



# Intervention programs promoting the integration of refugee students into elementary schools

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Handbook for the implementation of cooperative learning and imagined contact workshops

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# **INTERVENTION PROGRAMS PROMOTING THE INTEGRATION OF REFUGEE STUDENTS INTO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

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**Handbook for the implementation of  
cooperative learning and imagined contact  
workshops**

## **The IRCiS Project**

This handbook is the result of collaboration between the project research team and numerous teachers from Zagreb elementary schools, which is also its main strength – the activities we propose have been tested, critically evaluated and approved by the handbook’s intended users: elementary and secondary school teachers and teaching associates.

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this handbook is to help teachers in integrating refugee children (and other children who do not yet speak Croatian well) into schools currently attended by or expected to be attended by refugees. The handbook has been developed within the project entitled *Integrating refugee children in schools: A mixed-method study on the efficacy of contact-in-school interventions for building positive intergroup relations among refugee and host-society children* (IRCiS). Two workshop-based intervention programs were developed within the project. They were designed to be conducted during the school year in order to help integrate refugee children and develop better relations between refugee children and their Croatian peers. This handbook presents both programs, provides basic information about the theoretical underpinnings of the proposed workshops, and gives detailed instructions and guidelines for their implementation.

Our ultimate goal is to facilitate the integration process through research-based workshops which draw on both positive international experience as well as on feedback provided by Croatian teachers and teaching associates who participated in program development. We believe that such a combination of research and practice will make this handbook a useful resource for schools that have already taken in refugee children or will do so in the future.

### **Why is integrating refugee children important?**

According to the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is any persons who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”. For the purposes of this handbook, the term “refugee” also refers to applicants for international protection (persons who have submitted an application in Croatia, which has not yet been approved) and persons under international and temporary protection (persons to whom Croatia has granted such protection). Legally speaking, temporary protection is “protection of an urgent and temporary character” activated in accordance with the regulations

of the Council of the European Union when there is a mass influx of displaced persons because of, for instance, threat of war. This includes the unfortunate example of Ukrainian refugees, who were forced to seek protection in the European Union and in many other countries. According to international and Croatian law, including the Croatian Act on International and Temporary Protection (Official Gazette, 2018), children seeking protection and children under international and temporary protection have the right to education under the same conditions as Croatian citizens.

As a consequence of war and unrest in the Middle East in 2015, the number of refugees in Europe has increased. Moreover, the war in Ukraine has started a new refugee wave in Europe in 2022. Croatian data shows that while the number of refugees in Croatia is not large, it is on the increase: according to official data from the Ministry of the Interior, up until 2022 only slightly over 1000 people received some form of international protection in Croatia (i.e., asylum or subsidiary protection). Moreover, UNHCR data shows that during 2022 over 18,000 refugees from Ukraine temporarily settled in Croatia. Thus, Croatia has recently been confronted with a new task of including and integrating newcomers from war-stricken areas into its society<sup>1</sup>. Given that around 40% of persons under international protection in Croatia are children under eighteen, one of the challenges is certainly their inclusion into the regular education system.

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1 This handbook uses the term *school integration* (from Latin *integratio* = renewal of the whole) rather than referring to *school inclusion* of students (from Latin *includere* = include), a more recent use which we consider inaccurate as it does not describe the true meaning of the concept or the process behind it. Inclusion as a term has been adopted directly from the field of disability studies, where it specifically relates to the complete inclusion of persons with disabilities into the community, while considering their specific needs. However, integration as used in the migration and refugee context also has its specific meaning and tradition. It designates a desirable acculturation outcome (in contrast to, e.g., assimilation, separation or marginalization) or a desirable adaptation strategy, which implies a synergy between the origin and receiving cultures. Thus, integration is a two-way process, which requires the adaptation of people arriving as well as people receiving them, and the new configuration created in this adaptive process involves reciprocity, retaining the migrant's culture of origin and accepting the receiving culture. There is yet another argument of no less importance for the retention of the term *integration* in the migration and refugee context. Integration is a long-standing and widely accepted term, and changing it might cause unnecessary confusion. The same is true of the term *inclusion*, which has been largely used in disability studies from the outset. This is why different fields should have the freedom of choosing terms which adequately describe concepts and processes behind them, and which are well-established in each field. If we wished to "reconcile" the use of the two terms, we could, for instance, say: the inclusion of refugees (into all segments of the society) is important to enable their integration.



Another issue of importance is that refugee children do not constitute a single group with the same experiences and facing the same challenges. Some children may have undergone traumatic experiences while others have not, some may have spent weeks, months or even years en route, extending the period when they did not attend regular classes, while others may have arrived through the family reunification program (whereby persons under international protection can bring their spouses and minor children to Croatia), which means that they may not have had interruptions in education. Furthermore, refugee children come from various countries (mostly from Syria, Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Bangladesh, Pakistan and, recently, Ukraine), they speak different languages (Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish, Ukrainian,...), practice different religions, cultural patterns and customs, and may have had different experiences in the school systems of their countries of origin. However, what they all have in common is that they arrive in a new country because of danger, without speaking the language; they typically have a limited circle of acquaintances and friends, and they usually feel different from their peers.

Given that Croatian schools have little previous experience with refugees and with educating children who do not speak Croatian, they require support in various aspects of integration of refugee children: support in teaching them Croatian, support in the school enrollment process, support in providing guidance to host-society teachers and children, support in taking refugee children's abilities and capacities into account in everyday work, and support in promoting social relations with Croatian children. As a contribution to responding to these challenges, the main goal of this handbook is to improve the social integration of refugee children, more specifically, their relations with host-society children and inclusion in Croatian society.

Social relations between refugee children and their Croatian peers can be regarded as relations between different groups. Examples of such intergroup relations in schools are, among others, relations between girls and boys, but also between sixth-graders and eighth-graders, between students having different homerooms, children from different schools, etc. Ethnicity, particularly when it involves different skin color, is a difference that children notice the earliest, and some may use it to "divide" people into members of their own group (*in-group*) and another group (*out-group*). When we start to consider other people as

members of an out-group, we see them as a mutually similar group of individuals, and we lose sight of the fact that there is a single unique individual before us. He or she may be a member of a group that we do not belong to, that we are unfamiliar with, he or she may have customs different from ours, speak a different language and conform to different norms, but he or she is still a unique individual who, in addition to the “group package”, has his/her own specific characteristics, interests, hopes, dreams, abilities and qualities. Thus, when considering social integration of refugee children, we should take into account the intergroup character of their relations with host-society children, and the attitudes of host-society children towards refugee children.

Given that most refugees in Europe today come from Ukraine, followed by countries in the Middle East, African and South American countries (all of the latter belonging to a different cultural sphere), attitudes towards them are often related to ethnic, racial and religious prejudices that may already appear during childhood. For instance, prejudice research in the USA has shown that elementary school children are more prejudiced towards immigrants who are of Muslim or Arabic descent than towards any other group, although they do not know the meaning of the word “Muslim” (Brown et al., 2017). Moreover, research conducted in other countries suggests that refugee children rarely socialize with majority children, and that they are isolated and discriminated against (e.g., Guo et al., 2019; Şeker and Sirkeci, 2015). In the Croatian context, it has been found that intergroup socializing is primarily limited to the school (Čorkalo Biruški et al., 2020), and that there are rarely any intentional and planned encounters between refugee and host-society children in their free time (Vrdoljak et al., 2022).

It should be noted that attitudes and behaviors towards members of other groups can be most easily improved in childhood, particularly in school-age children. After roughly the age of seven, children become more mature, can understand that there are different groups, are better at understanding the experience of other people and at imagining being in their position. Children’s attitudes are more susceptible to change than those of adults, and school age children can change under the influence of views expressed by parents, teachers and peers. School is the natural place of education, and the place where children socialize with their peers and develop their first close friendships. A long tradition of research into attitudes towards people from different (ethnic) groups

has shown that interethnic friendships are the most robust way of improving attitudes and reducing intergroup prejudices. Moreover, close friendships with peers from the host country largely contribute to the general welfare of refugee children, as well as to the development of social skills of host-society students. The school, in fact, has a pivotal role in shaping these friendships by encouraging socialization between children from different groups, including socializing between refugee children and their host-society peers. This is why intervention programs promoting an improvement of intergroup attitudes and an increase in the frequency and closeness of socializing between host-society and refugee children should be conducted in schools.

## 1. WHAT IS IRCiS?

**The IRCiS Project** – *Integrating refugee children in schools: a mixed-method study on the efficacy of contact-in-school interventions for building positive intergroup relations among refugee and host-society children* – is aimed at integrating refugee children into elementary schools. Given that integration is a two-way adaptation process between the host society and the refugees, the project focuses on both of these populations. As a result, two programs were developed within the framework of the project. One targets schools attended by refugee children and their integration through intergroup contact with host-society children and through cooperative learning. The other is intended for schools where there are no refugee children yet, and its goal is to prepare host-society children to receive refugees by promoting tolerance and accepting differences.

The project had two phases: the first phase was devoted to investigating the needs of refugee children and other participants in the integration process – their parents, their Croatian peers, as well as teachers and teaching associates in selected schools. We wanted to obtain a comprehensive insight into the needs of refugee and host-society children during the integration process, and feed this information into a school intervention program aimed at developing positive attitudes of host-society towards refugee children. The two resulting programs were respectively designed for schools where the arrival of refugees is expected but has not yet happened and for schools where refugee students are already in attendance. They were created in cooperation with teachers and teaching associates from schools taking part in the project, whose role was to ensure that the program would be suitable for school use and children of different age groups. The following elementary schools from the City of Zagreb participated in the project: I. Elementary School Dugave, Braća Radić Elementary School, Fran Galović Elementary School, Gustav Krklec Elementary School, Ivo Andrić Elementary School, Jure Kaštelan Elementary School, Kustošija Elementary School, Lovro pl. Matačić Elementary School, Lučko Elementary School, Oton Iveković Elementary School, Sesevetska Sopnica Elementary School.

In the second phase of the project, we trained teachers and teaching associates to work with refugee children and host-society children in a two-way integration process. Next, the teachers and teaching associates conducted and evaluated

the two intervention programs aimed at facilitating the integration and acceptance of refugee children in society. Furthermore, the project also resulted in a set of guidelines and offered specific activities to be used in schools.

## **What were the results of the needs analysis research concerning the integration of refugee children?**

In order to address the integration challenges faced by stakeholders in the education process, this project took a bottom-up approach which started with determining the needs of the stakeholders in the school integration process. To this end, we conducted a series of focus groups and interviews in Zagreb elementary schools attended by refugee children, asking teachers, teaching associates, host-society students, refugee children and their parents how they see the process of integration of refugee children into schools, and what they need in this process. Although the stakeholder groups have different needs, and encounter and give priority to different challenges, there are issues which have been identified as critical by all participants. Three groups of challenges and needs in the process of school integration have been identified: (a) the level of awareness and readiness of the school, (b) difficulties in communication and linguistic challenges, and (c) social integration and intergroup relations<sup>2</sup>. In brief, it has been shown that the language barrier presents the biggest integration challenge both in achieving academic goals (i.e., in mastering the school curriculum) and in socializing and creating friendships between refugee and host-society children. Moreover, teachers lack ready-made activities that could improve integration and cooperation between children, and which could be used in a classroom context while taking into account the language barrier and the small number of refugee children in each class. The workshops we propose in this handbook are a result of a comprehensive needs analysis of all the participants in the integration process, and are an attempt to respond to these challenges.

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<sup>2</sup> The results of this research and the project itself are described in more detail in Vrdoljak et al. (2022) (available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2022.2061732>) and at <http://psihologija.ffzg.unizg.hr/projekti/ircis/novosti>.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

### Intergroup contact

Direct intergroup contact refers to face-to-face interactions between members of two groups, in this case host-society children and refugee children. Many psychological and other studies have shown that direct positive contact helps reduce prejudice and improves attitudes towards members of out-groups that we come into contact with.

The **intergroup contact hypothesis** was formulated as early as 1954 by prominent American psychologist Gordon Allport. According to him, certain basic conditions should be met to increase contact between members of different groups and improve poor relations between groups. These basic conditions are:

1. sense of equal status between groups
2. common higher goals
3. sense of interdependence between groups (the possibility of cooperation)
4. institutional support for intergroup contact.

To describe these conditions in more detail, we will focus on contexts where they can be realized. This primarily refers to the school, or more specifically the classroom which provides a context where these conditions can be satisfied. One of the best-documented approaches in applying intergroup contact in schools is the cooperative learning intervention, and the most frequent form of cooperative learning is the so-called jigsaw classroom. This is a method where members of different (racial, ethnic or other) groups work together on a clearly structured task under teacher supervision (Cameron and Abbott, 2017). After focusing on the jigsaw classroom as a method of direct contact, we will turn to imagined contact, another method which may be used to improve attitudes towards out-group members, particularly when direct contact between groups is impossible (for example, because the groups live separately).

## Cooperative learning as a method

Cooperative learning consists of group activities for mutual learning and instruction, such as peer tutoring, group research, the idea storm and the jigsaw classroom – where the teacher creates conditions of positive interdependence or cooperation between group members (Johnson and Johnson, 2015). Cooperative learning normally takes place in smaller groups (two to five students), where all group members can communicate face-to-face. In addition to boosting academic achievement (mastering the curriculum and the content of the activity), cooperative learning as a learning and instruction method contributes to acquiring different social skills that ultimately lead to an improvement in the relations between members of different groups. Cooper and Slavin (2004) consider cooperative learning to be a collaborative activity where learning is dependent on the structured exchange of information between group members, where each student is accountable for his/her own learning and contributes to the learning of other group members. The teacher plays a key role in structuring group work in a way that maximizes social and cognitive learning outcomes, and recommendations on how to structure the task are based on clear theoretical underpinnings (Buchs and Butera, 2015).



The classroom activity or the entire lesson is organized according to the principles of cooperative learning, and satisfies all of Allport's conditions:

1. equal status – all participants are students
2. common goal – all group members are there to learn something or to successfully complete a task

3. cooperative environment – students have to collaborate to achieve the goal, learn the content or successfully complete the task
4. institutional support – the teacher as a representative of the school as an institution supports intergroup contact and collaboration between students, and thus sends a clear and unambiguous message that such behavior is expected and desirable.

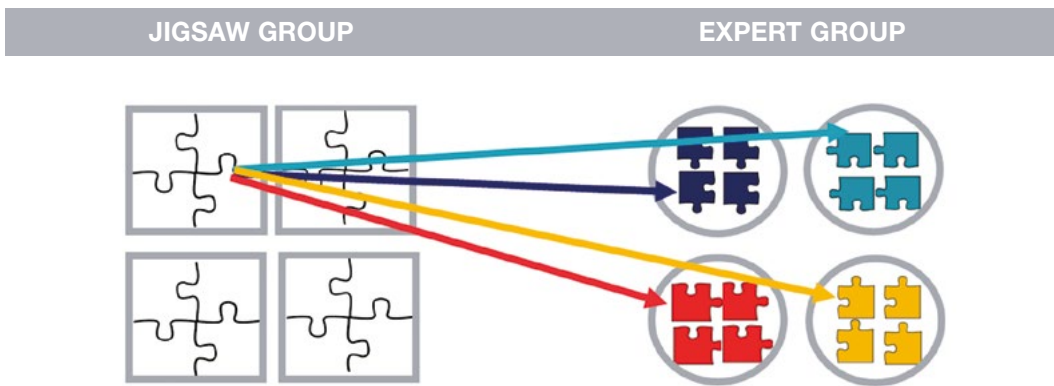
In cooperative learning, as the term suggests, the focus is on cooperation. Thus, it is important to exclude any elements of competition, and cooperation implies that all group members are required to contribute, i.e., that successful task completion depends on each group member because each of them has a unique, indispensable role without which it is impossible to fully complete the task.

