

Empowerment of the refugee migrant community through a cooperation project on art education in Greece

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ABSTRACT

This article contributes to the inclusion of the refugee community located in Polykastro (Greece) through an art cooperation project between the University of Seville and the NGO Open Cultural Center. We suggest that art education promotes the full development of the individual and the community. This study examines the identification stage which took place in October 2019. Using a Logical Framework Analysis we explored agents involved, problems, objectives, and alternatives. We conducted interviews, participant observations, and SWOT analyses. The identified problems point to a lack of integration and an intervention strategy for an inclusive improvement is discussed.

KEYWORDS

Education; forced displacement; NGOs; migration; Southern Europe.

1. Introduction

This article describes the first results of a research process within the cooperation project “Art, Culture, and Development Education. Education and culture for the personal and social empowerment of the migrant–refugee community of Polykastro, Greece”. The project was carried out between September and October 2019 and implemented by the University of Seville (Spain) and the NGO Open Cultural Center (OCC). This NGO develops its educational work focused on the migrant

community residing in municipalities of northern Greece, as well as in the refugee camp of Nea Kavala, which is 4.5 km from the town of Polykastro. The cooperation team has been composed of researchers from the University of Seville and the University of A Coruña, collaborating with the OCC staff. The aim of this project was strengthening the artistic–cultural dimension benefiting the educational processes of the migrant refugees and their community for personal and social empowerment, favouring their inclusion and development.

In order to understand the work evolved by OCC and the implementation of the cooperation project, it is appropriate to determine the social and cultural framework which determines the intervention carried out.

In the past decade, the global population of forcibly displaced people grew significantly, reaching a record high of 79.5 million by 2019 (UNHCR 2020). Most of this increase was between 2012 and 2015, driven mainly by the war in Syria. Europe, during the second half of 2015, witnessed an unprecedented influx of people seeking refuge by sea. Thousands of people died in the attempt, but more than a million people reached European soil and more than 1.5 million new asylum claims were lodged. This rise was mostly due to the increased movement through the Eastern Mediterranean towards Greece. Almost half of these people came from the Syrian Arab Republic, and also a significant percentage from Afghanistan and Iraq. Arrivals continued in subsequent years, but remained below 200,000 between 2017 and 2019, although Greece has nonetheless maintained an increasing percentage (UNHCR 2020). These data show a situation of permanent humanitarian aid in Greece, within an unsolved circumstance between the Hellenic Government and the EU. It can be deduced that the European policies implemented have not been able to facilitate a joint strategy for solving the problem. With respect to the asylum policy, the EU has long been trying to

establish a common territory for protection and solidarity based on a procedure of common status and asylum. However, in the EU, it was believed that the rules of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) were enough for an optimal development of the asylum policy and, eventually, it has been demonstrated that, in Europe, there are as many different asylum systems as there are member countries, with different and even opposing procedures in some cases (Stevens and Dimitriadi 2019).

1.1. Educational attention to refugees and migrants: the Greek case

In view of the lack of a common policy, the different European countries address the organisation of the migratory influx in a very different manner. The Greek context is a specific case in terms of both strategic–political relevance and migratory volume. In the last five years, Greece has been the eastern gate of the massive migratory influx toward Europe. In this chronic situation of humanitarian aid, its action must be expanded to the education sector and prioritised in order to favour the normalisation of the context, especially attending to schooling and cultural inclusion. Likewise, the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Europe, coordinated by UNHRC (2017), already involved a specific amount of financial support for the education sector, which was 10% of a total of \$525,904,019 allocated to the management of the situation of newcomers in Greece. As was stated by Esparza-Mengual (2018) and presented in the *Greece Emergency Response Plan* of UNHCR (2017), the Greek education system is facing problems related to the integration of refugee children in Greek schools and requires the participation of the civil society to improve intercultural education and social cohesion among all students, both native and migrant. As is gathered in such report, governmental priority and institutional support have been given to the Ministry of Education to ensure the schooling and regular attendance of refugees in formal

education. The latter includes pre-school, primary, and secondary education, through administrative coordination, transport supply, learning spaces, and lastly, equipment and materials. A case study conducted in Greek territory by Eleftheriadou (2020) indicates that most parents consider the education of their children a priority, and this is reflected by the fact that, in the academic year of 2018–2019, 12,687 refugee children were schooled. However, school dropout increases with the advancing school stages. This is largely due to the fact that education in Greece is compulsory up to the age of 14 and, therefore, the number of minors between 15 and 18 years of age in school is extremely low.

