

# Access to Education of Refugee and Migrant Children outside Accommodation (Open) Sites

Athens and Thessaloniki, Greece, March 2017

## Context

As of 25 March 2017, it is estimated that more than 20,000 of the refugee and migrant population in Greece are children (zero to 17 years).<sup>1</sup> As many of these children have been in the country for more than one year, access to education is a key area of concern.<sup>2</sup> According to national legislation, children are entitled to education irrespective of their legal status.<sup>3</sup> Yet, access to education, including formal, non-formal and informal,<sup>4</sup> remains challenging for many. Limited data on refugee and migrant children's access to education in Greece currently exists, including on access rates and barriers to education. This factsheet presents a snapshot of access to education activities, identified barriers and the perception of education of refugee and migrant children in a selected number of locations across Greece.

## Methodology

This factsheet presents findings from a consolidated analysis of: (1) data on access to education activities and attendance rates of children in a selected number of apartments, hotels, and shelters for unaccompanied and separated children (shelters for UASC) across Greece, administered by the Greece Education Sector Working Group (ESWG) in February and March 2017;<sup>5</sup> and (2) data on barriers to education and children's perception of education available, collected by REACH, in partnership with UNICEF, between February and April 2017. The latter is based on an assessment consisting of 35 key informant (KI) interviews and 15 focus group discussions with 81 children aged 15 to 17 in 10 locations in Athens and Thessaloniki. As both datasets are linked to a selected number of locations only and data collection by ESWG is ongoing, findings are not representative of the entire refugee and migrant child population in Greece and should be considered as indicative only.

## Map: Locations assessed



## Access to Education Activities

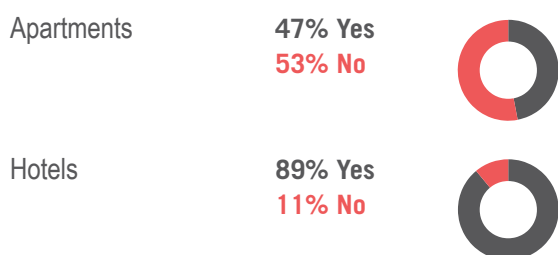
**59%** of assessed children attended education activities, including formal, non-formal and informal education, administered in the assessed locations or nearby.

**41%** of assessed children did **not** attend any type of education.

% of children attending education activities by age group, as identified in the ESWG assessment:<sup>6</sup>

Age group	Yes	No
6-11 years	59%	41%
12-14 years	61%	39%
15-17 years	61%	39%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>41%</b>

% of children attending education activities by location type, as identified in the ESWG assessment:<sup>7</sup>

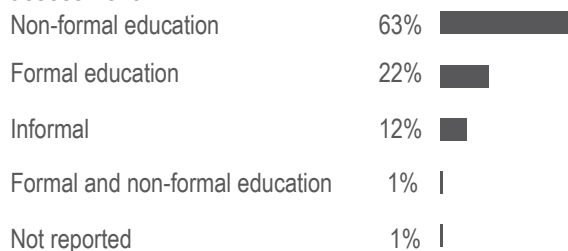


## Type of education activities accessed

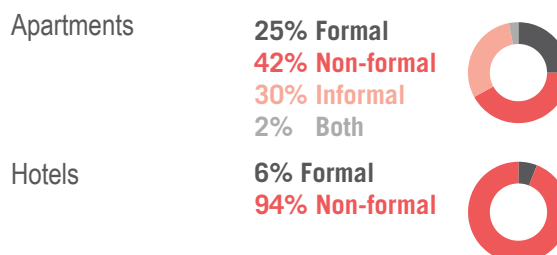
Among children attending any type of education activities

**63%** attended **non-formal education**.<sup>8</sup>

Type of education accessed, as identified in the ESWG assessment:



% of children attending education activities by location and education type, as identified in the ESWG assessment:<sup>9</sup>



As of end of March **2,500 children** from accommodation (open) sites were attending afternoon reception classes.

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## Barriers to Accessing Education

### Barriers to attending formal education

**10 / 10** assessed locations hosted some school-aged children who did not attend formal education, as indicated by KIs.