The jigsaw classroom is a method of cooperative learning which has proved successful and is based on the conditions of positive intergroup contact. The jigsaw classroom method employs two key notions: (a) **the jigsaw group** – a group where students learn the entire lesson or jointly complete the entire task, optimally composed of four to five students, and (b) **the expert group** – a group where children learn or practice a specific segment of a task that they become “experts” in (which is where the group gets its name), with optimally four to five students. In the ideal case, the expert group consists of as many students as there are jigsaw groups, because each jigsaw group sends one of its members into an expert group.

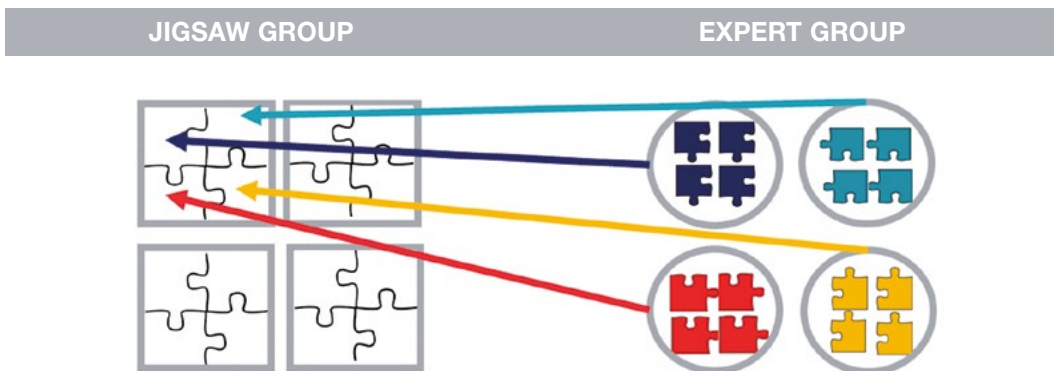
The jigsaw classroom consists of several steps:

1. The teacher divides the students into jigsaw groups and introduces the topic and the content to be learned in that lesson. It is important to explain to the students at the outset that they will later teach each other what they have learned, which is why they should make sure to learn their part well.
2. The content of the lesson should be divided into several segments, and each segment is studied separately by an “expert group”.
3. The expert group consists of students from different jigsaw groups: each student from a jigsaw group becomes a member of an expert group (all segments of the content should be covered in the jigsaw group, i.e., each jigsaw group member should go to each of the expert groups).



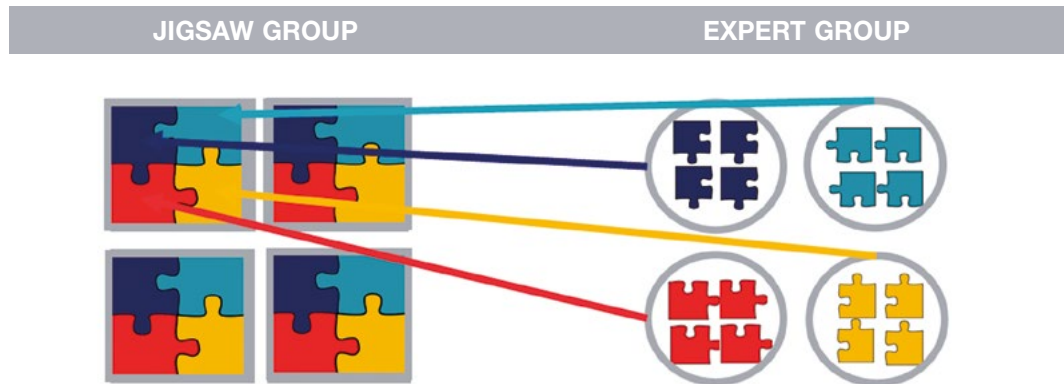


4. In the expert group students from various jigsaw groups work together on a specific task, that they will later on teach other members of their jigsaw group. Once the students have mastered their task or skill in the expert group, they return to the jigsaw group that they were assigned to at the beginning of the lesson. Now the jigsaw group includes “experts” trained in a specific part of the task. The teacher supervises the work of each group.



5. The jigsaw group is where the “jigsaw classroom” happens, because each student shares with the others what they have learned in their expert group, and in this way they complement each other in completing the entire task and realizing their common goal – mastering the content or skill. This aim cannot be achieved without the contribution of each group member, and students in each group are simultaneously teachers (they teach others in their expert area) and students (they learn from other students, experts in other segments).

6. After their mutual learning and teaching, the jigsaw group should demonstrate what they have learned. This may involve, for instance, taking a short quiz or doing a group performance of a joint activity. In this part, it is of crucial importance that all the elements from all the expert groups should be represented, so as to emphasize once again the significance of each jigsaw group member for the successful completion of the task.



7. The final element of the jigsaw classroom is raising awareness of joint achievement. This can be promoted by simple techniques, for example by group members congratulating each other or giving each other high fives.

What follows is an illustration of how this would work using an invented example of a lesson dealing with the Croatian mountain of Velebit. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher divides the students into jigsaw groups, with as many groups as there are parts into which the lesson has been divided by the teacher. The teacher then explains to the students that these are the groups where the students will work together on a task, and that they will teach each other parts of the content of the lesson. Each member of a jigsaw group is assigned one segment (a more specific topic) of the lesson on Velebit, and then members from different jigsaw groups who have been assigned the same content work together in new expert groups. In this way, each student from a jigsaw group becomes an expert in one of the more specific topics. The topics for this lesson are: 1. Velebit's most famous peaks and parts of Velebit, 2. Velebit's bodies of water, 3. Velebit's national and nature parks, 4. Velebit's plant and animal life, 5. Velebit's cultural heritage. These topics also determine what each expert group consisting of students from each jigsaw group will study and discuss with other

members of their expert group. In their expert group, they decide how to best present their segment of the topic to other members of their jigsaw groups once they return to them. Upon returning to their jigsaw groups, each group has one expert in each part of the lesson (parts 1 through 5), and this is how joint knowledge about Velebit is put together. Each member of the jigsaw group instructs other members on their topic, and learns about the other topics from his/her peers. Afterwards, members of the jigsaw group may take a short quiz on what they have learned or make a poster together. The lesson should end with an activity raising awareness of joint achievement and of the fact that each group member was essential to successful learning and completing the quiz or task, which should be symbolically celebrated by group members congratulating each other or using a group congratulatory gesture.

## Imagined contact as a method

Direct contact with members of the out-group makes cooperative learning possible, and is an effective way to develop and improve intergroup attitudes and behaviors. Still, the method imposes some limitations: it is difficult or impossible to use when the two groups are physically separated because there are simply no opportunities or not enough opportunities for direct contact (e.g., children do not attend the same class or school, do not meet during extracurricular activities or do not even live in the same town, region, state, etc.). Besides, when two different groups meet for the first time, their meeting may be afflicted by insecurity, mistrust and suspicion, which can decrease the likelihood of children striking a conversation or socializing. This is why studies have investigated whether people can be prepared for intergroup contact. In other words, researchers wanted to find out whether it was possible to encourage members of one group to take the first step, to approach the others that they see as “strangers”, thus creating an opportunity for themselves and the others to get to know one another. In an effort to overcome the limitations of direct contact, as well as to prepare individuals for intergroup contact, methods based on indirect contact have been developed. These methods **do not** involve face-to-face interaction.

One such method is imagined contact, i.e., imagining meeting and socializing with members of an out-group. According to the imagined contact hypothesis, put forward by social psychologists Richard J. Crisp and Rhiannon Turner

(2009), even imagining a pleasant, positive interaction with a person belonging to a different out-group can lead to improving intergroup attitudes and relations. The simplicity and convenience of such a method inspired numerous studies about its efficacy, and the results suggest that imagined contact may in fact lead to more positive intergroup attitudes, to increasing understanding and empathy towards members of the out-group and to a greater desire for future contact (Miles and Crisp, 2014). Although imagined contact was mostly studied with adults, its effect was larger when implemented with children (Miles and Crisp, 2014). Positive effects are evident in children of all ages, from kindergarten (Birtel et al., 2019) to secondary school (Turner et al., 2013). Given its effects and ease of implementation (it does not require any special materials, and children play an active role, which facilitates learning), the method of imagined contact can be useful in prevention and intervention programs in schools.

In classroom instruction, the imagined contact method is a four-step process. Firstly, students need to be informed about their task, as well as who they will be imagining. Secondly, the teacher should outline a scenario describing how contact with a refugee child began, and children then continue to imagine the contact on their own. Importantly, children should imagine a *pleasant* (and not unpleasant) *interaction* (i.e., a conversation or socializing) with a *member of the target out-group* (with a refugee child, and not a friend from their class). The third and fourth step additionally reinforce and deepen imagining positive contact with a refugee child. In the third step, children participate in some form of individual reinforcement of the effect of imagined contact, for instance by drawing what they imagined, by describing the imagined scenario in their own words or by drawing a comic. The last step is a whole group class discussion, also aimed at reinforcing the effect of imagined contact. In this step, students may volunteer to retell to the class what they have imagined, or can show their drawing and explain what it shows.



1. Introduction and definition of the out-group



2. Imagining



3. Individual reinforcement



4. Group reinforcement

When it comes to the integration of refugee children into Croatian elementary schools, the imagined contact method is primarily suggested as a way to prepare the class for the arrival of a new refugee student and is to be implemented before the child arrives in his/her new class. Imagined contact enables students to become familiar with and understand the notion of refugee children, to prepare host-society students for later direct contact; to stimulate them to be more open to initiating contact and to making new friendships.

### 3. AIM OF THE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

The aim of the two interventions is to assist in forming positive attitudes towards refugee children – by means of cooperative learning in classes already attended by a refugee child or by means of imagined contact to prepare the class for the arrival of refugee children. The ultimate goal is not only to create a positive relation towards a particular refugee child, but to transfer this positive attitude towards other refugees.

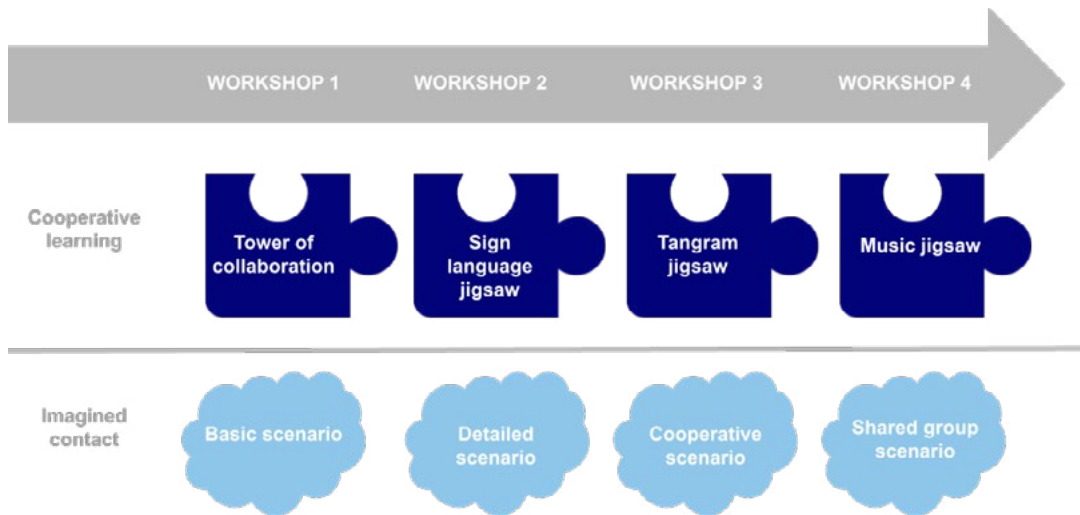
The key difference between the two interventions is that one features real contact between host-society children and refugee children (cooperative learning), whereas in the other, pleasant contact with a refugee child is only imagined by host-society children. However, the two interventions have several features in common, which informed workshop design:

- the duration of the workshop should be one school period
- the workshop should be designed for classroom use
- the workshop should require minimal preparation and materials
- the workshop should be based on the method of cooperative learning/ imagined contact
- the lesson plans and handbook guidelines should enable teachers to conduct the workshop themselves.

Additionally, in line with the finding that language is the single greatest barrier in the integration of refugee children in Croatian schools, cooperative learning workshops have been designed to contain as few verbal instructions as possible. Visual instructions and recorded video materials ensure easier understanding of workshop aims and tasks, and thus enable equal participation of all children, regardless of their knowledge of Croatian.

Each intervention program consists of a total of four workshops as shown in the picture below, and each workshop meets the above criteria. The workshops have been designed to be conducted during regular classes, ideally during the homeroom period, in one-week intervals. To check the efficacy of the program during the project, all teachers and teaching associates conducting the program in their classes should observe the same procedure and implement the activities in the same way. This is why the instructions in this handbook are very

detailed. The cooperative learning and imagined contact intervention programs have been designed to start with simpler tasks and move towards more complex ones, which is why we recommend that the workshops be conducted in the order given here.



This handbook is accompanied by a workbook with worksheets to enter information about each workshop. The workbook was originally intended for teachers testing the program, and its aim was to collect as much feedback about how the workshop worked, including children's reactions and teachers' impressions immediately after each workshop. This information was later used to improve the workshops by offering recommendations to teachers conducting the workshops after the initial testing. Although the workbook is no longer used to collect evaluation data, it has turned out to be useful to teachers in keeping track of children's reactions and particularly in ensuring that each refugee child comes into contact with as many of their classroom peers as possible.

## 4. INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CLASSES WITH REFUGEE CHILDREN – THE COOPERATIVE LEARNING METHOD

### Notes on teaching methodology

The jigsaw classroom method was initially designed to improve relations between Caucasian and African American children during racial desegregation of schools, but was later implemented in various formal and non-formal education programs throughout the world. It emphasizes cooperation between students and students teaching each other, with each member of the group playing an active role in both learning and teaching the content. Research has shown that cooperation-based tasks lead to better results than competition-based tasks. Although the method lays emphasis on knowledge transfer between students, the teacher plays a key role in ensuring the success of the process. The teacher's role is supervisory – s/he introduces the task, explains the activity, divides students into groups, supervises group work, and makes sure that the task remains cooperative and does not turn into a competition within the group or between groups. For the workshop to be successful, the following elements need to be given special attention:

#### 1. Dividing students into groups

When implementing the jigsaw classroom method, the aim is to ensure positive contact between a refugee child (usually there is a single refugee child in the class) and his/her Croatian peers. The jigsaw classroom is based on direct, face-to-face contact. To ensure that the interaction between students is as direct as possible, throughout the intervention program the refugee child should take part in a (jigsaw or expert) group with each host-society child attending the same class (or as many host-society children as possible if the class is very large). Therefore, students should be divided into new jigsaw and expert groups for each workshop, keeping in mind the rules of the jigsaw classroom activity. Moreover, the refugee child should never feel singled out or the subject of special attention, which is why all students, and not only the refugee child, should change groups. For the initial intervention program, we prepared group divisions for each workshop beforehand, and distributed them to the teachers. One example of such group division in an



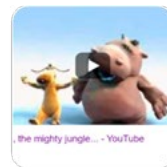
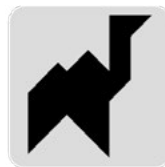
imaginary class can be found at the end of the cooperative learning section of the workbook accompanying this handbook. Workbooks were important for us to monitor the implementation of the intervention program, but are not required for workshop implementation. Still, we recommend their use, because monitoring workshops by using workbook activities provides better insight and easier identification of children's reactions to the workshop, and allows adapting future activities to make them more stimulating for students.