Furthermore, a quality, non-formal, complementary education is offered, which includes the teaching of the mother tongue, other languages, and professional training (for those teenagers and young adults between 16 and 24 years of age who do not go to school). Different NGOs have been in charge of proposing the offer of such non-formal education in the Hellenic country, promoting the learning of languages, fundamentally Greek and English, as well as the teaching of different subjects in Arabic, Farsi, and Kurdish, which are the mother tongues of many rootless children in Greece. This idiomatic learning takes into account that one of the main goals is to develop skills for life and basic literacy, providing the psychological support linked to the development of the teaching and learning processes.

In this educational context of crisis is where the Open Cultural Center (OCC) operates. OCC is an NGO dedicated to educational attention that facilitates the integration and social inclusion of migrants and refugees through activities of sensitisation and civic and intercultural education. OCC works responsibly to develop quality education, which is both a right and a shared responsibility of governments and civil society organisations (Albakri and Shibli 2019).

1.2. Open Cultural Center (OCC): non-formal educational attention in Greece

In order to determine the educational responsibilities and difficulties found by a non-governmental organisation such as OCC, it is worth mentioning an explanation of the collaborative activity developed by the NGO. OCC assumes a commitment with the families and migrant children of the area, who demand the different pedagogical projects – from cultural activities to a kindergarten for the youngest ones – evolved by the organisation for the necessary inclusion in the community.

OCC¹ is a non-governmental organisation with headquarters in Barcelona (Spain) that operates in Northern Greece. Its work is focused on providing educational attention to the migrant and refugee community. It was founded in April 2016 as a collective initiative of independent volunteers in the refugee camp of Idomeni (Northern Greece), which is placed at the border with the Republic of Macedonia. In this workspace, both volunteers and refugees collaborated jointly in the implementation of a safe educational context for children and adults. Then, the *Idomeni Cultural Center* was created, which held cultural events and activities: music and art lessons, film forum sessions, etc. It became a source of culture and learning in the camp, with over 150 children and 80 adults attending lessons and events. After the closing of the Idomeni camp in May 2016, OCC followed the refugees to the official camps of Cherso (in Central Macedonia) and Sounio (in the region of Attica), providing and developing a program of lessons, workshops, and cultural activities. It currently operates in Polykastro (capital of the municipality of Peonia, Kilkis), outside of the nearby refugee camp of Nea Kavala, which is 4.5 kilometres away. The facilities of this camp were designed to house 750 people; however, by the end of 2019, it was overpopulated with way more than twice its capacity. OCC attends to the refugee community settled in the municipality of Polykastro and in the bordering town of Axiópolis. In both cases, the

members of this community are mostly from Syria and Iraq. Likewise, this NGO attends to people from the Nea Kavala camp, mostly occupied by people from the Middle East. However, Nea Kavala is currently taking in its facilities a considerable population from Afghanistan who have been redirected from the overpopulated refugee camps of the Aegean Islands.

In this complex and multicultural context, the mission of OCC, as indicated on their website, is focused on a double objective: (1) improving the quality of life and promoting social, educational, and labour inclusion for refugees and asylum seekers through education and community activities in the transit zones, and (2) supporting inclusive communities and the rights of refugees and asylum seekers through activities of awareness, sensitisation, and cultural exchange. OCC operates in the educational context, carrying out a collaborative effort with different social agents within the area: entities of different nature and social attention, such as *Omnes* (Greece), which focuses on housing and census; *Help Refugees* (United Kingdom), which coordinates help and support for refugees; *Drop in the Ocean* (Norway), which focuses on assistance and logistics; and *Refugee Trauma Initiative* (United Kingdom), which is dedicated to psychosocial assistance. Thus, an optimisation is achieved not only at the educational level but also in the search for solutions that favour the integral development of the community.

Lastly, it is important to highlight that, in the present year 2020, four months after the realisation of this study, the COVID-19 pandemic has generated a very serious situation in social and political terms in the migrant and refugee community: as stated on the European Commission's European web site on Integration (Migrant Integration Information and Good Practices), with the application of rules and guidelines for social

distancing, European authorities and associations have raised the alarm about the living conditions of the most vulnerable members of society.

The current pandemic situation is severely conditioning the work carried out by OCC towards the migrant community. The successive closures and openings of educational centres, the mandatory quarantines due to COVID-positive cases among the OOC team, the intermittent confinement of the refugee camp of Nea Kavala, as well as the closures of the Hellenic country in the last year, are unavoidable facts that hinder the necessary exercise of inclusion. Nevertheless, any logistic and humanitarian activity, as well as the times that allow the educational development in the locality of Polykastro, will always be fundamental, while waiting for the social and sanitary normalisation of this exceptional scenario.

