NATIONAL REPORTS ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

NEWLY ARRIVED MIGRANT CHILDREN

Migrant children and communities in a transforming Europe

Mi CREATE

Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe

The project Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe (MiCreate) aims to stimulate inclusion of diverse groups of migrant children by adopting child-centered approach to migrant children integration on educational and policy level.

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PREFACE

This report presents the findings of **WP5 'Newly arrived migrant children'**. Specifically, it presents the results of a qualitative multi-method study conducted among 10–20 year-old children and young adults in schools in six countries: UK, Denmark, Slovenia, Austria, Poland and Spain. Newly arrived migrant children (NAM) were defined as those who had been living in host societies for **less than three years.**

In the national reports that follow, the **terms 'child' and 'children'** will be used most frequently when referring to participants in the study, although we are well aware that this may sound inappropriate and inaccurate, particularly in relation to the older group (15-20 years), and that a different term would be more appropriate when referring to young people. This terminological decision stems from the fact that in our field research the integration processes were studied from a child-centred (CC) perspective. The latter is based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore, the decision to use 'child' and 'children' is primarily analytical rather than substantive.

The **overall objective** of multimethod field work with NAM children was to highlight the specifics of the integration processes of NAM children from a **child-centred perspective**.

The **specific objectives** of the study were:

- to improve the understanding of the children's experiences of life in new social and cultural environments related to the arrival and staying in host societies within the first three years after arrival from a child-centred perspective,
- to examine the conceptualizations of well-being and what is important to them in their present situation (in relation to living conditions, socioeconomic status, cultural, background, gender, religion, language proficiency, etc.) and to learn how newly arrived children prioritize their needs,
- to examine migrant children's satisfaction with their new life in the host society through their self-perceived opportunities, choices and feeling of control over their own life and future,
- to examine identification and belonging processes,
- to identify the advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children's integration and to assess their experiences and views regarding the shortcomings of integration support services,
- to observe the dynamics of integration in relation to educational systems, peer group, sport, leisure activities, psychosocial support services, language learning courses; and in relation to the dynamics of family and migrant community, etc.

Research in schools in six countries was conducted over several stages with an overall duration of app. 24 months (field-work research phase was prolonged due to COVID-19 pandemic). Firstly the 'entering the field' phase was applied in order to get familiar with children and school environment in order to get to know children in spontaneous manner, spending time with them in the classroom and/or taking part in different

extracurricular activities with them in the fields of sport, art, music and similar. In this first stage we adopted a 'least adult role' (Martin, 2011) and blend in with the children by developing less paternalistic and more democratic and equivalent relationships with them. This was also important given that children are typically keen to please adults and thus to give socially desirable or confirmatory responses (Due, Riggs and Augoustinos, 2013). One of the aims of the first **participant observation** phase was also to avoid this trap. In addition, this phase enabled as to observe and understand school and peer dynamics within the context in which it occurs.

The second method applied among NAM children in the school environment was **survey** as a means to collect quantitative data. The results of Survey are presented in separate Report under the D5.3 '6 Survey analysis on newly arrived migrant children'.

After this initial entering in the field in some schools **participatory art-based** methods were applied. Children and researchers were drawing, writing, taking photographs, and done other arts activities, which were used for children to express their views and experience and to build trust in order to apply interviews and focus groups phase.

After that NAM children and young people were encouraged to talk about their past, present and future lives in a form of unstructured narratives and **collection of autobiographical life stories** (Bertaux, 2015) and in part with the use of **method of narratives of location** (Anthias, 1999, 2002). These methods were chosen with the aim to empower the children and to give them a central position in collecting data, to locate the children as a main source of information. The subjective perception of children was thus taken as authentic information and 'a truth', which enabled us to approach the process of integration, as well as well-being, from a child-centred perspective.

The method of collection of autobiographical life stories is a method of research that delivers a 'retrospective account that an actual person makes in prose of his own existence, stressing his individual life and the history of his personality' (Lejeune, 1975). The very nature of life stories brings to the fore subjectivity and individuality as important basic sources of information. The narrative autobiographical method is well suited to conducting the proposed research, particularly since it allows special analytical focus on children's experiences and life history, subjectivity, self-perception, flexibility of identity and possibility of locating various levels of data such as: concrete family story (what happened, when, why ...), interpersonal relations and their reflection, understanding of the broad political and economic situation, the interweaving of micro, mezzo and macro data, etc. (Bertaux, 2015).

Additionally, the narrative methods (Anthias, 1999, 2002) are especially suitable for researching (cultural) identity and belonging, and therefore also for examining results of migrant integration processes. The process of integration is a process of transforming the individual's cultural, ethnic, linguistic, etc. identities, and therefore it also addresses questions of belonging and self-identifications. Through the analysis of identity changes, we saw the actual process and the level of integration into a new cultural environment. We

believe that the method of narratives of location is suitable for measuring this process as the essence of the method is to 'catch the identity' through narrative – that is, catch the story about where we place ourselves in terms of social categories such as ethnicity, gender and class at a specific time and space.

In schools we also conducted **focus groups** with NAM children on selected topics, where children were encouraged to express their feelings, perceptions, ideas and attitudes concerning friends and socializing, school, family, local environment, identity, future plans, past achievements, desires and also topics such as multiculturalism, immigration, integration, current social and political events in the country and further afield, etc. Focus groups, unlike an interview, allowed members of the group to interact and influence each other during the discussion and consideration of ideas and perspectives.

In general, our multy-method fieldwork research in 6 countries followed the principles of the **Mosaic approach** (Clark, 2005; Clark and Moss, 2005), which recognizes different 'voices' or languages of children; treating children as experts and agents in their own lives; including children, practitioners and parents in reflecting on meanings, and addressing the question of interpretation. The Mosaic approach combines the traditional methodology of observation and interviewing with the introduction of participatory tools. We believe that applying a multi-method approach allowed children a range of options in terms of research activities, and thereby enable them to use different ways of communicating, some of which may suit them more than others (Due, Riggs and Augoustinos 2013). It also helped the researchers to break down power relations between children and us, and deliver a number of different forms of data, to allow cross-checking of results and comparison.

What follows are 6 national reports presenting data from qualitative fieldwork with newly arrived migrant children in the UK, Denmark, Slovenia, Austria, Poland and Spain. At the end of each national report there is also an appendix - a methodological section that presents the sample and methodological process in more detail.

Findings from the participant observation phase are common for all three categories of children (NAM, LTM and L) as this phase was conducted simultaneously with all the class. Furthermore, while observing class dynamic researchers were not familiar of the children 'statuses'. Consequently the analysis of this phase is the same in all three reports. (D5.1, D6.1 and D7.1)

Each national report includes a brief 1) introduction and 2) short methodological sections, a presentation of the 3) main findings from the participant observation phase, the interviews/autobiographical narratives and focus groups with newly arrived migrant children, 4) a discussion (including also a comparison long term migrant and local children), 5) a summary of the main fundings related to the newly arrived migrant children and an appendix - methodological section. The appendix is intended for internal use within the consortium only. It serves as a detailed description of the course of the research activities and collection of data we have obtained from the participant observation, focuses groups and interviews with children in one place. "Raw data" were used as a base for the analysis in

the reports WP5-7. Findings from participant observation phase are common for all three categories of children (NAM, LTM and L) as this phase was conducted simultaneously with all the class. Furthermore, while observing class dynamic researcher were not aware of the children 'status'.

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1. Introduction

This report aims to highlight the integration processes of migrant children from a child-centred perspective. Integration in our research is defined as 'the process by which people who are relatively new to a country (i.e. whose roots do not reach deeper than two or three generations) become part of society'; it is a 'process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration' (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016: 11). We recognise that children are not a homogenous group and there are likely to be differences based on varying characteristics, including age and migrant background. As such, the research focused on two age groups (10-13 years old and 14-17 years old) and newly arrived migrant children with the following objective: to improve our understanding of the children's experiences of life in new social and cultural environments related to the arrival and staying in host societies within the first three years after arrival from a child-centred perspective.

2. Methodological approach

The research was carried out in six primary and secondary schools across Greater Manchester from November 2019 to December 2020. All schools were attended by a large number of migrant children and children from diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Data was collected in varying stages through 29 days of participant observations, 7 focus groups and 51 autobiographical interviews, some of which were facilitated through art-based activities, such as drawing. Children were selected to participate in the research based on teacher and gatekeeper recommendations and child and parental consent. Some interviews had to be conducted online—as opposed to face-to-face—due to Coronavirus restrictions in place in the UK at the time, which limited children's availability to participate in the research.

3. Results

The newly arrived and long-term migrant children in our research reported that they felt included and accepted in their host society. Their initial struggles were largely to do with language learning and making friends, however, they were soon able to overcome these due to the inclusive nature of their schools and efforts made by their peers. They pointed to the multiculturality and diversity of their environments, both at school and in the neighbourhoods, as helping them to feel a sense of belonging. However, there was often an ethnic and gender divide in children's relationships whereby children interacted largely with those of their own ethnic and linguistic backgrounds and genders. There was also some evidence of ethnic and racial discrimination against migrants in schools and in Greater Manchester. Finally, local children had positive perceptions regarding migrants and were understanding of their needs. They ensured to include them in peer groups and support them within the school setting.

3.1 Participant observation

Peers

Peer sociability

The peer dynamics, networking and social relations observed among students differed between the schools included in the study. The anticipated markers of group differentiation according to gender and ethnicity were nevertheless common, although to varying degrees.

Peer groups delineated by ethnicity were observed in S2 and S3, both being public secondary schools where the majority of students is classified as having English as an

Additional Language (EAL)[1]. Children of the same nationalities or speaking the same languages often sat together during class and socialised during breaks. S2 also had an after-school club for Black boys only, which caused some controversy among staff and students. Particularly, some of the White staff were uncomfortable with the creation of this after-school club stating "Why can't we have an after-school club for white boys?". Nevertheless, there was also a lot of mixing between these groups in the school.

In S3, the formation of ethnic subgroups could be observed during most of the classes and they became more prominent during breaks. In classes, children speaking the same language amongst themselves (for example, Punjabi or Romanian) often sat at the same desks (but were sometimes separated by teachers when disruptive). Outside the classes, these affinities were amplified in the corridors and other common spaces, where identity markers such as skin colour, religious clothing or the use of native language informed how small groups are often created. Groups of Romanian children, in particular, were easy to spot on corridors and in the cafeteria since they spoke the language of the researcher. One ethnic group, the Roma children, who come mostly from Romania, were especially reluctant to socialise with children of different ethnicity. This has been noted by the EAL lead who elaborated on the possible reasons behind it: 'They come in year 7 (11 years old), but many of them don't mix with non-Roma students in their year group. Instead, they make friends with students from years 8, 9, 10. What happens is that these students often get naughtier the older they get'. Another reason for this could be the discrimination faced by Roma children. During interviews and informal chats, Romanian and Roma children conceded they are the target of abuse, especially from British peers. According to one Romanian student of Roma ethnicity, British peers uttered to him slurs such as: »Go back to your country!«, »Romanian bastard«, »Gipsy robber«, while some of the Roma girls confessed that British colleagues are mean to them and tell them 'to go and »eat sunflower seeds«' (which was an insult that the researcher was not necessarily aware of). On the other hand, other Romanian (non-Roma) students do not want to associate themselves or be associated with their Roma colleagues for fear of discrimination or stigma.

In S4, a public primary school where 75% of students were EAL, the most obvious divisions followed the gender line: while in class the boys and girls were mixing at the tables they are sat, this changes substantially during breaks in the playground. The way groups were formed were also informed by how long the children knew each other (i.e. if they attended nursery together), which could lead to exclusion of newer children; whether they lived in the same local area or attended extracurricular activities together; and whether they spoke a common language, as children who shared a second language were also inclined to spend more time together. In S6, a public secondary school where 36.7% of students are EAL and around 75% from ethnic minority backgrounds, the groups also were observed to be formed along gender lines and were mixed in terms of ethnicity. These divisions were certainly not absolute and there was still a lot of mixing between genders. Most notably, sub-

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1 In the UK, schools collect information on children's ethnicity and first language, which is coded to be either English as First Language (EFL) or English as an Additional Language (EAL) and provide additional language support to those categorised as EAL.

groups were formed around attitude to studying, i.e. very conscientious students sitting together or more rebellious/'joker' boys sitting together.

In S1, a public primary with 36% of EAL students, the children had seats assigned by the teacher, as the school has a mixed-ability policy in seating so that children of different levels sit together. Because of this, each table was gender and EAL/non-EAL mixed. During breaktime, most children split into small groups (four to six children), although some children were observed to stay by themselves and not interact with others during break time.

The schools in our study were of varying demographic characteristics and, as can be seen from the observations, this affected the ways in which social groups were formed. The group divisions along the lines of gender and ethnicity were observed, however to a different extent depending on the age of the children (primary or secondary) and the proportion of more recently arrived migrant children (classed as EAL). In schools with a higher proportion of EAL students, nationality-based groups seemed to be more common than in schools with smaller numbers of EAL students, even when the rest of the children were primarily from ethnic minority backgrounds. This could suggest that children of migrant backgrounds that were born in the UK formed social groups that did not necessarily follow the ethnic lines.

Peer communication

Positive communication between students was observed in all the schools under study, frequently involving instances of mutual support. In S1, students responded to and helped each other, when, for example, the teacher did not notice a raised hand, even though in most classes they were focused on individual work. In S2, the children readily communicated with each other in the classes observed and collaborated on tasks when required. The same was true for S3. Children did not shy away from collaborating in the class, particularly when they were supposed to work in teams, as it was the case during a Chemistry class involving group experiments in the lab or during a Geography session where students formed teams competing against each other to solve tasks set up by their teacher. One interesting observation during a Maths class was that some students smiled at one another with complicity when they were asked by the teacher a question and would get the answer right. This demonstrates that oftentimes there is a sense of camaraderie amongst children, something which was not necessarily immediately obvious when observing class dynamics.

In S4, students were observed being supportive and affectionate with each other, as well as presenting closeness with each other through the knowledge of each other's ethnicity, the languages they speak, their hobbies and favourite school subjects. Children congratulated each other when they perform well, sometimes they even applaud their classmates. Particularly interesting were the instances where children in distress (for example, because of a small injury sustained during the Physical Education class) were comforted by their peers.

In S6, more assertive students often volunteered to help those who seemed to be struggling, including students with better English ability often pairing up with those whose English was more limited and attempted to explain and help with classwork. These were often children who shared the same ethnic/linguistic community with the struggling student, but that was not always the case. Although some instances of children being quiet, shy, withdrawn, or not engaging with the rest were observed in S2 and S6; the overall picture is that of positive social interaction and dynamics both in personal and educational contexts.

These observations highlight the role of school and friendships between children as crucial sites of social capital formation. The concept, developed by Bourdieu (1980) and Coleman (1988), can be broadly defined as "social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness" (Putnam, 2007: 137) and in case of migration is crucial in facilitating community formation and settlement (Portes, 1995). Putnam (2000) has also highlighted the bridging potential of social capital, where social connection transcends the boundaries of ethnicity or socioeconomic status. Attending school and forming friendships and social networks for students in this study is possibly the primary site of social capital acquisition, allowing them to foster relationships that connect them (and perhaps, by extension, their families) to the local community.

Negative interactions were rarely observed in most of the schools, nevertheless, there were some instances where peer conflict or exclusion were present. For example, in S3 some instances have been noticed during classes when Romanian students would make fun of each other's English accents and pronunciations or they would bully each other. Another such instance involved a Romanian female student who confessed: 'Romanians in school were telling me I'm an orphan (...) And I felt like garbage that day. It was the most horrendous day'. An even more disturbing incident occurred one morning at the school reception, where a Roma parent and his boy came to ask for an urgent meeting with the school headmaster. The father explained (in Romanian) to the EAL lead that he would not let his child back in class because he received abusive and violent text messages via WhatsApp from another Roma peer from the same school. This echoes other discussions with school staff, according to whom bullying and threats often take place amongst children of the same ethnicity rather than from outside.

Educational staff

Engagement with students

The attitude towards and ways of interacting with students varied between teachers and schools. In S1, teachers were observed engaging students in a variety of tasks, and praising them for good answers, going around the classroom, answering students' questions and being generally supportive. In S2, teachers were observed to use a variety of techniques and tools to engage students, including educational internet programmes, games, music and incentives, such as badges, sweets and merits. In S4, the mainstream teacher was engaging and successfully combining kindness and authority. For those who do not yet master the

language properly, an older EAL female teacher (fluent in Urdu and Punjabi) was also present from time to time in the class, working at a separate table with these children. In S6, the discrepancies were very visible within the school, with some teachers applying a child-centric approach and treating the students with a lot of respect and encouragement, while other teachers expected the students to mostly work quietly and independently, harshly reprimanded any perceived misbehaviours and continuedly emphasized the threat of detention, creating a stressful atmosphere. In S3, the EAL staff was observed to have a better understanding of migrant children's needs. The staff had more regular contact with these students both during mainstream classes, where they offer targeted support alongside mainstream teaching and in the EAL department where children come for interventions tailored for their needs.

Overall, the mainstream teachers did not seem to treat migrant children differently than the rest of the group. The EAL staff, if present in the school, due to their particular focus often had a better understanding of migrant children and their needs, often being of migrant backgrounds themselves (S3, S4 and S6). The EAL staff, therefore, could often be seen as adopting a child-centred approach:

> The principles of child-centred education lead teachers to take into account the specific learning needs of migrants and pay attention to an individual learner's strengths and challenges, as well as needs that are tied to a personal set of circumstances such as length of stay, ethnic and cultural background, religion, age, gender, socioeconomic and legal status, and other personal traits and circumstances. (Gornik 2020: 538)

The child-centred approach in migrant children's education can be seen as a valuable practice, contributing to fostering equal conditions and opportunities for migrants, hence stimulating their integration (Gornik 2020).

Conflict management

In each of the schools taking part in the study, teachers responded to negative and disruptive behaviours. Usually, when such behaviour would occur, teachers would give a warning. This was a case in S1. In S2, if disruptive behaviour continued, they would ask the child to step out of the classroom or would be removed from the classroom by a member of the Behavioural Team. In S6, if the misbehaviour continued after warning the teachers would write down students' names on the board and give them detention, although not every teacher used this system. In other instances, teachers would raise their voices to control unruly classrooms (S3, S6). In S4, conflicts were generally addressed through reward and punishment systems in the form of Dojo points: an education app connecting teachers, children and parents, which has received several criticisms related to its impact on children's well-being (Williamson and Rutherford 2017), writing down names on the board and issuing card warnings for bad behaviour. A similar point system was also used in S6.

These reactive classroom behaviour management strategies, such as punitive reprimands and exclusionary discipline methods (i.e. detention) were often observed, despite the overwhelming evidence on their ineffectiveness (Sprick, Knight, Reinke, & McKale 2006). In line with research on the topic, the use of such methods would often result in loss of class time and negatively impacted student-teacher relationships (see Little & Akin-Little 2008). As mentioned above, in S6 the ineffectiveness of these methods used by some of the teachers was visible, contrasted with the effectiveness of child-centric and proactive approaches utilised by other teachers in the school.

No notable conflicts between children with different ethnicities could be perceived during the participant observation in the schools. In S3, an isolated incident was observed in one class where 'xenophobic language' was proffered (the exact content of this language was not made obvious to the researcher), which was immediately addressed by the teacher by asking the pupil to leave the classroom. In S2, no conflicts were directly observed but one teacher noted that students sometimes make complaints or raise issues noting the ethnicity of students in questions, i.e., "Arab students did it". The teacher remarked that it may sound racist but in fact she sees it as means of identifying students in question.

There were no instances of particular different treatment by teachers of children of migrant or minority ethnic backgrounds directly observed. However, in S2, some students expressed concerns that they are being stereotyped by White staff, for example, by referring to Black boys as 'threatening'. This is significant since Black male exclusion in the British educational system is a contemporary issue, with Black children of African heritage underachieving or being excluded in disproportionate numbers compared with their White counterparts, which could result from broader anti-Black sentiment in the British society (Christian, 2005).

Engagement with cultural diversity topics

Explicit engagement with cultural diversity topics as a separate instance was rarely observed, however in some of the schools it was seen to be underpinning the general quality of teaching in the schools. In S1, although no explicit engagement with cultural diversity topics was observed, there was some evidence that these topics were addressed by teachers based on comments from students. For example, the students were familiar with issues around gender identity (transgender, non-binary), and when asked by the researcher they informed him that they discussed it with the teacher during classes. In S6, cultural diversity was often addressed in a very casual and natural manner. As the school is very diverse and thus it seemed to be a part of the school's everyday life. For example, in EAL class covering the Tudor times in England, the teacher explained to the students what denominations in religion means by comparing Protestantism and Catholicism in Christianity to Shia and Sunni in Islam. In S2, however, the researcher noted that celebrities were often used as a learning tool, but the celebrities used were mostly white, which did not reflect the diversity of the school.

In S3, a difference was noted between mainstream and EAL teachers in approaching migrant children, with the former much more attuned to children's needs. This was visible in the wide range of languages spoken by the EAL staff: Urdu, Punjabi, Arab, Romanian (all handled by native speakers), French, Spanish, Italian, Hungarian. The EAL department is also furnished with dictionaries in multiple languages, which other departments often hire, and bilingual teaching materials and posters which adorn the departmental walls and tables. In the mainstream classes, engagement with cultural diversity appeared both in the topics included in the curriculum and the individual efforts made by staff members. The curriculum, which is detailed on the school's website, only partly reflects the diversity of children. Importantly, disciplines such as Literature, History or Reading only tangentially challenged a narrow British (sometimes European) perspective. With regards to the EAL classes, the curriculum itself is equally narrow in reflecting children's diversity. The researcher's observations and actual involvement in delivering teaching have revealed that some of the covered topics are rather Western-centred.

In S4, for children with low levels of English, there were several ways in which teachers addressed their cultural diversity. The 'hand singing' in the assembly room and even the singing of songs in African languages during these sessions were both effective ways to engage children who cannot speak good English. Similarly, during a literacy lesson with a group of children selected from the two Year 4 classes, the teacher used a system called 'tall, small and fall letters', which was especially useful for children without prior school experience. In mainstream classes, these reflections of cultural diversity were observed during reading sessions, when children are engaging with a book about a girl from Botswana or during the aforementioned Religious Education session when the teacher explains religious differences and atheism.

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions regarding equality, intercultural dialogue, intercultural conflicts, cultural and religious pluralism, migrants and migration were varied between schools. Positive attitudes were observed in S1: when discussing school values, a teacher did not focus on British values but talked about values in general and noted (about another school that they had a relationship with) that "We've got different values but they believe in the same things that we believe in", emphasizing unity. There was an instance observed of the teacher asking the students about who is from a different country and around 8 children raised their hands and answered: Sri Lanka, Iraq, Pakistan, India, China, and two or three answered Wales. In S6 drama class, one of the student groups was preparing a scene about racism and prejudice. They said that they think the topic is very relevant and timely and that it is important to discuss these things in order to bring the community together, of which the teacher was very encouraging.

In S2, there seemed to be some ethnic tension in the school with one (Black) member of staff remarking that "Arab boys get in a lot of trouble" and "they [Arabs] run around school like they own it so there's some resentment towards that". The school also had an after-

school club for Black boys only and some White members of staff were uncomfortable about its creation.

School environment

In S6, the school environment could be seen as reflective of the diversity of the school. In the hospitality classroom, there was a board on the wall presenting distinction and merit grade dishes from previous assessments. The board represented a great variety of dishes from different cultures, from gourmet French to traditional South Asian and Middle Eastern dishes. The cafeteria in the school served Halal food, amongst other dietary options. As described in the sections above, in S6, cultural diversity was often addressed in very casual and natural manner and it seemed to be a part of the school's everyday life. Following Banks' (2019) typology of multicultural approaches, S6 could be seen as exemplifying the Transformative approach, where concepts, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups are discussed. At times, such as the example of S6 drama class, where one of the student groups was preparing a scene about racism and prejudice, could be seen as exemplifying the Social Action approach, which takes dialogue as the starting point, allows for students to make decisions and take action in order to contribute to problem solving. Supported by their teacher, students in this class were able to formulate their own ideas about the topic, themselves recognising its timeliness and importance.

The Contribution Approach, where heroes, holidays and elements from 'other' cultures are included in the curriculum, and the Additive Approach, where concepts and perspectives from 'other' cultures are included, could also be observed in the schools under study. In S3, multicultural displays were observed in the EAL department, which was furnished with dictionaries in multiple languages, which other departments often hire, and bilingual teaching materials and posters which adorns the departmental walls and tables. In terms of mainstream classes, engagement with cultural diversity appears both in the topics included in the curriculum and the individual efforts made by staff members. Examples from S4, such as reading the book about a girl from Botswana and activities for EAL students including 'hand singing' and African songs could also be viewed under these categories.

Many schools in the UK engage in cultural celebrations (i.e., Black History Month, South Asian Heritage Month, Eid, the Chinese New Year, Diwali, Christmas and Easter), which depending on execution, could fall under either the Contribution or the Additive approach. These celebrations usually involve events and displays organised by cultural institutions, schools and the community. For Black History Month, S6 organised a trip for its history students to attend a history talk at a local university. Displays and posters are also a common feature of Black History Month at the schools. S3, which has a substantial Roma population, organises a series of events for Roma students, where they can choose the music and get together for fun activities.

How different factors affect integration processes?

N/A

3.2 Focus groups & Interviews

Dynamics and factors influencing the integration process of migrant children

Premigration period and migration experience

Country of birth/country of ancestors

The newly arrived sample in the autobiographical interviews consisted of 24 children and in the focus group—14 children. These children had migrated from various countries including Iraq, India, Italy, Pakistan, Romania, Syria, Portugal, France, Norway, Dubai, Turkey, Kuwait and Sudan. Reasons for migration differed across the sample, some had left home countries due to economic reasons, a minority were fleeing war and others came for educational purposes: "Interviewer: Do you know why did your parents move to the UK? Participant: I came for learning, for English" (Child 13, Male, AG1). However, not all children understood why they had to migrate, and the move came as a shock to them.

> *"It was like a sudden blast to me, I didn't know that. One day I was playing with my friends, I came up to our apartment, and my dad told me we are going to the UK. I just froze there, I didn't feel anything then after a bit, I started asking questions, I had like a million questions in my mind. It took like 2 to 3 months to move in here, so we had to pack a lot of stuff. In these 3 months, my dad explained to me why we are coming here, he told me the names of cities." (Child 33, Male, AG1)*

Over half of the sample's birth country differed from their ancestral country or they had experiences of staying in multiple countries before arriving in the UK. This is illustrated in figure 1, where a newly arrived child has drawn his journey to the UK. As it can be seen, he was born in Pakistan, lived in Spain for a year and then arrived in Manchester. In his drawing, England and Pakistan are close together, whereas, Spain is drawn as a faraway land, almost as a mere transitory place. His drawing also contains several anchors across the countries including his friends, his home, family and school. However, there are few boundaries between England and Pakistan making it difficult to distinguish which countries his anchors lie, showing the transnational character of these anchors (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2018). Like this child, many other children also had several anchors across the countries ensuring a sustained bond: "We have many memories from Norway, all the memories… My mum and my dad's families are still there […] The weather, the landscape, the snow, they are all nice in Norway" (Child 1, Focus group 4, Female, AG2).
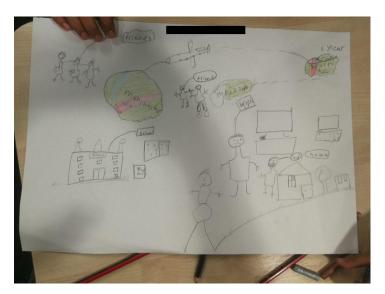
Figure 1. Drawing of a newly arrived child's experience of migration to the UK.

General life

Living conditions
    _N/A_

Spatial and social positioning

Children relayed positive perceptions and experiences of Greater Manchester. Some stated that they enjoy the availability of various leisurely activities: "A really good city, we are going, me and my family, sometimes we went to, like, cinema. We went shopping, you know, buy things" (Child 16, Female, AG2). Whilst a few others enjoyed the safety and diversity of the city which enabled them to quickly feel a sense of belonging as was the case for Child 20, for whom Manchester was strikingly different to his birth country of France. In France he did not meet many individuals of his own ethnicity despite having been born and having lived in France for several years. In Manchester the child became part of the Pakistani community who became a support bubble for him enabling him to settle well in his new environment:

> It's fine, you know because we have a community there, we have too many Pakistani there. When I was in France, I didn't know anyone. When I came there (to the neighbourhood in Manchester), I saw every Pakistani, they teach me how to speak in English, you know, they helped me a lot. So, in Manchester, I feel good, I like it because one year I was there, so, obviously, I like now. It's fine. But not too much good than, you know, Paris. But it's fine there. I like it. (Child 20, Male, AG2,)

This is an exemplar of Coleman's theory of social capital wherein social capital reflects the capital that exists in people's relationships. Social capitals are dependent on reciprocal relationships enabling individuals to gain access to a wide range of resources (Coleman, 2000). Individuals of a migratory background are considered to have less social capital as they have fewer social networks in their host countries. However, by being part of a

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community with the same ethnic immigrants, Child 20 was able to access a bank of resources that were critical for his English learning.

Perceptions of neighbourhood

Some children had strong bonds with their neighbours, with whom they played, shared their feelings and celebrated festivals: "Interviewer: What do you like most about your neighbourhood? Participant: Probably the community, if someone feels down, we won't just let him go, we would help them. We treat everybody equally, we wouldn't treat them extra special or extra important" (Child 33, Male, AG1). On the other hand, some children stated that they interacted little with their neighbours: "My neighbourhood, like I don't talk to my neighbours but they're all right. They don't make noise. They are calm people" (Child 38, Male, AG2).

Socioeconomic status

Children in this sample came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some children stated the occupations of their parents, however, in many instances these were not mentioned. In the instances where the parental occupations were discussed, parents had a range of occupations such as surgeon, a kitchen porter, a worker in the food industry and a doctor.

Inclusion in peer groups

Peers include members of the same community, classroom, or even a sports team (Reitz, Zimmerman, Hutteman, Specht & Neyer, 2014). In our research, we found that children were part of multiple peer groups including those from their neighbourhood, school and religious communities. Peer groups varied with some children having ethnic-specific friends and others with friends of a wide variety of backgrounds. It was noticeable that most newly arrived children did not report or allude to being friends with white British children. Instead, children reported being friends with individuals of migratory and ethnic-specific backgrounds, for example, those of a Pakistani background spoke of Pakistani, Indian and Iraqi friends. Whilst a Romanian child was friends with children he had known in Romania: "In this school there are about 5, then I others close to where I live. Some of them have been class colleagues in Romania. We grew up together, we were in the same class" (Child 19, Male, AG2).

Ethnic-specific bonding and social networks are important in the lives of newly arrived children as they provide access to resources to migrant children which may not have been otherwise available, thereby, increasing their social capital. This was the case for the children in our research who relied on these friends for language learning, social support and feelings of identification with the host country. For example, Child 21 (Female, AG2,) narrates feeling isolated due to not knowing anyone upon arrival to the country. The delay in attending school extended this period of isolation, which made the child yearn for the comfort of her home country which housed extended family members and friends. However,

the child soon overcame these feelings as attending school enabled her to form meaningful friendships:

> *When we came here, it was like ... we didn't know any single person, we didn't like it so much, we liked it, but not so much. We liked Norway best because we didn't see anything (different). When we came here, I had to wait so long time to get to school. So, it was so boring for me ... If you move to a place, you go to school very fast and you have something to do ... But now it's different because now we have friends (Child 21 Female, AG2,).*

Involvement in leisure activities, sport

Most children were involved in some form of leisurely activities, they cited engaging in the following activities: sports, online video games, reading, shopping, watching TV and spending time with family, and friends. Of all these activities, playing sports was the most cited. Children, more specifically boys, were involved in activities such as football, basketball and cricket. We also found that through playing sports children were able to meet new friends in the park or through sports clubs and bond over common grounds such as their favourite football teams and players.

> *Interviewer: And what kinds of activities do you and your friends participate in? Participant: I remember... it was probably in, we participated in an activity, like... it was, like, a small basketball tournament, and I made friends there as well, like, with other people from other schools. (Child 39, Male, AG2)*

In one instance football even seemed to bridge the gap between ethnicities and cultures as it provided the opportunity of inclusion despite language differences. This was the case for child 20 a Romanian child with primarily Romanian friends, football became a ground for which he could interact with his peers from other ethnicities: "...with the Moroccan boy I became friends at football. When there's a match, he asks me if I've watched it, to tease me. We get along well[...]" (Child 19, Male, AG2). This is not an uncommon finding as previous literature has shown that sports activities can increase individuals' social capital and help to bridge weak ties (Sime, 2017). These findings also highlight the importance of making leisure spaces available locally.

Some children reported not being involved in any outdoor leisurely activities or their leisurely activities having reduced significantly since arriving in the UK. The reasons for this differed across the children, for one child, this change occurred as the child's priorities changed from playing games to the attainment of education.

> *I don't go out much, I stay more at home, learning, that's what I like. That's what my mum taught me, that's what I'm gonna do my whole life. It's not that I have to be locked indoors the whole time ... In Romania, I was going out more, I had friends, I would visit my grandparents, I'd go to the store. But less so now. (Child 22, Female, AG2)*

For another two children, the wet and cold landscape of Greater Manchester simply did not allow them the opportunity to play outdoors: "Here, everyone is my friend, but, like, it's cold. I rarely go outside. I just stay inside and play games on my phone with my friends" (Child 44, Male, AG2). These findings are in line with previous literature which has shown that migrant children retreat to indoor activities post-migration and are less likely to make use of leisure services (Sime and Fox, 2014). In our research, we also found that this was more common amongst girls than boys. Girls were more likely to engage in indoor activities and where they did report engaging in outdoor activities this was usually confined within the school setting or with their siblings as opposed to their friends: "Yes, we don't go out of the house except for my piano lesson but my mom stopped it because of the coronavirus. I don't go anywhere that much except for school" (Child 32, Female, AG1,). Reasons for this gender difference is unclear from the sample, however, this corroborates previous research by Sime and Fox (2014), which showed that migrant parents were less likely to impose restrictions on movements of boys than girls.

Health (physical and mental health)
N/A

Educational environment and system

Experiences of inclusion in school

According to Manzoni and Rolfe (2019), schools are a key site for welcoming migrants and their families, helping them to develop 'footholds' through schooling and other support measures. This was corroborated in our research, where we found that schools played a significant role in helping children integrate: "Interviewer: What made you like this country? Participant: My friends and my family and this school" (Child 17, Female, AG2). Almost all children in this sample spoke positively about their school and described it to be welcoming and accepting. They especially appreciated the multicultural aspects of the school which enabled them to meet children not only of their own ethnicity and country of origin but also children from different backgrounds. They enjoyed being able to learn about different cultures and languages:

> _Interviewer: What do you like most about S3?_
> _Participant: It's a really big community, I've never seen such a big community before. People are from a lot of countries, different countries and have different cultures. I enjoy being in this school, it's unique. (Focus Group, Female, AG2)_

Similarly, Child 16 enjoyed school due to the opportunities it presented to learn, make friends and be in a mutually appreciative environment: "I like school because it's nice and every day you learn something new, more words you've never heard of before. And my friends, they are good friends. Teachers, they are more respectful. They respect you, they respect other people, other religions, other cultures" (Child 16, Female, AG2).

Experiences of exclusion

A few children reported experiences of exclusion from peer groups within the school setting. These experiences were directly linked to the child's migratory background. Some were mocked due to their lack of proficiency in English: "…she used to bully on me. She used to say, »You don't know how to speak English…You can't play with us properly so you're not going to be my friend«" (Child 50, Female, AG1). On the other hand, Romanian children (2) were bullied by Romanian and non-Romanian peers due to the perception that they may be 'Roma'. In one of these cases, the child remained silent and did not report the exclusion she was facing. This was particularly due to the fears that the bullying may worsen. The child was deeply affected by the discrimination but noted that she had no problems with being called 'Roma' but was upset with the unkind treatment:

> *Everyone was mistaking me for a Roma, but this didn't bother me, because they are humans too. But they were simply staring at me, 'Who is this?' And this has upset me. And there were even Romanian children who insulted me, I didn't expect this. (Child 22, Female, AG2)*

A number of children also experienced faith-based discrimination but, interestingly, this was experienced at previously attended faith-based schools and not the schools they were interviewed at. This may have been because all the schools in the current sample have a high proportion of migrant children with policies aimed at fostering inclusion. This was particularly the case for Children 05 and 37 who faced significant challenges at Christian schools attended prior to joining S1. Child 05 a Muslim child reported having previously attended a Christian school. The child felt excluded from peer groups and reported feeling hated by other children due to her Muslim faith: "But it was a Christian school like only Christians go there from another country that is Christian, so people don't really like to play with me in that school" (Child 05, Female, AG1). This led the child to move schools, upon attending S1, a large multicultural school, the child felt happier as she was able to make many friends: "Interviewer: What do you think, what is really nice in the school? What is great in your school? Participant: Lots of friends, the other thing that I really really care about is that they respect other religions because they didn't in the other school" (Child 05, Female, AG1). Child 37 reported similar experiences where she was made to study the Christian faith extensively, the child found it difficult to cope with and feared being moved to a year group below. She narrates that the environment at her current school is more inclusive. These findings indicate that being in a multicultural school can be conducive to fostering a sense of inclusion for newly arrived children.

> *So, the teachers here, they respect everyone's religions and welcome them [….] they don't really consider their religions – they don't care, because here we can be anything we want, study here. In other schools where I went, some of the schools, like Catholic schools, they weren't that welcome, because they wanted people to [have] strong belief of Jesus, and that was my first school, and I didn't know anything about Jesus. So, they said I needed to know, and they put the pressure on me. Every time for homework, well, they didn't have much homework. They had less homework than here, and every time*

they used this big Bible, and they would tell me to read like 20 to 30 pages each day or something – because they saw I am a late beginner –if they put me back in year three – If they put me there, I would suffer too, I would have never known anyone in year six, I would have never made friends because they would have been in a younger year when they [would] know anyone. And I'm so glad that they didn't come to that stage where they had to push me back down to the lowest stage. (Child 37, Female, AG1)

<u>*Language & School language policy and practice*</u>

Learning to speak English was central to some of the challenges newly arrived migrant children faced, as for many children their first introduction to English was upon arrival to the UK. The experience of being placed in a different linguistic environment was difficult for some children as they were worried about how they would make friends or engage with school life if they do not possess the necessary language skills: "When I arrived, I was so scared when they introduced me to my class. I just said »Hello« and then I ran out…they were all speaking English, how can I be like that?" (Child 06, Male, AG1). This mirrors Espin's (2006) perspective on language, where she argued that language is one of the toughest obstacles that migrants face, and not primarily because of more technical problems of grammar or pronunciation, but due to identity loss. 'Learning to live in a new language' is not a neutral act, but rather something that 'implies becoming immersed in the power relations of the specific culture that speaks the specific language' (Espin, 2006: 247). However, despite these challenges' children had a strong commitment to learning the language as they perceived it to be important, not just for social inclusion, but also as a doorway to future economic success: "You learn English, if you speak English, you can get wherever you want" (Child 19, Male, AG2).

There were a minority of other children in the sample who did not struggle with English as some were already familiar with the language from their home countries where they had been taught elements of English: "Where did you learn English? The school I went to [in Dubai] was British curriculum, so early on I started learning English" (Child 32, Female, AG1). Another child had attended private English classes in England prior to joining the mainstream school. In fact, these children preferred speaking in English as opposed to their home languages, this may be because they felt competent in articulating their thoughts in English. This trend was also seen amongst migrant children who had not been introduced to the English language prior to arriving in Manchester. These children reported that over time they felt more confident in speaking the language and therefore it became their preferred language to communicate in with their friends and siblings. This is a key issue for policy, as these findings indicate that additional support for language learning can help students to become more competent in speaking English and may even become their preferred method of communication.

School language policy and language learning

Certain school policies also played an integral role in supporting children to develop English speaking abilities. Some schools provided children with one-to-one support tutors who spoke the same language. This was considered to be a valuable source of help for children who received it:

> _I used to go to another school in Manchester. And I had this teacher, an assistant, who stayed with me and she also spoke Italian, I used to speak Italian and tell them and everything that I don't understand. And they taught me better English. (Child 14, Female, AG1)_

Other schools held English classes to facilitate the process of language learning:

> _Interviewer: What about in school?_
> _Participant: That's OK because I have a teacher who sits with me and she speaks Urdu, so it wasn't that hard._
> _Interviewer: Okay so she would translate for you until you learned English?_
> _Participant: yeah_
> _Interviewer: And now you feel like your English is good?_
> _Participant: Yes. (Child 14, Female, AG1)_

Another language policy some children reported was that they were not allowed to speak in their own language at school. The reason cited for this was that staff did not understand what the children were saying:

> _Interviewer: And do you think, you know, speaking in Italian... do you use Italian whilst you're at school at all? Or have you used it in the beginning?_
> _Participant: like [sighs], because apparently, in school right now, you can't really speak your own language._
> _Interviewer: Right._
> _Participant: Because the teachers... they will think that you are offending them and stuff like that. (Child 39, Male, AG2)_

However, using or allowing the use of native languages during class is an effective way to enable migrant students to feel comfortable and even learn the host language. According to Cummins (2001), when a minority language is welcomed by a school, it leads to a stronger sense of self and an improved academic performance. This was corroborated in our research, where we found that the newly arrived children who were given support from other children that shared their linguistic background were able to overcome challenges in English speaking and writing:

> _... When I came here, I didn't know what I was talking about. All I knew was "hi" and "bye". But then, I don't know, I think a girl, I think she's [child name], she used to be in this school to help me with English and how to talk and all that. She told me about words_

and then how to write cursive. Because she knew what language I spoke, she would translate everything to me. So, I found the first few months a bit more hard in my life. But then a girl getting to know everyone was the best thing that happened when I came. (Child 37, Female, AG1)

Interviewer: When was it difficult?
Participant: When I didn't know how to say things because I didn't know much.
Interviewer: So, what did you do in these situations?
Participant: I would just speak in Urdu with my friends. (Child 12, Male, AG1)

Peers

Peers constitute an important part of children's life as they influence children's wellbeing, development, life opportunities and sense of belonging. This was also the case for children in our sample who implied that their peer relations significantly contributed to their feelings of wellbeing and belonging: "Interviewer: What do you like most about this school? Participant: My friends. I like that I get to play with them" (Child 12, AG1, Male). At the beginning of their school life children feared that they may not be able to form friendships. However, it did not take too long for most of these children to build close relationships. These friendships were formed in the classes, at lunch, and through other activities such as football. For many of the children's peer relationships were ethnic- and culture-specific or clustered around a shared first language. This is not surprising since it is natural for one to gravitate towards those with whom they have common ground as this can help in forming early in-group membership (Evans and Liu, 2018). Our findings indicated that being in ethnic-specific friendship groups was useful to children in numerous ways. For example, for the newly arrived children whose English speaking abilities were in infancy, it helped in familiarising them with their host country and learning the language. This practice also enabled children to extend their social circles:

Interviewer: How did you find, was it easy to find new friends or some activities that would make you feel like you belong?
Participant [...] At the start, like it wasn't easy [...] because I couldn't speak English well and yes, some Italian friends helped me to get some friends. (Child 38, Male, AG2)

What was interesting, however, was that many newly arrived migrant children also spoke of holding positive and mutual relationships with children of varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They displayed feelings of respect and a sense of fascination for one another's cultural, linguistic and religious differences: "[...]I have met a lot of people from other countries that I didn't even know that they existed" (Child 39, Male, AG2).

Teachers/educational staff

Overall children held positive views about their teachers and felt that they could rely on them for support both academically and in interpersonal aspects of life: "Interviewer: If you are feeling unwell, to whom you talk to?

Participant: My teacher and they tell me where to go. If it's a problem with my friends, I try to solve it myself, if I can't, I go to the teacher (Child 32, Female, AG1).

