NATIONAL REPORTS ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

LONG TERM MIGRANT CHILDREN

Migrant children and communities in a transforming Europe

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MiCREATE
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-centred approach to migrant children integration on educational and policy level.

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

This report presents the findings of **WP6 'Long-term Resident Migrant Children'**. Specifically, it presents the results of a qualitative multi-method study conducted among 10–19 year-old children and young adults in schools in six countries: UK, Denmark, Slovenia, Austria, Poland and Spain. Long term migrant children (LTM) were defined as those who had been living in host societies for **more than five 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 (15-19 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 WP6 was** to gain comprehensive knowledge about the processes of integration in the case of **migrant children with long-term residency** in host societies by doing child-centred ethnography in Slovenia, Austria, Denmark, Spain, the United Kingdom and Poland. The study placed special emphasis on examining integration of these children in relation to diverse factors especially age, gender, religion, ethnic backgrounds and socioeconomic status.

Specific objectives of the WP6 study were:

- to improve our understanding about how migrant children with long-term residency have experienced integration in host societies, how are they satisfied with their new life, what are their needs and future ambitions
- to get insight into their 'strategies' of inclusion which they employed after coming to new social environments
- to assess factors influencing the integration process of migrant children such as living conditions, inclusion in peer groups, involvement in leisure activities, sport, presence/absence of strong ethnic community, the role of the local environment, spatial and social positioning, etc.
- to assess the role and meaning of social, cultural and economic capital of the migrant family, cultural background, gender, religion and other significant determinants on the integration process
- to evaluate the role of the educational system in the integration process

- to identify advantages, weaknesses, limitations and unexploited opportunities of existing models of migrant children's integration into the existing educational systems and the role of family, local children and educational staff in this regard

- to locate the trends and dynamics of integration of long-term resident migrant children through the analysis of identity changes, achievements and assessment of overall well-being; location of self-perceived general satisfaction with live (in host society), and self-perceived opportunities, choices, and power to influence and arrange their own life and future; the feeling of acceptance and being a 'part of the community'

- to give voice to migrant children with long-term residency to fully express their perceptions on their own life course and life changes.

- To shift the research and cognitive focus from the 'system' and adult perceptions to migrant children

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 LTM 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 D6.3 '6 Survey analysis on long-term resident 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 LTM 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 LTM 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 multi-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 long-term resident 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.

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 long term resident migrant children, 4) a discussion (including also a comparison with newly arrived migrant and local children), 5) a summary of the main fundings related to the long-term resident migrant children and an appendix - methodological section.

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)

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, art-based approach, focuses groups and interviews with children in one place.

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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 three migrant categories (Newly Arrived, Long-Term Residents and Local Children). In this report we aim to expose results related to the **Long-term Resident Migrant Children.** Our aim was to improve our understanding about how migrant children with long-term residency have experienced integration in host societies (concretely UK), how are they satisfied with their new life, what are their needs and future ambitions, to get insight into their 'strategies' of inclusion which they employed after coming to new social environments.

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-

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 sample of long-term migrant children consisted of children originating from a variety of countries including Egypt, India, Poland, Pakistan, Gambia, Jamaica, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, China, Nigeria and Spain. Some of these children moved to the UK whilst they were still infants and therefore began their education in England, whilst others had spent many years in their home countries prior to arriving in England. Children's birth and ancestorial countries were important to them as they house extended family members, friends, and for some their countries hold numerous years of memories. It was no surprise then that the initial move to England was considered to be difficult: "Interviewer: Do you like it that you moved here? Participant: I was scared at first but then I got used to it" (Child 31, Female, AG1). As a result, many children were actively engaged in practices which would maintain their affiliation with their birth/ancestorial countries, with many children visiting their country on a regular basis:

> *I am from Pakistan, I was born there. I lived there till I was 2 years old. I still go there like twice a year (Child 30, Male, AG1,).*

Migration disrupts a child's life with children having to leave family members, friends, homes, schools and neighbourhoods. They are then expected to forge a place for themselves in their new world by forming friendships, participating in education, learning the language and adhering to new ways of living. Whilst simultaneously dealing with problems such as destabilisation of their family relations and becoming trapped in structural conflict (Moskal & Sime, 2016; Nakeyar, Esses, & Reid, 2018; Pustułka, 2014; Sa□a□va□la□, Turjanmaa, & Alitolppa-Niitamo, 2017). Many children in our study had to do this several times, as some children had lived in multiple countries prior to arriving in the UK. Some were born outside of their ancestorial country whilst others had migrated from their home country to another, in which they lived for numerous years. These children can be classed as transnational migrants whereby they had homes and a sense of belonging across nations. This is illustrated in figure 4, where a child has drawn her migration history of moving from Nigeria to Germany and from there to England.

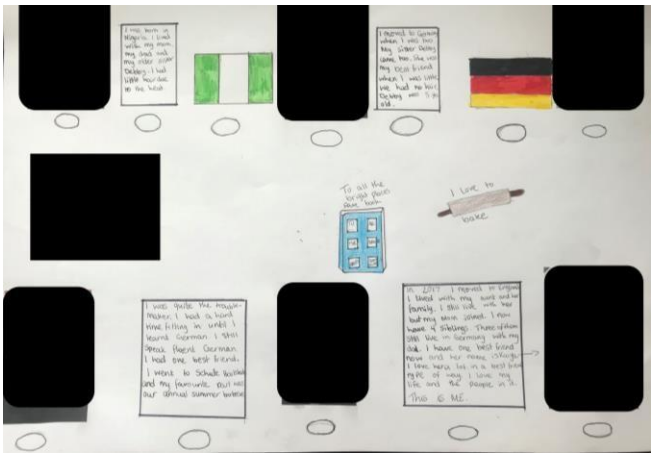

Figure 1. Drawing by a long-term migrant child about her migration experience. Parts of the image are blacked out for anonymity purposes.

General life

Living conditions

N/A

Spatial and social positioning

Similar to newly arrived children, long-term migrant children held Manchester in positive regard and enjoyed living in the city. Children with experiences of living in other areas of the country, such as Bristol and Lancaster, stated that they preferred Manchester. The availability of leisurely activities in Manchester was among the main reasons for preferring this part of the country. The diversity of communities in Manchester was also greatly appreciated by a few children. Diversity to one of these children meant "being different" (Focus Group 6). They felt that the diversity was unlike countries and areas they had lived in before. However, one child also alluded to ethnic segregation in Manchester whereby some communities were seen to house multiple types of people whilst others contained only individuals with the same shared characteristics: "I think there are different communities in Manchester, so like some places, it's integrated and there are so many different people, also there is some places where there is just one type of people" (Focus group 6).

Out of a sample of 13 children, 6 can be classed as belonging to higher socioeconomic background. One child reported that both his parents were doctors, another's father is an engineer, whilst other children stated that they routinely go on holidays abroad. One child was classed as belonging in the lower socioeconomic background, due to the child describing the area they live in to be unsafe. The remaining students' socioeconomic background could not be discerned, due to lack of information, and therefore it was difficult to comment on how these factors may affect children's wellbeing.

Inclusion in peer groups

Children identified peer relations as one of the most important factors in their school life. From a theoretical perspective, peer relations are useful for migrant children as they help to increase social and cultural capital (Coleman, 1988) and because they act as anchors enabling children to feel a sense of belonging and identification to their host society (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2018). Long-term migrant children reminisced about their past. As newly arrived children, they noted that they initially struggled to make friends, however, it did not take too long until they had formed strong bonds with others. Children quickly became part of multiple peer groups, including friends from the neighbourhood, school, mosques and leisure centres. The types of friendship groups children were in varied from child to child. Some children formed friendships with individuals with whom they shared cultural and linguistic backgrounds: "Interviewer: All of your friends here speak Urdu? Participant: 50/50, 50% of them are Pakistanis, 50% are Indians (Child 30, Male, AG1). This is not a surprising finding given that individuals tend to gravitate towards those with whom they have shared characteristics, such as language, religion and ethnicity (Evans and Liu, 2018). In fact, it can be argued that these friendships are an important part of migrant children's integration processes as children have somebody who can support them through similar struggles they have already been through. For example, Child 31 spoke about feeling scared as a new arrival but became friends with someone who came from the same area as her home country, forming friendships with her enabled this child to 'fit in':

> *I was scared at first but then I got used to it. One of my friends, she doesn't come to this school anymore, but she came from the exact same place and we just got to know each other after that, and I just got to fit in after that. (Child 31, Female, AG1)*

On the other hand, there were other children who noted being part of peer groups of diverse backgrounds. For example, Child 46, a Pakistani child, speaks about having friends who are from various countries. This was also the case for Child 49, who, although they wished the school had more children from her home country (India), quite enjoyed the diversity of the school.

> *Interviewer:: So would you say your friends are from different countries? Or are they all from the same country?*
> *Participant: No, they are from different countries. Some are from Africa… or from Pakistan, even, some of them… yeah.*
> *Interviewer: That's good. So do you learn a lot from them?*
> *Participant: Yes, actually. I learnt a lot from people in Africa. I mean, they are really nice to me and I actually enjoy it… learning of their culture and stuff.*

Involvement in leisure activities, sport

Most children reported being involved in some form of leisurely activities. Some younger children (i.e. those belonging to Age Group 1) stated that they were involved in activities such as swimming, cycling, ice skating, football, cricket, taekwondo, dancing and gymnastics.

These activities were important to children's wellbeing and enabled them to socialise with peers and expand social circles: "I like playing the guitar, I have a guitar lesson today. I like swimming and I do taekwondo. I got my black belt when I was 9. I have loads of friends there as well" (Child 31, Female, AG1,). These leisurely activities were also closely linked to some children's hopes for their future. For example, Child 31 hoped to have a career in sports. However, restrictions posed due to the Coronavirus meant that children had to stop being involved in outdoor activities, making them home bound, which impacted their wellbeing. Older children (Age Group 2), on the other hand, were more likely to be involved in sedentary activities such as reading, going to the cinema and playing online video games. Whereas one child was not involved in any outdoor activities and instead chose to spend her time doing homework and household chores. This is concerning given the multitude of benefits of engaging in physical activities. Putnam (2000), for example, argued that participation in clubs and sports activities helps individuals to build social cohesion and is useful in the creation of social capital.

> *Interviewer: What do you do in your free time?*
> *Participant: Mostly, I help my mum out and, like, just do homework, and, like, mosque, and read the Quran and stuff. I don't have that many hobbies right now, unless it's, like, cooking, and I don't know if that's classified as one [laughs]. (Child 45, Female, AG2)*

Health (physical and mental health)

N/A

Educational environment and system

Experiences of inclusion in school

Perceptions regarding school were largely positive as all children viewed their schools to be welcoming and accepting: "Interviewer: What do you like most about this school? Participant: It makes me feel welcomed, it makes me have a really good time" (Child 30, Male, AG1). Children felt as though they were part of a larger community where they recognised and respected each other's similarities and differences. Despite the positive views regarding inclusion in schools, a handful of children felt that more needed to be done to create a fully inclusive environment. Child 04 (Female, AG1) felt that the school needed to place more emphasis on minority festivals:

> *If I could change something…you know how here they celebrate mostly English celebrations and like Christmas and stuff, I'd like it more if they had more a big culture celebration as well like Hinduism and Judaism, and Muslim; and I'd just like it more if they did that more like most celebrations, they teach and talk about stuff but I just would like it more if they did craft where everyone can do and stuff like that.*

Child 45, on the other hand, states that the school curriculum needs to be modified as it does not take into account the experiences of migrant children:

> *Interviewer: Do you feel represented in the subjects you study?*
> *Participant: "No. It's mostly about… as a hijabi, and I am African, they mostly talk about Black UK people and how they feel, and how they were born here and stuff…And it's like, "I'm not from here, sorry. I don't understand a single thing you are talking about" (Child 45, Female, AG2).*

In addition, the child also felt that subjects such as geography cover European countries yet neglect others.

> *[In] Africa, even though it's ten times bigger, it's not seen as something that is big or important or anything like that. And most of the time, in history, we learn about the Western side. So, we don't learn about what happens in the East and how slavery affected them" (Child 45, Female, AG2).*

This highlights that Black and ethnic minorities are not a homogenous group and they are likely to have differences that need to be addressed within the curriculum. The students' observations also present a strong case for employing multicultural approaches to education. Particularly useful for creating intercultural educational environments are Banks' (2019) Transformative approach, where concepts, events, and themes from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups are discussed, and 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. Although as the above instances illustrate, the schools in our study were not always achieving this, the fact that children are aware of this and recognising the problem is significant in its own right.

Language & School language policy and practice

Experience of learning local language

All children were bilingual—with some even being multilingual—therefore naturally there was a presence of a wide variety of languages in the current sample, including Jamaican, Urdu, Hindi, Tamil, Spanish and Arabic. As new arrivals to the country, one of the biggest challenges they faced was in their English-speaking abilities, as children found it difficult to understand others: "Yes, it was like people speaking alien language, so hard" (Child 30, Male, AG1) and therefore found it more difficult to make friends: "Well, I didn't really speak the language. So, I couldn't really speak to the children" (Child 40, Male, AG2,). However, due to the children now having lived in the UK for five or more years most of the children described themselves to be proficient in their English-speaking abilities. When asked to recall how they learnt the language some children implicated parents and teachers in helping them learn the language, but others also stated that with the passage of time they 'picked up' the language:

> *Interviewer: How did you get to learn English after coming here?*
> *Participant: Don't know. Just, like, learn. I don't really remember. Just, like, eventually learned." (Child 40, Male, AG2)*

It is to be noted that not all children were able to become proficient in speaking the English language. For example, Child 26 (Female, AG1) notes that she struggles to speak the English language and therefore much prefers to speak Jamaican. The child further notes that due to this she struggles to understand instructions from her teachers. In a similar vein, Child 45 (Female, AG2) narrates her struggles with English she states that although she is proficient in speaking English she still struggles with the written form: "… when I came here, I had a problem with spelling and stuff like that, as in you spell completely different here than there… So I still have problems with spelling […]" (Child 45, Female, AG2). This shows that long-term migrant children may still require additional support from schools.

Language at school

It was clear that numerous languages were present in the school environment across the sample, some schools incorporated various languages in the school curriculum through specific language subjects being taught to children. However, more often various languages in the school environment were present informally, through migrant children speaking to peers. Some children communicated with their friends at school in both their native and in the English language, whilst others spoke primarily English at school. Children also acted as translators for new arrivals into the country, they supported them informally within the school setting to learn English, thereby helping to bridge the gap for their peers in the process of cultural integration.

