

9th UNESCO International Summer School at the Academy of Special Education:

Readaptation and reintegration as problems of refugee children

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organised by

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More than 50 million people in the world are refugees. A vast percentage of them are children- the witnesses, victims and perpetrators of violence in contemporary conflicts and wars, who function in literature as „invisible children” or „children without a place”.

The previous century and the beginning of the present decade provided us with a number of stories about the life of children – witnesses, victims and perpetrators in conflicts around the world. For this reason the efforts undertaken for the social integration of this generation should include a psychological and educational support aimed at the development and social integration of the child. Art. 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child indicates that "State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment ; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

Children and youth- refugees who managed to survive a conflict, war in the country of origin, are becoming the present and future generation of the European Union and the neighbouring states. In the difficult process of social reintegration of children- witnesses, victims and perpetrators, one which requires time and involvement of a number of actors, it is necessary to focus on rebuilding the children's self-esteem, identity, security, bonds as well as on preventing the long-lasting, negative psychological consequences.

Children have always been exposed to entanglement in the armed conflicts of the adult world. During the following summer school we will refer to three dimensions of the situation of children deprived of childhood: entangled in the roles of victims, witnesses and perpetrators in long-term (*la longue durée*) conflicts and wars, namely:

- the situation
- a psychological and social diagnosis of problems
- practices supporting the work of institutions and non-governmental organisations as well as the conditions enabling the children's return to the environments in which they were raised

Representations of the fate of children belonging to the categories indicated above are present in an international and intercultural, public and academic discourse. However, what is lacking is a critical consideration of the practices of psychological support for children in their resocialisation and readaptation. The portrayal of children's experiences which emerges from the accounts of refugee children (the Crimea, Syria, Egypt, Libia, Central African Republic, Chechnya, Palestine), present in parents' narrations, academic publications, journalistic writing and court case files, is extremely dark, violent and often difficult to accept.

Participants

The 9th International Summer School is targeted at young researchers in the fields of psychology, education, sociology and interdisciplinary studies. All participants should speak English

Anticipated partnerships:

Foundation for Somalia
Polish Humanitarian Aid
The Ombudsman for Children's Office
UNHCR
UNESCO
UNICEF