Some children made comparisons between teachers in their home countries and teachers in England. Two children, one from India and one from Romania described their former teachers as strict and serious with the Romanian child stating that teachers sometimes used physical punishment as a behaviour management tool. Teachers in the UK were thought to be kind, respecting and helpful. This helped children to become more accustomed to the British school system and academic life: "Yes, firstly the teachers. They are much better and more sympathetic. They listen to you, what's in your soul. There are such teachers in Romania too, but some are cruel, extremely cruel. And if s/he does something to you, the police don't do absolutely anything, maybe a fine and that's it. I don't find it fair, because that kid can be dead and you only get a fine and you're out, that's it. (Child 22, Female, AG2)". Child 37 had similar experiences with teachers in India and felt that the approach educational staff used to teach in England was much more effective in promoting learning: "in India, we never – we used to always have to say "Miss", always be serious with everything. But here you can actually have some fun learning a whole different" (Child 37, Female, AG1). Conversely for one Norwegian child, teachers in Britain were more assertive regarding their educational practices which instilled a sense of responsibility regarding education in the child:

> *Now I feel I really study good than I did in Norway. In Norway, I was like … if I had homework, I was like No, I can do it school instead of doing it at home. Because I didn't think about It's so important for me, because if you get detention, it wasn't like here. There, teachers say to you 'If you don't want to do this, it's your choice', but here, the teachers say to you 'No, you have to do this, you have to do this. It's like rules you need to do'. (Child 21, Female, AG2)*

Very little negative experience with school staff was reported, with the exception of three children. Two children reported that they felt excluded and not heard by class teachers:

> *Just I want to say about my teachers, sometimes they need to listen to the student. Like, you know, sometimes I have problems, they always give attention. So, when I want to explain to them, they're don't even listen… so that sometimes really hurts me. Like 'What did I do, why are you not listening?' So, I just get angry and I want to sit alone. Sometimes that's always happening to me. (Child 16, Female, AG2)*

Whereas another child felt that teachers were not using appropriate teaching methods which made the child disconnect from education:

Interviewer: What can you tell me about the school where you have studied?
Participant: It was not good; it was so boring. Like, the teachers will just give you like a worksheet and you just have to do it, they don't even look at it. 'It's in your book', that's it. They don't give feedback or anything.
Interviewer: This is for everybody?
Participant: Yes. I always say to my friend he just plays or eating. They would never check on him. Never. (Child 15, Male, AG2)

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

For newly arrived migrant children, one of the most important inclusion and integration practices was that performed by fellow peers, which included helping the newly arrived child to make friends and learn the language:

When I came here, I didn't know what I was talking about. All I knew was "hi" and "bye". But then, I don't know, I think a girl, I think she's [child name deleted], she used to be in this school to help me with English and how to talk and all that. She told me about words and then how to write cursive. Because she knew what language I spoke, she would translate everything to me. So, I found the first few months a bit more hard in my life. But then a girl getting to know everyone was the best thing that happened when I came. (Child 37, Female, AG1)

School policies, such as assigning buddies to newly arrived children, especially helped this process and was considered useful by the children:

Interviewer: I was wondering if you had to imagine for example a new student coming to your school, like it was yourself for example coming from abroad, not knowing English, what are the kind of things that you think a school could do that would be helpful for such a student?
Participant: Like they did for me, assign them to, I don't know, a student so that the student helps you go, get into some groups and then learn English. (Child 38, Male, AG2)

Psychosocial support

Psychosocial support was thematised in a small number of interviews. In these cases, children relied on friends, parents and teachers for psychosocial support. They reported that they could turn to these individuals if they need help. One child noted that his school offers a service to support children's mental wellbeing:

Interviewer: If you feel unhappy, to whom you comfortable to talk to?
Participant: There are those clubs that you can go to that they will help you relieve down a little, if there is something stressing you a little, we have it. They help children relieve down a little and teach them how to not be stressed and what they can do in the first place to not be stressed.
Interviewer: Have you been there?

Participant: No. Personally, I tell all things to my parents.
Interviewer: How did you know about these clubs?
Participant: One day my friend was feeling bad because of something the teacher did, and I was feeling bad for him, when he left I followed him, he entered this room, and once the door was shut there was this poster that says "the club that cares". (Child 33, Male, AG1,)

Family and wider community

Family

Most newly arrived children had migrated to the country with their parents and siblings, leaving behind extended family members such as grandparents, uncles, aunties and cousins in their country of origin or ancestral countries. These children migrated to the UK with their Immediate family members, except for a few whose fathers had migrated earlier for work purposes and in once instance a child's parent had not migrated with them due to parental separation. One child who had migrated to England to flee war In Iraq had noted: "My mum and dad came with me, so we didn't separate our little family, we're a nice family, we didn't separate" (Child 05, Female, AG1). This indicates the child's awareness that in the process of migration families do not always remain together. It is no surprise then that, overall, family was considered to be an especially important factor in the wellbeing of children. Some children spent time with parents and siblings through play and other activities and also received social and emotional support from them. Older siblings played an important role in supporting the education of younger siblings as for most children, parents were unable to support their child due to a lack of English-speaking abilities. Those who had no older siblings resorted to completing homework alone. This is problematic as parental support in education is necessary for good educational attainment, but due to language barriers, many migrant children are not afforded this support.

Interviewer: Can your parents help you with homework or do you rely mostly on your brothers and sisters?
Participant: It's mostly my brother and sister helping me with the homework.
Interviewer: So, they don't speak very good English your parents?
Participant: No. (Child 12, Male, AG1)

Having extended family in the UK was a key theme across some Interviews in feeling a sense of belonging and integration into British society. Children in the sample who had extended families in the form of aunts, uncles and cousins in the UK and also lived close to them. Extended family members provided an important form of social and emotional support and a sense of community. Children spent weekends playing with cousins visiting family members and engaging in activities such as going to religious centres together:

Interviewer: Do you have any relatives here, in the UK?
Participant: Yes. I have cousins and an auntie. [upon prompting] I visit them sometimes.
Interviewer: Do you like visiting them?
Participant: Yeah. (Child 14, Female, AG1)

It was notable that children without extended family in the UK struggled more to become accustomed to the society, as was the case for Child 17 who reminisced about life in Syria and the extended family she was forced to leave behind. For this child, life was better in Syria "Because all my family was there. Here I don't know anyone, only my family" (Child 17, Female, AG2). Similarly, Child 16 speaks about her affiliation to Kuwait and recounts time spent with family:

Interviewer: Do you still have some family in your country?
Participant: Yes, my cousins, my uncle, they are all, like, half in Kuwait, half in Saudi Arabia. When I was in Kuwait, I would always go to them. We enjoyed together, chatting, playing, do some fun stuff" (Child 16, Female, AG2).

It seems that family in the home country is an anchor that keeps them connected to their origin. Children sustained this connection through regular phone calls, and video chats:

Interviewer: What do you remember from Pakistan?
Participant: My grandparents [upon prompting] I miss them. I speak to them every week."
(Child 13, Male, AG1)

Migrant community, religious community

Religious community

Religion was an important feature in many children lives. Muslim children reported going to the mosque to learn the Quran or Arabic. A Sikh child spoke about going to the Gurdwara with family members and friends and a Christian Romanian child narrated being involved in Christian mass. These children were happy that they were able to practise their religion without restrictions and were accepted for their individual beliefs:

For the Muslims there, in school, they can put the scarf. When you go outside, no one talks bad words. If I was in France, they talk about bad things, we can't take our scarf in school. So, I like this because they all have community there, we are all like normal, they all respect there, it's fine. I like this because, you know, respect. (Child 20, Male, AG2)

Children also took part in celebrations such as Eid and Diwali with family and friends. Religious festivals and holidays were important as they served as a reminder for ethnic and cultural affiliation:

Interviewer: Do you have festivals that you go here? Are there any or you don't go to any? Have you been to any festivals here?

Participant: No, not any British festivals but we celebrate our festivals. Me and my friends in our society, we plan to, in our little central garden, we did fireworks and they allowed us to so that didn't make us feel sad because that's when all of us, the majority of our family, meet together so that's why.

Interviewer: So something that you used to do in India as well?

Participant: Yes. So we used to go in others homes and give them sweets, take sweets and come together in the area where we blow fireworks and then we had loads of fun there.

Interviewer: That's nice.

Participant: Yes. (Child 50, Female AG1)

A Sikh child who visits the Gurdwara with his family reported enjoying the celebration of Halloween. This is Indicative of the taking on the British identity. This is Illustrated In figure 2.

Figure 2. Drawing by Child 06: "There is my home and there is my school. I walk 1.2 miles from my home to school. I like chocolate. I like science. My favourite festival is Halloween. I like horror. I belong to India. This is the building of the school in Portugal. There are many things that I like there. I like trees, I like sunsets and sunrise".

Migrant Community

Another noticeable theme was that some migrant families gravitated towards living in areas with a high rate of migrant individuals and mostly migrants of a similar background. This is not an uncommon finding as migrants often stay in communities with a large number of people from origin countries as they share similar experiences. Migrant communities can also be important in signposting resources to children enabling them to form friendships with individuals who have similar backgrounds. However, despite the usefulness of interethnic ties researchers warn that close-knit ties with only one's own community can

lead to segregation and can limit a person's ability to access existing resources and therefore improve their social positioning (Putnam, 2007).

Local environment

Local environments are an important feature of a young person's life. It helps them to develop a sense of belonging which in turn improves children's feeling of security. This can be particularly important for newly arrived migrant children who have arrived into a country strikingly different to that of their home country. The resources provided in one's local environment can be imperative to the integration of children. For example, one child cited frequently visiting the park as this facilitated the formation of friendships.

> *Interviewer: And how do you feel when you are in the park, surrounded by nature?*
> *Participant: It feels nice because I can make a lot of new friends, who I don't know, just for, like, a day. And then the next day, have some more new friends. They keep coming. New friends keep coming there, and I can play with them and then talk about stuff. (Child 44, Male, AG2)*

Other

N/A

Conceptualizations of own well–being and life satisfaction

Self-perceived well-being and life satisfaction

Children's perceptions of their wellbeing and life satisfaction were positive with many reporting being happy and having a 'good life'. Factors such as family, friends, local community and school were commonly cited as contributors. This is illustrated by Child 19, who states that despite life being different in Manchester, as compared to Romania, he is satisfied with his current way of living. Moreover, strong friendships in Britain can be useful anchors in feeling connected to the country:

> *And here the life is good, a different living. I got used to living here. If you have friends, you forget (about Romania). You cannot forget where you were born, but it's easier" (Child 19, Male, AG2).*

Similarly, Child 20 speaks about 'having everything' as he now has a 'community' and lots of friends:

> *I have a lot of friends, I have my community now, I'm normal. I restart everything, so I have my friends, my community, I have everything now (Child 20, Male, AG2).*

CREATE

Identification and belonging

Transnational migration

Much of the sample had participated in transnational migration, whereby they maintained connections to their country of origin whilst simultaneously settling into other countries. As a result, their feelings of identification and belonging were stretched across various nations. Some children identified as belonging more to the country of their birth as opposed to their ancestral country. Whilst others were adamant that despite having been born in and spent several years in one country, their origin belonged to the country of their ethnicity. This is illustrated in the following quotes from interview 12 and interview 21. Child 12 was born in Italy, whereas his parents had immigrated from Pakistan. When asked if he is from Pakistan he states: "No, I am from Italy" (Child 12, Male, AG1). Child 21, however, speaks about feeling more Arab than Norwegian, despite having been born and raised in the latter country. For this child, belonging to a country is more than just having been born there, it is also represented in the way one dresses, how one speaks, the food one eats and the culture one is raised in. From the point of view of social anchoring, Child 21 has several anchors placed within her Arab culture that make her feel more Arab than Norwegian.

> *So, people, sometimes, in this school, ask me how do you feel yourself? Do you feel like European? Because you haven't been in Arabic countries? Do you feel yourself like Norwegian more? Or Arab? So, I used to say Arab, because at home we don't do … like Norwegian culture. We eat more Arabic food, we do things that Arabs do, like celebrating Eid, different thing they don't celebrate … The clothes we wear, it's not like them, we wear Arabic clothes, and we speak Arabic at home. So, I feel myself more Arabic than Norwegian. It's right that I lived there more than 13 years, but I just feel myself Arab because my family is Arab. So, if people ask me, I will say I feel myself more Arab than European. Because I don't do like European people I just grew up with the Arabic culture, so I feel myself more Arabic. (Child 21, Female, AG2).*

Family/ social ties

An anchor discussed by all children that heavily influenced their feelings of identification with greater Manchester and their country of origin was family and other social ties. Similar to the findings of Grzymala-Kazlowska (2018), children in our research had parallel anchors in relation to family and friends, which meant they had dual footholds In the UK and their home countries. Children missed the relatives and friends they had left behind, but through maintaining close ties with members of their community of origin, family and peers in England, children were able to remain connected to Britain:

> *… It's quite hard to live without relatives about one year and I came here one year ago so I miss India festivals that I do, my relatives. My father came here first. When we came, me and my brother and my mother but when he was here, I quite missed him and I used to cry. (Child 50, Female, AG1,)*

Having parallel anchors across countries created a safety net for those children who were concerned about their future in Britain. As Child 19 explains, the possibility of having to leave Britain due to Brexit does not affect him as he has friends and relatives he can return to:

> *Interviewer: (Seeing you have so many friends and family here) How would you feel if you had to return to Romania?*
> *Participant: Fine. With this Brexit, they would also return. But I also have friends in Romania, my grandparents, my relatives, my cousins. (Child 19, Male, AG2)*

Language

The significance of language to the transformation of identity in migrants has been discussed by Espin (2006). Obtaining the new – and losing the old linguistic community – is central to the experience of migration. Although the children in our sample were eager to learn the English language, some were concerned that in that process they were beginning to forget their native language. Language was an anchor that ensured that they sustained a bond to their origins, which was now slowly beginning to fade.

> *Interviewer: Do you get to speak Hindi here?*
> *Participant: Yes, because there some other friends who know my language. Sometimes we speak in it, when we play cricket.*
> *Interviewer: How does this make you feel?*
> *Participant: It makes me happy, I would give them more credit for speaking my language, if I had no friends who speak my language, I would have probably forgotten it by now. They do help me, when we are playing cricket, if they speak in Hindi, I would speak in Hindi, smile a little too. (Interview 33, Male, AG1)*

Feelings of safety

Children generally felt safe in their lives and neighbourhoods. Several factors contributed to this, including family, friends, the hustle and bustle of the city, and Greater Manchester's multiculturality. However, several factors that put children's feelings of safety into question. For example, two Romanian children spoke about the potential risk of having to leave the country due to Brexit, thereby making their future uncertain. The children did not wish to return to their home country as they both had high aspirations for their future which they felt could not be achieved In Romania.

> *I think about this Brexit thing: Why is it happening? Because people have the right to travel, but they do this for a better life, because they didn't have one back in their countries. They want to follow a different path, to change their life, to change themselves. (Child 22, Female, AG2)*

A few also felt unsafe due to the pandemic. Their lives had been significantly disrupted with one child having lost a friend to the virus.

> *Interviewer: How do you feel with all this Corona virus situation and how it's changing your life?*
> *Participant: Horror.*
> *Interviewer: Oh, do you feel scared?*
> *Participant: Yes. (Child 24, Male, AG1)*

Self-perceived opportunities, choices and feeling of control over their own life and future

For many children in the sample, moving to the UK was an opportunity for a better life. Some reported that their parents migrated for the sole purpose of a better future: "[...]My father wanted me and my family to get a better education, so we came to the UK" (Child 13, Male, AG1). Children themselves thought that Britain was a land of opportunities and felt that they could achieve much: "Beautiful life. You can do whatever you want. Like if you want to be a doctor you can be a doctor. If you want to travel, you can travel. [...] you can do whatever you want" (Child 16, Female, AG2). This is further illustrated in Child 19 drawing in which he has drawn his story of migration (figure 3).

Children wanted to become footballers, doctors, surgeons, police officers, businessmen and women, dentists and even a chemical scientist. They believed that if they worked hard in their education, they would achieve their goals. They did not believe it would be possible to achieve this in their home countries: "[...]I know I am going to have a better career here, I know that. In India, there is like a billion people living, and there is a lot of competition going on. Here, there is less people, less competition [...]" (Child 33, Male, AG1). This belief encouraged many children to work harder at school and take education more seriously, as was the case for Child 21 from Norway. The child reports not putting much effort into school in her country of origin, but since arriving in England she works harder as she has the belief that she needs to work more to achieve a good life. It is important for schools to note the high aspiration of migrant children and their willingness to engage with education:

> *So, when I was there, I was like I don't care about studying, like, I cared about it, but not like here. Here, I was like: "No, I need to study because I need to get to college, I want good grades, I want to get to university, I want to be something. I don't want to without work, I don't want to be without knowledge, I need knowledge, this is for me." But there, I didn't care. I was like: "School is nothing big for me, it's not everything for me." But here, I know that school is a big thing for me, and study is something important for me if I want to be something very good for me. So, that's different. (Child 21, Female, AG2)*

Figure 3. Drawing by Child 19: All my family is in the UK, only my grandparents are in Romania.

I miss them. I go visiting them in the summer. I've lived for three years in the UK.

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

The perceptions and attitudes regarding equality and intercultural dialogue were overall positive amongst children. Children recognised the diversity and multiculturality at their schools as an asset as this meant that they were in an environment where their differences were accepted. For example, Child 16, who migrated from Kuwait, initially feared facing backlash from the country due to her Muslim faith: "Because I'm Muslim, people are gonna bullied me". However, she did not face any discrimination and felt that "They were really good people, they respect others. That's really nice, for everyone, you know" (Child 16, Female, AG2). In fact, children not only appreciated being accepted for their migratory background and religious and cultural differences but also readily accepted the cultural and religious identities of others. For example, when Child 32 was asked about her perceptions of the diversity of Manchester she stated "It's a good thing because you get to know other traditions and other languages" (Child 32, Female, AG1). These findings do not coincide with some of the previous literature which proposes that diversity is likely to lead to a reduction in social capital and social cohesion in the short term (Putnam, 2007).

Some children were also actively engaged in learning about different cultures, not just through academic curriculum or events such as the Black History Month (BHM), but also through personal inquiry. For example, Child 22, a Romanian child with primarily non-Romanian friends, was fascinated with the customs and traditions of her Muslim friends: "I found it extremely interesting...how many cultures there are on this Earth and there are people who don't know anything about them, but it's extremely interesting. I was interested on their culture, but also their languages. I like discovering new languages, stuff, I've always been like that".

Perceived advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children's integration

Perception of integration

It was clear from the interviews that all children hoped to become productive members of British society. They had actively engaged in language learning practices, forming friendships and engaging with wider communities.

Advantages

Children Identified several practices employed by their school's that they believed to be useful for the integration of migrant children these are listed below.

Buddy system

A few children mentioned their school using the buddy scheme to support new arrivals. This is where a child is chosen to be a buddy for the new arrival. The buddy provides their time and support to their mentee. The children in our research noted this to be an effective strategy to enabling new arrivals to become familiar with the school and make friends. Child 50 who received this support describes her experience:

> *Interviewer: When you came here last year, in Year 4, did you have a buddy, like someone that helped you?*
> *Participant: Yes, [child name], [teacher name] [...]buddied me with her and then she used to show me around and her friends. Then I got on and I made friends with Mia's friends and then there was a group, like six people including me. Now I don't play with them but I play with one of the group and made another group. (Child 50, Female, AG1)*

Language support

Teaching assistants who were able to speak the child's native language were seen to be important in learning English:

> *Interviewer: How did you learn it here? At school or outside?*
> *Participant: Both, I used to go to another school in Manchester. And I had this teacher, an assistant, who stayed with me and she also spoke Italian, I used to speak Italian and tell them and everything that I don't understand. And they taught me better English. (Child 14, Female, AG1)*

4. Discussion

This report aimed to assess the integration processes of newly arrived migrant children from a child-centric perspective. The children involved in this research had a variety of migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds. In the discussion, however, we will also look at the results of research conducted among long term migrant children and local children.

We found that almost all children in the sample were transnational migrants. Even most of those who were classed as local had 'tangible', 'cognitive' and 'virtual' anchors tying them across nations due to their family's migratory background (Kazlowska, 2018). The identities of the newly arrived, long-term and some of the local children were rooted in their home/ancestral countries, continually cultivated by cultural and religious practices they and their families were involved in. However, more importantly, the newly arrived (and long-term) migrant children had begun forging or had already forged themselves a place in their host society and had developed many 'footholds' in Britain which helped them to feel a sense of belonging, with these footholds including peer groups and schools.

Being part of multicultural communities and schools was thought to be especially useful in the process of integration, in fact, newly arrived (as well as long-term and local) children advocated for multiculturalism stating its manifold benefits. These findings also link to the findings of WP4 whereby schools that housed large ethnic minority populations celebrated the diversity in their schools. For the newly arrived children, it meant that they were able to meet other children of similar backgrounds who were a great resource for feeling a sense of belonging. Local children, as well as newly arrived and long-term children, also commented that these environments were useful because they enabled them to meet and interact with individuals of other cultures and learn more about them. From a theoretical perspective, multiculturalism is useful as it has been found to promote inter-ethnic and co-ethnic ties and positive attitudes towards others (Marschall and Stolle, 2004; Oliver and Wong, 2003; Werbner, 2013: 416). For example, Agirdag, Demanet, van Houtte, & van Avermaet, (2011) in their research found that ethnic minority children who attended schools with large composites of minority children reported less peer victimisation. Indeed, our research showed that children were empathetic towards migrant children and certain children relied on their ethnic ties for social and emotional support. However, a problematic aspect of these settings is that individuals tend to cluster around those with whom they have shared characteristics sometimes leading to ethnic enclaves (Danzer and Yaman, 2013), thereby, defeating the purpose of promoting interethnic ties. Our research also found this, as participant observations showed in some cases there clustering of children of ethnic groups and genders. Similarly, children from ethnic minority backgrounds in the interviews and focus groups remained in large part friends with other ethnic minority children, except for some. There is a need for schools to focus more on cultivating interethnic ties amongst children. Despite this, we would like to argue that multiculturism, in schools can and should be seen as an asset to be utilised for the integration of migrant children as they provide migrant children with a bank of resources that may not be otherwise available to them.

Children's cultural and religious backgrounds formed an important part of their identities and the children needed them to be accepted. Parents and families engaged in many practices that ensured that these identities would remain cultivated. This included maintaining ties to home countries, sending children to Arabic classes, or churches. In a few cases, newly arrived children had attended schools where their own religious identities were undermined, which resulted in the pupils feeling alienated and therefore changing schools. In the new schools, it was felt that the teachers were more accepting of children's identities. These feelings were shared by long-term and local children whereby the supportiveness and fair and equal treatment of children by class teachers was felt to be a positive aspect of their school lives.

Peers were central as to the lives of newly arrived (and long-term migrant children). Long-term migrant children noted that they initially struggled to make friends when they were new arrivals. However, they quickly became part of multiple peer groups. Their peers supported them linguistically, socially and in the classroom. The local children were also empathetic towards the experiences of newcomers and engaged in practices to ensure they would feel included in the school setting. For example, children who had a migratory family background and a good grasp of a minority language supported migrant children by translating for them. Other children found a great sense of comfort in having peers who had the same ethnic background as them as they could feel a sense of belonging far from home. Generally, children were positive about their interactions and relationships with their peers with very few children reporting any conflict. This, however, does not mean that the children were not facing any discrimination, as it is possible that children were reluctant to discuss this at the school setting especially when there may have been teachers present. There was some evidence regarding discrimination against migrants in the data sets with children in focus groups discussing issues pertaining to racism in Manchester and Romanian children in the interviews reporting being bullied. This issue needs further pursual in order to understand the full picture of discrimination against certain categories of migrant children.

Language skills were identified by all children as one of the key challenge's migrant children face in Britain. Newly arrived and long-term children had anxieties around their competency in speaking English and recognised that without this they would not be able to access the majority culture and form friendships. The new arrivals and long-term children placed a great emphasis on their English learning abilities and were supported by local children in developing their competency in the language. At school, children were expected to conform to the majority language and some stated that they were not allowed to speak their home language at school. Due to this practice, these children's native language became confined to the spheres of their homes or friends. Some bilingual children noted that in the process of learning English they were losing proficiency in their own language. This is problematic given that language is not just a communicative tool, but highly linked to one's identity and sense of belonging. Children found a sense of comfort in speaking their own language and often times was a necessary means to remain connected with the countries of their origin. Bilingualism also has many benefits with previous research showing that bilingualism has cognitive advantages to children (Engel de Abreu, Cruz-Santos, Tourinho, Martin & Bialystok, 2012). Moskal and Sime (2016) argue that schools should promote home

languages and include them in the curriculum. It can also be argued that in a multicultural Britain, bilingualism will be useful at an economic level whereby bilinguals can become a support mechanism for new arrivals and those without competency in English speaking.

Another important finding was that, overall, children reported feeling satisfied with life and had many aspirations. Newly arrived children were more aspirant than long-term and local children as they recognised the long-term benefits of education for upward mobility. For the newly arrived children, Britain was a land of opportunities and they believed that by focusing on their education and learning English they could achieve well. However, the restrictions placed due to Covid-19, such as school closures, had a negative impact on some children's wellbeing with one child reporting feeling trapped. It is not possible to comment further upon this due to minimal data, but these findings do indicate that further research needs to be carried out on the impact of Covid-19 on migrant children.

5. Executive summary – newly arrived migrant children

This report presents findings of research carried out in schools, mainly across Greater Manchester on the experiences of integration of Newly arrived migrant children. Children were classified as being newly arrived if they had lived in the country for less than three years. They had migrated from various countries including Iraq, India, Italy, Pakistan, Romania, Syria, Portugal, France, Norway, Dubai, Turkey, Kuwait, and Sudan. Reasons for migration differed across the sample with some having left home countries due to economic reasons, a few due to war and others came for educational purposes. Displacement clearly marked their lives and having left behind loved ones; they were now in the process of creating a new life. In their new lives' family, school and peers played a central role in feelings of identification and a sense of belonging.

In regard to their migration experiences children arrived in the country with their immediate families with the exception of a few whose fathers had migrated earlier for work purposes. These children had left behind extended family members such as grandparents, uncles, aunties, and cousins but many also had extended family members in the UK. The extended family in the UK provided children with important forms of social and emotional support as well as a sense of community. In the immediate family older siblings were able to support younger siblings with their homework as many parents were unable to speak English. Family was also a key anchor that helped to sustain a bond between children and their home countries.

In relation to inclusion in peer groups, friends played a central role in the lives of newly arrived children. They were part of multiple peer groups including those in their neighbourhood, school and religious communities. Peer groups varied with some children having ethnic specific friends and others with a wide variety of backgrounds. Ethnic specific bonding was important as they provided children with resources that may not have been otherwise available to them, for example, many children relied on their friends for language learning. Exclusion from peer groups was only reported in a few instances, in these cases the discrimination was directly linked to the child's migratory background. There were reports of discrimination due to one's faith, ethnicity and linguistic abilities. Ethnic discrimination was particularly described by Roma children who felt discriminated against by both Roma and none Roma pupils.

Another central aspect to children's lives in Britain was education, these children recognised the importance of school and had high aspirations, with many already having forged ideas of their future occupations. For the newly arrived children, Britain was a land of opportunities and they believed that by focusing on their education and learning English they could achieve well in their future. An aspect children especially appreciated within their school environments was the multicultural nature of their schools. Children enjoyed learning about different cultures and appreciated the efforts schools put in place to celebrate the diversity of the cultures. Those of a religious background appreciated that they are able to practice their religion without restriction. In the beginning there were anxieties on how they would integrate in to this new society. The anxieties were rooted in the lack of

English-speaking abilities, with children wondering how they would form friendships if they could not communicate with others. Due to these challenges' children had a strong commitment to learning the language as they perceived it to be important, not just for social inclusion, but also as a doorway to future economic success. Children were supported In learning English by their teachers and peers.

The question of identity and belonging was a complicated one for this sample, namely because for over half the sample, United Kingdom was not the only country they had a migration experience off. Over half the sample was either born in a different country to that of their parents or they had lived in multiple countries prior to arriving in England. When asked about belonging some were adamant that they belonged to their birth country for others their identity was rooted in the country of their parents. The country of origin remained important to the children as most of the children still had extended family members and friends that they had left behind. Overall, it seemed that the children were satisfied with their lives and had positive perceptions of their wellbeing. It seems that it was social relations such as family, friends, local community and school that largely contributed to these feelings.

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DENMARK

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1. Introduction

This report aims to explore integration processes from the perspective of newly arrived migrant children aged 10–17, answering the following research questions:

- How do (newly arrived migrant) children perceive and experience processes of integration?
- How do educational staff approach and address newly arrived migrant integration processes?

In this report, the primary focus is on children's accounts of integration, while educational staff's approaches are studied partly through observations and partly through the children's accounts in interviews and focus groups.

Integration is understood in a broad sense as 'the process by which people who are relatively new to a country (i.e., whose roots do not reach deeper than two or three generations) become part of society' (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003: 4); hence, it is understood as a 'process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration' (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016: 11).

The integration processes were studied as far as possible from a child-centred perspective. The child-centred perspective takes its point of departure in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 12), emphasizing children's rights and capacity to express their own views. Since children's rights, in this view, apply to all children below the age of 18, the concept child is used throughout the report when describing the research participants. Hence, while emic concepts such as adolescent or young person (for the participants aged 14–17) or student or pupil (minding the school context in which research took place) could seem like more natural or appropriate descriptions, the concept child is sustained, underlining its purpose as an analytical, etic research category due to the child-centred approach of the research project.

2. Methodological approach

The research was carried out on six schools in different parts of Denmark (both small towns and large cities) from August 2019 to September 2020. All fieldwork schools were public schools characterised by linguistic and religious diversity and had a proportion of migrant children of 15% or above. Three schools (S1, S2 and S6) were primary and lower secondary schools (Grades 0–9), and two were lower secondary Grade 10 schools (S3 and S5). S4 was a school with only two reception classes aimed at newly arrived children (Grade 7–10).

Data was collected through participant observation (86 days), 10 focus groups and 77 individual interviews. In the observation phase, passive, moderate and active participation were practiced (Siegel, 2018; Fine & Sandstrom, 1999). Most of the interviews were facilitated by art-based approaches, such as drawing, mapping and photo elicitation.

For interviews and focus groups, written consent from parents/legal guardians was given to participants aged 14 and younger, while participants aged 15 and older signed the consent forms themselves. Besides written consent, ongoing and situated consent (Warin, 2011) were pursued by researchers in all research phases and sites, aiming at ensuring that children felt safe and comfortable participating in research activities. All the children's names mentioned in the report are pseudonyms.

3. Results

The results section provides a summary of the findings from fieldwork at the six schools. Special attention is paid to similarities and differences among schools, and age groups (age group 1: 10–13 years old [AG1]; age group 2: 14–17 years old [AG2]). Detailed descriptions of the methods used and the types of collected empirical data are provided in WP 5–7 Methodological section (appendix to this report).

3.1 Participant observation

Peers

Peer sociability

The observations showed varied patterns of peer dynamics, networking, inclusion and exclusion and social relations among schools and among primary schools (AG1), lower secondary school (AG2) and reception classes (mainly AG2).

In some classes, the researchers observed social subgroups along gender and ethnic lines, but the patterns were far from stable. In one school, an exception was the football field, which was very popular during breaks but used exclusively by boys. Clear signs of the tensions revolving around identity categories were not observed, although there was one exception: in one class, there appeared to be a pattern of bullying of children with disabilities.

The observations showed academic subgroups among the children while they were at work in class. Children experiencing academic challenges often worked together—sometimes across ethnic and gender lines. In some classes, children were expected to work independently, which posed a challenge for children in need of more extensive help and facilitation. Observations indicate that these children—some of them migrant children—were excluded from groups having less or no troubles with their schoolwork. Some of the observed teachers opposed this tendency by using cooperative learning or similar working methods.

Peer communication

Some children appeared almost mute in class and during breaks, while others were both verbally and nonverbally very communicative. However, very few children did not interact with peers. Often, the teachers urged them to participate and interact with their peers and the teacher. Unsurprisingly, off-task communication was observed during classes, too.

Some children appeared isolated or excluded, and some seemed to withdraw from social relations, academic collaboration, etc., apparently being challenged on their wellbeing.

Especially in primary school (AG1), tensions and conflicts among children were observed, for instance, combined with stressed teachers or the lack of help and facilitation of schoolwork. At two schools, instances of violent communication were observed in Grades 4 and 5.

On the other hand, many observations showed assertiveness, recognition and cooperation among children. Regarding language, multilingual peer communication was mostly observed in reception classes, while communication in mainstream classes was mostly in Danish. In S1 and S2, this was in accordance with school policies prohibiting speaking languages other than Danish.

Educational staff

Engagement with students

Observations showed both signs of child-centredness and the opposite. Thus, a focus on children's present comfort, happiness and belonging (Gornik, 2020) was not part of all observations, as they also showed exclusions of children's values and beliefs, scolding and threatening, and sometimes a strong focus on good behaviour and academic achievements as a precondition for future success and wellbeing and for the integration of migrant children. However, some teachers appeared explicitly oriented towards the children's needs and comfort, trying to combine schoolwork with the children's wellbeing. For instance, one teacher insisted on the course content but presented it in a humorous and engaging way, acknowledging that many of her students were not fond of academic work. In a reception class, a girl was given a non-academic space (outside classes) and care for months in school, being a seemingly distraught newcomer. The teacher bought crayons and paper for her to express her feelings while painting.

Regarding migrant children, teachers were observed integrating their cultural background and migrant experiences into the lessons, indicating a transformative approach (Banks, 2019) that facilitated intercultural dialogue. Other teachers preferred an infusion or assimilative approach (Banks, 2019), for instance, presenting Danish society and history from a 'Danish' perspective and urging migrant children to assimilate to 'Danish values', thus othering the migrant children, their values and experiences. Teachers were also observed culturalising migrant children, explaining their behaviour and opinions by referring to their cultural background or religion. Some teachers expressed essentialising beliefs about school systems in the migrant children's countries of origin, creating a dichotomy between 'Danish values' and 'values of others'.

Conflict management

Only a few conflicts explicitly related to religion, ethnicity, nationality or race were observed. Apparently, most conflicts arose from social relations in a broader sense. To resolve negative behaviour, especially noise and off-task behaviour during lessons, some

teachers scolded the children, ranging from threatening to contact parents to ending reprimands positively, for instance, stressing that 'it is so nice being in this class'.

In a reception class, a teacher straightened out a conflict between two boys, which the parents denied was a conflict, by talking with the boys after school, letting them express their views on a forced friendship. One potential ethnic conflict between two boys was solved (for the moment) in a respectful way. Especially in the lower Grades, some teachers spent large amounts of time opening class dialogue to deliberation about conflicts and other matters of concern to the students.

Engagement with cultural diversity topics

In primary school, the engagement with cultural diversity topics appeared sparse. Thus, rituals and cultural traits connected to the Danish majority culture were maintained. For instance, in December at some schools, it was a common project to decorate the school for Christmas. These activities were taken very seriously by the teachers. At one school in the week before the Christmas break, no mention of religions other than Christianity was observed. This could be seen as a 'difference blind' approach, not acknowledging, for instance, that some Muslim children found it challenging to join the church service excursion arranged by the school.

In some instances, comparisons between Christianity and Islam were drawn during lessons, but mainly in a comparative and multicultural manner rather than in an intercultural or transcultural manner (Hill, 2007, Hrvatic, 2007, Holm & Zilliacus, 2009, Risager, 2007).

In one Grade 10 class, cultural meetings and conflicts were included in the curriculum, for instance, by reading and discussing texts about the conflict in Northern Ireland in English lessons. Different youth cultures, identities and dreams about the future were also discussed.

In a reception class, the teacher tried to bridge languages by using phrases and their meanings in different languages and cultures. The parents were involved in the task. Some teachers tried to integrate the diversity of languages and cultural appearance for purposes of inclusion, while others did not integrate multilanguage resources on a daily basis.

In two reception classes, we observed that the teachers often asked the children to tell 'what this is like in your country of origin', both providing an opening for a dialogue about cultural differences and risking essentialising ethnicity and culture. For some teachers, it seemed difficult to balance the interest in the children's background and domains outside school, integrating an intercultural and inclusive approach for all children in class, without asserting some students an essentialising ethnic identity. Other teachers successfully avoided the essentialising of ethnic identity when inviting children to talk about their different cultural backgrounds and migrant experiences. This was done in an atmosphere of mutual recognition. Furthermore, the children were urged to develop and clarify their values and points of view.

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

Intercultural dialogue (Dervin & Jacobsson, 2021; Dervin, 2015; Breidenbach & Nyiri, 2009) in class was sparse and often took place in relation to religious festivals or delimited pedagogical issues. Some teachers openly engaged the children's experiences regarding intercultural conflict or cultural pluralism, while other teachers focused on educational outcomes or learning in class, disregarding multicultural or intercultural issues. How conflicts, dialogue or discussions about equity and migration were part of the relations in school seemed to depend on the resources of the teachers. In classes with a stressed and unorganized atmosphere, such issues have poor conditions.

In reception classes, intercultural pluralism appeared appreciated, especially when part of the academic tasks. But predominantly, rituals and cultural traits related to the Danish majority culture were maintained, expressing monocultural normativity.

School environment

The observations showed some variety regarding visibility or articulation of multiculturality in school, but in general, there were very limited indications or signs of a multicultural environment. As the terms 'multicultural' and 'intercultural' are often used interchangeably in a European context, multiculturality is here related to the term 'intercultural': the right to be different, promoting equal opportunities and coexistence in a democratic society (Hrvatić, 2007), while multicultural can be understood as 'cultures living alongside one another' and as such is a less dynamic term (Holm & Zilliacus, 2009).

The schools and classrooms used different approaches to reflect the diverse multicultural student intake. In some classrooms, different sayings in Danish and minority languages were displayed, while in other classrooms, the exhibitions on the walls were strictly monolinguistic. In the reception classrooms, easy-to-read books or books with simple pedagogical content (compared to the age of the children in class) were used. Outdated, age-inappropriate teaching materials, with content that did not mirror children's identifications or interests, were prevalent in reception classes. Overall, it seemed that the main reason for integrating or reflecting multicultural approaches was to assimilate (Banks, 2019) or as an additive part (Castagno, 2009), indicating that school was perceived as a place where children learn how to be part of the existing social order. At one school, the approach in some subject-specific areas could be described as educating for amalgamation, meaning that different groups form a new group instead of assimilating to the dominant culture (Castagno, 2009). Here, the teacher used different teaching strategies, for instance, by including children's experiences to reduce prejudices and enhance intergroup relations (Castagno, 2009).

How do different factors affect integration processes?

Newly arrived children were either observed in reception classes or during flex arrangements. At S1 and S2, newly arrived children were part of so-called flex arrangements, meaning that they joined mainstream classes from an early stage after arriving. At S1, part of the flex arrangement was extra resources for Danish as a Second Language (DSL),2 meaning that a co-teacher with DSL competencies was assigned in some lessons. However, the teachers had noticed that the migrant children felt singled out if the co-teacher paid them special attention in class. Thus, it was observed that in the co-teaching lessons, the two teachers supported all children in their group work, making sure that all children got the help they needed but without singling out migrant children as special or deficient. This approach may contribute positively to integration.

However, in the flex arrangements of S1 and S2, some children were apparently placed in mainstream classes without sufficient Danish skills. At S2, newly arrived migrant children were included in regular schooling despite the fact that they, based on observations, did not appear to have sufficient language proficiency. Teachers confirmed in field conversations that further language support was impossible because of a lack of economic support. To compensate, they used children who shared the mother tongue of newly arrived migrant children as interpreters.

At S3, S4, S5 and S6, newly arrived children were taught in reception classes. A potential barrier to integration was observed at S4, a small school with only two reception classes and no other students, thus precluding contact with local children in school. For S3, S5 and S6, the reception classes were placed in local schools. This meant most of the participating children had friends from their reception class, and some had friends outside their class. Children were assigned to the mainstream classes in some subjects (for instance, physical education, maths and English), which for some appeared as an integrating factor, while others seemed not ready or nervous joining the mainstream classes. It was also observed that migrant children visiting mainstream classes did not succeed in their attempts to connect with local children.

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2 DSL, the Danish L2 subject, is designed to meet the needs of students who do not speak Danish at the native level, bringing grammar and an appropriate selection of texts into focus. Students in L2 courses are primarily immigrants, refugees or second-generation immigrants. In general, there has been criticism raised against the courses and the educational system for L2 students in Denmark, because of the failure to support immigrants' and refugees' academic skills (EVA 2006; Holmen 2008; Holmen 2011; OECD 2010). The criticism also includes the term 'L2' (or DSL) as it limits the acknowledgement of the students' language competences; for many students, Danish will be at least their third or fourth language. In primary school, DSL can be an additional subject, used when children are assessed as needing Danish language support for a limited period. Children are then usually taught outside of class, or paired with an assistant teacher in class.

In S3, S5 and S6, the researchers observed children appearing excluded from academic or social activities. Processes of exclusion seem to negatively affect the process of integration. While some children apparently withdrew from activities to protect themselves, this is still a sign of an environment that is not sufficiently inclusive.

3.2 Focus groups and interviews

The findings regarding newly arrived migrants, presented in this section, are based on 43 individual interviews and 10 focus group interviews. Table 1 gives an overview of the distribution of interviews according to school and age.

	Individual Interviews	Focus Group Interviews	Age Group
S1	-	-	-
S2	5	2	10–13 y/o
S3	11	1	14–17 y/o
S4	17	2	14–17 y/o
S5	8	2	14–17 y/o
S6	2	2	14–17 y/o

Table 1

Dynamics and factors influencing the integration process of migrant children

Premigration period and migration experience

<u>Country of birth/country of ancestors</u>

(Thematised in 27 individual interviews and one focus group interview.)

Refugees, family reunited children and children of labour migrants take a very similar position when it comes to their country of birth. Feelings of belonging, wellbeing and identity are knit together in stories of the country of birth and family members living there. Thus, the children grow up in transnational social fields (Levitt & Schiller, 2004), the transnational family and the country of birth being important anchor points (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016). They miss their grandparents, their family, their house, their friends, etc. 'My country of birth is very beautiful,' some say. In particular, some state that they miss deceased family members. It may be elderly grandparents or younger family members who died in a war. One Kurdish child talks about the freedom fighters that she misses. Another stresses that having his homeland in your heart is important, even though it is Palestine, where he has never been. Many children are in touch with family and friends through social media.

Had it not been for war (refugees) or the quest for better jobs and better education (labour migrants), they wished they had stayed in their country of birth with their parents and family.

One girl states that she hates 'the bombs' and hates 'boats' (sailing on the Mediterranean) (Child 87, female, AG2).

On the other hand, many children note that Denmark is a great place to live. The Danes are very pleasant, one child says, and only a few of the children mention experiences of explicit racism. Denmark is better than their country of birth because it offers free education, peace and security. One is even allowed to talk about politics, and one can speak one's own language, a Kurdish child adds.

General life

Living conditions
    N/A

Spatial and social positioning

(Thematised in 15 interviews and two focus group interviews.)

Most children like the city they live in, but some of them do wish to move to a bigger city when possible. They like to know their way around in the city. One girl is still thinking of an important, distinctive building in her city, which was the first thing she recognized on arrival as a form of identifiable anchor (Child 87, female, AG2). Another girl prefers to live in a rural area, close to her family, while a third girl cannot wait to move to a bigger city to study.

Many of the children describe Denmark as a peaceful place where life is easy. In Denmark, it is possible to get an education and for parents to find a job. One underlines that one can have one's own room. However, many of the children also add that they lack Danish friends, and one child fears ending up unemployed.

As important places, the children highlight football clubs, after-school classes, upper secondary school and workplaces (stressing afterschool jobs and the opportunity to earn one's own money).

The children miss their country of birth, which they describe as the place of family and friends. Transit countries visited on the migration journey are not described in a positive light. Refugees from Afghanistan and Syria do not miss Iran and Turkey. These places, where they spent time in transit during their flight, evoke bad memoires of being treated badly, not going to school, having to work to earn money to support the family, etc. One child mentions Germany, where his family lives, as a better place than Denmark.

Inclusion in peer groups

(Thematised in 30 individual interviews and two focus group interviews.)

The children share experiences of not being included in Danish peer groups. The lack of Danish friends affects their wellbeing, feelings of belonging and identity. Attachment to

friends from the country of origin seems to be crucial to the children. These friends are important anchor points.

Some quotations from the interviews:

> Thus, my friends, I do not have a lot of friends, because I do not have Danish friends, that is…but not after school…they are drinking beer.' (Child 118, female, AG2)
> 'Yeah, I think if I have Danish friends, I can, like, learn Danish faster. Yeah, but I don't have Danish friends.' (Child 118, female, AG2)
> 'Not really. Not from originally, I mean I have some Danish friends but I'm not with them a lot and when I'm not with them we speak English so…we all prefer it [speaking English], it's just better.' (Child 144, female, AG2)

Refugee children, family reunified children and children of labour migrants, girls and boys alike, do not have many or any Danish friends outside school, they say, not even if they attend organised sports or a youth club during their leisure time.