> *Participant: So if I went to Egypt and if I just came back now and I didn't know any English then I would like it if I had a friend who can speak my language […] I just feel it would be nice if they had a friend who can speak their language who they can talk with them more." (Child 04, Female, AG1)*

It seems that there are benefits in children retaining their native languages as they can be an excellent support system to other migrant children who struggle due to a lack of English-speaking abilities. It is also a valuable employability skill. A case can be made here that multilingualism in migrant children should be celebrated, as it is a skill that children can use to support their communities.

Peers

Discussed in *Inclusion in peer groups* section.

Teachers/educational staff

Little discussions regarding the school staff took place in the interviews. Those who mentioned them, spoke about them in a positive light, citing that teachers were helpful,

respected students and did not discriminate: “The teachers they treat everyone fairly, and they don’t care about, like, are you White, Black, Indian, or anything like that” (Child 41, Female, AG2). Child 41 was an ethnic minority child born in Spain. She later went on to speak about how at her current school in Manchester she sees many more teachers that ‘look like her’, as opposed to Spain. To Child 41 being around teachers who look like her has made her feel that there are people she can speak to: "I mean, it’s still the same, but it feels like there’s more, like, people you can talk to and all that" (Child 41, Female, AG2).

Other children also noted that they felt as though there were teachers at the school to whom they could turn in order to seek support. Having supportive teachers made children feel safe and comfortable: "Yeah, I feel safe and comfortable, and I know that, like, the teachers care for me and all the students care for me and if anything, happen they obviously being worried and stuff" (Child 31, Female, AG1). Child 31 account shows that there was a culture within the school wherein even if the children did not feel they need help, they were aware of people they could turn to.

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

Some children recognised from personal experiences that being in a new environment can be ‘scary’. They stated that forming friendships with others and gaining linguistic competence can help to facilitate the process of integration. They, therefore, became a support system for the new arrivals by welcoming them, inviting them into peer groups and providing linguistic support.

> *Interviewer: How do you approach and talk to someone who comes new to your school? Participant: I just go them and say hi, how are you doing? I know how scary it is in the first days in a new school. (Child 30, Male, AG1)*

Psychosocial support

Some children reported a range of individuals on whom they could rely for psychosocial support, including parents, friends, siblings and teachers. They did not mention receiving any formal form of psychosocial support, such as school counsellors.

> *Interviewer: if you ever feel unhappy or something is bothering you or if there is any issue who would you feel comfortable talking to?*
> *Participant: Sometimes I just talk to my friends or sometimes I just tell the teachers.*
> *Interviewer: Do you remember any examples of that?*
> *Participant: Like, when I don’t know what a specific question was, I just go after school and talk to my teacher and they, like, help me, go through it together. (Child 41, Female, AG2)*

Family and wider community

Integration

Integration is defined as 'the process by which people who are relatively new to a country become part of a society' (Penninx and Garces-Mascarenas, 2016: 11). Parents or guardians are important in this process as they stipulate guidelines for children on how to behave, upholding moral codes and cultural and traditional values. In the current sample, a small number of children reported that their parents engaged in practices that would ensure children maintained a sense of affiliation to their ethnic and cultural background. This was primarily to do with language learning. Children reported being proficient in speaking their native language and often using it as a primary means of communication with their parents. This is despite most of the sample having moved to the UK in their infancy. This showcases parents' efforts in ensuring their child knew their home language. In fact, one student's (Child 45 Female, AG2) mother insisted that she speak Somali inside the home. Similarly, Child 30 narrates that as soon as he enters his home, he steps into his role as a Pakistani child: "As soon as I get home […] I speak my language. I eat my food like Biryani over here I speak English and over there I speak Urdu" (Child 31, AG1, Male). However, although parents ensured that children retained aspects of their cultural identity, some parents were also actively involved in integration practices as well, such as helping children learn English:

> *Interviewer: How did you learn Arabic?*
> *Participant: From my parents.*
> *Interviewer: And what about English?*
> *Participant: Even English, my parents and from school. (Child 25, Male, AG1)*

Extended family

Interestingly children seldom referred to extended family members in the UK, except for two children. Most children spoke about family members they had left behind. For one child, one of the most challenging aspects when leaving her home country was having to leave behind their family. Children therefore routinely stayed in touch with these family members over the phone, online or through text messages.

Migrant community, religious community

A few of the children in the sample came from countries where religion is part of the political sphere of their country. This was the case of Child 04, a Muslim, originally from Egypt. She was used to people openly praying in the street and celebrating Eid with her whole neighbourhood and so, naturally, the UK was strikingly different for her. She was now living in a neighbourhood where not everyone is a Muslim. The child became nostalgic about how she was able to practice her religion in her home country.

> *I did feel like a bit nervous because I didn't know what to expect and also like because in Egypt, obviously, you had like, I'm Muslim so all the neighbours are Muslims and stuff and whenever was time to pray everyone prayed together outside and then here everything is more… like no one is really Muslim near us but apart from our friends and our neighbours are know that, we still play with our neighbours and stuff when we play outside but I just feel like in Egypt like things were more close to your culture and everything. (Child 04, Female, AG1)*

However, not all was considered bleak in the UK, as Child 04 pointed out that she was still able to engage in core parts of her religion in the UK, such as celebrating Eid. It can be argued that by being able to engage in her cultural practices in England, the child was able to feel a sense of connectedness with the British society, whereas, if she was not afforded this freedom, she would remain anchored to her past. This highlights the importance of religion or religious community in migrants' life. This may be particularly significant for groups that might feel like outsiders, such as Muslims in predominantly Judeo-Christian contexts (Lee, 2018; Riaz, 2015; Ricucci, 2015).

> *Interviewer: Have you celebrated Eid here?*
> *Participant: Yeah, we celebrated here before and also outside with my friends who are Muslim and we still go together in a big group and celebrate with them in one of our houses and we used to go to a place for Muslims and pray with them and everything, so it's like a big open place where people pray, quite a few actually around a hundred, so it's like a big community then. (Child 04, Female, AG1)*

Local environment

Some children described their neighbourhoods to be quiet and peaceful with open spaces where they could play: "Like, there's not many cars where I live. So, like, there isn't a lot of sound. So, like, it's very calm." (Child 40). However, this was not the experience of all children in the sample, as was the case for one child in the focus groups who had experiences with burglary: "My neighbours didn't close the window, so… Someone went inside and stole their car key and tried to drive away: And they stole the TV as well."

Other

N/A

Conceptualizations of own well-being and life satisfaction

Self-perceived well-being and life satisfaction

There were a number of determinants of wellbeing in children's lives. This included family, friends, ability to participate in leisurely activities and school. However, due to Covid-19 related social distancing guidelines and school closures, some children noted that they were no longer able to engage with some of the core determinants of their wellbeing,

including playing with friends, going to school, seeking support from teachers, or partaking in extracurricular activities. Ultimately, this significantly impacted their wellbeing. It is unclear yet to the exact extent of the effect of Covid-19 on migrant children's wellbeing, but preliminary findings of this report indicate that this may have had a significant impact on children and governmental policies and schools should pay clear attention to the effect Covid-19 may have had.

> *Interviewer: How do you feel about all what's going on right now in the world with Coronavirus, people staying at home, and all that?*
> *Participant: It makes me feel sad because I rarely get to talk to my friends, see my brothers and sisters. We haven't celebrated my birthday. All we did is sit home and my dad got me a phone so that's good. My dad's birthday is coming up and I hope is gone by then because I really want to give my dad the best time of his life. (Child 26, Female, AG1)*

Identification and belonging

Children's identities were rooted across nations. They were not merely children living in Britain, they had anchors based within their ethnic, linguistic and religious backgrounds. There were close links to ethnic identity and language whereby children's native languages helped them to stay connected to their country of origin. They enjoyed speaking their own languages and found a sense of comfort in it. It was also one of the main mediums through which some formed friendships: "I have so many friends I feel like family because they speak my language" (Child 30, Male, AG1). For these children and their families, they needed to hold on to their language as it played a role in children remaining connected to their culture and home countries. For example, Child 45 (Female, AG2) discusses how losing her ability to speaking the Somali language makes her feel as though she belongs neither here, nor there: "Participant: But I can't, really, that much, because I am more of a, you know… I am more diverse, I feel like, because I'm not English, but I don't see myself as Somali as much, because I haven't been there for a while, and I don't speak it as well as everybody else".

Speaking English, on the other, hand helped the children to break the barriers of communication, form friendships with peers and connect with others. Children used both their native and host languages on a daily basis. This showcases the bifocal and bilocal nature of migrant children's lives whereby they felt a connection to both 'here' and 'there' (Moskal and Sime, 2016). Over time, their identities transformed to include aspects of both their home country and host country. Their identities that were rooted in their home countries remained intact due to the practices that their parents and ethnic community engaged in; whilst their identity rooted in Britain came from inclusion practices at schools and their peers.

Feelings of safety

Little information was available regarding children's feelings of safety with only two children having reported anything on this. Child 04 reported feeling safe and secure in her school setting: "Interviewer: Do you feel safe and secure in the school? Participant: Yeah, I feel safe and comfortable, and I know that like the teachers care for me and all the students care for me and if anything happen they obviously being worried and stuff. (Child 04, Female, AG1,)". Whereas Child 31 (Female, AG1,) reported feeling safe in her neighbourhood.

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

All children had hopes and aspirations for their future. Some children had clear ideas of careers they would like to pursue whilst others were unsure. This is understandable as the children being interviewed were relatively young. When asked 'what would you like to be when you grow up?' children across both age groups and genders cited a range of careers, such as teacher, doctor, judge, cricketer, footballer, businessman, actress, nurse, or gamer.

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

It was evident from the interviews that children enjoyed being part of multicultural communities, whether that be in school or within their local neighbourhoods. Multicultural societies enabled children to associate with people of their own culture, communicate in shared languages and feel part of a community. When children were not part of migrant communities, they can feel excluded, as was the case for Child 30, a Pakistani born child, who spent a considerable time in White British communities prior to arriving in Manchester: "This made me feel like I am an outsider, and in the countryside, there are not that many people from other countries, it's got really British people, so there are not that many languages. In Manchester, there are loads of people from other countries" (Child 30, Male, AG1). Child 31 (Female, AG1) narrates similar struggles at a catholic school she attended prior to arriving at School 1:

> *Participant: it was a Catholic school, so I didn't really fit there, but when I moved here, it wasn't really a religious school so there were load of different people, so it was easier for me to make friends compared to there.*
> *Interviewer: How did you feel there?*
> *Participant: I felt lonely at some points because I didn't have as many friends as I do now because also, I didn't know what they were saying and they didn't understand what I was saying. (Child 31 Female, AG1)*

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

Perception of integration

For one child, integration meant everyone is respected despite religious and cultural differences. In fact, she thought this to be a useful practice as it would ensure that all children feel safe. It was also thought that this would enhance children's sense of wellbeing:

> *Interviewer: When someone is new in your classroom, how should he or she be treated?*
> *Participant: They should be treated with respect like wherever they come from and everyone should respect their religion, respect their beliefs even if they didn't agree with that and I actually think that when that happens that's really good and I don't think anyone is to that and we should like feel safe because that's basically the goal to feel safe but obviously to feel safe as well and be happy when you come to school and have a good group of friends. (Child 04, Female, AG1)*

Child 41, who was originally from the Gambia, identified this to be a particular quality in the British educational system. She noted that her school in England was very diverse and teachers treated children equally irrespective of their backgrounds:

> *Interviewer: What are the differences between the two schools?*
> *Participant: Like, in Spain, there's, like, mostly white kids and in here they're mixed race.*
> *Interviewer: Oh, okay. So, you like that about the school?*
> *Participant: Yeah.*
> *Interviewer: Okay. What do you like most about it? Like, why do you like that your school is multicultural and diverse?*
> *Participant: The teachers they treat everyone fairly, and they don't care about, like, are you White, Black, Indian, or anything like that. (Child 41, Female, AG2)*

Advantages

Language learning was central to some of the problem's children faced in integrating. Some schools were able to provide children with additional support through teachers who spoke the child's language and or taking a differentiated approach to migrant children's learning. This was thought to be a positive aspect of the current model of integration in the UK, as children were better able to learn the language:

Interviewer: How did you get to learn it?
Participant: I think some of teachers helped me when I was in reception or something back in Bristol. And I kind of just picked it up afterwards.
Interviewer: How did they help you?
Participant: We started off with basic English, and then we just built it on that.
Interviewer: Was that helpful?
Participant: Yes. (Child 31, Female, AG1)

Weakness

N/A

Good practices

One school in the sample promoted additional languages as part of their school ethos. Child 30 (Male, AG1) described his class policy where every term the children are introduced to a new language. The child was delighted when Urdu, his native language, became the language of the term. Being in an environment where the child's home language was being accepted by others helped him to feel a sense of belonging at his school. This is a good practice for schools to adapt as it can help children to learn about one another's languages and cultures in a controlled environment where teachers can facilitate discussions.

Participant: Every morning. We have what we call language of the term. Urdu is our language of the term. So, you always say Essalamu Alaykom in the morning.
Interviewer: How does this make you feel?
Participant: It makes me really happy.
Interviewer: Did you have this back in Northern Ireland for instance?
Participant: No, over there, there weren't that many Muslims, there weren't that many people from other countries, there were only English.
Interviewer: What do you like most about this school?
Participant: It makes me feel welcomed, it makes me have a really good time. I have so many friends I feel like family because they speak my language. (Child 30 Male, AG1).

4. Discussion

This report aimed to assess the integration processes of migrant children from a child-centric perspective. The children involved in this research had a variety of migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds. 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, 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 and long-term 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 – long term resident migrant children

The aim of this report is to highlight the integration processes of long-term migrant children. The sample consisted of children originating from a variety of countries including Egypt, India, Poland, Pakistan, Gambia, Jamaica, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, China, Nigeria and Spain. Migration can be characterised with disruption to one's life and in our sample many children had to face this multiple times. As although some of these children moved to the UK whilst they were still infants' others had spent many years in their home countries prior to migration and a few had migrated several times prior to arriving in England. Children's birth and ancestorial countries remained important to them as they housed extended family members, friends, and for some this included numerous years of memories. Therefore, families and children engaged in practices that would maintain their affiliation.