1.3. Art, culture, and development education: a project of educational cooperation

Every development project of art education involves an attitude of social reconstructivism, which is a pedagogical trend that gathers the educational struggle against social exclusion (Barbosa 2002). In the same way, artistic action is a creative and social expression that allows us to articulate an equitable common culture. Thus, the art becomes an instrument that generates hope, and consequently, it favours an art education that aims at that construction of common cultural heritage and the great potential to transform socially (Anttila and Suominen 2019). Our project entitled “Art, Culture, and Development Education” seeks to provoke individual and social empowerment through contemporary artistic processes, thanks to the divergent thinking generated by the arts in childhood and adolescence. The generation of spaces for artistic creation allows children to communicate themselves and express their ideas, feelings, and concerns about the territory they inhabit and the reality around them. In this way, an

affective empowerment is produced in the community, supporting a democratic attitude throughout the participation and links with the context as well as the ability to imagine timely social changes and the strength to create them (Medina 2012).

According to the roadmap for Art Education of *The World Conference on Arts Education: Building Creative Capacities for the Twenty-First Century* (UNESCO 2006), from a general perspective, the teaching and learning of the art guarantees culture as the basic component of an integral education that allows the individual to develop fully. UNESCO defends the essential idea of art education as a universal right for all students, and it emphasises the need to include immigrants, people from cultural minorities, and/or people with disabilities. Furthermore, from the university context of Thessaloniki (Northern Greece), which is greatly influenced by the outlined migrant reality, Professor Letsiou (2014) explained that art education makes the most of a whole creative potential that helps to improve the processes of social interaction and the development of communication skills. Thus, art education is an instrument for the transformation of our world. To develop a project that links arts and education, it is necessary to explore spaces that cover social education, art therapy, and the contents of the discipline itself. An unavoidable critical educational exercise is proposed, based on strategic, cooperative, socioconstructivistic, and transversal learning that promotes and ensures coexistence and diversity.

Within these conceptual and social parameters is where the following project operates: *Art, Culture, and Development Education. Education and culture for the personal and social empowerment of the migrant-refugee community of Polykastro, Greece*. The project was developed from late September and throughout October of 2019. According to the data extracted from the Human Development Report (UNDP 2018), it is easy to observe that Greece does not maintain a low human development

index (HDI 0.87), which even remains above that of other European countries, like Poland (0.865), Portugal (0.847), and Russia (0.816); this is remarkable considering that Greece does not receive official development support. However, since it is exceptionally and intensely affected by the described migration crisis, it has been awarded specific socioeconomic and humanitarian aid. Thus, it is an appropriate context for the implementation of projects under the philosophy of international cooperation through social and sustainable development.

Under these criteria is the implication of the University of Seville and the promotion of the project *Art, Culture, and Development Education*, as part of its annual program of competitive aid potentiated by its Vice-Rector's Office for Social and Community Service. This project is developed in collaboration with OCC and was initiated in September 2019 with its identification phase. It is focused on strengthening the art-cultural dimension, benefiting the educational processes of the migrant–refugee person and his/her community for personal and social empowerment. The project aims to favour the inclusion and development of the community, getting a share of the objectives set for Greece in the integral response plan presented by UNHRC (2017).

2. Materials and method

In an attempt to develop and analyse the project, the procedure used was the Logical Framework Approach (LFA). This method is focused on facilitating the process of the conceptualisation, design, execution, and evaluation of the project.

This method is particularly useful in studying the nature of agents involved in a complex situation due to the analytical structure that LFA provides, which offers useful insights for the further development of the cooperation and research project. It cannot be overlooked that every development cooperation project is a set of programmed

actions that are geographically and temporally localised. A project of this character pursues a specific goal, previously established, to initiate, support, or promote the development of a community of people through collaboration in conditions of equality among its different agents (Ferrero 1997). The first phase of a project is known as the identification phase, which is an essential diagnostic exercise for the delimitation and definition of space, time, and methods of action in the development of the global project. For the realisation of the identification process, the Logical Framework Approach (LFA) is used, whose aim is to facilitate the process of conceptualisation, design, execution, and evaluation of the project. The LFA is an essential diagnostic exercise for the delimitation and definition of space, time, and methods of action in the development of the global project. Numerous researchers have successfully applied LFA in cooperation projects (Cordingley 1995). LFA has four analytical stages: analysis of the involved agents, analysis of problems, analysis of goals, and analysis of alternatives.

The usefulness of the LFA in our art education project and the description of its different phases will be dealt with in more detail in the next section.

