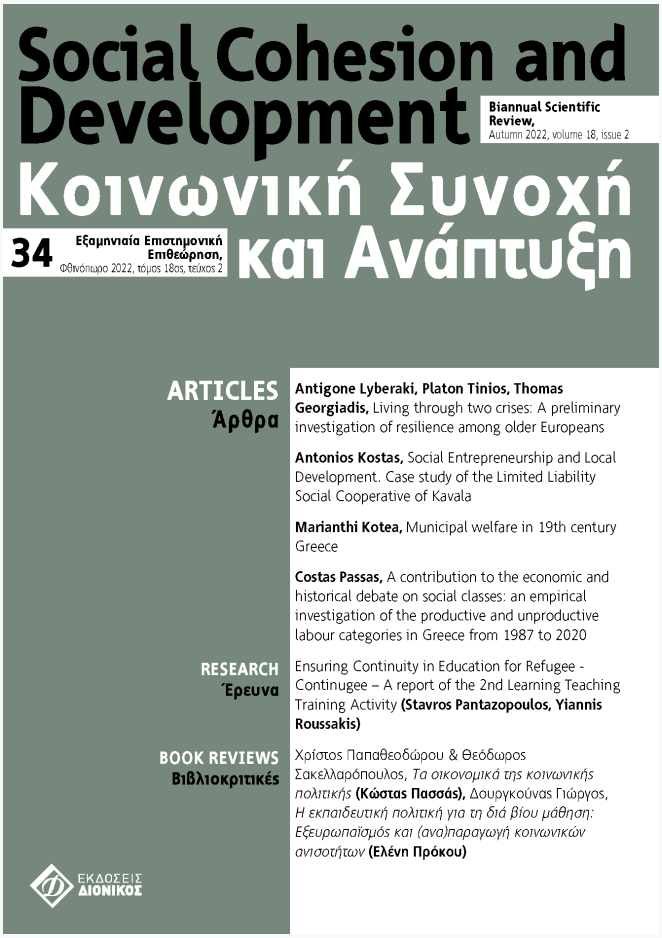
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"Ensuring Continuity in Education for Refugee - Continugee" – A report of the 2nd Learning Teaching Training Activity

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"Ensuring Continuity in Education for Refugee - Continugee" – A report of the 2nd Learning Teaching Training Activity

On July 2, 2022, the 2nd Learning, Teaching, Training Activity (LTTA) of the Project "Ensuring Continuity in Education for Refugee - Continugee" took place. Continugee is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme Key Action 2. The partners of the project are National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA Greece), the Scientific Society for Social Cohesion and Development (EPEKSA Greece), University of Urbino Carlo Bo (Italy) and University (Fachhochschule) of Kiel (Germany).

The project aims to create a partnership which will focus on the continuity of education for migrant and refugee children and adolescents, from the reception areas / countries to the places / countries of permanent settlement, and develop a needs-based curriculum and an in-service training program, and implement it in schools and education institutions of participant organizations, taking into consideration the local conditions and aiming at maximizing the European value along with refugees linguistic and cultural background of such interventions.

The "Continugee 2nd LTTA" was held as an online event, due to the COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions. It was organised by the team of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, coordinated by Assistant Professor Yiannis Roussakis, who welcomed all partners and attendees. Mr. Roussakis gave the floor to NKUA researcher, Dr. Stavros Pantazopoulos, who referred to the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in the development of the project. Dr. Pantazopoulos highlighted the ongoing travel restrictions, that still urge the partners to communicate online, even at Transnational Project Meetings. Meetings in person are always preferable, especially in the beginning of such projects, because they provide partners with an opportunity to meet both scholarly and socially and discuss in depth the project issues. However, Dr. Pantazopoulos pointed out the excellent cooperation of the Greek National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme, which allowed the Project to move forward and to being implemented to the maximum level possible.

The LTTA also hosted the Coordinator of Key Action 2 of the National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme, Anastasios Barmpas, who, in his brief salutation, highlighted the interest of the Greek National Agency for of the project, as "Continugee" addresses such an important issue, as the integration of young migrants and refugees into the education systems of countries of first reception and final settlement. He also underlined the importance of the project, for the acquaintance of young migrants and refugees with European values. Concluding, he mentioned that the National Agency is closely monitoring the activities of the project, is present during its implementation and will assist and support if and where needed, so that it can be successfully completed.

The LTTA continued with presentations from the partners on the Intellectual Output 2 and 3 of the Project. The NKUA contribution was presented by NKUA Assistant Professor Yiannis Roussakis. The NKUA was the leader of IO2, and Professor Roussakis started by referring to the aim of IO2, which was to conduct a needs analysis, through ethnographic and empirical research and subsequently to study:

(a) the ways in which learners and educators understand, conceptualize and develop the concepts of European values and global/ European citizenship against the values, and especially European values which are mentioned in education policy documents and the aims of schooling of the countries involved in the proposal. (b) the expectations of students and teachers towards the development a common reference framework for European values that will support a unified education.

