentioned, "questioning less" than boys, demonstrate the level at which girls are still pressed to conform to different standards of freedom than boys. Therefore, gender equality needs to be promoted to challenge rooted stereotypes and create environments of empowerment for refugee girls, and all girls in general. This process requires an intersectional approach that considers the various factors and identities that lead to girls' vulnerabilities, along with an exploration of the different policies and frameworks that shape refugee girls' wellness. This is crucial to encourage girls, especially girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, to break free from gender norms and restricting roles and help them reach their full potential.

5.7 "Selective solidarity" towards refugees - Looking towards the future

The massive flows of Ukrainian refugees who arrived in Poland were welcomed with remarkable solidarity and positivity. The Polish educators who participated in our study expressed highly supportive and positive opinions regarding Ukrainian refugees and stressed their solidarity to them, through their role as educators and as citizens as well. The Polish educators had also volunteered to support Ukrainian families and wish to continue doing so when there is need. However, this tremendous support and acts of humanism come in contrast to the recent history of Poland, which needs to be critically discussed and reflected upon.

Poland's history has shown that Poles' perceptions surrounding refugees' reception was different. In 2015, less than a decade ago, during Europe's "refugee crisis", cornerstone of the Law and Justice Party' (PiS) successful campaign in Poland was the opposition to the relocation scheme for refugees, as proposed by the EU. During that period, refugees from the Middle East and Africa, were presented as a "threat" that would be catastrophic for the values, culture and independence of Poland and the public opinion seemed to share the same view. In fact, in 2016, about 75% of Polish people viewed Muslim refugees from Syria and Iraq as a major threat (Hargrave, 2023).

Evidently, Poland, after the Second World War, became a highly homogenous and profoundly Roman Catholic country. In these years of a rise of the extreme nationalists around Europe, and particularly in Poland, this image of a "racially pure" Poland has been highly popular, in contrast to the image of a multi-cultural and diverse society, and was supported by conservative groups of the Church, too. Thus, refugees, and especially Muslim refugees, were seen as a threat to Poland's homogeneity and values (Cienki, 2017).

Since 2015, Poles' attitudes towards refugees gradually started becoming more positive, however, a remarkable shift occurred and in 2022, about 50% of Polish citizens even expressed positive views on immigration (Hargrave, 2023). This shift is linked to the current sociopolitical reality and the events surrounding Russian aggression. For the first time in more than 70 years the particular refugee case has unfolded in Europe, while European countries were accustomed to seeing refugee issues in the distant-to-them countries of the Global South (Morrice, 2022). However, the particular case involves

white, Christian, westernized refugees, thus, there is a proximity to the predominant, Eurocentric approach. As a result, people of the western world seemed to sympathize more with the refugees from Ukraine, reminding them that if Ukrainian citizens are in war, this could happen to citizens of other western countries, too. Therefore, the pre-existing assumption that human rights violations and war are restricted to specific regions of the world has been recently dismantled (Morrice, 2022). It is also essential to mention that the fact that the Russian aggression is the point at issue brings at the forefront another political connotation. The Refugee Convention in 1951 (UN, 1951), which established the definition of the “refugee”, also conveyed the concerns of Western European countries regarding an “expansionist Soviet Union” and depicted the “refugee” as “white” and “anti-communist” (Morrice, 2022, p.252). This depiction aligns with the image of Ukrainian refugees of today, as Russia is still associated with its recent Soviet past. Thus, larger political undertones underlie as the dipole between the USA and Russia is still prominent in the public dialogue. As a result, Ukrainian refugees have seen unprecedented humanitarian response and solidarity, as Ukrainian refugees today conform to that prior image of refugees which comes in contrast to the refugees fleeing the third world countries (Morrice, 2022, p. 251).

To this end, the adopted resettlement schemes and humanitarian response has been unprecedented. Apart from Poland, many more countries have shown unprecedented support to Ukrainian refugees. For instance, in the UK, the humanitarian response to Ukrainian refugees has been bigger than the support that was offered to refugees from Syria and Afghanistan together (Morrice, 2022). Similarly, Australia, Canada and the USA, which are distant to Ukraine geographically, have responded with unparalleled solidarity and support, which further stresses the existing bias and reminds us that the observed solidarity can be selective and often serve each country’s political purposes (Homeland Security, 2022; Government of Canada, 2022; Home Affairs, 2022, as cited in Morrice, 2022).