2.1. Project under the Logical Framework Approach (LFA)

a) Methodological structure of the analysis

Following the guidelines proposed by the United Nations – through their Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (Ortegón, Pacheco, and Prieto 2015)

– the methodological structure is defined in a quadruple analysis:

a.1.) *Analysis of the involved agents.* This type of analysis implies the identification of the people that may benefit directly or indirectly from this

project, exploring their roles, interests, relative power, and capacity and interest to participate.

a.2) *Analysis of problems*. The aim is to study the most relevant problems with the aim of identifying the main problem of the context and defining its effects and causes. The results are presented afterwards by using a problem tree.

a.3) *Analysis of objectives*. This analysis defines the potential situation once the main problems are diagnosed. It consists of turning the negative states of the problem tree into solutions and positive states.

a.4) *Analysis of alternatives*. The last analytical phase explores the means and purposes of the objectives in order to choose the ideal intervention strategies.

b) Adaptation to the context: summary of the project matrix

Table 1. Matrix summary.

<p>General objective: to empower the migrant–refugee community in Polykastro (Greece), collectively and individually, through education, art, and culture.</p> <p>Specific objective: to design a strategic plan of citizen empowerment for the migrant–refugee community in Polykastro (Greece) through education, art, and culture, as a document that legitimises a future cooperation project in the area.</p>		
Results	Indicator/s	Sources of verification
#1. General social and educational knowledge of the area, with emphasis on the educational project of OCC.	Organised visits to the educational projects, meetings with professionals and interviews with organisers of the OCC project, collaborating associations,	Recording and assessment of the interviews and visits.

	and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.	
#2. To conduct the art- educational pilot intervention.	mplementation of the art- educational pilot intervention.	Implementation of the pedagogical pilot intervention according to the general plan of specific objectives, contents, methodology, and evaluation. Recording of the experimental activity.
#3. Structured design of the action plan for the citizen empowerment in the migrant–refugee community in Polykastro (Greece) through education, art, and culture.	Plan with the pertinent objectives, contents, methodology, and evaluation. Study of the specific adaptation of the proposition made in the educational project of OCC, highlighting the shared interests.	Fieldnotes and interviews.

c) Sequences of the LFA analysis

In a five-week calendar, the project conducted four phases, which were in turn related to the different phases of the structure of LFA:

- 1st Phase: first contact and introduction in the social context of the region, OCC work, and project coordination. This phase is focused on the analysis of the participants involved and problems related.
- 2nd Phase: analysis of the educational project. Interviews with the staff of the educational project of OCC and interviews with faculty members of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. SWOT analysis. This phase is also focused on the analysis of the participants involved and problems.
- 3rd Phase: art-educational pilot experience. Depending on the extracted data, possibilities and realities of the educational context, a pedagogical experimental practice is promoted within the educational project of OCC.
- 4th Phase: assessment of the entire process and intervention. Final phase focused on the analysis of alternatives.

d) Participant observation: context and instruments

d.1.) Context. The main instrument adopted for the development of the Logical Framework Study was a participant observation. It is an action that directly helps to recognise the context, obtaining a lot of information about the scenario. Likewise, it is a useful instrument to study processes in which different agents are involved and where non-verbal communication and the behaviours of the different interactions among the participants play a relevant role (Dewalt and Dewalt 2011).

This action was carried out in three delimited contexts, favouring the analysis of the agents involved:

- Polykastro locality. Approaching the intervention area. Work and leisure areas associated with the refugee community.

- Nea Kavala Refugee camp. Facilities in the periphery of Polykastro, at 4.5 km from the city. The coexistence infrastructures and operation areas of NGOs such as *We Are Here* (education) and *Drop in the Ocean* (logistics) are identified inside the camp.
- OCC. Inside Polykastro. This participant observation exercise was carried out primarily in the context of OCC's educational action. It was decided that the best procedure was to examine the wide range of facilities and activities such as language lessons, sports activities, and kindergarten (collaborative project with the NGO *RTI Refugee Trauma Initiative*). During the participant observation, the people involved were: one full-time coordinator, 27 international volunteers, 15 migrant and refugee volunteers, and eight student interns (OCC 2019).

OCC's main educational projects in Polykastro focus on:

- *Language lessons*. English learning is currently the largest language offer of OCC. The age of attention to refugees ranges from three years (within the early childhood education project) to the adult age. This pedagogical resource and space is very relevant for establishing the bases of communication in the context. Approximately 69 adults and 70 children between the ages of six and 17 have been assisted under this Project (OCC 2019).
- *Kindergarten*. This is an early childhood education project shared with *Refugee Trauma Initiative* focused on providing attention to children who are still not registered in the education system. The number of children attending this activity during 2019 was 20. (OCC 2019).

d.2.) Instruments.