Long-term migrant children reminisced about their past and noted that as new arrivals they initially struggled to make friends. However, it did not take too long until they had formed strong bonds with others. Due to these experiences some children recognised that being in a new environment can be 'scary'. They stated that forming friendships with others and gaining linguistic competence can help to facilitate the process of integration for newly arrived migrant children. They, therefore, became a support system for the new arrivals by welcoming them, inviting them into peer groups and providing linguistic support.

Perceptions regarding school were largely positive with children viewing their schools to be welcoming and accepting. Children felt that they were part of a larger community where they recognised and respected each other's similarities and differences. They also enjoyed the multicultural ethos of their communities as it allowed them to associate with people of their own culture, communicate in shared languages and feel part of a community. Some children also spoke about their teachers being helpful and supportive. Despite the positive views regarding inclusion in schools, a handful of children felt that more needed to be done to create a fully inclusive environment.

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DENMARK

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1. Introduction

This report aims to explore integration processes in Danish context from the perspective of children aged 10–17 with and without migration experiences of different kinds, answering the following research questions:

- How do long-term resident migrant children perceive and experience processes of integration?
- How do educational staff approach and address 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, migration experiences (newly arrived migrants, long-term migrants and local children born in Denmark either with or without migrant parents) 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?

Long-term migrant children were mainly observed at S1 and S2. At S1, long-term migrant children were observed having difficulties in class and not receiving sufficient help to solve tasks. When the teacher was not helping in class, these children, some of whom appeared to have a greater need for help than others, were found in a less privileged situation. However, another teacher was observed to be aware of the needs of long-term migrant children. For example, she made sure difficult words in a text were explained in class but without pointing out that this was especially for the sake of the migrant children. Thus, organizing teaching and learning activities such that migrant children or other children with a need for academic support will benefit, but without singling them out as deficient, may affect integration processes positively.

At S2, the situation of the long-term migrant children appeared to be similar to that of local children who were children of migrants. Groups of children in these categories shared non-Danish mother tongues, which they used to communicate during the school day. In field conversations, teachers discursively constructed this diverse group of children as 'non-Danish students', an approach that is obviously a barrier to integration.

3.2 Focus groups and interviews

The findings regarding long-term migrants, presented in this section, are based on six individual interviews and five focus group interviews. Table 2 gives an overview of the distribution of interviews according to school and age.

Table 2

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

Premigration period and migration experience

Country of birth/country of ancestors

(Thematised in four individual interviews.)

One refugee child, in 10th Grade, explained that he was not able to travel to the country of origin because of fear of persecution. He explains that he, as opposed to other citizens of the country of origin, cannot go back because he has no passport from his country of origin, but only an alien passport.

Three other refugee children, who arrived in Denmark at preschool age, explain that they still have family in their African and West Asian countries of origin and in other European countries such as Sweden and Germany. They explain that they have contact with their family members (among them grandparents) in the country of origin via FaceTime, Skype or phone calls.

One says that her family planned to go back to the country of origin for a visit for the first time since the flight, but it was cancelled because of COVID-19.

Experiences of the first time in Denmark are thematised in three interviews, but premigration and migration experiences are not mentioned directly. While two of the children arrived at preschool age and did not experience a long or complicated transition phase to the Danish school system, a third child had a longer-lasting and more varied transition phase. She explains that she spent three years in a reception class, then went to an ordinary school, but shortly thereafter left for half a year's stay in a neighbouring country to the country of origin. When she returned to Denmark, Danish was still challenging, and she attended a new reception class:

> *I travel to [neighbouring country to country of origin] for half a year, and afterwards I come back to the 7th Grade, but it gets difficult for me, the language gets difficult, that's why I come here. (Child 103, female, AG2).*

General life

Living conditions

(Thematised in five individual interviews.)

The living conditions are at the centre of this section, where four children mention their housing conditions. While two describe their room as a nice place for relaxing and being oneself, two others explain that siblings may disturb them and make a mess in their room. One of them explains that she shares a room with her siblings and relates the size of the apartment to her mother being a migrant: 'Because my mother, she... is, does not come from

Denmark […] so, she is not that good at speaking Danish and stuff like that, so we live in such a small apartment' (Child 7, female, AG1).

Two children explain that they live with many family members. One of them explains that after her arrival in Denmark, her family moved from a smaller house to a larger, nice house with enough room for the whole family.

Spatial and social positioning

(Thematised in three individual interviews.)

Regarding neighbourhood, two children mention that they live close to the school. One mentions nice neighbours. Another explains that her mother has experienced conflicts with friends living nearby and has considered moving to another city. Now, however, she has decided to stay because some family members who have also migrated from the country of origin plan to move in nearby.

Inclusion in peer groups

(Thematised in six individual interviews.)

School and leisure activities, such as football, appear to be the places in which the children find their main peer groups, indicating that leisure activities are important social anchoring sites (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016). It appears from all interviews that peer groups and friends, both locally and in other countries, form an important part of children's wellbeing.

One informant (arriving in his early teen years) explains that the first three years in Denmark he did not have many friends. He kept to himself because he was afraid of making mistakes when speaking Danish. However, when he started Grade 10 (at another school), he chose to start being himself, and now speaks to many peers: 'But when I went to 10th, I said to myself, come on… be yourself. Yes. That's just the way I am now…talking to everyone' (Child 31, male, AG2).

As school is an important setting for peer groups, there are also considerations of challenges in this respect. One child explains that in the younger grades, everyone in her class could come along, but currently in 5th Grade, friendships in pairs are more common. Two children mention the importance of having a best friend in class, which makes the school day better and prevents a feeling of being alone.

Involvement in leisure activities and sports

(Thematised in four individual interviews.)

Two children mention football and two others swimming. Other, less formally arranged activities mentioned are going to the gym, visiting friends and relatives for dinner, watching TV, going to the mall, playing outdoors with friends, going to an internet cafe and to burger restaurants. One child mentions that she helps her mother cleaning at home due to her mother's bad health condition.

Health (physical and mental health)

(Thematised in one individual interview.)

One child explains that COVID-19 has influenced her everyday life, in addition to the restrictions imposed by authorities. Because her parent was afraid of the danger of infection, he wanted her to stay at home for weeks after the school reopened following the first lockdown; however, she refused:

> *Yes, and then I got very upset because I missed my friends and stuff like that. And I asked my father if I could please go to school when the schools opened, but he said no, wait just two more weeks and then I said no, now I wait two or three days and then it must be like that. (Child 7, female, AG1)*

Educational environment and system

Experiences of inclusion in school

(Thematised in four individual interviews.)

The most important factors of inclusion (and thus also possible exclusion) appear to be friends, teachers, parents and language.

As already mentioned, friends play an important role in feeling safe and included in the school environment. Several participants talk about feelings of nervousness and anxiety related to their first day of school and to entering new classes or schools during their stay in Denmark. These feelings seem related to not having any friends yet and not yet being used to the new social environment.

Teachers are a factor in experiences of inclusion, but in an ambivalent way. On the one hand, teachers invite children to present themselves and participate in learning and social activities in a welcoming way. On the other hand, expectations of participation can seem overwhelming. Hence, several participants mention that they were nervous to speak in front of class, 'started crying', 'was paralysed with fear', 'did not dare to say anything', or 'had a stomach-ache'. Thus, awkwardness, embarrassment and painfulness (Danish: *pinlig*) are

recurring concepts in the interviews. However, it appears that teachers are not sufficiently aware of these feelings among children. No children mention teachers helping in difficult situations. One child says that she thinks that her teachers do not know how burdensome it is to be anxious and nervous in class.

Parents appear to be a factor in both inclusion and exclusion. A parent can help to answer the teacher's questions if the child is too shy on the first day of school. However, parents can also be late picking the child up from school, causing a feeling of being left behind. One child mentions that during the COVID-19 lockdown, her parents, lacking time and language skills, were not able to assist with schoolwork, as opposed to her 'Danish classmates' (Child 7, female, AG1).

Language is also an important factor in participation. Among the children who arrived after approximately the age of 10, language seems to be an exclusion factor. It is difficult to be included in peer groups when one does not speak (enough) Danish or is not confident enough to speak it, which is once again related to feelings of anxiety and awkwardness.

Language and school language policy and practice

(Thematised in four individual interviews.)

As mentioned, children who arrived after a certain age (about 10) mention severe difficulties in learning the local language, while children who arrived at a younger age explain that they did learn the language quickly.

One child mentions that her school has a language policy prohibiting children from speaking their home languages in school: if they do that, she says, the teacher will shout and tell them that they must speak Danish. She accepts this: 'Fine, I mean…I go to a Danish school' (Child 130, female, AG1).

Several children talk about learning languages other than Danish. They are interested in learning English, German and French in school.

Two children who do not have Arabic as their mother tongue mention learning Arabic in Qurʿān school. One has phone calls with the teacher several times a week, practicing Arabic and Qurʿān recitations. She describes rehearsing and compares it to learning arithmetic operations. The other has not started learning Arabic yet, but wants to, to be able to study the Qurʿān.

Language also plays a role in everyday life in family and with peers from the same country of origin or with the same mother tongue. Several children explain that they speak their mother tongue with their parents and Danish with their siblings, or a flexible mix. One child explains that she helps her younger siblings with their Danish homework.

Peers

(Thematised in five individual interviews.)

Two participants, who arrived after the age of 10, speak of the reception class as a place with peers from many countries. However, they found it difficult to establish peer relations in mainstream classes because of language barriers. One child explains that, upon finishing reception class, he was placed in a class with students two years younger, which, along with language issues, meant that peer relations were hindered. Language thus seems to be an important factor in establishing and maintaining peer relations.

Three children mention the importance of having friends from the country of origin in Denmark, which indicates that the transnational social field (Levitt & Schiller, 2004) in which they are situated is an important factor for their social anchoring (Gzymala-Kazlowska, 2016). Thus, one child explains that her family has a close relationship with another family from the same country and that children from both families go to the same school, forming 'friendship groups' depending on their age.

Close friendships are significant. One child explains that it is central that there is always someone to play with in class, not being dependent on the best friend. Another mentions the opposite: that she is dependent on her friend being present; otherwise she feels lonely.

Another important factor and anchor (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016) in peer relations is shared experiences, such as going to the swimming pool with the whole class, playing football or going to amusement parks together.

While no children mention bullying or discrimination acts directly, it should be noted that when several children speak of insecurity and fear of embarrassing situations in school (as explained above), it points to social exclusion anxiety, which is a factor in bullying (Søndergaard, 2012).

Teachers/educational staff

(Thematised in four individual interviews.)

Teachers and educational staff seem to play an important role in processes of inclusion and integration and in the children's wellbeing.

The experience of (not) feeling recognized, appreciated and seen by the teacher is a recurring theme, pointing to the importance of a child-centred approach. It is obvious that being acknowledged by teachers is important. One child relates, looking back on arriving in Denmark five years earlier, that it was not difficult to learn Danish because the teacher was nice and 'always said so: Nado, you are a brainiac' (Child 105, female, AG1), which in the interview clearly appeared to be understood in a positive way. Teachers are mentioned as nice, fun andhelpful.

However, as mentioned above, it is also a theme in the interviews that children do not feel seen by their teachers when they experience anxiety or shyness. Apart from experiencing anxiety in school, a child says that when her mother becomes upset because of war in the country of origin, where family members still live, she feels unable to cope with going to school. However, she does not talk to her teachers about that (Child 7, female, AG1).

In addition, regarding language, a child (as mentioned) relates that in her school, children are not allowed to speak languages other than Danish (Child 130, female, AG1).

Several children mention (in)ability to live up to teachers' expectations. It makes them sad when their teachers scold them or their whole class for being troublesome and noisy and not being 'a good class'. In addition, they can be afraid of failing academic expectations, not knowing the correct answer or failing (future) exams.

Some express a lack of influence and a need for a higher degree of self-determination, which are both integral aspects of child-centred education (Gornik, 2020), both in class and in organised games in school. They wish to decide more for themselves, be able to be with friends and choose between different activities.

One child explains that she is not allowed to work with her best friend because of different reading skills, but then also not in physical education: "And then I just get annoyed and then I say in physical education that I don't want to join if I can't be with my friend, but then my teacher says, 'Now you go in and do physical education!'" She adds this reflection: "because consider if it was her and she really liked to be with her best friend and she was not allowed…Then she would probably also get upset and not have so much fun that way"(Child 7, female, AG1).

Unpredictability and lack of transparency are additional themes, revolving around teachers leaving their job, substitute teachers unable to calm the class and having well-liked teachers but knowing that they will soon leave again. One child's teacher left for a new job because of stress, which her class, due to their reputation as troublesome, thought was their responsibility. Only after some time had passed were the children told that her sick leave and job change were not their fault.

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

(Thematised in four individual interviews.)

As mentioned, language learning appears to be a significant factor in the integration process; it is a difficult task, especially for children who arrive at about age 10 or later. In addition, parents' inability to help with homework can complicate the integration process.

Encouragement and feeling welcomed (but not embarrassed in front of class) are also important. One child explains that she would like to welcome a new student:

> *So, I would very much like a new student from another country to come. For example, from my country, and spoke the same language as me. Because when we get new students, it's mostly not Muslims. Then it is mostly Danes and then some other countries. And I want to try where a student came...well, my best friend, she also comes from another country. And we have just become, like, best friends. I would like a new one, because I would really like…how we should receive them, so I would very much like to help the person. And then I would also like to talk to the person and tell how things work and I also know that it will probably be difficult for you and something like that. Because that's how it is sometimes. (Child 7, female, AG1)*

Psychosocial support

(Thematised in one individual interview.)

One child says, as mentioned above, that her mother is sometimes upset because of war in the country of origin, where family members still live. In these instances, she feels unable to cope with going to school. However, she does not talk to her teachers about it. This may point to a lack of sufficient psychosocial support for refugee and migrant children affected by severe experiences of war and flight. Other interviews with long-term migrant children point in the same direction, mentioning challenges such as loneliness, anxiety and fear of losing the residence permit in Denmark. However, options for getting help were not mentioned explicitly in these interviews.

Family and the wider community

Family

(Thematised in six individual interviews.)

The statements are mainly positive and related to cohesion, understanding, helping each other and common experiences, such as celebrations and travels. One child explains that her family has a shared and unique family language consisting of both Danish and the mother tongue (Child 103, female, AG2).

Several of the accounts mention family members migrating at different times, such as a brother or father arriving first and then other family members arriving later. Some also mention war in the country of origin and anxiety about being sent back and prosecuted or anxiety for family members living in a war-torn country.

