

RefugeesWellSchool



Webinar & Online Workshops
21.03.2022



A European Horizon2020 Research project



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This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 754849.





PROGRAMME

Plenary Webinar 10:00 – 13:00 CET

10:00 – 10:15	Welcome & Overview of the project <i>Ilse Derluyn, Ghent University, Belgium</i>
10:15 – 10:45	“Reflections on belonging: The role of schools in refugee health” <i>Mina Fazel, University of Oxford, UK</i>
10:45 – 11:00	“The mental health of migrant and refugee adolescents in the RWS study” <i>Caroline Spaas, KU Leuven, Belgium</i>
11:00 – 11:15	“The relationship between resilience and mental health problems among newcomer students in the RWS study” <i>Natalie Durbeej & Fatumo Osman, Uppsala University, Sweden</i>
11:15 – 11:30	Questions & Answers
11:30 – 11:45	Break
11:45 – 12:15	Effectiveness of the RWS interventions <i>Nikolett Szelei, Ghent University, Belgium</i>
12:15 – 12:30	Testimony from teachers (<i>Finland</i>)
12:30 – 12:45	Demonstration of RWS tools and resources <i>Signe Smith Jervelund, University of Copenhagen, Denmark</i>

Online Workshops 14:00 – 15:30 CET

We will have four parallel sessions to discuss the implementation of each RWS intervention. You will be able to choose one of the following sessions:

- Classroom Drama (*KU Leuven, Belgium*)
- Welcome To School (*University of Copenhagen, Denmark*)
- Peer Integration and Enhancement Resource programme (*University of Sussex, UK*)
- In-Service Teacher Training with Teaching Recovery Techniques (*Tampere University, Finland & Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies, Norway*)

Effectiveness of the RWS interventions

*Nikolett Szelei,
Ghent University, Belgium*

- On behalf of the entire RWS consortium -





**RefugeesWellSchool Report:
Findings on how school-based
interventions promote migrant and
refugee adolescents' well-being.**

RefugeesWellSchool (2021). *RefugeesWellSchool Report: Findings on how school-based interventions promote migrant and refugee adolescents' well-being*. Gent, Belgium: Ghent University.

Available on:

<https://refugeeswellschool.org/report-findings-on-how-school-based-interventions-promote-migrant-and-refugee-adolescents-well-being/>

Effectiveness from a broad perspective

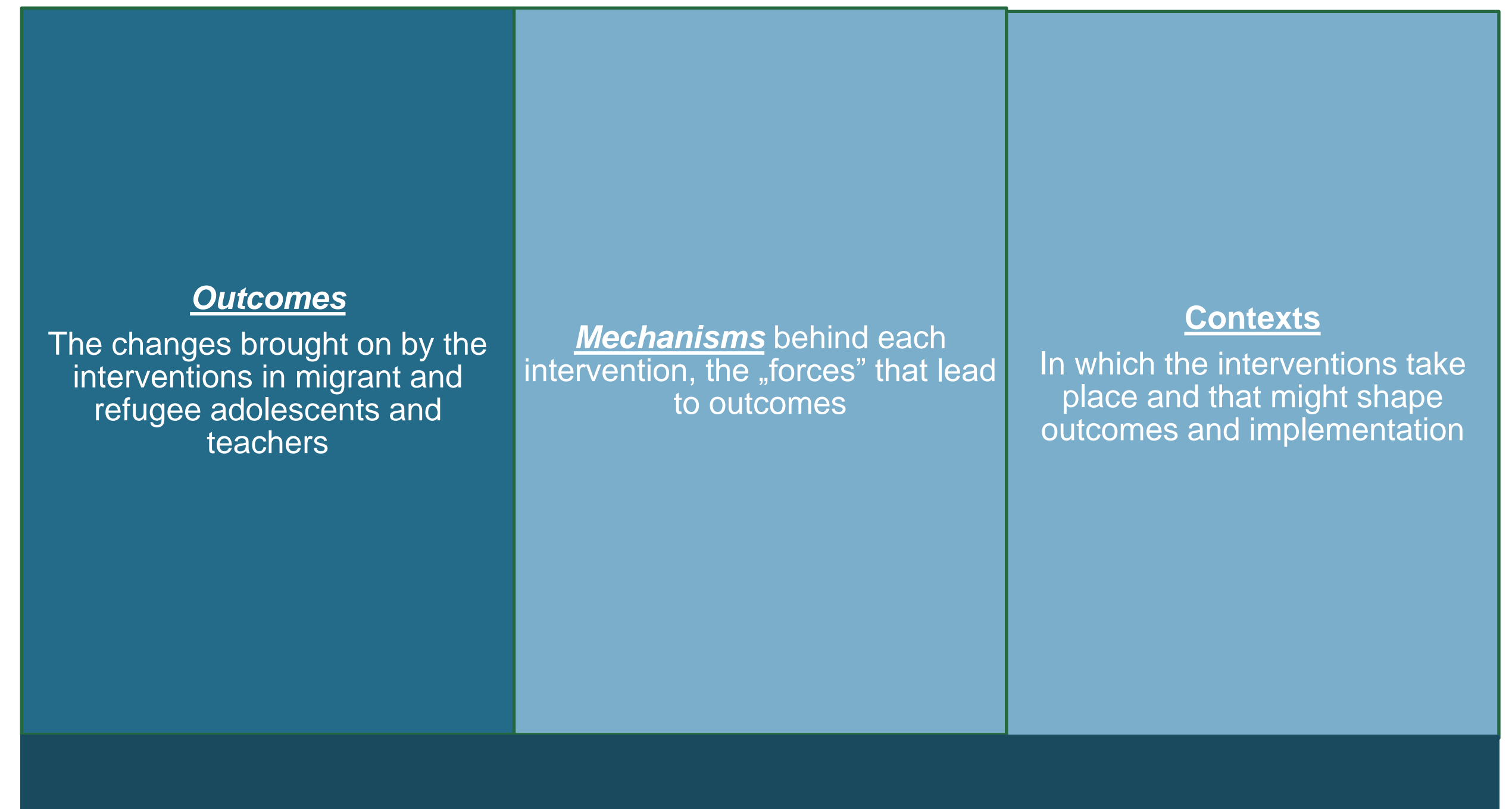
What does (not) work?