- *Semi-structured interview*. This is a flexible tool with open questions that allows obtaining more detail-rich information, associating themes and building a

holistic and comprehensive knowledge of reality (Massot-Lafon, Dorio-Alcaraz, and Sabariego-Puig 2004). Sixteen semi-structured interviews were performed and the sample consisted of six resident volunteers – members of the refugee community of the town who serve as volunteers in OCC – five members of the educational community of the organisation (the coordinator, the head of communication and international volunteer teachers); three active members of international cooperating organisations (*Help Refugees, We Are Here, Drop in the Ocean*); and lastly, two professors and researchers linked to art education in the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

- *Pedagogical pilot intervention.* An art-educational pilot experience is proposed to allow drawing the most pertinent pedagogical conclusions. This is a complete experimental participant observation action in which the member coordinators and researchers of the action become part of the group and studied community (Dewalt and Dewalt 2011). This intervention was carried out by eight teaching staff (three members of the research team and five members of the resident volunteer team) and approximately 35 students.
- *SWOT analysis.* The SWOT analysis is used as a tool for analysing the information gathered from the participant observation. This is an analytical technique focused on the study of the strengths, limitations, opportunities, and threats related to a specific problem. This analytical strategy is guaranteed to adapt to risk and vulnerability contexts (Gutierrez-Cuevas, Sanchez-Romero, and LopezGuinea 2014).

3. Results

The results are structured in the LFA levels of analysis:

3.1. Analysis of problems

Based on the participant observation exercise and the interviews conducted, the prescriptive problem tree within LFA was elaborated. The results suggest that the main problem detected lies in the poor inclusion of the refugee community in Europe, in general, and in the consequences of this situation in the city of Polykastro (Greece), in particular. This fundamental problem has its causes and implications as Figure 1 illustrates:

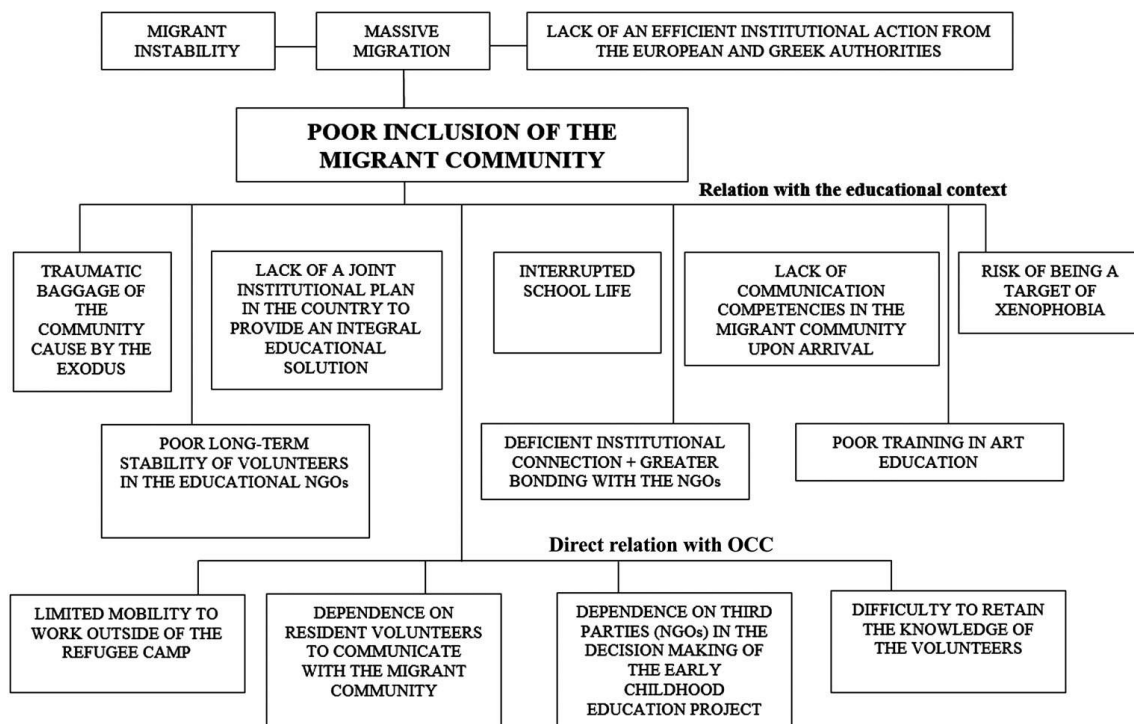


Figure 1. Problem tree.

3.2. Analysis of objectives

After the analysis of problems, we focused on the educational task that responds to the research hypothesis and key question of this study: How can art education promote social inclusion from the relationship between Open Cultural Centre and the migrant–refugee community in Polykastro? The answer to this question covers the

described problems and turns them into development goals, positive states to reach, and results of overcoming such problems (Gómez-Galán and Sainz-Ollete 2013) (Figure 2).