One child states that having Danish friends is important and that learning to speak Danish is easier if one has Danish friends. One child mentions Danish children acting in a racist way and another mentions harassment and bullying.

Almost all the children say that they have friends in their countries of birth. They miss their friends but keep in contact via social media, Skype, etc. Some explain that their families know each other, too, being part of a transnational migrant network. Others explain that they found friends from their country of birth in Denmark, for instance, in neighbouring towns. One girl talks about a close friend from her country of birth who lives in Denmark. They talk about their country of birth and discuss what it is like to be a refugee.

One boy explains that he was raised to be moving between different countries. He experienced a whole year of complete solitude during his first year in a Danish school. Afterwards, he had a clear experience that his inclusion now in the different local communities of sport, leisure time activities, etc., are the fruits of his own hard work and will to meet other young people and take the initiative to communicate and make friends. (Child 99, male, AG2).

Involvement in leisure activities and sport

(Thematised in 30 individual interviews and one focus group interview.)

The children are involved in leisure activities. Some play football, for instance, in clubs around their neighbourhoods. One boy stresses that he is together with local children in the football club but does not have any other contact with the local children (Child 141, male, AG2). When not in school, the children watch television or movies, listen to music, do their homework, visit friends and eat together, read books (Danish books and Arabic books are

mentioned), go shopping, go to cafes, etc. Some of the children have or have had an afterschool job.

One girl says that she is alone after school, 'looking at my telephone' (Child 125, female, AG1). Social media, such as TikTok, appear important to the children. Many, especially boys, mention gaming. They game with children all over the world using English as a lingua franca.

Health (physical and mental health)

(Thematised in nine interviews.)

One child praises the Danish free healthcare system, which is apparently an anchor point for him in the new country. The wellbeing of two other children appears threatened due to psychological problems associated with the migration process and communication problems in the health sector.

A girl's traumatising experiences during the long journey to escape war in the home country encompass accounts of suicidal thoughts and family members' psychological hardship after arriving in Denmark. Another girl says that she has been diagnosed with a kidney disease and was treated at a Danish hospital. 'Afterward, they say, if you drink four litres of water, five litres of water, you will maybe better…but I did not receive any treatment…it aches.' Thus, she seemingly feels othered. However, she adds that the nurses are nice people and not racists (Child 87, female, AG2).

Educational environment and system

Experiences of inclusion in school

(Thematised in 27 individual interviews and one focus group interview.)

The children express an experience of being included in school with regard to being taught and educated. The education system is an anchor point (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016) in the new country and causes a sense of belonging. Generally, the children say that they are fond of going to school and pleased with their teachers. They are happy to be taught school subjects, such as math and English, and some state that they look forward to further education. However, being in a reception class seems complicated in regard to inclusion, as the concept of 'reception-classes' accentuates otherness, and provides limited options for attending the full range of school subjects and for qualifying for access to further education.

Many point to the importance of learning Danish in a hurry and the challenges related to learning a new language at a fast pace. 'Well, everybody speaks Danish in Denmark, so you have to…if you want to understand each other,' says one of the boys (Child 92, male, AG2). Some of the children miss science-related subjects, as the focus in reception classes is on math and Danish. They worry about how it will be to start general upper secondary school, for instance, as they lack instruction in several subjects in reception class.

Also, being socially included—making Danish friends—is difficult. In the breaks and in their spare time, they are together with other migrant children. None of the children mention having Danish friends. Four mention harassment, and one girl says that she has been bullied and called 'black' (Child 122, female, AG1). One girl says that it is hard to make Danish friends because they do drink alcohol, which she does not (Child 118, female, AG2).

Language and school language policy and practice

(Thematised in 23 individual interviews and three focus group interviews.)

Many of the children mention speaking many languages: their mother tongue, other languages from their country of birth or from neighbouring countries, English, Danish and other languages. However, none mention teachers using languages other than Danish as a resource in the lessons.

Many of the children add that it is hard to learn Danish. Some are pleased with receiving extra instruction in Danish as a second language, while others are worried and frustrated about the slow pace in teaching Danish. In two classes, the children act as substitute teachers for newly arrived peers. Using the mother tongue when helping newcomers seems well-reputed. However, in a focus group interview, five girls discuss being aware of not speaking the mother tongue when in social company, so people around them do not feel left out (FG 208, AG2).

One girl says that she is not allowed to speak languages other than Danish in some lessons, but that she asks her girlfriend in Turkish to explain if there is something she does not understand. In another subject, they are allowed by the teacher to speak languages other than Danish, but if they do, the Danish classmates say, 'Why don't you speak Danish?' (Child 125, female, AG1).

Peers

(Thematised in 27 interviews and two focus group interviews.)

According to the interviews, it seems that newly arrived migrant children socialise with other migrant children in the classroom and during breaks. They are important anchor points (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016) for the children and for the development and maintenance of their identities and feelings of belonging. We have the same refugee experiences, one girl emphasizes. A boy says that his best friend is an Arab boy and that he speaks Arabic and helps him in class. Some children say that it is hard to make friends because they do not speak Danish very well, and two AG2 children say that it is because they do not drink alcohol. Asked if he has any friends in his class, one boy answers, 'So, we know each other and we say hi to each other, yes' (FG 208, male, AG2), indicating that this is the only kind of contact he has with Danish peers. A boy says that he is annoyed with his Danish classmates, and a girl adds that Danish classmates are noisy. Not speaking Danish very well makes it difficult to

work together with Danish classmates, one girl states, and one boy says he works alone during lessons. 'That is better for me, I think,' he adds (Child 137, male, AG2).

Teachers/educational staff

(Thematised in 13 interviews and two focus group interviews.)

Generally, the children are pleased with the teachers and apparently see them as gatekeepers to Danish society. 'I like the teachers, the teachers are nice,' one says (Child 85, female, AG2). A girl supports this perception: 'He [the teacher] helps me a lot,' (FG 209, female, AG2). Some of the children explain that their teachers helped them when they started in school, especially with extra instruction in Danish as a second language.

One boy is afraid of being stuck in school. He has been in the reception class for almost two years now, and he is anxious about never getting out of the reception class system. Being 16, his ambitions for future education are fragile, as he foresees a long, difficult road before he can enter higher education. Still, he mentions the teachers helping him with his wishes for education (Child 136, male, AG2).

Two children say that they refrain from telling the teacher about being harassed. One explains that he does not think it will help; on the contrary, his experience is that it can get worse if the teachers are involved (Child 136, male, AG2).

Some children compare the school system in Denmark with the school system in their countries of birth. Most prefer the Danish system. However, one child says that one learns more in school in his country of birth.

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

(Thematised in 18 individual interviews and one focus group interview.)

With regard to inclusion and integration practices for newcomers, above all, the children mention being taught Danish as a second language. Affiliation with Denmark seems to depend on language competence. Receiving extra instruction in Danish as a second language was very good, one child says. 'I did learn a whole lot,' she states.

Another apparently blames himself for a lack of inclusion and social and academic participation:

> *I went to 10th Grade directly and there they barely spoke English [...] having a whole school year not talking to anyone, but I was like, maybe it was also my fault, because I'm too... like left in [country of origin] like, I was in Denmark but like, my real me was like in [country of origin], so I was still calling my friends in [country of origin], I wanted to go home so bad. Reached a point where I was like crying one day, I was like, I want to go back to [country of origin], I just want to go back. (Child 99, male, AG2)*

One states that one does not learn Danish in the reception class because everyone speaks English. Another explains that she joined forces with another newcomer because neither of them spoke Danish. One claims that it was hard to learn physics because the assignments are full of Danish text.

Language issues and being part of a joint 'language community' seem to be important for the perception of inclusion and integration (Rytter, 2019), particularly because learning Danish to be included in the educational system is a challenge for newly arrived children. In summary, learning Danish as soon as possible is important to newly arrived children, but they point to many problems in their learning processes. They do not mention other inclusion and integration practices regarding them as newcomers.

Psychosocial support

(Thematised in nine individual interviews and one focus group interview.)

While none of the children talk about institutionalized psychosocial support, one says that his teacher has helped him fight his shyness.

One girl, who plans to continue to general upper secondary school, explains her worries:

> *This is a new country, a new culture, and then…education…we are a little anxious. Well, if we go to that school…if it is not good for us…or if we can't get on with the Danes, because we have never had…Danish friends. (Child 87, female, AG2)*

Looking for support, the children find friends and peers from their countries of birth. One of the girls explains, 'We have the same history. Thus, we understand each other' (FG 209, female, AG2). Another girl says, 'Yes, precisely. I have my girlfriends…yes…I…if they have almost the same histories, but not having a time as hard as mine…but anyway…but they have lived through adversity, too.' (Child 83, female, AG2)

Family and the wider community

Family

(Thematised in 35 individual interviews and three focus group interviews.)

When it comes to belonging, feeling secure and having a sense of wellbeing, the family plays a key role and can be seen as the most important anchor point (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016).

Family is important in relation to migration. Some children talk about family members travelling to Denmark ahead of the rest of family, and about family reunifications—waiting time, delays and insecurity. They talk about missing family members—in particular, grandparents and deceased family members are mentioned.

Some talk about new family members born in Denmark and the importance of marrying and settling down. Having a boyfriend and 'kissing' is not allowed by her parents, one girl says, but she has one, and her mother tacitly knows (Child 83, female, AG2). When married, you can move out of your parents' house, another girl adds.

It is important for many of the children to stick together in the family or the extended family and to take care of other family members, such as younger siblings. Some of the children declare their sisters and brothers 'my best friend' (Child 87, female, AG2).

Migrant community, religious community

(Thematised in 13 individual interviews and one focus group interview.)

Almost all 13 children talking of this subject highlight extended families (in Denmark, other countries and their country of origin) as the core of the migrant community. Social and/or religious institutions and organisations are only mentioned sporadically.

'We have helped each other,' one child states (FG 209, female, AG2). Newly arrived refugees are helped by those who have been here for a while, she says. This may be as interpreters or peers who have similar or comparable experiences and thus can support and understand other newcomers.

Some children mention the importance of speaking the mother tongue with family members and watching television from the country of origin. Two children refer to the importance of places. One Kurdish child refers to a specific mountain in her country of birth, and another child refers to a mosque (Al Aqsa) in her grandfather's country of birth.

Local environment

(Thematised in 15 individual interviews and one focus group interview.)

The local environment is mentioned in relation to different activities: going for a walk or a bike ride, hanging out with friends or going on a trip to nearby cities. The local area is also the site of afterschool classes and afterschool jobs. Two children explain that they have relations to their Danish neighbours. Two girls say that they used to visit the local library, and one of them used it to borrow books in Arabic.

Other

N/A

Conceptualisations of own wellbeing and life satisfaction

Self-perceived wellbeing and life satisfaction

(Thematised in 28 individual interviews and two focus group interviews.)

With regard to wellbeing and life satisfaction, the overwhelming indicator was having good friends, while others included being with family and spending time in nature. A few children mention leisure activities (mostly sports) as an important aspect of wellbeing. The opposite clearly has a negative impact on wellbeing: not being part of friendships, feeling lonely and missing family members and important places in the country of origin.

Almost all children mention the importance of friendship. In a focus group interview, four girls explain the importance of friendship with other migrant children in this way: 'We share the same experience. So we do understand each other. [...] So, if one of us is sad [...] we ask why and are together the whole day' (FG 209, female, AG2).

Hence, strong and long-standing friendships with other migrant peers seems important for wellbeing and life satisfaction. Another girl explains that friendship and family are the most important for her life; she mentions friends because 'they are everything for me' (Child 87, female, AG2).

Family is also closely related to wellbeing. A boy underlines that obtaining a good education is important, as he can afford to take his family on trips. Some of the children link friendship and family by mentioning a brother or a sister as their best friend, strengthened by sharing family ties and experiences.

A more ambivalent part of wellbeing is nature; it is ambivalent because nature is associated with joy and wellbeing but also with recollections of war: 'I will say, the sky is very peaceful, but [...] looking at the lake, it is a mirror for the sky and a way for rockets. [...] when the children look at it, they hate it, actually' (Child 87, female, AG2). Another talks about the silence and beauty of the sea, but is simultaneously reminded of the dangerous escape across the ocean.

Negative influences on wellbeing are closely connected to not having friends at all or not having local or Danish friends. The lack of local friends and the difficulties in meeting Danish peers is prevalent in many interviews; for instance, this boy remarks: 'But, like, social, I don't know, because I don't have, like, Danish friends' (Child 141, male, AG2).

The feeling of loneliness as part of insufficient life satisfaction is mostly connected to being a 'newcomer' in the country and school, illustrated by this and other excerpts: 'Sometimes...when you move to another country, and you feel a bit...alone. You are not feeling well' (Child 208, male, AG2).

Missing family members who remained in the country of birth seem to be of immense importance for many of the children. Some children also mention missing familiar places or spots in the country of birth.

Using the concept of social anchoring (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016) to understand wellbeing and life satisfaction, children's points of stability—or instability—are closely related to friendships and family, both facilitating social and psychological feelings of belonging and temporary stability. Family and friends represent both subjective and external dimensions of anchoring, intensifying the importance of both.

Identification and belonging

(Thematised in 31 individual interviews and three focus group interviews.)

As is the case for wellbeing, three aspects seem to be key to both identification and belonging: enduring or trusting friendships, family relations, and education experiences. Furthermore, belonging to two or more countries—by heart, by choice, or by force—is a recurring motif in the interviews, often as part of self-identification.

Friendship is very important as part of both identification and identity. Having enduring friendships seems to strengthen identity constructions and social anchoring (Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001; Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016). One girl explains why her friends are so important to her: 'We [five girls] have been together for almost three years, where we experienced so many good and bad things…' (Child 85, female, AG2). Not having friends can negatively influence identity construction and a feeling of belonging:

> […] like it's my first year here in Denmark and I still feel like I'm left out, I don't really know how things go on here, and then I could talk to somebody else who isn't from Denmark, and we would relate to each other.' (Child 99, male, AG2)

Families and close relationships with relatives are closely connected to aspects of identity. Being together with the family—often by family reunification—seems to be a protective part of belonging to a new country, even if it is not without conflicts, hurdles or losses:

> […] when there was no war, we were together with the whole family [in the country of origin], the whole family. Also my sister […], we always went together […], my mom and dad…they weren't…very sad and so. They were happy. But now…my mom has five brothers…they are all dead. (Child 35, female, AG2)

Taking conclusive part in school life seems difficult, because of language, personal or social issues, but seems important for the children's sense of belonging and future perspectives: 'I wanted to become more…I want to think more about my education. Well, I think so much about my education, because in [country of origin], it is hard…harder than here…to get an education' (Child 85, female, AG2). Talking about the importance of feeling

part of daily school life and getting an education, one girl reflects on her position: 'It...is hard to learn language...And this is not my language...it's very hard. Sometimes...I get very angry on it...But it is also good that I did come here [to Denmark]' (Child 86, female, AG2).

Complex feelings towards an alien language that is not part of one's identity are mixed with gratitude for being safe and belonging (partially) to a new country. Some of the children point at future identities and belonging by contemplating their future; this often involves obtaining a good education (at the university level) and having their own apartment.

Other aspects of self-identification can be associated with ethnic affiliation, such as when a child is painting the Palestinian flag or another boy describes the importance of cultural artefacts lost in the airport on the escape route. A more complicated or ambiguous part of belonging is articulated by a couple of children as they express relief to arrive in Denmark and appreciate being there; at the same time, however, they express sadness about the forced escape from their well-known country and city, friends and relatives.

Feelings of safety

(Thematised in 20 individual interviews and one focus group interview.)

Feelings of safety seem to be tied to four topics. The most frequently mentioned topic is instability in the country of origin and in transit countries and the relatively high stability and safety in Denmark regarding lasting peace, protection and fulfilment of basic needs, such as those related to health and family finances. As one child explains, when asked about her life in Denmark: 'Yes. It is better...much better. [...] I can find...to eat or sleep...it is very different [from the country of origin]' (Child 84, female, AG2).

The children predominantly perceive the absence of war as safety; the fear of bombs, losing their livelihood and being at the mercy of family or friends are compared to being safe and feeling secure in Denmark. Thus, a second aspect of the feeling of safety is related to the absence of war, anxiety and separation:

> In these periods...where my dad was here [Denmark]...we didn't have a house or other things...We lived at my uncle's place. It was very hard. I never thought we could get out of there. I was sure I had to be there forever. (Child 83, female, AG2)

A third aspect of safety concerns their legal status and future in Denmark because of harsh immigration and naturalization policies. It seems that a lack of predictability and security about one's legal status affects perceptions of safety and security. One child expresses worries about the Danish immigration policies on Syrian refugees in particular (pointing out certain areas as 'safe' for returning to Syria) in this way:

> Sometimes... [...] if I am from the capitol of [country of origin] ... That means [...] they get kicked out. [...] Out, yes, because they think in the capital [of country of origin] that you can... you can stay there. (Child 118, female, AG2)

A few children also mention experiences of racism, among them vicarious experiences of racism witnessed by siblings or peers. One girl mentions her difficulties in getting an afterschool job because of her hijab.

A fourth important aspect of feeling safe in life is friendship, which contributes to stability and continuity for newcomers. Relationships with teachers may also seem important, especially in one school. By believing in the children and affirming their importance, one girl underlines that her teachers make her feel comfortable and confident about herself, supporting her feelings of safety. This perspective is confirmed by other children at the same school.

Self-perceived opportunities, choices and feelings of control over their own lives and futures

(Thematised in 29 individual interviews and two focus group interviews.)

This aspect of wellbeing seems to be more blurred regarding self-perceived personal opportunities on the micro level and structural barriers (such as legal status, level of education and age) on the macro level. Thus, wellbeing can be perceived despite structural barriers.

Having choices and opportunities often seems to be connected to current education and a hope for being able to stay in Denmark. Several children express a desire to stay in Denmark, even if they have the choice to go elsewhere (including their country of origin); however, some doubt if they are legally allowed to stay, which has a negative impact on the feeling of control and choices.

Some children express a feeling of control and opportunities in the present because of their devastating experiences while fleeing from their country, pointing at new and better opportunities in Denmark; some express a sense of 'unfamiliarity' with the country of birth, as they have only vague memories of their life before war and exile:

> Yes, because I was young in (country of origin). I can't remember how it was. But it was good sometimes. […] But I can't remember…when I went to school…or being together with my family…my house…Yeah.' (Child 35, female, AG2)

One boy expresses his perceived opportunities as getting an education: 'But I think coming to Denmark, yes. It is…a very huge opportunity for me. […] Getting an education and a job…yes.' He also stresses that living in a democracy is perceived as an opportunity to participate and engage in society: 'So, one of the things I like in Denmark, that is democracy. You can just be…you can tell your opinion. Yes. […] I have the same opportunities as everybody else' (Child 89, male, AG2). In this case, the perception of having opportunities and control over one's life is connected to education and being on an equal footing because of democratic rights.

Almost all the children relate control over life and future opportunities to education, pointing at a preference for higher education. Some of the boys, though, want to be mechanics, some by choice and others by 'forced possibilities', since arriving at age 14 or older limits the possibilities of an academic career.

Often, the great extent of liberty and independence in school is mentioned as a positive reinforcement of autonomy and control over one's own life. In a focus group interview, two girls share their experiences as follows:

> Well, if we want to study, then we study, if we don't want to, then we don't [...]. It's me to decide.' The other adds, 'So it is you who is in charge of your future. (FG 209, female, AG2).

A boy points at his dream of becoming a professional football player as part of his perceived opportunities:

> Like, it's like better education and for example I like football, so if I ever want to be a football player, I got more chances here than in Africa (Child 141, male, AG2)

A few children do have a feeling of being 'stuck' in the reception class system. They do not feel control over their schooling and have only limited options regarding their education:

> Well, I am a little afraid of...when I am a grown up. And I can't be a pilot. I have to stay here [in the reception class] until I am 25 (Child 136, male, AG2).

The feeling of being in an educational limbo with limited opportunities is mostly expressed by newly arrived children aged 14–17. A girl relates being in the reception class to being an 'outsider' and not having many choices regarding school:

> Because...you know [...], you are not part of the ordinary school [...] you are a special place, that is for me, because I am refugee. That's not good to think about...I know why I am here [at the school for newly arrived migrants]' (Child 83, female, AG2).

This small story points to lack of control over one's life and future, making this theme a complex affair.

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

(Thematised in 15 individual interviews.)

The perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions that can be related to equality, intercultural dialogue, intercultural conflicts, cultural and religious pluralism, migrants and migration in the interview material can be divided into different themes.

New in school (migration): A boy notes that it is important to know the language, and he suggests what the school should do when someone new starts in class: 'You should give the person extra lessons, like I got, because then he begins to find friends and play and talk to people and understand' (Child 123, male, AG1). A girl notes that if a new girl comes to class, she will help her understand things and translate for her. She believes that the teacher would like her to do that.

Language and intercultural dialogue: Girls in a focus group interview wonder why people must correct their language even though they understand very well what they are saying. It obviously irritates them a bit, and one of them offers the example that if she confuses 'one' with 'a' in a sentence, people understand very well what she means, but they still correct her. She wonders, 'If you understand me, why correct me?' (FG 209, female, AG2).

Plans of education and future (equality/opportunities): Some children have globally oriented plans regarding education:

> *Because studying medicine is…it is something like a global study, you can use it everywhere. So, if you decide to stay in Denmark, you can work here. If you decide to go to wherever it is…[country of origin]…The United States…Germany…everywhere…you can work as…a doctor. (Child 81, male, AG2)*

Hatred (intercultural conflicts, cultural and religious pluralism, migrants and migration): Five girls in a focus group talk about whether they have experienced hatred or bullying. One girl's sister experienced a girl in class that hated refugees. All the other children in this class had no problem with refugees: 'We don't take it that serious because there are few of that kind of people, and that…like our teacher, most people love us very much…so, one of a million' (FG209, female, AG2).

Approaches to children (intercultural dialogue (Dervin, 2015) and identity (Anthias, 2002, Dervin & Jacobsson, 2021): A child likes the way teachers in Denmark are supportive of what children are doing and producing in school. She compares it to her country of origin, where everything must be perfect, or else it is thrown away. She appreciates Denmark's policy of displaying student work on shelves.

Democracy and comparison of countries and possibilities (equality, intercultural conflicts, cultural and religious pluralism, migrants and migration): In some interviews, the children compare their lives to other peoples' lives inside and outside Denmark, compare their lives and opportunities with their parents' opinions and values, and compare their grandparents' life circumstances and lack of opportunities with their own. A girl says that she likes living in a democratic country like Denmark, but she does not like that at some workplaces, one cannot wear a hijab:

Child: Sometimes when I go and talk to...a boss [at the workplace] about a job. So they say you cannot work here because you wear a headscarf.
Interviewer: Because you have what?
Child: A headscarf. So...one time I went to a hotel, and they told me that I can work there if I take off my headscarf. But I cannot.
Interviewer: But you will not do that?
Child: Yes...So, always...it is a little difficult when I ask for employment. It is only this once...and there were many...many people who were nice and kind, yes. (Child 35, female, AG2)

(Perceived) advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children's integration

Perception of integration

(Thematised in 18 interviews.)

According to the children, the following aspects are important in the children's understanding of integration. First, language. Having or learning the language of the new country to express oneself is of great concern to the children. The satisfaction with expanding Danish language skills and the frustration of not being able to articulate your thoughts in Danish were mutually dominant in the interviews.

Second, equality is important. Some children find Denmark to be a socially equitable country, thereby enhancing their sense of integration. A boy puts it this way: 'Because they have...the opportunity to use their [education]...There's no difference. [...] Everybody is equal' (Child 118, female, AG2).

Third, an important aspect is friends, both among local children and among fellow migrants. Not having friends/Danish friends can weaken the feeling of being integrated. As a boy says, 'But, like, social, I don't know, because I don't have, like, Danish friends. Like, all my friends are from this school or online.' (Child 141, male, AG2). On the other hand, migrant peers are also important for integration. For instance, a group of girls states that long-term friendship with equally experienced migrants supports their inclusion in the Danish school system.

Lastly, system support or lack thereof is perceived as important for integration. Children mention insufficient interpreters, bureaucracy when renewing passports or residence permits and long case processing times as barriers to integration.

Also, a few children's (AG2) discussion of independence from their parents' beliefs about marriage, living alone, etc. can be seen as part of their understanding of integration.

Advantages

(Thematised in 13 individual interviews.)

According to the children, it is a positive thing to learn the language of the country and to have several languages one can use. A few children mention leisure-time activities, often sports, as advantages. Most of the children refer to the school system, teachers or peers as positive 'models', and some explain that the Danish school system is not so fixed on tests and competition. One girl stresses that including children's pieces of art in libraries, for instance, is an advantage when it comes to integration: 'But in [country of birth]…if we create something like this [paper dolls in the library], so just put it in the trash. It's not good enough. […] But [here] is good that you support children in creating things' (Child 87, female, AG2).

Summing up, the positive factors in existing models are 'important persons' (teachers, peers, neighbours), learning the language and using well-known languages. Opposing integration seems to be not having models or practices to welcome newcomers.

Weaknesses

(Thematised in 13 individual interviews.)

A more attentive welcoming system in school is recommended by several children. Some wish for more support during the first days of school, simply to be able to navigate the building. One girl describes her first day. Being left alone on the playground, in school or between classes during the first days of school is confusing and gives an impression of loneliness. One boy remembers his first days of school with similar experiences, helping a newcomer around a couple of months later—as a mentor by choice.

A small school and isolated reception classes are mentioned as a main weakness in the existing system by children (AG2) attending S4. They explain that the school is very small and not connected to schools where they can meet Danish youth and speak Danish during the day except with the teacher. They describe it as a weak point that they attend a reception class for three years to learn Danish, but still do not reach proficiency. They find that they are lacking 'a Danish life', as a boy says. Another expresses worry that they might get stuck in the reception class, and he might never be able to move further in the educational system. It is important to him that his teachers help him.

A girl explains that the school she attended previously was bigger and that she prefers that school because of its greater variety of students; for example, there are more girls there, compared to her being the only girl in her class now. Another girl suggests that they as refugees should attend a bigger school and, for instance, follow maths lessons—which they are good at from the country of origin, she says—with Danish students. Other schools in the Danish sample have reception classes established at the compulsory school, as in the children's suggestions here. It differs by municipality.

Lack of opportunity to establish friendships with Danish children is generally perceived as a weakness. This may be due to isolated schooling or a lack of interest from local children. One boy articulates that not attending a Danish school makes it difficult to meet people. And, even when playing football in a club, it is difficult to become better acquainted with the other players, the Danes:

Child: But like, like, the Danish people, I just talk to them at football...after that I don't talk to them, like...I don't know.
Interviewer: Okay. Is it hard to get, like, close to them, or just because?
Child: I think, like, they already got so many friends [okay], so, like, they...like, for them they have a lot of friends, so like, it's not like a big thing to, like, [...] Like have...like, make you, their friend or something. (Child 141, male, AG2)

Children attending big schools also note that it is difficult to make Danish friends. They perceive it as their own responsibility to make friends:

Yeah, just in general do it or else you don't get anything. Like what I said earlier, in order to get something [yeah] you need to do something. (Child 99, Male, AG2)

It is thus a weakness in the existing integration system, that the responsibility of integration rests, to a large extent, with the newcomers, while majority society and citizens do not reach out sufficiently; this is seen both in school organizations and the isolation of migrants, even among Danish students.

Another weakness lies with the local authorities stressing children's parents by, for example, forcing them into practical trainee work despite illness such as backpains and headaches. One girl explains that she often wants just to leave the school and get a job to free her mother of the dependency on the municipality and its decisions. In addition, a lack of trust in health professionals and inadequate treatment of family members or children themselves is mentioned as a problem influencing children's ability to integrate.

Some girls in a focus group interview also mention that the interpreter who translates at school for their parents in meetings with their teachers does not translate sufficiently well. The interpreter does not translate all the important details or mistranslates. It feels like the interpreter wants to control the situation.

Issues mentioned are also digitalisation of services if, for instance, renewal of certificate of residence is not going through as expected. There is no office to visit and ask for help, only a telephone number, and they tell you to wait for the certificate.

Good practices

(Thematised in 12 interviews.)

Elements in school that children and young people emphasise as good practices are mostly focused on language learning but also on gaining knowledge and education in a broader sense. A boy talks about his favourite school disciplines, history and social science, because he gets to know people better and learn how people react:

Not only in Denmark, but in the Middle East and everywhere (Child 89, male, AG2).

A girl especially likes that they have a lot of group work in school. As a newcomer, she explains, it is very easy to get to know people if you work with them in smaller groups in school. She also recognizes that the tone in class is easy-going when the students make jokes, play a game while doing maths or during Danish lessons. She recognizes a good day in school, and she appreciates when it is fun to learn. However, other children prefer when the teacher is in charge and takes control in class instead. One mentions that he does not like to be left alone to work by himself or in groups.

4. Discussion

This report has explored integration processes from the perspective of children aged 10–17 who are newly arrived migrants in Denmark. However, bellow discussion will also include some findings from the research with long-term migrant and local children as well. Addressing the first and overall research question, '*How do (migrant and local) children perceive and experience processes of migrant integration?'*, some major themes can be extracted from interviews, focus groups and participant observations. When integration is considered as processes of migrants and children of migrants becoming part of society (Rudiger & Spencer, 2003), settling, interacting and being part of social changes (Penninx & Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016), four topics stand out from the empirical material: ontological security, transnationality, peers and friendship and language.

A basic sense of ontological security is crucial for the experience of becoming part of and interacting with the new society. The interviews with the children show, explicitly and implicitly, a tendency for external social anchors (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016) related to being in Denmark to provide a sense of ontological security. Hence, newly arrived children in particular speak of democracy in Denmark, the opportunity to get a free education, a job or income support and the high degree of security in Denmark as positive framework conditions for integration. In addition, the importance of the family and extended family—representing both internal and external dimensions of social anchoring (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016)—is underlined in almost all interviews. The feeling of basic security, stability and predictability for oneself and one's family thus appears to be a main factor influencing integration processes in a positive way and allowing for wellbeing. However, the interviews also point to feelings of lack of security. Some children worry about their future

jobs and education options, indicating a mismatch between the rigorous demands of the education system and an inadequate reception teaching system not fully suitable for fulfilling students' learning needs. Others worry about temporary resident permits, insecure housing policies and unstable conditions for family members both in Denmark and abroad. Hence, conditions contributing to ontological insecurity may comprise barriers to integration.

Transnational social fields (Levitt & Schiller, 2004) are another important factor to take into consideration when examining the integration and wellbeing of children. It appears from interviews and focus groups that transnational social anchors (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016) play an important role in the lives of the children, in particular relatives and friends living abroad, either in the countries of origin or in other countries. The children tend to be in contact with their relatives via phone or video calls or social media. Some of the children visit relatives abroad for shorter or longer periods, while others are restricted from such travels due to unrest and war. COVID-19 is also mentioned by several children, both with and without migrant backgrounds, as a hindrance to travelling abroad. In addition, transnational social anchors play a significant role within the children's local context. In school, including languages other than Danish can strengthen the transnational social anchors of both migrant children and local children whose mother tongue is not Danish. The opposite also seems to be true: the exclusion of other languages can contribute to an experience of important anchors, experiences and competences as not valued in the school context.

Peers and friends appear to be a crucial factor for integration and well-being, based on the distribution of the theme in the empirical material and the ways in which the children qualify the theme. It is difficult for the newly arrived migrant children to make friends, especially local Danish-speaking friends. In addition, long-term migrant children and local children describe friendship and peer groups as of the utmost importance for wellbeing. School is important, as it provides the context for the friendships that children do make. Also, leisure activities and organised sports appear to play a major role as sites for social anchoring, seen in peer groups in schools hanging out after school, going to sports together, watching television together or being together online. Belonging to peer groups as communities on the micro level is thus crucial for the experience of integration and inclusion in society in a broader sense for all children, regardless of background. For migrant children, having friends with the same background or mother tongue seems important, as such peers contribute to feelings of belonging and safety. Hence, a one-eyed focus on 'getting Danish friends' as contributing to integration is not recommended. However, it is noteworthy that many migrant children describe significant difficulties in connecting with Danes, and that some indicate advanced Danish language skills as a prerequisite for making Danish friends.

With regard to practices and policies surrounding the issue of language, there are interesting tendencies connected to specific groups of children. Across all schools, observations and interviews show that significant measures are taken to promote migrants' gaining a sufficient level of Danish. Three models have been observed: reception classes placed in mainstream schools (S3, S5 and S6), reception classes placed in separate schools

(S4) and a flexible reception system where children are placed in mainstream classes on arrival or after a short period but receive additional training in Danish as a Second Language as an integrated part of their school day (S1, S2). Two main barriers to integration are identified: reception classes placed in separate schools hinder contact with Danes, children at S4 explain. However, when included in mainstream classes, several children report insufficient support for connecting with others and participating in instructional activities. Hence, isolation is a risk in both the separate and mainstream systems.

Newly arrived migrant children find it difficult to learn Danish and welcome the efforts made by the school to enable them to learn Danish. As mentioned, they see their lack of Danish proficiency as limiting their ability to make local friends; in addition, they see speaking Danish as a prerequisite for further education and employment. Long-term migrants who arrive after a certain age experience similar challenges in learning Danish. A point to note is that children assume that learning Danish is their own responsibility and blame themselves if they fail.

Another important finding, described by long-term migrants and local children with migrant parents, is a school practice of prohibiting children from speaking their mother tongue in school (S1, S2). Several children describe how they are forbidden to speak their mother tongue with explicit reference to the school being 'Danish'. However, interviews and observations show an exception to this practice. If local children have the same language as a newcomer, they are allowed and encouraged to speak their mother tongue and act as interpreters for the newcomer.

The findings regarding language practices point to a rather assimilatory approach, as learning Danish seems to be happening at the expense of the other languages that children speak. According to the long-term migrant children and local children with migrant parents, the school's approach to their mother tongue is reasonable, and they accept it. However, from their own accounts and from observations, in practice, they want to and do speak their mother tongue at school. Thus, on the one hand, the mother tongue is important for the children, as it anchors them in larger social fields that transcend school, and, on the other hand, schools appear to be anchor points to only a minor degree for the use, practice and appreciation of languages other than Danish. This does not hold only for non-Danish mother tongues, but for all other languages except English, German and French (the foreign languages officially taught in Danish elementary schools), such as classical Arabic, which many children learn in Qurʿān school. Hence, the potential for children's multilinguistic resources for integration and learning seems overlooked in fieldwork schools. In addition, in reception classes, a one-sided focus on learning Danish and using Danish materials seems to hinder the use of age-appropriate materials in response to children's academic skills and interests.

The second research question, '*How do educational staff approach and address migrant integration processes?*', was approached partly through observations and partly through the children's accounts in interviews and focus groups. The results show both barriers and positive factors for child-centred integration processes in teachers' practices.

Tendencies towards monoculturalism, monolingualism and adult-centrism have been observed; these represent barriers. The prohibition against speaking minority languages in school, because the school is 'a *Danish* school', is an example of a combined monocultural and monolinguistic practice that excludes children's anchors and resources from the school context. Many observations also point to a tendency resembling methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Schiller, 2002) that focuses on nation states as natural entities and anchor points for children, not acknowledging transnational aspects of their life worlds. For instance, when teachers, though aiming at inclusion, ask children 'What is it like in your country?', it implies that children represent certain countries and 'cultures', not leaving space for alternative and more multifaceted identity processes.

Teachers obviously often imply adult-centric approaches, focusing on good behaviour and good performance in school as integration measures (Fattore, Mason, & Watson, 2007; Gornik, 2020). On the one hand, these aims seem reasonable—hence, also internalized by several children—as they comply with societal expectations. On the other hand, it places a large burden on children if they do not succeed in, for instance, speaking fluent Danish within two years after arrival.

As for positive factors for integration, teachers were observed and described by children as contributing positively by acknowledging children's wellbeing in the present. This includes descriptions of having stable and secure relations with both teachers and peers. However, some children point to experiences of feeling nervous and exposed in class, for instance when being examined in lessons, and either feeling lonely or fearing loneliness. Such experiences appear to be insufficiently acknowledged by teachers. By keeping children's need to belong (Søndergaard, 2012) and their need for ontological security and predictability in mind, teachers may contribute positively to integration processes. An experience of security and stability in school may be of particular relevance for refugee children and others having severe worries in their lives outside school.

Regarding interculturality, some observations and interviews indicate that pointing out cultural or national differences is not always the most suitable approach to integration. Some children feel pointed out in an uncomfortable way when asked to account for, e.g., situations in their countries of origin. In addition, some children appear uncomfortable with being made visible in the need for special linguistic support during lessons. Such uncomfortable feelings may again be related to the need for belonging and feeling one is an equal member of the class. Hence, more diversity-sensitive and discrete approaches are recommended, not pointing children out as different when considering their learning needs but encouraging them to share their experiences and opinions without relating this to specific national identities.

5. Executive summary – newly arrived migrant children

The findings regarding newly arrived migrant children in Denmark consists of a sample of 43 individual interviews (5 Age Group 1 and 38 Age Group 2) and 10 focus group interviews (2 Age Group 1 and 8 Age Group 2).

According to the children, the following aspects are important in their understanding of integration. First, language. Having or learning the language of the new country to express oneself is of great concern to the children. Both the satisfaction with expanding Danish language skills and the frustration of not being able to articulate one's thoughts in Danish were dominant in the interviews.

Equality is another important factor. Some children point out that Denmark is a socially equitable and democratic country, a perception that may enhance their sense of integration.

Thirdly, an important aspect is having friends, both among local children and among fellow migrant children. As for friends among local children, not having Danish friends can weaken the feeling of being integrated and accepted in the new society. On the other hand, migrant peers are also important for integration since (migrant) experiences and often language are shared. Some children state that long-term friendship with equally experienced migrants supports their inclusion in the Danish school system.

Lastly, system support or lack thereof is perceived as important in integration processes. Children mention insufficient interpreters, bureaucracy when renewing passports or residence permits and long case processing times as barriers to integration, as well as anxiety regarding refugees' possibility to stay in Denmark may hinder integration processes.

According to the children, the most important advantages in the Danish integration system are learning a new language and thus to have several languages one can use. Most of the newly arrived children refer to the school system, teachers or peers as positive 'models', and some explain that the Danish school system is not so fixed on tests and competition. Leisure-time activities, often sports, are also seen as advantages. Summing up, the positive factors in existing models are 'important persons' (teachers, peers, neighbours), learning the language and being able to use well-known languages.

According to the children, an important weakness in the existing system is the lack of a more attentive welcoming system. Some wish for more support during the first days of school, such as simply to be able to navigate the building or to get welcomed by a peer mentor. Children attending one of the fieldwork schools, a small school with isolated reception classes, mention this form of organization as a weakness. They explain that the school is very small and not connected to schools where they can meet Danish youth. Their only possibility to speak Danish during the day is with the teacher. They describe it as a weak point that they attend a reception class for three years to learn Danish, but still do not reach proficiency, and fear to get 'stuck' in the reception system. Another weakness in reception

classes is the huge focus on learning Danish at the expense of other subjects such as maths or physics.

Lack of opportunity to establish friendships with Danish children is generally perceived as a weakness. This may be due to isolated schooling or a lack of interest from local children. It is thus a weakness in the existing integration system to a large extent seems to rest with the newcomers, while majority society and citizens do not reach out sufficiently; this is seen both in school organizations and the isolation of migrants, even among Danish students.

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MICREATE

SLOVENIA
Mateja Sedmak
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1. Introduction

This report presents main findings of the research conducted among newly arrived migrant children in primary and secondary schools in Slovenia from October 2019 to March 2021. The main aim of the research was to explore the nature, dynamics, and strategies of the integration process of migrant children who attend primary and secondary schools in Slovenia. We understand migrant children's integration as a complex and multi-layered process through which migrant children who are new to a country become a part of the society (Garcés-Mascareñas and Penninix 2016). Following this, our aim was to collect evidence on how NA migrant children perceive and experience the processes of integration. Furthermore, we tried to analyse the experiences of this heterogeneous group through the lens of a child-centred perspective. Therefore, our aim was to capture children's subjective understandings and perspectives about their own lives and experiences of migration, life transitions, integration, and general well-being (Mayeza 2017). Children were considered

experts of their own lives, skilled communicators, and meaning-makers (Clark and Moss 2005; Fattore, Mason and Watson 2007; Gornik 2020), and the most relevant source of information (Mayeza 2017).

Personal experiences of the migration process and the dynamics of social adaptation and inculturation after migration depend on various factors, age being one of them (Heckmann 2008; White 2010; Sime and Fox 2015; Huijsmans 2015). While the decision to migrate (at least in the case of voluntary migration) is primarily made by adults, this is usually not the case for children who are forced to follow the decisions of their parents. Moreover, the migration experiences of children differ from those of adults. The issues and challenges related to youth migration are very diverse and range from linguistic and cultural adaptation/acculturation (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco and Todorova 2008), identity and belonging (Collier 2015), nationalism, xenophobia, and discrimination (Jensen et al. 2012; Åhlund and Jonsson 2016), well-being and mental health (Ensor and Goździak 2010; Soriano and Cala 2018; Anagnostopoulos et al. 2016) and similar.

There were 2 age groups of children involved in the study: 10-14 years old children (primary school) and 15-19 years old (secondary school). In this report, we use the terms 'child' and 'children' when referring to the participants of the study, although we are aware that this may seem inappropriate and inaccurate, particularly in relation to the older group (15-19 y/o), and that a different expression would be more appropriate when referring to adolescents. This terminological decision stems from the fact that in our fieldwork the integration processes were studied from a child-centred (CC) perspective. The latter takes its point of departure from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore, the decision to use 'child' and 'children' is primarily analytical rather than substantive.

What follows is: *firstly*, presentation of methodology, *secondly*, the results from participatory observation phase, which lasted at least 15 observation days per school and was conducted prior to the collection of the autobiographical stories, *thirdly*, presentation of the results from the focus groups and the collected autobiographical life stories with the newly arrived migrant children (NA), who are in Slovenia less than three years, We conclude with a discussion and short summary.

2. Methodological approach

The research was carried out in 7 schools: 3 primary schools and 4 secondary schools across Slovenia from October 2019 to March 2021. All schools were public educational institutions, located in the urban environment and attended by a significant number of migrant pupils and children who vary in their linguistic, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. Primary school children were in our first age group (10-14 years old), while secondary school children were assigned to the second age group (15 – 19 years old). In relation to secondary schools, two different types of schools were part of our sample: grammar schools which lead to academic education and vocational schools that offer a profession. More details about the school selection process can be found in the report on WP 4 - *Educational Community and*

School System in Slovenia (Sedmak, Gornik, Medarić, Dežan, 2020). Additional information about the methods and methodology used can be found in the attached report on WP5-7 - *National report on quantitative research, qualitative research and reflexive methodology: Methodological section* (Sedmak, Gornik, Medarić, Dežan, 2021).

Data was collected by applying several methodological approaches. First, we conducted at least 15 days of participant observation at 5 schools. At two remaining schools, we were able to arrange 5 to 10 days of observation. This phase consisted of passive, moderate, and active participation. Gatekeepers organised classes that were the subject of observation according to the MiCREATE criteria (ethnic, linguistic, religious, etc. diversity). Apart from the organisational role, these gatekeepers did not take an active role in this phase of the research. Considering that Slovenian schools participating in the MiCREATE project collect parental consent forms for the research activities conducted in the school at the beginning of the school year, we were able to start the observation phase immediately.

This stage was followed by the collection of 99 autobiographical interviews and organisation of 11 focus groups. Participants were selected on the recommendation of teachers and gatekeepers (usually a school counsellor or someone who is responsible for migrant learners) or they volunteered to participate. All respondents were informed about the project's purpose and signed informed consent forms before research activities began.

Most interviews were conducted face-to-face. They lasted between 15 and 65 minutes. Only a few interviews involved more participants (e.g., a pair) and always at the request of the children demand, while the rest were organised as a conversation between a researcher and an individual child. In two schools, the interviews took place in an online environment (e.g., MS Teams), as restrictions regarding Covid-19 were in place in Slovenia at that time. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

Regarding focus groups, our research team conducted two focus groups in 5 schools and one focus group at 2 schools. In total, we interacted with children in 11 focus groups that consisted of 3 to 6 participants. Sometimes, the children who participated in the focus groups were already participants in the interviews. All focus groups were recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

Interviews and focus groups started in October 2020 and ended in April 2021. Despite the outbreak of COVID-19 that interrupted and prolonged our research, we successfully reached our goals and fulfilled sample requirements. To some extent, this was a consequence of the partnership previously established with selected schools. All but one school participated in the project's fieldwork within the WP4 in which our research activities focused on educational professionals.