Realist evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997)

For *whom* and to what *extent* does it work?

In what *circumstances* does it work?

How and *why* does it work?



Data collection

- Quantitative and qualitative data collection from adolescents, teachers (and parents)
- Standardized questionnaires pre- (T1) and post-intervention (T2, T3)
- Focus groups and individual interviews at T1 and T2
- COVID-19: dropout led to less power, and some interventions did not complete T3 => Limitations

	T1	T2	T3
	Adolescents	Adolescents	Adolescents
Quantitative*	3549	2066	1071
Qualitative**	247	184	-
	Teachers	Teachers	Teachers
Quantitative*	206	168	234
Qualitative**	161	140	-
<i>*these numbers include intervention and control group **participants in focus group discussions and individual interviews altogether</i>			



Data Analysis

- **Quantitative:**
- *Outcome measures:* emotional problems, hyperactivity, prosocial behavior, peer problems, posttraumatic stress symptoms, resilience, overall wellbeing, perceived social support from family and friends, school belonging, executive functioning
- *Context variables:* age, gender, reason for migration, time between assessment points, country, number of completed sessions, migration status, living situation, time spent in host country, country of origin
- *Structural Equation Modeling:* Nulmodel (testing for school-level effect); SEM regression with group as predictor; regression with group + context variables
- **Qualitative:** focusing on participants' experiences, thematic analysis



Classroom Drama implementation

Table 1: CD intervention overview			
CD goals	CD countries	Intervention group	COVID-19 interruption
⬆️ Increased psychosocial well-being ⬆️ More positive intergroup peer relationships ⬆️ Increased executive functioning	Belgium	222 adolescents, 20 classes, 6 schools	Yes
	Denmark	128 adolescents, 7 classes, 7 schools	No
	United Kingdom	102 adolescents, 4 classes, 1 school	No



Welcome To School implementation

Table 2: WTS intervention overview

WTS goals	WTS countries	Intervention group	COVID-19 interruption
↑ Increased mental health ↑ Increased resilience ↑ Increased social support and social capital	Belgium	16 classes, 5 schools	yes
	Denmark	13 classes, 10 schools	yes
	Norway	10 classes, 9 schools, 77 students	yes



Peer Enhancement and Integration Resource programme (PIER) implementation

Table 3: PIER intervention overview

PIER goals	PIER countries	Intervention group	COVID-19 interruption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⬆ Increased cross group understanding 	UK	108 adolescents, 4 intervention groups	yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⬆ Increased participation ⬆ Developing more friendships ⬆ Increased mental wellbeing 	Finland	154 adolescents, 8 intervention groups, 3 schools	no