The NKUA team, among others, provided partners with a research guide for needs analysis and assessment research, which will outline the (qualitative and quantitative) methodologies to be used and the general form of the research instruments (i.e. questionnaires and interview protocols) which were adapted for national case studies. Experts from NKUA, along with the project manager, additionally reviewed relevant international needs assessment and analysis reports in order to validate and make results more reliable. Professor Roussakis IO argued that the research revealed that the education offered in Greece to refugees encounter barriers in the implementation. Those barriers consist of problems that arise during the pandemic, there was a lack of basic equipment, the education was offered within the camps and, in the bottom line, the offered education was limited. Professor Roussakis concluded stating that the aforementioned obstacles make the need for change an imperative, not only in Greece but also in most EU member states.

Professor Eduardo Barberis from University of Urbino Carlo Bo stated that the Italian research team intended to identify, analyse and assess refugee childern's educational needs as well as the training and professional development needs of their teachers, in Italy. According to the data, in Italy, racism and xenophobia is not quite an issue, or it is an implicit and stereotyped issue. In addition, the ones offering the education in refugees are semi-professionals, lacking some type of qualification.

Reviewing the Italian case, he argued that the refugee education does not exist in the policy making headlines in Italy, on the contrary to the accompanied minors, who draw all the attention. Furthermore, he stated that the ones get the spotlight, subsidiaries, policies etc. are the family of the refugees and not the children themselves. The research also highlighted the fact that there is a limited number of schools for vulnerable children in Italy.

Concluding his presentation, he mentioned that during the Ukrainian crisis 150.000 refugees were forced to move to Italy, among them, the 1/3 are children. According to the data collected by the Italian research team, although those children went in the ending of the school year, the Italian educational system manage to enclose 65% of them in the classes and offered them education.

Christos Zisis from the Fachhochschule Kiel presented the German case regarding the European values, teaching approaches and school integration (IO2) and briefly referred to the German best practices (IO3). He reported that many refugee children attend school for a limited time in countries located at the boarders of European Union and then move on to schools in mainland and Northern Europe (i.e., Germany) following their families or (in the case of unaccompanied minors) the arrangements between EU Member States for their allocation. The research pointed that refugee students face gaps or deficiencies in the process of recognition of previous periods and contents of study, (i.e. acquired knowledge, skills and competences) due to the "continuity deficit" among the European educational systems.

Mr. Zisis proceeded mentioning that the research was conducted not only in Kiel but also in other northern and neighbor cities with major refugees' population. The research pinpointed that educational policies of the northern parts of Germany are affected by the Nordic neighbors,

for example Denmark. As for the analysis and the research results, he highlighted that the Kiel research team faced some minor methodological problems regarding the European values and how the interviewers perceived them. As a result, he mentioned that the correspondent criteria have to be redefined and reconsider of what these European values mean and represent.

Mr. Zisis concluded mentioning that tentative and further conclusions will be mentioned in the next LTTA, when the synthetic report will be concluded, regarding the IO3.

Assistant Professor of Panteion University (Athens), Nikos Kourachanis, representing EPEKSA, shed light upon the aspects of educational facilities for refugee children of third countries in Greece, by making an overall description on the Greek educational system. Proceeding on his presentation, stated that the EPEKSA conducted the research on IO3, based on the findings of the needs analysis and assessment, to seek and highlight good practices towards integrating European values and values education in the education of refugee children in Greece.

The main issue of concern found during the research, according to Professor Kourachanis, is that the Greek state failed to overcome barriers regarding the educational process. Moreover, additional problems were identified. These problems can be categorized under four (4) central dimensions. (A) administrative issues such as part-time and inexperienced teachers, (B) school dropouts, (C) the refugee education coordinators who work as a hub between the children and the school, and lastly, (D) the teacher training material, which is insufficient.

Professor Kourachanis concluded highlighting that despite the problems arised, the refugee children achieved a rather high level of education, socialization and inclusion.

The second LTTA of Continugee Project highlighted the issues of education of young refugees and migrants in EU and especially in partner countries, Greece, Italy and Germany. Research data and results provided a learning and training framework that could effectively address the needs refugee children and their teachers face, concerning: (a) common European values, that should be integrated in refugee education to promote social inclusion of refugee children and their families and (b) learning needs that would enable refugee children to successfully participate in the educational process, both in the country of first reception and in the country of permanent settlement.

Stavros Pantazopoulos, Panteion University

Yiannis Roussakis, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)