This reality should concern and problematize us, regarding the way in which refugee flows are perceived. Pure humanism and empathy does not see discrimination, separation and division in regard to color, ethnicity, religion or culture. Contrarily, it transcends these factors and celebrates diversity, mutual respect and equal rights for a human life with dignity. Therefore, this time can be transformative, problematize people worldwide and

shape the way refugees are approached. The witnessed momentum of solidarity and humanitarian acts globally, can lead public opinion to advocate for the equal rights of all refugees irrespective of their race, religion or ethnicity. Refugees should be treated with respect and be offered real opportunities to rebuild their lives, which includes their equal access to education. To this end, relevant research should focus on reimagining the landscape of refugee education and aim at a holistic model and multidisciplinary approaches that celebrate diversity (Arnot & Pinson, 2005; De Wal Pastoor, 2016).

Overall, the unparalleled number of Ukrainian refugees that arrived in Poland led to the urgent issue of attending to the forcibly displaced people's needs. Catering for Ukrainian refugee students' educational needs is crucial as schooling plays a vital role in supporting the inclusion of refugee children and their families. To this end, our research discussed the perspectives of teachers of refugee education in Poland, on the basis of (language) educational inclusivity. The perspectives of all participants were investigated in reference to the supports utilized to create an inclusive educational space. Specifically, this was examined in regard to the way Ukrainian students' needs were addressed and met, and to the existing barriers to Ukrainian students' education. The case of Ukrainian refugee girls was also researched and possible differentiations concerning their needs and barriers to learning were searched for. The main points that emerged in this study are summarized below.

First, having examined the first research question in regard to the needs of refugee Ukrainian students according to their educators' perspectives, various learning, psychological and social needs emerged. The provision of additional Polish and cultural awareness lessons arose, along with the need to include targeted and differentiated educational supports and methods. Teachers' further training and professional development was stressed and the significance of an increase in interpreters and bilingual teaching staff was highlighted. In addition, the importance of the involvement of refugee students' parents was emphasized as they can detect and highlight their children's complex needs and provide teachers with an insight into children's prior background and experiences. In addition, in regard to children's psychological needs, the establishment of a non-triggering, safe, and empathetic learning environment was noted as vital, as it can effectively help Ukrainian refugee students with their trust issues and distress due to their current uncertainty and war-related trauma. According to our findings, refugee students'

psychosocial needs can be also met through an increase in extra-curricular activities, such as field trips and after-school clubs that promote students' socialization and sense of belonging. Finally, the importance of maintaining Ukrainian refugee students' previous connections was stressed as well as improving Ukrainian students' relationships with their classmates in Polish schools when conflicts emerge.

Secondly, various access and opportunity barriers to Ukrainian refugee children's learning were detected. In particular, Ukrainian families' financial problems, the existing language barrier, and refugee students' trust issues and psychological problems due to war, hinder Ukrainian students' learning and overall wellness. Moreover, the attitudes of parents of the Ukrainian refugee students are crucial, as Ukrainian parents push their children to succeed academically and often express their skepticism and reluctance towards the nature of the Polish education system. In addition, Ukrainian refugee students' dual school attendance is noteworthy as highlighted in our study. Ukrainian refugee students are still remotely attending their previous school classes, which are now operating within a war-zone area. This dual school attendance negatively affects students' learning and emotional state as it is challenging and tiring for them and adds to children's already enhanced anxiety and frustration. This demonstrates a unique situation that requires further investigation and consideration, in order to see how dual school attendance can be dealt with so as to work in favor of refugee students' education and well-being, and not against.

