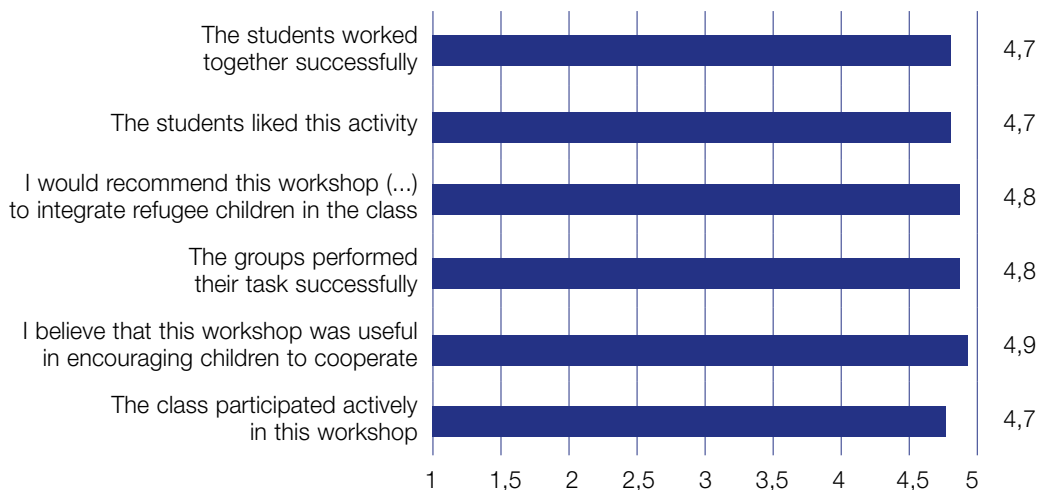


6. FEEDBACK AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM

Cooperative learning

Once the workshops were completed, we collected feedback from the teachers and students. We start by presenting teacher feedback. We were in contact with the teachers while they were conducting the workshops, but the most important source of information were the workbooks where they noted their impressions and students' reactions to the activities.

After each workshop, the teachers who conducted the cooperative learning workshops assessed how successful each workshop was in achieving its goals. There were six statements that the teachers rated on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely). The chart below shows the average ratings for different aspects of the cooperative learning workshops.



Overall, the teachers gave very positive assessments of the workshops, and considered them a success, they said that students participated actively, collaborated successfully and were successful in completing the tasks. Moreover, the teachers said that the students enjoyed the workshops very much. They believed the workshops to be useful in encouraging cooperation, and would recommend them to their colleagues when refugee children are introduced into a class.

In addition to these general assessments, we also asked the teachers to provide feedback on the following five aspects: instructions, necessary materials and supplies, content of the workshop, workshop duration, and how changing groups during the workshop worked. Their feedback shows that they considered the instructions simple and clear, and that the nonverbal and visual illustrations that we prepared were helpful in explaining the task. Furthermore, the teachers considered the materials to be well prepared, but did mention that additional preparation was necessary for some workshops, primarily when video materials were used (e.g., for the sign language workshop). Most of them considered the content interesting and age-appropriate, and the workshops to be doable during a single period. Given that some teachers were not familiar with the principles of cooperative learning and changing groups, they mentioned that it took a bit of practice not to lose too much time changing groups. When the program is implemented in the future, it may be useful to start with an introductory workshop where children would be prepared for this type of work if they are not familiar with it.

Here are some examples of teacher feedback⁵:

- *“When making the tower, the children were yelling, laughing, despairing, jumping, hugging each other, cheering each other on... It was fantastic!”*
- *“Students love the workshops. They are very curious each time. They are happy about completing the task successfully, and they help each other. They are very proud of themselves once they become 'experts'.”*
- *“The students are satisfied with all the workshops, and they were sorry to hear that this was the last one.”*
- *“An interesting, wonderful and very instructive workshop. Some children taught the children at home how to sign words, and I got the parents' positive feedback as well.”*
- *“These ready-made activities to encourage better cooperation among students are highly welcome. It is great when a workshop can be completed within a single period.”*
- *“All the groups completed the task successfully. Comments at the end – “Teacher, it was really great today.”*

⁵ The comments are presented as they appeared, without stylistic interventions.

- *“The workshop caused delight among students, and a very high level of activity. Even students that had a history of conflict worked together.”*
- *“The students assessed this workshop as interesting. They additionally learned how to pronounce the names of shapes that they were making in Farsi, because one of the refugee students at one point said in delight: “This is our language.”*

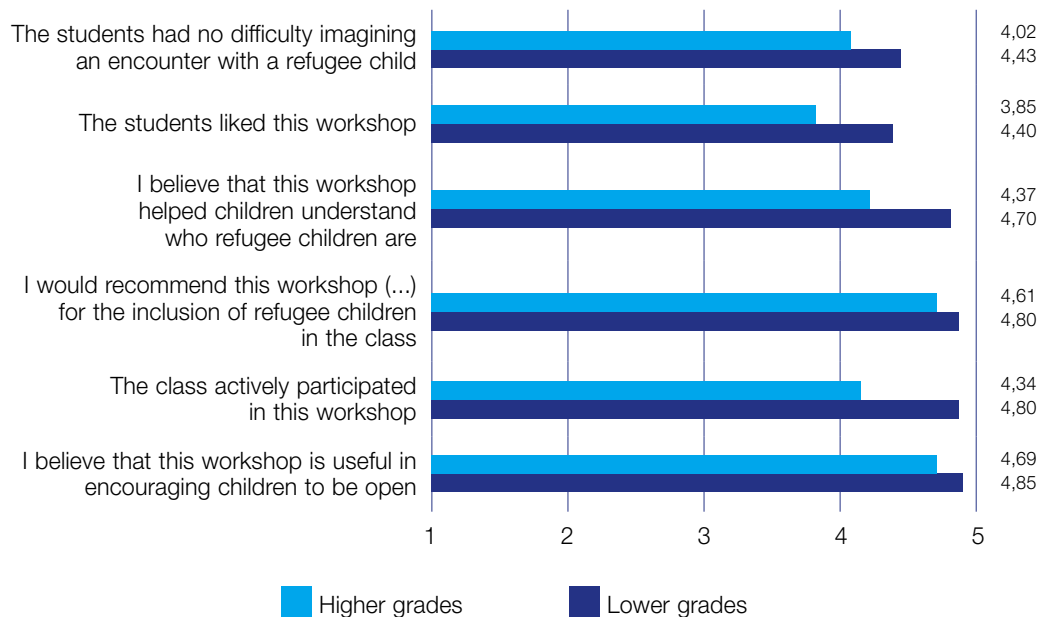
Children gave us their impressions in group conversations (so-called focus groups), and we talked to refugee children individually. Their feedback confirms teachers’ positive impressions about liking the activities and their enthusiastic participation. Here are some of their comments:

