

# 18<sup>th</sup> IMISCOE Annual Conference

## Crossing borders, connecting cultures

---

### **“I have a dream”: refugee children’s aspirations from a child-centered perspective**

Nektaria Palaiologou (School of Humanities, Hellenic Open University)

Marina Sounoglou (School of Humanities, Hellenic Open University)

Eirini Kyriazi (School of Humanities, Hellenic Open University)



## Introduction

- Refugee flows in Greece
- Skaramagas refugee camp

## Methodology

- Project objectives
- Interview protocol
- Research context
- Sample

## Identifying children's aspirations

## Conclusions

# Refugee flows in Greece

---

- In Greece, 1.1 million refugees have entered the country since 2014 (UNCHR, Operational Portal, 2020)
- The estimated number of refugee and migrant children across Greece is 45.300 and among them 4.594 are unaccompanied (UNICEF, 2020)
- In 2021, total arrivals are 3.594 (1.286 sea arrivals and 2.308 land arrivals) (UNCHR, Operational Portal, 2021)

# Skaramagas refugee camp

---

- Skaramagas refugee camp is one of the largest refugee camps in mainland Greece, in Athens' port area
- Skaramagas camp is home to more than 3.000 refugees and the majority of this population (40%) is children and adolescents
- The community is very diverse (different regions, cultures, languages, religions)



# Project objectives

---

Research aim of the project (MiCreate\*) is:

- position the refugee children in the center of their stories
- acquire knowledge of the essence of their life with sensitivity
  - > explore their aspirations
  - > map their future ambitions
  - > understand their educational needs

\* Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe

# Interview protocol

---

Interview questions align with research questions

**3 axes**

**Personal**

**Social**

**Educational**

- Prior schooling experiences
- Post-resettlement educational experiences
- Aspirations and dreams

***RQ:** What are your dreams? What kind of job would you like to do in the future?*

## Research context

The study was conducted at Skaramagas refugee camp between July and September 2020. The camp was chosen as it would allow us to identify a comprehensive list of children's aspirations.

## Sample

Distribution of sample by gender/country of origin/age breakdown

N=21



# Children's aspirations

---

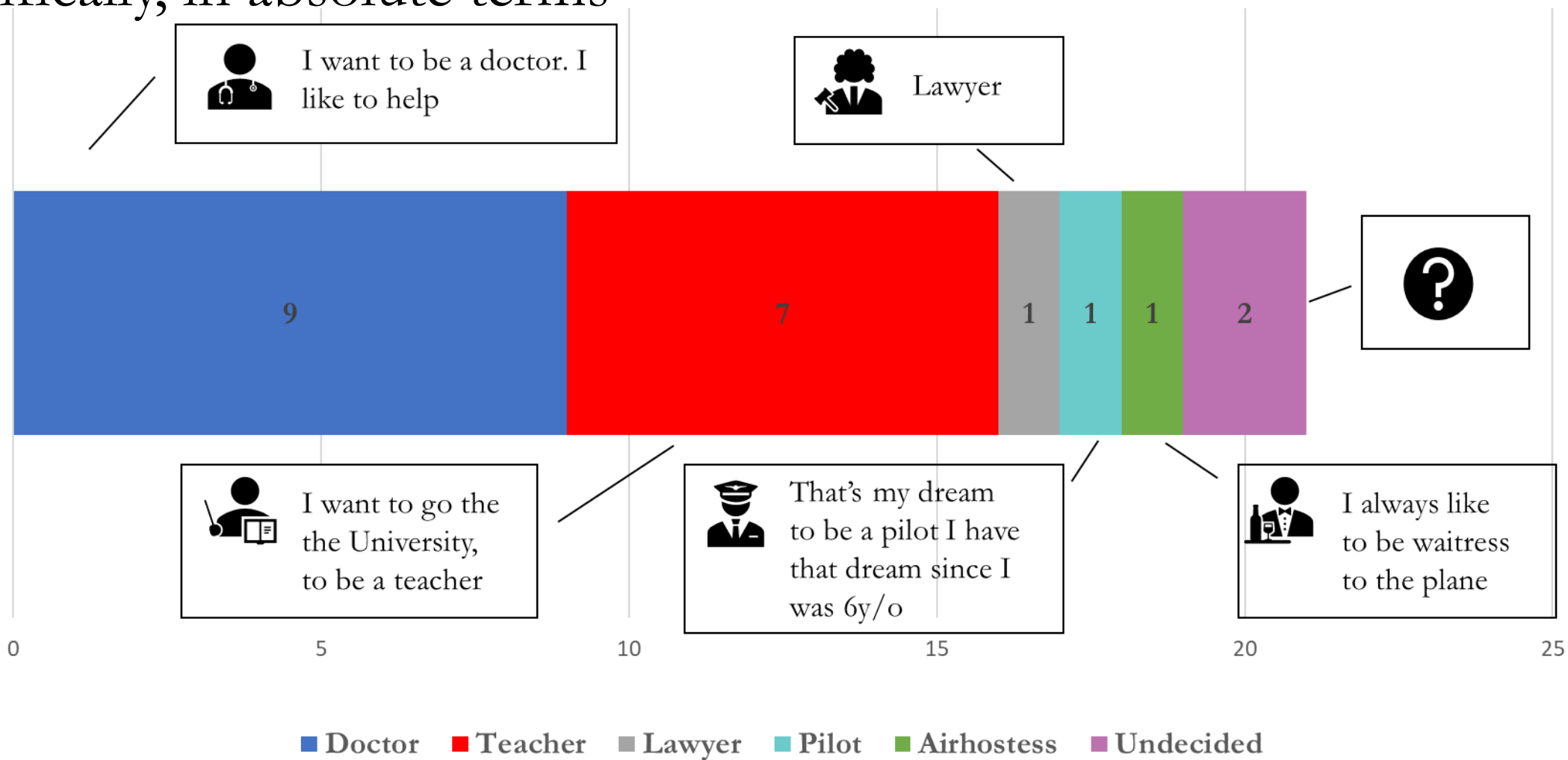
## Core Research Questions:

*What are your dreams? What kind of job would you like to do in the future?*

- Children's aspirations predominantly focused on their education
- The respondents cited their dream of having access to higher education
- The majority of the participants want to obtain a university degree
- Refugee children have interest in the future
- They set long-term goals



# Specifically, in absolute terms



# Children's aspirations

---

Participants	Quotations
They have dreams	<i>“Whenever I see an airplane I just make a wish and I also put all over my room pictures of airplanes that’s a dream”</i>
They feel capable	<i>“I want to study English studies.. English and German. Plus like for my studies I will study medicine”</i>
They want to improve the quality of their life	<i>“I’d would like a good scholarship” “I want opportunities”</i>
They want to obtain independence	<i>“To express myself, to find my own self, to get my destiny”</i>
They want to offer to the community	<i>“Doctor. Help people” “My dream is to become a person in the future that can help others”</i>

# Children's aspirations

---

- Our findings seem to correlate with the results of a study reporting that migrant and refugee children in Greece want to study and become doctors (UNICEF, 2017)
- Doctor, lawyer, teacher are the most respected professions according to a survey conducted in 35 countries

These are the world's most respected professions

Based on rankings from the Global Teacher Status Index, 2018

Occupation	Average rank (1-14)
1 Doctor	11.6
2 Lawyer	9.5
3 Engineer	9.1
4 Head Teacher	8.1
5 Police Officer	7.8
6 Nurse	7.4
7 Accountant	7.3
8 Local Government Manager	7.3
9 Management Consultant	7.1
10 Secondary School Teacher	7.0

Source: Varkey Foundation

# Conclusion

---

- Provide an appropriate environment for learning at the camp
- Help children set short and long-term goals for their education
- Inform children about educational possibilities and opportunities
- Encourage children to do their best
- Involve refugee parents in their children's education
- Close the cultural gap between refugee and majority students in school

So...

---



refugee children expedite their  
academic success and their's dream will not remain  
out of reach

# References

---

- Dolton P., Marcerano, O., De Vries, R., & She, P. (2018). *Global teacher status, Index 2018*. Varkey Foundation. Available on <https://www.varkeyfoundation.org/media/4790/gts-index-9-11-2018.pdf>
- UNCHR Operational Portal (2021). *Refugee Situations: Mediterranean Situation, Greece*. Available on <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5179>
- UNCHR Operational Portal (2020). *Refugee Situations: Aegean Islands Weekly Snapshot, 13-19 April 2020*. Available on <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/75682>
- UNICEF (2020). *Refugee and migrant children in Greece – As of 31 May 2020*. Available on <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/12771/file>
- UNICEF (2017). *Refugee and migrant children in Greece*. Available on [https://www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org.eca/files/eca-dataproduct-Refugee\\_and\\_migrant\\_children\\_in\\_Greece\\_data\\_analysis\\_August\\_2017.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org.eca/files/eca-dataproduct-Refugee_and_migrant_children_in_Greece_data_analysis_August_2017.pdf)