Additionally, financial reasons related to school's funding were underlined which further deteriorate Ukrainian refugee students' education. The noticed underfunding of Polish schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic has led to decreased extra-curricular activities, after-school clubs and Polish lessons, lack of psychologists, lack of resources and limited infrastructure (paper, books, number of teachers and classrooms) as well as significant lack of specialized and bilingual teaching staff. A special mention was also made in regard to psychologists' limited help and a significant number of undiagnosed Ukrainian students who arrived in Polish schools, due to the stigmatized, taboo nature that mental health and behavioral disorders still hold in Ukraine. Other barriers to learning, as expressed by the perspectives of Ukrainian educators, are the destruction of prior school environments in Ukraine due to war, which often obstruct students' virtual attendance, along with the slow-paced and challenging transition to the Polish education system. In addition, the prevalence of online teaching material seems to be difficult to cope with as practical

challenges often arise with the online attendance of previous Ukrainian schools, requiring a stable internet connection and specific equipment to access the online platform. Finally, all teachers expressed their frustration regarding the limited space, the increased workload and the number of students that have been maximized after the large influx of Ukrainian refugee students in schools throughout the past year.

Concerning the third research question, regarding the education of Ukrainian refugee girls in Poland, no major differentiations arose between Ukrainian refugee girls and boys. Ukrainian girls' access to education in the Polish education system seems to be equally provided and encouraged, which is also denoted by Ukrainian refugee girls' remarkably good academic performance in Polish schools. Slight differentiations noted are restricted within the gender-normative differences in behavior among boys and girls, which comes in contrast to the educational access to refugee girls from other countries of origin and backgrounds.

Finally, remarkable were the findings that demonstrated the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on schools' funding which poses additional barriers and challenges to refugee students' education and inclusion, as well as, the frustration that teachers in refugee education expressed about their increased workload and numerous challenges they are facing due to schools' underfunding. In addition, Ukrainian refugee parents' worry and skepticism were highlighted as they play an important role in shaping their children's access to education and psychosocial condition. As for the mentioned dual school attendance, it needs to be further examined as it is an unprecedented educational reality which affects the overall inclusion of many of the Ukrainian refugee students. Moreover, the relationships among students, the use of interpreters and bilingual staff in schools, and the teachers' perspectives on refugee education were underlined as crucial factors regarding an inclusive refugee education. Finally, the significant bond formed among refugee teachers and refugee students of the same nationality as observed in the case of the Ukrainian school in Warsaw, was a remarkable finding due to its positive effect in improving Ukrainian refugee students' psychosocial state and helping them gain a sense of safety and belonging.

Moreover, it is essential to make some final remarks in regard to the existing bias and "selectiveness" detected concerning the case of Ukrainian refugees and their educational access and inclusion. As previously presented in Chapter 1, p.4 and Chapter 5.7, p. 79-80,

Ukrainian refugees have been viewed and presented with an overall positive approach worldwide, in a way that is unparalleled to any other refugee case. Refugees from under-developed/developing poor countries, of different (to the western countries) religion, cultural background and race, often face discrimination, xenophobia and racism which lead to their alienation and marginalization. Negative stereotypes, misconceptions and harmful pre-assumptions about them accompany their advent in the host countries, as they are often seen as a threat to the host country's dominance and financial, cultural, and sociopolitical progress. Such negative characteristics were not met in the case of Ukrainian refugees, who were mostly seen by the public opinion as well as the mainstream media with a sympathetic eye. Countries of the EU, along with countries from distant-to-Ukraine parts of the world, such as the USA, Canada and Australia, offered significant support and solidarity to the Ukrainian refugees, underlining the different characteristics of this refugee case compared to others.

6. Conclusive Remarks

Due to the special features of the case of the Ukrainian refugees, the enrollment of Ukrainian refugee students in Polish formal education has led to the emergence of distinctive findings concerning refugee education that calls for further investigation as it encompasses newly emergent perspectives. However, what remains consistent and was evident in our research, too, was that refugee students' inclusion, - one of the main aims of refugee education -, calls for a holistic model approach that offers a supportive and welcoming environment to all and effectively meets refugee children's learning, social and psychological needs. Such a model provides equal participation for all students and celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity, in and out of classroom, going beyond mere acceptance.