- *“It was quite fun and at certain times also funny.” (refugee student)*
- *“Yes, it was fun when we worked together in groups of four. When we dropped it, we would get a little nervous, but we would start working again.” (Croatian student)*
- *“These workshops were fun for me because we worked in groups, and we do not do that often... And then we have the opportunity to communicate with each other more.” (Croatian student)*
- *“We made a good team. We always managed to understand each other. Everyone gave their ideas, and then we decided which idea to choose.” (refugee student)*

Imagined contact

Teachers who conducted imagined contact workshops also entered their notes in workbooks, which we used as a valuable source of information. Given that the scenarios were somewhat different for younger and older children and for teachers teaching lower grades and subject teachers in higher grades, we will present the results separately.

After each workshop, all the teachers who conducted imagined contact workshops assessed how successful each workshop was in achieving its goals. We offered six statements that they rated on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely). The chart below presents average assessments for imagined contact workshops for lower grade teachers and higher grade subject teachers.



The teachers' assessments are positive. The teachers in lower grades gave slightly more positive assessments than teachers who conducted the workshops with older children. Overall, the teachers considered the workshops useful, doable in a 45-minute period, and would recommend them to other teachers. On the other hand, children in lower grades found it easier to imagine meeting a refugee child, they liked the workshops better and participated more actively than older students.

This is also evident from the teachers' comments. Here are some examples of comments from lower grade teachers:

- *"In this workshop the students showed compassion, as well as a great desire to meet the other child, the refugee. I am blown away by how simple it was for them to establish contact. Nobody rejected the refugee child, but accepted him/her and wanted to achieve contact."*
- *"Children participate actively and with great joy. They hope for the situation to happen in real life. They want to help others."*
- *"What they found most interesting was comparing and sharing their story with the others. No more shyness".*
- *"Most children establish contact with the refugee child easily, and they are happy to do the tasks. At the last workshop they may have been a*

bit tired of the same repetitive topic and task, but after being motivated and asked to work, we conducted the workshop without difficulty.”

- *“I have the impression that the task gets easier for the students every time. This time they were delighted to imagine playing in the snow.”*
- *“The workshop was well received, and they are eager to hear which situation they should imagine this time. It is a shame that the day was sunny, and they had to imagine snow.”*

Subject teachers recognized that the workshop had an effect on older children as well, but cautioned that students found the third or fourth similar workshop tiresome.

- *“It is clear that there is a difference in their attitudes towards refugee children, they participate actively, they ask more constructive questions, they pay attention to communication barriers, they are more open, they consider things from a different perspective. A great change is noticeable in relation to the first workshop.”*
- *“Some students protested at the beginning of the workshop, they said that each of the four workshops makes them imagine and write about the same thing. With time they get different ideas and understand that the workshops are not really the same. I think that the workshops are certainly useful for the children.”*
- *“Sports had a positive effect on motivating the male students in the class, but unfortunately not enough for them to take the topic more seriously. The male students do not really show any noticeable progress in their way of thinking, whereas the girls really show a lot of empathy when imagining.”*
- *“Class reaction to the workshops was positive, I think they like the scenario with the summer holidays and having a good time in the playground, which helped them imagine the encounter more easily. Most students did not find it difficult to imagine the encounter, but they did not like that they had to write a composition again.”*
- *“I believe that in this and all the other workshops, students should be given a choice of whether they want to describe the encounter by using a comic or a composition. On the other hand, some students find it difficult to draw a comic, they can express themselves better by writing a composition.”*

Overall, the teachers suggested that children should be informed at the outset that four similar workshops would take place. They also suggested giving students more freedom in the individual reinforcement phase, i.e., letting them choose different methods of reinforcement for each workshop (a comic, a composition, a drawing, a song, a collage, etc.). This could decrease the fatigue that older children feel as a result of repeating very similar activities, and could stimulate their creativity and motivation to take part in the activity.

In conclusion, the intervention programs were well received by the teachers and the students, who said that the workshops were successful in realizing their goals. The intervention program was also recognized by the wider community. Both program designs, the one preparing for the integration of refugee children (imagined contact workshops) and the one promoting the integration of children (cooperative learning workshops) were recognized as a significant innovation in the field of social sciences, and were included in the Catalogue of Innovations and Patents of the University of Zagreb. Moreover, the programs were also internationally recognized: they were presented at ARCA 2021: 19th International Innovation Exhibition, where they were awarded a silver medal. This is why it is with great pride and joy that we encourage all teachers and teaching associates to use the programs.