

GRAVITAS SCHOLA

A unique school for children displaced due to war, persecutions, or other disasters.



2022 -2023

400 children
Ukrainians, Belarussians
30 teachers, psychologists



2023 -2024

500 children
Ukrainians, Belarussians,
Afghans
40 teachers, psychologists

WE SEEK TO DESIGN A HUMANE, JOYFUL, AND DIGNIFIED EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT BY MERGING HEALING, LEARNING, AND INTEGRATION.

The school is located in Vilnius, Lithuania, and provides education to all children from primary school to graduation. The number of students is growing rapidly.

"Gravitas Schola" collaborates closely with various organizations to include Vilnius Municipality, Ukrainian Embassy, Children Rights Ombudsmen, The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, and local Universities.



Dare to lead



SAVING THE UKRAINIAN SCHOOL

Gravitas Schola emerged from an extraordinary challenge – the request to transport and transplant the whole school community (around 300 persons): teachers, students, parents, grandparents, and pets from Kharkiv, Ukraine to Europe.

In March 2022, NGO "Domus Solis" accepted the call and organized transportation, housing, and humanitarian aid for the Ukrainian school community to land in Vilnius.



ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW SCHOOL

The largest group of war refugees arrived on March 18th 2022, and within four days, the children entered their classes.

In May, Gravitas Schola was officially registered as a non-profit secondary school. Today the school offers multicultural educational curricula with special attention to the development of English skills and students' mental health.



BECOMING A COMPETENCE CENTRE

Due to unique know-how, Gravitas schola became a competence center providing consultancy, exchange programs, educational material, and training for national schools and local municipalities accepting Ukrainian refugees in different countries. To promote educational innovations at the systemic level, Gravitas Schola collaborates with institutions, scientists, researchers, policymakers, and lawyers.



BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Gravitas Schola provides multiple services to the community members. It transformed old dormitories and a hospital into cozy homes with the help of volunteers and donors. Our four community villages host 300 refugees. Volunteers organize humanitarian aid, employment support, and therapeutic, cultural, and social activities to help refugees integrate into local society.

More than 100 volunteers and 30 sponsors.



Humane integration in education

The exceptional relocation of an entire school community created challenges and opportunities, inspiring leaders to design a different approach to the education of refugees.

PROBLEM to be solved:

The mainstream policy for refugee education offers three alternatives:

- 1) study online in your native school;
- 2) have a transition year to learn the local language;
- 3) go to a local school and learn with local students in the local language.

Traditional policy for children's refugee placement into national schools is not aligned to articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Children. The existing practice does not undertake respect for the right to national identity (art. 8) and does not provide education that is accessible and consistent with a child's human dignity (art. 28).



All three options create unequal conditions for refugees to socialize and learn because children can not continue education appropriate for their age and capacities as they could in their native country. Therefore many children who have experienced war or other traumatic experiences decline to national schools to avoid stress, exclusion, and humiliation coming from language and cultural barriers.

THE EXISTING SYSTEM DID NOT FIT US; THEREFORE, WE CREATED THE NEW ONE, FOR ALL REFUGEES.

In **Gravitas Schola** education for refugees is designed in the most flexible, accessible, and humane way. Students interact in a multi-cultural environment where each culture, including the local culture, receives the same respect and interest.

1. The educational process and teachers are sensitive to traumatic experiences of students
2. Students can learn the local national curriculum in their native language and gradually adapt to the local language.
3. Students can also attend classes in their native language, literature, history or culture, thus nurturing their national identity.
4. Students have the right to choose courses and make decisions in the school parliament, following the principles of democratic education.
5. Students can choose to receive national and/or native school graduation diploma.
6. Students attend extra courses on human rights, democracy, citizenship, and sustainability.

WE BELIEVE THAT **GRAVITAS SCHOLA** CAN BECOME A MODEL FOR INSPIRING THE WORLD SCHOOLS TO BECOME MORE FLEXIBLE AND HUMANE FOR REFUGEES.



With the help of our friends

Gravitas Schola has attracted around 500 000 Eur from private sponsors to cover core costs of wages, food, and utilities. Vilnius municipality provides premises, and The Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports, through the national system of funding per student, partially covers costs of wages and educational material.

To fully realize a model of school bespoke to refugees, **Gravitas Schola** seeks **funding** for the development of four areas.

Curriculum

Translation and adaptation of curricular and educational material. (To create the possibility to study national curricula in native languages and attend courses on native literature, history, language etc.)

Competence

Competence development programs for school personnel in psychological trauma, democratic education, humane pedagogy, and non-violent communication to create school culture, and educational model sensitive to the unique needs of refugees.

Change

Innovative courses for students on emotional intelligence, human rights, democracy, citizenship, entrepreneurship, sustainability, etc. To transfer the best practices of the EU, US, and other countries and to transform traumatic life experiences of students into leadership for peace and democracy.

Community

Social and cultural integration and good practice exchange for the whole school community to support students, teachers, and parents in building social skills, intelligence, culture, and social networks enabling successful integration into new society.

**"Gravitas Schola" collaborates with international partners:
International democratic education network, Action Inquiry Fellowship
(US), Trauma-informed schools UK, Lietuvos Junior Achievement;
Center for Non-violent communication**

We appreciate your help and partnership

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GRAVITAS SCHOLA @Contribee

We develop with the growing trust of partners. Join for co-creation of the school model tailored to the needs of refugees

Evolution of trust -

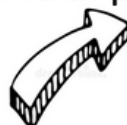
Transformation of contribution and support



PARTNERSHIP. Mutual commitment for impact.



SUPPORT. Professional consultancy and financial patronage



HELP. Ad hoc in-kind and instant donations, volunteering