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Didactic Dimensions to Ensure Refugee Minors' Protection against Sexual Abuse within European Refugee Crisis

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ABSTRACT

The current importance of the present research is rooted in the fact that despite a solid legislative background and increasing number of scholarly studies, didactic dimensions to ensure efficient refugee minors' protection against sexual abuse and exploitation have not been subject to comprehensive study though the contemporary civilization faces a systemic refugee crises that affects minors as most vulnerable population. The research aimed to explore the above-mentioned dimensions, identify their stakeholders and tools, reveal the critical factors for their operation. The research methodology stood on the comparative approach, combined desk and field studies, included theoretical analysis of international white papers and academia contribution regarding refugee minors' protection against sexual violence. Special emphasis was laid to empirical analysis of the current state of affairs and promising practices of 40 countries that are member states to the Lanzarote Convention Committee of the Parties. The research results made it possible to outline major didactic dimensions for refugee minors' protection, identify key players and instruments for the above dimensions development, and to highlight promising practices in the area across various countries. The research significance is due to the confirmed efficiency of the developed methodology that allowed authors to explore current state of affairs and further trends to foster and enhance didactic dimensions of refugee minors' protection against sexual violence at the age of refugee crisis.

Keywords: refugee minors, children's protection against sexual abuse, European refugee crisis

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State of the literature

- Refugee children's protection from sexual abuse and exploitation has not become subject for the comprehensive didactic research so far. Both international and national legislation provides grounds for legal studies. Scholars traditionally focus mostly on migrant children's issues in terms of legal background for their rights protection and ways to cope with social, cultural and educational challenges that refugee minors often confront after officially settling in a host country. Minors' needs in terms of medical, psychological care, social workers training are traditionally analyzed through the lenses of refugee children after they are already granted the right to live in another country
- Meanwhile, minors' protection from abuse and exploitation (including their sexual formats) during their trans-border move and stay in temporary accommodation centers for refugees has not been subject to research.

Contribution of this paper to the literature

- The research provides a comprehensive study of current state of affairs regarding didactic dimensions that are under way in different countries affected by European migration crisis that started in 2015.
- The study combines desk and field analysis to explore promising national practices in the area.
- The research implements multifaceted approach to the issues in the focus and outlines various target audiences that should be subject to specialized training, explores relevant topics and content for particular audiences' training, specifies training tools for diverse communities that are affected by migration crisis, on the one hand, and engaged in tackling the crisis challenges, on the other.
- The above mentioned issues are analyzed from the point of protecting minors against sexual abuse and exploitation; the overall procedure lays down the methodology for further interdisciplinary research of didactic dimensions for protecting minors from sexual abuse within the framework of the migration crisis.
- It should be mentioned that until now the problem has not become subject for the comprehensive study.

INTRODUCTION

Current Importance of the Research

The year of 2015 witnessed the skyrocketing migration crisis that affects most of the European continent. The European refugee or migrant crisis has turned out to be a complicated phenomenon that covers diverse challenges, including political, legal, economic, cultural ones.

Within the above framework minors represent the most vulnerable body: they are those who are most often exposed to illegal trafficking, violence, and abuse.

Gordon Brown, the UN Special Envoy for Global Education, called the year of 2015 already the worst year since 1945 for children being displaced, the worst year for children becoming refugees (The UN news center, 2015).

High-profile international organizations and forums have repeatedly voices the above challenge that raised specific concerns among the participants of the UNO Summit for Refugees and Migrants (2016).

High-ranking officials refer to international legislation in their strive to foster international legal administrative background to find solutions. Law enforcement agencies have approved protocols and regulations at hand to ensure law and order at border crossing points and inside the hosting countries. Throughout the last four decades Scholars have provided considerable empirical data and recommendations to help refugee minors and meet their needs. However, the scale and realities of the current European migration crisis have highlighted the gap between sufficient legislative background and scholarly studies, on the other hand, and didactic tools and dimensions that can help those engaged ensure efficient refugee minors' protection against sexual abuse and exploitation.

Research Goal and Tasks

Bearing in mind the above state of affairs *the present paper goal* is to map didactic dimensions for minors' protection against sexual abuse and exploitation within the framework of current refugee crisis that has turned into a cross border humanitarian's disaster since 2015.

This goal is expected to be reached through a number of tasks performance that include the following: mapping training dimensions, outlining target audiences, identifying training tools for the above audiences, specifying promising practices across the countries affected.

The above-mentioned tasks are supposed to reveal relevant activities to protect minors and help them disclose and survive the trauma of sexual abuse and exploitation they might have been exposed to through their crossing borders and stay in temporary accommodation centers for refugees.