Extended families in Denmark, the country of origin and other European countries are also mentioned, and contact is maintained by travelling (before COVID-19), phone calls and video calls, indicating that transnational relations are important social anchors (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016) for the children. The extended families include grandparents, aunts and uncles, but also 'friendship families', referring to families from the same country of origin, who are closely related. One child says that her relative will marry a relative of a classmate,

thus relating the two families and making the two classmates 'sisters' (Child 130, female, AG1).

Another remembers arriving in Denmark: 'It's because we came and then, well, we lived in, like, a house, and then three or two days later we were going to the beach with Bashiira's family [friend from class] and it was really awesome' (Child 105, female, AG1). This family, including a classmate and friend, thus appears to be a social anchor. The same child tells us that in relation to celebrating Eid, the two families usually plan a common excursion. She explains that the following year's trip is already planned, as the parents asked the children where they would like to go, and they agreed on a specific amusement park. This seems to provide a sense of predictability and stability for the child.

One child's parents divorced after arriving in Denmark. One of the parents remarried to a person from a third country, also living in Denmark. She says that it is a bit challenging to move back and forth between the two families but is also curious to learn the new stepparent's language (Child 7, female, AG1).

Migrant community, religious community

(Thematised in four individual interviews.)

Issues related to religion are thematised in four interviews, in all cases Islam. One child explains that he is a Shia Muslim, and he hopes that God will help him in his life. Two others join Qurʿān school. One joins via phone calls (which was also the case before COVID-19, she explains) and the other goes to a Qurʿān school twice a week together with some of her classmates. Another child explains that she would like to learn more about her religion and wants to start studying the Qurʿān.

As mentioned above, activities related to religion seem to provide a sense of stability and predictability, as when traditions related to Eid are known well in advance.

Also, migrant communities not related to religion are mentioned. Having a relation to a family from the same country of origin is important, and to have family members such as aunts, uncles and cousins living nearby is important to the children.

Local environment

(Thematised in three individual interviews.)

The local environment is mentioned mostly with regard to positive aspects related to places and activities, such as living close to school, having nice neighbours and a nice house, hanging out in a local internet cafe or a friend's garden. A darker statement about the local environment concerns the parents conflicting with friends living nearby and thus considering moving to another city. This prospect worried the child, who did not want to change schools. However, the plan was cancelled because close family members were

planning to move to the same city from another place in Denmark. Thus, having family members nearby may be of importance for the children, securing a sense of safety for the parents and therefore for the children, too.

Other

N/A

Conceptualisations of own wellbeing and life satisfaction

Self-perceived wellbeing and life satisfaction

(Thematised in five individual interviews.)

A major theme is difficulties related to school life and friendships in school, both as a newcomer, looking back, and as a student more experienced with the Danish system. Several children mention that their wellbeing dropped upon arrival in Denmark because of curtailed social anchoring (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016), for instance, because of loss of friends and opportunities for communication.

> *It was a little difficult to live in Denmark because I did not know the language. I had no friends. So, I came from my country where I had a lot of friends, and so…the first three months, I was just at home, and then…it was because that…we were just going to find school and stuff like that for me. (Child 31, male, AG2)*

Other children, having arrived at a younger age, do not refer to the first time in Denmark as especially difficult. It is just the opposite—they point to the first years in school as easier, with better and less complicated relationships with classmates and less academic pressure from teachers.

Being able to communicate with others and to have friends seems of great importance for the children's wellbeing.

In addition, pleasant experiences together with others are mentioned, such as good food, going to burger restaurants or amusement parks, the Qurʿān school, celebrating Eid and being with friends and siblings.

Being alone may also provide a sense of wellbeing, such as relaxing and watching movies in a nice room of one's own. However, being alone can also relate to a lack of wellbeing. Hence, when everything is too much, one child dreams of being alone in the calm mountains, and she feels alone while being surrounded by other people.

To sum up, friends and good relations in school, language competence and the feeling of living up to academic standards and not being nervous about the future seem important factors in wellbeing.

Identification and belonging

(Thematised in six individual interviews.)

Important factors and categories seem to be age (mentioned by one who does not enjoy being the oldest in class), country of origin (mentioned by two) and religion (mentioned by three). There are not many explicit reflections on identity categories. However, one child reflects on her teachers' categorization of her class as 'not good' and too troublesome or noisy:

> *When they say it, it feels like a little bah. Because you want to be the best class or not the best, but you want to be a good class. And then when she says that, you probably think a little, bah I wonder...I wish it was not like that. (Child seven, female, AG1)*

Feelings of safety

(Thematised in four individual interviews.)

One points out that in his everyday life, he feels safer in Denmark than in the country of origin, where it could be unsafe to show an expensive new cell phone and go out late at night. In a transit country on his way to Denmark, he experienced unsafety, as people there were 'really racist'. On the other hand, he feels unsafe because of the insecurity of whether he can stay or will be sent back to the country of origin. He was family reunited with a brother who was persecuted in the home country. But their residence permits are temporary—even though the brother has been in Denmark for 10 years, studied and has a job today. This points to an important sense of unsafety and loss of ontological security (Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2016), and he says that he thinks about it every night (Child 31, male, AG2).

As already discussed, another child mentions that her parent worries about the family members left behind in a country at war, which makes the child worry, too. The same child is also worried that her family might move to another city (Child 7, female, AG1). Thus, several factors combined may contribute to feelings of unsafety or insecurity.

It bears repeating that children in this group experience feelings of anxiety in school regarding peer groups, academic demands and unstable relations with teachers. At the same time, several refugee children in the group have only temporary residence permits, which indicates insecure conditions. Hence, feeling unsafe and exposed in school may contribute to an aggregated burden on these children.

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

(Thematised in three individual interviews.)

One of the older children in 10th Grade has a plan for his future, including a specific field of education, and he wants to start his own business afterwards (Child 31, male, AG2). With regard to staying in Denmark, however, he experiences a lack of control because of his temporary residence permit. Thus, his feelings of opportunity and control appear characterised by ambivalence, which may point to the Danish emic concept of integration as something desirable yet impossible (Rytter, 2019).

Another younger child dreams of visiting her grandparents in Africa after COVID-19.

A third child in 5th Grade finds her current life difficult and wants a break. She explains that when she was younger, she was cheerful and played with her friends, while today she worries about her future exams. She would like to 'learn all the things' both in school and related to her religion, so that she can visit Mecca when she grows up: 'There are a lot of things I think about, even though I'm not so big…not an adult yet' (Child 7, female, AG1).

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

(Thematised in two focus groups.)

In the individual interviews, no direct perceptions or opinions regarding equality, interculturality, migration, etc. were voiced. However, in two focus groups, related issues were touched upon.

One topic in the focus group was what an ideal school would look like if the children could decide for themselves. The dialogues from the focus groups show that migrant children staying in Denmark for the long term would like functions such as a kitchen and a playground. One girl adds that learning classic disciplines should not be the only aim of the school; physical education and the like are also important. Thus, the suggestions point to the importance of child-centred values, such as current wellbeing, and not just learning for future purposes. However, it was not possible to identify differences between children with and without migration experiences in these focus groups (FG 205, AG1; FG 212, AG1).

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

Perception of integration

(Thematised in two individual interviews.)

In two interviews, themes that may be related to the perception of integration are mentioned. They both point to the importance of speaking Danish. One child wonders how

she can improve her Danish besides already being in the reception class—perhaps going to a club or to certain schools to practice Danish even more (Child 103, female, AG2). Another reflects on her teacher prohibiting her from speaking her mother tongue in school. As mentioned above, she thinks, 'Fine, I mean…I go to a Danish school' (Child 130, female, AG1). These examples suggest that some children think that it is their own responsibility to learn Danish and that they accept a monolinguistic regime. That integration is an individual responsibility of migrants and not primarily a state task is increasingly being thematised in Danish discourse and politics on integration (Rytter, 2018).

Advantages

N/A

Weakness

N/A

Good practices

N/A

4. Discussion

This report has explored integration processes from the perspective of children aged 10-17 who are newly arrived migrants in Denmark, long-term migrants or children who were born in Denmark but many of which have migrant parents. 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 thenewcomer.

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 - long term resident migrant children

The findings regarding long-term migrant children in Denmark consists of a sample of six individual interviews (4 Age Group 1 and 2 Age Group 2) and five focus group interviews (3 Age Group 1 and 2 Age Group 2).

Due to the small sample of long-term migrant children, it is difficult to draw more general conclusions on this specific group in the Danish context. However, the findings derived from the empirical material on long-term children which is presented in the following, is supported by results on respectively the newly arrived migrant children and the local children, of which a significant part of the Danish sample consists of children of migrants.

According to the long-term migrant children, the following aspects are important in their understanding of integration. It bears repeating, that children in this group experience feelings of anxiety in school regarding peer groups, academic demands and unstable relations with teachers. At the same time, refugee children in the group have only temporary residence permits, which indicates insecure conditions. Hence, feeling unsafe and exposed in school may contribute to an aggregated burden on these children. One example is a refugee child (Age Group 2) explaining that he has a plan for his future, including a specific field of education, and he wants to start his own business afterwards. However, regarding staying in Denmark, he experiences a lack of control because of his temporary residence permit and fear of being sent back to the country of origin. Thus, his feelings of opportunity and control in the integration process appear characterised by ambivalence.

As also seen in the group of children newly arrived in Denmark, long-term migrant children point to the importance of speaking Danish, both regarding how to improve one's Danish skills and on some schools' rules on not speaking the mother tongue in school. The statements point to some children thinking that it is their own responsibility to learn Danish and that they accept a monolinguistic regime.

6. References

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SLOVENIA

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1. Introduction

This report presents main findings of the research conducted among migrant and local children in primary and secondary schools in Slovenia from October 2019 to March 2021 with an emphaises on the resultes related to the long-term resident migrant children. 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 migrant and local 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.

In interpreting data, we divided our sample into three categories according to their 'status' (newly arrived migrants, long-term migrants, and local children). According to this, we were interested in the specific experience, challenges and strategies related to the integration of newly arrived children. We were curious about life satisfaction, well-being and future ambitions of long-term migrants and the role of local children in the integration of migrant children. In this report we focus on long-term resident migrant children but sometimes referring to other two categories of children as well.

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 long-term resident migrant children (LTM), who are in Slovenia more than five years, *fourthly*, presentation of the results from focus groups and collected autobiographical life stories with the long-term migrant children (LTM). We conclude with a discussion and abstract.

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 appendix on WP5-7

- *National report on methodology* and also in the *Report on reflexive methodology* (Sedmak, Gornik, Medarić, Dežan, 2021).

Data were 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, 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 language 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.

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 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.

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 sample of long-term migrant children who live in Slovenia for more than 5 years consists of respondents originating mainly from the territory of the former common state the Republic of Yugoslavia, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, North Macedonia, and Serbia. In addition, we had a conversation with migrant children from China, Russia and Slovakia. Some of these children came to Slovenia as infants and were included in Slovenian kindergartens and/or first grades of elementary school. Others had spent many years in their countries of origin before coming to Slovenia. Their countries of origin are important to them because they still have a part of relatives and friends living there. Additionally, plenty of warm memories were created there. Consequently, several migrant children still consider their country of origin as their home.

> *It drags me because my home is there, all my people live there, everything mine is there, we know each other, everything is different. But honestly if I had to decide whether I would go back or not I wouldn't. I have more opportunities and possibilities here. It still drags me back, but I wouldn't leave Slovenia."(girl 1, 18 y/o, long term)*

> *That feeling I have when I step on my yard, memories, the smell of my house. Despite bad experiences, this is still the place where I was born. My soul is there." (girl 1, 16 y/o, long term)*

Some migrant learners initially considered the move to Slovenia as a difficult challenge and had similar concerns as newly arrived migrant children (e.g., how will they be accepted by peers, will they be able to communicate, will their academic success decline, what will happen to friendships made in the host country). Others were excited to move to a foreign country and anticipated new opportunities more relaxed. There are differences in terms of the frequency of visits to their country of origin. Some visit it at least once a year (for a longer period or they have been there on holiday) while others have not been there for years.

> *Honestly, I really don't like visiting Bosnia. There's not plenty of people to hang out with. I have family and everything, but I am not used to it. I live here since I was 8 years old, I'm here almost 10 years. I'm used to this town and that's it. Really, I can't wait to return when we go for a visit. (girl 2, 18 y/a, long term)*

The decision to migrate has disrupted their lives because they had to leave relatives, classmates, friends, homes, schools, and neighbourhoods. However, some migrant children maintain contact using social media apps.

We often talk, Snapchat, phone and similar. I also use Instagram, I have TikTok, WhatsApp, Viber and YouTube. (girl, 12 y/o, long term)

General life

Living conditions

It is clear from the interviews that the living conditions of long-term migrant children vary considerably (both, within the group and in comparison with other groups). In general, their living situation is better comparing it with the situation of newly arrived migrant children. Long-term migrants live in large apartments, or their families own a real estate in Slovenia. Several have houses in their country of origin as well. However, not all have such an advantage. For example, some long-term migrant children share a room with siblings or other relatives. Many families started their life in Slovenia in tiny rooms or they shared apartments with relatives and later moved to more spacious apartments.

Generally speaking, I think that we made a huge improvement. When we arrived, we had this apartment, everything was crammed, only the basics. Throughout these years, we renovated the apartment and now, this is completely different story. (boy, 15y/old, long term)

Here, plenty of Bosnians struggle in small apartments. Everyone lives in small apartments. We didn't have troubles with that because we have huge apartment, we live in a house from the beginning, we rented it from Bosnians, and they helped us. We have large apartment; 2 families could live in it. There's 4 of us, everybody has a room, there's living room, kitchen, we don't have problems. (girl 2, 16 y/o, long term)

We have come across an example of a migrant child living in a crammed apartment that also poses a potential health risk to family members.

My mum has to pay attention because sometimes something black occurs. Mould and moisture. I sleep alone but I don't have my own bed. My mum shares bed with my sister and my brother. My dad has a bed for himself so he can rest. Sometimes, my brother wants to sleep with him, but dad has difficulties sleeping because there's so little space. Our flat is constantly broken. (boy, 10 y/o, long term)

During the COVID-19 outbreak, when schools were closed, migrant children who have room for themselves enjoyed a quieter place to study, reduced family tensions, and a better sense of privacy. On the other hand, several migrants admitted that sharing a room strengthened ties between siblings.

Spatial and social positioning

Similar to the newly arrived learners, the long-term migrant children also perceive Slovenian cities in a positive regard. They enjoy living in the centre of the town or in its proximity and they like various urban facilities (e.g., shopping malls, parks, schools, cinema, bowling centre, stadiums). Several children who have lived in other areas of Slovenia prefer their current place of residence and often refer to it as their home. Three long term migrant children believe that the size of the town is associated with a more tolerant attitude local people express.