3. Results

What follows is the presentation of main findings from the fieldwork at 7 Slovenian primary and secondary schools.

3.1 Participant observation

This phase lasted from November 2019 to October 2020. Our observations were not limited to classrooms nor to class time exclusively. We extended our research activities to school yards, hallways, school cafés, nearby grocery stores etc., conversed with learners during breaks or on the way to P.E. classes, silently filling field notes in the back of the classroom, or observed interactions from a distance. These field notes included content information (peer interaction, teacher-child interaction, general class dynamic, teaching techniques, child centred approach, etc.) and our personal observations and reflections (thoughts, concerns, doubts, and similar).

Peers

Peer sociability

In the participant observation phase, our attention was on general observation of peer interactions, social networks, and relationships or in relation to specific determinants such as gender or ethnicity.

In most classes observed, we could identify the tendency towards differentiation between genders; girls hung out and sat together, while boys formed their own group. This was especially true in the primary schools. Sometimes, the number of representatives of a particular gender determined how the groups were formed. For example, if the class consisted of 5 boys and 20 girls, boys were more likely to hang out together. Sometimes gender and ethnic determinants overlapped, as in primary school S1 and secondary school S2 where newly arrived and/or migrant girls socialised almost exclusively among themselves. In addition, although children of younger and older age groups worked and socialised together in the classroom, the situation during breaks, in the cafeteria or in the school playground often revealed that groups tended to form according to gender.

Peer interaction in class was generally friendly, cooperative, and tolerant, however individuals who are less proficient in Slovene language were often excluded. Considering that migrants of Albanian ethnic origin differ significantly in language compared to other migrants from the former Yugoslavia, it is not surprising that this ethnic group was regularly identified as more internally connected or distant from the rest of the classes. To some extent, such patterns are sometimes encouraged by teachers who, when migrant children arrive, decide to sit together children who speak similar language. However, it depends on the individual whether this limits the child's overall sociability.

Another characteristic that may have kept a child from peers was academic ability. Learners who needed more help with learning and/or language, regardless of migrant status, were often less popular in terms of group work. Sometimes, learners who were more successful spent their time together, while children with learning difficulties formed their own group.

At several schools, groups were formed according to language, ethnicity and/or kinship. For example, at secondary school S3, one group of children spoke Bosnian when interacting while the Albanians spoke Albanian. In terms of group characteristics, at no school did we find that migrant status had an impact on whether the group was loud or reserved, noisy or calm, shy, or outgoing. For instance, in primary school S1, migrant children were more often among the noisy lads while in S2 secondary school, Albanian boys were more reserved, quiet, and reserved. In S3 secondary school, local children were more likely to be the ones who sought attention, etc.

Peer communication

Generally speaking, each observed class consisted of more extroverted, loud, and talkative children, and their more reserved and shy peers. We identified examples of positive and constructive communication, encouragement, and support, but also examples of exclusion, conflict, and sometimes abusive behaviour. Additionally, we could observe closeness between children in terms of knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses (e.g., who is good at which subject, who speaks which language, what hobbies they have, etc.). In several classes, children were willing to help each other with class work. Long-term migrant children (but not exclusively) who spoke the same language as their migrant peers were more likely to help them.

Further, we observed several incidents of exclusion of children whose language proficiency was limited. In S1 primary school, a child from Kosovo who had language and learning difficulties was excluded from class interactions. However, he kept company with peers from other classes who had the same cultural background. Similarly, the Albanian speaking migrant children in S2 secondary school tended to be more silent and preferred to spend time among themselves. In S3 secondary school, the newly arrived migrants were quiet and reserved, some were sitting alone. On the other hand, in S1 primary school and S3 secondary school individual local girls were excluded because of their shy and quiet nature, while in S4 primary school, a girl with mental disabilities rarely interacted with her peers. Regardless of her limitations, classmates helped her. From our observations, we can conclude that the language barrier can severely affect migrant learners' ability to interact with local peers. On the other hand, exclusion from peer groups is not limited to migrant children as we found several examples of local children who were excluded due to their personal characteristics, academic abilities and/or mental disabilities.

In most schools, the children were very communicative, verbally, and nonverbally. Non-verbal communication was very explicit in the form of pushing around, hugging, shaking,

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playful fighting and teasing, but this was not limited to any particular nationality, and it was present in both primary and secondary schools. Physical communication increased during breaks and in secondary vocational school during practical classes. More violent communication was evident at secondary vocational school S2, where mainly male adolescents insulted each other and used coarse language, however, this seemed to be mostly 'friendly adolescent folklore' rather than serious insults. Further, migrant children often conversed in their languages (e.g., Bosnians in Bosnian language, Albanians in Albanian language etc.), especially during breaks but as in S2 secondary school, also regularly during classes. In S2, teachers did not complain about this and sometimes even teachers' instructions were in Bosnian. Sometimes, local children participated in the discussion and used the Bosnian language or accent themselves or, as in one school, asked migrant peers to teach them some phrases or words in migrant learners' language. On the other hand, some migrant children intentionally spoke Slovene exclusively to improve their language skills. Sometimes, local children were not satisfied with migrant peers not speaking Slovene in school and were criticising them for speaking in their language.

During our observation, we also noted several examples of more or less prohibited use of digital devices inside schools and secret messages between peers. In S2 vocational secondary school, children openly used mobile phones and Bluetooth speakers during classes, with the knowledge and consent of teachers, to communicate with each other, to use Google Translate to understand the lecture or because they were bored. On the contrary, at S7 secondary school, children relied on more analogue methods to send notes; these were hidden in a pencil case or similar and sent across the classroom.

Educational staff

Engagement with students

Interaction between teachers and children varied greatly and dependent heavily on the teachers themselves. Some teachers facilitated engagement with children to a significant extent, irrelevant of their languae proficiency or interest, by using innovative teaching materials (e.g., video clips, music, boardgames, educational sites and applications) and incentives (sweets), stimulating discussion, and creating a safe but demanding atmosphere. In contrast, other teachers limited themselves to *ex cathedra* teaching methods where they developed little interaction with the children.

In all schools, our research group had difficulty identifying a child-centred approach. The principles of child-centred education require teachers to consider specific learning needs of migrant and local children and to respond to strengths and challenges of individual learner. Further, attention is paid to personal circumstances such as length of stay, ethnic and cultural background, religion, age, gender, socioeconomic and legal status, and other personal characteristics (Gornik 2020: 538). In S6 primary school, some teachers came closer to the child-centred approach because of the general teaching approach this school advocates for, i.e., the 'formative assessment approach'. Here, children are encouraged to play a more

active role within the educational approach, set their teaching goals, assess their strengths and weaknesses, choose learning methods, etc. To be more precise, in S6 primary school, we could observe that at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher asked the children what they already knew about a specific topic, and they listed the associations, phenomena, concepts on which they were building. Then the teacher asked them what they wish to know about this phenomenon at the end of this lesson and how they will achieve the goal (which methods will be used), wrote these goals in a notebook and at the end of the lesson the teacher checked if they have reached this goal. After that, the children themselves formulated questions for review and prepared a guide for the next lesson ("What else do I want to find out about this topic, I'm also interested in ..., etc.).

In one primary school and one vocational secondary school, a more child-centred approach was observed in subjects considered 'less demanding' (e.g., art, P.E., home economics) or in subjects that are oriented towards practical skills (hairdressing) and children had more say in the design of activities. For example, children could suggest a particular hair technique or make a certain product from chosen material, decide whether they want to play volleyball rather than football and similar. When observing other subjects, learners were part of the discussion, however all tasks were selected by the teacher. In general, teachers in all schools expected children to work mostly quietly and independently.

Usually, the additional Slovenian language course for migrant children is an environment where teachers are more innovative, creative, attentive and child centred. One reason lies in smaller groups of such classes and the more relaxed atmosphere. Moreover, the language courses are not so 'task oriented', structured and determined by curricula and teachers have more freedom in designing the lessons. This feature enables teacher with more opportunities to respond to each learner individually. Moreover, such a class is usually smaller and allows teachers to tailor instructions, explanations, and materials more successfully than in regular classes. In these classes, teachers praise learners for all and not just the correct answers, answer questions, use innovative teaching methods, rely on a more personal approach and are generally supportive.

However, we noted examples of scolding, threatening, ignoring, and insulting behaviour. For example, in S1 primary school, most teachers paid no attention to a group of migrant children from Kosovo. Consequently, these children are not motivated or interested in schoolwork. Implicit tensions, lack of respect and lack of encouragement were observed towards a boy from Albania, where a teacher gave the impression that he had given up on him and considered him a failure. In S2 secondary school, few teachers attempted to address individual needs. However, these attempts were limited to occasional checking whether learners understood the tasks. The checking was in a form of direct questions and not, for example, explanation in a foreign language. In S2 school, some teachers did not care whether all learners understood the lessons or had the opportunity to participate. Consequently, learners became bored and texted or browsed on their mobile phones. Surprisingly, teachers were not bothered by such behaviour as long as they had silence in the classroom.

Conflict management

During participant observation, we did not register any significant conflicts between learners that would stem from ethnic, religious, or racial characteristics. However, there was general misbehaviour present (e.g., chatting during lessons, inappropriate comments, rude behaviour towards teachers or among peers, etc.). Often, teachers looked powerless, they gave a warning, raised their voices, threatened with punishment, or asked for silence, sent learners out of the classroom while a notification about inappropriate behaviour was also sent to their parents or guardians, or changed the seating arrangement. Other teachers tried to engage children who were misbehaving in class activities, but often without success. Sometimes, they continued with the lesson or punished learners. On rare occasions, teachers did not respond to negative and disruptive behaviour which affected the quality of the learning experience for all participants. We were surprised by the prevalence of exclusionary disciplinary methods in primary and secondary schools, where children were asked to leave the class. The ineffectiveness of these methods was also clearly evident during our observation days.

In general, we noticed that teachers often paid more attention to local learners and less attention to migrant learners. However, this was usually because they represent the majority of the class and not necessarily because of discriminatory behaviour. Consequently, this was reflected in the teachers' low attention and sensitivity to conflicts that have possible roots in ethnic, religious, or racial factors. Contrary, in S3 secondary school, two groups of children who differed in their ethnic backgrounds had a dispute, and as a solution to this conflict, their mainstream teacher organised a class lesson in which they discussed the principles of multicultural cohabitation. Another example comes from S7 secondary school, where although no direct conflict was observed, a teacher reported that local children sometimes express discriminatory attitudes when writing an essay.

One practise that might work to prevent conflicts is the method used by the teacher at S6 primary school. Once a week, the mainstream teacher organises 'the circle' where the children sit in a circle and discuss about interpersonal relationships, evaluate the week and the strengths of their classmates, while at the same time look for improvements in their behaviour and the behaviour of their classmates. Additionally, all classrooms in this school have a class rules board, highlighting positive attitudes and values for a respectful environment.

Engagement with cultural diversity topics

Discussing this aspect, there were few examples of schools (S4 primary and S5 secondary school) that did not pay attention to topics related to cultural diversity, however, the picture was not entirely positive since explicit and direct engagement was seldom observed. For addressing these topics, primary and secondary schools used different international awareness days and individual school traditions (e.g., charity fairs in December, school talent shows, charity concerts). For example, in S1 primary school, children went to the cinema on

the Day of Tolerance. After the movie, they had a class discussion about tolerance and tolerant behaviour. At the same school, International Day of Migrants was dedicated to migrant learners who went to the intergenerational centre where they presented their cultural traditions to the residents. Several schools decided to present different languages spoken in the schools on the World Day of Languages. The hallways were sometimes decorated with posters presenting different cultures and cultural traditions, and one primary school painted greetings on school's stairways in different languages.

Language classes for migrant learners proved to be most filled with various opportunities to discuss about cultural diversity (secondary schools S2 & S7, and primary school S6). In these classes, teachers more often addressed stereotypes, compared linguistic and cultural similarities, and highlighted the benefits of migrations and intercultural dialogue (secondary schools S3 & S7). In relation to other subjects (i.e., Civic Education, History, Geography, language courses, Sociology), we could recognise a cultural blindness approach, even though above subjects offer a plethora of topics related to cultural diversity. This goes in line with the themes of the curriculum, which neither reflects the diversity of learners nor challenges Eurocentrism. Sometimes, teachers satisfy by merely asking migrant children how something is called in their mother tongue (S6 primary school). On the other hand, other teachers linked teaching topics to different cultural traditions. For example, before the Christmas holidays, children compared customs and local traditions related to Christmas (secondary school S7).

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

Positive attitudes towards multiculturalism and cultural cohabitation were observed mainly in two primary schools (S4 and S6) and two secondary schools (S5 and S7). In these schools, we most frequently saw classmates discussing language differences (e.g., different alphabet) and learning one another's language. Further, they were curious about religious activities (especially food prohibitions and traditions) and cultural habits (e.g., family traditions related to holidays) in formal (during class) and informal settings (during breaks).

When topics related to intercultural conflict, racism, migration, and similar were discussed as a consequence of the curriculum, some children openly shared their opinions. Usually, children were advocating for equality, tolerance and an inclusive approach that encouraged adjustments on both sides. At S2, examples of hate speech, intolerant attitudes and ethnic labelling could be observed when children teased each other (e.g., Come on, shut up Bosnian) or migrant children made fun of themselves (e.g., "Teacher, I am just a dumb Bosnian, what can I do?"). Such conversations were not problematized by either the children or the teachers.

In S7, a couple of children decided to organise a roundtable to address issues of migrant peers. During one lesson, the children presented their plan to their classmates and sparked a discussion. Most classmates encouraged them in their attempts or raised no direct objections. In addition, a group of girls shared their positive experience of volunteering at

the nearby non-governmental institution that organises learning support for migrant and refugee children. At this school, one teacher often covers topics related to intercultural dialogue, stereotypes, religious pluralism, and the benefits of migrations, thus children's increased sensitivity to these issues may be a result of her teaching. In another class at this school, the children were preparing for the school's annual talent show and one group discussed with interest the number of languages represented in last year's show. From this, we might conclude that they value the school's multilingual environment as an advantage.

School environment

Our observations revealed considerable variety in the visibility of the multicultural nature of the school. In some schools, there was no visibility at all, in some only limited, and in others, we could find several signs of a multicultural nature of the school. In general, primary schools put more effort into visible expressions of multiculturalism with posters, drawings, poems, pictures, etc. displayed in the hallways and on the classroom walls.

S4 primary school has most elaborate visible signs of multiculturality. This school is also nationally recognised as the primary school with the best practices related to addressing multiculturalism and integration of migrant children. The entrance door of this primary school has stickers that read "*Multicultural, multiethnic, multinational, multilingual, contemporary, innovative, healthy, eco-school.*" Further, the school community adapted the school anthem and created a school rap song to include and acknowledge the children of diverse backgrounds present in the school. In the hallway, stairs are covered with stickers with greetings translated into the languages present at the school. In one of the corners, a Nationality stew hung with information about how many different countries are represented in the school, a national flag for each country and the exact number of children from each country. They also organised an exhibition called "*On the path of stories and inspiration*", which features portraits of successful migrants in Slovenia.

Several primary and secondary schools had posters in classrooms and hallways that learners had made to inform the rest of the school about *the European Day of Languages.* These posters contained information about the different languages spoken in Europe and their alphabet. At one school, we noticed an example of a riddle in Macedonian language. Similarly, at S3 secondary school, in the entrance hall posters were informing about *the International Day of Tolerance* and *The Day of Greetings (*also known as *hello day).* These materials provide information about tolerance and human rights declaration. In S6 primary school, posters titled "My Idol" or "My Home" hang in the classrooms, where children present their homeland or a famous person from their country. In terms of school cafeterias, most schools have a policy of acknowledging at least some cultural restrictions related to food (the Muslim children have an alternative menu to pork).

In the geography classroom of primary school S1, dictionaries and English books were stored. In another classroom, we observed language games and books in Albanian and Macedonian that foster cultural identity of migrants. In secondary school S2, there were

didactic materials for Slovene language course developed by the teacher of Slovenian language herself (e.g., the script *I Speak Slovene*, a series of multilingual stories *All for one, one for all*). The latter is a collection of short Slovene tales that was translated into Bosnian, Macedonian and Albanian by migrant peers. Another such material is the workbook Time for Slovene language (primary school S6).

How different factors affect integration processes?

According to the data collected during the participant observation phase, it is difficult to assess the role various factors (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, religion, SES, language) have on the integration process of migrant learners in Slovenian schools.

In terms of cultural background several observations indicated that migrant children with Albanian cultural background and Albanian mother tongue experience more difficulties in the process of integration and acceptance compared to migrant children of other ethnic groups from the territory of the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere. The reasons for this are complex: close ethnic boundaries, language constrains, discrimination, 'othering' and stigmatisation by the majority Slovenian population, but also by other migrant ethnic groups, the traditional family orientation, which advocates for mothers staying at home, socialising only with family members and often not being fluent in the Slovenian language, and fathers being absent because they work all day.

Regarding the age, it looks that integrational challenges were more pronounced among newly arrived older children enrolled in secondary school or in the last grades of primary school.

Regarding socio-economic status (SES), we could notice that migrant children from families with low SES has less opportunities for peer socialisation in extra-curricular actives as for instance football training, or other social events that require financial participation (going to the cinema, bowling, shopping, hanging out at the café after school), which affects the integration processes.

Proficiency in Slovenian language by migrant parents also positively influence the integration process of children, as the children are exposed to the opportunity to practice the Slovenian language also at home and receive help with the schoolwork. Children who joined parents who already lived in Slovenia and spoke the Slovenian language and were familiar with Slovenian 'roles', expectations, etc. in school and society had an easier process of integrating to some extent.

Finally, we found that the restrictions related to the COVID-19 outbreak and consequent school closure also affected migrant children integration process. They missed the opportunity to socialize with peers, Slovenian language course was interrupted, some of them returned to their country of origin where they had less opportunity to interact with the culture/language of the host country. Additionally, migrant children had difficulties

attending and following online classes; sometimes they had no access to computer, internet, or a suitable room to study, or they were taking care of their younger siblings because their parents were working.

3.2 Focus groups & Interviews

Dynamics and factors influencing the integration process of migrant children

Premigration period and migration experience

Country of birth/country of ancestors

The newly arrived sample in the autobiographical interviews consisted of 31 migrant children living in Slovenia for less than 2 years. In the focus groups, 15 newly arrived migrant children participated. These children had migrated from different countries including Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), North Macedonia, Serbia, Austria and China. Their reasons for migration vary; most migrant families had left their country of origin due to economic reasons, while a few came for educational purposes. Migrant families decided to go to Slovenia directly or after living in some other European country because they were searching for better work, life and future opportunities for the family and especially, as is so often the case, for migrant children.

In most cases, at least one family member (usually from the territory of the former Yugoslavia) worked in Slovenia for years before the rest of the family followed. Usually, it was a father who worked there and was then followed (often after several years) by his wife, children, and other family members (grandparents, etc.). Sometimes, several members of the extended family migrated to the same town in Slovenia. In a handful of cases, the children stayed in the country or origin with their grandparents or another member of the extended family for another year or more, after the mother moved to Slovenia to join the father. In such cases, children finished the primary school, took care of grandparents, and waited until both parents had adapted to the host society and arrange living facilities.

Some newly arrived migrant children were happy and excited when parents told them that they were moving to another country, but later concerns arose about school, peers, academic success, and language barriers. Others did not want to move because of a strong attachment to their country of origin.

> *Honestly, I didn't want to come here. I didn't like it. I wanted to stay in Macedonia but my father said that there was no life for us, no money. (girl 1, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

On the other hand, not all of them were comfortable with peer relations in their country of origin.

I felt happy when parents told me that we will move because I didn't like it there. I didn't like how people behaved to me in Bosnia. Friends were giving me a weird look. I only had two friends I enjoyed hanging out together. (girl 1, 13 y/o, newly arrived)

We didn't like each other. I don't know, we quarrel all the time. Had conflicts. I liked it better here than in Serbia. (girl 2, 13 y/o, newly arrived)

Despite fond memories of their country of origin, most newly arrived migrant children have no intention to return. They perceive Slovenia as a country that offers them a better quality of life, better education, and more employment opportunities. Some are eager to live in more economically successful countries (e.g., Germany or Austria). Several migrant children pointed out that their parents invested a plethora of resources to ensure them a better future in the host country, so they try hard not to disappoint them.

But honestly, I would never consider returning there. I mean, forever. Because … I have more life opportunities and more possibilities here. Something draws me back, but I would not leave Slovenia ever. (girl, 18 y/o, newly arrived).

Expectedly, a significant proportion of migrant children still fell strongly connected with their country of origin and miss their previous life.

I always want to return to Kosovo. I feel it that way, it's natural, it's good there. I feel good there. (girl 3, 13 y/o, newly arrived)

In Bosnia, I lived in a village, and I was free, turned on the volume, listened to the music, couldn't hear anything. Nobody was nagging. (boy 3, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

However, newly arrived migrant children are able to identify benefits and advantages of living in the host country.

People in China just ignore each other. In China, everyone works hard, they need to walk fast, and they don't care about anything around them. My dad and my mum worked every day, students are doing their homework all the time and are exhausted. Life here is healthier, more relaxed, it benefits me. (boy 1, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

In Kosovo, you have no health insurance and stuff. (girl 3, 13 y/o, newly arrived)

Life is better here, more work opportunities. Education is better. I learn here more. In Kosovo, the situation is challenging, it's not like here. When they finish schools, they can't work, there's no job. That's why they come here, go abroad, because of money and jobs. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

Usually, migrant learners reported frequent visits to their country of origin, where part of their family and friends still live. Before the pandemic, these visits were more frequent (for example every month). However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak several of them have not seen relatives for months or even a year.

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We go in Bosnia every three or four months. When parents take a holiday. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

I wasn't in Macedonia during summer holidays because of Covid. I haven't been there for 10 months actually." (girl 1, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

During the quarantine, others purposely spent time in their country of origin.

*I liked it when schools were closed because I was in Bosnia with my family.
(girl 1, 16 y/o, newly arrived)*

General life

Living conditions

Migrant children differ in their living conditions. Some have large apartments and houses, while others live in crammed, damp and narrow spaces. Sometimes, siblings or relatives had to share their rooms, which was a challenge during the school closure, but also in terms of having a sense of privacy. We were able to identify two examples of newly arrived migrant children who reported additional tensions that arose when landlords took advantage of migrant families. However, when landlords and migrant families share the same ethnic background, these relationships often developed into friendly interactions.

Currently, my father and I, we live in an apartment. We rent a room, share bedroom. We would like to buy a house here. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

I share bedroom with my sister. I would love to have my own room. It would be quieter and more peaceful. But we also have a younger brother. He has toys in our room and that's just wow. We constantly tidy up this room! (girl 2, 13 y/o, newly arrived)

Me and my sister are sharing the bedroom while my brother sleeps with parents. (girl, 12 y/o, newly arrived)

The majority of newly arrived migrant children have a room for themselves. They listed several advantages of such accommodation, for example having a private place where you can be alone or to talk with friends without being disturbed, the possibility to decorate the room according to one's own taste, it helps to have a quiet place to study and similar. Regarding their future aspiration, migrant families longed for real estate ownership.

We live in a house. I have my own room which is quite large. My brother has his own room. (girl 2, 16 y/o, newly arrived)

When my brother and mother will arrive, we will move to a larger apartment. Then, we will apply for citizenship so we could buy a house. (girl 1, 16 y/o, newly arrived)

Sometimes, families live in apartments that present a risk factor for health, mainly because of mould. Small apartments require more adjustment and consideration among family members, which can lead to family tensions. A few migrant children live in student dorms. Usually, these dormitories are comfortable enough so learners can study without unnecessary interruptions. An advantage of such facilities in terms of easier integration is that they also support socialisation with (local) peers.

Student dorm is much better for students. You have everything you need, just like at home. Also, you have friends which help you to achieve. You achieve certain language level, if you don't understand something, they can help you. This helped me tremendously with language learning. (girl 3, 16 y/o, newly arrived)

Spatial and social positioning

The children share positive perceptions and experiences of the Slovenian towns in which they live. Some children enjoy the availability of parks, playgrounds, shopping malls, cinemas, bowling centres, and football clubs. The majority of migrant children perceive their migration as a transition to a better in terms of spatial and social positioning.

[name of the town] is beautiful. The nature. Everything is great! When I am here, I feel calm. (girl 1, 13 y/o, newly arrived)

[name of the town] is very good. It has the sea, it has everything and it's nice. (girl 4, 16 y/o, newly arrived)

I like that we could go shopping or for a walk here. I live in the [name of the town] city centre, close to the bakery. It's better to live here than on a hill. It's prettier here, everything is close. (girl 1, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

Others point out the safety of these towns and environment that makes them feel accepted.

First time I got here, I realised that Slovenians are very friendly. People in [name of the town] are less friendly than in [name of the town]. This country is very peaceful and beautiful. I think lifestyle here is better than in China, people still feel happy. Here is healthier, people live very healthy. This is the best way to live. On the other hand, in Slovenia, there is less things you can do for fun. This city has only one or two places where we could go for karaoke. This city is safe, this is a safe country. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

I like [name of the town] because my new friends live here. I like that we live in a city centre because we used to live in a village. People here are nicer, the nature is more beautiful. (girl, 15 y/o, newly arrived)

Some migrant children have quickly developed strong bonds with their neighbours. Migrant families feel accepted in their new neighbourhood and the children and/or families visit each other regularly. In this context, we would like to point out that the culture of neighbours visiting each other is not very strong in Slovenia, so we should consider such encounter as particularly positive. However, some migrant children reported negative experiences with neighbours when racist or discriminatory remarks were made.

> *My mum adapted. She found some neighbours, they are friends now, they drink coffee together. (girl, 19 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *We also have neighbours that are impolite to me. I don't think they're Slovenes. When they see me, they speak so loudly and say corona. I think they're not from Slovenia because their skin is brown or black. We have a neighbour from Macedonia who is friendly, we talk a lot. Some neighbours are foreign students at the university. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *We have good relationship with all neighbours except one. This older lady often nags if you listen to loud music. Everyone else is friendly and nice. I listen only to Balkan music and once she came upstairs saying that in Slovenia, I cannot listen to Balkan music, especially not so loud. Nobody else heard anything. We talk with all neighbours, they are nice, we see each other every day. This old lady sits on her balcony all day and monitors everything. There are Serbs, Bosnians and Slovenes in our building. I often babysit a girl from one Bosnian family. (girl 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

Others established polite but rather distant interactions with neighbours.

> *Slovenes and Bosnians live in our building. We don't know Bosnians, we don't talk much, we greet each other on a hallway. (girl 5, 16 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *Our neighbours are fine, I never heard anything negative. We say hello to each other. (girl 1, 13 y/o, newly arrived)*

In terms of SES, most children come from a lower or middle socio-economic background, as their families are mostly economic migrants. Regarding our sample, we could find numerous examples where mothers and children followed the father who previously worked in Slovenia and consequently lived there alone for some time. Mothers often stay at home or work in low-skilled professions (e.g., as cleaners) with rare exceptions of self-employed mothers. Sometimes, the restriction was that the mothers had to wait a certain period of time to obtain a working permit.

Plenty of migrant fathers are self-employed or own a business (having a truck company, construction company, or bakery) or work on construction sites, at the port, as truck drivers, plumbers, and in other blue-collar professions. In rare examples, the fathers still work abroad (in Germany or Austria), but the rest of the family lives together in Slovenia. A very few interviews revealed that the parents had obtained a higher education degree in the

country of origin (e.g., in pharmacy, computer engineering, health care) but had to take a lower-paid position in the host country.

> *My father is self-employed. Currently, he renovates houses. In Bosnia, he completed a school for programmers. Technical school. My mum wants to work but she can't. She needs some documents. (boy 1, 13 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *My dad works for Slovene company but in Germany. (girl 2, 16 y/o, newly arrived)*

Several migrant families still own a home in their country of origin. Some migrant children have expressed that the family is attempting to buy a house in Slovenia, while several have already completed this process.

In some cases, older siblings, or migrant children themselves help in restaurants, kitchens, bakeries, grocery stores and similar areas to earn pocket money. Sometimes, they work to help their parents, but they also want to earn some money to support their own interests.

> *I was working now and bought my phone. The one I wanted. I don't need a fancy phone. I don't care for iPhones, people look whether is iPhone or not, but I'm not bothered. What matters to me is whether it works fine, fast, that's all I need. (girl 4, 16 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *I work during summer holidays, I wash the dishes. I save mostly for shoes, make up and clothes are not so important. (girl 5, 16 years old, newly arrived)*

During the pandemic outbreak, SES revealed that newly arrived migrant children had to rely on school resources to get a computer or tablet. Sometimes, migrant children owned a personal computer or tablet, sometimes families managed to meet the needs of all family members with computers that parents used at work, or they purchased another device.

Inclusion in peer groups

Our research shows that newly arrived migrant children are part of multiple peer groups, for example in their neighbourhood, in leisure activities, and at schools. Peer groups differ in that some children have friends from the same ethnic background, while others have friends from various backgrounds. Sometimes, relatives of similar age act as a link between different social groups. These groups are important because they work as anchors that enable migrants to identify with the host society (Grzymała-Kazłowska, 2018). Their first attempts to become part of a peer group were facilitated by extracurricular activities (mostly related to sports). In terms of class dynamics, it was easier for newly arrived migrant children to interact with other migrant children or children who have similar ethnic backgrounds. Shared experiences and similar cultural characteristics and language eased the process of communicating and interacting with peers.

Newly arrived migrant children in the 1st year of high school often pointed out the advantage that all children were in a new situation and had to form social bonds with classmates from the beginning. This helped them to be more relaxed, proactive, and less anxious. On the other hand, teachers in primary schools are more involved in the process of

peer group formation. They have more tools (e.g., tutoring system) and resources to organise a peer support system, which affects how relationships are formed between children.

Migrant children rely on friends for language support, social support, and identification. Usually, newly arrived migrant children assess their peers as tolerant, helpful, and nice. If long-term or second/third generation migrant children know someone from their country who is struggling with the same challenges and situations, they are willing to turn to them.

> *Classmates are nice, they didn't comment on anything, they don't tease me, they are good, nice, helpful, also during school closure if I don't understand something they help mi. I write to them, and they help me. (girl, 19 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *In the dorm, I had plenty of peers from Bosnia. They were Bosnians and they helped me with language. They translated to me, we had a language course in the dorm, another course in school. In the dorm, my roommate was a girl from Slovenia and we talked, we helped each other. (girl 3, 16 y/o, newly arrived)*

However, we must not idealise, because sometimes newly arrived migrants are excluded from group activities or peers make fun of them because of their language mistakes. Such behaviour prevents migrant children from participating in leisure activities and reinforces their feelings of being excluded, lonely and alone. As a result, they refrain themselves from approaching peers and cannot practise their social and language skills nor form friendly relationships. In some cases, slightly challenging peer dynamic is the result of migrant children being older than their classmates. However, not all migrant children respond with withdrawal. Several migrant children point out that the responsibility of becoming part of the group lies with the newcomers, who must try to be proactive, brave, and friendly, when coming into a new environment. Eventually, such an approach will result in befriending several peers.

> *I was always standing alone during the long break. Nobody came to me. I felt so, I don't know, so bad. (girl 3, 13 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *At other school, some older girls were giving me the look, they were commenting, laughing when I said something wrong. They weren't nice. That's why I didn't want to play volleyball anymore, I started avoiding P.E. They often laughed at me because I didn't speak Slovene correct and they have comments on my accent. (girl 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

Peer activities revolve around common interests (music taste, sports clubs) and are characterised by a relaxed atmosphere. Although newly arrived migrant children were concerned about how classmates would accept them, in most cases they had no difficulty making friends with at least few children.

> *My classmates are great! I can't say anything bad about them. I didn't expect that they will accept me so nicely. They all want to help, and this is very dear to me. They speak Slovene and I try to answer in Slovene. We don't quarrel. (girl 2, 13 y/o, newly arrived)*

In relation to peer groups that existed in their countries of origin, plenty of migrant learners have lost contact with their friends or were only rarely in touch with them using chat applications (e.g., Instagram, Messenger, Snapchat, Viber, WhatsApp). However, others were eager to visit them, they share common interests and can interact as nothing happened when they visit them. Due to their relatively short time away from their country of origin and the people living there, these connections are still rather strong, and they invest considerable amount of time and effort in maintaining them.

Involvement in leisure activities, sport

The most common leisure activities among newly arrived migrant children are sports, online video games, shopping, watching series on Netflix, and spending time with family or friends. Boys engage in activities such as football, hockey, skateboarding, and video games. We have found that migrant children are able to expand their social network through sports and make friends quickly upon arrival. These children often bond over common interests such as their favourite football teams. Girls, on the other hand, are more likely to engage in sedentary and artistic activities or prefer reading. However, several of them enjoy sports activities, such as roller-skating, skateboarding, and volleyball.

Other children reported that their leisure activities had decreased significantly since their arrival to Slovenia. The reasons for this differed. Sometimes, cultural differences regarding how they spent time in their country of origin in comparison with host country's habits affected the quality of interaction. In other examples, the children were still searching for the right activity, or they were not confident to participate in group activities. An additional constraint could be that they are not very well informed about what the environment offers in terms of free time activities. Further, the habit of participating in extracurricular activities may not be developed to such extent within different cultures.

> *Here, we hang out with friends, we go out, drink some coffee and talk every time. I feel a little bit bored because we just talk every time, we just eat, and sometimes we go to the cinema. We had different sense of humour. Sometimes, I go and hike or run by the river. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *I walk in the park. That's all. I still haven't found what I'm looking for. I don't do anything at home. (girl 1, 13 y/o, newly arrived)*

Health (physical and mental health)

Some newly arrived migrant children reported about the difficulties encountered when they arrived in Slovenia. They struggled with the idea of being away from their country of origin while their relatives still live there. Sometimes, only part of the family left the country, or the decision affected friendships and relationships. Combined with concerns about the new country and anxiety regarding how they will fit in, these challenges affected their mental and physical health. In terms of the first day of school, they worried about whether

anyone would understand them, whether they would be laughed at, and how they would get along in school. Such concerns filled them with anxiety and fear.

> *When we arrived in Slovenia, I struggled a lot, I left my friends and my sister in Macedonia. I had to adjust to new stuff, school, language, friends, everything was new, I was confused. It was hard. (girl 1, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

Additionally, family calls and visiting their country of origin could cause stress. However, these calls were a stress reliever for several newly arrived migrant children. In the first weeks and months of living in Slovenia, some migrant children developed psychosomatic symptoms (skin rash, heart pain, breathing difficulties) and had to be monitored by medical staff. Other migrant learners reported feelings of being relieved, relaxed, curios and calm after they left their country of origin.

> *At first, it was hard, but now I'm better, there's huge improvement. It is not that hard. If I face challenges, I believe I can deal with them. I feel better now. When my family call, I am happy, but afterwards, everything is normal, I am not sad anymore. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

In general, we observed that educational community pay little or no attention to the mental and physical health of migrant children. They did not have relevant professionals, services or interventions designed to address these issues. Similarly, newly arrived migrant children were not paying much attention to their mental health except in cases where disorders significantly affected the quality of their life (e.g., anxiety that causes breathing troubles and requires hospital visit). Additionally, physical and psychological condition of family members was rarely addressed. Perhaps the already challenging situation of migrant parents who struggle with employment and household management pushed the problems related to mental and physical health aside.

Educational environment and system

Experiences of inclusion in school

Almost all newly arrived migrant children express positive views about the process of inclusion in schools. They are generally satisfied with their classmates and teachers and their willingness to help them. Before their first days at school, most of them were full of concerns, questions, and fears. They did not know if anyone would understand them, how would they fit in or find the right classroom. However, they soon realised that classmates are attentive and friendly to them, and that most teachers are willing to help them. Such circumstances helped migrant children to adapt relatively quickly to the new educational environment.

> *Immediately if they see that I don't understand something or that I have a weird look on my face they explain it to me. Not just Bosnians but also Slovenians. (girl, 16 y/o, newly arrived)*

Newly arrived migrant children are often involved in school clubs (e.g., reading club, chess club) and extracurricular activities that took place in school, especially in primary schools. From our sample, they are rather quick in approaching these activities and use these settings to expand their social network and practice language. Even though some migrants attract more attention because of their appearance, they rarely encountered negative attitudes.

> I had just one experience that left me feel not that confident. When I walked through the hall, there was a group from a higher level and they said, "From China". And they were laughing, and I didn't know what happened. They never say anything bad, they just say "From China". Sometimes, they look at me and just smile. That confuses me because I don't know if they are friendly, or they laugh at me. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

Within the primary schools, teachers are noticeably more involved in the process of welcoming and supporting migrant children. They organise a tutoring system, sit learners who share the same language/cultural background together, organise learning assistance and similar. Migrant children are grateful for such help. In secondary school, most migrant children are more autonomous and do not seek/expect such support from peers. However, they appreciate friendly classmates who are willing to include them in their social circle and support them at multiple levels (with schoolwork, personal life, and bureaucratic tasks). Further, they were grateful for approachable teachers. In general, teachers and classmates were vital in ensuring that the school was perceived as a welcoming environment.

However, not all migrant children are not included as one would hope. During some interviews and focus groups, we found tensions that resulted in this exclusion. In one particular case, there were quarrels present in a female group that discriminated others in terms of SES and ethnicity. A group of girls from Slovenia belonging to wealthier and more educated families, disapproved of migrant girls from BiH whose parents were blue-collar workers. However, the dynamic was not always on the axis ethnic majority-minority as we recognised conflicts also between Serbs and Bosnians or Albanians and Serbs (or other minority groups).

Language & School language policy and practice

Learning to speak Slovene is a key challenge for newly arrived migrant children. For many, their first introduction to Slovene is when they arrive in the host country. Being in a different linguistic environment can cause stress and anxiety. Considering their lack of language skills, learners were concerned how to make friends, achieve high grades, engage with school life and similar. This is in line with Espin's (2006) view that language is among challenging obstacles migrants face. This is not only due to the new linguistic system (grammar and pronunciation) but also due to the 'identity loss'.

Certain school policies play an important role in supporting children to develop language proficiency. Among these, a language course designed for foreign students was most frequently mentioned. These courses vary in duration; some extend over the official period, while other schools stick to the prescribed number of lessons. Another measure schools

often adopt is to designate classmates who speak the same language as migrant children as buddies or tutors. Usually, these children sit together. At least for newly arrived migrant children, the possibility to speak in their mother language helps them to integrate more quickly.

Newly arrived migrant children themselves quickly realise that language proficiency is crucial for the inclusion in new environment and succeeding in school. In fact, the number of migrant children who spoke in their mother tongue (when this was possible) when talking to the researcher was very low. Considering this, we can say that migrant children are soon able to have a conversation in Slovene, at least to some extent.

One of the strategies to become more proficient in a new language is to consciously spend more time with local peers and practice the language with them. Additionally, Slavic languages share some common features that help migrant children from the territory of former Yugoslavia (Balkan region) to learn Slovenian language more quickly.

> *We all hang out together but sometimes it's better that I sit with a Slovenian girl and try hard so we can understand each other. I need someone who speaks Slovene a lot because this will help me to improve. That way, I will be fluent in another language since I assume that my language will not bring me as many benefits as Slovenian language, especially after some time in relation to job and similar. (girl 6, 16 y/o, newly arrived)*

Two newly arrived migrant children from Serbia had no difficulties with the Slovenian language because they attended private Slovenian language lessons in their country of origin. Other migrant children read books in their free time to improve their language skills.

> *At first, it was difficult. Slovene is very similar to Bosnian language, and this has its advantages and disadvantages. We rely on fact that people will understand us, so we don't need to learn as much. This is not true, we need to learn it, we have to know it. /.../ At first, I had to ask for explanation but now it's quite easy. When someone wants me to speak, I try hard to use Slovene so people can understand me, for example, in hospitals and so. (girl 6, 16 y/o, newly arrived)*

Children often used social interactions and informal peer support to learn the language better. They indicated that interaction with local peers empowered progress as it enabled practice of the language. In addition, teachers' support and encouragement was appreciated. Several migrant children expressed gratitude because their classmates were interested in their mother tongue and migrant learners had the opportunity to teach them something new.

In some schools, children reported that they are not allowed to use their own language at school. Sometimes, this prohibition extended to formal and informal occasions (e.g., lessons, during breaks, in the cafeteria). Teachers either politely remind a group of migrant children chatting in their language that they should try to speak Slovene because this would help

them in various situations, or they prohibit such interactions stating that only Slovene should be spoken.

In some other schools, as in the secondary school S2, Serbo-Croatian and Albanian languages are prevailing languages among children in the hallways, school cafés etc. At the same time, teachers do not interfere with this practice.

> They don't allow us to speak Bosnian in school. Not all but some say that we are not allowed to speak Bosnian because we are in Slovenia and should speak Slovene. (girl 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

When migrant children encounter difficulties and do not understand something, some are brave enough to speak up and ask teachers or classmates to repeat or explain it, some of them use language applications (e.g., Google Translate) and dictionaries, while many of them remain silent.

When they are in public places (for example, hospital, post office, grocery shop), migrant children and their families try to speak Slovene. However, not all families and family members are equally successful in learning the new language. We spoke with newly arrived migrant children whose older siblings had given up studying on university because language barriers prevented them from following the lectures.

Peers

Newly arrived migrant children report that peer relationships significantly contribute to their feeling of being part of the group and are accepted, but also to their feeling of belonging and wellbeing. On their first school day, many of them were terrified that they would be excluded and lonely. However, for most of them, it was not difficult to form relationships in the classrooms, school playground, in the cafeteria, in the language course and similar.

> I was worried whether someone who speaks my language will be at school and how will I manage everything. When I came to school, my mainstream teacher told me that there's another classmate from Bosnia. That was great! I hang out with her all the time. We chat and lunch together. (girl 5, 15 y/o, newly arrived)

> At first, I was nervous, I didn't know how I will approach them, how to get to school, everything was different. What should I do, I don't understand their language? (girl 2, 13 y/o, newly arrived)

Others experienced more difficulties because of their language constraints and/or reserved character. Another challenge arises when migrant learners differ in age from the rest of their peers. In Slovenia, this may happen because schools want to give migrant children an additional year in which migrant children are not assessed but have the opportunity to learn the language and form close ties with their peers. In such situations, it

is not unlikely for migrant children to feel different from classmates and they must find a way to overcome this barrier. Sometimes, migrant families decide to send their child to a lower grade for the same reasons as the schools.

Apart from language barriers, we identified rare examples where cultural differences presented a significant barrier to group dynamics as migrant children were less familiar with the customs and traditions of the host country. Additionally, negative remarks regarding migrant children's language skills, ethnicity, or family affected migrant children's wellbeing and their position among peers.

> Sometimes, I can't get what's the point of things my friends are talking about and sometimes, they think I am weird. Yeah, you need to feel it (laugh). We need to understand each other. That's important. Slovenian teenagers are not interested in making new friends. They always have old friends, they became friends when they were 6 or 7 and that lasts forever. They keep distance. This is hard. Apart from having different logic, this is another thing why we can't talk so much. We can't make fun, we can't joke because we don't understand each other's jokes." (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

Teachers/educational staff

In general, newly arrived migrant children hold a positive attitude towards their teachers and feel that they can rely on them. Teachers help and encourage them to learn the language, participate in school activities and become part of the class. For most children, mainstream teachers and school counsellors are their first contact after arriving at school. They introduce migrant children to other members of the class community, guide them around the school and sometimes decide which classmates will help migrant children. The latter is especially common in primary schools.

Some teachers pay more attention to whether newly arrived migrant children follow explanations or perhaps need additional information than others. Primary school teachers in particular seem to be more attentive to migrant children compared to teachers from the secondary schools. Throughout the school year, teachers encourage other learners to help migrants when necessary. Considering the low language proficiency of newly arrived migrant children, some teachers adjust learning materials and do not punish language mistakes with lower grades. Especially teachers of Slovenian language and mainstream teachers show a high level of empathy and are more willing to spend time organising activities to promote tolerant behaviour. Sometimes, they recognise when learners struggle in interacting with peers and offer their help.