Thus, protection deserves particular attention throughout the present research.

LAW AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Legal Framework

The research framework mapped above requires the international law to be considered as the background for further studies. There is a number of international conventions that focus on the children rights in particular, their protection against exploitation and abuse, and refugee issues, as well.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) declares respect to the each child' rights, irrespective of his or her race, color, sex, language, religion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. The UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) *specifies the refugee status, rights and duties, etc.* The Council of Europe Convention for the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Lanzarote Convention) (2007) states explicitly that Member States should take necessary measures to prevent all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children and to protect children (see article 4 of the Convention). The above international legislation obviously applies to the migration crisis, as well. Moreover, the situation under study is subject to the Lanzarote Convention provisions on recruitment, training and awareness raising of persons working in contact with children at risk (see article 5 of the Convention) and on education for children (see article 6 of the Convention).

Thus, international legislation lays particular grounds for protective and preventive measures that should engage national authorities, relevant agencies and servants, target multicultural community of refugee minors, as well.

Regarding the Russian Federation the legal basis for migration phenomenon regulation is the Constitution of the Russian Federation (1993), international treaties, Russian federal laws (1993, 2002, 2006), the conception of the state migration policy of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025 (2012), other normative legal acts.

Following the legislation in force, current research landscape aims to outline the didactic scope and dimensions of the hosting countries' tasks regarding refugee minors' protection against sexual violence.

Academic Framework

It should be mentioned that some papers have already appeared as direct response to the current refugee crisis (Arsenijević et al., 2016). Moreover, some scholars underline the importance of going beyond legal order aspects and draw attention to possible education contexts for minors' protection (Novara et al., 2016).

There is a considerable number of publications on psychological aspects and care management regarding displaced children (Joshi & Fayyad, 2015; Gaudichon et al., 2017), issues related to refugee child mental health and disorder from the angle of social justice (Chung et al. 2008; Eytan et al., 2002; Nielsen et al., 2008), analysis of intergenerational trauma in refugee families (Sangalang & Vang, 2016).

Special emphasis is laid to the importance of refugee minors' resistance to stress (Asarnow, 2011; Brymer et al., 2008; Slewa-Younan et al., 2015).

Academics also focus on school performance and emotional problems in refugee children (Rousseau et al., 1996), underline the importance of school-based prevention programs for refugee children (Rousseau & Guzder, 2008), and nation-wide tools for their integration into the hosting community.

Another field of research covers service provision issues (Drachman, 1995), concludes on the relevance of training migrant children's caretakers (Givaudan et al., 2016), the importance of cultural and linguistic issues in the emergency care of children (Flores et al., 2002; Chigisheva, 2010). The interpreters' role and capacity with regard to forced migrants psychotherapy is also under study in a number of papers (O'Hara & Akinsulure-Smith, 2011).

As for the Russian academic environment similar issues have been highlighted through academic discussion and research publications, including social-cultural adaptation of refugee children and forced migrant children (Volobueva, 2015), psychological help to refugee minors (Ovcharenko, 2014), legal tools to regulate migration in Russia (Lyogkaya, 2015) and protect minor refugees from sexual abuse and exploitation (Atabekova, 2016). Some research papers focus on the needs of minors in the temporary settlement camps (Kilaev & Idrisov, 2007; Yudin, 2015).

However, neither legislation in force nor the existing research findings provide the international community with a structured knowledge of didactic dimensions to prevent and protect refugee children from sexual abuse and exploitation since the very moment they cross the hosting country border.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research included theoretical and empirical activities. The first stage aimed to outline research background and framework.

Materials for theoretical analysis covered official international conventions, regulations, national legislation of the countries that are members to the Committee of the Parties to the Lanzarote Convention, and scholars' research on the issues under study. Scopus and WoS databases, as well as the Russian National Citation Index data (e-library) were used to search for the latest developments regarding the research of the issues concerned. The brief summary of the current state of affairs is introduced in the section *Law and Literature review*.

Materials for empirical studies covered experiences of the countries affected by the European refugee crisis. To identify the above the Lanzarote Committee Member States Replies to the Questionnaire on the Urgent monitoring round were examined (The Lanzarote Committee Urgent monitoring round. State replies, 2017). The mentioned monitoring aimed to identify the situation regarding the protection of children affected by the refugee crisis from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. It should be mentioned that RUDN University has been engaged in methodological support for the Russian Federation participation in the Lanzarote Committee activities, including the monitoring round on the refugee minors' protection against sexual violence.

The Questionnaire was collectively designed and approved by the Lanzarote Committee Member States as open-ended and allowed respondent countries to elaborate on the issues under study with concrete examples and comments.