The migrant children feel comfortable and accepted in their town and in their neighbourhood. They plan to stay in Slovenia and raise children here. Additionally, migrant children say that their parents often emphasise that the family has moved to a better place. Those migrant children who had visited relatives in other countries abroad were able to compare the advantages, but also the disadvantages. of living in Slovenia.

> *I was in Switzerland and anywhere where my relatives live. Not that I praise Slovenia because we are speaking right now and want to impress you but such clean environment, such lovely people, this can't be found anywhere else. Currently, Slovenia is on the 1st place. I was in Germany and in Switzerland and neither of them can compare to Slovenia. (girl 3, 18 y/o, long term)*

> *Here in Slovenia, you have to give a lot of money, more and more and then you run out of it and can't afford a car. (boy, 10 y/o, long term)*

Often, migrant families live in surroundings where at least one neighbour has had similar experiences in terms of migration. This helps migrant families feel more comfortable and able to rely on someone nearby. Others who live in less diverse neighbourhoods also feel accepted.

> *Neighbours are so lovely, polite, they accept us, they don't speak bad about us despite coming from another country. We are the only Albanians in the building. Others are mostly Slovenes. These people are the nicest, especially elderlies. This is so cute (laugh). I think they are adorable. During the pandemic, we don't visit each other. Sometimes they bring apples or some other fruit. They are really nice and try to accept us. Some understand how it is to move from abroad while some don't. (girl 3, 18 y/o, long term)*

Regarding socioeconomic status (SES), many migrant children report that they, as well as their siblings, engage in work activities. To some extent, they help with household expenses, but for most migrant children, work is a way to earn pocket money. They regularly work in restaurants, bars and in factories.

Similarly, to newly arrived migrant children, mothers are often stay at home mothers or hold an occupation in low paid profession (e.g., cleaners, factory workers). This is also the case for migrant mothers who have obtained a higher education degree in their country of origin. Some mothers were also at home in their country of origin. A few of them are employed in a business owned by their husbands. Frequently, fathers work on construction sites, in the port or in utility services, they are truck drivers or business owners.

> *My father opened bakery. First, he tried in one town then another and another. Now, we are at the border. When brothers finished high school, he employed them. My father doesn't work, he controls the process, he controls workers. My mum helps him in the bakery. (girl, 17 y/o, long term)*

LT migrant children were aware of economic differences among peers. Often, they rejected values of consumerism, reported excluding remarks and negative attitudes toward people who are less advantageous. Regarding equipment needed during the school closure, most of them had their own tablets and computer.

> *Now, peers put plenty on material status. You're a top dog if you, I don't know, spent 500 € for shoes. It doesn't make sense to me; I can have shoes for 100 € or 70 € and they're the same. Maybe they will last longer than these for 500 €. In my opinion, peers are very observant when it comes to how someone dresses.*
> *(girl 4, 18 y/o, long term)*

Inclusion in peer groups

Migrant children identified peer groups as one of the most important factors in their school life. Long term migrant children recall that they had a hard time making friends when they arrived, however, soon they developed strong bonds with classmates, as well as with other peers. Now, they are engaging in several peer groups that extend from school to leisure activities. In these groups, children with various backgrounds interact.

Some long-term migrant children still feel more comfortable spending most of their time with children with whom they share the same cultural background. Others have more diverse social networks. In relation to this, some migrant children were afraid upon arrival that local peers would exclude them if they will be seen with classmates from their country of origin, so they deliberately socialised with local children.

> *At first, I didn't want to hang out with them, because I was like "Oh, no, everybody will see it and they'll say "Oh, look, she spends time with her people"" and they will turn against me. This wasn't okay from me. (girl, 17 y/o, long term)*

Peer groups also differ in size; some long-term migrant children enjoy the company of a larger group of peers, while others prefer interactions limited to a smaller social circle. Sometimes, migrant children form peer groups in Slovenia differently than in their country of origin.

Here, I'm not the person who is very out-going. I don't know why. I have one friend that I met when I arrived, and we still hang out. I'm different when I'm in Bosnia. Here, I'm reserved, cautious, I watch what I say and what I do so people wouldn't think bad of me. I don't have many friends, I have one, I hang out with everyone and have good relationship with all classmates, but I keep my distance. (girl 4, 18 y/o, long term)

The main peer groups are related to classmate interactions and leisure activities that define migrant children's lives. Long term migrant children report that peers were helpful from the beginning. However, after they had adjusted, migrant children slowly began to take on the role of buddies or tutors for migrant children who arrived later.

Language is an important feature of such interactions, as they rely on both, their mother tongue and Slovenian. In interaction with local peers, migrant learners point out that conversations became easier when their language skills developed.

In general, we can say that long term migrant children are included into various peer groups and present a valuable and important part of the social circles they form. Especially migrant children in secondary school express a high level of confidence to participate in peer groups without fearing that their migrant status may be a factor of exclusion. Long term migrant children who have gone through primary and secondary education in the host country and have more experience with cultural traditions, customs and local people are even more relaxed in secondary schools. They perceive secondary schools as a place where peers are less likely to question the individual's cultural background, interethnic conflicts, and similar topics.

Involvement in leisure activities, sport

The majority of long-term migrant children report engaging in one form of leisure activity or another. They often go for a walk with friends and family, watch TV, go shopping or to a club, dance, take care of their pets, read, participate in a religious activity, skateboard, watch Netflix, play football or online video games, and hike. Their activities and involvement do not differ from the involvement of local children. These activities are vital for their wellbeing and allow them to spend time with peers and expand their social network. Several activities are linked to their future aspirations and interests, for example, becoming a professional athlete. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, these leisure activities were interrupted and during our fieldwork we could recognise that the children's overall wellbeing was affected.

Health (physical and mental health)

Regarding long-term migrant children's mental health, especially older migrant children reported that their mental health was most impaired upon arrival. Several of them experienced problems in that period due to their ethnicity and language. They were convinced that peers would reject them because of their nationality and consequently suffered from stress and anxiety. Some tried to deny this part of their identity, and this led

to internal fights. In several cases, such challenges were resolved when they met a migrant child who was proud of roots but at the same time successfully fit in the peer group.

> *The worst part was that I was angry with myself, with who I am. This was horrifying because I was like "Look, if I were a Slovene, if I were something else, this wouldn't happen." It took me a long time to come to my senses and I tell myself "Look, I'm proud of my origin. I'm happy that I have such a lovely family. They took care of me, and they raised me so well. But it took me so long. (girl, 17 y/o, long term)*

For a small group of migrant children, socialisation was limited because of former sports injuries or health conditions that prevented them from participating in sports and other peer activities.

> *I know how it feels when you're mentally unstable, it's the worst feeling. You can cure everything, but mental health is difficult, you have to figure it out with yourself. I want to help others to avoid such state of mind. I solved this issue alone, nobody helped me. Only now, when I am already saved, I went to psychologist. Only now, when I am out of the woods, my mum realised that something is wrong, that I struggle with something. (girl 1, 16 y/o, long term)*

Generally, the older migrant children were more aware of their mental struggles than the younger one. For most, the first school days were a source of stress or a stress reliever. As a result, plenty of migrant children still have very vivid memories of the first months and years that followed themigration.

> *I remember that one morning I woke up and I didn't want to go to school among these new people and everything. I called my mum and told her that my heart hurts. She was worried and came home with my father, they took me to doctor, they made some tests, and everything was okay. Then the doctor asked why and everything. She told me that I was stressed because of new environment and everything. She gave me pills and I took them one month, every morning before I went to school, I took one and I was fine all day. (girl 3, 16 y/o, long term)*

In terms of mental health, some migrant children struggled because of family situation (low SES, family fights, absent parents or relatives) or peer exclusion. In terms of addressing problems, migrant learners often discuss their struggles with family and peers.

Migrant children who completed primary school in Slovenia often benefited from the possibility of transitioning to secondary school. According to them, this allows more equal footing for everyone since the situation is the same for all and everybody has the opportunity to make an impression. Several LT migrant children experienced bullying in primary school. These migrant children benefited from the opportunity to start in a different environment surrounded by new people.

I feel better here than I did in my former school. Teachers are nice. Sometimes, when I came from school, I was crying, I was sad. Sometimes, I refused to go to school because I knew people will be rude to me there. Now I feel good, I really enjoy being in school. (girl 1, 15 y/o, long term)

Educational environment and system

Experiences of inclusion in school

Long term migrant children perceive school as a positive, welcoming, and accepting place. Regarding their class, most migrant children feel that they are part of the class community. In conversation with migrant children who were in their 1st year of secondary school, they indicated that they felt more relaxed and encouraged because everybody was new to the situation and not very familiar with the expectations, school rules and classmates.

Several migrant children reported that they behave more inclusive towards peers because they themselves had been excluded at some point in their lives. Sometimes, migrant children cannot count on peer support when dealing with learning difficulties.

If I have troubles with certain subject or homework there's no way anyone will help me. No chance. No matter whether it would be that I won't pass the class or will have a resit exam there's no way someone would help me. (girl 1, 16 y/o, long term)

A migrant child is often excluded from group activities by the teacher due to not having homework. When migrant children feel that peers perceive them differently, their strategy is to ignore this feeling or pay little attention to it. If they have classmates from the same country of origin, they are more likely to feel accepted and spend more time together.

Language proficiency is another factor that significantly determines the level of inclusion and integration of long-term migrant children.

My former classmates didn't talk to me, and they concluded that I'm rude even though I didn't say a word. I was quiet because I didn't know the language. They judged too soon. (girl 1, 15 y/o, long term)

Language & School language policy and practice

Long term migrant children are bilingual or even multilingual. Our sample consists of migrant children who speak a variety of languages, from Serbo-Croatian, Albanian, Macedonian to Bulgarian and Turkish. Upon arrival, they were worried because of their language proficiency and did not know how this would affect their social life.

> *I really wished to learn the language and really wanted to become accepted in this group. It's strange to be lonely, you have 28 classmates but you're alone. This was weird, so I started having conversations with people. You can't just stand there; you must come out with a topic despite not being proficient. I had to find myself a company, I had to start talking. (girl 3, 16 y/o, long term)*

Having lived in Slovenia for several years now, most of them describe themselves being fluent in Slovene. Among key factors that contributed to their speaking abilities, they list parents, teachers, classmates, everyday interactions with peers, and language course. In general, it took them 3-6 months to feel more confident in Slovene.

> *Actually, school really helped me. If I weren't in school, I wouldn't learn Slovene so quickly. And my friends, of course, we chat, and it was way easier, I got into conversation with them and it was really nice, so I learnt quickly. (girl 3, 16 y/o, long term)*

However, not all migrant children are proficient in Slovene despite being here for years. Language barrier is still present for a significant proportion of migrant learners who speak Albanian language as their language differs considerably from the languages of to the Slavic language group. Additionally, these long-term migrant children struggle to understand teachers' instructions and have difficulties doing their homework. The distinctive feature of the Slovene language, the dual, causes problems for many migrant children whose mother tongue uses only singular and plural. This shows that long-term migrant children can still benefit from additional language support.

The school environment is also characterised by different languages. Sometimes, teachers use a foreign language to explain part of the learning content to migrant children. It is far more often, however, that language variety is found only in informal settings, e.g., when migrant children interact with their peers. Some migrant children have chosen to communicate with their classmates in both their mother tongue and in Slovene, while others speak mainly in Slovene at school.

> *I speak mostly Slovene, however, when girls from Bosnia gather, they speak Bosnian only. But for me, it's embarrassing to speak Bosnian in front of unknown people, I don't know why but I'm like this from the beginning. So, I speak Slovene with them. They speak Bosnian, but I speak Slovene most of the time. In general, I'm not confidant speaking Bosnian in front of strangers because I have this feeling that I came to their country, and I hear sometimes that people don't want to speak Slovene and I have this feeling that I am the one who needs to adapt, not the other way around. (girl 2, 18 y/o, long term)*

Several long-term migrant children translate for newly arrived peers, helping them bridge the gap in the process of linguistic and cultural integration.

I spend most of my time with a friend from Kosovo. We're in the same class. We speak Slovene because she needs to learn the language, it will be easier for her. (girl 2, 15 y/o, long term)

I helped her a bit when she arrived. I taught her the basics. For example, that you know when someone says "Cheers!" that's not a toast but rather a greeting, when someone says "See you later" this means they go away. The same was with colours and the dual. We have different meanings.
(girl 3, 16 y/o, long term)

According to long term migrant children, most teachers are not particularly fond of listening to migrant children communicating in their language in class and during breaks. In contrast, migrant children perceive their local classmates as mostly tolerant of different languages.

Peers

Long-term migrant children have warm relations with their peers. Especially after their arrival, some were more enthusiastic to socialise with friends who spoke their language, while others quickly connected with local peers. Conversations are held in Slovene, their mother tongue, or they use both languages and English. Friends provide emotional and learning support, they share interests and spend free time together. In addition, they contribute to well-being of long-term migrant children. In general, classmates are friendly, helpful, inclusive, and tolerant. Peer groups consist of friends from school, (younger) relatives, peers from the neighbourhood and children from leisure activities.

Sometimes, long term migrant children are older than their classmates because schools placed them in lower grades to provide them an extra year of language learning or because they did not pass the year due to language or other learning difficulties. These circumstances sometimes affect peer dynamics and perceived level of individual's maturity.

It's ok, it's not bad, but I think that I'm slightly more mature than them. Overall, they are 2 years younger than me and act a bit childish. I was always a bit more mature, now I'm like a mother to them. It's ok, they're not impolite, just childish. (girl 2, 18 y/o, long term)

In the first year after arrival, migrant children were aware of existing peer-groups, however, some had more difficulty coming into the circle than others. Plenty of them reported being excluded by peers at some point. In some cases, teachers' intervention resolved the situation. In others, it was more a question of language proficiency and time. When migrant children have a better command of the Slovenian language, the quality of peer relationships improves.

Regarding violence, migrant learners admit physical and verbal violence. Sometimes, migrant children experience insults related to their ethnic background or cultural and linguistic characteristics.