> Professors are very kind. They take into account that I don't speak Slovene and help me. During Slovenian language class they allow me to read texts in Bosnian language so I can understand the context. Everyone is very kind. (girl 5, 15 y/o, newly arrived)

> Teachers helped me a great deal. They told me that if I have any trouble, they will help me. This felt good, I felt good. (girl 3, 13 y/o, newly arrived)

On the other hand, some teachers are ignorant and unaware of the needs and concerns newly arrived migrant children have or even openly express negative attitudes regarding migration processes. One teacher frequently makes fun of migrant children and uses sarcastic tone when communicating with them. Another teacher often shouted at migrant children asking what a migrant child does in school if he is not able to learn the language. Moreover, a few newly arrived migrant children had an impression that teachers tolerate inappropriate behaviour more when it is committed by local children than by migrants.

> *No, usually they don't pause their lectures, wrap up the content in 5 minutes and explain it to me in English. If I would ask them to do so, they probably would. To be honest, I think they are not very good in English. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *I often heard people say that Bosnians are stupid. One professor said that we, Bosnians, are stupid and good only for work in drains, that we can't be doctors and office workers because we are not smart enough, that we are good only construction sites and so. (girl 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

Some migrant children compared teachers and school system from their country of origin with teachers and system in Slovenia. A few of them were able to compare both at different educational levels. While some migrant children from BiH and Serbia assessed school system and teachers from their countries of origin to be more demanding, they were convinced that teachers in Slovenia are stricter. On the other hand, some migrant children from BiH and most from Kosovo felt that educational system in Slovenia is much more demanding than theirs and that Slovenian teachers tolerate inappropriate behaviour (e.g., using swear words in schools) for longer. In general, a more demanding school system and teachers with higher expectations were associated with better education and improved future opportunities.

Further, several migrant children have an impression that they can influence the school process and express their wishes and interests for the teaching content. They believe that teachers are often interested in their opinions. When asked to describe exact situations they had difficulties recalling them.

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

The most often mentioned inclusion and integration practice regarding newcomers is the 'tutorial' and 'buddy system' where a tutor or buddy is selected/appointed by a teacher, especially in primary school, to guide and support the newly arrived child. This contributes greatly to a sense of safeness and overall wellbeing.

Slovene language course for foreigners was also one of the most frequently listed. It is also a highly rated practice. These courses are scheduled early in the morning or late afternoon; however, it is also not uncommon to place these lessons in the middle of the regular schedule. Sometimes, they are concentrated in the first few months of the school year or run through the entire school year.

In few schools, an additional teacher is appointed to the newly arrived migrant children. Such a professional provides learning help and support. Further, school libraries furnished with books in foreign languages are also highly appreciated by migrant children (and teachers of Slovene language for foreigners). To a limited extent, and only some of them, migrant children had the opportunity to present their culture and language in class. However, such opportunities were rare.

Another seldomly used integration practice with a questionable effect is the placement of migrant children in a grade below their biological age. Such a decision is usually made to secure the migrant child an additional year without grades, however, the child is subjected to a more intensive language course.

Psychosocial support

Some migrant children rely on friends and teachers for psychosocial support, but the main source of support for newly arrived migrant children at this point are parents and family. Only a few migrant children reported awareness-rising activities at school that promote preventive measures related to racism, xenophobia, social exclusion, bullying, and different types of violence. Several migrant children pointed to the supportive role of school counsellors and/or teachers, especially on their first school day and in the first few weeks. However, no migrant child was able to recall whether there is a specific school service to support children's mental health. Note that migrant children in Slovenia do not receive specific and targeted mental health support. They are highly dependent on competencies, knowledge, skills, available time and other resources of school counsellors.

Family and wider community

Family

All newly arrived migrant children in our sample came to Slovenia with their family - parents and siblings, often leaving behind other relatives (grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, etc.). In numerous cases, the fathers had already migrated for work purposes a few years earlier and the rest of the family followed them later. In some cases, the fathers are still working abroad (e.g., in Austria or Germany), while the rest of the family lives in Slovenia. In such cases, the fathers return to Slovenia every weekend, and family time is limited to two days and the holidays. In other examples, one parent and younger siblings of migrant children live in the country of origin (for example, because they are waiting for the younger sibling to finish primary school in the country of origin), while another parent and the migrant child are already in Slovenia. Such separation affects family dynamic negatively.

In general, we can say that having family members living in the same country encourages migrant children to better cope with the daily challenges that migration brings, while at the same time, this is also a motivating factor for success. It was not uncommon to hear from migrant children that their parents sacrificed plenty to assure better future for them, so the children have to adapt quickly and perform at their best.

It's hard, nobody can be indifferent in such situation, you leave for example your grandma and you go to some unknown place. The system is different and it's not easy, but we have to make efforts because our parents have done this for our own good. Not because they want something bad for us but because they wish great things for us. We have to adapt, and we have to remain strong. (girl 6, 16 y/o, newly arrived)

In general, the family is considered the most important and relevant factor in the context of children's wellbeing. Especially in the first period after the migration, family is also a source of psychological support and has a therapeutic function. Migrant children spend significant amount of time with parents and siblings and receive plenty of social and emotional support from them. Family life determine their weekends, when they have more opportunity to spend time together, go hiking, grocery shopping, and play boardgames. Sometimes, fathers spend weekends recovering from hard work. Older siblings support the education of younger ones and often help them and parents with language. In addition, many migrant families encourage their members to speak Slovene. Other families decide to maintain their mother tongue and use it at home.

I speak Bosnian mostly at home where my family is. When we go somewhere, for example, to grocery shop or hospital we try to speak Slovene. (girl 6, 16 y/o, newly arrived)

Some migrant children have extended family members (aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents) in Slovenia who arrived in the country before or after them. These family members usually live in close proximity to each other, or are located in a nearby town. Like parents and siblings, relatives provide vital social and emotional support. Migrant children organise sleepovers, picnics, and game nights for their cousins and maintain contact with them. For a few migrant children, it was important that they could engage in religious activities with their cousins. With relatives who are still in the country of origin or live somewhere abroad, migrant children sustain regular contact through phone calls, video chats and messages.

We call each other every day using Messenger and Snapchat. We also have a group, but mostly we speak separately. Group is used when we're sharing stuff. (girl 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

Migrant community, religious community

Religion is important for migrant children lives. It presents an anchor, a sense of belonging, identity, a root and tie with family traditions and culture. It gives children a sense of purpose, hope and tranquillity. Muslim children reported fasting and going to the mosque to learn the Quran, while Orthodox children celebrate Slava. Newly arrived migrant children indicate that religion is important to them, however, they have fewer opportunities to practise it in Slovenia than in their country of origin, since they are not as familiar with the location of religious institutes and where they can find the necessary information. Consequently, they often limit religious practises to the privacy of their household.

I like Christmas and Easter. I think Easter is 7 days after your Easter. We paint eggs and then we play games with them. On Good Friday, we fast. (girl 2, 13 y/o, newly arrived)

A more institutionalised religious involvement also depends on the concrete local religious community – if there is a religious community or/and a migrant community at all.

Newly arrived migrant children enjoy celebrating religious holidays because extended family and relatives have the opportunity to gather, eat traditional food and play traditional games.

In terms of the migrant community, some migrant families live in buildings where other migrants from the same ethnic background already live. Cultural similarities and experiences of migration help them to connect and socialise. Some migrant families live in rented apartment owned by the landlord, who comes from the same country. Usually, these people helped them with information concerning the host country during their first months. Such communities also enable children to make friends with peers who have a similar background.

One Serbian family lives in 4th floor. We are in 3rd floor, in the basement are another Bosnians and the rest are Slovenes. These Bosnians are from our town, and we know each other from there. They have younger kids, 9-years old boy and 6-years old girl. We often go for a walk together. Her mother is very grateful when I take the girl because she is very curious. I was the same when I was child (laugh). (girl 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

Local environment

Regarding the local environment, newly arrived migrant children often compared the local environment in the country of origin with the environment in the host country. Children who previously lived in a village and now live in the centre of the town were enthusiastic about the proximity of important places (e.g., playground, shopping centre, school), however, they also missed quiet places (especially forests and countryside) from their country of origin.

Additionally, several migrant children said that the size of the town meant that people are more tolerant, friendly, and positive towards newcomers. In relation to this, most of them had very few or no negative interactions with locals.

Other
N/A

Conceptualizations of own well–being and life satisfaction

Self-perceived well-being and life satisfaction

In general, newly arrived migrant children mostly reported being happy and having a good life. Factors that contribute to overall satisfaction and wellbeing are family, friends, local environment, classmates, school, leisure activities. However, where families are still separated, migrant children's life satisfaction is affected. Before their first day at school, migrant learners experienced a severe amount of stress and anxiety, they were worried and sad, but soon they were able to interact successfully with peers and establish important social ties that contribute positively to self-perceived well-being.

> *I feel better than in the past. I feel better in Slovenia, I like that I found new friends and that we live in the town, we used to live in a village. (girl 5, 15 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *It's ok but because my father is always missing, I feel like nobody is really here. (girl 3, 13 y/o, newly arrived)*

Identification and belonging

Migrant children reported feelings of identification and belonging to different nations. However, due to their newcomer status and the relatively short time they spent in the host country, belonging and identity were often strongly linked to their country of origin. However, newly arrived migrant children who feel accepted and supported by teachers, classmates and friends can develop a sense of belonging to the host society very fast.

> *I never felt that I'm from a foreign country, I'm from Slovenia. In the primary school, at the beginning, I felt it that way but later no more. Because of my friends, classmates, teachers, this helped me. (girl 4, 16 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *When I look at it that way, it seems that now my home is here. I go to Macedonia only on vacation, I need to adapt that I will not return to Macedonia, except during the holidays, this will be my home now, job will be here, everything. (girl 5, 16 y/o, newly arrived)*

Among important social anchors that influence migrant children's identification and feeling of belonging to the culture of origin are, first and foremost, family, relatives (especially those who still live in the country or origin), and religion. On the other hand, new friends, leisure activities, schoolmates, teachers, and school are the new anchors in Slovenia.

> *I like it better here because me and my friends can go to stadium every dan, we go to the beach when it's warm, we swim. (boy 3, 13 y/o, newly arrived)*

In terms of language, as Espin (2006) discusses, the acquisition of the new language and the loss of the previous linguistic community is a common feature of migratory experience. Language is identified as another anchor that helps them maintain ties to their country of

origin. Migrant children usually speak their mother tongue at home, while they tend to communicate in Slovene in public institutions (e.g., school, post office, grocery shop, hospital). Contrary, when they interact with peers from the same country, they use their mother tongue.

Feelings of safety

Newly arrived migrant children feel safe in their lives and neighbourhoods. Several factors contribute to this, from family to friends to the size of the town and an objectively low crime rate. However, some very specific incidents can affect the general feeling of safety, such as violent episode in dance clubs, football hooligans in the town or cultural differences regarding gender. In most cases, life in the host country was evaluated safer than previous life in terms of social security, economic wealth, and physical safeness. Finally, the feeling of not being safe was often related to the pandemic outbreak.

> *I've often seen in the clubs that people were fighting. Boys and girls. Last time, two girls were beating each other in the loo because of a guy. I've seen them fighting outside as well. Sometimes, I see people brawl in the town. I don't like this in Slovenia, people brawl more. In Bosnia and in my town, this doesn't happen so often, people are not fighting in the clubs just because they're bored. (girl 2, 17y/old, newly arrived)*

Self-perceived opportunities, choices and feeling of control over their own life and future

Moving to Slovenia is perceived by many (especially older age group) children as an 'up-grade' and a chance for a better life. Several migrant children reported that the reason for migration lies in parental decision to secure better future for themselves and especially for their children. Newly arrived migrant children often describe Slovenia as a country with a stable economy, better educational opportunities, and promising career prospects.

> *We came here because of me, because of school, because in Bosnia you don't have – you finish elementary school, high school, college and then you sit home because there's no work for you. (girl 3, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *My dad decided for Slovenia because of me. I think this is the most important reason. He wanted to start a business here, give me an opportunity to go to school here because he think's there's a better education. Also, I wouldn't be so tired here as a student. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

Children's future aspirations range from professional athletes (footballers and hockey players), police officers, detectives, lawyers, teachers, entrepreneurs, dentists, doctors, hairdressers, beauticians, coaches, plumbers, translators, bodyguards, and car mechanics. They are convinced that if they put enough effort, they will achieve their goals. Such a mindset is not very common in their countries of origin, according to their words. Many of them are motivated to succeed and try hard in school because they feel a certain responsibility towards their parents.

My parents put plenty of effort to get me here, everything is better here for me. I don't want to disappoint my parents. (girl 6, 16 y/o, newly arrived)

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

Overall, the interviews revealed that newly arrived migrant children have positive attitudes regarding equality and intercultural dialogue. Often, the children speak positively about equality, multiculturalism and cultural and religious pluralism.

For me, it's important that new learners are accepted. In terms of religion as well. This is important for me. (girl 2, 13 y/o, newly arrived)

If I feel good in your company, I don't care whether you have money or not. In most cases, this is important and that's really impolite. Why do we divide people in such a way? We are all the same, all people. I don't know how parents can raise their children dividing people between those who have money and those who haven't. We are all the same, we were all born, we will all die, that's life. You're not better than me if you speak to me in such a way. How dare you speak to someone in such a way? (girl 7, 16 y/o, newly arrived)

(Perceived) advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children's integration

Perception of integration

From the interviews, it appears that newly arrived migrant children want to become active members of Slovenian society. Often, they emphasise that they want to learn the language and understand Slovenian cultural traditions because they want to live, work, and raise children here. They are actively engaged in language learning and making friends, which helps them to understand Slovenian culture, but also to maintain customs. They are respectful and tolerant of cultural and religious pluralism. Sometimes, migrant children feel that minorities are more often the target of peer violence.

I think it's better that they speak Slovene with me, this will help me to learn more, it will be easier for school, for job, for everything. (boy 1, 17 y/o, newly arrived)

Advantages

Practices often cited by migrant children as beneficial include opportunities given by teachers where migrant children present their country of origin and cultural characteristics to classmates, additional hours of Slovene language course where teachers use various teaching materials to help them learn the language, and adapted materials. Additionally, ice breakers upon arrival are valued as positive activities that help with the atmosphere. Several children are included in the buddy or tutor system at their schools. These buddies (local learners) volunteer their time and support to migrant learners and help them achieve certain academic and social goals quicker. Sometimes, the buddies are migrant children who are already more proficient in Slovene but have had similar experience. Moreover, migrant

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children are eligible to special learning status and have a possibility to set the dates for exams in advance, so that they can prepare for exams on their own terms and pace. In relation to the food restrictions, the children reported no incidents where these restrictions were violated.

> *Last year, when I arrived, I didn't speak a word. I didn't know the language. My friend spoke for me. Then I started attending this language class, got the foreigner status, set my exam dates. (girl 1, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

> *My classmate who sits with me translates instructions or what is for homework. (boy 2, 17 y/o, newly arrived)*

Weakness

Sometimes, newly arrived migrant children miss more interaction with teachers in their mother tongue (either to talk to teachers who are fluent in their language or to have special lessons in their mother tongue) or a short summary of the lesson in adjusted form. In addition, migrant children sometimes complain that the number of hours for language learning is too low. Several children were not given the opportunity to present their culture, while others were scolded for using their mother tongue during breaks or in class. In some examples, teachers and migrant children struggled in communication and that led to migrant children being ignored. Rarely, this escalates into arguments and impolite behaviour by teachers.

Good practices

Look at the chapter 3.2.4.2.

4. Discussion

In this report, we have aimed to reflect on the integration process of migrant children from a child-centred perspective, drawing on observations and opinions expressed in interviews and focus groups with newly arrived. The children involved in the research have a variety of linguistic, cultural and religious backgrounds, however, most of them come from the territory of the former Yugoslavia: Bosna and Hercegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, etc. According to the theory of social anchors by Grzymała-Kazłowska (2016), migrant children have different anchors in the process of integration. Some of them are related to the country of origin, while the others are related to the host society. The most important anchors for (newly arrived) migrant children included in our research are (extended) family and friends, school, teachers and classmates, leisure activities, religion, and orientation towards a (better) future. All anchors contribute to an easier integration into the host society, while allowing the preservation of the children's family culture. Moreover, all anchors contribute to a sense of ontological security, belonging, identity, and personal meaning. All these factors are essential in preventing potential social exclusion, spatial and

social segregation, and radicalization. Finally, anchors change upon arrival. Those connected to their homeland and past experiences are stronger, and over time their strength weakens, and the anchors established in Slovenia become stronger.

Social media and frequent visits to the home country help migrant children stay connected to their country of origin, so most migrant children have transnational and mixed belongings and identities.

Migrant children perceive host country Slovenia as a country of better educational and job prospects and also as a country with a high level of social and physical security. All these are very strong motivators for integration. Consequently, most migrant children perceive Slovenia as a place where they will stay and raise a family; very few plans to return to their home country.

Children are generally empathic to one another. However, we could recognise several patterns in terms of migrant children cluster in groups according to specific characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, language, or gender). Thus, interethnic interactions are not developed to the extent one would hope for. Schools should spend more time and resources cultivating interethnic relations among children.

Peers and friends present crucial pillar of children's wellbeing. Local children and long-term migrant children support newly arrived migrant children learn the language, while social ties extend over these categories. Children engage in activities designed for migrant children; they are tutors or study buddies or translate instructions. However, some newly arrived migrant children find it difficult to make local friends. Several have huge language constrains and several children reported instances of discrimination and violence, but generally, interactions with class-mates are tolerant. Belonging to a group of peers is crucial to the experience of inclusion in society, regardless of the individual's background.

In terms of integration, language is cited by all learners as a crucial barrier and important factor for successful integration. Several newly arrived migrant children struggle with Slovenian language in the first year after arrival. Similar to our findings from research with the educational community in WP 4, schools rely only on additional Slovene language course for migrant children, but newly arrived and long term migrant children as well as local learners most often point out that language courses are often insufficient. Findings regarding language practise point to the assimilatory approach since learning Slovene is happening at the expense of other languages. However, English, German, and Italian language are exceptions since they are part of the foreign languages officially taught in Slovenian schools (but not languages of the prevailing migrants' communities from the territory of former Yugoslavia).

Regarding teachers and school approaches, we could hardly detect any child-centred approach. However, learners often describe teachers as supportive, friendly, and respectful. However, some NA migrant children feel nervous in class or report discriminatory attitudes from teachers as well.

Feeling safe, having friends, family support and having a stable position for future events appear as one of the key factors influencing the integration process. Overall, learners report high levels of life satisfaction and have many aspirations and ambitions. However, the restrictions caused by the pandemic outbreak have noticeably affected their general wellbeing.

5. Executive summary - newly arrived migrant children

Learning to speak Slovene is a key challenge for newly arrived migrant children. For many, their first introduction to Slovene is when they arrive in the host country. Being in a different linguistic environment can cause stress and anxiety. Newly arrived migrant children themselves quickly realise that language proficiency is crucial for the inclusion in new environment and succeeding in school. Almost all newly arrived migrant children express positive views about the process of inclusion in schools. They are generally satisfied with their classmates and teachers and their willingness to help them.

Before their first days at school, most of them were full of concerns, questions, and fears. They did not know if anyone would understand them, how would they fit in or find the right classroom. Most often mentioned inclusion and integration practice regarding newcomers by NAM children is the 'tutorial' and 'buddy system' where a tutor or buddy is appointed by a teacher, especially in primary school, to guide and support the newly arrived child. This contributes greatly to a sense of safeness and overall wellbeing. Slovene language course for foreigners was also one of the most frequently exposed. In few schools, an additional teacher is appointed to the newly arrived migrant children. Such a professional provides learning help and support.

In relation to school and integration practices in general, newly arrived migrant children hold a positive attitude towards their teachers and feel that they can rely on them. On the other hand, NAM children expose that some teachers are ignorant and unaware of the needs and concerns newly arrived migrant children have or even openly express negative attitudes regarding migration processes. In general, the child-centred approach in schools and classes is non-existent. It could be observed that educational community pay little or no attention to the mental and physical health of migrant children. They did not have relevant professionals, services or interventions designed to address these issues in school settings. Some migrant children rely on friends and teachers for psychosocial support, but the main source of support for newly arrived migrant children at this point are parents and family.

Moving to Slovenia is perceived by most (especially older age group) children as an 'up-grade' and a chance for a better life. Several migrant children reported that the reason for migration lies in parental decision to secure better future for themselves and especially for their children. Newly arrived migrant children often describe Slovenia as a country with a stable economy, better educational opportunities, and promising career prospects. In general, newly arrived migrant children mostly reported being happy and having a good life. Factors that contribute to overall satisfaction and wellbeing are family, friends, local

environment, classmates, school, leisure activities. However, where families are still separated, migrant children's life satisfaction is affected.

Migrant children reported feelings of identification and belonging to different nations. However, due to their newcomer status and the relatively short time they spent in the host country, belonging and identity were often strongly linked to their country of origin. However, newly arrived migrant children who feel accepted and supported by teachers, classmates and friends can develop a sense of belonging to the host society very fast.

Overall, the interviews revealed that newly arrived migrant children have positive attitudes regarding equality and intercultural dialogue. Often, the children speak positively about equality, multiculturalism and cultural and religious pluralism. Newly arrived migrant children want to become active members of Slovenian society. Often, they emphasise that they want to learn the language and understand Slovenian cultural traditions because they want to live, work, and raise children here. They are actively engaged in language learning and making friends, which helps them to understand Slovenian culture, but also to maintain customs.

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![MiCREATE]

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1. Introduction

The MiCREATE project aims to study integration processes from a child-centred perspective. In its broadest and most basic sense, integration means "the process by which people who are relatively new to a country (i.e., whose roots do not reach deeper than two or three generations) become part of society"; it is a "process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration" (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016: 11). Following this characterization, the two main research questions of our fieldwork are:

How do (migrant and local) children perceive and experience the processes of integration?

How does educational staff approach and addresses integration processes?

The aim of this report is therefore to shed light on the integration processes of newly arrived migrant children in Vienna, Austria, from a child-centred perspective. Therefore, it was worked with the understanding that (migrant) children are not a homogeneous group, but experts in their own lives. The overall research focused on **two age groups** (10 to 13 years and 14 to 17 years) and three migrant categories (newly arrived children, long-term children, and local children). The research with the group of **newly arrived migrant children** includes all children who arrived in Austria within the last three years and focuses on their perception of being relatively new in Austria.

Moreover, children from two different types of schools (AHS and MS) were included in the sample. In this context, it is important to mention that the Austrian secondary school system is divided into two types of schools that offer different prospects for the future. Children from socio-economically and educationally advantaged families often attend **AHS** (*Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule*), which leads to academic education. Socio-economically and educationally disadvantaged children usually attend **MS** (*Mittelschule*), which leads to vocational training or a profession. These disadvantages are often structurally intertwined with migration history. Therefore, many of the children with a migration background in the sample also attend MS. However, as the Viennese school system is very diverse and in most schools more than 50% of the children have a mother tongue other than German, some in the sample also attend AHS (see also report on WP4).

2. Methodological approach

The MiCREATE study was conducted between February 2020 and June 2021 in seven schools (two AHS, five MS) in Vienna, Austria (for more details on the school selection process, see the report on WP4). All schools were attended by approximately 50% of children with a mother tongue other than German. Therefore, the children in the sample had different linguistic, religious, ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds. The study was conducted in different phases (with interruptions due to the Covid19 pandemic) and included 37 days of participant observation, 87 biographical narrative interviews and 12 focus groups. Children in the sample were selected through recommendations from teachers and principals, as well as personal contacts and consent from children and parents or guardians. Due to the Covid19 pandemic, many interviews and focus groups had to be conducted online via video chat, which limited the ability to use child-centred approaches such as arts-based methods. For instance, it was not possible to conduct a photo safari (walks with children to places where they feel comfortable). However, it was possible to use some art-based methods via video chat, such as identity mapping. However, conducting them via video chat limited the opportunities and the process of building trust.

More detailed information on the methods used can also be found in the methodological report (WP5-7 Methodological Section).

3. Results

The results of the study clearly show that for all the children in the sample, migration and different linguistic, religious, ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds are the norm in their social environment and among their classmates. Moreover, most of them hold inclusive views and stated that no one should be discriminated against because of their origin, sexual orientation or gender. The local children mostly shared with the researchers positive attitudes towards their migrant peers. Nevertheless, observations and some interview content indicated that discrimination among peers does exist. Even if diversity is part of everyday life and inclusive opinions exist, it can lead to disadvantages in the classroom due to certain affiliations.

The diversity of children that exists needs to be taken more into account in school policy and the curriculum. It was reported that issues such as migration and diversity are rarely addressed in school. However, some children also reported that there were few incidents of racism by teachers and educational staff, as well as by people outside school. Accordingly, it is important to incorporate children's personal and cultural knowledge and the different needs associated with it more into school policies and curricula.

For newly arrived migrant children and children with long-term migrant backgrounds, the greatest obstacles in the integration process were language acquisition and academic success. At this point, the intersection of class and ethnicity could become relevant. For instance, if there is no money for the necessary school support, the migrant child from a family with a low socio-economic background is at a disadvantage. The Austrian education system also relies heavily on the support of parents and guardians (see OECD 2018). This means that children with a migration background receive less support in learning German than other children. In this respect, an understanding of integration must always take into account the confluence of different disadvantaging structures.

3.1 Participant observation

Participant observation could not be fully conducted due to the Covid19 pandemic, as the majority of classes were switched to online instruction. We were therefore only able to conduct the participant observation in short phases (from February to March and from September to November 2020).

Peers

Peer sociability

In general, it can be said that certain categories, such as gender, had a structuring effect on the observed group dynamics. For example, groups of peers formed during breaks according to gender. The boys formed a large group where they massaged each other or pretended to hit each other for fun. Similarly, the girls formed several small groups. There

were the "cool" girls who also interacted with some boys, and quieter girls who talked or ate. So the category of gender shapes the classroom. The appearance of the popular and unpopular children also had a gender aspect. Some boys who were dominant and attracted the attention of their classmates and teachers also appeared popular and integrated. In addition, it was mainly the "cool" girls who interacted with boys. Thus, in the classroom, certain power structures also influence who is popular or unpopular.

It has also been observed that not every child is included in a group. For example, a girl who was new to the class sat alone during breaks and did not actively participate in class nor was she included by the other children. Due to the Covid19 situation, it was not possible to further observe whether the girl was included in the rest of the class. However, it is clear that inclusion in a group is not a given and may depend on various factors.

In addition, the topic of the lesson can encourage interaction between the children. For instance, one topic in class was cultural festivals. The children talked about the festivals they celebrated and also exchanged ideas about them during recess. From this we can conclude that cultural commonalities can connect the children.

Peer communication

Peer communication was often found to be respectful and helpful during lessons. For instance, some children helped each other by whispering to each other when someone did not know the answer to a question. In addition, children helped each other by translating words into other languages. It was also observed that some children talked to their neighbours when they had the opportunity. It can be assumed that the children are aware of the difficulties that can arise from multilingualism and therefore support other children when they cannot follow the lessons or do not understand something.

Regarding communication at recess, observations suggest that not every child interacted with others, which could be related to popularity in the class. In particular, "naughty" or "funny" boys attracted the attention of other children and actively participated in the interaction by addressing others. On the other hand, there were some children who did not participate in interactions during recess. During observation, it was not clear whether they did not want to or had other reasons such as being shy. Accordingly, some children are very dominant in their behavior while others are quiet and do not interact much with others.

As far as language was concerned, children sometimes used a special language that differed from that of adults. Older children in particular used their own style of speech in the form of words and phrases. These were often derived from expressions used in English pop culture. In addition, some children also conversed with each other in their mother tongue, which is not German, which is not welcomed in every school and by every teacher. In this way, the different language skills can be used by the children to differentiate themselves from others.

It could also be observed that children reported unauthorised behavior to teachers, which usually has negative consequences for the children who do not follow the rules.

In summary, sociability and peer communication may depend on the composition of the class and the popularity and achievement of the children. It was also observed that children support each other when it comes to achievements or when someone does not understand something. Thus, despite the diversity of the children, a certain type of community was observed in which a certain hierarchy of popularity and achievement prevailed.

Educational staff

The following section focuses on educational staff, their interactions with children, their management of conflict, and their consideration of diversity in the classroom.

Engagement with students

Interaction between teachers and children varied according to the personality of the teachers and their relationships with the children. Some teachers placed great emphasis on discipline and performance in class, while others placed more emphasis on connecting with children and getting them to participate. For example, one teacher tested the children and commented on each child's performance. In contrast, some teachers interacted with the children at eye level. This was done by asking open and simple questions. But also by taking their time, showing interest and asking follow-up questions. During the observation, it seemed that the playful and interactive teaching also lightened up the class atmosphere.

Moreover, we observed that the voluntary requests to speak mostly came from the same children. For instance, one child was able to leave the German support class because he raised his hand several times. This decision seemed to have been made spontaneously during the class. Instead, another child was immediately placed in the remedial class. It was stated that he would have gone there earlier, but there are limited places. This shows that every achievement and effort counts. So the motivation to participate is primarily to improve one's grades. On the other hand, it also shows that the school does not have the resources to support all the children. Other children were pulled in by the teachers. It was also observed that some children did not respond to questions at all. Therefore, some teachers made efforts to include different children in the lessons. Nevertheless, it was never possible to actively involve all children.

In addition, some teachers expressed their distrust of the children's performance by, for example, insinuating that they were copying their homework. These situations took place in front of the whole class.

It was also observed that some teachers had a very particular way of interacting with and teaching the children. To the observer, it almost seemed as if they were playing/acting a role, e.g. one teacher was the "cool" one who wore t-shirts with comics and was funny and

impulsive. Others were known as "strict", so had a very stern demeanour. Of course, they probably have different characteristics, but still it seemed that some teachers portrayed their characteristics in an exaggerated way.

In general, observations during the lessons indicated that there was a lack of child-centeredness, especially with regard to the participation of all and the inclusion of well-being, as the lesson topics seemed very distant from the real life experiences of the children. This could be related to socio-economic and migrant characteristics that are not addressed in the curriculum. Scholars highlighted that monocultural approaches label the migrant child as 'different' and delegitimise experiences and perspectives (see Banks 2019). This can lead to a negative educational career trajectory. Accordingly, it is important that a child-centred approach includes children's experiences and personal as well as cultural knowledge.

Conflict management

As far as conflict management is concerned, we have observed different situations. If there was a conflict with an individual child, the teacher warned the person first. If there was trouble again, the child was sent out of the class or the teacher started shouting. It was also observed that the teachers used their authority to force the children to follow the rules. A mediation session was also observed between a class and two teachers. The class had a general problem with one teacher and therefore sought to talk to another teacher.

Engagement with cultural diversity topics

Culture and identities play an active role in the classroom. The issue of culture has been approached in different ways. On the one hand, some teachers incorporate diversity into their lessons, for example by doing identity mapping with the children, referring to their cultures or talking about cultural celebrations. On the other hand, it also happened that teachers stressed that they "felt sorry" for the children because they did not know the "Austrian" culture. Another teacher also referred to cultural differences. Moreover, diversity was sometimes incorporated into the schools' "corporate identity". For instance, some schools greet their visitors with banners saying "Hello" or "Welcome" in several languages.

The school seemed to pride itself on its diversity. However, it was not always clear how this diversity was dealt with. Sometimes it felt that diversity was presented externally but not from different perspectives. Furthermore, there seemed to be a dominant approach that propagated that anyone can do anything, regardless of where you come from. However, this way of thinking, which can be described as neoliberal, overlooks various inequalities based on socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, etc. In order to do justice to the concept of diversity, multiple perspectives need to be brought into focus.

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

Cultural and religious diversity was sometimes a theme in the classroom. In various situations, the children expressed the opinion that all people should be treated equally, regardless of their skin colour, religion or culture. In addition, one girl expressed the opinion that foreigners should be allowed to live in Austria. In addition, some children discussed racism with a police officer present and stressed that they do not support racist police violence.

School environment

In many schools there is the appearance of a multicultural approach, but at the same time there is a monocultural dominance in the classes. Most schools have colourful hallways and corridors full of pictures and paintings. These pictures relate to cultural themes and other countries. Thus, different cultures are visible in the school and the children participate in the design. Different cultures are also referred to in the classrooms, for instance through pictures of different cultural celebrations. Thus, the visible school culture seems to be multicultural (see Banks 2019). Nevertheless, the different cultures are not visible in the dialogue and the majority discourse is not visibly challenged. Therefore, it can be said that school approaches can be described as infusion. Elements from "other" cultures are thus incorporated into the school environment, but continue to be viewed from the perspective of the majority. This also means that the hegemony of the discourse of the majority remains, which is why the school environment can be described as monocultural (see Banks 2019).

How different factors affect integration processes?

With regard to newly arrived children, we observed that integration into a new class community can be difficult. One newly arrived girl sat alone every recess. Other children did not approach her and she herself did not attempt to interact with others. In addition, the German language seemed to be a constant factor in interactions with teachers. It seemed as if every interaction tested the newcomer's knowledge of German.

3.2 Focus groups & Interviews

The following section focuses on data content conducted with children who had been in Austria for less than three years at the time of implementation (8 interviews, 4 focus groups). Due to the different countries of origin, the legal situation of newly arrived children in Austria can vary considerably. In this respect, it makes a difference whether the child is in the asylum procedure or comes to Austria from another EU country and therefore no asylum procedure is necessary. The children were between twelve and seventeen years old, four of them were female, two male. While some came to Austria only recently (e.g. seven months ago), others have been in Austria for almost three years. Their countries of origin are both

European and non-European (Bosnia, Serbia, Romania, Cambodia and Eritrea). One child is originally from Serbia, then lived in Germany and came to Austria in 2020. Thus, the different migration stations must also be taken into account

Dynamics and factors influencing the integration process of migrant children

The integration process of the children can be influenced by various factors and dynamics. The following sections provide insights into the various problems and challenges, but also good practices, those newly arrived children can face in Austria. The chapters focus on the pre-migration period, the migration experience, general life, the educational environment and system, the family and wider community, and other relevant issues and discuss their relevance for the newly arrived children's integration process.

Premigration period and migration experience

<u>*Country of birth/country of ancestors*</u>

In general, it became clear in the interviews that the circumstances under which the newly arrived children immigrated to Austria from their country of origin vary and cannot be reduced to individual factors. Some children pointed out that they came to Austria due to civilian displacement, fleeing war, and/or violence. Other newly arrived children came because their parents found work in Austria or because they expected a better education. Some children pointed out that they left their nuclear family to immigrate to Austria (15y/o, female, Bosnia).[3] For instance, one child explained that her mother still lives in Bosnia and her father works in Ireland. Instead of arriving in Austria with her nuclear family, she immigrated with her aunt and cousin (15y/o, female, Bosnia). Some emphasized that they had prepared themselves for immigration to Austria in their country of origin. For instance, one girl stressed that she already started learning German in Romania (15y/o, female, Romania). The interviews with the newly arrived children reflect on the complexity of migration processes.

Migration is associated with a local and social transition. Especially migrant children who lived in the countryside before moving to Vienna described a different kind of community associated with a big city. For instance, some newly arrived children in the sample perceived their country of origin as different from Austria; for instance, one child emphasized that she perceived the community in Bosnia as better than in Vienna (15 years, female, Bosnia). She concluded that this is due to the small size of the city where she grew up because for her it is new to live in a big city (15y/o, female, Bosnia). This distinction, related to the size of the city, was also stressed by another child who expressed that he knew all the people of his age in his hometown and that this was different in Vienna (16y/o, male, Serbia). These quotes indicate that the anonymity of a big city like Vienna involves a different experience of the community. Furthermore, the quotes indicate that the children have not yet experienced (a satisfactory) "community" in Vienna. Concerning that, many children pointed out that they

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[3] The age, gender, and country of birth are given for each interview citation, e.g., 12y/o, male, Croatia.

still have friends in their country of origin (15y/o, female, Bosnia). It can be assumed that the feeling of a community in a big city is not immediately given due to the existing anonymity.

The experience of migration and the evaluation of the children can also be very different. One child expressed "that it was very nice to come to Austria". Her family came by car and everyone was excited about the new things they would experience. She then started to slowly improve her German and also made new friends (15y/o, female, Romania). Here coming to Austria was related to positive feelings such as having new experiences. In contrast, another child described the ambivalent feeling of being at home both in Austria and in her country of origin. This depends on which country she is currently staying in. For instance, when she visits her family in her country of birth, she wants to stay there, but when she is back in Vienna, she is happy to be back (12y/o, female, Bosnia). The quote indicates that both places are associated with certain feelings and ties can be built in several places. Thus, migrating to Austria does not necessarily mean having to give up one's ties to the country of origin. The feelings about coming to Austria can therefore be positive or ambivalent.

However, life before and after migration can also be perceived as similar if certain constants remain. One newly arrived child perceived no difference between his country of origin and Austria. When asked about her time in Romania, she answered: "my time in Romania was a normal time, I was at school, then at home, then I did my homework and studied, it was also like in Austria, I just changed the place". She added that she does similar activities in her free time as she did in Romania (15y/o, female, Romania). Here it becomes clear that certain activities such as school attendance or leisure activities can create a constant sense of life and identity. Taking up activities in the new country that were already practiced in the country of origin could promote integration because they establish continuity.

General life

Living conditions

One newly arrived child shared that he studies at home and that he has enough space and a quiet place to study (16y/o, male, Serbia). Unfortunately, the other newly arrived children did not reveal any further information about their living conditions.

Spatial and social positioning

Many of the newly arrived children pointed out that they like the area where they live (15y/o, female, Romania, 14y/o, female, Bosnia; 17y/o, female, Serbia; 12y/o, female, Bosnia). For instance, one newly arrived child highlighted the large apartment they live in and the nice neighborhood (15y/o, female, Bosnia). Likewise, green spaces and parks in the neighborhood are reported to be perceived positively. Furthermore, one newly arrived child emphasized that she experiences the district where she lives as diverse and feels very comfortable there (17y/o, female, Serbia). Similarly, one child reported that she likes the district where she lives and that there are many beautiful places to visit in Vienna, e.g., the

Belvedere, the Danube Island, or Schloss Schönbrunn (15y/o, female, Romania). Vienna as a place to live is therefore perceived positively.

Inclusion in peer groups

Being integrated into a peer group can be associated with a certain process. One newly arrived child pointed out that when arriving in a new country, it can be challenging at first to find new peer groups (12y/o, female, Bosnia). In this regard, some described finding a peer group in Austria as a "process" (16y/o, male, Serbia). One newly arrived child, for instance, explained that he was very shy at the beginning. Another child emphasized, "I didn't have many friends and family here, but with time and school and soccer and sports you start meeting people and interacting more, it's much easier than before" (16y/o, male, Serbia). Therefore, the children shared several aspects that helped them to find a peer group.

First, many newly arrived children stated that they had made friends at school (15 years old, female, Romania). This may also be linked to time resources, as one newly arrived child expressed. This newly arrived child meets her friends mainly at school because in her free time she is most at home or playing volleyball (17 years, female, Serbia). Accordingly, the school can set the local and temporal framework for peer groups.

Second, some pointed out that it is helpful to know someone from Austria before arriving in Austria. Some children know other children from their country of origin who immigrated to Austria earlier. One child, for instance, perceived it very helpful to have two friends who had also come to Austria from her country of origin (16y/o, male, Serbia). Having someone in Austria who knows their way around helps with orientation and facilitates social integration into peer groups.

Third, speaking the same language and understanding each other can contribute to peer group formation. Especially when one is new to Austria and does not yet know German well, this can be an essential moment for a feeling of inclusion. However, in this regard, one newly arrived child stressed that she does not have friends whose first language is German. This indicates that because some newly arrived children perceive it as easy to make friends who speak the same language or come from the same country of origin, that some stay with these peer groups and thus have less contact with other peer groups, for instance, peers whose mother tongue is German (15y/o, female, Bosnia). Speaking the same language can therefore be a bonding element and promote inclusion in a peer group.

Lastly, it should be noted that some newly arrived children maintained their relationships in their countries of origin. For instance, one child said that she has many friends in Bosnia (15 years, female, Bosnia) and another child has many friends in Romania (15 years, female, Romania). Subsequently, maintaining existing friendships in the countries of origin may also be important for the feeling of being socially included.

Involvement in leisure activities, sport

They mentioned activities such as reading, running, cycling, rolling, working out, volleyball, playing video games, watching TV or online series, playing with their mobile phones, and going shopping or meeting with friends (16y/o, male, Serbia; 15y/o, female, Bosnia; 15y/o, female, Romania; 17y/o, female, Serbia; 12y/o, female, Bosnia). Some of the newly arrived children have many hobbies. For instance, one child expressed that she likes to read in her free time to improve her language skills. She also likes to go shopping with her mother and engages in various sporting activities such as running and cycling (15y/o, female, Romania). In contrast, there are also newly arrived children who pursue only one activity but then follow this one very intensively. For instance, one girl expressed that she has volleyball practice six to seven times a week (17y/o, female, Serbia). It can be said that leisure activities are practiced with different intensities.

In some interviews with newly arrived children, the impact of the Covid19 pandemic on leisure activities became evident. For instance, one child stressed that she used to go to the gym regularly before the pandemic, but now she describes herself as "not very active" (15y/o, female, Bosnia). Similarly, one newly arrived child pointed out that he used to train a lot until his soccer training was canceled because of Covid19. Now he goes running regularly or works out at home instead. However, sometimes he also plays video games (16y/o, male, Serbia). Due to the limited possibilities, the children had to look for other activities or barely exercised.

Health (physical and mental health)

Regarding physical and mental health, unfortunately, there is less information. However, it should be noted that Covid19 has had an impact on the way health is managed. One newly arrived child, for instance, referred to Covid19 and stated that he is healthy and has no stress because of Covid19. In his opinion, the virus is not so dangerous, nevertheless, he emphasized that it still affects and limits his life (16y/o, male, Serbia). In addition, the link between mental health and group dynamics was emphasized by a newly arrived child. He told a story about a girl who committed suicide because she was bullied. The reason she was bullied was that someone was sending around nude photos of her (17y/o, male, Serbia). In this regard, the connection between peer interactions and related dynamics for mental health becomes clear.

Educational environment and system

This section addresses the impact of the school environment and the education system on newly arrived children's integration. School is a crucial environment in which integration can take place. Therefore, this research will discuss the experiences of newly arrived children in the school environment that promote or hinder integration.

Experiences of inclusion in school

According to the child-centered approach, those children who feel comfortable in the new country are successfully integrated (see Gornik 2020). One newly arrived child described feeling comfortable at school now, but that this was a process. In the beginning, when she arrived at a Viennese school, she found it difficult to find her way around. Therefore, the development of well-being could be related, first, to getting to know the school environment and, second, to getting to know peers and teachers. Following this thought would mean that new, unknown environments like a new school can develop a feeling of discomfort. Subsequently, a newly arrived child said that the first period in the new school was difficult because of the new language, the new impressions, and the new environment at school. However, she mentioned that she could ask her peers for help when she did not understand something. They also helped her with her homework. After one or two months, she found friends in school. She also told about a teacher who always asked her if she understood everything. So the teacher made sure that she could follow the lessons (15 years old, female, Romania). New, unfamiliar environments such as the school environment can therefore lead to discomfort. However, open and active interaction with peers and teachers can reduce feelings of indisposition.

In contrast, some newly arrived children reported that they did not feel integrated at school and had experiences of exclusion. Some peers bullied a newly arrived child, who then changed schools (12 y/o, female, Bosnia). Again, it is clear that inclusion in a social environment at school is significant for the well-being of newly arrived migrant children.

Another reason for the feeling of exclusion is the language barriers and the difficulty to overcome them (15y/o, female, Bosnia; 12y/o, female, Bosnia). One newly arrived child reported, for instance, that she sometimes asks for an explanation in English so she can follow the lesson. However, her teacher answers in German, so the newly arrived child cannot comprehend the content (15y/o, female, Bosnia). The behavior of the teacher can complicate the integration of newly arrived children. In addition, the dominance of the German language in school becomes evident here. Newly arrived children need linguistic support because the experiences of not understanding could lead to frustration and doubts about their abilities. Moreover, newly arrived children want to improve their German language skills to interact more easily with German-speaking peers and teachers. One child pointed out that he needs to become better at German to participate in school activities (16y/o, male, Serbia). The knowledge of the language of the country of arrival, in particular, can influence the possibility of participation and integration. In addition, a lack of German language skills meets with structural difficulties. One girl reported that she was not accepted in many schools due to her lack of German language skills. However, her current school did not require a language certificate, so she can now speak fluent German. The confidence the teachers had in her abilities and their acceptance made it easier for her to learn. She also pointed out to feel accepted by her peers and never felt like she was "the foreigner" (17y/o, female, Serbia). These quotes highlight the individual and structural difficulties of newly arrived children and the importance of a supportive social environment at school.