The research methodology rested on the comparative approach to analyze the replies from 41 countries to identify challenges, promising practices, and urgent needs. The study laid particular emphasis to didactic dimensions of preventing refugee minors' sexual abuse and their protection.

The research methodology further included study of particular countries' cases regarding promising practices aimed at refugee minors' protection in the context of the regional war interventions, conflicts and terrorism development.

Table 1. Clusters characterizing didactic dimensions for minor refugees' protection against sexual abuse

Parameters for cluster identification	Target audiences for training	Topics for training	Tools and forms for training	Language and mediation issues for and through training
Percentage of respondents who mentioned the parameter	100%	100%	60%	30%

With regard to everything mentioned above the cluster analysis was applied to identify the trends regarding countries perceptions on prospective didactic dimensions to protect children from abuse and exploitation.

The analysis took into account the level of the nation socio-economic development, state governance system, historical development pathways, native population size, multilingual/monolingual community, cultural religious features. It should be mentioned that State Members to the Lanzarote Committee differ a lot in terms of the above mentioned characteristics. These features were considered as variables to identify statistically significant data for discriminant analysis and factor analysis that were used to outline each cluster detailed profile.

Factor analysis was used to map more or less developed practices within each didactic cluster from the angle of current practices regarding refugee minors' protection and their sexual abuse prevention.

The t-test was applied to evaluate the significance of the different variables and to determine statistically significant differences.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was used for data management and procession.

RESULTS

The cluster analysis helped to identify the major trends that Lanzarote Committee member states view as critical ones to enhance didactic dimensions for minor refugee protection against sexual abuse.

According to the field research findings the clusters include target audiences that should be trained regarding minors' abuse and exploitation, the topics on which the minors should be trained, tools that proved or expected to be effective for the above training, preventive measures through training.

Table 1 shows the percentage of countries in each cluster. Mention should be made that each cluster integrate diverse countries in terms of their historic, political, economic and cultural religious profiles.

It seems important to underline that the above percentage was not sensitive to a country's socio-economic development ($p > 0,03$), state governance system ($p > 0,03$), historical development pathways ($p > 0,02$), cultural-religious features ($p > 0,02$).

The discriminant analysis identified as statistically significant ($\lambda = 0,58$, $\chi^2 = 5,65$, $p < 0,02$), the geographical position of the countries, such nations as Greece, Italy, Turkey, Serbia, Hungary, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are on the forefront line in terms of refugees' major itineraries towards key European hubs of welfare and prosperity.

Moreover the discriminant analysis revealed as statistically significant ($\lambda = 0,213$, $\chi^2 = 4,05$, $p < 0,01$) the monolingual/multilingual community profile of the country officially registered population, as such countries as Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russian Federation are known for linguistically and culturally diverse fabric of their officially registered populations.

The factor analysis was used to provide qualitative characteristics for each cluster. Regarding the cluster on target audiences for training the following factors were identified:

1st factor – training of the police and border/migration officers (0.981), the item was mentioned by 99% of the respondents;

2nd factor - training of the personnel in the refugee accommodation facilities (0.974), the item was mentioned by 97% of the respondents;

3rd factor – training of the refugee minors (0.964), the item was mentioned by 96% of the respondents;

4th factor - training of the judiciary (0.414) the item was mentioned by 41% of the respondents;

5th factor – training of the foster families (0.384), the item was mentioned by 38% of the respondents;

6th factor – training of the school teachers (0.312), the item was mentioned by 31% of the respondents;

The respondents' opinions did not correlate with responding countries socio-economic development ($p > 0,02$), state governance system ($p > 0,03$), historical development pathways ($p > 0,03$), cultural-religious features ($p > 0,01$). Nonetheless the discriminant analysis identified as statistically significant ($\lambda = 0,245$, $\chi^2 = 4,65$, $p < 0,01$) the geographical position of the countries, that are on the forefront line of refugees' major itineraries towards most developed European.

Regarding the cluster on topics for training the following factors were identified:

1st factor – training of the personnel in charge of refugee minors to deal with traumatized minors (0.981), the item was mentioned by 99% of the respondents;

2nd factor - training of the refugee minors on legal administrative issues and cultural traditions of the hosting country (0.964), the item was mentioned by 96% of the respondents;

3rd factor – training of the personnel in charge of refugee and asylum seeking minors to adapt them to new environments (0.911), the item was mentioned by 91% of the respondents;

4th factor - training of the personnel to help refugee minors get informed about risks of sexual abuse (0.313) the item was mentioned by 31% of the respondents;

5th factor – training of the personnel to identify sexual abuse victims among refugee minors (0.287), the item was mentioned by 29% of the respondents;

The respondents' opinions did not correlate with responding countries socio-economic development ($p > 0,03$), state governance system ($p > 0,03$), historical development pathways ($p > 0,02$), cultural-religious features ($p > 0,02$).