In-Service Teacher Training (INSETT) implementation

Table 4: INSETT intervention overview

INSETT goals	INSETT countries	Intervention group	COVID-19 interruption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⬆ Increased refugee competence ⬆ Increased multicultural awareness and sensitivity ⬆ Increased self-efficacy ⬆ Increased teacher-parent trust and collaboration 	Norway	17 teachers	yes
	Finland	70 teachers 6 other staff	no
	Sweden	45 teachers, teacher assistants and language teachers	no



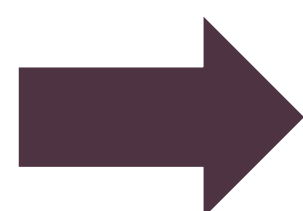
In-Service Teacher Training (INSETT) with Teaching Recovery Techniques (TRT)

Table 5: Combined INSETT + TRT intervention overview				
Combined intervention		INSETT + TRT countries	TRT Intervention group	COVID-19 interruption
INSETT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⬆️ Increased self-efficacy ⬆️ Increased competence regarding refugee and migration-related issues ⬆️ Increased teacher-parent collaboration ⬆️ Increased multicultural competence 	TRT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⬆️ Increased mental well-being and resilience ✅ Decreased PTSD symptoms 	Finland	15 adolescents, 3 groups in 2 schools	Yes
		Sweden	35 adolescents, 5 groups in 2 schools	No



Some quantitative results

- ❖ PIER decreased post-traumatic stress symptoms
- ❖ CD increased the sense of family support in adolescents
- ❖ Significant differences in several context characteristics => Mostly country, gender, migration reason, time of assessment, but they play out differently in the different interventions => **See more in the Report !**
- ❖ Brunak et al. : in WTS, dosage of the intervention has an effect: *emotional symptoms decrease with every added module received*
- ❖ Quantitative analysis does not reveal more about the effects of the intervention, possibly due to too low statistical power
- ❖ The results have to be understood in light of disruptions and delays in implementation and assessment



Stay tuned for more detailed publications!

RefugeesWellSchool, 2021

Some qualitative results

- ❖ In general, participants experienced the interventions as positive
- ❖ Qualitative analysis also shows diverse and complex experiences (eg did not always started out as positive, but became one)
- ❖ Some common features of outcomes getting to know each other, building relationships, developing self-expression, respect, empathy; emotional regulation
- ❖ Some common features of mechanisms: and mechanisms: social setting, creative tasks, safe environment
- ❖ Some common context characteristics: structural and organisational barriers, teachers' and adolescents dispositions



Outcomes – Self-expression & reflections on own identity and others

- ❖ Being able to express one's own experiences, feelings, identity, culture and heritage
- ❖ Personal development
- ❖ Seeing the self in relation with others, Realising “you are not alone”
- ❖ Teachers (INSETT) rethinking their role as teachers, revaluing the profession, dilemmas between teaching and caring responsibilities

» It is important to be able to delineate and make clear what issues in a young person's mental health belong to the school...This is related to the teacher's own wellbeing at work« (Teacher, FI, PIER).

*» ...learning what it's like, for me who's lived in England all my life, to learn about somebody who's come from- had to leave their country and come to another country to flee, that would have been quite hard to understand before, without the PIER sessions«
(Student, UK, PIER)*

*»There was a Chinese girl in our class and she was quite reserved, very quiet and she discovered during the sessions that she is very funny and that the whole class thinks she is funny, because she could act things out instead of having to use language«.
(Teacher, BE, CD)*



Outcomes – Building social relationships

*»I have a strong memory that one young boy took the other one by the hand, somewhere midst in our exercises. It felt like my heart was melting into the fact that we shared such a lot of deep experience and richness for us all, that the belonging went so much further, this is maybe really good.«
(Facilitator, Finland, TRT)*

- ❖ Getting to know each other
- ❖ Building positive and trustful relationships between peers and teachers
- ❖ Increased feelings of belonging
- ❖ Teachers feeling part of a professional community (INSETT)

*»It is when you begin to discuss with colleagues that you begin to tell your own experiences. And it's like further education or like that you create a deeper relation with colleagues. «
(Teacher, Sweden, INSETT)*