## 2. Communication during the activities

It has already been mentioned that the language barrier is the single most significant obstacle to integrating refugee children. To ensure equal footing between host-society and refugee children, how well children speak and understand the majority language should be taken into account. Therefore, the tasks have been designed to be nonverbal with as few verbal instructions as possible, and where possible, words were replaced by pictures and/or movements.

### Description of workshops

The first workshop focuses on nonverbal cooperation, with all the students having the same role – to coordinate movements among themselves to complete the task. The remaining three workshops are based on the jigsaw classroom principle. What follows are lesson plans for the workshops in the cooperative learning intervention program. The workshops are designed to be used with elementary school children.



All the materials necessary for the workshops are available in the digital repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (<https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:833288>).

## Workshop 1: Tower of Collaboration

**AIM:** To encourage student contact and cooperation, to coordinate movements in teamwork

**DURATION:** 1 period

**MATERIALS:** Materials for this workshop are available in the digital repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (<https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:833288>).

- Illustration of the task, one copy for the teacher, on an A4 sized sheet (r1\_prikaz\_tornja.pdf)
- Video demonstrating the tower being assembled (r1\_uvodni\_video.mp4)
- Each group of four students should get:
  - 6 cups made of sturdy plastic
  - 1 rubber band with four pieces of rope/string attached (the number of pieces of rope should match the number of children in the group)

### METHOD

#### INTRODUCTION (10 min)

At the beginning of the class, the teacher shows a video demonstrating how to assemble the tower, and then divides the students into groups of four.<sup>3</sup> The groups should stand in different parts of the classroom.

*Today we will play a game to see how we perform in activities which require dexterity and collaboration without saying a lot. First we will watch a video which shows what you will be doing in your groups later.*

The teacher plays the video (r1\_uvodni\_video.mp4).

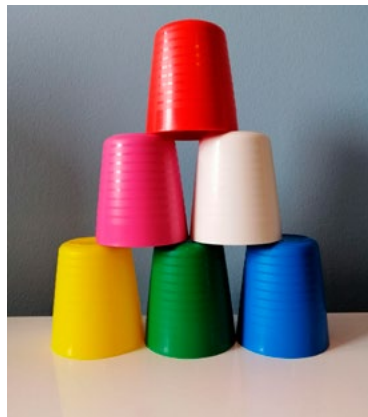
<sup>3</sup> The division into groups that we used for the intervention program is available in the workbook. The list for the first workshop is labeled as R1 – Grupa 1, the list for the second workshop appears under R2, etc. In this way we ensured that each refugee child is part of a group with a different set of host-society peers, which is crucial to realizing the desired program outcomes. Although dividing children into groups according to a prearranged plan is not strictly necessary in future workshops, we believe that it is preferable to letting children form groups themselves, because the refugee child may only ever end up in a group with children that s/he normally socializes with. This is why the workshop lesson plan refers to our suggested group division list given in brackets. However, teachers conducting the workshop outside the IRCiS project are free to adapt this, and select a different group division.

**INTRODUCTION**  
**(10 min)**

*Now I will divide you into groups and you will try to build the Tower of Collaboration like you have seen in the video. You will be working in groups of four; members of the first group are (read the list of children in Grupa A on the R1 – Grupa 1 list, and immediately show the children to their table), members of the second group are (read the list of children in Grupa B on the R1 – Grupa 1 list),...*

Each group gets 6 cups and a rubber band with ropes/strings attached, and the teacher says:

*Each group has been given cups and a rubber band with a rope. Your task is to stand around in a circle, and each group member should hold one piece of rope in their hand in such a way that the rubber band is in the middle of the circle. Now try to build the Tower of Collaboration using the cups, as shown in this picture (r1\_prikaz\_tornja.pdf). You can only hold the rope with one hand, as seen in the video. Use whatever hand is easiest / the one you normally use to do things / write. The task is completed when you manage to build a tower out of all the cups. The colors of the cups are not important. As you work, it is important to use as few words as possible. Remember, all members of the group should participate, and once finished, the tower must stand, so it is important to cooperate and work together. You have enough time, you do not need to compete or rush. Any questions? Do all of you understand the task?*



*The Tower of Collaboration*

**GROUP WORK**  
**(12 min)**

Students stack the cups to build the tower. The teacher goes from group to group and supervises. At the end, the teacher praises successful completion of the task, and encourages students to congratulate each other within their group (e.g., by giving high fives, applauding).

<p><b>ROTATION</b> <b>(2 min)</b></p>	<p>The teacher divides students into new groups (read the list for R1 – Grupa 2):</p> <p><i>Now we will break into new groups. Listen carefully! Members of the new first group are (read the list of names from Grupa F appearing on the R1 – Grupa 2 list, and show them to their table), members of the second group are (read the list of names from Grupa G on the R1 – Grupa 2 list)...</i></p>
<p><b>GROUP WORK</b> <b>(12 min)</b></p>	<p>Repeat the task with the instruction:</p> <p><i>Check whether each group has 6 cups and a rubber band with the ropes. Your task is to stand in a circle once again, and for each group member to actively participate in making the tower. When you complete the tower, congratulate each other again. Remember – this is not a competition, it is important that you work together and that the tower is stable at the end!</i></p> <p>Students build the cup tower. The teacher goes from group to group and supervises. At the end the teacher gives praise for successful completion of the task and encourages students to congratulate each other within their group (e.g., by giving high fives, applauding).</p>
<p><b>END OF THE LESSON</b> <b>(2 min)</b></p>	<p>At the end of the lesson the teacher congratulates all groups on successfully completing the task and emphasizes the importance of working together to achieve the final goal – everyone’s contribution is important to ensure success.</p>

Changes recommended on the basis of feedback after the intervention workshops:

- Sometimes children need to be reminded not to use verbal communication, because they get carried away.
- Special attention should be given to ensure that groups do not compare with each other or compete; the emphasis should be on collaboration.
- A more demanding task can be used with older children, for instance, building a more complex and higher tower or build the tower with closed eyes following the instructions of one student

## Workshop 2: Sign language jigsaw

**AIM:** To learn words in Croatian Sign Language, to work in teams, to encourage tolerance for diversity

**DURATION:** 1 period

**MATERIALS:** Materials for this workshop are available in the digital repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (<https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:833288>).

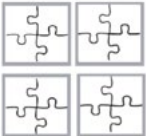
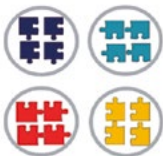
- Demonstration video with selected words from the Croatian Sign Language (r2\_uvodni\_video.mp4)
- Illustrations of words and examples of sentences for teachers (r2\_pojmovi\_i\_recenice\_za\_nastavnike.pdf)
- Materials for expert groups
  - one tablet or mobile phone per group – to show the videos
  - videos with instructions on how to sign words in Croatian Sign Language (r2\_osobe.mp4, r2\_zivotinje.mp4, r2\_radnje.mp4 i r2\_predmeti.mp4)
- Materials for jigsaw groups
  - Illustration of a sentence (r2\_recenice\_za\_povratak\_u\_maticnu\_grupu.pdf)

### METHOD

#### INTRODUCTION (2 min)

The teacher first divides the students into jigsaw groups of four students (if this has been prepared in advance, read the groups for R2 – matična grupa). The groups should stand in different parts of the classroom.

*Today's task is about learning to speak or communicate in a special way. Which way is that? You will find out during the workshop! We will work in small groups, so listen carefully! The members of the first group are (read the list of names under Grupa A in R2 – matična grupa and show them to their space), the members of the second group are (read the list of names under Grupa B in R2 – matična grupa)...*

<p><b>JIGSAW GROUP</b> (5 min)</p> 	<p>When all students have been divided into jigsaw groups, the teacher gives further instructions for the sign language jigsaw.</p> <p><i>This time we will do a short workshop where you will learn some signs from Croatian Sign Language. Does anyone know what sign language is? Who uses sign language? Have you ever seen someone using sign language?</i></p> <p><i>Croatian Sign Language is used by people who cannot hear. Sign Language has its rules, and the signs are made with your hands, arms, head, face and your body. Every word or sign has its own movement.</i></p> <p><i>We will now watch a video showing some signs from Croatian Sign Language.</i></p> <p>The teacher plays the video “r2_uvodni_video.mp4Znakovnica”.</p>																								
<p><b>ROTATION</b> (2 min)</p>	<p>The teacher divides the children into expert groups (read the list of children under R2 – ekspertna grupa).</p> <p><i>Now we will divide into expert groups; these are the groups in which you will learn to sign some words from the Croatian Sign Language.</i></p>																								
<p><b>EXPERT GROUP</b> (15 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher gives instructions and explains that students will learn some signs in each group. Students should learn these signs well, because they will later show them to their friends once they return to their jigsaw groups. Each expert group gets a tablet or a mobile phone with the videos.<sup>4</sup> Each expert group gets a set of different signs to learn.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="470 1175 1267 1514"> <thead> <tr> <th>People</th> <th>Animals</th> <th>Action</th> <th>Objects</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>boy</td> <td>elephant</td> <td>listen</td> <td>music</td> </tr> <tr> <td>girl</td> <td>giraffe</td> <td>watch</td> <td>TV</td> </tr> <tr> <td>cook</td> <td>cat</td> <td>love</td> <td>cake</td> </tr> <tr> <td>teacher</td> <td>dog</td> <td>go</td> <td>house</td> </tr> <tr> <td>doctor</td> <td>bird</td> <td>write</td> <td>letter</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	People	Animals	Action	Objects	boy	elephant	listen	music	girl	giraffe	watch	TV	cook	cat	love	cake	teacher	dog	go	house	doctor	bird	write	letter
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<sup>4</sup> In addition to the repository, you can also access these video materials on the project's YouTube channel:

People – Osobe: <https://youtu.be/ju1IMpN8250>

Animals - Životinje: <https://youtu.be/xJQL1mm-frU>

Action - Radnje: <https://youtu.be/51OIKSo8qBE>

Objects - Predmeti: <https://youtu.be/Se2E13lvSqg>

<p><b>EXPERT GROUP</b> <b>(15 min)</b></p>	<p>Each expert group gets a different video, with five signs from Croatian Sign Language. The group with video „r2_osobe.mp4” will learn to sign the following words: boy, girl, cook, teacher, doctor. With children in their expert groups, the teacher gives the following instruction:</p> <p><i>Each group has been given a tablet. The tablet contains a video. Each group has a different video. Your task in these groups now is to learn to sign the words which are shown in your video. You can practice them together and help each other. You should learn them well, you need to become experts in these signs, because you will later be showing them to your other friends.</i></p> <p>As students practice the movements, the teacher goes from group to group and supervises their work.</p>
<p><b>ROTATION</b> <b>(2 min)</b></p>	<p>The teacher tells the students to return to the jigsaw groups that they formed at the beginning of the lesson (R2 – matična grupa).</p>
<p><b>JIGSAW GROUP</b> <b>(10 min)</b></p> 	<p>Each jigsaw group gets an illustration of a sentence that contains one word from each of the expert groups – each child from the jigsaw group has their unique role: to sign the appropriate word to the other members of the group and teach them how to sign it by repeating after him/her.</p> <p>For instance, the jigsaw group gets the sentence as shown below. The child from the expert group “people” signs his/her word (“girl”), and all the other students repeat it after him/her, then the child from the expert group “animals” signs his/her word (“dog”), the others repeat, then the third child signs the action (“go”), and the fourth child signs the object (“house”).</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><i>Example of the sentence “The girl and the dog are going home.”</i></p> <p>The teacher gives the following instruction:</p> <p><i>Each group has been given a picture. Each member of your group can sign one element from this picture. Your task now is to sign the entire sentence – each one of you should show the word they have learned, and the others should repeat it after him/her. You now have five minutes to practice this together.</i></p>

<p><b>JIGSAW GROUP</b> <b>(10 min)</b></p>	<p>The teacher supervises group work to make sure that all the members of each group are participating, and provides assistance if necessary. Each child should be able to successfully sign their word, and to ensure the participation of the refugee child, it is particularly important that s/he completes her/his part of the task. After five minutes of practicing the sentence, jigsaw groups present their sentence to the remainder of the class, who guess their meaning. The teacher encourages group members to congratulate each other after successfully signing their sentence. The students should be told that this is not a competition. The teacher gives the following instructions:</p> <p><i>Now each group will show us their sentence. Students from the other groups can try to guess its meaning. If you have an idea what the sentence means, please raise your hand. Remember that this is not a competition, each group should have enough time to show their sentence and all the students should participate!</i></p>
<p><b>END OF THE LESSON</b> <b>(4 min)</b></p>	<p>At the end of the lesson, the teacher congratulates each group on the successful completion of the task and encourages them to congratulate each other within their jigsaw groups (e.g., “high fives”). The teacher points out the importance of working together to achieve their final goal – everyone’s contribution is important for the ultimate success. The teacher concludes the lesson by saying that they have learned several words from Croatian Sign Language, asks the students how they liked it and whether they would like to learn more sign language words.</p> <p><i>Today we have learned several words from Croatian Sign Language. There are also other sign languages like American Sign Language, German Sign Language and French Sign Language. Just like other languages we speak, sign languages also have many words that can be learned which makes it easier to communicate with people who cannot hear. How did you like this lesson? Would you like to learn more words from Croatian Sign Language?</i></p>

Changes recommended on the basis of feedback after the intervention workshops:

- This workshop is interesting and motivating for students. Older students found the task easy, and, if there is time at the end, a more challenging task can be added, for instance for students to come up with their own sentences in their group and then present them to the entire class who should “translate” them.



## Workshop 3: Tangram jigsaw

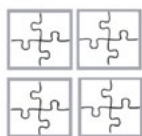
**AIM:** To stimulate contact and collaboration, to teach each other and learn cooperatively, to develop visual perception skills and spatial relations

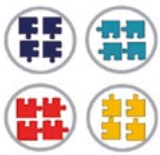

**DURATION:** 1 period

**MATERIALS:** Materials for this workshop are available in the digital repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (<https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:833288>).