The discriminant analysis identified as statistically significant ($\lambda = 0,213$, $\chi^2 = 4,05$, $p < 0,01$) the geographical position of the countries, that are on the forefront line of refugees' major itineraries towards most developed European.

Moreover the discriminant analysis revealed the statistical significance ($\lambda = 0,113$, $\chi^2 = 3,05$, $p < 0,001$) of the monolingual/multilingual community profile of the country officially registered population.

The factor analysis was also used to explore the practices regarding tools and forms for various audiences' training.

1st factor – short-term courses and workshops for the personnel in charge of refugee minors to deal with traumatized minors (0.992), the item was mentioned by 99% of the respondents;

2nd factor - talks and games for the refugee minors on legal administrative issues and cultural traditions of the hosting country (0.974), the item was mentioned by 97% of the respondents;

3rd factor – posters, leaflets and brochures for refugee minors to adapt them to new environments (0.83), the item was mentioned by 83% of the respondents;

4th factor – verbal and non-verbal materials for refugee minors with information about risks of sexual abuse (0.273) the item was mentioned by 27% of the respondents.

The overall percentage was not sensitive to any variables regarding countries' features.

Language and mediation issues for and through training also became subject to factor analysis. The research identified two important factors in the field.

1st factor concerned the importance of multilingual materials development for refugee minors (0.691), the item was mentioned by 69% of the respondents

2nd factor touched upon the need for interpreters' engagement in dealing with refugee minors and their presence at the border crossing points and refugee care facilities (0.433), the item was mentioned by 43% of the respondents).

The respondents' opinions did not concern responding countries socio-economic development ($p > 0,01$), state governance system ($p > 0,01$), historical development pathways ($p > 0,02$), cultural-religious features ($p > 0,01$). Nonetheless, the discriminant analysis revealed the statistical significance ($\lambda = 0,111$, $\chi^2 = 4,00$, $p < 0,0001$) of the monolingual/multilingual community profile of the country officially registered population.

DISCUSSION

The section aims to provide comments to the statistic research findings and elaborate on the countries promising practices in terms of training for refugee minors' protection against sexual abuse.

First, it seems timely to mention that discriminant analyses results (statistical significance of the monolingual/multilingual profile of the country officially registered population and the geographical position of the countries, that are on the forefront line of refugees' major itineraries towards most developed European nations) indicate that the more systemically a country is involved in dealing with refugees the more consistent and developed practices it has in terms of didactic issues regarding refugee children protection against sexual abuse.

The Lanzarote Committee Member States through their replies to the monitoring Questionnaire specified the importance of establishing the relationship of trust between refugee minors and hosting country personnel in charge of them.

Respondents specified that professionals and volunteers working with children affected by the refugee crisis should undergo through a special training that is aimed to enhance their minors' awareness of the minors' psychology, traumatized child's specific needs, etc. Training should be tailored to all persons in contact with refugee minors, to all stakeholders engaged in work with refugee children. The empiric analysis confirmed that countries realized the current importance of the above though the list of the stakeholders differs regarding different countries' experiences. Thus, most countries underlined the importance of police, migration forces, personnel in care facilities or social worker, while the importance of judiciary and prosecution, guardians and foster families training was mentioned only by some countries (for instance, Germany, the *Czech Republic*).

The open-ended questionnaire allowed the Lanzarote Committee Member States to elaborate on promising practices regarding the information on the training contents.

For instance, in Austria, the employees of the Municipality of Vienna are trained to work with refugee children, and their training has special focus on dealing with traumas, intercultural problems, identifying cases of refugee minors' exploitation or sexual abuse and similar issues).

Belgium mentioned that the staff of the Federal Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers offered training to identify victims of sexual abuse. Denmark provided information that personnel dealing with asylum procedure are trained to use the cognitive interview method to help traumatized persons. In Poland, the Border Guard runs a special project on protecting children in camps for migrants against sexual violence, to enhance camp staff qualifications in this area and also to improve parents' educational skills. It has also been created to educate children about how to avoid dangers and how to find help and support when needed.

The Member States to the Committee of the Parties on the Lanzarote Convention provided the information regarding the practices their countries implement to raise minors' awareness and tackle multicultural challenges they face while crossing the border of the host country.