*»I have also learned a lot about them. About their story, about where they lived and all that and that was meaningful. For some, that helped me contextualize their behaviour«
(Teacher, Belgium, CD)*



Outcomes – Emotional regulation, coping with stressful and traumatic memories

»Then you if you are like sad about it, then you are in a bad mood for the rest of the day, because you are thinking about really bad stuff and now. (...) Student, Denmark, CD

- ❖ Feeling emotionally relieved after sharing
- ❖ Handling stress and trauma
- ❖ Believing in one's ability to cope with stressful and traumatic memories
- ❖ Greater awareness of strength and resilience

*R1: »After it you are going to feel good. For example, I felt more relaxed after sharing my feelings with my friends.«
(Student, Denmark, CD)*

»And the absolute strength is also that thanks to this kind of intervention, we are talking about out loud about our experiences, responses to trauma and other significant things. So it might normalize these events and that taboo would disappear around the trauma.« (Facilitator, Finland, TRT)



Outcomes – Teachers

- ❖ Knowledge and skill development on migration and mental health
- ❖ Greater awareness of students' psychosocial needs
- ❖ Reflecting on the role of a teacher and the teaching profession in light of students' psychosocial needs

»I felt that what I foremost got out of it was a heightened awareness, of what I do and what situations the students may be in (...) Teacher, Norway, INSETT



Mechanisms – Social setting

- ❖ Group scenarios, teachers'/facilitators explicit actions to make social connections
- ❖ Listening to others and connecting
- ❖ Exchanging views, opinions, knowledges
- ❖ Identity as part of a social group and social dynamics

*»I think teachers were really helpful as well. They would introduce me to people, because to be honest I didn't wanna speak to people [laughs]«
(Student, UK).*



Mechanisms – Safe environment

*»Many lessons we learned. At the beginning to create a safe state and that you relax and stop for moments... instead of showing different superiorities and authority«
(Teacher, FI, PIER).*

- ❖ Confidentiality
- ❖ Emotional safety
- ❖ Teachers' and facilitators actions and explicit confirmation of trust, safety, confidentiality
- ❖ Responding to students' needs: pacing, flexibility

*»During the Welcome to School lessons they were much closer to each other. And also, when something like that was told, they could really tell each other, 'you can share that here, it stays within our class, we're not going to tell that to others'. So that trust really came out very strongly. I think that had a positive effect on our class. There was much more connection there.«
(Teacher, BE, WTS)*



Mechanisms – Creative and relevant tasks

- ❖ Playful and fun activities
- ❖ Diverse and creative forms of activities (role-play, videos, classroom testimonies, storytelling, photos, etc.)
- ❖ Activities that do not overly rely on verbal expression
- ❖ Teachers: contents relevant to their context and to migration and mental health

*»I think some students also questioned: 'What am I actually doing here? We'd better just address our lessons instead of playing games'.«
(Teacher, BE, CD)*

*»[Role-plays] would help people understand how... how the process, how people undergo the process and how does it feel like«
(Student, UK).*



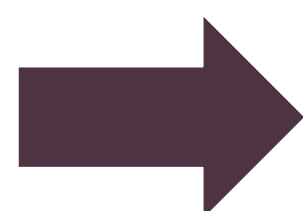
Contexts

- ❖ Constraints in school settings: curriculum demands, lack of resources and psychosocial support staff, organisation of reception classes
- ❖ Adolescents' and teacher dispositions towards the interventions (relevance, resistance to pathologise students, willingness to engage in creative expressions etc.)
- ❖ Pre-existing social dynamics and atmosphere in class
- ❖ Teachers' and therapists preexisting knowledge on migration, multilingualism and wellbeing



Conclusions

- ❖ In general, these interventions have the potential to foster wellbeing, social relationships and identity development
- ❖ Results are limited in light of interruptions and delay
- ❖ Quantitative analysis does reveal some significant effects, further more detailed analysis is currently on the way
- ❖ Qualitative results show the many positive outcomes of the interventions, but also the complexities and ambiguities of psychosocial interventions in schools, and school organisations in general
- ❖ Flexibility and tailoring interventions to students, teachers and school organisations



Stay tuned for more detailed publications!

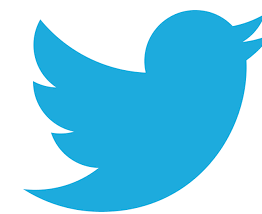
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