> *My classmate was explaining the war, how it went, and the next slide was some soldier. But this was not a soldier of our army, it was a boy, 14 years old, who was wearing a uniform and held a toy gun. He literally had this picture on his slide, he put it on and wrote "Kosovar soldier". That was it. When others have seen that, of course, they started to laugh and commented "This is a child holding a gun." It wasn't comfortable nor funny, I don't get it why it would be funny. I'm not saying this because it was insulting to me but because it would be insulting for any nation. This isn't funny, you can't make fun of such things, people lost families. (girl, 17 y/o, long term)*

They have developed various strategies to cope with it – from immediate and direct confrontation to ignorance. A troubling peer dynamic affects migrant children's' wellbeing.

> *I don't ignore it; I continue as long as I don't win. Seriously! If someone says that I'm a Muslim I ask what makes non-Muslims better? Or why am I worse? Would anything change if I were a Catholic? I respect my religion as well as other religions. Likewise, you have to respect me as a person, not that you downgrade me because I'm a Muslim. I have several classmates that behave like that. All right, in most cases, I will turn around and go away but when I feel attacked and insulted, I show them where's their place. I won't allow anyone to insult me. (girl 1, 16 y/o, long term)*

Teachers/educational staff

Long-term migrant children speak about teachers mostly in a positive light. Teachers appear to be helpful, respectful, supportive, encouraging and kind. Many migrant children feel that they can turn to teachers when they need support. Others expected more support from school counsellors, especially during the application process. Teachers were a particularly important figure upon their arrival. They helped them acquire the language and supported them with their schoolwork. In one example, the teacher discussed issues related to discrimination and this helped to bridge the gap between a migrant child and classmates. Often, teachers encourage other children to help migrants with school responsibilities.

> *In the morning, before classes and after them, sometimes also in the middle of the day, teacher worked with me. Sometimes, she gave my classmates some tasks and took more time for me or we were working alone."(girl 3, 16 y/o, long term)*

> *Teacher gave me another chance because she knew that I was from Bosnia and that I struggle a bit with the language. I was very happy. (girl 1, 15 y/o, long term)*

However, some migrant children experienced discriminatory and ignorant behaviour from teachers.

> *I don't listen to teachers. When they go away, we intentionally speak Bosnian. Nobody says anything when people in school speak English or German but when we speak Bosnian everything is wrong. We intentionally start to sing. It's not like we don't care, but we provoke and continue to talk Bosnian. We don't struggle with Slovene, but the experience is different when we can discuss in Bosnian. (girl 4, 16 y/o, long term)*

> *I think it's weird that teachers examine Bosnians only for a grade 2. Like, they gave you minimal criteria. I mean, it's not strange since some assess only for a positive grade, right, but I still think this is weird. (girl 4, 16 y/o, long term)*

Some learners point out that teachers explicitly tell them that in case of any trouble, they are welcome to knock on their door and they will help them. Additionally, before the assessment, when long term migrant children had a specific learning status, teachers gave them a list of questions to help them organise their learning. At the same time, some children indicate that they have not received help and support when they have asked for it.

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

Long term migrant children identify forming friendships with others and acquiring Slovene language as two main and very helpful resources for the integration process. In terms of language proficiency, they cite peer interactions, Slovene language course and teacher support as the most vital ones. After their arrival, several migrant children visited the school before the official beginning of the school year. They were welcomed by the school counsellor and teachers and received the necessary information about school life. Some migrants were accompanied by another teacher who provided a learning support and translated the teaching content. Migrant children from several schools had the opportunity to present their country, religion, and history to their classmates.

> *Us, migrant learners worked in library with a special teacher. Once, we made a poster, our group from Bosnia, we presented it to our classmates. (girl 1, 15 y/o, long term)*

Looking back on their first months in Slovenian schools, long-term migrant children assess positively the possibility of being excused of exams during their first year in a Slovenian school or that they could set the exam dates in advance. According to migrant children, this helps learners to organise their learning activities and reduce stress. One migrant child pointed out that the school organises special clubs for children from abroad. These clubs unite migrant children who have had similar experiences, offer a possibility to expand social network and learn more about different cultures.

Psychosocial support

In terms of psychosocial support, nobody mentioned any official support available for migrant children organised in the school environment. However, some long-term migrant children visit psychologists or doctors due to stress experienced after the migration. Less institutionalised psychosocial support comes from parents, siblings, relatives, friends, and teachers. There are no data related to the mental health and wellbeing of long-term migrant children in Slovenia.

Family and wider community

Family

Long-term migrant children report that their parents maintain the language and cultural and religious practices to ensure maintaining their ethnic heritage. In most cases, migrant children speak their parents' language fluently and often use it in communication with parents and other relatives. Parents also ensure that migrant children are aware of their cultural heritage and cultural identity. At the same time, during the first years, several parents actively helped migrant children to learn Slovene.

The family is also a source of psychological support and gives a feeling of stability. Migrant children also have close ties with members of their extended family. Some relatives live in Slovenia, while others are still in their country of origin or somewhere else abroad. In the case of relatives who were already living in Slovenia before the migrant child arrived, these family members helped the migrant family find housing, apply for documents, find school, learn the language, and understand cultural differences. Long-term migrant children still stay in touch with relatives from their country of origin. They use phone calls, online communication tools or text messages. Usually, these family members are also the ones migrant learners had most difficulties leaving.

In some cases, coming to Slovenia meant that family members could live together after many years of, for example, one parent being away due to work abroad.

> *What's positive is actually that I can be with my family here and that we are together every day. Before the arrival, I couldn't see my dad every day. It's easier now when the whole family is here together. (girl 4, 16 y/o, long term)*

Migrant community, religious community

In several examples, long-term migrant children report that in Slovenia they are still able to engage in core parts of their religion, e.g., fastening during Ramazan, attending religious education, or celebrating their traditions. The ability to engage in cultural practices allows migrant children to stay connected to their cultural background. For some migrant children, religion and the religious community are important features of their lives. For example, one

long-term migrant child is named after one of the saints in accordance with their tradition. Some migrant children combine their traditions with the traditions of the host country, or migrant families adapt their traditions to the host society. Migrant children's religious affiliation and associated traditions are more often a subject of interest than discrimination.

> *I spend holidays with my family, we celebrate everything, Christmas, Easter, New Year, everything that exists in Slovenia, even if it's not slightly connected to the Muslim tradition. We shouldn't celebrate New Year but since we're here, we are adapting to this culture. I fasten during every Ramazan, the same goes for my friends. Sometimes it's hard, but I know that I must. When we celebrate bajram I'm not in school, I always get a permission for absence. I have to respect our rules, I need to be with my family, go to the mosque, that's it, it'll always be like this. I respect my religion, I wouldn't care if I were absent without a permission. (girl 1, 16 y/o, long term)*

> *As a Muslim, I should wear a hijab, but our family don't follow this. We are Muslims, we believe in God, but we don't comply to strict rules, for example, to wear a hijab. (girl 3, 18 y/o, long term)*

For most long-term migrant children, it is common that they attended religious services more often in their country of origin than in Slovenia. Sometimes, they do not know where these services take place, while in other cases the importance of attending these services is diminished. When migrant children were younger, some of them regularly attended religious education classes, however, this was often a result of their parents' decision. Nevertheless, migrant children perceive these moments as another opportunity to meet with friends, but after a few years, some of them have decided not to affiliate with any religion.

In relation to migrant community, sometimes members of the migrant community celebrate holidays, and traditions together and help each other. In terms of common values, traditional gender roles and social expectations inflicted by the migrant community are prominent in the narratives of migrant children belonging to the Albanian ethnic community from Kosovo and North Macedonia. Several Albanian female migrants point out that these expectations negatively affect their wellbeing. The institution of marriage presents an important topic in their society, and the whole family (more specifically fathers and brothers) is involved in deciding who will marry whom. Albanian female migrants who are in an intimate relationship with a person of a different ethnicity feel uneasiness because they often hide their partners from family members. Additionally, these females point out that migrant girls from the same country of origin understand the struggles related to such cultural traditions and expectations better than local peers.

Local environment

Some long-term migrant children describe their neighbourhood as quiet and peaceful. Over the years, the majority of migrant families have developed respectful and polite relationships with neighbours. Several migrant children speak warmly about elderly

neighbours in particular. In some cases, neighbourhoods house several migrant families, while in others, migrant families are surrounded only by local neighbours. Long-term migrant children perceive Slovenian towns as green, tolerant, safe, rather diverse, and calm.

Other

N/A

Conceptualizations of own well-being and life satisfaction

Self-perceived well-being and life satisfaction

Long-term migrant children list various determinants of wellbeing, for example, family and relatives, friends, extracurricular activities, and school. COVID-19 restrictions have severely impacted their opportunities to engage in free time activities and spend time with friends in an offline environment. Consequently, their wellbeing was affected.

> *The last time I was there, was before the quarantine. I miss my relatives and some friends. This virus also affected our rituals during the Ramazan, the whole family usually participated but because of corona this is no longer possible. During quarantine, it was difficult to be with my sister because we had to share everything. (girl 1, 15 y/o, long term)*

Having a friend and building strong bonds with peers are among vital factors for long-term migrant children to feel comfortable, accepted, and relaxed. This is especially important considering the state of several migrant children who were rather distressed, anxious, and sad when they had to migrate. After several years, some migrant children still miss their friends, school, and life in their country of origin. On the other hand, most migrant children are more satisfied with their life and opportunities in Slovenia. One reason is that families are finally together.

> *In Bosnia, there were me, my mum and my brother, my dad worked here, and he returned once or twice per month, whenever he could. Later, we decided to all come to Slovenia because we wanted to be together and because we believe we have better life opportunities than in Bosnia. (girl 2, 18 y/o, long term)*

Additionally, migrant children value good family atmosphere and strong ties between family members. They aim for open relationship with parents where they feel loved and safe.

> *I feel good considering my health, my mental and physical state. There's nothing I miss in my life, I am happy. In my family, it's natural that sometimes somebody is sad or happy. We all have own problems, we solve them as they come and generally, we are one happy family. (boy, 15 y/o, long term)*

Identification and belonging

Long-term migrant children have anchors related to their ethnic, linguistic, and religious background. For some long-term migrant children, it is important that they can speak with family and peers in their mother tongue, while others are more reserved to speak their mother tongue in the host country because they consider it inappropriate. Additionally, migrant children often refer to their country of origin as home, although they do not necessarily want to return. Others feel that the bond with their country of origin is broken and perceive Slovenia as their home. For example, one migrant child who already has dual citizenship plans to give up both citizenships to obtain Slovenian citizenship.

Sometimes, peers from the same country of origin help migrant learners develop and embrace their identity.

> *Later, one guy came, he is also at this school, he's also Albanian and we started to talk. I liked him a little. I think he is the reason I'm prouder of who I am and that I don't care what another think. Now I can prove someone that we, Albanians, are good people, that we're not as bad as people like to think about us. (girl, 17 y/o, long term)*

Feelings of safety

We have not been able to gather much information regarding the safety of long-term migrant children. Sometimes, they describe the people in the host country as nice and to some extent this could be interpreted as perceiving them as people without bad intentions. One migrant child mentioned that people in Slovenia always care about other people and try to help when troubles arise. In terms of material safety, the migrant learners think that the household situation is more stable now and has improved compared to life in their country of origin.

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

All migrant children have hopes and aspirations for their future. Some long-term migrant children have a very clear idea of what they want to become and how their careers should develop. They want to become professional athletes (footballers), construction engineers, plumbers, office workers, models, journalists, psychologists, lawyers, and hairdressers. Some of them want to move to another country (for example in Turkey, France, Germany, or Switzerland) while others want to stay in Slovenia. Some also want to return to their country of origin. Many of them plan to educate further and apply for the university program.

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

Interviews reveal that most long-term migrant children hold positive attitudes and opinions regarding multicultural communities. Living in a multicultural society and participating in a multicultural classroom allows them to learn about new cultures and

communicate in shared languages. Migrant children pointed out that migrant communities help people integrate into the host society, but also maintain the cultural traditions of their community.

(Perceived) Advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children`s integration

Perception of integration

In terms of integration, long-term migrant children address various aspects. One migrant child described how her family perceives integration as a process in which migrant family have to show respect to the host country by celebrating the holidays and traditions of the majority. Often, migrant children addressed the question of language and religion. Plenty of long-term migrant children believe that migrants should learn the language of the host country to be able to participate in the host county, however, migrants who speak the same language should have the opportunity to speak in their language. According to migrant children, learning the language is a sign of respect and an indicator of integration. In terms of religion, long-term migrant children believe that everyone has the right to participate in religious activities in institutions intended for religious services as well as to celebrate religious holidays and traditions within the family. At the same time, migrant families should respect the national traditions and holidays of the host country.

Advantages

Most migrant children emphasise the value of the language course that is tailored to the needs of foreigners learning Slovene. Moreover, reflecting their first months in the host country, some appreciate that the teachers adapted the learning material and offered them help and support. Further, the opportunity to set the exam dates and receive exam questions in advance has had a positive impact on their academic performance. Organising a peer support system (having a buddy or a tutor) where local children help migrant learners is another tool that was often mentioned.

Weakness

N/A

Good practices

Several good practices were described in the chapter 3.3.4.2.

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 and long-term migrant children as well as local children (some of them also second or third generation migrants). 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 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.

Most migrant and local children who participated in the study advocate for multiculturalism and cite its benefits. Local and migrant children often state that they enjoy being part of the school where different cultures, languages and traditions are represented. Local children (especially those who have migrant background) offer support and are a crucial factor in the integration process and in the providing well-being of migrant children.

Children are 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 migrant children find it difficult to make local friends. Several children reported instances of discrimination and violence, but generally, interactions 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. In schools, children mostly speak Slovene, however, some schools are less tolerant of speaking other languages during classes or breaks, and explicitly state that "this is a Slovenian school thus Slovene should be spoken there". Due to such policies, many migrant children speak their mother tongue or the language of their parents' country of origin only at home and in informal situations with peers from the same language group. As Moskal and Sime (2016) note, schools should promote diversity of languages and include them in the curriculum. 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 migrant and local learners 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.

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

Feeling safe 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 - long term resident migrant children

The sample of long-term migrant children who live in Slovenia for more than 5 years consists of respondents originating mainly from the territory of the former common state the Republic of Yugoslavia, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, North Macedonia, and Serbia. In addition, we had a conversation with migrant children from China, Russia and Slovakia. Some of these children came to Slovenia as infants and were included in Slovenian kindergartens and/or first grades of elementary school. Others had spent many years in their countries of origin before coming to Slovenia. Their countries of origin are important to them because they still have a part of relatives and friends living there. Consequently, several migrant children still consider their country of origin as their 'home'. Some migrant learners initially considered the move to Slovenia as a difficult challenge and had similar concerns as newly arrived migrant children (e.g., how will they be accepted by peers, will they be able to communicate, will their academic success decline, what will happen to friendships made in the host country). Others were excited to move to a foreign country. There are differences in terms of the frequency of visits to their country of origin. Some visit it at least once a year while others have not been there for years.