Thus, workshops, lectures, games and art activities are put in place to help refugee minors to get familiar with cultural specifics of another community ("Hope for Children" CRC Policy Center, Cyprus). Moreover countries provide information about the host nation social norms and legal system (see examples from Austria, Turkey), host community customs and values, including sexual relations aspects (see the information regarding Denmark, Sweden), as well as on authorities' functions and governmental policies, including the police activities, youth welfare, minors' protection, the prohibition of violence and sexual offences against them (Austria, Germany).

Some respondents underline the importance of designing and providing printed verbal and non-verbal material (posters and pictograms explaining minor's ways to react in emergencies) for arriving minor refugees.

It is critical that the above-mentioned activities and material should be set forth in a language that minors affected by the refugee crisis understand. This is a way to break the silence around exploitation and abuse.

The research on multicultural communities underlines the importance of the language and culture mediation service provision at reception centers and first arrival spots and during the overall procedure to identify minors' status and as those in need of assistance due to illegal trafficking/exploitation.

The field research revealed a number of promising practices with this regards. It seems timely to mention Germany's initiative to launch recommendations for children in German, English, French and Arabic languages, Sweden's leaflet in various languages for refugee children explaining their rights to support. Further, as part of the international cooperation project ReAct (Reinforcing Assistance to Child Victims of Trafficking) various countries including Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom designed materials in the following languages: Arabic, Dari and Farsi, Chinese, Vietnamese, Pashto, Pidgin English (for Nigerian), English, French, Dutch, German, Bulgarian, Croatian, Romanian, Serbian, Tigrinya.

Moreover, extremely promising practices have been developed in Turkey. The country authorities have launched the "Social Cohesion Program" under the "No Lost Generation" initiative financed by the EU MADAD Fund in Turkey. The project aims to enhance the communication between Turkish and Syrian children. The information exchange through peer education techniques by Turkish and Syrian children are held in Turkish and Arabic on such issues as discrimination, exploitation and safety. About 7,120 children have engaged in training.

The Russian Federation has not become a consistent part of European refugee crisis itineraries so far. Nonetheless, guidance materials on interaction and trust building tools for work with refugee minors have been developed for law enforcement and border guard personnel, teachers, and social workers, as well.

To identify challenging issues, in accordance with the annual plan of basic administrative actions the Russian Interior Ministry holds regional meetings, seminars with the heads of the units on minors' affairs.

There is an active collaboration of ministry of emergency, internal affairs bodies with volunteer organizations to engage volunteer organizations in support for refugee minors and search for missing children, etc.

CONCLUSION

The research methodology and findings made it possible to map didactic dimensions for minors' protection against sexual abuse and exploitation within the framework of current European refugee crisis. The fact that empirical analysis covered 40 Member States to the Lanzarote Committee allowed the research team to deal with a really diverse club of nations in terms of their social, economic, political, cultural, geographical features. A set of statistic methods that was used for data processing, including cluster, discriminant and factor analyses paved the way to identify statistically significant variables that relate the level of didactic dimensions development in the countries to their exposure to refugees' itineraries and registered population multicultural profile.

The above mentioned dimensions include the target audiences that should be trained regarding minors' abuse and exploitation, the topics on which the above audiences should be trained, tools to implement the above training, language and mediation issues through training.

The statistic processing of the collected data led to the identification of those key factors that characterize audiences that should be subject for ongoing training and revealed the existing different level of stakeholders' involvement in training. Regarding the identified audiences, further development should be put into practice regarding refugee minors' parents and foster families. Moreover, the research highlighted the lack of and therefore need for sustainable coordination of various stakeholders' training. Thus, greater efforts should be invested in the relevant activities.

The research confirmed that the issues of refugee minors' protection against sexual violence have not become the common aspect of training content for various audiences across countries affected by refugee crisis. Steps towards community awareness raising activities with regard to the issues under study deserve further attention at local, national and international levels.

As for the tools to promote the mentioned training the research findings confirm that countries use traditional educational formats ranging from courses and seminars for the personnel to lessons and talks with children. The study of the countries' relevant practices leads to the recommendation to all those concerned to search for and implement more innovative ways, including cognitive techniques, creative thinking tools, case studies, etc. The research also confirms the importance of language and mediation issues. They include materials design, the personnel qualification, the hosting country capacity in terms of multilingual specialists' engagement, interpreter service availability, consistency of policies for refugee minors' inclusion and adaptation to the hosting language and culture landscape.

The overall research findings can be used as part of training courses and educational aids for those who engage in refugee children protection against sexual abuse.

Further research is necessary to study legal regulations, administrative provisions, education aspects covering the goal of safety and human rights provision for refugee minors during their stay in temporary accommodation centers.

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