There are objectives associated with unsolved problems in the studied framework.

However, these are shown in the objective tree because they help to illustrate and structure the magnitude and ramification of responsibilities of the detected problem.

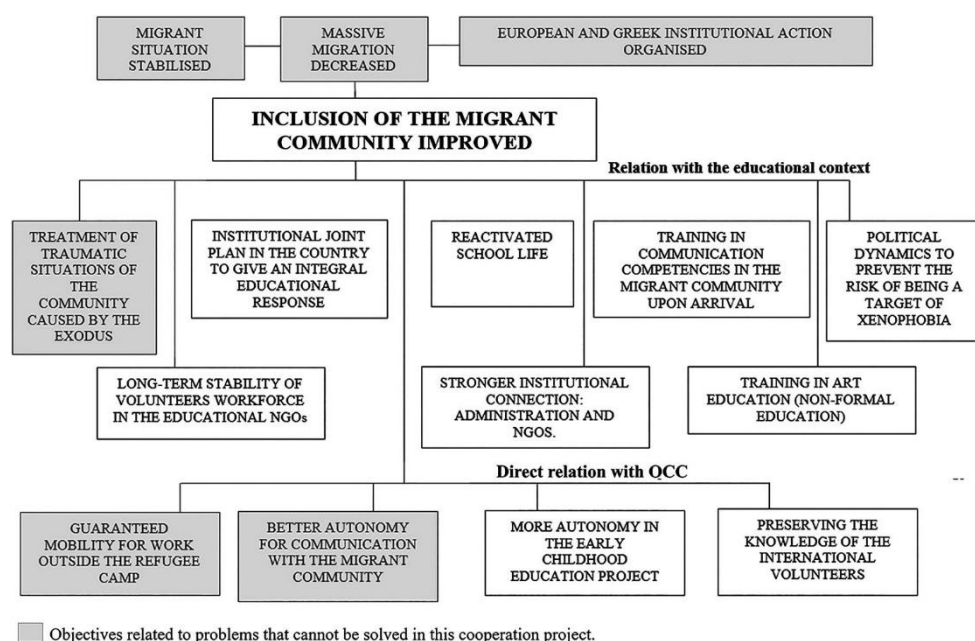


Figure 2. Objective tree.

3.3. Analysis of strategies

To carry out an analysis of strategies or alternatives that allows for a systematic and feasible attainment of objectives, it is necessary to associate the detected problems with the artistic and cultural educational dimension intended in the project. In this study of relationships, there are conditions to consider that derive from the problem tree previously presented. Such conditions are directly related to the generation of alternatives, both in its means and in its aims: the conditions of viability and sustainability of the project.

It is important to highlight that a cooperation project of this kind, i.e. linked to education, transcends all types of geographical, economic, and cultural frontiers and understands education as an unconditional assertion of life, granting it the category of historical subject (Ortega and Mínguez 1998). Based on this idea, the design of strategies to be developed in the project must underline the great responsibility of a teacher with his/her own pedagogical training, which is part of the acquired commitment with the community and, thus, a way of assuming education as an assertion of life over other interests. Therefore, teacher training is a key element in the global development of the project in terms of sustainability and viability. OCC is an NGO that depends on resident and international volunteers to perform the teaching work and, consequently, the strategies of pedagogical action are aimed at them; it is necessary to conceive the training of educators as a mechanism of the provision of sustainability and viability.

After the analysis of the involved agents, problems, and objectives, we profiled a dynamic that incorporates the implementation of an experimental pedagogical practice. It was convenient to facilitate this educational practice, which, from the experiential perspective, would provide more information about the viability of the project. Therefore, we conclude that the pedagogical dynamic must be focused on OCC's project *Kindergarten*. The justification for such a conclusion is based on the following motivations:

- More flexible teacher training (considering the characteristics of the project).
This implies a strategy design in which we can facilitate the training of educators in a sustainable manner.
- More assumable repercussion of the cultural variables involved in the pedagogical exercise.

- Promotion of a clearer integration at three levels:
 - Family in the Greek and migrant community.
 - Institutional integration (possibility of establishing links with schools).
 - Clearer possibility of participation from international and national universities.

3.3.1. Summary of the pedagogical pilot experience: “Territories of the gaze. From Polykastro to Nea Kavala”

The analysis of strategies and the participant observation exercise resulted in an experimental pedagogical practice that serves to check whether an artistic educational practice within this context is viable for the development of the cooperation project that is intended to be carried out in the future – that is, an educational practice capable of generating identity, cultural openness, and social inclusion through the arts. The proposed pilot experience focuses on this main objective, and for this reason, we have chosen an educational action that draws our attention to the analysis of the context and the habitat of the community itself. We do not forget that the visual and plastic arts are obviously related to the development of perception and sensitivity, and contribute to the construction of a cultural knowledge that promotes social integration (Barbosa 2002).

