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INTRODUCTION

“We live in interesting times, replete with transformations, abounding with local and global attractions as well as historical surprises.

[...] The world is full of endemic and expanding conflicts, and definitions of particular interests alone are not sufficient to solve them.”¹

At the crossroads of countries, cultures and disciplines

The present book: “The Interdisciplinary Contexts of Reintegration and Readaptation in the Era of Migration – an intercultural perspective” was prepared within the activities of the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Wellbeing at the Maria Grzegorzewska University². It is an outcome of the 9th International Summer School “Readaptation and reintegration as problems of refugee children”, held by the UNESCO Janusz Korczak Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies on Child Development and Wellbeing³ at the Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw, Poland between 14 and 24 September, 2015.

¹ Jerzy Jastrzębski, *W ciekawych czasach. Szkice o kulturze i edukacji*, Wrocław 2004, p. 7.

² UNESCO/Janusz Korczak Chair: <http://www.aps.edu.pl/unesco-chair.aspx>; Maria Grzegorzewska University: www.aps.edu.pl

³ The UNESCO Chair activity is aligned with UNESCO’s priorities in relation to humanities and social sciences and concentrates on the challenges of the modern world, defined in the Millennium Development Goals. The themes of organized events include: sustainable development, cultural diversity, human rights (children’s rights), interculturality and intercultural education, as well as modern psychological, pedagogical and sociological challenges.

The international school was organised in cooperation with the Polish National Commission for UNESCO and the CEEPUS Program – Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange, and within the project: The Children’s Rights Erasmus Academic Network (CREAN). Partners of the event included: The Foundation for Somalia, “Ocalenie” Foundation, Polish Migration Forum and The Children’s Rights Erasmus Academic Network (CREAN). The 2015 edition of the school was held under the patronage of: UNIC Warsaw, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, International Janusz Korczak Association (IKA) and the Team for the Pedagogy of Culture and Intercultural Education of the Committee on Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN).

Among the participants of the International Summer School and its activities were academics, doctoral students, university students and activists of NGOs – specialists in the fields of psychology and pedagogy as well as other social and human sciences. The participants and lecturers came from various countries: Georgia, Kazakhstan, Romania, Germany, Italy, Croatia, Ukraine and Poland. They represented the following universities, institutions and non-governmental organisations: Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, Civic Integration Found and Youth Worker in World Vision International, Tbilisi, Georgia, Youth Center For Alternative Education, Tbilisi, Georgia, Cherkasy National University, Cherkasy, Ukraine, J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Osijek, Croatia, Dimitrie Cantemir University, Romania, Mykhailo Drahomanov National Pedagogical University, Kiev, Ukraine, Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Georgia, Red Sea University, Port Sudan, Sudan, University of Pisa, Italy, Taraz State Pedagogical Institute, Kazakhstan. Polish participants included university students, doctoral students and staff of the Maria Grzegorzewska University as well as one doctoral student from the Institute of Slavic Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences and one student from Jagiellonian University. All participants and lecturers deal with various subdisciplines of psychology, pedagogy and sociology. Many of them are involved in academic work as well as international research and prosocial activity in culturally and socially diverse backgrounds.

Several key dimensions of the situations of children and adolescents were addressed throughout the course of the summer school. These situations concern children and adolescents who are:

- deprived of childhood, entangled in the role of victims, witnesses and perpetrators in conflicts and longue durée wars, and their consequences;
- stigmatized, excluded, invisible, socially ignored and marginalized due to their status, origin and economic situation (children and adolescents – migrants, refugees, members of national and ethnic minorities);
- entangled in systemic discrimination and the processes of social stratification which prevent them from enjoying their rights to the fullest extent, including the right to education.

These dimensions comprised: the situation of children and youth in the so called fragile contexts; the psychological and social diagnosis of problems; practices supporting the work of institutions and non-governmental organisations as well as the conditions under which children and adolescents are able to return to the environments in which they were raised, or environments of new, host countries. Such approaches also required examining media discourse on migration crisis in the contemporary world and its impact on children and youth.