Language & School language policy and practice

Many newly arrived children must first attend German support classes to improve their German language skills.4 The children's opinions about the German support classes vary. For instance, one newly arrived child said that learning German in the German support class was easy for her because she likes the German language. She liked her friends and teacher. However, the first month was difficult for her because she did not understand the German language (15y/o, female, Romania). In contrast, one child stated that she has good German skills because she was not in a German support class. She emphasized that she liked being included in her class from the beginning, instead of being separated from the class community (17y/o, female, Serbia). From this, it can be concluded that on the one hand, it can be helpful to learn German intensively in the German support class, on the other hand, the separation from children who speak German well can also promote exclusion.

In general, regarding positive experiences related to languages, feedback, and support from teachers were highlighted. For instance, one child reported that she had many positive experiences through her teachers and that they were the reason for her good German (17y/o, female, Serbia). Similarly, one child shared that she received good feedback from her teacher about her German skills (15y/o, female, Romania). Thus, support and feedback can promote newly arrived children's confidence in learning the new language.

The focus on the acquisition of the German language goes hand in hand with little support for the mother tongue of the newly arrived children. Thus, for instance, many of the newly arrived children pointed out that their mother tongue is generally not promoted in schools. It seems that schools give multilingualism little space. One newly arrived child highlighted the dominance of the German language by stressing that teachers at her school do not like it when children speak in their mother tongue. She emphasized that this leads to difficulties because many of her peers do not speak German well. It follows that for many children the mother tongue is the only means of communication (15y/o, female, Bosnia). However, some children still speak to others at school in their mother tongue. In this context, some emphasized how positive it is to have a variety of languages at school, especially to promote inclusion (12y/o, female, Bosnia). Some newly arrived children stressed that speaking their mother tongue remains an effective means of communication in their new country. In this respect, they considered it adverse when teachers speak only German with them or when peers who speak the same language are, absent from the class. For instance, one child mentioned that she, unfortunately, cannot talk to anyone at school in Romanian (15y/o,

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4 Since 2018/19 children with insufficient German language skills must attend a "Deutschförderklasse" (German support class). These classes are designed to promote the learning of the German language separately from the regular class. Children in Deutschförderklassen, thus cannot switch to the regular class until a certain level of German has been reached. The assignment is regulated by the MIKA-D test, an Austria-wide and standardized test procedure, and this test is also used at the end of the semester to check for over-assessment of German language skills. All children in these classes are exceptional students and do not receive grades. The German support class is usually designed for one semester and can be attended for a maximum of four semesters (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung 2021).

female, Romania). Learning German is considered necessary, but speaking in the mother tongue with teachers and peers is also welcomed and supported.

Peers

Perceptions of peers at school were framed as 'diverse' or 'migrant'. One newly arrived child emphasized that she likes that many of her peers in her class are from different countries or have parents from different countries. She mentioned that her friend from India likes to wear traditional clothes, which she herself likes very much. However, she pointed out that together they talk more about school and homework than about their ancestral countries (15y/o, female, Romania). Nevertheless, in one focus group, the children stressed that they feel comfortable in class and that there is no bullying (16y/o, male, Serbia; 12y/o, female, Bosnia). Even if cultural habits are shared, relationships with peers at school are mostly about school issues.

Classmates at school are generally described as nice, welcoming and helpful (16y/o, male, Serbia; 15y/o, female, Romania; 17y/o, female, Serbia; 12y/o, female, Bosnia). One newly arrived child emphasized that she had felt very welcome from the beginning and that no one had made her feel "different." She also noted that making new friends was easier than she had expected. In addition, her friends are one of the reasons why she speaks German so well. She emphasized that she feels supported and that they have taught her the correct spelling and pronunciation. Nevertheless, she stressed that you have to be an open and confident person in order to communicate (17y/o, female, Serbia). Therefore, it is important to communicate and get in touch with the new social environment of the school, even if it can involve some effort.

Planning special activities with the class community, such as field trips, can also promote social integration. For example, one newly arrived child stated that she made many friends at school when they went on field trips together (15y/o, female, Romania). Field trips allow peers to get to know each other in a setting other than school.

Teachers/educational staff

The newly arrived children indicated that they experience most teachers as helpful and supportive (16y/o, male, Serbia; /o, female, Romania; 12y/o, female, Bosnia). For example, one girl mentioned that she can always ask her German teacher if she does not understand something or needs help. She said that she is allowed to write to her privately if she needs help, which makes many things easier (15y/o, female, Romania). Similarly, one girl explained that her German teacher is the reason for her good German skills. She also mentioned that the principal of her school also supports her (17y/o, female, Serbia). Here it is clear that support is important for the children's personal development.

In contrast, some of the newly arrived children also had unpleasant experiences with teachers. For example, one newly arrived boy emphasized that there are also teachers who are not interested in his situation (16 y/o, male, Serbia). Similarly, one girl experienced that

a teacher did not talk to her because he assumed that she would not understand him. She went on to say that she approached this teacher about it when she had gained some confidence in the German language. In the meantime, they have a good relationship with each other (17 y/o, female, Serbia). It is suggested that some teachers do not understand the situation of the newly arrived children and do not know how best to act. This could be due to their own powerlessness in the face of the situation, as they may not have attended any necessary training themselves or be able to speak other languages.

Some newly arrived children would therefore like to see more talk about other cultures, religions and traditions in school. One newly arrived child reported that her teachers in history and geography sometimes talk about these topics. She emphasized that she likes to learn about different cultures and the history related to them (15y/o, female, Romania). Teachers' openness to different cultures, religions and traditions can encourage interest in them.

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

The quotes from the interviews suggest that the most important focus for the inclusion of newcomers is German language skills (16y/o, male, Serbia; 15y/o, female, Bosnia; 17y/o, female, Serbia). This could be related to the fact that education policies, and therefore schools embedded in these policies, emphasize the importance of this skill for academic success and labour market integration. Thus, performance-based language success is prioritized over the social and emotional needs of newcomers. This is particularly evident in the introduction of German language support classes, which separate the children of newcomers from mainstream classes. Here, the children who attended these classes stated that the change from this class to the regular class was difficult because they had to make new friends again (15y/o, female, Romania). This move to a new class environment, with many challenges, can have a negative impact on the well-being of this vulnerable group.

Psychosocial support

Unfortunately, the children in this sample did not comment on the issue of psychosocial support. In general, it is known that the provision of psychological and social support in schools is low (Standard 2019).

Family and wider community

Family

The family members of the newly arrived children live in different countries according to their migration history. One newly arrived child told that he lives with his father, while his mother and brother stayed in Serbia. During the interview, the child expressed a desire to see his family more often. Unfortunately, Covid19 made the visits even more complicated (16 y/o, male, Serbia). Another newly arrived child also stressed the importance of being able to live with his family (15y/o, female, Romania). Being with his family can therefore be understood as a basic need of newly arrived children.

Some newly arrived children live with their nuclear family in Vienna (15y/o, female, Romania; 17y/o, female, Serbia). The relationship between family members was described as positive. For example, one newly arrived child perceives his family as supportive (16y/o, male, Serbia). Similarly, a newly arrived girl stressed that she has a very open relationship with her family members: 'I can talk to my siblings and my parents about everything'. She and her brother help each other with homework. In addition, the family goes for walks or visits museums on weekends (15y/o, female, Romania). In addition, some children also receive support from their parents with homework and studying (12 years, female, Bosnia). Accordingly, family members can be a resource when it comes to arriving in a new country.

Family members can be particularly helpful if they already live in the country to which one is immigrating. This was the case for a child who had visited Vienna several times before moving there because she knew some family members there (15y/o, female, Bosnia). Through the visits of the family members it was possible to get to know the new environment and to orientate oneself with the help of the family members.

In addition to the positive family relationships of the children, languages and language acquisition were also mentioned in relation to the family. One newly arrived child stated that she enjoys talking to her family at home in Romanian. However, she speaks to her siblings in German to improve her German language skills (15y/o, female, Romania). Another newly arrived child mentioned that her younger sister struggles with the German language because she is shy and not so open, so she wants to help her (17y/o, female, Serbia). Within the family, both the mother tongue and the language of the new country can be promoted.

Migrant community, religious community

There are few quotes in the interviews that refer to the migrant community. However, one child has a friend in Vienna who is also from Serbia (16y/o, male, Serbia).

Local environment

N/A. For other related topics, see also the section on "Spatial and Social Positioning".

Other

Two other themes were raised by the children. One child in the sample has Austrian citizenship and stressed that she feels good because she can now live in Austria, which she considers a good country (15y/o, female, Romania). Another child mentioned experiences of racism but did not want to give details about it, but it seemed to bother him (16y/o, male, Serbia).

Conceptualizations of own well–being and life satisfaction

The well-being of migrant children is an important indicator of integration into mainstream society in a child-centred sense (Gornik 2020: 537). The following sections therefore highlight the most important findings for conceptualising the own well-being and life satisfaction of newly arrived children in Austria.

Self-perceived well-being and life satisfaction

Well-being and satisfaction were described firstly in relation to the fulfilment of certain norms and abilities. For example, one child mentioned that being patient and punctual is important for her well-being. She does not feel comfortable when she is late for school or other appointments (15y/o, female, Romania). Another child expressed that she feels good because she learned German quickly (17y/o, female, Serbia). On the other hand, activity and social engagement were highlighted as factors for well-being and life satisfaction. One child pointed out that he is happy going for walks with his family and playing soccer with his friends makes her happy (15y/o, female, Romania). One child stressed that video games, soccer, friends and music are important for his well-being (16y/o, male, Serbia).

Identification and belonging

In terms of identification and belonging, some children indicated that they identify more with Austria and Austrian society, while others identify more with the country and society of their country of origin. For example, one girl stressed that she is happy to live in Austria and not in her country of origin (12y/o, female, Bosnia). One child, on the other hand, stressed that he feels at home in Serbia because he grew up there and has many friends. However, he also hopes to feel at home in Austria one day (16y/o, male, Serbia).

Feelings of safety
N/A

Self-perceived opportunities, choices and feeling of control over their own life and future

Newly arrived children pointed out that they have better future chances in Austria than in their countries of origin (12y/o, female, Bosnia). However, one child stressed that she would like to find a good job in the future (15y/o, female, Bosnia). In this context, one child stated that he would like to have a career and is therefore currently focusing on learning German (16y/o, male, Serbia). One child mentioned that he is afraid that his German is not good enough for school and the job market (16y/o, male, Serbia). A newly arrived girl also stated that she has language problems and is therefore unsure how the next few years will go and whether she will be able to fulfil her dream of higher education (15y/o, female, Serbia). In addition to the focus on the German language, the importance of grades was also mentioned. One child stressed that this importance is related to her desire to go to a better school after MS: "Yes, now I have already enrolled in another school because I want to have

a school with a good degree (…), that's why I came to Austria, to have a good education and not to sit at home" (15y/o, female, Romania). She can imagine becoming a doctor's assistant because she would like to work in a hospital. However, most children who attend AHS want to go on to university (12y/o, female, Bosnia).

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

The following chapter looks at the children's perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions on issues such as equality, intercultural dialog and others.

Regarding **equality**, one child pointed out that Austrian citizenship can be important for the labor market, but not for friendships (15y/o, female, Serbia).

Regarding **intercultural dialog and intercultural conflicts**, one child stressed that she does not like intercultural conflicts and war. She pointed out that these conflicts are not necessary and that the conflicting parties should try to communicate with each other in order to find peaceful solutions (15y/o, female, Romania). Furthermore, one girl raised the issue of intercultural dialog between "Austrians" and newcomers and explained that it is therefore important to be very open. Her direct way of communicating helped her to feel better integrated at school and accepted by the teachers (17y/o, female, Serbia). Thus, she also confronted teachers when she felt excluded or discriminated against in class.

On the topic of **cultural and religious pluralism**, one child stated that it was not a problem for her that people from other countries live together "because everyone is a human being" (15y/o, female, Romania).

In relation to **migrants and migration**, one child stated that "people migrate because they are looking for a better life and/or they are fleeing from a war" (17y/o, male, Serbia). In the same vein, another child said that she can understand migrants who leave their country because of a war or for other reasons (15y/o, female, Romania). She explained that sometimes it is necessary to migrate to a "better" country. One child is also sympathetic to people who come to Austria, arguing that migrants are the ones who "help" Austria by doing jobs (such as cleaning or construction work) that Austrians do not want to do (15y/o, female, Bosnia). In addition, one child stressed that it is "very nice when people find their true selves in other cities" and therefore promotes an open attitude towards migration (16y/o, male, Serbia), and one child stressed that everyone should be treated equally (12y/o, female, Bosnia). In contrast, one child expressed understanding for people who say that there are too many foreigners in Austria (15y/o, female, Bosnia). However, it is normal for children to have a diverse environment, at least at school. For example, one child mentioned the high level of diversity in his class. Having a certain migration history is normal for her school, she said (17y/o, female, Serbia).

Racism was defined differently by the children. For example, one girl pointed out that "racism is when people are treated differently because of their skin color or nationality" (15y/o, female, Serbia) and one boy stressed that racism often has to do with different skin colors (17y/o, male, Serbia). One child expressed his opinion on racism, stressing that racism is "totally wrong, it is not okay to judge people by their race, religion or anything else. People are human beings and should be treated like human beings. And people should get to know them before they judge them." (16y/o, male, Serbia).

Perceived advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children's integration

Perception of integration

Many quotes suggest that language learning is central to the newly arrived children's understanding of integration (15y/o, female, Romania). This is consistent with the federal government's understanding of integration and the integration measures based on it.

However, in addition to the role of language, getting to know peers or friendships in general were also highlighted as important factors for integration (15y/o, female, Romania). For example, one girl stressed that money, a job and German language skills are important for her to integrate, but she also emphasized that she feels integrated when she is with friends and socializes (15y/o, female, Serbia). Thus, the children include not only achievement-related factors such as language, but also social and emotional factors in their understanding of integration. Unfortunately, this understanding is often missing when it comes to integration and education policies, where social and emotional factors related to migrants' well-being receive little attention.

In terms of a definition of integration, one child emphasized, "The more you integrate into a society, the easier it is for you, but of course you cannot forget your roots and where you come from" (17y/o, female, Serbia). This is a clear plea against an assimilationist approach to integration that prevails in Austrian integration and education policy (see report on WP4).

(Perceived) advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children's integration

Advantages

The promotion of the German language and the associated improvement of language skills are highlighted as necessary in order to be able to communicate with peers and teachers. For example, one child stressed that thanks to the German language support she was able to communicate better and make friends after the first few months due to the German language support (15y/o, female, Romania). In this respect, it can be said that learning or already mastering the language is highlighted as an important factor for integration.

Weakness

The existing model of German support classes promotes German language skills, but at the same time leads to difficulties on the social and emotional level. One child, for example, reported that she had made friends in the German course, but had lost them again after moving to the regular class. In the mainstream class she then had to find new friends again (15y/o, female, Romania). It can be said that integration measures focus on language and performance and do not take into account social and emotional needs. The importance of also taking into account social and emotional needs is emphasized by scholars who propose child-centered integration policies (Gornik 2020)

When asked what can be done to make migrants feel comfortable in Austria, one child answered that it was important to give them a job or the opportunity to work (15y/o, female, Romania).

Good practices

A good practice mentioned during the interview is class trips. These encourage interaction between peers to get to know each other (15y/o, female, Romania) and break the usual assessment situation that prevails in school. Another good practice mentioned by the children was cultural celebrations. One child pointed out, "We had a cultural festival. I thought it was very nice. The students prepared dishes from their home countries and we served them in school. It was very nice and I thought it was very cool because you had the opportunity to observe all the cultures and see how diverse our school actually is" (17y/o, female, Serbia).

However, one child highlighted that there are not many good practices for integrating newcomers. Newcomers are more dependent on the good will and commitment of their teachers. Without her German teacher, she would not have managed to settle in so quickly at the new school (17y/o, female, Serbia). Another child reported that one teacher kept checking to see if she had understood a word and asked other children to explain it to her if she did not know (15y/o, female, Romania). In this respect, classroom interaction with language barriers can be evaluated as good practice, because despite the difficulties in understanding, there were opportunities and consideration for the social environment. Although it is clear how important teachers and peers are for integration, there is a lack of action to encourage teachers and peers to provide support or to provide them with the means, such as training, to provide support.

Most long-term migrant children reported no explicit good practices regarding integration at school in the interviews. However, it was pointed out, for instance, "it is practical to have someone sitting next to you who speaks the same mother tongue as you" (13y/o, male, Macedonia). Furthermore, learning support in school can be seen as another good practice (14y/o, male, Syria). In addition, one long-term migrant child shared that "video and film material helps a lot in class for comprehension" (12y/o, male, Ukraine).

4. Discussion

This report sought to address two main research questions that were: How do (migrant and local) children perceive and experience the processes of integration? And how does educational staff approach and addresses integration processes? First of all, it must be pointed out that the Corona pandemic hampered the research process greatly. Nevertheless, managed the research team to achieve the goals defined in the project plan. Regarding the research questions, we learned a lot about the (migrant) children's perceptions of integration and how it is addressed in school from a child-centered perspective. As part of the research, interviews and focus groups were conducted with three groups (newly arrived migrant children, long-term migrant children, and local children). Although the analysis was conducted separately, it can be said that there are many commonalities in the opinions and perceptions of the different groups. This concluding section is going to highlight the central themes that were identified across the analytical sections above.

First of all, it should be said that the results of the study clearly show that for all children in the sample, migration and different linguistic, religious, ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds are the norm in their social environment and among their peers. In general, migrant children hold inclusive attitudes and advocate that no one should be discriminated against. It became clear that issues such as intercultural conflict or prejudice against peers were very rare among migrant children. Rather, the migrant children had an open attitude towards their peers and emphasized that they believe it is important to give everyone a chance. Nevertheless, negative experiences such as racism are to be expected in their everyday lives from time to time, but more likely outside of school and from people in the host society than with peers, teachers, or other migrant children.

Furthermore, the majority of migrant children emphasized that discussion of intercultural issues and sharing of experiences in this context rarely take place in the classroom. However, many of them would welcome learning more about these topics. Similarly, there is often a lack of multilingual teachers and role models for children with migration history. In this context, it became clear that especially for newly arrived migrant children and children with a long-term migration background, the hurdles in the integration process lie primarily in language acquisition and school success. Thus, many of them emphasized that they would have liked to have had someone they could understand when they were new in class. In this context, it is also worth mentioning that it was often positively highlighted if there was a teacher or educator who spoke the same language as the migrant child or also had a migration history.

Moreover and similar to the WP3 and WP4 reports, the analysis in this report clearly shows that diversity and high migration rates are not necessarily a problem. For many of the children, it is a reality and thus normality that all of their friends at home speak a language other than German. Conflicts among peers rarely have anything to do with intercultural issues but are rather caused by social conflicts such as arguments among friends or bad behaviour in class. Against this backdrop, it appears that school practices and educational policies do not address this state of high diversity, especially in urban areas like Vienna.

While there is an inclusive reality among peers in schools, both political discourse, and educational policies are oriented towards rather exclusive concepts that do not address the reality of migrant children's lives.

In summary, the research, conducted from a child-centered perspective, sheds light on migrant children's (mostly positive) opinions on the issue of diversity that affect them in their daily lives. It also shows how policies can miss real problems and needs, especially regarding the high degree of diversity in schools in Vienna, Austria. While children perceive a variety of languages, religious believes, national and ethnic origins, and other characteristics as the foundation of their every-day-life in school, education policies as well as discourse negate this reality and tackle "problems" like multilingualism among peers with restrictive and exclusive measures (e.g. German support classes or MIKA-D test). As analysis with "radical diversity" approaches show: This dynamic is part of the hegemonic logic of anti-pluralistic approaches (Institut für Social Justice & Radical Diversity 2021) and needs to be changed to enable all parts of society to participate and create a societal space that honours the high diversity of our societies.

5. Executive summary newly arrived migrant children

The report focuses on data collected with "newly arrived migrant children." This refers to children between the ages of 10 and 18 who had been in Austria for less than three years at the time of the study and were attending secondary school in Vienna, Austria. Data on newly arrived migrant children include participant observation, qualitative interviews, focus groups, and quantitative surveys. Due to the different countries of origin, the legal situation of newly arrived migrant children in the sample can vary considerably. On the one hand, there are children from other EU countries who do not have to go through an asylum procedure. On the other hand, there were also children in the sample who were currently in the asylum procedure.

The aim of this report is to gain insights into how newly arrived migrant children perceive their integration process in the Austrian education system. Following the principles of child-centered research methods, the study addressed the following research questions:

How do newly arrived migrant children perceive and experience the integration process?
How do educational staff approach and deal with integration processes?

The study, guided by these research questions, was conducted with a child-centered approach. Therefore, it worked with the understanding that newly immigrated children are not a homogeneous group, but experts on their own lives and on their experiences with integration measures in the Austrian education system. The following report addresses newly arrived migrant children's perceptions of their daily lives as well as other factors (e.g., future plans, peers, school) that influence their integration process as newly immigrated children.

The results of the study show that for the majority of newly arrived migrant children in the sample, migration and diverse linguistic, religious, ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds are the norm in their social environment and among their classmates. While most children in the sample hold inclusive views, schools lack policies to address issues of national, religious, or ethnic diversity. In addition, the results show that the biggest obstacles in the integration process for newly arrived migrant children are language acquisition and academic success.

In this context, the report's findings highlight three things: first, the diversity of children in schools needs to be more fully addressed in curricula. Second, schools need to become more diverse spaces, for example, in terms of teaching staff and teaching materials. Third, the education system needs to focus more on providing individualized support to newly arrived migrant students.

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POLAND

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1. Introduction

This report aims to highlight the integration processes of newly arrived migrant pupils from a child-centred perspective. Integration in our research is defined as 'the process by which people who are relatively new to a country (i.e. whose roots do not reach deeper than two or three generations) become part of society; it is a 'process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration' (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016: 11). We recognise that children are not a homogenous group and there are likely to be differences based on varying characteristics, including age and migrant background. As such, the research focused on two age groups (10-13 years old and 14-19 years old) and three migrant categories (Newly Arrived, Long Term Residents, and Local Children). In this report mostly the results related to the newly arrived migrant children will be presented.

This report is a result of the analysis of the research with children based on the interviews, focus groups, and observations made in six schools selected for the in-depth study by the Polish research team.

2. Methodological approach

At the beginning of the study, there were three primary schools included in it, two secondary schools, and one dormitory house for teenagers attending different schools in the Krakow metropolitan area. As the project came across the Covid-19 pandemics restriction we needed to change the methodological approach as two schools refused further cooperation to conduct the study, so there was no possibility to have individual interviews with children and organize focus groups as it had been previously planned. To reach the required numbers of interviews and organize a lacking focus study we involved one more school in the study (S5) and approached children from the Polish language course that was led by one of the researchers in the Polish team (S6). We also had some interviews with children from different Kraków schools who were met by our researchers on different occasions and events (S0). The interviews, having autobiographical narrations, had been conducted among local children and children with a migrant background to examine their experiences of living in diverse societies, coming to school, and explore their attitudes and opinions toward cultural and religious pluralism, otherness, intercultural communication, intercultural conflicts, migration, migrants, integration, etc. As some of the interviews were done during the restrictions imposing social distancing and were made online, researchers faced particular difficulties in acquiring children's engagement and readiness to speak openly about their life experiences. This affected the range and depth of the data collected during this part of the study. Adding children from the language school that was previously known to the interviewer and who trusted her, combined with several art-based and similarly engaging methods brought added value to the study.

As a result of the researchers' effort, 91 children were interviewed: 32 in the 9-13 years old group and 58 in the 14-19 years old group. The age of one primary school student was not assessed. 54 children were Ukrainian, 26 were Polish, three were Belarussian, two Indian and Venezuelan, and one person from Russia, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. 26 children were local, 42 were newly arrived children, and 23 were long-term children. These groups were unequal contrary to the project's plan for several reasons. In Poland, long-term migrants are still a small group of people as the large wave of migrations began in 2014. As it was explained in the WP3 report on the reception community and the WP4 report on the school community, migration of children was a subsequent effect of previous economic migration of their parents. It is therefore a relatively new phenomenon. On the other hand, when the two biggest schools dropped out of the study there was a problem with acquiring enough local children for the study. This resulted in interviewing more newly arrived migrants for the project.

The interviews were made between June 2020 and April 2021. The period of study was much extended due to pandemic circumstances. There were also 9 focus groups conducted

with the participation of 4 children. There was no possibility to organize more focus groups due to the pandemic situation.

Before direct contact with children, our researchers took part in the participatory observations that were held in all initial six schools where the study was first enacted. In each school, there were at least 8 days of such observations conducted, where the final number of days in each school was limited by permission given by school management. In each school, the observation took place in at least two classes and the number of informants ranged from 20 to 75 children, teachers, and other school employees. All observation days had been performed between November 2019 and January 2020. During observation days our researchers came across a greater diversity of students in terms of their nationality than it later appeared in the qualitative and quantitative study results.

3. Results

The MiCREATE project aims to study integration processes from a child-centred perspective. In the broadest and most basic sense, integration means 'the process by which people who are relatively new to a country (i.e., whose roots do not reach deeper than two or three generations) become part of society; it is a 'process of settlement, interaction with the host society, and social change that follows immigration' (Penninx and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2016: 11). Following this characterisation, two main research questions of our fieldwork were:

• How (migrant and local) children perceive and experience the processes of migrant integration?

• How does educational staff approach and address migrant integration processes?

The research with children, both migrant and local, was not easy to perform. Children attending contemporary schools are in general fixed on their affairs and living in their worlds, which is hardly accessible by not entrusted persons from outside of their social circles. The emerging virtual culture of contemporary children, often limiting contacts to those maintained online or via smartphones widened the generational gap. Furthermore, the pandemics and lack of possibility to organize events that would familiarize children with the study and research agenda, possibly getting their more interest in it, made interviews even harder. We also encountered distrust on behalf of parents who, having lived in totalitarian times, had been sceptical of allowing children to talk about private matters, recalling state intrusion they suffered in their youth. Many respondents are also living day by day and admitted not to reflect on their experiences, opinions, and past. It occurred that younger children tend to be more open and trusting than older ones. Thus, the above-mentioned difficulties caused the impossibility to gather data that would answer all research questions that were initially planned as expected results of the autobiographical interviews and other supporting parts of the study.

3.1 Participant observation

Peers

Peer sociability

In theory, kids placed in the dormitory (S1), which creates the specific living community, shall have lively peer relations, maintained on an ongoing level. Unfortunately, observation revealed several major problems with the integration between peers representing different national groups. Usually, those problems are attached to groups' formal separation but also will to stick together which is common for children originating from the same countries or at least using the same language. The same behaviour was observed also during classes and breaks in S2 and S7. In S2 school migrant children outnumbered the local one in one of the classes, while another was a preparatory class – consisting only of migrant children. They were naturally sticking together.

On the other hand, the S3 situation was mixed. Some children were well-integrated (felt good, socializing, well-oriented in a school environment) and had vivid relations with Polish peers while others were more reserved. Some boys there were more sociable while girls tend to have fewer but more solid friends. No divisions during brakes were observed. In S8 in turn poor integration was observed. Children were forming cliques focused on their own, specific agenda. Migrant children were rarely included in the activities.

In S4, classroom divisions were very clearly outlined, partly on the gender line, but not only. It was evident that in the classrooms there were groups of children sticking together, but also the flow of students between them was smooth. The class leaders were clearly noticeable. They were also the most popular children. The smartest, most active students constituted a separate group. The foreign boy who spoke almost no Polish was the most isolated from the rest. It must be however underlined that the best students (boys) in the class looked after him. The position of these students was assessed as part of the classroom relations observation and referred to grading and teacher's assessment. Sometimes his inability to answer teachers' questions caused outbursts of laughter and whispers. However, these were not very negative or hostile reactions, rather perceived as circumstantially funny. Children were amused by the situation and the row of mistakes, not laughing out the boy himself. In one of the classes in S4, the Ukrainian children stuck tightly together. However, the divisions based on nationality were not clearly outlined. This is probably due to the small number of foreigners in the S4 school.

Formal separation in the dormitory was caused by placing children in rooms according to their nationality and the introduction of different daily plans for local and migrant children. During common social meetings, or events Ukrainian and Polish teenagers are sitting in separate rows by choice. The same refers to the use of common spaces. In some cases, teenagers eagerly engage in social relations, usually during organized events. Sometimes it happened spontaneously as in the case of a Ukrainian student who regularly cooked for his peers. Teenagers living together (S1) were generally tolerant and did not mind the

expression of different cultures and customs (e.g. allowed Christmas decorations in Ukrainian national colours). Positive attitudes towards diversity were also observed in S3, S4, S7, and S8. Children do not exclude their migrant friends, often help each other while learning, but except for already built friendships they are also not much interested in foreign peers. The relationship seemed superficial, limited to classroom activities, and not continued during breaks or outside the school. More occasions for interaction came with organized events (S1). Then, children who are usually passive and withdrawn become active and more talkative. The interest in activities is usually short-lasting but spontaneous. From the observer position children quickly lost their interest in participation, were often impatient. They stopped listening, returned to smartphones, or were rudely commenting on extended lectures or speeches. Most of the social life in the dormitory takes place in sleeping rooms.

There were clear gender divisions in primary schools observed where boys played with boys and girls with girls (S3, S7).

In S7 observer distinguished a stable pattern of the behaviour of children with a migrant background including copying behaviours, and attitudes of other peers, not sticking out, being polite and obedient to teachers, showing off talents or knowledge only on occasions, or being asked, working hard, staying together in own group or at least being close to countryman, and joining Polish peers only by invitation.

Peer communication

In S1, despite a daily routine that enforces interaction in common spaces, Ukrainian and Polish children are using national languages even in the presence of peers from different countries. National groups are sticking together and rather do not mix. In the dormitory, it was observed that children deliberately do not use common spaces (daily room, kitchen) in the presence of peers from different countries. They did not mix also by gender (living on different floors). Interactions between national groups are not common, usually initiated by individuals. The communication schemes are basic, usually requiring the use of a mixture of simple Polish and Ukrainian words. Each group had leaders – who become agents of mutual contacts.

In S3 it was observed that children had good communication between each other and slightly worse in the language of instruction. Some words were not recognized by children and needed to be translated with different phrases by teachers. In the schoolyard, a gender division was observed among all children. The migrant boy in one of the classes had a leadership position, often mediated between class and teachers (e.g. too much homework). It was also noticed that younger children often communicate without conversation, using body language or showing tricks, multimedia in smartphones' apps and laughing. Children were often using smartphones' online translators to communicate.

In two out of the three S4's observed classes, students were very insubordinate. They talked a lot during the lessons and disturbed teachers in every lesson. They often argued

with each other and laughed out each other. They made malicious comments about other peers. However, a very large part of the communication between them was carried out using cell phones. Students (despite the teacher's ban) used phones constantly - they used Whatsapp and Messenger, Instagram, and TikTok. This part of their communication was inaccessible to the observer. Children talked and wrote to each other mainly in Polish. The exception was contact with a student from Vietnam who knew only basic Polish. His peers communicated mainly in English and using the language of gestures. Ukrainian children often spoke Ukrainian to each other, but they used Polish in their conversations with Polish children. Sometimes they just interfered with the words in Ukrainian.

Children in secondary schools tend to be less sociable and less interactive. Most of them were minded by their businesses. In some cases, isolation caused by the language barrier was observed (S2).

In S7, S8 children were loud and active. They behaved less obediently, even during classes when they often made comments or were laughing. Usually, wrong answers were laughed out and it referred to both local and migrant children. The latter ones however felt uncomfortable in such a situation. They showed affection, seemed ashamed, or dim. Sometimes they stand out and shout over peers. In S8 most children think about themselves and do not pay attention to the needs of others.

In S7 and S8 children communicated in Polish during lessons and breaks. This also referred to migrant children. Only some of them spoke in national languages during breaks.

Educational staff

Engagement with students

Teachers and educators are quite open towards foreign children but tend to assimilate them. Systematically they Polish names of migrant students (S2), however, they often try to learn some words and expressions in Ukrainian. The language sensitivity is however low and during official events, many teachers tend to use sophisticated words harder to be understood by foreigners (e.g. "przyczółek" (bridgehead), "pogorzel" (site of fire), etc.) (S1). Despite awareness of the mixed listeners, teachers use only Polish teaching materials and tools. The same problem was observed in S3. Here teachers however paid attention thus migrant children could understand the messages. Some teachers here allowed children to enter class only in pairs which enforced interaction. Children with good command of Polish were active during lessons and liked being asked. This observation was confirmed in the quantitative study.

In S2, the integration approach, understood as an effort to include migrant children in the classroom activities was absent and teachers did not even encourage students to learn from each other. The same was observed in S8, but only in some classes, while in others not. In other schools it was transparent – all children were treated the same way without paying attention to their nationalities or other differences (S7, S8). It was observed that migrant

children have more confidence in contacts with teachers than with their Polish peers. On the other hand, teachers of Polish as a foreign language (often also Polish language teachers) were those who had better knowledge and research on the situation of migrant children. They had a better approach and were more active in integration practices (S8).

The child-centred approach as defined in the MiCreate project was uncommon. Teachers rarely paid attention to students' needs, nor listened to what they wanted. If some manifestations were visible it concerned only the perception of specific needs of some children (S3).

The same thing was observed in S4. Teachers used their pre-eminence. Only some of them tried to treat local and migrant children as equal partners. Young teachers had visible problems with maintaining discipline in the classroom. They seemed to be resigned on this account. Teachers showed openness in contact with migrant children. Some teachers allowed immigrant children to use English in class as contemporary lingua franca. Children here could take exams in a simplified mode - adapted to their language proficiency. They were also given more time during the tests. Teachers allowed better students to help their foreign peers during lessons. They might assist or translate something for them or explain what was said by teachers by rephrasing it to simpler expressions. Such conversations during classes were not interrupted.

S3 school forbade the use of smartphones by students which particularly affected positively peers interactions. Phones were in use frequently during the school breaks (S7) or even at the lessons (S4). In such a situation social relations between peers were very limited.

Conflict management

In S1, a Teenage Dormitory Council was elected to help in conflict management. There are also some Regulatory Committees. Teachers often limit access to the common room where table tennis equipment is placed to discipline misbehaving boys. This was used as a discipline tool.

In S3 our researcher observed that migrant children who were put under pressure by teachers were defended by peers asking for a more lenient approach. On the other hand, teachers patiently explained the differences (e.g. accent, pronunciation errors) that were the cause of mocking between peers. The observation time frame did not allow us to conclude if those efforts were effective to prevent further mocking.

In S2 teachers ignored possible reasons for conflicts and it was observed that local children sometimes have hostile attitudes towards their migrant peers. This reflection was not confirmed however in the autobiographical interviews held with migrant students attending this school. Children interviewed in this school prized relations with their Polish peers, felt cared for and guided.

In S7 a conflict management classes were conducted during regular classes led by external trainers. There were teachers here who had difficulties in coping with students generating problems. One of those was seeking help from an observer confiding that for the whole semester she was not able to resolve inter-ethnic conflict in the class.

In S8 a fight between two boys was observed. Teachers mediated conflict but were more focused on the perceived offender and calming his aggression. The victim was left behind. The class was being counselled and children were able to talk about their emotions.

In S4 no situations of ethnic, cultural, racial or religious conflicts were noticed during the observation. When it comes to other conflict situations, teachers at S4 did not deal with them very well. In these situations, teachers showed a strong paternalistic approach. They threatened students with negative behaviour assessment, addressed negative comments to the class, put entries to register and sought the headmaster's intervention. All those usually escalated problems. There have been very few mediation attempts in these situations.

Engagement with cultural diversity topics

In S1 we can distinguish positive elements related to teachers' engagement in cultural mediation but also some common mistakes and insensitivity in this area. All information directed to students is available in Polish only even when Ukrainian children are more willing to participate in announced events. On the other hand, when talking about history, customs and celebrations teachers try to describe common grounds and adhere to common historical heritage. They did not impose a one-way point of view on historical events but rather tried to learn the view of students and accustom it to a more common understanding of history. They do not avoid difficult topics but try to describe them without cultural supremacy. When talking about migration teachers adopt the cosmopolitan approach. They are aware of the advantages of multiculturalism and rather adhere to the positive visions of migration.

In S3 the bilingual potential was explored by one of the teachers during the lessons to show the rich fullness of languages (S3).

In S7 some intercultural issues were present during Polish and family education lessons. In S4 teachers when asking migrant children they referred to their nationalities, expected and accepted answers comprising their cultural codes.

Generally, the intercultural issues are explored more broadly only on the occasion of customary or traditional days, or during celebrations, school contests or similar events. In such circumstances teachers were interested in foreign traditions, customs and differences between them (S4). In S1 they encouraged children to share those with their peers.

In S7 teachers, as observed, were aware of cultural differences between students from different countries however they often exaggerated these differences. On occasion, they were preparing different teaching materials and assuming such necessity. In the opinion of observers, such an attitude brought segregation to the class which was not necessary as

migrant children had a good command of Polish and could use the same set of teaching materials.

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

Teachers are generally open and helpful to foreign students. They however divide children into those who are »our« and those Ukrainian (S1, S3) Intercultural dialogue often is connected with historical heritage and common past events that are being interpreted in a friendly and dialogical manner. Migration is often seen through the lens of problems that need to be solved – irresponsibility of parents, their lack of care, absence, troublesome adaptation, alienation. Judging by declarations, conversations and behaviours, researchers had the impression that some migrants do not have clear national or ethnic identification, they often do not think about it at all (S1). Teachers in the learning process use different assessment criteria for migrant children (S3), adjusted to the language proficiency of children. In S7 in the same manner homework tasks were assigned. Some teachers were much interested in the project and its aims, saying that such activities are groundbreaking and they would love to take part in the action after retirement. This was frequent observation also in WP4 interviews with teachers when they were talking about overwhelming everyday duties making any other, additional efforts to create or implement integration practices barely possible. On the other hand in S8 (the largest school) teachers claimed there are no specific adjustments to foreign-born students. Here, the approach was very individual and relied on individual teachers' competencies and engagement.

In S2 it was observed that migrant children tended to treat learning more seriously, being more active during lessons and were more conscientious in task performance, while local children treated school less seriously and demonstrated a lack of engagement.

Teachers who had more contact with migrant children tended to be more integrative and eager to raise their competencies by consultation in supportive institutions or taking additional studies or participating in training sessions. Most often they were teachers of languages or art. Teachers of specific subjects (geography, biology, chemistry) were more distant and less prepared to work in a diverse environment. All teachers however were trying to adjust their teaching methods to the specific needs of children (S3, S4, S7, S8).

In S4 it has been noticed that students (boys) used offensive language in jokes towards Muslims. There was also one situation where the teacher made a joke about black people based on stereotypes (not racist/degrading, however).

In overall impression, local students seemed to have a very positive attitude towards their migrant peers. Teachers also were open to migrant children and no prejudiced attitudes were ever observed.

School environment

The Polish school environment is dominantly monocultural with some additive and transformative approaches present in individual attitudes of certain teachers and educators. History teaching or celebration days are the main instigators to include some intercultural threads however it still takes the form of complements to homogenous narratives. There are some hints to include common history which is still seen from a solely Polish perspective. The Polish language is the one used in all teaching materials, even those that were created by teachers on purpose. The school corridors are also monocultural. All vignettes, posters, materials and announcements are in the Polish language and refer to Polish cultural tradition. Rarely was it possible to find some English, French or German displays that referred to foreign language classes. There was no space here for migrant issues or affairs. Its presence was not observed during this phase of the study.

How do different factors affect integration processes?

Newly arrived migrant children

Children in S1 seemed to be overloaded with education. Their after school activity was rather passive and many children had been tired and withdrawn. The language barrier seemed to be the most important factor that lengthens the time necessary to engage in learning daily. Many students worked with dictionaries. Migrant children are used to harder work and doing more homework (S3) so they do not understand Polish children complaining. As observed and heard, they usually love Polish schools, having experience of the authoritarian model of education in their own country. There are plenty of misunderstandings between peers, usually caused by language problems. They are the source of short-term conflicts averted by explanation. Boys seem to integrate faster, talk more, have a wider social circle and are open to teamwork while girls are more individual and competitive (S7). Children who are working with a cultural assistant are less integrated and somehow separated from the class. The presence of an assistant creates distance between children and their peers. The situation changes when such support is finished (S8).

3.2 Focus groups & Interviews

Dynamics and factors influencing the integration process of migrant children

Pre-migration period and migration experience

Country of birth/country of ancestors

The vast majority of the interviewed children migrated to Poland from Ukraine (27 out of 33 interviews). Apart from them, we had three participants from India, one from Vietnam, one from Venezuela and one from Azerbaijan. About half of the children visited (or visit regularly, depending on the length of their stay in Poland) the country of origin during school holidays, to meet with their generational families: grandparents, cousins, relatives and friends. In a few cases of older students who emigrated to Poland alone, i.e. without parents, visits are more frequent, for example also for Christmas holidays. These are students from Ukraine who decided to attend secondary school in Poland and live in a schools' dormitory, having a legal guardian in Poland. It must be noted here that the term "legal guardian" is ambiguous. Most of these children have custodians that were established by notary contracts signed in Ukraine between parents or guardians with selected custodians. Such contracts are not legal or valid in Poland however, they are customarily accepted by schools and teachers and sometimes also representatives of health care institutions. This is an example of a very negative practise with far-reaching results to the well-being of children who are often neglected in these situations. Polish law allows only for a custodian established by family courts from individuals who represent certain pedagogical and legal competencies. On the contrary, this contract custodians are seen as a business causing distortions. One of them is the fact that many contractual custodians have hundreds of children under protection and make huge money on that conduct. Some of them are almost peers of those pupils – in many cases irresponsible or even exploiting those children, sometimes sexually. This practice is particularly new and not explored yet by academia. It relates to children placed in dormitories and boarding schools and the only paper written (not published yet) was delivered by the Leader of the Polish Research team. In the newly arrived migrant group, only two children declared to have a legal guardian but did not mention any negative experiences related to this fact. In the long-term migrants' group, there are few more children under such contractual custody, usually those living in the dormitory. Only a few of them declared such a fact during the interview.

Almost all children who came to Poland claim that migration was a good change in their lives because general living conditions in Poland are better than in their country of birth (see also below). The only thing they miss from the country of origin are people, family and friends close and emotionally linked to respondents.

Our participants did not list any other places that would be significant for them, they rather expressed a wish to integrate into the society in Poland as soon as they can and – in cases of children whose family members remained in the country of origin – a desire to have the whole family in one place as soon as possible. We may conclude then that it is more important for them to be with all their significant others in one place in relative well-being rather than to live in a place that presents any per se significance for them.

> *(I want to visit Ukraine) Maybe for a week or a month to talk to my friends, but I would rather live here (09.2020.27M.AA.K.15.UA.S3).*

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Everything is better here. (09.06.2020.28M.OA.K.13.UA.S2)

I think I like more things in Poland than in (XXXXXXXX)[5]. (...) Poland...I think I want to make my life in Poland (13.06.2020.33M.AO.M.15.VE.S2).

General life

Living conditions

Most children claim that their general living conditions in Poland are better than in their country of origin. They mention such factors as parents' employment possibilities and salaries, education options, health services, public communication in the city etc. Some children also mentioned the state of peace in the country (especially contrasted with the insecure situation in Ukraine) and the higher reliability of the state and its institutions as such.

When specific living conditions are concerned, such as housing, the results are more ambiguous. Some children seem satisfied with the flat or house they are living in, but for a part of our interviewees, migration brought worse living conditions than they used to have: for example, when a family moved from a big house with a garden to a two-room flat where a child no longer can have a room for herself. On the other hand, some participants were content that after migrating to Poland their family finally could have a place for their own and not shared with members of a generational family.

Although none of the children was willing to elaborate on the topic, we assume that their living conditions do affect the general quality of their lives, at least to some extent. Indirectly, we were able to observe that during the interviews, which, due to the pandemic situation, were conducted online. Some of the children who shared their space with the rest of the family, especially younger siblings, were interrupted during the interviews, so we may suppose that also their online learning could be sometimes interrupted similarly.

Yes, it is better than the one we used to live in (the flat).
(07.09.2020.27M.AA.K.15.UA.S3)

I did not want to go to Poland. Because I had all my volleyball, basketball, football stuff there. We had a house, I had my own two rooms, a computer, a console, TV, everything. (19.03.2021.34M.DS.M.11.UA.S6)

My parents decided we would have no future in Ukraine. Because there are no universities that are free from corruption, you can buy a diploma. And Poland is our closest neighbour, the closest country. (19.03.2021.39M.EA.K15.UA.S6)

Spatial and social positioning

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[5] The name of the country was erased for the pseudonymization reasons.