It is clear from the interviews that the living conditions of long-term migrant children vary considerably (both, within the group and in comparison with other groups). In general, their living situation is better comparing it with the situation of newly arrived migrant children. The migrant children feel comfortable and accepted in their town and in their neighbourhood. They plan to stay in Slovenia and raise children here. Additionally, migrant children say that their parents often emphasise that the family has moved to a better place.

Migrant children identified peer groups as one of the most important factors in their school life. Long term migrant children recall that they had a hard time making friends when they arrived. Now, they are engaging in several peer groups that extend from school to leisure activities. In these groups, children with various backgrounds interact.

Regarding long-term migrant children's mental health, especially older children reported that their mental health was most impaired upon arrival. Several of them experienced problems in that period due to their ethnicity and language. They were convinced that peers would reject them because of their nationality and consequently suffered from stress and anxiety.

Long term migrant children perceive school as a positive and welcoming place. Regarding their class, most migrant children feel that they are part of the class community. Several migrant children reported that they behave more inclusive towards peers because they themselves had been excluded at some point in their lives. Sometimes, migrant children cannot count on peer support when dealing with learning difficulties. Language proficiency is another factor that significantly determines the level of inclusion and integration of long-term migrant children. Long term migrant children are bilingual or even multilingual. Having lived in Slovenia for several years now, most of them describe themselves being fluent in Slovene. Among key factors that contributed to their speaking abilities, they list parents,

teachers, classmates, everyday interactions with peers, and language course. In general, it took them 3-6 months to feel more confident in Slovene. However, not all migrant children are proficient in Slovene despite being here for years. Language barrier is still present for a significant proportion of migrant learners who speak Albanian language as their language differs considerably from the languages of to the Slavic language group. Several long-term migrant children translate for newly arrived peers, helping them bridge the gap in the process of linguistic and cultural integration. According to long term migrant children, most teachers are not particularly fond of listening to migrant children communicating in their language in class and during breaks. In contrast, migrant children perceive their local classmates as mostly tolerant of different languages.

Regarding violence and bulling, migrant learners admit physical and verbal violence. Sometimes, migrant children experience insults related to their ethnic background or cultural and linguistic characteristics. They have developed various strategies to cope with it – from immediate and direct confrontation to ignorance. A troubling peer dynamic affects migrant children's' wellbeing. Long-term migrant children speak about teachers mostly in a positive light. Many migrant children feel that they can turn to teachers when they need support. However, some migrant children experienced discriminatory and ignorant behaviour from teachers as well.

Long term migrant children identify forming friendships with others and acquiring Slovene language as two main and very helpful resources for the integration process. They also assess positively the possibility of being excused of exams during their first year in a Slovenian school or that they could set the exam dates in advance. In most cases, migrant children speak their parents' language fluently and often use it in communication with parents and other relatives. Parents also ensure that migrant children are aware of their cultural heritage and cultural identity. At the same time, during the first years, several parents actively helped migrant children to learn Slovene.

The family is also a source of psychological support and gives a feeling of stability. LTM children report that in Slovenia they are still able to engage in core parts of their religion, e.g., fastening during Ramazan, attending religious education, or celebrating their traditions. For some migrant children, religion and the religious community are important features of their lives. For most long-term migrant children, it is common that they attended religious services more often in their country of origin than in Slovenia.

Having a friend and building strong bonds with peers are among vital factors for long-term migrant children wellbeing. This is especially important considering the state of several migrant children who were rather distressed, anxious, and sad when they had to migrate. After several years, few migrant children still miss their friends, school, and life in their country of origin. On the other hand, most migrant children are more satisfied with their life and opportunities in Slovenia. One reason is that families are finally together.

All migrant children have hopes and aspirations for their future. Some long-term migrant children have a very clear idea of what they want to become and how their careers should

develop. Some of them want to move to another country while others want to stay in Slovenia. Some also want to return to their country of origin. Many of them plan to educate further and apply for the university program.

Interviews reveal that most long-term migrant children hold positive attitudes and opinions regarding multicultural communities. Migrant children pointed out that migrant communities help people integrate into the host society, but also maintain the cultural traditions of their community. In terms of integration, long-term migrant children address various aspects: most often they expose language and religion. LTM children believe that migrants should learn the language of the host country to be able to participate in the host county, however, migrants who speak the same language should have the opportunity to speak in their language. According to migrant children, learning the language is a sign of respect and an indicator of integration. Most migrant children emphasise the value of the language course that is tailored to the needs of foreigners learning Slovene. Moreover, reflecting their first months in the host country, some appreciate that the teachers adapted the learning material and offered them help and support. Further, the opportunity to set the exam dates and receive exam questions in advance has had a positive impact on their academic performance. Organising a peer support system (having a buddy or a tutor) where local children help migrant learners is another tool that was often mentioned.

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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 to shed light on the integration processes of migrant children in Vienna, Austria, from a child-centred perspective with an emphasis on the results related to the long-term resident migrant children. It was worked with the understanding that (migrant) children are not a homogeneous group, but experts in their own lives. The 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. Research with **children with a long-term migration** background focuses on the perspective of children who have been in Austria for more than five years, but have a migration experience themselves. The work with **local children** aims to focus on the opinions and experiences of children who were born in Austria. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that many of the children in the sample of local children still have a migration history and rarely have Austrian citizenship. In this report we focus on the research with long-term residency 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).

The report addresses the three groups (newly arrived children, long-term children and local children) separately and aims to gain a better understanding of their integration experiences.

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?

Most of the long-term children seemed to be integrated into the class community. They adhered to the school rules and did not stand out for being loud or behaving in a way that broke the rules. They also interacted proactively with teachers or with other peers and often reported during class.

3.2 Focus groups & Interview

The sample in this section includes all children who were not born in Austria but have lived in Austria for more than four years (17 Interviews, 6 focus groups). Our sample varies greatly in terms of legal status, length of residence, migration history, country of origin, as well as age, gender, and type of school attended by long-term migrant children. Thus, on the one hand, some have a permanent residence status, e.g. because they immigrated from an EU country or have been in Austria for a long time and have already acquired a residence title or citizenship. On the other hand, some are still in the asylum application process. However, what the long-term migrant children have in common is that they all lived in different countries before arriving in Austria. The range of countries of origin is wide, ranging from European countries such as Ukraine, Spain, or the Czech Republic to non-European countries such as Ethiopia, Syria, or Pakistan.2 While some came to Austria as babies, others immigrated as toddlers. Most of the long-term migrant children did not come to Austria during the so-called "summer of migration" between 2015 and 2016 but before. Besides, while some came to Austria directly from their country of origin, others lived for many years in countries other than their country of birth before migrating to Austria. In total, we conducted 19 individual interviews with long-term migrant children. In addition, long-term migrant children participated in 6 focus groups.

Dynamics and factors influencing the integration process of migrant children

The integration process can be influenced by multiple factors and dynamics. The following sections attempt to provide insights into the various issues that long-term migrant children who have been in Austria for more than four years face. Therefore, the following chapters address the pre-migration period and the migration experience, general life, the educational environment and system, the family and wider environment of the children, as well as other important issues and shed light on their relevance for the children's integration process.

Premigration period and migration experience

Country of birth/country of ancestors

The following section deals with the pre-migration period as well as the migration experiences of the long-term migrant children. First, it sheds light on the importance of the country of birth for the children. Second, it asks about the migration history of the children's families. Third, the section focuses on the children's arrival in Austria. After these insights into the historical-biographical aspects of the children's lives, the chapter closes with a brief conclusion.

2 The age, gender, and country of birth are given for each interview citation, e.g., 14y/o, male, Spain.

In general, while some long-term migrant children still have strong ties to their countries of origin, others have more difficult or less strong ties to those countries. Long-term migrant children who have strong ties to their countries of birth, visit their countries of origin regularly. Furthermore, the associations of many regarding their countries of birth are strongly tied to the presence of relatives. One girl, for instance, came to Austria from Slovakia six years ago because of her mother's job. She stated that she visits Slovakia often because her father still lives there, and she has friends and relatives there. Nevertheless, she feels more at home in Austria (13y/o, female, Slovakia). The situation is similar for one boy, who has a strong bond with Romania (14y/o, male, Romania). Although he came to Austria as a young child, he still visits Romania every year and spends time with his relatives. Although many of the long-term migrant children have strong ties to their countries of birth, they pointed out the differences between their country of birth and Austria. Most of them perceived Austria as more modern, for instance, one child stated that in Macedonia it is not allowed for girls to wear shorts (13y/o, male, Macedonia). Some stated that Austria offers them more future opportunities and better education (13y/o, female, Slovakia). Another long-term migrant child shared that he perceives Romania as a non-modern country in contrast to Austria (14y/o, male, Romania). Nevertheless, some long-term migrant children have little or no connection to their countries of birth, either because they cannot visit them or because they have no memory of them. For instance, one long-term migrant child was born in Syria. He cannot return to Syria because of the war (14y/o, male, Syria). One long-term migrant child left Ukraine as a one-month-old child and therefore has no memories of it (12y/o, male, Ukraine).

Furthermore, migration and family histories are often dependent on geopolitical dynamics and therefore vary widely across the sample. Many long-term migrant children have intergenerational migration histories. Some long-term migrant children mentioned that their parents also migrated for the first time before they were born. For instance, one child's parents had to flee the Taliban and migrated from Afghanistan to Pakistan, where he was born and lived for several years before fleeing to Europe (14y/o, male, Pakistan). In addition, one child, who was born in Macedonia, described that his parents had fled Serbia. After he was born, they fled to Austria with the help of relatives (13y/o, male, Macedonia). One child has a story of family reunification: after his brother migrated to Europe, the rest of the family followed (14y/o, male, Syria). Moreover, some of the long-term migrant children described their migration journey in detail. For instance, one child felt that the journey was long and exhausting, but he also had some positive impressions (14y/o, male, Pakistan). For instance, he felt like he was on an adventure at times and visited new countries such as Greece and Turkey (14y/o, male, Pakistan). One child mentioned that they had also been to Turkey before coming to Austria (14y/o, male, Syria). In addition, one child reported that he did not have a visa to come to Austria, so he traveled by foot, car, bus, and boat. It took a total of two months to arrive here (13y/o, male, Afghan).

Overall, it can be stated that the interviews show that long-term migrant children often have a long, sometimes even transgenerational migration history. Although they have certainly had different experiences, their stories show how deeply migration histories can be rooted in their own and their ancestors' biographies.

General life

This chapter deals with questions of living conditions, the long-term migrant children's spatial and social environment, their involvement in peer groups as well as in leisure activities and sports. It also addresses the health of long-term migrant children and concludes with a summary.

Living conditions

This section analyses how long-term migrant children perceive their living conditions. In general, the interview content indicates that the first time in Austria is often associated with rather little space and poorer housing conditions and that it is generally difficult for migrant families to find suitable housing. This concerns both private apartments and accommodations for asylum seekers. The extent to which long-term migrant children perceive their housing conditions is explained below.

The private sphere is highly determined by high rent prices (13y/o, male, Macedonia). In this context, some families were dependent on the support of locals in their search for housing. This is shown, for instance, by the story of one long-term migrant child. He reported that his family of four initially lived in a small town in Austria in a two-room apartment where the kitchen was located in the living room. Then a family friend helped them find a three-room apartment in Vienna. For the past month, the family has now been living in a new, larger, and better equipped, as well as a more hygienic apartment (13y/o, male, Macedonia). Other long-term migrant children who come from neighboring countries report an additional housing resource in their countries of origin. One child reported that they left Vienna during the Covid19 lockdown because they have a larger house with a garden in Slovakia (13y/o, female, Slovakia). Not all of the long-term migrant children live in private apartments, as some are still in the asylum process. Others have had experiences with asylum homes when they were asylum seekers in the past. For instance, one child reported that after arriving in Austria, he and his family were taken by the police to an initial reception center where they spent two to three days. He described it as "overcrowded and dirty"(14y/o, male, Pakistan). One boy also lived in an asylum home for four months when he and his family were new in Austria (14y/o, male, Syria).

In summary, the long-term migrant children talked about the difficulties of housing. Scientific literature also indicates that the housing situation for migrant families is often precarious and that refugees in particular encounter structural obstacles in the Vienna housing market. Many have difficulties finding suitable housing and have to seek help. Others have had bad experiences in inadequate housing. Structural disadvantages such as lack of financial resources or language barriers are often the reason for poor housing conditions as well as the expensive housing market in Vienna (see Aigner 2019).

Spatial and social positioning

The following section examines what spatial and social positioning the long-term migrant children are embedded in. In general, long-term migrant children who live in Vienna have a positive image of the city (13y/o, male, Afghan; 14y/o, male, Pakistan). For instance, one child, who used to live in an initial reception center in St. Pölten, pointed out that he likes Vienna because of its rich social environment (13y/o, male, Afghan). Another child mentioned that he enjoys the diversity in the city, e.g., many Arabic-speaking people like him (14y/o, male, Syria). The tendency seems to be that cities offer more comfort to migrant children than more rural places in terms of diversity

Inclusion in peer groups

This section gives a brief overview of the children's inclusion in peer groups. More information about peers will be given in the section “peers” in chapter 3.3.1.3.

In general, it can be said that most of the long-term migrant children interviewed are embedded in peer groups. One child, for instance, has had friends in Austria since elementary school. He also enjoyed the first two weeks in secondary school because he quickly made many new friends. Even though he moved to Vienna recently, he is still in touch with some old friends (13y/o, male, Afghan). Most of the children also reported that they have a good class community at school as well and help each other (13y/o, male, Afghan; 14y/o, male, Syria; 14y/o, male, Afghan).

Regarding experiences with peers outside of school, long-term migrant children experienced positive and negative situations. Positive situations include mutual support and understanding, and interest in each other's lives (14y/o, male, Syria). For instance, one long-term migrant child mentioned that he has friends who helped him when he came to Austria (13y/o, male, Macedonia; 14y/o, male, Syria). Some pointed out that they also have friends who have the same country of origin or mother tongue or who share the same experiences. For instance, one long-term migrant child has friends who were also asylum seekers at the beginning (14y/o, male, Syria). In general, many of the long-term migrant children have friends who also have a migration history in their family (12y/o, male, Ukraine).