With relevance to the subjects of the Summer School, the problems addressed in the monograph focus on children and adolescents who, due to their vulnerable circumstances, require psychological and pedagogical support. The support is necessary primarily in the area of their re-socialisation and social reintegration. Academic efforts aimed at diagnosing these problems and situations seem particularly important in the modern world. Thus, the present publication has been designed as an attempt to contribute to this vital global discussion.

The academic profile of the Summer School and the research interests of its participants allowed us to look at the question of children's and adolescents' readaptation and reintegration both from a psychological, sociological and pedagogical perspective. Further, it allowed an analysis of the issues in the following contexts:

- historical (variability through time of issues connected with education, childhood, adolescence and socialization in various contexts);
- territorial (variability through time and space of questions connected with readaptation and reintegration);
- theoretical (indicating paradigms, concepts, theoretical approaches relating to the subject of children's and adolescents' reintegration and readaptation and their interpretation, as well as the aetiology of the phenomenon);

- methodological (indicating methodological assumptions, research procedures, research approaches to reintegration and readaptation in the era of migration).

A broad, interdisciplinary insight into the problem of readaptation and integration of children and youth in European and non-European societies affords a better understanding of the complexity of the problem and the possibility to design comprehensive pro-integration solutions.

The lecturers' and participants' academic articles, both theoretical and empirical, are an outcome of the 9th UNESCO International Summer School. Their contribution made this volume possible.

Introduction to the structure and chapters of the book

This edited volume consists of two complementary parts. The first section focuses on the questions related to current problems and challenges in the area of reintegration and readaptation in diverse social and cultural contexts. The second part refers to varied issues and challenges faced in the praxis of working with and in the interest of children and adolescents in the dimensions of reintegration and readaptation.

In the first chapter: *Refugee Crisis – Between EU Identity and Eurocentrism*, **Smaranda Cioban** outlines key ideas and vital aspects of discourse relating to the present Refugee Crisis in Europe. The author presents the results of research on media discourse pertaining to the presentation and perception of migrants and refugees in Europe. In her study, the author combined a variety of methods, including discourse analysis, content analysis and frame analysis to thoroughly explore the way the media influence the social perception of the aforementioned groups. The problem was investigated through the perspective of European identity crisis and a post-colonial mentality. The author's analysis points to the assessment that post-colonial attitudes are still present in Europe, while divisions among European states in addressing the problem of migration point to a crisis in the European identity.

The chapter by **Beatrice Signorini** *Reintegration as a Problem of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors in European and Italian Legislation* illustrates what legislative measures have been implemented to facilitate the reintegration and protection of third-country unaccompanied minors who arrive in Italy and on

the territory of the European Union. The author provides a thorough review of existing literature on the subject as well as provisions of both European and Italian legal systems in the area of reintegration and protection of unaccompanied refugee minors, pointing to deficiencies in the legislation and the implementation of existing regulations. In her analysis, among other things, she points to the problem of insufficient monitoring of refugee minors, lack of organic Italian immigration law on unaccompanied minors, and unequal implementation of regulations in various parts of Italy.

In *Self-Image and the Image of the World in the Eyes of Young Roma in Poland* **Barbara Weigl** discusses the results of qualitative research conducted among Roma youth in three Polish towns. Following an outline of transformations which have taken place in the 21st century among Polish Roma community, the author reviews the situation of Roma students in the Polish system of education, then proceeds to the presentation of research results based on interviews with the young Roma. The text discusses their perception of self and others as well as aspects of their reality, including challenges, aspirations and hopes, pointing to a certain duality of attitudes: embedded in Roma tradition, yet open to the opportunities offered by the modern world.

In their article entitled *Exploring Resilience in Children from Families of Low Socioeconomic Status*, **Oana Rognean** and **Oana Ghimbulut** present the results of research conducted in Romania among children from socially disadvantaged environments, concentrating on the investigations of children's resilience. As a theoretical background, the authors provide an explanation of the concept of resilience as well the relationship between economic status and risk factors. Their study reveals that despite unfavourable living situations, these children display resilient competences, i.e. adapt to adverse conditions. The authors explored the manner in which children face adversities, grouping the strategies and resources used when tackling life difficulties into clear categories.