- Introductory video demonstrating how to complete the tangram (r3\_uvodni\_video.mp4)
- Materials for the expert group
  - one tangram for each child (r3\_pocetni\_tangram.pdf)
  - illustrated set of instructions on how to complete the tangram, one per group (r3\_upute\_za\_ekspertne\_grupe.pdf)
  - “a cheat sheet” with the tangram shape from the expert group for each child (r3\_salabahter.pdf)
- Materials for the jigsaw group
  - pictures of tangram shapes for the jigsaw group, all the shapes for each group (r3\_prikazi\_tangram\_likova\_za\_maticnu\_grupu.pdf)

METHOD	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> (2 min)	<p>At the beginning of the lesson the teacher says:</p> <p><i>Today we will do a new activity and develop our skills of making a tangram. We will work in small groups. First, I will divide you into groups of four students. These will be your jigsaw groups.</i></p> <p>Students should sit together with the other members of their group (R3 – matična grupa), and the groups should be in different parts of the classroom.</p>
<b>JIGSAW GROUP</b> (8 min)	<p>The teacher takes one tangram, turns towards the students so that s/he can be seen by everyone and says:</p> <p><i>Today we will learn how to do a tangram. A tangram is a puzzle that originated in China a long time ago. As you can see, this rectangle in my hand is actually made up of seven smaller pieces. They can be put together to get different shapes, such as animals, plants, objects and so on.</i></p>

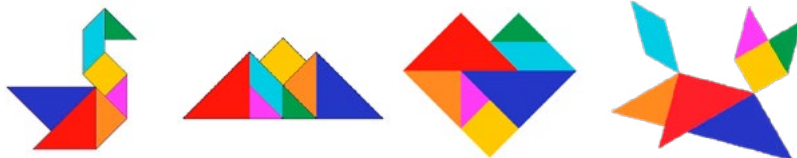


<p><b>JIGSAW GROUP</b> (8 min)</p>	<p><i>The rules to make a tangram are not difficult: you need to put together the puzzle by using all the pieces, the pieces should not overlap (the teacher demonstrates) and they must all connect (the teacher demonstrates). Now we will watch a video which explains a little better what making a tangram looks like.</i></p> <p>The teacher plays the video (r3_uvodni_video.mp4).</p>
<p><b>EXPERT GROUP</b> (10 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher divides the students so that each member of a jigsaw group is part of a different expert group (R3 – ekspertna grupa). The teacher says:</p> <p><i>Now we will learn how to make different shapes out of these tangrams, but I will not be teaching this today, you will be learning from each other. That is why you will leave your jigsaw groups and join your new expert groups.</i></p> <p>The teacher then distributes the tangram instructions to the groups (r3_upute_za_ekspertne_grupe.pdf), so that each group gets a sheet of paper placed in the middle of their desk showing how the tangram is made. The teacher says:</p> <p><i>Now you will learn how to make the pictures that you have been given. You will learn how to make them and you will become experts, and then you will share your knowledge with the other members of your jigsaw group when you return to it. This is not a competition, and it is important that all of you learn how to make the shape. This is a cooperative task. You should help each other learn and work on the task together. Practice to make the shape several times, to get better at making it.</i></p>  <p><i>Illustration for the expert group</i></p> <p>Children learn how to make the shapes. The teacher goes around the class, checks if the expert groups are collaborating, and provides explanations and assistance if necessary. At the end of joint work in the expert groups, the teacher says:</p>

**EXPERT GROUP  
(10 min)**

*Now that you have finished learning, you will return to your jigsaw groups. But before that, I will give you small pictures of the shape that you learned to make. These pictures are just to help you, a “cheat sheet” to remember your shape if you need to. Each one of you can only look at your own cheat sheet.*

The teacher distributes the cheat sheets (r3\_salabahter.pdf).



*Cheat sheets for the shapes (swan, mountains, heart, cat) in the jigsaw group*

**JIGSAW GROUP  
(20 min)**



After returning to their jigsaw groups (R3 – matična grupa), the teacher distributes papers which contain black silhouettes of all the shapes that the students learned to make in their expert groups, and words for them in Croatian, Arabic and Farsi, as well as a photograph showing each word (r3\_prikazi\_tangram\_likova\_za\_maticnu\_grupu.pdf) and says:

*Now, your task in the jigsaw group is to teach each other how to make these shapes. This is not a competition; you do not need to try to be the fastest – the only thing that matters is that each one of you shows the other members of your group how to make your shape and that you teach them how to make it. Remember, you can only look at your own cheat sheet.*



*Illustration for the jigsaw group*

The teacher goes around the class, makes sure that everyone is working together, and provides assistance if necessary. Each child should successfully teach other members of their group how to make their shape, and to ensure the participation of the refugee child, it is particularly important for him/her to show to the others how to make his/her shape.

**END OF THE  
LESSON  
(2 min)**

At the end of the lesson the teacher congratulates each group on the successful completion of the task and encourages them to congratulate each other within their jigsaw groups (e.g., “high fives”). The teacher points out the importance of working together to achieve their final goal – everyone’s contribution is important for the ultimate success.

Changes recommended on the basis of feedback after the intervention workshops:

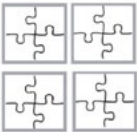
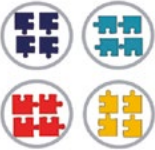
- The cat and the swan have proved to be a bit more difficult than the mountain and the heart, so they can be replaced with simpler shapes that need to be prepared in advance.
- Refugee students were very happy to see that each shape illustration was accompanied by a caption in Croatian and their mother tongue. This prompted their Croatian peers to learn some words in their language and find out more about the culture of the refugee child.


## Workshop 4: Music jigsaw

**AIM:** To collaborate, practice and synchronize rhythms, to become acquainted with new sounds

**DURATION:** 1 period

**MATERIALS:** This workshop requires a song based on which students can practice the rhythm. As part of the proposed intervention program, we used the audio recording of the song “The lion sleeps tonight/In the jungle”, which was well received by both younger and older students.

METHOD	
<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b> (2 min)</p>	<p>At the beginning of the lesson the teacher says:</p> <p><i>Today we will do another activity in small groups. I will first divide you into groups (if breakout into groups has been prepared ahead of time, the teacher reads the list of children for R4 – matična grupa). These are your jigsaw groups that you will return to at the end of the lesson.</i></p>
<p><b>JIGSAW GROUP</b> (8 min)</p> 	<p>Students should sit together with the other members of their group, and the groups should be in different parts of the classroom.</p> <p>The teacher plays the song and says:</p> <p><i>Today we will have a music workshop. First, I will play you a song, and later we will learn different movements to it. You will practice these movements in your expert groups that we will now break into (the teacher reads the lists for R4 – ekspertna grupa and assigns each expert group with its movement: tapping fingers, clapping, tapping the knees, and stomping their feet).</i></p>
<p><b>EXPERT GROUP</b> (15 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher:</p> <p><i>You will now work together in your expert groups to come up with a way to perform the song. I will play the song for you, and you need to work together to decide on the way to perform it. You should practice performing your task diligently, because you will have to show it to the members of your jigsaw group once you return to it!</i></p>

<p><b>EXPERT GROUP</b> <b>(15 min)</b></p>	<p>The teacher plays the first minute of the song, which should be repeated multiple times so that the children can practice their performance. The teacher goes around the class to check if everyone is working together to come up with the performance, and provides explanations and assistance if necessary. Before playing the song the last time, the teacher says that it is the last time the song will be played.</p>
<p><b>JIGSAW GROUP</b> <b>(15 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher asks the students to return to their jigsaw groups and says: <i>Now your task in these groups is to learn how to perform this song together. I will play the song again three times, and you need to coordinate with each other. After that, each group will perform the song for the rest of the class.</i></p> <p>After they practice performing the song together three times, the groups present their performances to the class. After each performance, the teacher encourages group members to congratulate each other, for instance by giving each other high fives.</p>
<p><b>END OF THE LESSON</b> <b>(2 min)</b></p>	<p>At the end of the lesson the teacher congratulates all groups on successfully completing the task and emphasizes the importance of working together for the final goal – everyone is important for the ultimate success.</p>

Changes recommended on the basis of feedback after the intervention workshops:

- This activity was a favorite among younger children, and they were very active and creative, while initial discomfort is to be expected with older children, and they need additional incentive to actively participate in this activity.
- Creativity in expert groups can be additionally boosted, for instance by encouraging a group to come up with different sounds that they can make by using paper (rustling, tearing), another group to come up with sounds and rhythms that they can make using pencils (tapping), the third group to come up with sounds that they can produce with their body as an instrument (clapping, stomping their feet), and the fourth group, for instance, by using their voice (whistling, singing, etc.). Once they return to the jigsaw group they pick different elements to create a combination that is “their own” reaction to the song.

## Frequently asked questions

What follows are some situations that can arise in the classroom during cooperative learning workshops, followed by guidelines on how to respond in these situations. However, being teachers, you know your classes best and you should select an appropriate response taking into consideration these guidelines as well as the classroom climate.

### **What if the refugee child is absent when the workshop is supposed to take place?**

If the refugee child is absent when the workshop is supposed to take place, the workshop should be postponed and conducted at the next opportunity. Keep in mind that the intervention is based on intergroup contact, and its aim is to improve attitudes towards members of another group, in this case refugee children. For the workshop to be conducted, the refugee child needs to be in attendance so that direct contact can be realized. However, also remember that this information is meant for the teacher, and not for the participants/students.

### **What if a host-society child is absent when the workshop was supposed to take place?**

If one or more host-society children are absent on that day, the workshop should take place as planned.

### **What if the number of students is not divisible by the number of groups?**

Adjust groups as needed: for instance, one student may be part of two jigsaw groups or two students from the same jigsaw group may go to a single expert group, and then work together to show their part of the task to the others once they return to their jigsaw group. This should not be the group with the refugee child.

### **What if a student or a group is slower or less successful?**

It is important to stress to the entire group/class that speed is not important, and the activities are all about working together.

### **What if students within a group or in different groups start competing with each other?**

You should emphasize once more that collaboration is the main aim of the activity, and that there should be no competition. One suggestion to eliminate competition in the Tower of Collaboration workshop is, for instance, to have each consecutive group start after a short delay – if the groups do not start at the same time, then it is impossible to compare which group was quickest in making the tower.



## 5. THE INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR CLASSES WITHOUT REFUGEE CHILDREN (IMAGINED CONTACT METHOD)

### Notes on teaching methodology

Each workshop in the imagined contact intervention program consists of four steps:

1. Introduction and definition of the out-group (refugee children in each case)
2. Imagining
3. Individual reinforcement
4. Group reinforcement

We will briefly explain each of the steps and then provide some general guidelines for implementing the imagined contact method in the classroom.

### 1. Introduction and definition of the out-group

To enable the children to successfully imagine contact with a refugee child, it is important to explain to them who refugee children are. Some, particularly younger children, may not know the meaning of the word refugee or may have their own definition that need not necessarily be correct. This is why the first workshop should start by providing a single definition to all students by giving a simple presentation.

The presentation is available in the supplementary materials accompanying this handbook (available at <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:669993>) and contains only the most basic information, ensuring understanding by all, even the youngest, children. The presentation does not mention cultural specificities of refugee groups, because this is not related to the aim of this intervention – the aim is to understand the notion of a refugee and especially of refugee children, to increase willingness and openness to initiate contact with refugee children in the future (wherever they may come from), to raise awareness about possible communication challenges (e.g., not speaking the language) and to come up with ways to overcome these challenges. Imagining should also be made easier

for children, because existing research shows that the success of the method hinges on the task not being too demanding. This is why the presentation contains photographs of different children, all of whom are actual refugee children.





The instructions in the introductory part should be given at a slow pace, checking with the students whether everything is clear, whether they have any additional questions, whether they are ready to start imagining, especially when the method is used for the first time. After the first workshop, the presentation is no longer necessary, and only a short reminder of who refugee children are is sufficient. The teacher may return to the presentation if s/he notices that the children have not understood the task.

## 2. Imagining

The second step of the imagined contact method includes imagining a pleasant and positive contact with a refugee child. To make imagining easier, the teacher should read the beginning of a scenario describing the first moments of an encounter, mentioning an appropriate context. After that the teacher should tell the students to imagine the encounter in more detail themselves, any way they like. Individual imagining is encouraged and gently directed by asking open questions at the end of the scenario.

The scenarios prepared within the project are based on the results of research into the effectiveness of the imagined contact method, as well as on suggestions from teachers and teaching associates who work with elementary school children on a daily basis. To make the scenarios realistic, they are different for younger children (in lower elementary grades) and older children (in higher elementary grades).

The children should also imagine meeting a different refugee child for each workshop and scenario. Such diversity when imagining has been correlated with a higher probability that the effect of the intervention will “spread” to refugee children in general, and not only to children who are very similar to the ones that the students have imagined. Here are the scenarios for each workshop:

<p><b>WORKSHOP 1:</b></p> 	<p>Children imagine an encounter with a refugee child <b>in their class</b>. This is <b>the basic scenario</b>, most frequently used in research. The scenario is easy to imagine regardless of the students' age, and is consistent with conducting the workshop in the school, which is why it is used in the first workshop.</p>
<p><b>WORKSHOP 2:</b></p> 	<p>This scenario for imagined contact includes <b>a detailed description of the context</b> or the environment where the encounter is taking place. Such an approach helps children imagine the encounter in more detail, which has been linked to higher efficacy, and is a way to build on the first workshop. To make the scenarios realistic for both younger and older children, there are two versions. Students in lower elementary grades should imagine an encounter in their favorite <b>park</b>, and students in higher grades in their <b>neighborhood</b>. Both environments are familiar to them, which makes imagining easier.</p>
<p><b>WORKSHOP 3:</b></p> 	<p>The scenario in the third workshop includes another aspect that has been shown as useful when applying this method – <b>working together</b> with an imagined refugee child. Collaboration, working together on a joint task, makes the imagined contact more intense, and can lead to stronger effects. Lower-grade children should imagine working together with the refugee child <b>helping a neighbor clear snow</b>, and higher-grade children should imagine <b>helping younger children</b> getting a ball off a tree.</p>
<p><b>WORKSHOP 4:</b></p> 	<p>The last workshop has been designed to highlight the connection with the imagined refugee child by emphasizing <b>belonging to the same group</b>. Lower-grade children should imagine that they are in a group together with a refugee child during <b>a competitive game at a children's birthday party</b>, and older children should imagine that they are in the same <b>sports team at a sports competition</b>. For the situation to be pleasant, it is important for their team to win.</p>

### 3. Individual reinforcement

After some time has been spent in imagining the scenario (any of the scenarios mentioned above), the effect of imagining should be individually reinforced. This allows students to imagine the encounter with the refugee child in more detail, and to remember it better. Before starting the activity, children should be told

how much time they will have, and close to the end they should be notified how much time is left to be able to finish their work on time.

Individual reinforcement can be done in different creative age-appropriate ways. With older children this is mostly writing compositions, which allows later analysis of their work to explore their imagining process in more detail, and with younger children other methods such as drawing, are frequently used. As the children are writing or drawing, the teacher can ask them questions to remind them what else they can write about/draw, and how they can imagine the encounter in more detail.

#### **4. Group reinforcement**

In addition to strengthening the effect of imagining the encounter through individual reinforcement, group reinforcement achieved through a conversation with the entire class may also be used. During the conversation, the children can volunteer to share what they have imagined with other students, they can read what they have written or can show and explain their drawings. The teacher plays a dual role – to check whether the child has understood the task correctly, and to incite additional imagining by asking more specific questions. These questions should allow the child to imagine his/her encounter with the refugee child in more detail. Although some workshops contain examples of such questions, teachers should think of additional questions on the basis of students' stories.

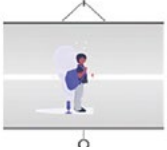
For this part of the workshop to work well, teachers should create a classroom atmosphere where children are comfortable to share their imagined scenarios with others. Children who may have imagined an unpleasant encounter or have not imagined an encounter with a refugee child should be gently corrected. Additional more specific guidelines for the group conversation can be found in the workshop lesson plans, and in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section at the end of this part of the handbook.



What follows are lesson plans for each workshop. Workshops for lower elementary school children are presented first (for grades 2 to 4), and are followed by workshops for higher elementary school grades (5 to 8).