The sample for the pedagogical pilot action was selected on the basis of three to five years and five to eight years. The intervention proceeded following the steps outlined below:

Phases²:

- 1) *Outlining our territory* (Figure 3). This initial stage was developed in the facilities of OCC. Through graphical representation, we approach our immediate environment: in a largeformat continuous paper (100 cm × 300 cm), we

delimited the contours of the buildings represented in black and white pictures. With this action, the children submerged in the graphic intervention from a visual guide, which, apart from facilitating the development of fine motor skills, allowed them to reflect on the awareness of their immediate surroundings from a graphic perspective.



Figure 3. *Outlining our territory*. Photograph by Communiars.

- 2) *Visualising the street* (Figure 4). In the vicinity of OCC, we walked the street from the subjective view of the participants: the children selected a framing through a manufactured viewfinder, which allowed them to identify the pictures that were previously intervened with the delimited contours, thus helping them to become aware of the context through their own gaze. Then, they represented what they visualised through a pictorial and free practice.



Figure 4. *Visualising the street*. Photograph by Communiars.

- 3) *Take the square* (Figure 5). In the third step, we carried out a collective and pictorial intervention again using large-format paper (100 cm × 400 cm). In a single large group, the children drew the most representative space of the town: we approached the main urban space of the municipality, with the aim of generating bonds among equals and with the Greek community through artistic expression.



Figure 5. *Take the square*. Collage and photographs by Communiars.

- 4) *Inhabit the gaze* (Figure 6). In the facilities of OCC, we proposed a dynamic of virtual reality from the combination of screen projection and software, which facilitated a live *chroma key*. The children submerged in the paintings made in the street and in the square, becoming a game of *reimagination* of the environment and habitat.



Figure 6. Inhabit the gaze. Images of the participant children interacting with the projection. Collage and photographs by Communiars.

4. Discussion and conclusion

For the sake of simplicity and organisation of the data collected, we integrated the SWOT analysis. Making use of SWOT has favoured a discussion that finally proposes a key set of limitations, strengths, opportunities, and external threats to the educational project and its development. Firstly, it may reveal weaknesses and possible improvements. It also identifies the lack of inclusion of the migrant community in relation to the native community. From the observation exercise carried out, and in relation to the situation of the migrant community, we can also deduce the traumatic burden caused by the exodus. Trauma is aggravated by the lack of stability that people awaiting asylum maintain, the limitations of communication and language skills of the community that has just arrived in the municipality, as well as the restrictive mobility they maintain in order to work outside the refugee camp. In relation to the organisational and administrative situation of educational projects of collaborating non-governmental associations, it is worth highlighting the permanent and logical instability of the situation and the need to improve the connection with institutional entities in the area. In addition, OCC depends on resident volunteers to communicate with the migrant community, which generates a handicap of dependency. Likewise, the transient nature of the international volunteers makes it difficult to retain knowledge and experience, which is an obstacle to the sustainability of the project, although not an insurmountable one.

In the *strengths* section, we mainly underline the wide margin for learning and manoeuvre that OCC maintains to develop at different scales of expansion, both

administrative and managerial, and in terms of the scope of its mission. On the other hand, a great strength within the OCC project is the inclusion of resident volunteers in its educational work: a sign of identity that makes the educational work implemented maintain relevant links of inclusion. Our experimental pedagogical exercise revealed the clear harmony between resident and international volunteers, between the migrant community and the international community who collaborated horizontally within this project. This identity is an asset for inclusion, which is also facilitated by OCC's work outside the refugee camp and the work with the migrant community in the local area. Breaking the boundaries of the refugee camp makes inclusion a more accessible fact, which allows for greater stability in interpersonal relationships in the community itself and, by extension, in OCC's own project.

Finally, a very noteworthy aspect that becomes a strength is the focus on learning communication skills. An NGO that enhances language learning inevitably facilitates social and identity relations.

Within this SWOT analysis, there is still a need for discussion on threats to be faced. This can be summarised as an external volatility due to an unstable situation and the possible worsening of the social situation. Thus, it may have repercussions on the new arrival and settlement of migrants, resulting in xenophobia, racism, and worsening living conditions. The current pandemic situation has been a clear example of this threat turned into weakness.