The chapter *Challenges in the Reintegration and Readaptation of Ethiopian Immigrants' Children in Israeli Society* by **Dominika Zakrzewska-Ołędzka** focuses on the description of challenges and limitations faced by the Israeli state in the process of supporting the children of Ethiopian immigrants in Israel in adjusting to their new reality and the strategies aimed at overcoming them. The historical and social background provided in the introduction shows Israel as a state created by immigrants and thus having considerable, long-term

experience in developing tools for dealing with the absorption of immigrants and refugees. In the first part, the author provides an analysis of challenges faced by children migrating to a different country with a distinct cultural context. Furthermore, the text discusses ways of overcoming the difficulties in the social and educational field. It puts an emphasis on the importance of family situations and the attitude of the members of the new community to the processes of integration and acculturation. The article mentions several groups of immigrants, with a particular focus on Ethiopian migrants as the group encountering the strongest adaptation problems due to the largest cultural differences.

Ksenija Romstein's contribution on *Early Education Agendas and Practice in the Upbringing of Young Children in Post-Conflict Regions in Eastern Croatia* refers to a key question posed by the author: what values are formally supported in contemporary early education agendas in Croatia? The text offers an analysis of the National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education as well as an assessment of preschool environment in post-conflict regions, followed by a discussion on how the assumptions of the Curriculum are reflected in pedagogical reality. One of key aspects of preschool education discussed by the author is the question of segregation vs. inclusion of children from ethnic and national minorities. The results of the analysis point to disparities in practices, as some institutions foster inclusive and multicultural values, while others segregate children based on their ethnic or national origin, thus negating such values as inclusion, participation and citizenship.

In the text *Children and Youth with Multicultural Backgrounds in the Polish System of Education*, **Urszula Markowska-Manista** and **Edyta Januszewska** present the theoretical (legal) and practical (school environment) aspects of the Polish system of education with a focus on the situation of foreign children. The authors provide an analysis of academic literature, reports from non-governmental organizations and government institutions as well as various legal regulations to shed light on the functioning of migrant children in Poland, specifically in the Polish system of education. To provide a broader perspective on the subject, the review outlines the history of immigration in Poland, selected aspects of the Polish education system as well as selected regulations of international and domestic law referring to the education of foreign children. The analysis also draws on fragments of the Authors' own research among foreign, migrant and refugee children in Polish schools.

In her article *Communicating Beyond Words: Active Listening as a Key to Readaptation and Reintegration of Refugee Children*, **Rahaela Varga** discusses the role of active listening in the process of readaptation and reintegration of refugee children. Drawing on the theory of the pedagogy of relation, the author points to the importance of social competences in a classroom environment. Being one of key social competences, the concept of active listening is indicated as a tool which can aid teacher-student and student-student communication, with a particular focus on the role it plays in the process of the readaptation and reintegration of refugee children within the system of education of a host country.

In their contribution *The Hidden Curriculum in the Function of Promoting Equal Educational Opportunities for the Roma* **Vesnica Mlinarević** and **Maja Brust Nemet** draw attention to the importance of the education of Roma minority and the specifics of the process of Roma children's integration in the Croatian system of education. The authors explain the concept of hidden curriculum, accentuating its role in the promotion of the integration of Roma children in Croatian schools. At the same time, they address issues which are crucial in the process of social integration: the need to acquire intercultural competences by teachers and the need to support Roma parents in developing educational possibilities for school-aged children. The text also provides examples of projects realized for the integration of Roma minority in the Republic of Croatia, illustrating best practices in integration initiatives.

Olha Ovcharenko and **Tetiana Gorobets's** chapter on *Psychological Peculiarities of Internally Displaced Students' Readaptation to Study in Higher Educational Establishments in Ukraine* deals with the challenges faced by Ukrainian students following the recent domestic crisis. Specifically, the authors address the problem of internally displaced students, focusing on a program of psychological support implemented at the Psychology Department of the Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy. The text provides a description of Depth Psychotherapy aimed at facilitating the displaced students' readaptation to the altered conditions of the social situation in Ukraine. As explained by the authors, this goal is achieved by applying the techniques of active social and psychological education, which consists, among other things, in the creative expression of students' feelings and emotions. Such a technique allows practitioners to strengthen their self-identity, enhance interpersonal communication and aid their self-realization in a society.

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