## Workshop description – lower grades (grades 2 to 4)

### Workshop 1: Basic scenario

- AIM:** To teach children the meaning of the term “refugee”. To develop positive attitudes towards refugee children by using the basic scenario of imagined contact.
- MATERIALS:**
- Power Point presentation (PPT) entitled “Djeca izbjeglice” (Refugee Children) – available for download from the repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:669993>
  - sheets of paper, drawing supplies (pencils, crayons/felt pens)
- DURATION:** 1 period

METHOD	
<p><b>INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE OUT-GROUP</b> (5 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“Today we will do an imagining exercise. You will imagine that you met a child who is a refugee, and that you are having a good time with them. Later we will make drawings of this, so I will now give you sheets of paper – but do not write anything on them yet.”</i></p> <p>The teacher distributes the sheets of paper and then starts the “Refugee Children” PPT.</p> <p>While showing the first slide, the teacher says: <i>“First of all, do you know who refugees are?”</i></p> <p>Students answer the question.</p> <p>The teacher gives the entire class the following definition while showing the second slide: <i>“Refugees are people who had to leave their country because they were in danger there. They usually leave because there is war in their country and they are not safe there, and they look for protection in other, more secure countries, such as Croatia.”</i></p> <p>While showing the third slide, the teacher says: <i>“Refugee children who come to Croatia come from a different culture. This means that they speak a different language, they sometimes have different customs and habits, they went to schools that had different programs, and some may dress differently and may look different. When they arrive in Croatia, they usually do not speak Croatian, and they need some time to learn it well. That is why it is often difficult for them to talk to their friends and teachers.”</i></p>

<p><b>INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE OUT-GROUP</b> (5 min)</p>	<p>While showing the fourth slide, and the last two slides (slides 5 and 6), the teachers says: <i>“Still, they like to play just like you, they like sports, pets, books, music, video games and so on. Refugee children are like you, but they are special at the same time, just like each one of you.</i></p>
<p><b>IMAGINING</b> (3 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“Now that we know who refugee children are, we will imagine for a while how it would be to meet one of them. I will first read the instructions, and then you will quietly imagine for a while after that. Get comfortable in your chairs and relax. If you like, you can close your eyes. If you do not want to close your eyes, that is okay too. It is important that you are comfortable and that you try to imagine as much detail as possible.”</i></p> <p>Children should be given a short time to get comfortable and to prepare. The teacher reads the scenario and pauses after each question at the end of the scenario.</p> <p><i>“Imagine that a refugee child comes to your class and that the teacher tells him or her to sit next to you. Your friends in your class are excited that you will all meet the refugee child and they encourage you to talk to him or her. At first s/he does not know what to tell you because s/he does not speak Croatian well, but you soon start to have a good time together. Soon, the bell rings, which means that the class is ending.</i></p> <p><i>What does the refugee child look like? [pause]</i></p> <p><i>How can you understand each other if he or she does not speak Croatian well? [pause]</i></p> <p><i>What can you do to become friends? [pause]</i></p> <p><i>Now please take a bit of time and quietly imagine this meeting.”</i></p> <p>After two minutes of imagining (starting from asking the first question), the teacher asks the students to open their eyes and start working on the following task.</p>
<p><b>INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT</b> (25 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“You spent some time imagining that you met a refugee child. Now draw what the encounter looked like on the pieces of paper I gave you earlier. Try to draw the meeting in as much detail as possible, draw what the child you imagined looked like, what you did together... Next to or underneath the picture give a short description of what you did together, how you felt, and how you think the child felt. You can also say which language you used to talk to each other, whether you were able to understand each other well, and what else you would like to say to them. Later, if you like, you will be able to present your work to the class.”</i></p>

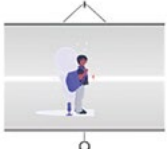

<p><b>INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(25 min)</b></p>	<p>Check whether the students have all the supplies they need. The teacher should ask the children who finish the task too quickly to think a bit more and add more detail to the drawings, and should encourage children who are slower. If the entire class finishes early, this phase can be shortened. The teacher should let the children know shortly before the end of the activity that they only have a bit more time left (e.g., five minutes).</p>
<p><b>GROUP REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(10 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher asks volunteers to say what they imagined. Retelling (and additional imagining) should be encouraged by asking questions such as:</p> <p><i>“Did you find out each other’s names? How did you do that? What was the child’s name?”</i></p> <p><i>“What made you think that this child was a refugee?”</i></p> <p><i>“Where were you sitting? Did you talk during class or during your break?”</i></p> <p><i>“How did you start the conversation?”</i></p> <p><i>“What were you doing?”</i></p> <p><i>“How did you talk? In which language? Did you understand each other?”</i></p> <p><i>“Did they tell you something about themselves? What did you tell them?”</i></p> <p><i>“Did any of your friends join you?”</i></p> <p><i>“Do you think you could become friends with this imagined child?”</i></p> <p>During the conversation, the child should be encouraged to imagine the meeting in more detail and to share it with others. The teachers can ask other questions about the situation. In this stage children should be corrected if they have, for instance, imagined an encounter with a child who is not a refugee, a negative encounter, etc. (see the FAQs for additional guidelines).</p> <p>The remaining time should be spent encouraging as many children as possible to share their imagined experience, but children should not be forced to share if they do not wish to do so. It is not essential for many children to tell their stories, but asking additional questions and talking to the child who is sharing should also encourage other children to imagine the situation in as much detail as possible and to reinforce the imagined scenario.</p>

## Workshop 2: Detailed scenario



**AIM:** To develop positive attitudes towards refugee children by using imagined contact with a detailed scenario.

**MATERIALS:** sheets of paper, drawing supplies (pencils, crayons/felt pens)

**DURATION:** 1 period

METHOD	
<p><b>INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE OUT-GROUP</b> (2 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“Today you will imagine once again that you have met a refugee child, but today you will imagine a different child. Before we begin, let me remind you that refugee children are children who left their country because there was war there, or because they were exposed to injustice or danger in some other way. They are no longer safe in their own country, so they come to other, safer countries, including Croatia. They do not speak Croatian very well at the beginning, and it is difficult for them to understand friends and teachers. Later we will describe the encounter. I will now give you sheets of paper – but do not write anything on them yet.”</i></p> <p>The teacher distributes the sheets of paper.</p>
<p><b>IMAGINING</b> (3 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“I will first read the instructions, and then you will quietly imagine for a while after that. Get comfortable in your chairs and relax. If you like, you can close your eyes. If you do not want to close your eyes, that is okay too. It is important that you are comfortable and that you try to imagine as much detail as possible.”</i></p> <p>Children should be given a short time to get comfortable and to prepare. The teacher reads the scenario and pauses after each question at the end of the scenario.</p> <p><i>“Imagine you are in your favorite park. It is spring, and the weather is nice and sunny. You can hear birds singing and you can smell spring flowers. Your friends are not there today and you are playing alone. Then you notice another child your age in the park. You remember that your friends told you it was a refugee who moved to a nearby street, and who does not speak Croatian well. At the beginning, you do not know how to approach them, but you start playing and having fun together soon.</i></p>



<p><b>IMAGINING</b> <b>(3 min)</b></p>	<p><i>What does the refugee child look like? [pause]</i> <i>How can you understand each other if he or she does not speak Croatian well? [pause]</i> <i>What are you doing together in the park? [pause]</i> <i>What can you do to become friends? [pause]</i> <i>Now please take a bit of time and quietly continue imagining this encounter."</i></p> <p>After two minutes of imagining (starting from asking the first question), the teacher asks the students to open their eyes and start working on the following task.</p>
<p><b>INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(25 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>"You spent some time imagining that you met a refugee child. Now draw what the encounter looked like on the pieces of paper I gave you earlier. Try to draw as much detail as possible, draw what the child you imagined looked like, what you did together... Next to or underneath the picture, give a short description of what you did together, how you felt, and how you think the other child felt. You can also say which language you used to talk to each other, whether you were able to understand each other well, and what else you would like to say to them. Later, if you like, you will be able to present your work to the class."</i></p> <p>Check whether the students have all the supplies they need. The teacher should ask the children who finish the task too quickly to think a bit more and add more detail to the drawings, and should encourage children who are slower. If the entire class finishes early, this phase can be shortened. The teacher should let the children know shortly before the end of the activity that they only have a bit more time left (e.g., five minutes).</p>
<p><b>GROUP REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(10 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher asks volunteers to share what they imagined. Retelling (and additional imagining) should be encouraged by asking questions such as:</p> <p><i>"Did you find out each other's names? How did you do that? What was the child's name?"</i> <i>"What made you think that this child was a refugee?"</i> <i>"How did you start the conversation?"</i> <i>"What were you doing?"</i> <i>"How did you talk? In which language? Did you understand each other?"</i></p>

**GROUP  
REINFORCEMENT  
(10 min)**



*“Did they tell you something about themselves? What did you tell them?”*

*“Did any of your friends later join you?”*

*“Do you think you could become friends with this imagined child?”*

During the conversation the child should be encouraged to imagine the encounter in more detail and to share it with others. The teachers can ask other questions about the situation. In this stage, children should be corrected if they have, for instance, imagined an encounter with a child who is not a refugee, a negative encounter, etc. (see the FAQs for additional guidelines).



The remaining time should be spent encouraging as many children as possible to share their imagined experience, but children should not be forced to share if they do not wish to do so. It is not essential for many children to tell their stories, but asking additional questions and talking to the child who is sharing should also encourage other children to imagine the situation in as much detail as possible and to reinforce the imagined scenario.




## Workshop 3: Cooperative scenario

**AIM:** To develop more positive attitudes towards refugee children by implementing imagined contact which includes collaborating with a member of the out-group.

**MATERIALS:** sheets of paper, drawing supplies (pencils, crayons/felt pens)

**DURATION:** 1 period

METHOD	
<p><b>INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE OUT-GROUP</b> (2 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“Today we will imagine an encounter with a refugee child once again, but you will imagine a child that you have not yet imagined. You will imagine that you have encountered a child who left their own country because there was war there, or because they were exposed to injustice or danger in some other way. This child is safe here in Croatia, but they do not speak Croatian very well at first, which is why it is difficult for them to understand friends and teachers. I will now give you pieces of paper which you will later use to describe the encounter.”</i> The teacher distributes the pieces of paper.</p>
<p><b>IMAGINING</b> (3 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“I will first read the instructions, and then you will quietly imagine for a while after that. Get comfortable in your chairs and relax. If you like, you can close your eyes. If you do not want to close your eyes, that is okay too. It is important that you are comfortable and that you try to imagine as much detail as possible.”</i></p> <p>Children should be given a short time to get comfortable and to prepare. The teacher reads the scenario and pauses after each question at the end of the scenario.</p> <p><i>Imagine that it is winter and that a lot of snow fell overnight. You are happy because you will go out and make a snowman! An older neighbor in your street comes out to clear snow, and a child your age joins him and starts helping him. You recognize that it is a refugee whose family has recently moved to your street. You also decide to help your neighbor. Although the refugee child does not speak Croatian very well, the two of you are having a good time clearing the snow together.</i></p>

<p><b>IMAGINING</b> <b>(3 min)</b></p> 	<p><i>What does the refugee child look like? [pause]</i>  <i>How can you talk to each other if the child does not speak Croatian well? [pause]</i>  <i>How can you have fun while you are helping? [pause]</i>  <i>What can you do together as you are finishing clearing the snow? [pause]</i>  <i>What can you do to become friends? [pause]</i>  <i>Now remain seated for a while and imagine this meeting."</i>                  After two minutes of imagining (starting from asking the first question), the teacher asks the students to open their eyes and start working on the following task.</p>
<p><b>INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(25 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>"You spent some time imagining that you helped your neighbor together with a child who is a refugee. Now draw what the encounter looked like on the pieces of paper I gave you earlier. Try to draw as much detail as possible, draw what the child you imagined looked like, and what you did together after clearing the snow. Next to or underneath the picture, give a short description of what you did together, how you felt, and how you think the child felt. You can also say which language you used to talk to each other, whether you were able to understand each other well, and what else you would like to say to them. Later, if you like, you will be able to present your work to the class."</i>                  Check whether the students have all the supplies they need. The teacher should ask the children who finish the task too quickly to think a bit more and add more detail to the drawings, and should encourage children who are slower. If the entire class finishes early, this phase can be shortened. The teacher should let the children know shortly before the end of the activity that they only have a bit more time left (e.g., five minutes).</p>
<p><b>GROUP REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(10 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher asks for volunteers who want to share what they imagined. Retelling (and additional imagining) should be encouraged by asking questions such as:  <i>"Did you find out each other's names? How did you do that? What was the child's name?"</i>  <i>"What made you think that this child was a refugee?"</i>  <i>"How did you help your neighbor? Was it difficult? What did you do as you were helping your neighbor?"</i>  <i>"Did you do anything after that?"</i>  <i>"How did you start the conversation? In which language? Did you understand each other?"</i>  <i>"Did they tell you something about themselves? What did you tell them about yourself? What else would you like to find out about the refugee child?"</i>  <i>"Do you think you could become friends with this imagined child?"</i></p>

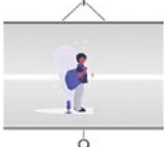

<b>GROUP REINFORCEMENT (10 min)</b>	<p>The aim of the conversation is for the children to imagine the encounter in as much detail as possible and to share it with the others. The teachers can ask other questions about the situation. In this stage, children should be corrected if they have, for instance, imagined an encounter with a child who is not a refugee, a negative encounter, etc. (see the FAQs for additional guidelines).</p> <p>The remaining time should be spent encouraging as many children as possible to share their imagined experience, but children should not be forced to share if they do not wish to do so. It is not essential for many children to tell their stories, but asking additional questions and talking to the child who is sharing should also encourage other children to imagine the situation in as much detail as possible and to reinforce the imagined scenario.</p>
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## Workshop 4: Shared group scenario

**AIM:** Developing more positive attitudes among children towards refugee children by implementing imagined contact which includes elements of a shared group identity.

**MATERIALS:** sheets of paper, drawing supplies (pencils, crayons/felt pens)

**DURATION:** 1 period

METHOD	
<p><b>INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE OUT-GROUP</b> (2 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“Today we will imagine an encounter with a refugee child once again, but you will again imagine a child that you have not yet imagined! Let me remind you that refugee children are those children who left their country because there was war there, or because they were exposed to injustice or danger in some other way. They are no longer safe in their own country, so they come to other, safer countries, including Croatia. They do not speak Croatian very well at the beginning, and it is difficult for them to understand friends and teachers. Later we will make drawings of this. I will now give you sheets of paper – but do not write anything on them yet.”</i></p> <p>The teacher distributes the pieces of paper.</p>
<p><b>IMAGINING</b> (3 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“I will first read the instructions, and then you will quietly imagine for a while after that. Get comfortable in your chairs and relax. If you like, you can close your eyes. If you do not want to close your eyes, that is okay too. It is important that you are comfortable and that you try to imagine as much detail as possible.”</i></p> <p>Children should be given a short time to get comfortable and to prepare. The teacher reads the scenario and pauses after each question at the end of the scenario.</p> <p><i>“Imagine that you are at a playroom for a birthday party of a friend. The room is full of balloons and toys. You notice a child you do not know, who you heard was a refugee. Soon it is time for a game, and the playroom teacher divides you into groups where you are supposed to find as many balloons of the same color as possible. You are in the group with the refugee child. At first you are not certain how it will all go because the child does not speak Croatian very well, but you soon start to look for balloons together and help each other, and you are having a great time! At the end of the game, your group has won!</i></p>

<p><b>IMAGINING</b> <b>(3 min)</b></p>	<p><i>What does the refugee child look like? [pause]</i>  <i>How can you understand each other if he or she does not speak Croatian well? [pause]</i>  <i>What are you doing together, how are you having fun? [pause]</i>  <i>How will you celebrate your victory? [pause]</i>  <i>What can you do to become friends? [pause]</i>  <i>Now remain seated for a while and imagine this meeting.</i>"</p> <p>After two minutes of imagining (starting from asking the first question), the teacher asks the students to open their eyes and start working on the following task.</p>
<p><b>INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(25 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>"You spent some time imagining that you met a refugee child. Now draw what the encounter looked like on the pieces of paper I gave you earlier. Try to draw as much detail as possible, draw what the child you imagined looked like, what you did together... Next to the picture you can give a short description of what you did together, how you felt, and how you think the child felt. You can also say which language you used to talk to each other, and whether you were able to understand each other well. Later, if you like, you will be able to present your work to the class."</i></p> <p>Check whether the students have all the supplies they need. The teacher should ask the children who finish the task too quickly to think a bit more and add more detail to the drawings, and should encourage children who are slower. If the entire class finishes early, this phase can be shortened. The teacher should let the children know shortly before the end of the activity that they only have a bit more time left (e.g., five minutes).</p>
<p><b>GROUP REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(10 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher asks volunteers who want to share what they imagined. Retelling (and additional imagining) should be encouraged by asking questions such as:</p> <p><i>"Did you find out each other's names? How did you do that? What was the child's name?"</i>  <i>"What made you think that this child was a refugee?"</i>  <i>"How did you start the conversation?"</i>  <i>"What were you doing as you were competing?"</i>  <i>"How did you celebrate your victory? What did you do afterwards?"</i>  <i>"How did you talk? In which language? Did you understand each other?"</i>  <i>"Did they tell you something about themselves? What did you tell them?"</i>  <i>"Were any other children in the group with you?"</i>  <i>"Do you think you could become friends with this imagined child?"</i></p>

**GROUP  
REINFORCEMENT  
(10 min)**



During the conversation the child should be encouraged to imagine the meeting in more detail and to share it with others. The teachers can ask other questions about the situation. In this stage, children should be corrected if they have, for instance, imagined an encounter with a child who is not a refugee, a negative encounter, etc. (see the FAQs for additional guidelines).