Reasons for children not attending, by number of locations reported (out of 10), as indicated by KIs and identified by REACH:

1. Difficulties with Greek language 8
2. Lessons not helpful<sup>10</sup> 5
3. Registration time has passed 3
4. Children cannot concentrate 3
5. School is too far away 2
6. Transport, school material's costs too high 2
7. Parents are afraid of racism 1

### Children stopping to attend formal education

**10 / 10** assessed locations reported that at least one child had stopped attending formal education.

Reasons why children stopped attending, by number of locations reported (out of 10), as indicated by KIs and identified by REACH:

1. Difficulties with language 8
2. Lessons not helpful<sup>10</sup> 5
3. Children cannot concentrate 4
4. School is too far away 2
5. Parents are afraid of racism 1

## Children's Perception of Education

### Formal education

Children who attended formal education often reported their expectations were not met.

Most reported reasons, as identified by REACH, included:

1. **Classes conducted in Greek not attractive for some children**

Several children did not intend to stay in Greece, so lessons conducted in Greek did not correspond to their priorities.<sup>11</sup>

2. **Teaching entirely in Greek without translation**

Some children who did not speak Greek well had difficulties in catching up with classes. This was of particular concern to children who had never been to school in their country of origin.

#### End notes

1. Sources include: MoMP, MoD, RIS, EKKA, ARSIS, ASB, DRC, IOM, NRC, UNHCR, UNICEF, as of 25 March 2017.
2. The majority of the current refugee and migrant population on mainland Greece has been in Greece since the closure of the Western Balkans route and the EU Turkey statement in spring 2016.
3. [Law 251/2014](#).
4. 'Non-formal education' is an organised educational activity, which takes place outside the established formal system, but is administered by trained personnel; 'informal education' comprises learning which does not follow a set curriculum and may be administered by volunteers, parents or others.
5. ESWG data was provided by partners, including ARSIS, Caritas, Faros, Iliaktida, IOM, Metadrasi, OXFAM, PRAKSIS, Save the Children, Solidarity Now, UNHCR, and SOS Children's Villages.
6. Please note that the difference in proportion between different age groups and the overall attendance rate is because

## Non-formal education

Overall, children positively assessed non-formal education classes. Most reported reasons, as identified by REACH, included:

1. Classes introduced routine into daily lives of children
2. Children were able to learn something 'new'
3. Children enjoyed the range of activities available, including sport, language and crafts

Among both children attending formal and non-formal education, the number of children who stop attending education is high, due to the pattern of fluidity and movement of residency of children.

## Children's Voices

“ I like in general to go to school and I want to have an education. But I don't go because I don't know the alphabet, and the lessons were a too high level so I left. When I started, I told them that I can't read and write, and since then nobody showed me how to write. The teachers were speaking only in Greek to me. ”

M17, Afghanistan, unaccompanied

“ Sometimes I feel I don't have a reason to wake up. It's not that I don't like to wake up, but there is not something to make me leave the bed. It's better since we started having classes, this is a reason. ”

F16, Syria, accompanied

“ I came here to continue studying but it's not good, because it is all in Greek and most of it we don't understand. For three months I used to go – they registered me – but nothing changed in those three months and I quit, because I went to school, I woke up at seven a.m. and I just came back. I learnt nothing there. ”

M16, Iraq, unaccompanied

“ Language is important, if you don't know Greek you can't follow the classes and can't understand. If I don't have education, I don't have eyes. Without education you can do nothing. ”

M17, Afghanistan, unaccompanied

most children assessed were aged 6-11 and because the assessment also covered children in the age group 3-5 years whose attendance rates were lower and are not included in this overview.

7. The difference in terms of assistance is tied to the location stability of children. Children hosted in apartments are likely to be relocated, preventing continuous attendance. N=4838.

8. N=2808.

9. N=2804.

10. Lessons were reported as not helpful because children were waiting to be relocated or because lessons were not adapted to children's skill level.

11. Please note that, according to a recent report by the Greek Ministry of Education, efforts are made to raise awareness on the importance of education regardless of the language.