Finally, among the results to be pointed out, the opportunities for a possible arts education project within the educational context of OCC are highlighted: the proposed project clearly connects with the pedagogical philosophy at the core of OCC, which implies great possibilities for the exercise of inclusion between the migrant community and the Greek community. The cooperation project would also favour the institutional

connection, as it would enable links between universities, the University of Seville and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and the repercussions with the educational institutions of primary education in the area. Further analysis showed that through the pilot pedagogical practice, the international and resident volunteers and children involved in the dynamics have enjoyed the reflection, with a very active participation. They have all built inter-subjective bonds, producing a playful space for the exchange of knowledge. The visual interpretation and re-imagining of the territory empowers its participants, as it results in an awareness of the community context and its relationships (Tsevreni 2014).

Following the analysis carried out, it is important to highlight some aspects for reflection. In the action plan proposed since 2016 by the UNHRC for Greece (2017), the importance of the non-formal educational exercise, developed essentially by non-governmental organisations, is pointed out. These educational organisations are focused on psychosocial support, the promotion of basic skills for life (communication and social competencies) and fundamental literacy. This is where educational and cultural activity play an important role for the personal and community empowerment of migrants. For this reason, it is opportune to make such a project visible, because it shows in a practical way that the scientific literature and educational and artistic tradition propose: through educational processes, the arts favour the improvement of communicative and social skills, free creative expression, and consequently, the generation of participatory activity in the environment, enhancing collaboration and collective decision-making (Letsiou 2014; Tsevreni 2014). Taking into account these pedagogical principles, OCC's educational project in northern Greece proves to be an optimal context for artistic and cultural educational development. The design of a

strategic plan of pedagogical intervention for art education would pose an advance in the exercise of social inclusion.

Within the concept map of the detected and discussed main problems, we propose a map of objectives that impact, alleviate, or favour an inclusive improvement of the migrant–refugee community. To define the intervention plan, it is fundamental to stress two basic aspects.

Firstly, the commitment of art-educational teacher training of the agents involved in the educational project of OCC. This promotes the necessary viability and sustainability in any exercise of context improvement. Therefore, it is fundamental to work with the migrant community that collaborates as resident volunteers: the migrant people who join OCC as volunteers are those who stay for a longer and prudential time to take on teacher training in art education that allows them to work as volunteer educators and implement such training. A great risk of situational instability in the area has been detected; therefore, to develop a middle-term work, there is a preference for collaborating with those resident agents over international volunteers. The time estimated for a possible educational work plan in the calendar is a maximum of approximately three years.

Secondly, the early childhood education project of OCC is the one with the most possibilities of being linked to the art-educational dynamics and to the teacher training plan. The educational pilot practice carried out served to experiment with its possibilities and probable future projections. It is the project with the greatest stability and it implies a more specific staff training, which is also basic and affordable to develop, aimed at both resident and international volunteers.

The defining ideas for a tentative plan of art-educational intervention can be synthesised in the following summary:

- Project: Art, culture, and development education. Art education for the personal and social empowerment of migrant refugees in Polykastro (Greece).
- Involved parties:
 - University of Seville.
 - Open Cultural Center.
 - Research Group Education and Audiovisual Culture (HUM-401).
 - Communiars Group.
- Objective: Strengthen the art-cultural dimension, benefitting the educational processes of the migrant–refugee person and his/her community for their personal and social empowerment, favouring their social inclusion.
- Beneficiary community: Community of migrant and refugee people in Polykastro (Greece).
 - Main linking project: Kindergarten – Early Childhood School OCC.
- Calendar:
 - First year: Identification proposition: 2019
 - Phase 1 y 2: Two years of work is proposed, but depending on funding possibilities and health regulations.
 - Main agents: Resident migrant volunteers.

Lastly, it is important to underline that, due to the exceptional period generated by the viral pandemic since 2020, the OCC educational project is facing difficulties and temporary stoppages. Everything depends on this situation changing and adapting to a new scenario in order to continue the work in a normalised way and fully reactivate the educational project for the migrant community.

Acknowledgements

This study results from the International Cooperation project Art, Culture, and Development Education. Education and culture for the personal and social empowerment of the migrant–refugee community of Polykastro (Greece). This project was approved in a competitive call of grants for activities and projects development cooperation 2017/2018 of the University of Seville. This study had the participation of the Research Group Education and Audiovisual Culture (HUM-401) and the Communiars Group. We are grateful to all members of the Open Cultural Center (Polykastro, Greece) for their involvement, effort, and experience, which were essential for the development of this study, with special thanks to the resident migrant volunteers.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This work was supported by Universidad de Sevilla [grant number 2017/2018 Development Cooperation Projects].

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¹ <http://www.openculturalcenter.org>

² An example of the full dynamic is shown in the website communiars.org at

<https://vimeo.com/370668331>