The remaining time is spent encouraging as many children as possible to share their imagined experience, but no children are made to share if they do not wish to do so. It is not essential for many children to tell their stories, but asking additional questions and talking to the child who is sharing should also encourage other children to imagine the situation in as much detail as possible and to reinforce the imagined scenario.

The teachers who conducted the workshops did not suggest changes to individual workshops, but to the program as a whole, which is why the suggestions appear here. Changes recommended on the basis of feedback after intervention workshops with younger children:

- It should be made clear at the outset that there will be several workshops with a similar topic, where similar activities will be done.
- Sometimes it is necessary to extend the time that children have for individual and group reinforcement. Drawing contact in the individual reinforcement phase can last longer than expected with younger children, but they enjoy this very much.



## Workshop description – higher grades (5 to 8)

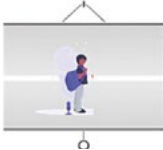
### Workshop 1: Basic scenario



**AIM:** To teach children the meaning of the term “refugee”. To develop positive attitudes towards refugee children by using the basic scenario of imagined contact.


**MATERIALS:**

- Power Point presentation (PPT) entitled “Djeca izbjeglice” (Refugee children) – available for download from the repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:669993>
- Pieces of paper, pencils

**DURATION:** 1 period

METHOD	
<p><b>INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE OUT-GROUP</b> (5 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“Today we will do an imagining exercise. You will imagine that you met a peer who is a refugee, and that you are spending time with them. Later we will write about this. I will now give you sheets of paper – but do not write anything on them yet.”</i></p> <p>The teacher distributes the sheets of paper and then starts the “Refugee children” PPT.</p> <p>While showing the first slide, the teacher says: <i>“First of all, do you know who refugees are?”</i></p> <p>Students answer the question.</p> <p>The teacher gives the entire class the following definition while showing the second slide: <i>“Refugees are people who had to leave their country because they were in danger there. They usually leave their country because there is war there and they are not safe, and they look for protection in other, more secure countries, such as Croatia.”</i></p> <p>While showing the third slide, the teacher says: <i>“Refugee children who come to Croatia come from a different culture. This means that they speak a different language, sometimes have different customs, that they went to schools that had different programs, and some may dress differently and may look different. When they arrive in Croatia, they usually do not speak Croatian, and they need some time to learn it well. That is why it is often difficult for them to talk to their friends and teachers.”</i></p>

<p><b>INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE OUT-GROUP</b> (5 min)</p>	<p>While showing the fourth slide, and the last two slides (slides 5 and 6), the teachers says: <i>Regardless of the differences, refugee children have similar interests like you, they like sports, play video games, watch movies, TV shows, use social media and YouTube... Refugee children are like you, but they are special at the same time, just like each one of you.</i></p>
<p><b>IMAGINING</b> (3 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“Now that we know who refugees are, we will imagine for a while how it would be to meet one of them. I will first read the instructions, and then you will quietly imagine for a while after that. Get comfortable in your chairs and relax. If you like, you can close your eyes. If you do not want to close your eyes, that is okay too. It is important that you are comfortable and that you try to imagine as much detail as possible.”</i></p> <p>Children should be given a short time to get comfortable and to prepare. The teacher reads the scenario and pauses after each question at the end of the scenario.</p> <p><i>“Imagine that a refugee your age comes to your class and that your teacher tells them to sit next to you. Your friends in your class are excited that you will all meet him/her and they encourage you to talk to the refugee. At first s/he does not know what to tell you because s/he does not speak Croatian well, but you soon start to have a good time together. Soon, the bell rings, which means that the class is ending.</i></p> <p><i>What does the refugee child look like? [pause]</i></p> <p><i>How can you understand each other if he or she does not speak Croatian well? [pause]</i></p> <p><i>What can you do during the break to have fun? [pause]</i></p> <p><i>What can you do to become friends? [pause]</i></p> <p><i>Now please take a bit of time and quietly imagine this encounter.”</i></p> <p>After two minutes of imagining (starting from asking the first question), the teacher asks the students to open their eyes and start working on the following task.</p>
<p><b>INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT</b> (22 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“You spent some time imagining that you met a refugee child your age. Now write a composition on the pieces of paper that I gave you describing what this imagined meeting looked like. Try to give as much detail as possible, write down what your new friend looked like, what you did together, how you felt as you were hanging out together, how you think he or she felt. You can also say which language you used to talk to each other, whether you were able to understand each other well, and what else you would like to say to them. Later, if you like, you will be able to present your description to the class.”</i></p>

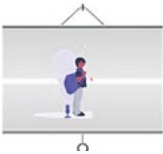

<p><b>INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(22 min)</b></p>	<p>Check whether the students have all the supplies they need. The teacher should ask the children who complete the task too quickly to think a bit more and add more details to the composition, and should encourage children who are slower. If the entire class finishes early, this phase can be shortened. The teacher should let the children know shortly before the end of the activity that they only have a bit more time left (e.g., five minutes).</p>
<p><b>GROUP REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(10 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher asks volunteers to share what they imagined. Retelling (and additional imagining) should be encouraged by asking questions such as:</p> <p><i>“Did you find out each other’s names? How did you do that? What was your imagined peer’s name?”</i></p> <p><i>“What made you think s/he was a refugee?”</i></p> <p><i>“Where were you sitting? Did you talk during class or during your break?”</i></p> <p><i>“How did you start the conversation? Which language did you speak? Did you understand each other?”</i></p> <p><i>“What did you do together?”</i></p> <p><i>“Did they tell you something about themselves? What did you tell them about yourself? What else would you like to find out about them?”</i></p> <p><i>“Did any of your friends join you?”</i></p> <p><i>“Do you think you could become friends with this imagined peer?” Why? What would have to happen for you to become friends?”</i></p> <p>The aim of the conversation is for the children to imagine the encounter in as much detail as possible and to share it with the others. The teachers can ask other questions about the situation. In this stage children should be corrected if they have, for instance, imagined an encounter with a child who is not a refugee, a negative encounter, etc. (see the FAQs for additional guidelines).</p> <p>The remaining time should be spent encouraging as many students as possible to share their imagined experience, but no students should be forced to share if they do not wish to do so. It is not essential for many children to tell their stories, but asking questions and talking to the child who is sharing should also encourage others to imagine the situation in as much detail as possible and to reinforce the imagined scenario.</p>



## Workshop 2: Detailed scenario

**AIM:** To develop positive attitudes towards refugee children by using imagined contact with a detailed scenario.

**MATERIALS:** pieces of paper, pencils

**DURATION:** 1 period

METHOD	
<p><b>INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE OUT-GROUP</b> (2 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“Today we will imagine once again that you have met a refugee child your age, but today you will imagine someone different. Before we begin, let me remind you that refugee children are those children who left their country where their lives were in danger because of war or because they were exposed to injustice or danger in some other way. They are no longer safe in their own country and they come to other, safer countries, including Croatia. They do not speak Croatian very well at first and it is difficult for them to understand their friends and teachers. Later you will write a composition to describe this encounter. I will now give you sheets of paper – but do not write anything on them yet.”</i></p> <p>The teacher distributes the sheets of paper.</p>
<p><b>IMAGINING</b> (3 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“I will first read the instructions, and then you will quietly imagine for a while. Get comfortable in your chairs and relax. If you like, you can close your eyes. If you do not want to close your eyes, that is okay too. It is important that you are comfortable and that you try to imagine as much detail as possible.”</i></p> <p>Children should be given a short time to get comfortable and to prepare. The teacher reads the scenario and pauses after each question at the end of the scenario.</p> <p><i>“Imagine you are walking around your neighborhood. It is spring, and the weather is nice and sunny. You see neighbors passing by and cars in the street. As you come closer to your house, you notice a child your age in the street. You do not know him or her, but you have heard that he or she is a refugee who does not speak Croatian very well. You are walking towards each other, and you decide to stop and say hello. Although you are not sure what to say to each other at first, soon you start to hang out and have fun.</i></p> <p><i>What does the refugee look like? [pause]</i></p> <p><i>How can you understand each other if he or she does not speak Croatian well? [pause]</i></p> <p><i>What are you doing together, how would you have fun? [pause]</i></p> <p><i>What can you do to become friends? [pause]</i></p>

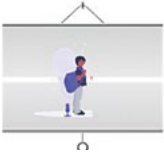

<p><b>IMAGINING</b> (3 min)</p>	<p><i>Now please take some time and quietly continue imagining this encounter.”</i></p> <p>After two minutes of imagining (starting from asking the first question), the teacher asks the students to open their eyes and start working on the following task.</p>
<p><b>INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT</b> (25 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“You spent some time imagining that you met a refugee child your age. Now write a composition on the pieces of paper that I gave you describing what this imagined encounter looked like. Try to give as much detail as possible, write down what your new friend looked like, what you did together, how you felt as you were hanging out together, how you think he or she felt. You can also say which language you used to talk to each other, and whether you were able to understand each other well. Later, if you like, you will be able to read your composition to the class.”</i></p> <p>Check whether the students have all the supplies they need. The teacher should ask the children who complete the task too quickly to think a bit more and add more details to the composition, and should encourage children who are slower. If the entire class finishes early, this phase can be shortened. The teacher should let the children know shortly before the end of the activity that they only have a bit more time left (e.g., five minutes).</p>
<p><b>GROUP REINFORCEMENT</b> (10 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher asks volunteers to say what they imagined. Retelling (and additional imagining) should be encouraged by asking questions such as:</p> <p><i>“Did you find out each other’s names? How did you do that? What was your imagined peer’s name?”</i></p> <p><i>“What made you think that s/he was a refugee?”</i></p> <p><i>“How did you start the conversation?”</i></p> <p><i>“What were you doing?” How did you start hanging out? Where all did you go together?”</i></p> <p><i>“Which language did you speak? Did you understand each other? Did you use anything to help you talk?”</i></p> <p><i>“Did they tell you something about themselves? What did you tell them?”</i></p> <p><i>“Do you think you could become friends with this imagined peer?” Why? What would have to happen for you to become friends?”</i></p> <p>During the conversation the child should be encouraged to imagine the encounter in more detail and to share it with others. Teachers can ask other questions about the situation. In this stage students should be corrected if they have, for instance, imagined an encounter with a child who is not a refugee, a negative encounter, etc. (see the FAQs for additional guidelines).</p> <p>The remaining time should be spent encouraging as many students as possible to share their imagined experience, but no students should be forced to share if they do not wish to do so. It is not essential for many children to tell their stories, but asking additional questions and talking to the child who is sharing should also encourage other children to imagine the situation in as much detail as possible and to reinforce the imagined scenario.</p>



## Workshop 3: Cooperative scenario

**AIM:** To develop more positive attitudes towards refugee children by implementing imagined contact which includes collaborating with a member of the out-group.

**MATERIALS:** pieces of paper, pencils, crayons (if desired)

**DURATION:** 1 period

METHOD	
<p><b>INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE OUT-GROUP</b> (2 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“Today we will imagine an encounter with a refugee child once again, but you will imagine a child that you have not imagined yet. You will imagine that you have encountered a student your age who left their country because of war or because they were exposed to injustice or danger in some other way. They are safe here in Croatia, but they do not speak Croatian very well, so it is difficult for them to communicate with their friends and teachers. Later we will describe the meeting. I will now give you sheets of papers – but do not write anything on them yet.”</i></p> <p>The teacher distributes the sheets of paper.</p>
<p><b>IMAGINING</b> (3 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“I will first read the instructions, and then you will quietly imagine for a while. Get comfortable in your chairs and relax. If you like, you can close your eyes. If you do not want to close your eyes, that is okay too. It is important that you are comfortable and that you try to imagine as much detail as possible.”</i></p> <p>Children should be given a short time to get comfortable and to prepare. The teacher reads the scenario and pauses after each question at the end of the scenario.</p> <p><i>“Imagine that you are returning from school and you are walking towards your house. You see a child your age in front of you walking in the same direction. When you look at them more closely, you realize this student is a refugee who came to your school and attends another class in your school. Soon, several younger children run towards you and ask for your help to get down a ball that got stuck in a tree. Although you do not know each other, and although the refugee student does not speak Croatian very well, the two of you decide to help the children together.</i></p>

<p><b>IMAGINING</b> (3 min)</p>	<p><i>What does the refugee student look like? [pause]</i>  <i>How can you understand each other if he or she does not speak Croatian well? [pause]</i>  <i>How will you talk to each other to decide what to do? [pause]</i>  <i>How will you help the children get the ball off the tree? [pause]</i>  <i>How will you have fun as you are helping them? [pause]</i>  <i>What can you do to become friends? [pause]</i>  <i>Now please take some time and quietly continue imagining this encounter.”</i>                  After two minutes of imagining (starting from asking the first question), the teacher asks the students to open their eyes and start working on the following task.</p>
<p><b>INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT</b> (25 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“You spent some time imagining that you met a refugee student your age and that you helped others together. Now draw a comic on the pieces of paper that I gave you, describing what this imagined meeting looked like. Try to draw what the student you imagined looked like, what you did together, how you helped the younger children, what happened after you helped them. Use a thinking bubble (🧠) to write down what you were thinking or how you felt at the time, and use a speech bubble (🗨️) to write what you said to each other. You can also think about which language you used to talk to each other, and whether you were able to understand each other well. Later, if you like, you will be able to present your work to the class.”</i></p> <p>Check that all the children have all the necessary supplies, and <b>draw the two types of bubbles on the board</b>. The teacher should ask the children who finish the task too quickly to think a bit more and add more detail, and should encourage children who are slower. If the entire class finishes early, this phase can be shortened. The teacher should let the children know shortly before the end of the activity that they only have a bit more time left (e.g., five minutes).</p>
<p><b>GROUP REINFORCEMENT</b> (10 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher asks for volunteers to tell the class what they have imagined (this can also be done by using the comic). Students should be encouraged by asking questions such as:</p> <p><i>“Did you find out each other’s names? How did you do that? What was your imagined peer’s name?”</i>  <i>“What made you think that s/he was a refugee?”</i>  <i>“How did you start the conversation?”</i>  <i>“What were you doing?” How did you help the children get the ball off the tree? What did you do afterwards?”</i></p>

**GROUP  
REINFORCEMENT  
(10 min)**



*“Which language did you speak? Did you understand each other? Did you use anything to help you talk?”*

*“Did they tell you something about themselves? What did you tell them?”*

*“Do you think you could become friends with this imagined peer?” Why? What would have to happen for you to become friends?”*

During the conversation the child should be encouraged to imagine the encounter in more detail and to share it with others. The teachers can ask other questions about the situation. In this stage, students should be corrected if they have, for instance, imagined an encounter with a child who is not a refugee, a negative encounter, etc. (see the FAQs for additional guidelines).