It should be highlighted that the aim should not be for refugees to become the "same" as the native students, but to be seen as equals. This can be achieved through their access to an education of equal and quality opportunities and the deduction of language barriers that hinder this process. Teachers' role and attitudes on that are crucial. Teachers in refugee education need to rephrase the ideology of "one language for all, equality for all", which is restrictive and fails to see how diversity can enrich the whole society, and function as agents for refugee students' well-being and growth. Educators should become aware of their sociopolitical role, while the ones in charge of regulating refugee education and policy-making need to educate teachers about cultural and linguistic diversity and make them more sensitive concerning the ways they perceive refugee education politically and ideologically. Teachers should realize their agentive role and recognize the way power relations operate in the classroom in order to address possible inequalities as well as the ideologies that reproduce them. This can lead to reshaping current (language) ideologies, which often promote linguistic assimilation, and challenging power relations.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the war in Ukraine, along with its special characteristics as mentioned above, marks an important moment in the way in which Europe approaches refugee movements. The unprecedented aid offered to Ukrainian refugees indicates how impactful political willingness and public support can be. The Ukrainian refugee case can be a pivotal historical moment that will transform and reshape the way individuals worldwide view refugees and the latter's needs as well as their

education. The humanitarian aid provided to Ukrainian refugees need to be included in practice and policy in order to effectively respond to refugee students' needs. In addition, the current momentum of solidarity and support to refugees from Ukraine can be the spark that will spur to action and advocate for the equal opportunities and moral value of all refugees, regardless of their culture, race or religion, not only in Poland, but throughout the world. Refugees should be treated with respect and given equal opportunities that foster them to reclaim their lives. Educational inclusion, as an integral part of this process, can be a valuable tool for refugees' empowerment, self-confidence, and increased opportunities, allowing for their social inclusion and ending discrimination and marginalization.

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Appendix A: “Interview Guide”

Interview Questions

1. What do you think about the new Ukrainian students? (/How do you feel about..?)
2. From your experience, what are Ukrainian refugee students’ needs? (Then, specifically about learning needs, focusing on language education and then, moving on to social (/psychological) needs, depending on the answers)
3. What about girls? Have you detected any differences regarding their needs?
4. What does an inclusive environment look like to you/ your students?
5. What kind of support do you utilize during your courses? (Do you find it inclusive? Does it respond to the needs of the students?)
6. From your experience, what access barriers have you detected concerning Ukrainian students’ education/ inclusion (if any)? (+one more access-related question)
7. What *opportunity* barriers have you detected regarding Ukrainian students’ education/ inclusion (if any)? (+one more opportunity-related question)
8. How do you see the relationships of refugee children with other students?
9. Do Ukrainian children attend online classes of the Ukrainian program as well, and what do they say about it?

Emergent sub-questions:

- Language barriers? Teachers’ perspectives on bilingualism? Monolingual or bilingual paradigm?
- Parental involvement?
- Teachers’ - staff’s training- specialization?
- Psychological support for refugee students?
- Actions towards students’ socialization (e.g., after-school clubs)?
- Adequate equipment -infrastructure?

Appendix B: "Information Letter"

This letter was submitted to school principals and educators, informing them about the aim and context of this study, and asking for their consent.



Patras, Greece 18/12/2022

INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam,

With this letter, we would like to inform you and ask for your consent for the research to be carried out among teachers of Szkoła [REDACTED] entitled "Educators' perspectives on inclusive language education for Ukrainian refugee children".

The research is carried out in the framework of the Master Thesis of the Postgraduate Programme Language Education for Refugees and Migrants of the Hellenic Open University in Greece. Responsible for the research is the postgraduate student Ms. Vaia Christina Kontogianni and her supervisor Ms. Sofia Tsioli.

The aim of the research is to highlight the educational needs of Ukrainian refugee students for a more inclusive education. In this context, a case study will be carried out with interviews with teachers. If necessary during the research, other arts-based data collection tools will be used if necessary.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and we remain at your disposal for any clarification either via email [REDACTED] or phone [REDACTED]

Sincerely



Sofia Tsioli

Dr. of Applied Linguistics and Research Methodology
Hellenic Open University

Author’s Statement:

I hereby expressly declare that, according to the article 8 of Law 1559/1986, this dissertation is solely the product of my personal work, does not infringe any intellectual property, personality and personal data rights of third parties, does not contain works/contributions from third parties for which the permission of the authors/beneficiaries is required, is not the product of partial or total plagiarism, and that the sources used are limited to the literature references alone and meet the rules of scientific citations.