Kraków is generally perceived as an attractive and friendly city by our participants. They are also mostly pleased with the neighbourhoods they are currently living in (mostly large residential areas) as well as flats their families are currently renting (see the section above).

A separate issue here is the difficulties that some families met while trying to rent a flat in Kraków. There were cases when children reported that it was difficult for their parents to settle a contract with a flat owner (private person) who was not willing to rent it to a person of Ukrainian origin. Such cases were naturally interpreted by our interviewees as discrimination and hostility towards their nation and decreased their hopes to integrate smoothly into Polish society. Consequently, children whose families have experienced such mistreating, tend to perceive their own and their family's social position as somehow lower than a position of the local Polish people - the children were also aware that such mistreatment was neither fair nor deserved.

When we were looking for a flat or for work, many Poles did not want to take us, they stood us up. That was upsetting. (19.03.2021.39M.EA.K15.UA.S6)

Inclusion in peer groups

The most important peer group for all our interviewees was their class at school. Almost every child we talked to mentioned at least one person in the class who helped them to find their way at school and cope with all upcoming difficulties from day one. Even if our participants mentioned any difficult situations with classmates (there were only a few of them, see below for more details), they also reported that in general, they had support from at least a few people in the class. Belonging to a peer class group was important for our interlocutors.

It is important to notice that the period of pandemic emergency influenced the integration processes and social relationships of our participants to a great extent. Especially those who came to Poland shortly before the pandemic did not have a chance to establish relationships with classmates or any other peers and remained pretty isolated during the time of online schooling.

Not many children mentioned other peer groups they socialised with. If any other group was mentioned, it was for example an incidental football team of children living in the neighbourhood and playing together. No child mentioned belonging to a group of children in a minority migrant community.

I am friends with some girls there. Everybody helped me with questions during the lessons. There were many things I did not understand and that is why I was seated next to a girl and she explained to me everything. (07.09.2020.27M.AA.K.15.UA.S3)

Involvement in leisure activities, sport

Around half of the children declare that at some point after coming to Poland they were involved in at least one type of leisure activity, although due to the pandemic situation it was not always continued at a time when the interviews were conducted.

Among these activities are sports (especially football), chess, drawing, art classes, music lessons (also online music lessons with a teacher from a country of origin). We could observe some division of interests among the children related to gender: boys tend to be involved in sports activities far more often than girls, who seem to prefer art classes.

The leisure activities allow children to broaden their social network and meet not only more peers but also instructors, who may become an additional source of support for them. Most children attend local, i.e. Polish groups of interests, although some report socialising mostly with other children of their nationality.

It is worth mentioning that there are cases of children (although not numerous in our participant sample) who in their free time help their parents in family enterprises, such as a restaurant or a car garage.

> Child: "free time... She has a restaurant here and in my free time I maybe go to my mum and help her
> Researcher: You play football with Polish children or foreigners?
> Ch: Rarely with Poles.
> R: So with XXXXXXXXX[6]?
> Ch: yes (09..2020.10M.TN.M..VIE.S2)

Health (physical and mental health)

The topic of mental and physical health was treated rather generally in the interviews. Our participants claimed they are satisfied with their state of health but in general, we did not ask any specific questions concerning their ways of caring for their well-being.

Similarly, the issue of health services' ability was not discussed extensively in most of the interviews, partly due to the limited language proficiency of the participants and partly due to the nature of online interviews, which made it more difficult to elaborate on topics usually not related to children's everyday experience. However, there was one case of a girl suffering from a chronic condition who was very pleased with the standard of health services in Poland and declared it far better than the services in Ukraine where she came from.

> In Ukraine, we were visiting doctors for three years with my mum and nobody could decide what was wrong with me (...) So many tests and nothing. And here only a week in a hospital and I already have a diagnosis and now I have the diag... well, the illness and I am treated. (09.09.2020.43M.OA.K.14.UA.S3)

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[6] Name of nationality was erased for pseudonymization

> *Poland is great. This is Europe. There is the standard. Education. Medicine. Everything here is, I do not know about the others, but for me, everything is enough, very good, I am satisfied. (9.12.2020.35M. MK.M.17.UA.2018.S2)*

Educational environment and system

Experiences of inclusion in school

With minor exceptions (of single events rather than general experiences of any participant), all interviews showed the school environment as friendly and inclusive. For every child, the most stressful part of coming to the Polish educational system was the very first days (see further sections of the report), but once the initial stress was overcome, they declared that their well-being at school improved. The biggest stressor then was their initial none or not sufficient proficiency in Polish.

Some children mentioned that at the beginning they were treated in an unfriendly way by one or a few people in the class, but despite this, they quickly managed to find friendly and supportive colleagues. Another important factor that supported migrant students' inclusion was the helpful and open attitude of most of the teachers and school staff.

> *K: There was one girl who did not like me at the beginning*
> *R: What does it mean? What happened then?*
> *K: She did not talk to me at all, I wanted to make friends with her but she did not want to". (08.09.2020.13M.KA.K.9.UA.S3)*

> *The first day was awful, this all, and then I met my friends. (13.10.2020.18M.OH.M.16.UA.2019.S1)*

Language & School language policy and practice

Language challenges were undoubtedly a source of major difficulties for all of the children we interviewed. Regardless of the time spent in Poland, all of them still reported having some language problems, as well as ambitions to improve their Polish and become as fluent as native speakers.

All of them declared that writing in Polish is difficult: for the children of Ukrainian origin one of the biggest obstacles being the difference between Latin and Cyrillic script. On the other hand, the typological closeness and lexical similarities between Polish and Ukrainian or Russian helped them, both to understand basic communication at the very beginning and to acquire more complex vocabulary later on.

All children received language help from school: additional lessons of Polish as a foreign language and constant support from teachers who in most cases put effort to adjust linguistic complexity of educational materials and classroom communication to students'

proficiency. Almost all our interviews underlined that they could count on their classmates' help when they had problems with understanding Polish.

It is worth noticing that some children, whose families planned emigration to Poland in advance, received some lessons in the Polish language before leaving their country of origin. These children generally declared higher confidence in their ability to learn Polish successfully, but it does not seem that prior preparations decreased the initial language shock, experienced after coming to Poland, to a significant extent.

When it comes to the maintenance of a child's first language, it is mostly used at home, in the family circle, or while contacting family and friends left in the country of origin. Although in some schools there are teachers who speak Ukrainian or Russian, children do not receive formal lessons in these languages (as lessons of first or heritage language). The teachers only use the child's first language to facilitate communication and knowledge transfer at the beginning, aiming to switch to Polish as soon as the student is ready for it. Similarly, peer communication in a language of a country of origin between children of the same migrant nationality is rather not supported by schools and a preference for using only the majority language at school is strong.

> *I have some problems with some words, but I understand them because I speak Ukrainian (07.09.2020.27M.AA.K.15.UA.S3)*

> *Researcher: When did you come to Poland?*
> *D: Four months ago.*
> *R: And you speak Polish so well?*
> *D: Because I had a teacher in Ukraine and I had extra classes (07.09.2020.30M.DL.M.14.UA.S3)*

> *If you do not speak Polish nobody will pay attention to you and you cannot be anybody's friend. (19.03.2021.34M.DS.M.11.UA.S6)*

Peers

In general, our participants described the positive and friendly attitude of their peers. Without a single exception, all our interviewees immediately met at least one person in a new class, who helped them to adapt to the new situation, helped with language problems and showed them around the school. Although it was not expressed explicitly, we may assume that such experiences played an extremely significant role in their integration process. In most cases, those supportive classmates were majority Polish students, although in a few stories our participants of Ukrainian origin mentioned colleagues belonging to their minority group: that was always the case in classes to which attended a little group of Ukrainian students.

When it comes to negative experiences such as discrimination and bullying, such events were rare and singular. They took the form of nasty comments, calling names, or hostile looks

when migrant students talked in their native language. It is worth mentioning that when we look at the gathered material in total, there are more discrimination events that children experienced outside of the school and from adults (such as negative comments in public transport or on the street; discrimination from a potential landlord who did not want to rent a flat to a migrant family) rather than from their peers and in the school environment.

Teachers/educational staff

Almost all of our participants expressed a positive opinion of their teachers. They are described as helpful, supportive and open. In our sample of 33 interviews, there is only one where a student declared he did not receive any help from his teachers after coming to Poland. No child reported any event of discrimination or mistreatment from a teacher.

It seems that the vast majority of teachers accurately adjusted their requirements and teaching strategies to the needs and abilities (language ones included) of the migrant students, which should be considered as an example of a child-centred approach. For example, our interviewees described events when their homework or class test was graded with a relatively high mark despite mistakes and the child was aware that her Polish peer would be graded with a lower mark for the same quality of work. Within the subgroup of our participants coming from Ukraine, it was frequent to compare teachers' attitudes in Poland and Ukraine and these comparisons were always in favour of the Polish educational system. Children mentioned that in Poland they felt more respected, cared for and treated more individually and that teachers' requirements seemed more reasonable for them (which does not mean lower or easier to meet).

> *Here I can say they respect me, there is respect. Some teachers are just like me for example. The teachers here are so…. humanistic. I do not know if such a word exists. They are human. They are interested in how I learn if I am alright. There is care from the teachers and I like it very much that they want to help me if I have any problems, they can offer me something. There was nothing like this in Ukraine. It is like day and night, the education systems. (9.12.2020.35M. MK.M.17.UA.2018.S2)*

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

Due to limited proficiency in Polish, it was not easy to tackle the problem of integration practices. The issue is quite abstract and turned out to be difficult to explain in our interviews. When we tried to inquire what factors they perceived important in their integration process we tried to operationalise the concept as feeling better, more at home in Poland, making more friends, etc. In general, children mentioned the same sources of support that were discussed in the above sections: friendly peers, teachers, school staff etc.

It is important to note how essential a role some children explicitly assign to language proficiency. When asked about their identity, some of them treated the ability to speak Polish fluently and the frequency of speaking Polish as an index of their national identity. Almost every participant claimed that her/his main goal is to learn Polish as fast as she/he

can because this is the most important skill and resource that allows them to function successfully at school and outside and blend in the society.

> *Child: I am probably Russian because I talk in Russian and I was born in Russia, maybe it is 50%, maybe 25% that I am Polish because I as if talking in Polish good, I do not know.*

> *Researcher: And will you be Polish more one day or will it always be 25%?*

> *Child: I do not know, maybe if I have a spouse that will talk in Polish, I will become Polish in 50% (25.03.2021.21M.SA.K.10.UA.S6)*

Psychosocial support

The main source of psychosocial support for our participants are their teachers, and, less frequently, other members of the school staff such as culture assistants, school psychologists or pedagogues. This is an area that should be developed in the Polish education system on different levels.

Family and the wider community

Family

Among our participants, most children migrated with their families – parents and siblings – some with only one parent, and some came to Poland alone (this related to teenagers from Ukraine who started secondary education in Poland and have a "legal" guardian here).

For those who came with families, being together with their closest ones seems one of the most important values and sources of support. In some cases when also members of a generational family live in Poland (aunts, uncles, cousins) children described good relationships with them, maintaining constant contact and offering mutual support. When it comes to family members left in the country of origin, children expressed longing and wishes they could be together with their grandparents, cousins, etc.

The issue of distance and absence of important family members was also mentioned by our participants when we asked about the advantages and disadvantages of the migration experience: even these children who were very happy and pleased that they changed the country of living, signalled that missing their loved ones was difficult for them.

> *I don't like it that I cannot meet my one grandma, the other grandma and grandpa. 19.03.2021.17M.AM.M.10.UA.S6*

> *Well, I arrived 3 years ago. I was without my parents. Only with a caregiver. 08.10.2020.10M.HI.M.18.UA.2017.S1*

Migrant community, religious community

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Even though most of our participants are of Ukrainian origin and the number of migrants from Ukraine is constantly growing in Kraków, the migrant community actually was not mentioned by the children. Only one girl talked about regular visits to a church where a mass in Ukrainian is celebrated.

> I went to the church, I do not remember the street near the castle, at 4 pm. There is a Ukrainian mass on Sundays" (09.0615M.MA.K.16.UA.S2)

Local environment

Apart from the issues discussed above – leisure activities, school environment, migrant and religious communities – the local environment was not exactly mentioned in our interviews. This may be partially due to the pandemic situation which prevented children from many activities that could have been present under regular conditions.

Other

N/A

Conceptualizations of own well–being and life satisfaction

Self-perceived well-being and life satisfaction

The parts of the interviews focusing on children's wellbeing were rather superficial and general, mostly due to children's limited proficiency in Polish. For most of them, especially the younger ones, it was important that they lived in Poland together with their families, and if the family was separated (for example the child immigrated only with her mother and the father remained in the country of origin) children described it as disturbing and sad, they also expressed a longing for members of their extended family. As mentioned above, it was also important to establish relationships with peers (usually at school). The changes in well-being over time were correlated with growing familiarity in the place of living and growing proficiency in Polish, which virtually all participants perceived as a vital part of finding themselves in the new country.

> I don't like it that I cannot meet my one grandma, the other grandma and grandpa." 19.03.2021.17M.AM.M.10.UA.S6

> Sometimes it happens that my friends are not at school and I miss them very much and I want to be with them." 14.03.2021.29M.EA.K.16.UA.S0

Identification and belonging

As mentioned before, it is important to note how essential a role some children explicitly assign to language proficiency. When asked about their identity, some of them treated the

ability to speak Polish fluently and the frequency of speaking Polish as an index of their national identity.

Another category used for self-identification was the physical place of living: some children decided that the longer they live in Poland, the larger their "Polish part" becomes.

Interestingly, there were also a few children who claimed that at the present moment of their lives it is too early to decide about their identity and that building a national identification requires more life experience.

> *I dislike it a bit because it is difficult to answer, but I think that I just am. I think I simply do not have experience. I think this is not the point in my life to decide about it (identity) (13.06.2020.33M.AO.M.15.VE.S2)*

> *D: I am Ukrainian, there is something in the documents. But I want to be Polish.*
>
> *Researcher: Do you think this is a question of time?*
>
> *D: Yes. (19.03.2021.19M.DA.K.12.UA.S6)*

> *I feel human. Not a guy from Ukraine who is not cool. Not some foreigner who knows nothing. I am fifty-fifty. (19.03.2021.34M.DS.M.11.UA.S6)*

> *I do not know, I am partly Azerbaijani and partly Polish. Somewhere in the middle. I lived in Azerbaijan, I in Poland and I can see how it works. (19.03.2021.39M.AN.K.14.AZE.S6)*

Feelings of safety

This topic was generally blended with the topic of well-being and our participants declared that they felt well and safe in their life. Some Ukrainian students underlined the fact that Poland is a much safer and more reliable country than their homeland and that moving to Poland gave them a feeling of safety.

> *Everything is better here. The law is obeyed, everything is regulated and not as it is in Ukraine where you can do such things and later you pay and go on with your life. And secondly, people, treatment is different here, people are good here, I do not know, In Ukraine, people are jealous, bad, something like this. 09.09.2020.43M.OA.K.14.UA.S3*

Self-perceived opportunities, choices and feeling of control over their own life and future

Most children located the source of control in their lives somewhere between their parents and themselves. It is worth noticing that in a few cases it was a child who mobilised the family to emigrate to Poland, which probably increased her self-efficacy.

Living in Poland, they find their future chances in life comparable to their Polish peers, on the condition that they master the Polish language sufficiently. Many participants, when

asked whether they planned to stay in Poland when they grow up, decided they prefer to go to yet another country, always Western Europe or the USA. None of them preferred to return to their country of origin.

When it comes to specific plans for the future: job, further education, etc., most children answered they had not decided yet, with few exceptions of students who had a well-defined passion (for example music) and intended to pursue it further as a professional career.

I will never return to Ukraine. There will never be opportunities for work and the future. 19.03.2021.39M.EA.K15.UA.S6

I chose the international school because I wanted to continue learning English. Because in the future I do not want to be in Poland but for example in the UK or in another country in Europe. 19.03.2021.39M.AN.K.14.AZE.S6

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

In most cases, our participants perceived migration as an experience that was difficult at the beginning, but worth the effort at the end. They underlined that moving to Poland helped their families to improve life standards, extended their future perspectives and opened them the door towards next migrations if they wish to live somewhere else when they are adults. On the other hand, they were fully aware of the costs of changing the country: the need to adapt to a new place and culture, learning a new language and above all, leaving their families and friends.

Some of the children were very insightful when it came to the significance of migration in the contemporary world. For example, one of the interviewed girls said:

I know that for the Poles it is difficult even if they are tolerant. Because it is Poland and you go out on a street and you can hear only Ukrainian. I do not know, everywhere it works like this that people move, and without Ukrainian people, some things here would not exist. (14.03.2021.29M.EA.K.16.UA.S0)

For most children encountering different – slightly or completely – cultural and religious traditions were transparent and unsurprising, but some had some difficulties in accepting that theoretically the same religious holidays, such as Christmas between Roman and Orthodox churches, may be celebrated in different moments and ways:

I felt uncomfortable because this is a completely different country, I simply did not understand how Poles may celebrate the holiday like this (09.06.2020.20M.DA.K.15.UA.S2)

We also encountered a very interesting quote showing that even for a child from a migrant family, who identifies herself as a migrant, migrants coming from another place may be perceived as a source of potential threat:

> *I am a bit scared of these eastern migrants from that Arabian Peninsula (09.09.2020.43M.OA.K.14.UA.S3)*

Most think migration is ok because it gives more chances and brings you to a place with better living conditions.

> *It is difficult at first, you know nobody and nothing but after 2 years you feel at home. (19.03.2021.19M.DA.K.12.UA.S6)*

> *In migration, it is difficult that you do not know the culture, you change your, well, circle (25.03.2021.30M.RK.M.15.UA.S6).*

Advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children`s integration

Perception of integration

Our participants perceived integration as a natural phenomenon: something that should happen naturally and makes an inevitable consequence of the process of migration, which in their perspectives also remains an immanent part of the contemporary world. It must be noted, however, that this conclusion is inferred from the general content of the interviews we collected rather than based on any direct verbal statement and for that reason we are not able to present any explicit quotation in this subsection. As stated many times above in the present report (and illustrated with excerpts from the interviews), the language proficiency of our participants taken together with the conditions of conducting the interviews (mostly online, which made it difficult to keep children's attention for a long time) hampered our possibilities to discuss more complex and abstract topics.

Since children's attitude to hosting society was open and they demonstrated high motivation and determination for learning both the Polish language and culture, we may also claim that they – even if unconsciously – perceive themselves as active parts of the process of integration. On the other hand, they remained aware that it is the host environment that creates beneficial or obstructing conditions for the integration.

Advantages

Even though the question about weak points and possible improvements was explicitly asked in almost every interview, there was only one person who suggested what could be implemented to make the system function better for migrant students. Namely, one girl said that:

The educational system is quite alright, I just think that the same school pedagogues should have to explain… teach the children tolerance
(13.10.2020.11M.VA.K.18.UA.2018.S1)

Based on other parts of the interview with her, the comment refers to the general situation in Poland and discrimination she experienced in different contexts:

It surprises me that it is a problem for some people that I am Ukrainian. Apparently we live in the XXI century and I think that if it is a problem for someone that another person comes from a different place, it means that this first person has a closed head. (…) I experience discrimination for example on the tram when I talk in Ukrainian and I can hear that somebody comments on that. It happens everywhere.
(13.10.2020.11M.VA.K.18.UA.2018.S1)

Weakness

Similarly to the previous section, also here our participants did not give any specific answer despite being explicitly asked about weaknesses of the present integration model in the Polish educational system.

Good practices

Among good practices identified by our interlocutors, we may list:

- Introducing new students to the class by a teacher;
- Additional lessons in Polish as a second language;
- Additional lessons in other subjects;
- Tolerant and open attitude of teachers and school staff.

4. Discussion

The pandemic period as well as general cultural change in the activities, social functioning and schemes of communication between youth and adults caused enormous difficulties in gaining the material and knowledge that was initially planned. Regardless if interviews were made online or in a real-life setting, if it was preceded by deeper relations between the interviewer and a child we still encountered a reluctance from children to share their inner

opinions and deeper emotions. Children did not want to share their privacy or more intimate confessions. As a result, most of the outcomes here are presented as a resemblance of general opinions and views on the World those three groups of children had with little insight into most private experiences and this emotional sphere that was kept private, even if from the course of the interview we knew it existed.

The knowledge gained during the interviews and focus groups were compared with the notes made by researchers during the observation phase that enabled them to find similarities and differences. Forced change of research environment due to Covid-19 pandemics provided new possibilities and proved that each school may create a unique education environment fostering or deteriorating integration processes and that the nature of these factors can be surprising and unpredictable. Hereby we encountered a great rivalry between popular children and others, resulting in mobbing and mocking just in one school that was not present in any other. Children involved in this conflict entered it from outside so could not estimate when it started and why it happened. Another interesting thing about this conflict was that some migrant children were joining popular children and integrated well within this group and others not, being withdrawn by the result of the bullying. Such assessments prescribe a cautious approach to the knowledge learnt during the study, especially in terms of generalizing conclusions and writing recommendations for further development of integration practices.

From the whole study, it was obvious that Polish schools were well prepared for accepting migrants and made many efforts to successfully support them in the integration process. There were however thoughtless mistakes made, usually caused by a false belief in benefits arising from certain solutions or attempts to provide support and make the life of migrant children better. The greatest of such mistakes was grouping children of the same origin together in rooms, classroom rows or task and project teams. It naturally discouraged them from using the Polish language that always had been seen as the dominant integration factor.

Gaining language proficiency is the most important in the integration process. With the ability of smooth communication both with peers and with teachers all other problems diminish. As most of the respondents in migrant groups were Ukrainians they learned language fast. They were supported by additional language courses organized in each school, however, it was revealed in the study that such children would prefer more emphasis be made on facilitation of relations between them and Polish peers. The latter was much helpful and open towards their foreign classmates, often offering help in tasks, translating things not properly understood and trying to explain the matters. Also more advanced in language learning students played such a role as their native peers. Different forms of communication are used, including body language, drawings and using online translation apps. Sometimes cultural mediators were assisting children in learning however was perceived as an obstacle in integration with peers. This phenomenon was not linked to the institution of cultural assistant itself but rather the methodology of their work that limited the contact between the migrant child and their Polish peers.

In peer relations, the most difficult is to overcome the group divisions, formed according to nationalities or languages are spoken. However, if the language barrier is broken children begin naturally mixing. In the adaptation process, there were some patterns used by migrant children. They were copying behaviours and attitudes of other peers, not sticking out, being polite and obedient to teachers, showing off talents or knowledge only on occasions or being asked, working hard, staying together in their group or at least being close to countrymen, and joining Polish peers only by invitation. If in some groups leaders emerged they usually became the agents of mutual contacts. Language is often a decisive factor in socializing patterns. Children who do not speak Polish most often stick to their nationality group, while those with good Polish command are more active in social relations and the school community and life. There was a difference seen in the observation phase between local and migrant children referring to school behaviour. Migrant children were calmer and at the same time more conscientious while Polish children were easy-going, less obedient or even rude. This difference had not been communicated by the children themselves.

When we discussed teachers' attitude to migrant children we observed that they are very devoted to taking care of those children, ease the burdens of education for them, and their attitude is encountered and appreciated by migrant children. On the other hand, some teachers tended to assimilate children, patronizing them and this approach is not much child-centred. They also often use division of we/ others in approach to migrant children. Children however did not raise this issue in the interviews. We may as well assume that this observation was the effect of the researcher's attitude and judgment made through his knowledge and experiences. Teachers, especially those who are teaching specific subjects and having limited everyday contact with children unthoughtfully used sophisticated language which was hard to catch by migrant children, The language teachers and educators had a more conscious approach and were always willing to help migrants with understanding the matter of the lesson or assigned tasks. Unfortunately at the same time teachers were using only Polish teaching materials. They however adapt the assessment of children's progress to their language abilities which was highly valued by children. The perception of integration techniques between observers and interviewed students differs. Students usually did not notice the activity of teachers in the sphere they thought was most important to fast integration which was the facilitation of contacts with their Polish peers. Observers encountered such efforts however maybe there were not deep enough to be appreciated by students.

There were not many conflicts encountered in the study. Usually, teachers were able to solve it positively however some negative approaches were also observed manifested by leaving the victim behind and focusing on the offender, or showing a paternalistic approach based on force and authority. Children who experienced violence or bullying took mostly passive strategies, like changing schools or seeking help outside the school.

Teachers on occasion made efforts to introduce some intercultural issues in multiple subjects. These attempts were appreciated by respondents, especially those with a longer history of stay in Poland. Needless to say, those efforts were still made from a rather monocultural perspective and all those intercultural add-ons were more incorporated into

the dominant traditions rather than being explored equally as a source of cultural diversity and world heritage. On the other hand, children were cared for by teachers who helped them in adaptation as much as possible and no discrimination cases were reported by those newly- arrived and only singular by those long-term migrants. Discrimination if perceived came from external actors like locals, or strangers.

The afterschool activities were largely limited by pandemic restrictions. Migrant children seemed to be less sociable however this was not confirmed in the quantitative study. The long term migrant complained about being overloaded with education, language learning and part-time jobs. Migrant children eagerly engaged in sports and often this activity opened them the possibility to find friends. The state of epidemics got them frustrated as they suffered freedom restrictions.

Family relations are important to all children. Only migrant children must have faced the problem of family disintegration according to data gathered in the interviews. Most newly-arrived migrants experienced homesickness but were able to see them from time to time, while long-term migrants having at first problems with departure consequences, finally coped with them and accepted their new life and fate. Some of them were willing to emigrate while others felt omitted in the decision-making process but in the end, all of them praised this profound decision.

This is especially true when children are comparing their living conditions in the country of origin and the country of the destination. It improved in all cases and all dimensions. Children staying in Poland for a longer period complained also about less intense relations with their parents who were overworked or focused on other duties. If the family is absent children are maintaining contact via online tools or are meeting with them on holidays and midterm breaks. Nevertheless, children felt that their sphere of well-being expanded significantly after migration and settlement in Poland. They have greater opportunities and their future seems to be brighter.

Children are not much religiously engaged, however, the proportion of those who are believers or practitioners is larger in the group of local children. Migrant children also do not engage in the life of the migrant diaspora which might be considered surprising. Children had a problem with defining their identity so it might be also the reason for not engaging in the minority activities organized by the members of national representatives. Children also could not precise their future plans except for those who were long term migrants. That group was composed of older children who naturally need to make their first living choices that will shape their future.

Generally, we may assume that the integration process of migrant children is smooth and progressing fast and they land in a friendly environment. The problem of discrimination and xenophobia is present in Polish reality, but not in schools and communities familiar to children. Usually, it is experienced by strangers or heard from the news and governmental propaganda. There were singular cases of discrimination on the property market however it changed presently. The greatest obstacle to overcome is the language barrier, once overcome almost all other problems disappear. Local children express curiosity and interest

in their foreign friends however get befriended only after some time or with the migrant's children initiative. Sometimes such relations are built around mutual learning or help provided by Polish peers. We believe that this particular problem relates to the cultural patterns of social relations in Eastern Slavic nations. Both Polish and migrant students are generally open-minded and appreciate pluralism, freedom and tolerance. Of course, there are exceptions from such attitudes however they are rare and rather condemned. For migrants taking part in the study, migration had been a positive experience and appreciation is rising with the length of the stay. People who play an important role in the process of integration usually try their best to make this process faster and less difficult for children at stake. Sometimes they are lacking institutional support. On the other hand, we need to underline that due to the specifics of migration to Poland integration efforts on behalf of the host society is quite an easy one due to many similarities between locals and migrants. This may give a false feeling of being ready for migration and transformation to a multicultural society. Poland is not and in the case where migrants from far cultures with uncommon languages will arrive all efforts and competencies gained presently might occur to be futile. We believe that only strengthening certain institutions like the Polish language as second one tutoring and empowering cultural assistants, making this profession attractive and well paid may be a milestone in the embedding the integration practices for now and for the future implementation in case of more diverse newcomers.

5. Executive summary – newly arrived migrant children

This was the biggest group covered by the research. It is somehow coherent to the nature of migration in Poland which still is more temporary than permanent. Children who arrived in Poland only recently have to face some kind of a cultural shock to start their adjustment to the reception environment.

Most of the forty-two interviewed within this group came from Ukraine. The migration phenomenon in Poland is still homogenous and less diverse than in most Western countries. The present crisis might change that trend. The migrants coming to Poland are not differing much culturally from their Polish peers. In issues related to schooling, they complain mostly of being overloaded with duties complementary to additional language classes they must attend. On the other hand, they appreciate Polish school as an institution. Contrary to their experience in the homeland Polish school appears to be more caring, child-centric and supportive. This impression is the contrasting reality which by objective factors do not show child-centredness as a policy.

Migrant children often notice teachers and peers efforts to make them welcome in the new country, however, due to the language barrier, social relations are often superficial and become more intense only if both parties put enough effort to maintain them. It is more visible in younger children who often stick together in their national groups. Younger children are also more often divided by gender.

Newly arrived children are devoted to good performance. They are learning hard and are more attentive to school obligations, treating learning seriously. Migration became a turning point in their lives making it much better. After a short period of anxiety, most of them adapted fast to the new environment and slowly dissolve their connections to the homeland. Over time they naturally set the relations with Polish peers, but this is usually limited to the school environment and no such relations are established in the neighbourhoods.

Social relations as such were also heavily affected by the Covid-19 pandemics and forced remote education and lack of any opportunity to meet with peers. Most of the interviewees in this group confirmed also that gaining Polish language proficiency had been a breaking point in the whole integration process and were determined to achieve it as soon as possible. This is one of many reasons why this group of children expressed a very positive opinion of their teachers. Children here appreciate the help and the effort made to make them welcome. In Polish schools and Poland generally, they feel much better however reflection over future plans are mixed. Some of the children in the newly-arrived group treat Polish school and learning process instrumentally as leverage to further migration to the Western countries. None of this group declared a wich to return to their home countries.

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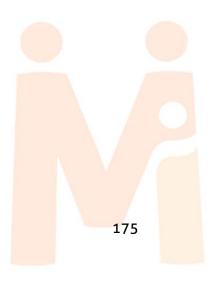
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SPAIN

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1. Introduction

This report contains the principal results of Work Package five related to the participating Spanish schools. The main goal of this part of the study is to gain comprehensive knowledge about the processes of migrant inclusion in host societies, focusing on newly arrived migrant children. Specifically, we considered two age groups: preadolescents (10-13-year-olds) and middle adolescents (14-17-year-olds). Furthermore, we consider different factors, such as gender, religion, ethnic background, or socioeconomic status. Additional, we also contemplate the following objectives:

- To evaluate possible factors influencing the inclusion process of migrant children such as living conditions, participation in peer groups, involvement in leisure activities, sport, presence or absence of ethnic community, the role of the local environment, spatial and social positioning, etc.

- To examine children's conceptualisations of well-being (concerning living conditions, socioeconomic status, cultural background, religion, language, etc.).

- To explore migrant children's satisfaction with their new life in the host society through their self-perceived opportunities, choices and feeling of control over their own life and future, identification and belonging.

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- To identify the advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children's inclusion and assess their experiences and views regarding the shortcomings of inclusion support services.
- To analyse local children's perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions regarding equality, intercultural dialogue and conflicts, cultural and religious pluralism, migrants and migration.

We divided the results into following items: 1) participant observation; 2) newly arrived migrant children: focus groups & Interviews/autobiographical stories/narration of location; and 3) finally, there is a section on conclusions and discussion which summarises and reflects the most relevant issues. It contains ideas that have emerged in research and reflections that can contribute to the development of new discourses and perspectives aimed to address the challenges of education and inclusion of migrant children in the Spanish context.

2. Methodological approach

Seven schools participated in this research (see Table 1 for a general description of the participating institutions). The main selection criteria for defining the participating schools were: (a) to obtain a significant migration rate, ideally greater than 40% (this involves a high level of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity) and (b) the availability to participate in the research.

Table 1. Schools and characteristics

	Type of school (public/private)	School level (primary/secondary)	Location (urban/rural)	The number of total students	Migration rate (%)	Languages	Religions
	SCHOOLS						
S1	Public	Primary	Urban	Approximately 500	Approx. 51%	Catalan, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic,	Hindu Christians Muslims, others.

						Urdu, others.	
S2	Public	Primary	Urban	500	Approx. 50%	Spanish, Catalan, Arabic, others.	Christians, Hindu, others.
S3	Public	Secondary	Urban	537	More than 40%	Spanish, Catalan, Urdu, Arabic, French, Chinese, Russian, others.	Christians, Muslims, others.
S4	Public	Secondary	Urban	Approximately 800	40%	Catalan, Spanish, French, Chinese, Ukrainian, Romanian, Arabic, Wolof, others.	Christians, Muslims, others.
S5	Public	Primary	Urban	170	90%	Catalan, Spanish, Urdu, Arabic, Pashto, Farsi, Chinese.	Christians, Muslims, others.
S6	Public	Secondary	Urban	100	90%	Catalan, Spanish, Urdu, Arabic, Pashto, Farsi, Chinese.	Christians Muslims, others.
S7	Public	Secondary	Urban	250	25%	Catalan, Spanish, Georgian, Romanian	Christians, and other

Source: own elaboration.

All schools are state schools and located in Catalonia. S1, S2, S4, S5 and S6 participated in previous project stages, specifically during WP4. We included S4 and S7 to meet the required numbers of observations, interviews and questionnaires.

Catalan Department of Education considered five of these schools as 'high-complexity institutions. These institutions are located in socially and economically mixed environments and suffer the consequences of the internal residential segregation of municipalities. They often coexist with other nearby schools with a less deprived social composition, with a social profile of students far removed from the reality of their immediate environment. This situation is the result of years of stigmatization and social ghettoization which have

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negatively affected the families' interest in those schools and, especially, their heterogeneity (Síndic de Greuges de Catalunya, 2021).

The fieldwork started in February 2020 and ended in March 2021. This time slot was interrupted from March 2020 to September 2020 due to Covid-restrictions. Because of school closures and the reduction of face-to-face activities, we conducted some specific actions online.

We implemented different research methods: participant observation during the daily school activities, focus groups, art-based workshops and interviews, from a careful child-centred approach. We adapted the specific format of these strategies to the participating children' different age ranges. For example, we used art-based methods to facilitate all the focus groups with primary schools' children. Instead, with secondary schools' students, we combined dialogical focus groups with art-based approaches.

As summarized in Table 2, we carried out 58 days of participant observations; interviewed 104 students (63 from primary school, 41 from secondary school). We conducted 18 focus groups with the participation of 100 students.

Table 2. Fieldwork: schools, participant observation, interviews and focus groups

School	Number of days of participants observation	Number of interviews	Focus groups
S1	8	32	6 focus groups (24 participants)
S2	10	22	2 focus groups (22 participants)
S3	5	10	4 focus groups (10 participants)

S4	6	4	2 focus groups (9 participants)
S5	9	9	2 focus groups (16 participants)
S6	20	10	2 focus groups (19 participants)
S7	No	17	No
TOTAL	58	104	18

3. Results

In most cases, the newly-arrived (and long-term) migrant children who participated in the sample reported feeling welcomed, safe, and comfortable in the school environment. On the other hand, some communicated feeling excluded during their first months in the host country. Their initial struggles were due to language acquisition and the impossibility of explaining themselves in an unknown language. Some children reported a sense of loneliness, sadness and shame during the first period.

Children highlighted some classmates, teachers, and other educational staff as having a critical role in inclusion. The school as a multicultural space has also been identified as another important point for positive experiences related to inclusion. In most cases, for newly arrived migrant children, long-term and local, a diverse student population was an added value of the school.

Furthermore, local children had positive perceptions regarding newly-arrived and long-term pupils. In terms of values and perceptions about migration, many newly-arrived, long-term and local children showed high sensitivity towards migration, borders and social justice.

When newly-arrived and long-term children spoke about their experiences, some of them used terms such as "get adapted". Also, in some specific cases, long-term and local children reported that "it's the newcomer's responsibility to make efforts to relate with the rest of the students". This way of perceiving the newcomer's experience may indicate a pattern of conceptualizing integration that is mainly related to a personal endeavour (from the newcomer) and a sense of individualism rather than a relational framework (all students, teachers and school staff from the school). This tendency opens relevant questions regarding the potential benefits of offering resources to make newly arrived, long-term migrant and local students more aware of the integration process as something collective and not individual.

3.1 Participant observation

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We adopted a "floating observation" approach (Delgado, 2003), which allowed us to be open-minded. Then, as the days went by and following the main objectives of this part of the research project, from a child-centred and reflexive approach, we began to focus on four key dimensions: peer interactions, interactions with school staff; task orientation; teachers' interaction

Field notes were the primary way of capturing the data collected. The register included an accurate description of the context (surroundings, conversations between participants, activities carried out, etc.) and more reflective notes (thoughts, questions, doubts, tensions). As Hernández-Hernández and Sancho-Gil (2018: 13) state, "we situate our field notes in conversation with the thoughts that emerge as we read them carefully, in a process of interrogation and searching for what is explicit and what remains invisible".

Peers

Peer sociability

The observation of peer sociability showed an inevitable heterogeneity among the different schools. These differences were mainly related to each school's specificity and were not directly attributable to being either primary or secondary schools. In almost all institutions, we did not observe social subgroups related to ethnicity but mainly gender and existing power relations between students. Nonetheless, in schools such as S5 (PS) and S6 (SS), we observed a slight tendency of Romani children to stay in groups. These schools historically had a very high percentage of Romani children and were poorly considered in the neighbourhood. Therefore, the social patterns of Roma children may be due both to attitudes towards this ethnic group and to the boundaries imposed by Roma children themselves. In general, we observed an excellent atmosphere between students. Still, there were some specific cases of exclusion (more related to particular individuals rather than a whole subgroup), which, however, were not associated with any identified gender or ethnicity variable.

Peer communication

Students generally communicated in Spanish while using Catalan to speak to the school staff and during class activities. The other source languages were rarely used to help a partner or for brief, informal interactions. Peer communication varied considerably in the different schools. For instance, in S1 (PS) and one class of S4 (SS), students respectfully communicate with each other. In the other two classrooms of S4 (PS), the communication tended to be passionate and agitated but not violent. In S5 (PS), many verbal relations were based on implicit power hierarchies in the class. The "logic of the coolest often characterized the peers' interactions dynamics". Instead, in S3 (SS), aggressive communication was a usual form of interaction, particularly among some boys. They made provocative jokes regarding their country of origin or their sexual orientation. They usually used body interactions to annoy each other. However, they helped and listened to each other if needed.

Educational staff

Engagement with students

In general, we observed a familiar, intimate and confident communication between students and educational staff in all schools. In most cases, the school seemed a space of trust, care, and security for students and teacher-student relations were perceived as positive. In most cases, teachers interacted with the pupils warmly/affectionately, helped them when needed, and provided personalized attention to each individual. Pupils generally showed a positive engagement with the teachers, and they looked at them for help and were responsive to teacher interactions.

Predominantly, from our observations, all schools made an active effort to generate emotional support, a space of trust and care for students and their families. This effort was observable both in the teaching staff's involvement and commitment during school hours and in students' behaviour, which often recognized and looked for teachers in case someone needed help.

Conflict management

In most participant schools, the management of conflicts was integral to the school policy (S1, S2, S5, S6). Specifically, most schools had clear internal policies to address issues related to any school conflict structurally. These strategies mainly focus on encouraging dialogue, negotiation and conflict resolution. Of particular interest is the effort for having an immediate resolution of the conflict. When a confrontation occurred, teachers usually tried to talk about the tensions and conflicts that just appeared in class.

For this reason, when negative behaviours became visible in the classroom (violent communication, tensions between students or the teacher), they discussed the topic inside the classroom with the whole group. This tendency was particularly evident in school S5 (PS). We often observed that teachers suspended the scheduled lesson to reflect on what was happening in the classroom, creating a safe space for students to express themselves. In some specific cases, one of the teachers left the classroom with the pupils involved in the conflict to talk and reflect. Nonetheless, the disputes observed were not related to ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds.

Engagement with cultural diversity topics

In general, in all the schools, we observed that teachers are sensitive to intercultural issues. However, the school curriculum tends mainly to focus on Eurocentric culture. In other words, multiculturalism and cultural diversity are not transversal to the curriculum but tend to be addressed in a more informal and contingent way. For instance, the teachers promoted little language exchanges in S4 (in first and second grade) in S2 (fifth grade). They introduced the languages of origin of the students in the class by asking questions (e.g. *How do you say*

this in Arabic?) or posed anecdotal questions about some specific traditions (e.g. New Year's Eve). At the same time, in S4, we observed how the teacher actively tried to foster students to maintain and refresh other languages they already know (first language, languages they have learned in other countries they have lived in, etc.).

These observations point out how the treatment of cultural diversity is related to teachers' willingness and sensitivity but not envisaged as a specific policy in the school curriculum. A relevant limitation is therefore the schools' lack of educational and curricular resources to incorporate interculturality in the classroom or as part of the curriculum, which is limited to a fundamentally Eurocentric perspective. Thus, it has not yet been possible to incorporate other cultures and approaches from different social realities and territories as structural elements beyond the anecdote. This evidence suggests relevant considerations for policies that move beyond the Eurocentric curriculum and consider more child-centred perspectives. Schools usually are aware of this reality. In the specific case of S1, due to previous work with the Esbrina research group, the institution is developing a project where they are trying to explore a pluralistic curriculum through a collective approach taking into account different perspectives, backgrounds, contexts and cultural expressions.

Regarding religious diversity, the observed panorama was quite heterogeneous. All the participating schools are secular and do not have a specific religious orientation. In Spain, according to the educational law (LOMLOE 2020), schools are obliged to offer catholic religion lessons if families request it. For those who voluntarily enrol, the grade does not count in the average academic record mark (this means that it does not count for university entrance or for obtaining a scholarship). Nonetheless, for instance, in S4, we observed a monocultural approach for the Christmas concert. All the songs were traditional Catalan carols with specific religious symbols. Schools did not think of secular (e.g. winter solstice celebration) or interreligious (e. g., organizing activities for Christmas, but also Chinese New Year, Ramadan, etc.). On the other hand, in S5, we noted that students were allowed to leave the classroom ad hoc for worship activities (e.g. evangelic *culto,* Islam praying).

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

In general, all children of the participating schools recognised diversity as structural to their reality and considered it wealth and positively valued multiculturality. However, they also realised that diversity could sometimes be a source of conflict and tension. In no school did we observed explicit attitudes and opinions regarding intercultural dialogue, intercultural conflicts, cultural and religious pluralism, migrants and migration.

All schools' members (students and teachers) have entirely normalised that the origin of the pupils is very diverse, and neither students nor teachers treat others in different ways depending on their roots.

The only exception is for newly arrived students who may have difficulties with the language and the culture. In this case, the teacher's attention toward the student can be more

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personalised. They try to find collaborative strategies (e.g. having a peer translating for the new students) to help the newcomer cope with language and cultural difficulties. At the same time, teachers made explicit references to the other students so that they were aware of the need to be empathetic with the newly arrived mates.

Finally, we also noted that teachers are very sensitive to the fact that many pupils come from complex backgrounds, regardless of their origins.

School environment

As previously mentioned, diversity forms part of the everyday experience of the schools; however, multiculturality is not structural in the educational contents proposed by the schools nor in the official curriculum. Hence, we consider that, following Banks' typology of approaches, most initiatives related to multiculturality adopt a Contribution Approach (Banks, 2019) in which knowledge regarding other cultures becomes anecdotal information (e.g. *How do you say this in Arabic?* typical foods). On the other hand, in some cases, the school's visual display tends to give an account of the cultural diversity of students (e.g. a map with the different country of origin, a welcome board with greetings in other languages). Only school S1 showed an active effort to move from a Contribution Approach toward an Additive Approach by proposing initiatives to design a curriculum and an environment that explicitly addresses interculturality.

How different factors affect integration processes?

For the newly arrived, the main factors affecting their integration related to learning the host country languages and understanding the social and cultural codes of the school and the classroom. To tackle this issue, S3, S4, S5, S6 provide children with a particular space -a reception classroom (*aula d'acollida*) for learning the language. Instead, in schools S1 and S2, the "*aula d'acollida*" role is relatively marginal, and newly-arrived students are placed directly in the class. Furthermore, teachers often ask long-term migrants who share the same mother-tongue as newly arrived to act as translators and helpers.