The remaining time should be spent encouraging as many students as possible to share their imagined experience, but no students should be forced to share if they do not wish to do so. It is not essential for many children to tell their stories, but asking additional questions and talking to the child who is sharing should also encourage other children to imagine the situation in as much detail as possible and to reinforce the imagined scenario.








## Workshop 4: Shared group scenario

**AIM:** To develop more positive attitudes towards refugee children by implementing imagined contact which includes elements of a shared group identity.

**MATERIALS:** pieces of paper, pencils

**DURATION:** 1 period

METHOD	
<p><b>INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITION OF THE OUT-GROUP</b> (1 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>Like last time, today you will be imagining an encounter with a refugee student your age. Once again, please imagine a person that you have not imagined earlier. You will imagine that you have encountered a student your age who left their own country because of war or because they were exposed to injustice or danger in some other way. They are safe here in Croatia, but they do not speak Croatian very well, so it is difficult for them to communicate with their friends and teachers. I will now give you pieces of paper which you will later use to write a composition.</i></p> <p>The teacher distributes the pieces of paper.</p>
<p><b>IMAGINING</b> (3 min)</p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“I will first read the instructions, and then you will quietly imagine for a while after that. Get comfortable in your chairs and relax. If you like, you can close your eyes. If you do not want to close your eyes, that is okay too. It is important that you are comfortable and that you try to imagine as much detail as possible.”</i></p> <p>Children should be given a short time to get comfortable and to prepare. The teacher reads the scenario and pauses after each question at the end of the scenario.</p> <p><i>“Imagine you are in the school playground. It is summer, and the playground is full of children your age. There is a child your age whom you do not know, but you have heard that he or she is a refugee and that he or she does not speak Croatian very well. You are all bored and you do not know what to do. Suddenly, someone suggests that you organize a sports competition. You are in the team together with the refugee child. You introduce yourselves to each other and you start working together to be as good as possible in the game. You are helping each other and having a great time. At the end of the competition, your team has won!</i></p>

<p><b>IMAGINING</b> <b>(3 min)</b></p> 	<p><i>What does the refugee child look like? [pause]</i>  <i>How can you talk to each other if the child does not speak Croatian well? [pause]</i>  <i>What are you doing together, how are you having fun? [pause]</i>  <i>How will you celebrate your victory? [pause]</i>  <i>What can you do to become friends? [pause]</i>  <i>Now remain seated for a while and imagine this encounter.”</i></p> <p>After two minutes of imagining (starting from asking the first question), the teacher asks the students to open their eyes and start working on the following task.</p>
<p><b>INDIVIDUAL REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(25 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher says: <i>“You spent some time imagining that you met a refugee child your age. Now write a composition on the pieces of paper that I gave you, describing what this imagined encounter looked like. Try to describe what the student looked like, and what you did together. Mention how you felt and how you think he or she felt, which language you used to talk to each other and whether you were able to understand each other well. Think about how you felt when your team won, how you celebrated your victory and what else you would like to say to them. Later, if you like, you will be able to present your work to the class.”</i></p> <p>Check whether the students have all the supplies they need. The teacher should ask the children who finish the task too quickly to think a bit more and add more detail, and should encourage children who are slower. If the entire class finishes early, this phase can be shortened. The teacher should let the children know shortly before the end of the activity that they only have a bit more time left (e.g., five minutes).</p>
<p><b>GROUP REINFORCEMENT</b> <b>(10 min)</b></p> 	<p>The teacher asks volunteers to say what they imagined. Retelling (and additional imagining) should be encouraged by asking questions such as:</p> <p><i>“Did you find out each other’s names? How did you do that? What was your imagined peer’s name?”</i></p> <p><i>“What made you think that s/he was a refugee?”</i></p> <p><i>Which sport did you compete in?”</i></p> <p><i>“How did you start the conversation? In which language? Did you understand each other?”</i></p> <p><i>“What were you doing as you were competing?”</i></p> <p><i>“How did you celebrate your victory? What did you do afterwards?”</i></p> <p><i>“Did they tell you something about themselves? What did you tell them about yourself? What else would you like to find out about him/her?”</i></p> <p><i>“Do you think you could become friends with this imagined peer?” Why? What would have to happen for you to become friends?”</i></p>

<b>GROUP REINFORCEMENT (10 min)</b>	<p>The aim of the conversation is for the children to imagine the encounter in as much detail as possible and to share it with the others. The teachers can ask other questions about the situation. In this stage, students should be corrected if they have, for instance, imagined an encounter with a child who is not a refugee, a negative encounter, etc. (see the FAQs for additional guidelines).</p> <p>The remaining time should be spent encouraging as many students as possible to share their imagined experience, but no students should be forced to share if they do not wish to do so. It is not essential for many children to tell their stories, but asking additional questions and talking to the child who is sharing should also encourage other children to imagine the situation in as much detail as possible and to reinforce the imagined scenario.</p>
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Changes recommended on the basis of feedback after intervention workshops with older children:

- Teachers feel that repeating similar activities can be tiresome for older children. Therefore, it may be better to let each student select what they want to do in the individual reinforcement phase (i.e., a comic, a composition, a drawing).
- You should also be prepared for some children possibly having strong negative attitudes and prejudices towards refugees.

## Frequently asked questions

What follows are some situations that can arise in the classroom when using the imagined contact method, followed by guidelines on how to respond in these situations. Still, teachers and teaching associates know their classes best – an appropriate response should therefore be selected taking into consideration these guidelines as well as the classroom climate. When doing all these activities, a child's right to decide whether to take part in the activity should be respected, and the spread of any prejudices or misinformation should be stopped to ensure the best possible implementation of the activity.

### What if the child refuses to do the imagining activity?

Research shows that forcing children to participate can have negative effects, leading to negative attitudes towards refugee children. The option to refuse participation should not be mentioned in advance, but if a child says they do not want to take part, that is okay. It is important to ensure that the child does not interfere with the other children who are taking part. The teacher may try to motivate the child to participate if s/he thinks that motivation is the issue.

### What if you notice that a child has not taken the task seriously?

If this happens, drawing on children's experience may be useful – for instance, by mentioning that a refugee child could come to their class, and that the activity may be useful to them. The atmosphere should not be made negative, but the instructions should be repeated to the entire class, thus encouraging the child to come down.

### What if nobody wants to share what they have imagined?

As stated in the program, the fact that volunteers will be asked to share their work with the class should be mentioned before the activity, which should prepare children for sharing. If nobody volunteers, the teacher may try to repeat the scenario and ask the class one of the questions asked in the imagining phase. Finally, the teacher may give his or her own example (*"For instance, I would imagine that we..."*) but without giving too much detail, so that the children do not merely repeat the same answer.

### **What if the child imagines negative contact?**

In case a child imagines contact which is not positive or pleasant (an argument or lack of any contact with the imagined refugee child), the teacher can say something like: *“It seems that you imagined an encounter that did not go so well, and we said at the beginning that we would imagine a positive experience. Can you try to imagine how this sort of situation might end well after all?”* If such an approach does not help, another child who has imagined positive contact may be asked to speak (as inspiration), returning to the child who imagined a negative experience afterwards and checking whether they could now imagine how contact could have gone well. If this does not help the child imagine and verbalize positive contact, another child or the teacher may help him or her come up with what a “happy ending” might look like.

### **What if prejudices about refugees appear?**

It is of paramount importance to stop any prejudices and repeat that refugees are simply children like themselves, children their age who had to leave their country because it was too dangerous to live there. Classroom rules (if there are any) should be mentioned; such rules normally include listening to each other, not disturbing others if they are doing their task, using polite language, and not insulting others.

### **What if a child does not imagine an encounter with a refugee?**

If a child starts to, for instance, talk about an event involving a friend from his/her class rather than an encounter with a refugee, s/he should be reminded of the task: *“Our task today was to imagine an encounter with a refugee child, and it seems that you have imagined a child who is not a refugee. Can you now imagine meeting a refugee child? What could you do together? Would this imagined meeting be different than the one you imagined first? How so?”* To remind the child and help him/her, you can use the introductory workshop presentation about refugee children.

### **What if the child imagines a situation that is “too easy” (for instance, that there is no language barrier)?**

As before, the child should be reminded of the task: you could ask the child what would happen if the imagined child did not speak Croatian, how they

could still communicate together without having to use language... For instance: *“What a good story! But remember, we mentioned earlier that not many refugee children speak Croatian very well. Can you imagine what you could do together if that child did not speak Croatian very well? Could you still understand each other? Could you have fun? How?”*

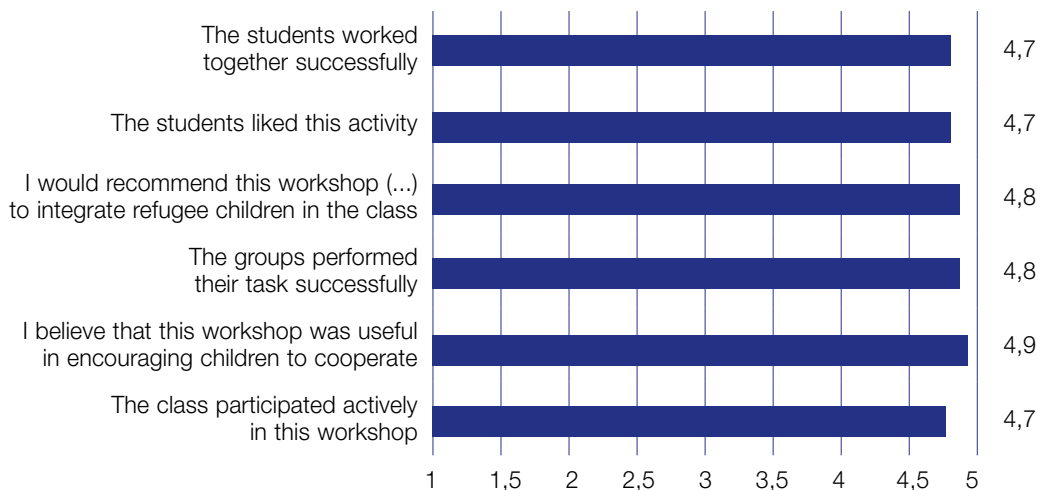
If the entire class seems to be ignoring poor knowledge of Croatian, the teacher can ask about other situations where they met some children who do not speak Croatian (e.g., tourists on vacation) and check if someone has any experience that they could share as inspiration with the rest of the class. For instance, the teacher may have the students break into groups by the month when they were born, but without saying anything, in complete silence, to demonstrate how challenging it may sometimes be to overcome the language barrier. Because of time limitations and duration of other parts of the activity, this task could be done during another period, as appropriate or feasible.

## 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 feedback<sup>5</sup>:

- *“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.”*

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<sup>5</sup> 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.”*

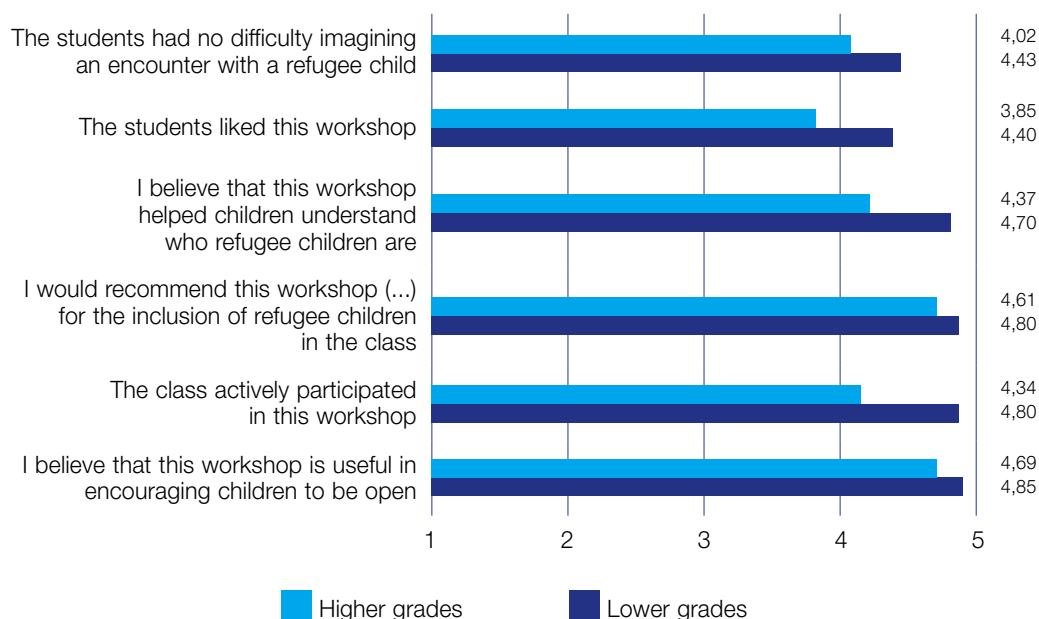
Children gave us their impressions in group conversations (so-called focus groups), and we talked to refugee children individually. Their feedback confirms teachers’ positive impressions about liking the activities and their enthusiastic participation. Here are some of their comments:

- *“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.

## 7. ATTITUDES OF CROATIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN TOWARDS REFUGEE CHILDREN

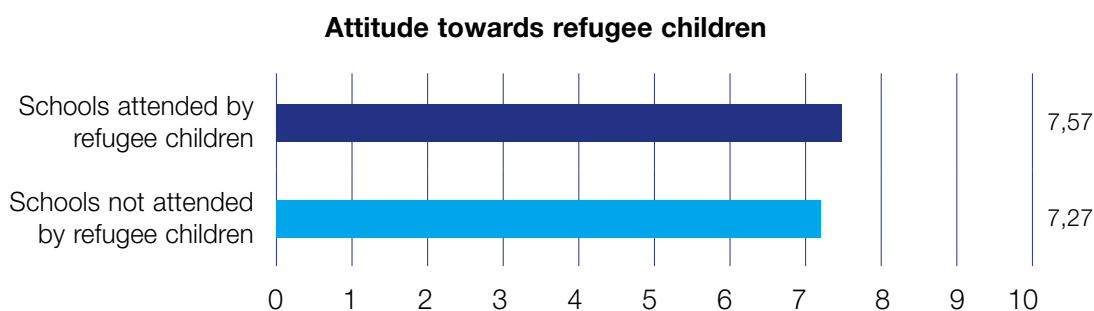
At the beginning of school year 2021/2022, we conducted a study into the attitudes of Croatian elementary school children towards refugee children. The study was conducted immediately before the Ukraine war started, and presents a good basis for comparison for future studies.

A total of 2217 students participated in the study (50% boys), attending second to eighth grade in 24 elementary schools in Zagreb (*Braća Radić Elementary School, Fran Galović Elementary School, Gustav Krklec Elementary School, Ivo Andrić Elementary School, Jure Kaštelan Elementary School, Lovro pl. Matačić Elementary School, Lučko Elementary School, Marija Jurić Zagorka Elementary School, Medvedgrad Elementary School, Mladost Elementary School, Otok Elementary School, Oton Iveković Elementary School, Pavelek Miškina Elementary School, Petar Preradović Elementary School, Sesvetska Sopnica Elementary School, Špansko Oranice Elementary School, Većeslav Holjevac Elementary School, Vinko Žganec Elementary School*), Karlovac (*Banija Elementary School, Braća Seljan Elementary School, Dragojla Jarnević Elementary School, Grabrik Elementary School*), Zadar (*Šime Budinić Elementary School*) and Sisak (*Braća Bobetko Elementary School*). A total of 739 students came from classes that were attended by refugee children, and 1478 students came from schools where, at the time of the study, there were no refugee children in attendance. We wanted to examine the attitudes of elementary school students about refugee children, as well as to compare the attitudes of children who had the opportunity to be in contact with refugee children in their classes with those who had no such experience. As has been said earlier, positive contact is the best way to reduce prejudice and develop positive attitudes.

We asked all students about their attitudes towards refugee children. More specifically, we asked them what they thought about refugee children, which characteristics, in their opinion, describe refugee children, which feelings refugee children evoke, how acceptable they found different types of relations with refugee children, whether they believed that their teachers and peers expected them to

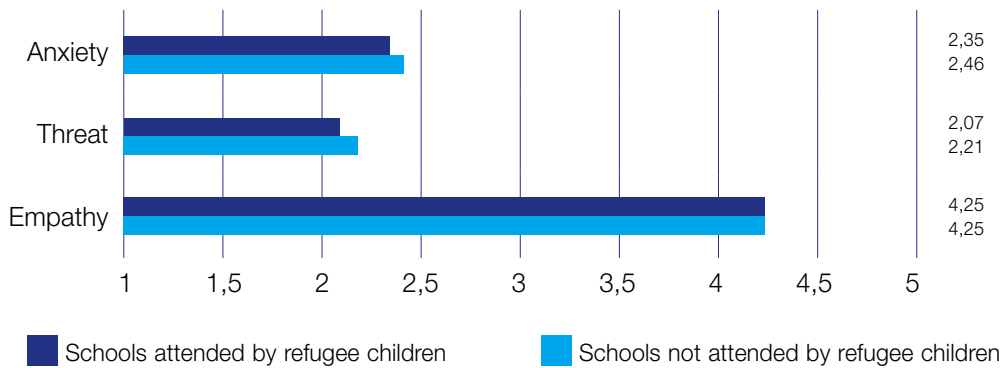
socialize with refugee children, whether they would like to socialize with refugee children, and how refugee children should behave once they come to Croatia.

Average results in both groups of schools are very encouraging, and show that Croatian students have unequivocally positive attitudes towards refugee children. However, the attitude towards refugees is somewhat more positive in schools and/or classes attended by refugee children, that is to say among children in direct contact with refugees.

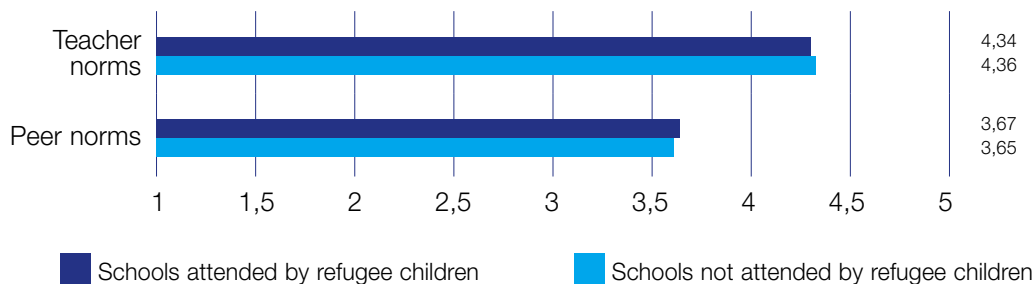


We additionally checked which characteristics students attribute to refugee children. The results show that children who attended a class with refugee children also attributed more positive characteristics to them – they considered them neater, more polite and friendlier than their peers who did not have a chance to socialize with refugees. However, the results showed that children who attended a class with refugees also considered them somewhat lazier than children in schools where there were no refugees. It should be emphasized that these differences are small, and that children's attitudes towards refugees are largely positive.

In line with this, children from schools attended by refugees felt significantly less anxiety when thinking about refugees, and saw them as less of a threat than children attending schools where there were no refugees. Thus, positive effects of school contact with refugee children on the attitudes and experience of their host-society peers are obvious. However, it should be noted that all children, regardless of whether they attended school with refugees or not, felt a high level of empathy and low levels of anxiety and threat.

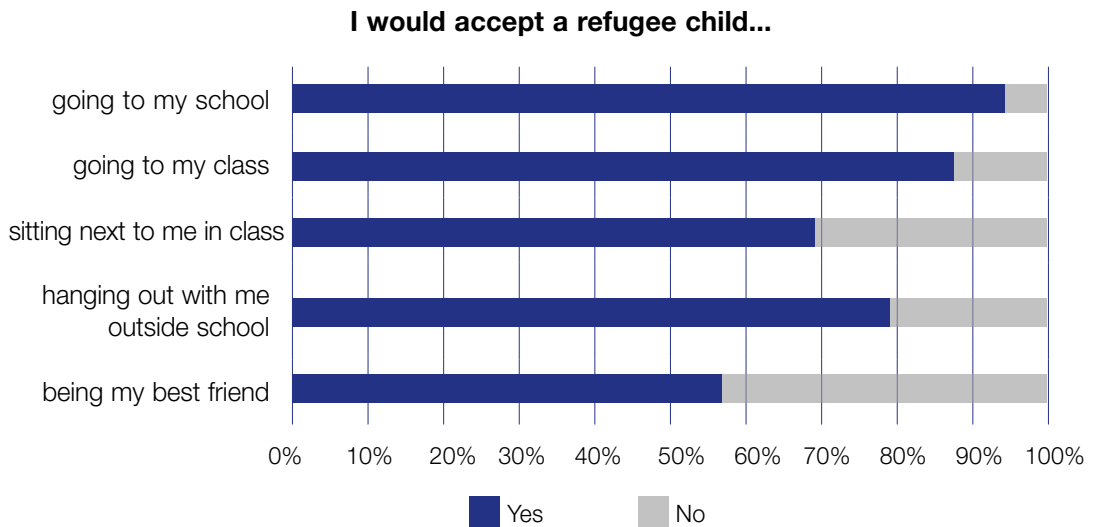


Children’s attitudes and behaviors are largely shaped by norms, i.e., what they believe that their teachers and peers expect. It is encouraging to see that all the children believed that their teachers would support them if they socialized with refugee children, and expected cooperation and friendship to develop between them. This is a very important finding, because experience of institutional support is one of the key prerequisites for successful intergroup contact. Children also reported that their peers expected them to socialize with refugees, which means that peer opinions do not pose an obstacle in this sense. However, this score is lower than that relating to teacher expectations, which is why school interventions should encourage children to socialize with refugee children.



We also asked children about their social distance – how acceptable they found different types of relations with refugee children (e.g., sitting next to them in class, going to the same class, socializing outside of school, being good friends). Children’s responses showed that nearly everyone would gladly accept refugee children to attend the same school and class as them. Most children would sit next to refugee children and would socialize with them outside of school. Moreover, over half of them would accept a refugee child as their best

friend. This leads to the conclusion that Croatian students have a relatively low social distance, finding different types of relations with refugee children acceptable. These findings are the same for all children, regardless of whether they attended a class with a refugee child or not.

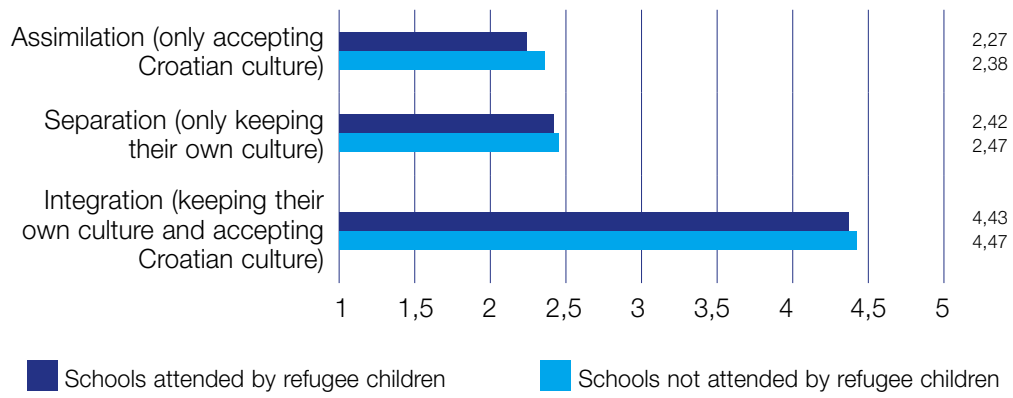


Moreover, students reported that they would like to socialize with refugee children if they had an opportunity, and, interestingly, this desire was more pronounced among students who did not have this experience, which points to their openness.

We also asked Croatian students how refugee children should behave when they come to Croatia, with regard to retaining their own culture and accepting the Croatian culture. The responses show that students consider both important. In other words, most students would like refugee children to preserve their own culture and also accept Croatian culture, which shows children’s readiness for integration as a desirable adaptive outcome of contact between different groups and cultures. It is particularly important to point out that children who socialized with refugees considered assimilation as a less desirable outcome than children in schools without refugees, where assimilation meant completely rejecting their own culture and customs and accepting Croatian culture and customs.



# Attitudes of croatian elementary school children towards refugee children



## What have we learned about refugee children and host-society children?

We have learned from refugee children and their Croatian peers what helped all of them to feel better and to socialize more with each other.

- Refugee children felt better in their class if their Croatian peers approached them first, introduced themselves and showed that they wanted to socialize with them. This is very important, because now we know the best course of action for host-society children when a refugee child comes to their class.
- Refugee children do not find learning Croatian easy. It is easier for them if friends from the class help them. Any sort of help is welcome, it is important to show good will and willingness to help one's peers in mastering the language.
- Refugee children were also helped by playing and socializing with their Croatian peers, and they learned the language faster in that way. This can be seen from what refugee children said in the interviews:

**But what is the trick to learn the language, apart from having an older sister?**

*Well, reading. And, like, hanging out with friends and stuff. That is good for learning too. That helped me a lot.*

**And what is the best way to learn Croatian?**

*With someone's help, with a friend, or something like that... When we write homework, I often write homework with friends and stuff. Then if I do not understand something, I ask them and that.*

**What would your advice be to children coming to Croatia who do not speak Croatian, what is the trick to learn it?**

*Playing games. You can play football, you can play Uno in class, in the third grade and in the fourth... Yes, I remember that we played Uno in the fourth grade, in class. You should play games!*

- Host-society children found language to be the greatest obstacle in socializing with refugee children, but they said that they were not prepared for the arrival of refugee children to their class and did not know what to expect. Therefore, it would help them to think beforehand how they could socialize with refugee children to be ready to approach them later, which is what imagined contact workshops in this handbook offer; other creative approaches helping children think about this beforehand may also be helpful.

We learned that everything is much easier once children learn Croatian, because then they can talk to each other, learn, and even whisper to each other during class. Until refugee children have mastered the language, everyone can still socialize in school. This is where the workshops that we have devised – which do not require knowing the language – may be helpful. We hope that everyone conducting the workshops will have fun, we wish you success in using the activities, and we hope that your work will be filled with laughter and joy.

## Summary

The aim of this handbook is to help teachers and teaching associates in schools attended by or expected to be attended by refugee children to contribute to the process of integration of refugee children in elementary schools. The handbook presents two intervention programs – one based on the cooperative learning method for schools attended by refugee children, and one based on the method of imagined contact for schools and classes that are yet to enroll refugee children. Both programs have been developed on the basis of the most up-to-date knowledge as well as suggestions, comments and feedback from teachers and teaching associates in schools that participated in the project. Therefore, we hope that this handbook and the two programs in it will be of assistance to schools in the integration of refugee children.

The materials presented in the handbook are available in the repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (<https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:848219>) and on the website of the IRCiS project (<http://psihologija.ffzg.unizg.hr/projekti/ircis/materijali>). The electronic version of the handbook can be downloaded on the same website. If you have any additional questions, you can contact us at [project.ircis@gmail.com](mailto:project.ircis@gmail.com) or at the address of the project coordinator: [mjelic@ffzg.hr](mailto:mjelic@ffzg.hr).



Manuscript "Intervention programs promoting the integration of refugee students into elementary schools: handbook for the implementation of cooperative learning and imagined contact workshops" is one of the few tools intended for Croatian teachers, which strengthens them theoretically and methodically for teaching in classrooms which host-society students already share or will share with refugee peers, i.e. with children who come from other cultures and who do not know the Croatian language. These programs fill a critical gap in teaching materials that help the main stakeholders of upbringing and education - both teachers and students - in understanding and changing attitudes towards refugee children, which is one of the fundamental prerequisites for their successful integration into Croatian schools and society as a whole. Clear theoretical foundation, unambiguity of purpose and goal, focus on collaboration learning, comprehensibility and solid organization of the text and, in particular, the selection of appropriate teaching and learning methods and methodically well-developed student activities are the main features of this manuscript, which is why it represents valuable material for professional training, empowerment and direct practice of teachers in the preparation of domiciles students to meet refugee children, but also to all those who come from other cultures and choose Croatia as their life destination.

*Professor Vedrana Spajić Vrkaš, PhD*

The intervention programs presented in this publication contain four complete, detailed and developmentally adapted workshops for encouraging the school integration of refugee children intended for use in lower and upper grades of primary school, regardless of whether they are attended by refugee children or not. The authors began designing the workshops after conducting an analysis of the needs of actors in the system of refugee children integration into the educational system of the Republic of Croatia, which indicated that school staff lack activities that would facilitate cooperation between refugee children and host-society children. The content of the workshops respects relevant theoretical assumptions and available empirical data and relies on examples of good practice and suggestions of actors involved in direct work with children, including teachers and teaching associates from schools that are among the most experienced in the integration of refugee children in Croatia. In workshops based on cooperative learning, the integration of children is encouraged in a non-intrusive way, which accounts for the language barrier and does not lead to unnecessary exposure of refugee children. In this way, an inclusive classroom climate is encouraged and achieved in a very natural, almost casual way. The implementation of the workshops itself is simple, suitable even for school staff with less experience in the implementation of workshops and the issue of refugee integration. The positive feedback of the teachers who conducted the workshops in their classes support the fact that the workshops are purposeful, well designed and well received by children, especially in classes where refugee children are already integrated. It is important to point out that the designed workshops can also serve as a template for designing other activities intended for a similar purpose, and the starting points and results of the conducted research on the attitudes of students towards refugee children can form the backbone of future research in this area. I welcome the publication of this publication and congratulate the authors for preparing a useful resource, which I believe will facilitate the response to the challenges that are already before us.

*Jelena Matić Bojić, PhD*