Regarding the language, there is another crucial distinction between students arriving from Spanish speaking countries and students from non-Spanish speaking countries. Since the school's language is Catalan, but most social interactions are in Spanish, students from Spanish-speaking countries often resist learning Catalan. This resistance affects certain teachers in their goal of including students through the learning of the Catalan language.

3.2 Focus groups & Interviews

Dynamics and factors influencing the integration process of migrant children

Premigration period and migration experience

Country of birth/country of ancestors

During the focus group, interviews and art-based activities, most newly-arrived children referred to their country or place of birth. Both children from primary and secondary schools usually drew the flag and its colours or wrote the names of the nation (or city). Additionally, some of them offered information about their migration experiences. The most recurrent themes were: the bureaucracy related to migration, the impact that migration had on their families' structure, the relationships they maintain with the country of origin and the subjective experience of being a "new-comers".

For instance, some of them explained they were excited to move to another country, although others pointed out that there was a long process of bureaucracy before migration:

> *It's not like, okay, we're going to Spain. It's a process; first, you do the papers here, then you do them there... and those who have to leave have to go to the airport and sign. The process was very slow... and I was looking forward to it* (S3, boy 7, 14 y/o, NA)

On the other hand, not everyone experienced it in the same way. For some, the change was complicated and involved leaving behind family members. Furthermore, although many migrant children arrived in Spain with their parents, a significant number were first separated and then reunited with them in the host country. This situation means that a remarkable proportion of children had previously stayed with a relative in their countries of origin. For this reason, it is essential to understand how the migration process shapes children's life stories and the grief they experience (Calvo 2005; Larriva 2017). For instance, some children shared their migration experience:

> *It was from the time my mother left until I went to my aunt. I had a bit of a hard time. It was kind of weird. Because that's when I started to become aware... The same thing that happens to people who don't... who don't have... Your parents can help you, but you don't have their physical support* (S6, boy4, 15y/o, NA).

Moreover, we have to say that sometimes children did not arrive all at once. Instead, it was a slow process in which siblings came to the host country at different times,

> *From the beginning my mother planned to bring me first, then she brought my sister. She had the chance and brought her"* (S6, boy 4, 15 y/o, NA).

Additionally, in many cases, parents were separated, with one parent staying in the country of origin and the other travelling and migrating with the child. This phenomenon is known as transnational families, "families [whose members] live some or most of the time separated from each other yet hold together and create something that can be seen as a feeling of collective welfare and unity, namely 'familyhood', even across national borders" (Bryceson & Vuorel, 2002: 3). For example:

> *In Honduras, there are my two cousins and my uncle and my grandfather and my sister.* (S5, girl 9, 10 y/o, NA).

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Many of their narratives revealed the children's deep-rooted memories of their country of birth, related to the family who stayed in the country or school experiences before the migration. For example, in the case of art-based activities, children often drew the school they went to in their home country (S1, boy 6, 12 y/o, NA; S1, girl 15, 12 y/o, NA; S1, girl 14, 12 y/o, NA) or shared experiences during the interviews and focus groups:

> For me, the best school I've been to was the one before this one (in Honduras). Because first, they taught you to be independent. First, they taught you workshops because if you did study, you could work in this field, and you already had a basis in this subject - mechanics, electricity, etc. (S6, boy 4, 15y/o, NA).

Some had returned to the country of origin for a few months. Others were going to travel but coronavirus restrictions prevented them from doing so (S7, boy 4, 13 y/o, NA). In some cases, talking about their place of origin reminded them of joyful moments and painful events.

Finally, regarding their migration experience, some children also pointed out the complexities of being a newcomer and the strategies they adopted to cope with this situation, specifically related to learning and understanding a whole set of new cultural codes and ways of doing.

General life

Living conditions

During the fieldwork (art-based activities, interviews and focus groups), children (both from primary and secondary education) did not speak explicitly about their living conditions. Therefore, it was not possible to collect information systematically. However, the information given by teachers and other educational community members made us aware that in some cases (S1, S3, S5, S6), children were living in precarious conditions (tiny spaces, sharing rooms with other families, evictions, etc.).

Another indicator that helped us understand the children's living conditions was the percentage of "canteen grant" that the schools offered. Children up to 16 years of age attending public and charter schools from low-income families could apply for an individual meal allowance. Therefore, the Department of Education covered all or part of the children's meal expenses during school hours. Most of the participating schools had a high percentage of children with "canteen grant".

To sum up, we could consider that, based on the activities carried out in the schools, children expressed a certain reluctance to talk about their socio-economic conditions. For instance, some children seemed to be "afraid" when we spoke of nationality, identity documents or citizenship (perhaps because some families took many years to obtain a residence permit). Similarly, we considered that it could be too intimate or possibly painful

to describe the precarious conditions of their family. Finally, other students may be just too young to be completely aware of their family socio-economic status.

Spatial and social positioning

On the one hand, several children highlighted the greater sense of security they perceive in Spain than their country of origin. On the one hand, several children stressed the more powerful feeling of safety that they perceive in Spain concerning their country of origin:

> *In Spain, it is very good to live. Because here you feel safer. In my country, you feel safe when you are there. But when you go to another country, you realize that it is not like that, that there is a lot more security here than there. You have to be very careful there because it is dangerous. Here you can go out … You have more freedom.* (S6, boy 4, 15 y/o, NA)

On the other hand, some of them, especially younger children, compared the natural landscape of their country of origin with the urban environment where they were living nowadays, reporting a certain feeling of homesickness mainly related to the possibility of enjoying natural landscapes. Similar considerations are also related to local food culture, as children said they miss the richness of food from their home country.

Finally, other perceptions of their migration to a new country referred to the amount of novel information and changes they faced.

> *There is a lot of energy and a lot of information here.* (S3, boy 8, 14 y/o, NA)

> *It is a different place and a different culture. (…). In other words, they are not the same people you have in your country. So, they speak differently, maybe the accent … They speak the same language, but the accent is different. And, perhaps, the way of dressing, the way of chatting …* (S6, boy 4, 15 y/o, NA).

Regarding the perception of their neighbourhood, their opinions strongly differed depending on the specific location of each school. For instance, in S2 (located in the city centre in a very touristic place but with a high percentage of inhabitants considered people with social exclusion risk), children tended to felt that the area was unsafe and affected by crime. On the other hand, children in a school in a district far from the city centre (historically segregated and ghettoized) tended to perceive their neighbourhoods as safe and quiet, even if, in some cases, they depicted the area as dull. For instance, one girl (S5, girl 6, 10 y/o, NA) decided to describe the neighbourhood with the image of a robot because "*it is always the same*". These different perceptions are strongly related to the urban distribution of migrants in the Barcelona area. Concerning the perception of their home, many children described it as their favourite place, pointing out that they spend most of their free time there (for further information, see Section *Involving in Leisure Activities, Sport).* Finally, as previously mentioned, almost no children explicitly spoke about their socio-economic status. This aspect may indicate the delicacy and complexity of this question for a young population

Inclusion in peer groups

Newly arrived children reported a certain difficulty in arriving and getting to know new people. Specifically, they stressed the feeling of knowing only a few people at that moment and the role of the family relationship in coping with this deficiency.

As reported by the participating children, most of their social relationships occurred in the school environment and the family context. They found some difficulties in knowing peers from other contexts, either for language reasons or for the settlement process itself.

For instance, in S3, two children reported that they had not met many people at the moment, and their immediate social environment was their families. Similarly, S6 girl 4 pointed out that:

> *The first few days I didn't go out because I didn't feel so comfortable. But then I started going out, that is, I went to my grandmother's home... because I had no one to go out with.* (S6, girl 4, 15 y/o, NA, from the Dominican Republic).

These considerations underlined the need of thinking about policies and initiatives capable of addressing the children's socialization and well-being beyond the school environment. Some cases that seemed to address this challenge successfully were related to the organization of "casals" or similar leisure activities. The "casals" are meeting spaces, organized either by the town hall or NGOs, to offer children opportunities to share their leisure time. Especially in primary schools, many children reported the role of the "casals" as a place to get to know and meet new friends. Nonetheless, these spaces often did not respond to the needs and interests of older children, who may have more difficulties finding opportunities for socialization out of the school.

Regarding the migrant community, just one child mentioned its role (beyond the extended family) in socialization processes. Specifically, in S6, one boy reported the positive role of the migrant community by stressing the comfort offered by the possibilities of sharing experience with peers proceeding from his same geographical area:

> *Q: And do you like how there are a lot of people from South America?*
> *A: Yes.*
> *Q: And why?*
> *A: Because they understand some things that Spaniards don't know when I say them.* (S6, boy 1, 15 y/o, NA, from Venezuela)

Finally, a boy in S3 (S3, boy 7, 14 y/o, NA) pointed out the role of digital technologies in allowing him to contact his friends in Pakistan.

Involvement in leisure activities, sport

Most newly arrived children reported spending much of their free time at home or their relative's homes, even before the COVID crisis. In this context, digital technologies played an essential role in their entertainment and leisure. Several of them explained that they

spent their free time playing video games, watching and creating content for Youtube or playing with the mobile phone. These findings were consistent with general results about the use of digital technologies by Spanish youth, which reported that children were spending an average of 2 hours and 24 minutes per day of their leisure time using digital devices. At the same time, these findings were consistent with children's reporting home as their favourite place *because of the internet.*

This tendency to spend their free time inevitably reduces the time children spend outside the home environment, which could have consequences for their personal and social development (Desmurget 2020; Twenge 2017). Children also referred to three main spaces and contexts.

Some children reported playing different sports in their free time (e.g. football, water polo, swimming, etc.). Nonetheless, their involvement in these activities was inevitably affected by Covid-related restrictions. Several children, especially in primary schools, also referred to their activities in the "casals". The "casals", as mentioned above, are meeting spaces, organized either by the town hall or by NGOs to offer children opportunities to share their leisure time. They also run summer camps and activities during the vacations where leisure, sport and socio-cultural activities occur. Finally, older children from low-income districts also reported casually hanging out with friends, mainly to walk in the city centre or visit the local shopping mall.

Health (physical and mental health)

In the vast majority of cases, children did not speak explicitly about their mental or physical health, although some of them shared with us that when they arrived, they felt depressed, uprooted, disoriented or facing migratory grief:

> *When I came here, it was horrible, horrible. I spent every day crying. I cried every day. Because I didn't understand things and in my country I understood everything. And in my country, I was one of the highest grades, and when I arrived here, it was chaotic… Everything is different.* (S6, girl 4, 15 y/o, NA)

However, none of them treated these issues with professionals; even though, in Spain, the migrant population has access to the national health system (regardless of their status). The Royal Decree-Law 7/2018 guarantees universal health care. However, in some cases, different autonomous governments imposed administrative obstacles that delay or deny healthcare (for instance, in Madrid, various NGOs report this situation).

Even if healthcare is available to all children, none expressed a specific concern regarding this issue. Furthermore, some of the participating schools (S5, S6) also had mental health care professionals in their team. In addition, during school lockdown, due to COVID restrictions, all schools developed a policy of individual care. For this reason, during the first weeks of the lockdown, the school's main goal was to establish contact with families and children (phone calls, video calls, etc.) to ensure their well-being rather than explicitly focus on curriculum content.

Educational environment and system

Experiences of inclusion in school

In most cases, newly arrived migrant children perceived a sense of welcoming and safety in the school environment. On the other hand, some agreed that during the first period, they found it complicated to adapt to a new language and specific peers dynamics:

> *I have never been a very open person. I have a hard time with that. It's not like I know you and I talk to you. I mean, I'm very shy. And I'm not very open. So, when I arrived, it was difficult for me because I don't know anyone and I'm very shy, and it's hard for me to gain confidence with people. And the first few weeks I did feel a bit different, but when I saw all the people, the good thing about this school is that there are many cultures. I didn't feel very lonely because they weren't from just one culture; they were from different cultures. I don't know. I felt part of the group. But I couldn't say it because I'm not expressive.* (S6, boy 4, 15 y/o, NA).

Children identified the school as a multicultural space as another key aspect for positive experiences related to inclusion. In most cases (for newly arrived migrant children, long-term and local students), a diverse children population was an added value of the school.

Language & School language policy and practice

Many of the anecdotes and experiences about school had to do with language acquisition in everyday life. Most children shared their stories focusing on the first days at school. They paid attention to two fundamental figures: classmates and teachers (especially tutors and the reception tutor). For instance:

> *Teacher translating: He doesn't speak Spanish nor English. He feels the other students are lovely people, but he can't talk to them as they do not understand each other. On many occasions in class, he does not have any help and does not understand the content. He would like to talk and make friends with peers but cannot because of language.* (S3, boy 7, 14 y/o, NA)

Regarding the perception of the language of instruction, their opinions differed depending more on their characteristics (if they were shy, open, friendly, etc.) rather than the specific context of the school. In general, newly arrived migrant children found it challenging to adapt to Catalan or Spanish (although some exceptions).

According to Staring, Day and Meierkord (2017: 1), "supporting newly arrived migrant children to master the language of schooling (...) is key for their successful reception and integration". For this reason, most of the participating schools had the reception classroom where newly arrived migrant children could learn the language of instruction (mostly Catalan because the language of socialisation among students is Spanish). On the other hand, as Eurydice (2019: 15) states, "migrant students' educational progress may be delayed

if too strong a focus is placed on the acquisition of the language of instruction, to a degree that students' learning in other curriculum subjects is halted". For this reason, many of these practices did not only focus on learning the language; they also considered other aspects such as emotional education, coexistence, health and trauma, etc. (see more in section "psychosocial support"). For instance:

> *The reception classroom it's very good! Because first, they give you a good base... They teach you the vocabulary and then... you learn to socialise. It's not just you in the same classroom. And then, between people, you learn to talk and see yourself, and it's easier.* (S6, boy 4, 15 y/o, NA)

In the languages spoken by newly-arrived migrant children, we did not find any specific school language policy aimed at this issue. Maintaining children's existing languages has a "positive impact on functional literacy, including educational success as a whole" (Staring, Day and Meierkord 2017: 5). Still, schools were not applying substantial projects regarding the home languages of migrant children. They did have some initiatives, such as letting children speak in their language when new children arrived or speaking in informal and specific spaces such as corridors).

Peers

Most newly arrived migrant children, when reflecting on their experiences at school, remarked on the importance of certain peers during their early days. For instance, in the vast majority of cases when the newly arrived children did not speak Spanish or Catalan, teachers usually asked one classmate of the same country to accompany the newcomer during the first days in the institution (something similar to peer education or mentoring). We could conduct and develop some interviews and art-based activities because a classmate translated everything (e.g. S1, S3). For instance:

> *He has felt that two of their colleagues have helped him to be more comfortable at school. One of them is a newly arrived student (from Pakistan). The other is a local who speaks Darija (Moroccan Arabic) and tries to talk to him. There is one teacher that helps him a lot. He likes to be in class with his classmates.* (S3, boy 8, 14 y/o, NA)

On the other hand, less frequently were reported negative experiences. Some specific cases explained that their first few days were difficult (not only because of the language), but rather for some dynamics with their peers:

> *A: Yes, because it's the first time he has gone to school, and it happened to me too the first time I went to this school. Somebody made fun of me during my first day, and he is here, and he teased me the first day.*
> *Q: And how did you feel?*
> *A: I felt angry.* (S2, boy 1, 10 y/o, NA)

Although these were exceptional cases in the fieldwork, the school should consider these situations. According to the literature, the lack of positive relationships and attachments

with peers could contribute to more severe consequences such as a higher risk of early school leaving (Eurydice 2019).

However, most children explained that the most positive and valued aspects of school were their relationships with their peers and friends, essential for their well-being (see figure 1). Something perceived during the art-based activities (specifically drawing their classmates in their life-lines, relating the school to words such as friendship, companionship, friends, etc.), but also during the conversations with the researchers:

> Q: And how do you feel in this school?
> A: Very well... with my friends... I met more friends... I learned things that I couldn't learn in Colombia... (S6, boy 2, 15 y/o, NA)

Figure 1. Children were asked to define their school with one word. Many of them were friendship, happiness, friends (S1).

Teachers/educational staff

Children highlighted the role of teachers and other educational staff as a critical aspect in welcoming newcomers. According to different studies carried out in European contexts, teacher support, expectations, and attitudes towards children learning and experiences are significant factors to consider when educating migrant children (Janta & Harte 2013; RESL.eu 2017). Although children mentioned the entire educational community, some specific teachers, such as the tutors or the ones in charge of the reception classroom, were one of the principal members in their integration process:

> It was when I arrived. The maths teacher explained very well; she had a very good sense of humour... And another teacher I also liked very much... And she's the one in the reception classroom. She was already very good at explaining and seeing how people felt. And with the other teachers, everything was fine. (S6, boy 4, 15 y/o, NA)

Children identified remarkable differences between school dynamics in their home countries and the host society in some instances.

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Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

Although most children did not talk broadly about inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers at school, they expressed that they felt a sense of welcome when they arrived. This sensation would be promoted not just by specific rules or activities of the school but as an outcome of a school staff aware of the complexity of the arrival process of newcomers.

However, as mentioned above, the primary practice regarding newcomers was the reception class. Most of the participating schools were using this resource as a place to help learn Catalan and Spanish and ensure the children's well-being. When newcomers were with all the other classmates, teachers implemented initiatives such as inviting them to talk in their language to promote a sense of comfort. As mentioned, in some schools, they also assigned another classmate to accompany the newcomer during the first weeks.

Newcomers also appreciated resources such as having a reception tutor and a psychologist.

(See more on the sections: *Experiences of inclusion in school, Language & School language policy and practice* and *Psychosocial support*).

Psychosocial support

All participating primary and secondary schools usually had two main characteristics: having a high level of children with migrant backgrounds and being considered as highly complex. The qualification of "maximum complexity" is granted by the Catalan Government to primary and secondary schools that are in disadvantaged social and economic environments or that children's families have a complicated social and financial situation. (see section 2 for more information). For this reason, institutions can have specific specialists or resources that the rest of the schools in Catalonia may not have.

For example, in the case of S1, due to school regulations, the reception classroom had fewer hours because the school's management team decided to opt for co-teaching strategies. The reception classroom played a more critical role in other schools, such as S2, S4 or S6. The main objective of this practice was to promote the acquisition of the language of instruction (Spanish and Catalan) as quickly as possible. Still, in many cases, they also were focused on emotional and psychological support (S6):

> *Well, yes, actually, my reception classroom tutor was already very good at explaining and seeing how people felt. And the other teachers, well, everything was fine.* (S6, boy 4, 15 y/o, NA).

S5 or S6 had additional figures such as the emotional educator or the psychologist. For instance:

Q: If you need anything, can you count on your teachers?
A: Yes. I mean, the one I dare to talk to the most is Teacher 1, and I feel that I can let off steam with Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 and the emotional educator. (...)
Q: And outside of school, have you had any support?
A: No. Well, but in the school, there are figures like the psychologist. But I haven't been there.
Q: And would you like to?
A: Yes, I think I'll go this year; they're trying. (S6, girl 4, 15 y/o, NA)

In addition, it is also important to emphasise that during school lockdown, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most schools tried to develop a more holistic approach to education (this means that addressing students' emotional needs was one of the most important aspects during the first weeks). For this reason, schools tried to offer psychosocial support (or at least, a sense of caring) for families and children.

Family and wider community

Family

As mentioned above, the family plays a crucial role in children's lives and everyday experiences. A first aspect that emerged from children's discourses around their family dynamics is that newly-arrived children tended to include their extended family (e.g. uncles, cousins, grandparents, etc.) in the description of their families. This tendency may indicate a conceptualization of the family structure that moves beyond the nuclear family concept (parents and children) and includes a broader range of relatives. A possible reason behind this tendency could be the migratory experiences of their families. Several children reported that their family decided to move to Spain because other relatives (e.g. aunt) already lived in the country. Furthermore, they explained that the relatives already living here played a crucial role in facilitating their arrival and adaptation (e.g. offering temporary housing, helping with paperwork, etc.). These circumstances gave an account of the importance of the role of the extended family in migratory experiences and patterns.

A second aspect reported in children's narratives was the crucial role of their family in their social and leisure experiences. For instance, several of them, also due to the difficulties in making new friends, spent their free time with their family and extended families (e.g. going to visit some relatives after school or hang out with them).

A third aspect that emerged from the research was the central role of the family dynamics in their migratory experiences. Within that, we observed different patterns. Some children reported that all the family moved together to the new country. In contrast, others explained their families' migration as a gradual process, where different family members moved to the new country during various moments. This process of family reunification strongly affected children's experiences. Several children speak about their transnational family relations from different perspectives.

For instance, some children explicitly explained the role of these transnational bonds in their affective life, i.e. some of them report a particular worry and nostalgia toward their relatives that remained in the homeland country. One boy (S2, boy 1, 10 y/o, NA) expressed his concerns about his brothers living in other countries. Similarly, one girl (S5, girl 1, 10 y/o, NA) reported that her father still lives in their homeland even if he wants to move to Spain.

Likewise, other children's, in their family description, included the representations of the relatives who live in the homeland country, making a distinction between "those who are here" and "those who remained" (see figure 2).
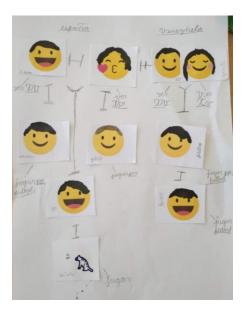

Figure 2. The family representation of S5, boy1, 10 y/o, NA.

Finally, a significant number of children explained that, in their migration experience, they were first separated and then reunited with their family in the host country. This situation means that a remarkable proportion of children had previously stayed with a relative in their countries of origin.

The patterns of family reunification and transnational relations played a central role in children's well-being and integration process since they strongly shaped their biographies and feelings.

At the same time, other reflections regarding the role of the families in children's migratory experience emerged from the conversation with one girl in S6 (S6, girl 4, 15 y/o, NA). The girl explains:

> *For instance, in the beginning, I told her (the mother) that I didn't feel well here... and she told me, "well, you will adapt to it". My mother takes my cousin as an example. She also came here very young, and she didn't have any problem adapting here. And I told her that she did not have the same life that I had... (S6, girl 4, 15 y/o, NA)*

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This conversation offered relevant insights regarding the parent's willingness to have their children adapt to the new country. At the same time, it may indicate the possible tensions that may emerge between the parents' hopes and the children's current affects and living experiences regarding moving to another country.

Migrant community, religious community

Newly arrived children did not report comprehensive information or reflections around the role of the migrant or religious community in their lives. Some recognised the positive aspects of having many children from the same background in their school. However, their discourse around a broader migrant or religious community was relatively sparse. In only two cases, children explicitly mentioned their religious beliefs or the role of religion in their lives. For instance, in S1, one child described several events associated with religious ceremonies as an essential part of his life (e.g. the day of his baptism, his sister's baptism, the day of his first communion, etc.) (see figure 2).
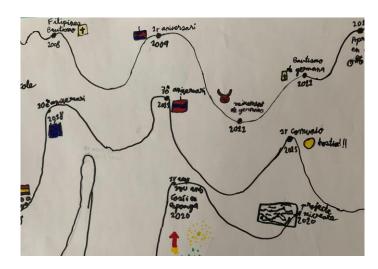

Figure 3. Lifetime made by a newly-arrived migrant child in S1.

Similarly, one child in S6 reported his Christian faith but stated that he was not involved in any religious activity. The scarcity of mentions to religious or migrant communities may indicate whether a minor role of these environments and experiences in children's lives or a low tendency to talk about this part of their lives in school spaces.

Local environment

Especially in the urban area, most children seemed to spend much of their free time at home and sporadically visit some other part of the city either with their parents or with organised activities such as the "casals". This tendency was consistent with data about the overall Spanish population, where only 18% of children reported spending their free time outdoors (Jover-Olmeda et al., 2018). In addition, excessive urbanisation could further accentuate this trend. Which mainly affects lower-income groups and implies the reduction of spaces for children's play and sports.

On the other hand, they linked the visit of emblematic sites mainly to school activities. They had a very positive impact on children, which referred to them as significant events in their lives.

Other

N/A

Conceptualizations of own well–being and life satisfaction

Self-perceived well-being and life satisfaction

As derived from the collected data, children's perceptions of well-being were mainly related to their everyday contexts and experiences. Within it, the family, the school environment, and peers played the most relevant role. According to Sabolova et al. (2020), children commonly identified these factors as key in enhancing or inhibiting their well-being.

From the perspective of newly arrived migrant children, both the nuclear and extended family and the school environment had a crucial role as enhancing factors. In particular, according to children's narratives, both families and schools were critical anchoring elements by acting as stable points of reference that allowed them to locate their place within the migratory experience (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016). These aspects were particularly evident when children spoke about the role of their home and their family in their free time. Also, in the satisfaction they expressed regarding the school environment and its policies for newcomers. This evidence pointed out crucial considerations on the importance of educational and familiar policies supporting newly arrived children's well-being.

On the other hand, children's perspectives on the peer group were more nuanced. Even if all children reported that having friendly peer relationships out of the school is crucial for their well-being, many newly arrived children expressed difficulties in meeting and interacting with other children outside the school environment. This situation improves when children attend extracurricular activities such as "casals". Nonetheless, due to COVID restrictions, these opportunities were minimal. Again, this evidence pointed out the importance of a broader educational system beyond formal education spaces to support newly arrived children's well-being.

Identification and belonging

Although it was not explicit, the newly arrived children tended to feel more connected to the countries they come from than to the host country. These views were more evident in particular feelings of nostalgia or homesickness reported by the children, especially about

their relatives that were still in their home country and the food culture and landscapes of their home place. However, several children showed an appreciation toward the new country, expressing their willingness to stay here. For instance, one girl (S6, girl 4, 15 y/o, NA) said:

> Because sometimes I say "I'm fine here", and sometimes I say "no". But, it's not that I want to go to my country, I just want to stay better here. Because I don't want to go, but I need to understand everything about here and stay. (S6, girl 4, 15 y/o, NA).

This sentence highlighted the tensions the girl was experiencing. On the one hand, she showed her intention to stay in the host country. On the other hand, she expressed the need to understand the new place better. These tensions indicated her (and many other children's) process of adaptation. How to manage to understand the new site better and control her multiple identities and belongings? How retaining certain links to the society of origin and adopting ways of life specific to the new culture and society? (Esteban-Guitar & Vila, 2015).

These considerations confirmed the complexities related to the adaptation process for migrant children. Furthermore, they pointed out potential research directions oriented toward developing educational practices to understand and cope with the fluid, transnational and moving identities experienced by migrant children.

Feelings of safety

In general, children reported a strong and positive feeling of safety regarding their experience in the new country. On the one hand, this safety addressed the school environment where most newly arrived migrant children perceived a sense of welcoming and security. On the other hand, the feeling of safety also appeared in their perception of the country and their living conditions, which most described as safe and quiet.

In particular, many children constructed their feeling of safety in comparison with their country of origin, perceiving that Spain is safer than the country they come from:

> In Spain, it is very good to live. Because here you feel safer. (...) here you feel free, and you walk without worries. (...), There, I don't usually go out on the street because it gives me insecurity. (S6, boy 4, 15 y/o, NA)

As pointed out by Grzymala-Kazlowska (2016), this positive feeling of safety can constitute an influential anchoring factor for newcomers. Furthermore, it acts as a protective factor in enhancing their well-being.

Self-perceived opportunities, choices and feeling of control over their own life and future

Children showed a heterogeneous panorama about their possible futures. Most of them imagined themselves with a pleasant life in the future and a well-recognized job (e.g. medical doctor, lawyer, football player, nurse, judge, etc.). In other words, children from primary school and secondary school had a positive perception of their future. They considered that the local environment could offer them meaningful opportunities to pursue their interests and goals. Nonetheless, in some cases, although they had some general ideas about the future professions, they would like to be clear about the steps needed to get a job (e.g. the number of years of study required to become a judge).

On the other hand, most newly arrived children imagined themselves living in their host country as adults, expressing their lack of intention toward moving back to their home country. This willingness was indicative of positive well-being in the new country.

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

A few children shared their attitudes and opinions about cultural diversity experiences related to equality, intercultural dialogue, cultural conflicts, migration, etc. There was a noticeable difference between younger and older children; school children tend to construct their perceptions concerning school experiences. On the other hand, newly arrived children from secondary schools shared stories about their lives in and out of the school environment.

For instance, several children pointed out the importance of growing up and attending a school in which there was a high level of cultural pluralism, understood as something positive and "valued" (learning about different cultures, traditions, having peers who speak other languages or even with different accents). None of the children spoke specifically about religious pluralism (neither as a positive or negative aspect).

A reduced number of newly arrived children explicitly explained experiences of discrimination related to cultural diversity. Those who did were the older ones (secondary schools). Children shared stories they had experienced or known in their country of origin as well as in Spain. For instance:

> Q: *Have you ever seen this kind of situation (of discrimination)?*
>
> A: *Yes, in my country a lot. With my neighbour... in my country you know that the Haitians ride donkeys or horses. So, they judge them by how they dress, how they smell. By everything, by their skin colour (...) they argue with them, and it's very ugly (...) they treat Haitians as if they were not people because they are Haitians they can't do the same as us.* (S6, girl 4, 15 y/o, NA).
>
> *When my mum arrived in Spain (...), a woman once told her that she had no right to anything because she had no legal papers (...) she told her that she should be grateful because instead of starving in the street, she was there working. My father also once*

worked for a month, and they didn't pay him. A lot of things happened to them. (S7, girl 1, 13 y/o, NA).

Finally, when they talked about the need to build an egalitarian society where all people have the same rights and opportunities, children underlined the importance of working in a world with "*no violence and no racism*" (S7, boy 4, 13 y/o, NA). Furthermore, referring to the migrant community, one child reported that "*we should regulate people who are working but do not have legal papers, because my mother also has friends who are undocumented and are also exploited in this way*" (S7, girl 1, 13 y/o, NA).

(Perceived) advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children`s integration

Perception of integration

In primary schools, children did not speak explicitly about their conceptualizations of integration nor specific integration policies. The prior references to these topics addressed integration policies that they experience in their everyday life (e.g. reception class) or their own subjective experience as being a newcomer. Specifically, when they spoke about their experiences as newcomers, some of them used terms such as "get adapted" or "you have to learn many new things". This way of perceiving the experience of being a newcomer may indicate a pattern of conceptualizing integration that is mainly related to a personal endeavour, where the child had to go through reconfiguring its habits, codes, and language. Therefore, this understanding seemed to leave aside the social, political and educational dimensions of inclusion policies and how these policies and models affected their lives. From a broad perspective, this tendency opened relevant questions regarding the potential benefits of offering resources to make children more aware of the role of integration policies in their lives to enable them to feel that they can be competent stakeholders and have a voice regarding these issues.

Advantages

From their point of view, the most common practice related to integration models is the *aula d'acollida* (reception classroom). As mentioned in previous sections, the main goal of this action is to promote the acquisition of the language of instruction in the shortest possible time. Once the newly-arrived migrant children have a basic understanding of Catalan and Spanish, they no longer attend these lessons and follow the same curriculum. One of the most significant and most highly valued aspects of the *aula d'acollida* is that the tutor tried to address children's emotional needs in most cases (S2, S5, S6), developing a pedagogy of care where reciprocity and biographical experiences are vital aspects.

Weakness
N/A

Good practices

Hardly any newly arrived migrant children specified which specific good practices were effective for migrant children's integration. On the other hand, taking into account the fieldwork carried out in other phases of the project, observations and some informal conversations with children, they highlighted the following different practices:

- The school's conversion into a space for socialisation means that schools are not only institutions that influence pupils' academic performance but also places that act as micro-ecosystems of society at large, facilitating socialisation processes. Many of the children interviewed pointed out the importance of attending a school with pupils from different backgrounds (languages, nationalities, and origins). In their view, this was a positive aspect for the integration of immigrant children ("because they will always have someone who speaks their language").

- The promotion of collaboration with social entities, neighbourhoods and schools and cultural activities promoted. Newly-arrived migrant children tended to report a few cultural and social experiences outside the school regarding the city they live in (e.g. visiting museums, exhibitions, and parks). One of the most valued aspects was that the school gave them the "opportunity" to explore the city and the neighbourhood, stressing the importance of the local environment for migrant childrens' integration.

- The cooperation with the Casal infants acts as socio-educational spaces to accompany the educational trajectories of children and young people that directly affect their well-being (especially for the youngest pupils or primary school pupils). On the other hand, these spaces, in addition to enabling practices that can influence students' learning and performance, are places where children develop social and emotional skills, learn to foster positive relationships with their peers and contribute to promoting a pedagogy of care in which reciprocity and concern for others are fundamental aspects.

4. Discussion

Overall, the research carried out in schools showed some similarities and differences between the experiences of newly-arrived and long-term migrant children. In particular, according to children's narratives, it is possible to consider both the family and the school as crucial anchoring elements by acting as stable points of reference that allow them to locate their place within the experience (Grzymala-Kazlowska 2016). As already identified in WP4, schools cover a crucial role in children's integration and well-being and offer a wider variety of strategies to address these issues. On the other hand, even if all students reported spending much of their free time at home, local children reported having a wider social circle concerning newly arrived and long-term migrant children. These differences indicate the need to address explicitly and design policies that go beyond the school and offer other spaces and opportunities for socialization. Finally, regarding children's well-being and feeling of belonging, we observed several similarities between the experiences of local and

migrant children. In both cases, the current pandemic situation has strongly affected their quality of life. Furthermore, since most of the participating local children were second-generation migrants, the experience of familiar transnational bonds and transnational identities was common in several participants, independently from the cluster.

The school system and reception process:

For migrant and local children, newly-arrived pupils' reception and integration process usually connect with language acquisition. In most cases, migrant students focus on the local language learning, a process in which the reception classroom and some specific classmates (mainly migrant pupils who can speak the newly-arrived children's mother tongue) are significant figures. They describe the reception classroom as one of the main advantages of the migrant children's integration models by long-term migrants and newly-arrived migrant children. Nevertheless, some participants (especially long-term migrants) pointed out that this system has limitations: according to the Catalan Department of Education, the reception classroom may only attend foreign students who join the education system for the first time and are over 8-9 years old. For this reason, some long-term students were not able to have this support during their academic trajectory. During the research, we detected that some of the long-term migrant children interviewed didn't speak Catalan fluently, as they couldn't attend the reception classroom because they did not fit the age range or profiled it.

Nonetheless, they could speak Spanish correctly. This perception could connect with the fact that Catalan is the official language used in schools. Still, sometimes some teachers switch to Spanish to better understand students from other Spanish-speaking countries. Meanwhile, Spanish is the most commonly used among classmates during Barcelona's leisure activities and surroundings.

According to Staring, Day and Meierkord (2017:1), "supporting newly arrived migrant children to master the language of schooling (...) is key for their successful reception and integration". Nonetheless, the current system focuses on language skills. It neglects other issues such as cultural mediation, the application of non-Eurocentric educational perspectives in the curriculum and the daily school practices, and the exchange of information and knowledge among locals and migrants. Moreover, some long-term migrant students from secondary and primary school (S5 and S6) indicated that their academic level was lower and did not felt prepared for higher studies. This situation may be due to different factors. Still, as Eurydice (2019: 15) states, "migrant students' educational progress may be delayed if too strong a focus is placed on the acquisition of the language of instruction, to a degree that students' learning in other curriculum subjects is halted".

The lower academic level in migrant students becomes a tension for the educational community. This tension increases in Secondary courses. On the one hand, it is frustrating for teachers that students have poor academic results after the involvement and blur they carry out, as seen in S6. On the other hand, students worry because they feel that they have a lower curricular level than what would correspond to them according to the course in which they are. This feeling directly links to immigration policies. According to the

international guidelines established by the EU for the integration of migrant children, they should go to school as soon as possible, as it facilitates better performance in studies and all the psychological and emotional aspects. However, one of the obstacles to achieving this is the Immigration Law itself, since the family reunification system does not facilitate bringing the children. Still, on the contrary, the conditions are practically impossible to achieve. Thus, the later migrant students enter the educational system, the more complex their academic success is.

Added to this situation are educational administration policies, which create great inequality among public schools. A few schools have a concentration of vacancies. They have live enrolment, which is why they continuously receive new foreign students, making it more challenging to maintain a curricular level and advance content.

Belonging and migrant experience:

Sometimes the living conditions of families directly affect the social, cultural, economic and material thinking of migrant students. In some cases, the family's economic difficulties affect the concerns and aspirations of migrant students (Dreby, 2019). Moreover, in general, children with migrant trajectories and children who suffered racism and discrimination showed greater empathy with the situation of migrants. They also displayed a more significant commitment to social justice beyond the issue of migration, such as gender equality, antiracism, defence of the public system, housing rights, LGTBIQ+ rights, among others.

Local and migrant participants' interventions revealed that the feeling of belonging and identification is generated in multiple dimensions, narratives and trajectories. In this sense, the identification of children participating in the research is often not related to national or continental feelings (e. g. European, African, etc.) nor their citizenship, but multiple forms of belonging, including their relationship with family, ancestors, religion, culture, among others. For instance, several local participants with migrant parents (children born in Spain but whose parents migrated from other countries) stated that they belong to another country. They also referred to the place where their parents were born and had most relatives as "my country". Nevertheless, the feeling of belonging appears as a heterogeneous and complex phenomenon, where different social, cultural and affective elements intervene.

In some cases, mainly in long-term and local students, children develop a sense of belonging to the school. That is to say, in general, there is not a shared sense of belonging to a particular (ethnic, religious) community, nor a nation or a region, but a feeling of belonging to the school itself (e. g. I am from S1, I belong to S1, etc.). Thus, the day-to-day practices of schools and the relationships between teachers, staff, and students foster and develop a sense of belonging and community.

Mental health

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In some schools in contexts of greater vulnerability, we could evidence how the school stands as a space of care for the children. Thus, teachers and staff generate caring relationships with students, which students also perceived. Assuming the care in school and pedagogical relationships created in classrooms allow the students to develop other narratives of themselves and perceive the school as a welcoming space. It is essential to highlight that care relationships extend between teachers or staff and students and exist among students, creating links and alliances. This atmosphere contributes to making them feel a school is a safe place. However, it is true that some conflict also coexists in these relationships between students.

Pandemics effects

The current pandemic has strongly affected the mental health of children and youth in Spain (del Castillo & Pando, 2020; Baldaqui et al., 2021). According to a study conducted by the Centre for Sociological Research, the young population has suffered twice as much anxiety as the general population (CIS, 2021). A significant number of children and adolescents reported episodes of sadness or distress, decreased social and leisure activities, and demotivation and/or disengagement from school during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of them reported spending much of their free time at home (even after the lockdown). In this context, digital technologies play an essential role in their entertainment, social and leisure activities. Several of them report spending their free time playing video games, watching and creating content for Youtube, chatting and using social media. These findings are consistent with general findings of the use of digital technologies by Spanish youth, which report that children and teenagers tend to spend an average of more than two hours per day of their leisure using digital devices.

Some schools (S4, S5 and S6) include mental health care professionals in their team, such as psychologists, emotional educators, psycho-pedagogues and therapists, so psychological support is an important element in the children's reception process and tracking. In addition, during the pandemic-derived school lockdown, all the schools developed a policy of individual care (pedagogy of care), which included phone calls to the families, individualized tutoring, non-academic virtual meetings with students and family welfare's monitoring. For this reason, during the first weeks of the lockdown, the school's main goal was to establish contact with families and students to ensure their well-being rather than explicitly focus on curriculum content.

Socialization processes and relation to the local environment

As mentioned above, especially in the urban areas, most children seem to spend much of their free time at home. This tendency accentuates in the case of newly-arrived children and long-term migrant children who reported a low usage of the public spaces and refer to visits to local emblematic places mainly related to school activities or afterschool programs. Besides, several focus groups reveal that many participants living in areas with a low or low-middle per capita income index perceive their neighbourhoods as noisy and unsafe places where crime is usual. This feeling relates to the territorial segregation that entails the

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concentration of the migrant population in specific areas, and it is common among children and teenagers of S2, S3 and S7, either newly-arrived, long-term migrants or local students.

Furthermore, migrant children indicate that their socialization processes are mainly related to the extended family and the school since they report difficulties meeting and interacting with other children outside the school or familiar environment. Instead, local children reported having a wider social circle mainly composed of friends in the neighbourhood and beyond. They also indicate an increased number of outdoor activities, such as spending time on the streets with friends, going to the park, taking a walk through the neighbourhood, etc. In this case, social bonds beyond the school indicate greater importance of the local environment in their life and well-being. From a policy perspective, it suggests the need to consider educational and urban policies oriented toward supporting a stronger relationship with the local environment, especially for newcomer children.

5. Executive summary - newly arrived migrant children

This report contains the principal results of Work Packages five of the European project Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe (MiCreate) related to the participating Spanish schools. The main goal of this part of the study is to gain comprehensive knowledge about the processes of migrant integration in host societies, focusing on newly arrived migrant students. Specifically, we considered two age groups: preadolescents (10-13-year-olds) and middle adolescents (14-17-year-olds). Seven schools located in Catalonia participated in this research. The main selection criteria for defining the participating schools were: (a) to obtain a significant migration rate, ideally greater than 40% (this involves a high level of cultural, religious and linguistic diversity) and (b) the availability to participate in the research. The research started in February 2020 and ended in March 2021. We implemented different research methods: participant observation during the daily school activities, focus groups, art-based workshops and interviews, from a careful child-centred approach.

The research focused on providing a comprehensive overview of children's experience addressing children's migration experience, general living conditions, the inclusion in peer's groups, their experience in the school, their involvement in leisure activities, their perceived well-being, their familial relationships, their perceived opportunities and the perception about existing models of migrants' integration.

A total of 17 newly arrived children participated in the individual interviews and 29 during the focus groups. We considered newly arrived children as those children living in Spain for less than one year. Children's countries of origin are very varied, with most children proceeding from Central or Latin American countries, North Africa, Pakistan, India and China.

Regarding **their migration experience,** newly arrived children reported mixed feelings. On the one hand, they reported feeling welcomed in the new country and a stronger feeling of safety that they perceive in Spain concerning their country of origin. Also, they reported

a positive perception about their future and considered that the local environment could offer them meaningful opportunities to pursue their interests and goals. On the other hand, several of them spoke about the difficulties of the change, especially regarding having to leave behind some family members. Furthermore, although many migrant children arrive in Spain with their parents, a significant number are first separated and then reunited with them in the host country. These situations inevitably affected their well-being and familiar relationships. Similarly, several participants stressed a feeling of homesickness mainly related to the friends and relatives far away and the possibility of enjoying the natural landscape they used to have in their home country.

Regarding **their perceived inclusion in a peer's group,** newly arrived children tend to report difficulties in arriving and getting to know new people. Specifically, they stress knowing only a few people and the role of familial relationships in coping with this deficiency. As reported by the participating students, most of their social relationships tend to occur either in the school environment or in the family context. They find some difficulties in knowing peers that belong to other contexts. In this context, practising some sports or being involved in extracurricular leisure activities cover a fundamental role in supporting socialization processes behind the school.

Regarding their experiences with the **school experience,** the vast majority of newly arrived migrant pupils perceived a sense of welcome, safety and comfort in the school environment. Some classmates, teachers, and other educational staff have highlighted this as a critical aspect of the integration processes. In particular, some teachers, such as the tutors or the ones in charge of the reception classroom, are principal members in their integration process. Similarly, in some cases, the presence of other students that proceed from the same country was valued very positively by children since they helped them cope with language and cultural differences, especially during the first period. The school as a multicultural space was identified as another key aspect of positive inclusion experiences. In most cases, the presence of a diverse student population was an added value of the school.

Children agreed that one of **the major obstacles** was adapting to a new language, new cultural codes, and specific peer dynamics during the first period. Their initial struggles were due to language acquisition and the impossibility of explaining themselves in an unknown language. Due to that, some pupils reported a sense of loneliness, sadness and shame during the first period. Nonetheless, almost all of them recognized as very positive the educational initiative of the reception classroom, whose primary goal is to promote the acquisition of the language of instruction in the shortest possible time.

Finally, when newly-arrived students spoke about their experiences, some used terms such as "get adapted". This way of perceiving the experience of being a newcomer may indicate a way of conceptualizing integration that is mainly related to a personal endeavour (from the newcomer) and a sense of individualism rather than a relational framework. This tendency opens relevant questions regarding the potential benefits of offering resources to make newly arrived more aware of the integration process as something collective and not

individual. Furthermore, despite some educational policies in the schools seeming to be effective and appreciated by the children, the global overview of these findings points out the need for thinking about policies and initiatives capable of addressing the socialization and well-being of children also beyond the school environment.

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