More negatively, some long-term migrant children do not have many friends in Austria and emphasized that they maintain contacts with people via the Internet as well as in their countries of origin and other regions (14y/o, male, Romania; 14y/o, male, Pakistan). In addition to social contacts with peers in Austria or via the Internet, some long-term migrant children still have friends in their countries of origin (13y/o, male, Macedonia; 13y/o, male, Afghan). One long-term migrant child, for instance, described a rather ambivalent relationship with peers in Macedonia (13y/o, male, Macedonia). Overall, it can be seen that it is difficult for children with a migration history to maintain old friendships and build new ones.

Involvement in leisure activities, sport

In the following section, we ask about how long-term migrant children are involved in leisure activities and sports and what their perceptions are on these topics. Long-term

migrant children engage in various leisure activities, such as swimming, running, walking, mountain biking, painting, studying, reading, meeting friends, or traveling (17y/o, male, Ethiopia; 14y/o, male, Pakistan; 13y/o, female, Slovakia; 16y/o, female, Afghan). Some play sports together with their friends, such as two children, who play basketball with their peers (13y/o, male, Afghan; 13y/o, male, Macedonia). In addition, one girl mentioned that she likes to draw and think about philosophical questions. She emphasized that she likes to make up stories but never has the time to write them down (16y/o, female, Afghan). One boy emphasized that he teaches himself English in his free time. To do this, he watches American movies and plays video games (14y/o, male, Romania). One child said that he likes to hang out with his friends (14y/o, male, Syria). While some spend their free time with friends, others mentioned that they spend their free time with their family (14y/o, male, Pakistan; K14; 13y/o, female, Slovakia). For instance, one child goes for walks with his family on weekends (14y/o, male, Pakistan). Similarly, one child sometimes visits his cousin to play PlayStation (13y/o, male, Afghan). Beyond that, larger outings were also reported. For instance, one child mentioned that he traveled with his family to Turkey, Spain, Russia, and Ukraine (12y/o, male, Ukraine). In general, it can be said that leisure activities are very different and vary according to interests.

Health (physical and mental health)

This section deals with physical and mental health and how the long-term migrant children observe these issues. One boy reported a bone disease, because of which he has to exercise his feet every day (14y/o, male, Afghan). Another boy also spoke about his limitations when he once had a broken foot and could not walk all summer because of it (13y/o, male, Macedonia). In addition, one child referred to the positive aspects of doing sports, e.g., the fact that she can concentrate better on homework or studying if she played sports beforehand (13y/o, female, Slovakia). On the other hand, one focus group talked about the fact that since the Covid19 pandemic it has been more difficult to find a sleeping rhythm (17y/o, male, Ethiopia).

Educational environment and system

This section analyses how long-term migrant children perceive their school environment in terms of inclusion or exclusion, language practices, and policies in school, their classmates and teachers, and psychological support options, and closes with a brief conclusion.

Experiences of inclusion in school

This section refers to the experiences of inclusion in school made by the long-term migrant children. On the one hand, there are a lot of positive perceptions of inclusion in schools. Inclusion is often associated with peers. Therefore, it seems that school is highly associated with social interaction and well-being. For instance, one long-term migrant child shared that he does not want to change schools because of his friends (13y/o, male, Macedonia). Similarly, one long-term migrant child reported positive experiences with inclusion in his first school in Austria (MS). When he moved to another city and had to change

schools, he was sad because he had to leave his friends (13y/o, male, Afghan). In addition, some long-term migrant children highlighted school trips as experiences of inclusion and well-being (14y/o, male, Syria; 13y/o, male, Afghan; 15y/o, male, Bulgaria). On the other hand, there are also negative experiences of exclusion at school. For instance, one boy mentioned that there were intercultural conflicts between peers. He said that there was "a group of Turkish children, one of the Afghan children, and one of Serbian children" who did not like each other. However, even though they were constantly fighting, they began to understand each other over time (14y/o, male, Pakistan).

Language & School language policy and practice

This chapter examines both long-term migrant children's language use and language policies in schools. First, it should be said that all children in the sample with a long-term migration background speak more than one language, and many are even proficient in more than two languages (14y/o, male, Pakistan; 12y/o, male, Ukraine; 14y/o, male, Syria; 13y/o, male, Afghan; 13y/o, male, Macedonia; 14y/o, male, Romania). Many have a mother tongue other than German and additionally learn a third language such as English or Russian at school or in self-study (14y/o, male, Romania; 12y/o, male, Ukraine). Subsequently, language proficiency is strongly related to the children's migration history. For instance, one boy, whose parents are from Afghanistan and who grew up in Pakistan, speaks Dari, Farsi, Urdu, English, and German (14y/o, male, Pakistan). Similarly, one boy emphasizes that he was born in Syria and lived in Turkey for a while before coming to Austria. Therefore, he speaks Arabic, a little Turkish, German and English (14y/o, male, Syria). In addition, the children's socio-spatial environment also determines their language use and knowledge. For instance, one long-term migrant child speaks four languages: Ukrainian, Russian, German, and English because of the people and cultures that surround him (12y/o, male, Ukraine).

For many of the long-term migrant children, it seems to be very important to have a good command of the German language, both in terms of academic success and for social reasons. However, it should be emphasized that many children with a long-term migration background found learning German difficult and exhausting at first (13y/o, male, Macedonia; 15y/o, male, Bulgaria; 14y/o, male, Syria; 13y/o, male, Afghan). They were helped by peer and teacher support as well as German classes for newcomers at school and consumption of media in the respective language (14y/o, male, Syria; 13y/o, male, Macedonia; 15y/o, male, Bulgaria; 14y/o, male, Pakistan; 12y/o, male, Ukraine). In contrast, one long-term migrant child emphasized that she found it easy to learn German and that she speaks fluently and does all her homework independently (13y/o, female, Slovakia). Overall, it can be said that all long-term migrant children of the sample perceive the knowledge of German as very important for life in Austria.

Although most long-term migrant children need to be able to speak German well, some would also like to have peers with the same mother tongue at school (14y/o, male, Syria). Unfortunately, many schools have strict guidelines and restrictions that only allow the German language. This does not seem to be comfortable for everyone, as some need explanations in another language because their knowledge of German is not sufficient.

Peers

This section takes a closer look at the role of peers in the lives of long-term migrant children. In general, peer dynamics in schools can vary widely. While there are some positive perceptions, others have more negative experiences of conflict and discrimination.

The positive experiences are characterized by mutual appreciation. In this context, for instance, one long-term migrant child tries to learn the mother tongues of his peers (14y/o, male, Syria). While some have ambivalent feelings towards their peers and do not value all of them (12y/o, male, Ukraine), others reported more negative experiences. Accordingly, many children perceived exclusion such as bullying and exclusion of themselves or others at school (14y/o, male, Pakistan; 12y/o, male, Ukraine; 13y/o, male, Macedonia; 13y/o, female, Slovakia; 16y/o, female, Afghan; 14y/o, male, Afghan; 12y/o, male, Ukraine). Some conflicts are based on a personal level, as noted by one long-term migrant child who emphasized that conflicts among peers resulted from personal problems and had nothing to do with the origin or language of those involved (13y/o, female, Slovakia).

In contrast, other quotes indicated that bullying was related to ethnic, cultural, and religious differences. For instance, one girl in a focus group reported that she had arguments with Muslim classmates because they did not accept her opinion of not believing in God. They told her that she was "not a real Muslim" and that "God will punish her." (16y/o, female, Afghan) Furthermore, a boy from another focus group shared that he observed another child being bullied and laughed at in class because of his skin color and language. He also witnessed that there was bullying due to a lack of German language skills. In addition, he reported that he was bullied because of his name (14y/o, male, Afghan). Moreover, negative experiences are also based on gender discrimination. For instance, a girl reported that she is class president, but her male classmates do not listen to her (16y/o, female, Afghan). She further shared that a boy in her class does not respect girls or women and that she and a friend of hers are judged by him based on how they look, what they wear, and what they eat (16y/o, female, Afghan). In addition, there is also ableism in schools, as another student mentioned that in his previous school a disabled child was bullied (14y/o, male, Afghan).

Overall, the quotes indicate that long-term migrant children do experience exclusionary situations at school, which relate to different aspects. Furthermore, it became clear that most of the long-term migrant children who experienced or witnessed exclusion did not know how to deal with it and therefore were not able to change the situations.

Teachers/educational staff

The following chapter deals with the role that teachers play in long-term migrant children's lives. Many of the long-term migrant children mentioned that they feel supported by their teachers and have a relationship of mutual respect (13y/o, female, Slovakia; 16y/o, female, Afghan; 12y/o, male, Ukraine). Even though some teachers are sometimes strict, long-term migrant children feel comfortable in their presence (12y/o, male, Ukraine; 13y/o, male, Macedonia; 14y/o, male, Pakistan).

In general, intercultural dialogue at school seems to be important to long-term migrant children. While one long-term child reported that diversity, as well as cultural and religious issues, are not addressed by teachers (13y/o, female, Slovakia), others experienced the opposite. Some emphasized that their teachers talk about other countries and cultures (14y/o, male, Syria; 14y/o, male, Pakistan; 15y/o, male, Bulgaria). Moreover, one long-term migrant child mentioned that she appreciates a teacher who speaks the same mother tongue (13y/o, female, Slovakia). In addition, there are also rather ambivalent experiences with teachers. For instance, one boy reported a conflict with a teacher about his religious beliefs regarding the evolution theory (13y/o, male, Afghan).

Overall, the data show that teachers play a dominant role in long-term migrant children's lives and their values and opinions are important to them. Nevertheless, long-term migrant children want to be respected for their beliefs and norms.

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

This section is about practices of inclusion and integration of newcomers. In addition, it is about what the children of long-term migrants suggest to make newcomers feel welcome. Having experienced being a newcomer themselves (15y/o, male, Bulgaria), some long-term migrant children emphasized that mutual respect and appreciation play a crucial role in making someone new feel welcome (14y/o, male, Pakistan). In addition, many long-term migrant children pointed out that their well-being needs to have friends and social contacts in the new school (12y/o, male, Ukraine; 15y/o, male, Bulgaria). Teachers should also prepare their lessons so that the newcomers feel included (12y/o, male, Ukraine; 14y/o, male, Syria), some mentioned. All in all, it can be assumed that the school plays an important role in the well-being of the newcomers.

Psychosocial support

This chapter briefly discusses the long-term migrant children's thoughts on psychosocial support. The basic tenor here is that the children share the opinion that no one should be ashamed to seek help (14y/o, male, Pakistan). However, only a few long-term migrant children went to counseling (14y/o, male, Pakistan). Many long-term migrant children do not even know about it. It seems as if it would be necessary to expand the offer of psychosocial support at Austrian schools.

Family and wider community

The following chapter investigates the meaning of family, migrant and religious community as well as the local environment for the long-term migrant children in the sample.

Family

It varies greatly with whom the long-term migrant children live. For instance, some long-term migrant children have many family members in countries other than Austria (15y/o, male, Bulgaria; 14y/o, male, Afghan; 14y/o, male, Romania; 12y/o, male, Ukraine). In this context, some of them mentioned that they have not seen their family for a long time for various reasons (13y/o, male, Macedonia; 13y/o, male, Afghan). Many of the long-term migrant children would like to see them again or wished they had spent more time together in the past (14y/o, male, Afghan). However, here the long-term migrant children reported having a transnational network (14y/o, male, Afghan; 14y/o, male, Romania; 12y/o, male, Ukraine; 14y/o, male, Syria). Nevertheless, some long-term migrant children have been reunited with their families. For instance, one child stated that he is grateful to have his family back after they were separated in Syria several years ago (14y/o, male, Afghan). Others live together with their nuclear family in Austria. Here, one long-term migrant child emphasized that he has a positive relationship with his family and speaks of mutual support and care for one another (13y/o, female, Slovakia). Nevertheless, regarding school, it was emphasized that many parents take school very seriously and want their children to have good grades (13y/o, female, Slovakia). Thus, long-term migrant children mentioned that some family members are very strict and have high expectations. Extensive responsibilities in the family, such as household chores, taking care of siblings were also mentioned (14y/o, male, Romania; 13y/o, male, Macedonia).

Migrant community, religious community

In general, some of the long-term migrant children reported that they have contacts with others who come from the same country of origin as they do (13y/o, male, Macedonia; 14y/o, male, Syria) or are migrants themselves (14y/o, male, Pakistan). In this context, one child mentioned that his family lived in an apartment next to a family that came from the same village as them in Macedonia. He explained: "So we were neighbors in Macedonia, and now we are neighbors in Austria. We lived there for two years and it was nice" (13y/o, male, Macedonia). In addition, some also have relatives in Vienna with whom they have contact (14y/o, male, Syria). Overall, it can be said that some long-term migrant children have a migrant community in which they are embedded.

Local environment

Unfortunately, no data on questions about the long-term migrant children's local environment were available in the sample. For related topics, see also the section "spatial and social positioning" in chapter 3.3.1.2.

Other

Another topic that came up rarely is the issue of love and romantic relationships. For instance, one child mentioned that he is in a romantic relationship at the moment (14y/o, male, Romania).

Conceptualizations of own well-being and life satisfaction

Child-centeredness must take into account the well-being and life satisfaction of children. Thus, the adult-centered concept of integration needs to be adapted by integrating the dimension of well-being from the child's perspective (Gornik 2020: 537). The following section presents the interview content that relates to the conceptualization of the well-being and life satisfaction of the children.

Self-perceived well-being and life satisfaction

In general, well-being is a key indicator of integration (Gornik 2020: 537). The long-term migrant children suggest that well-being may also be related to (academic) performance. For instance, one girl indicated that she is satisfied with her school performance and her general life (13y/o, female, Slovakia). Similarly, one boy stressed that he feels good when his grades are good in school because he wants to have a good job (14y/o, male, Syria). One child stated that he feels "like newborn" when he arrived in Austria because he has more career opportunities here (13y/o, male, Macedonia).

In addition to the goal of achieving something, some emphasized that their family and their friends make them happy. For instance, a boy pointed out that being with his family makes him happy (14y/o, male, Afghan) and one boy mentioned that he feels good when he is with his friends (13y/o, male, Afghan).

However, some long-term migrant children also talked about strategies for what they do when they are not feeling well. For instance, a child cooks for his family or rides a mountain bike when he feels bad. Being in nature and with friends makes him feel better (12y/o, male, Ukraine).

Identification and belonging

In general, some long-term migrant children had an ambivalent positioning regarding their sense of belonging, especially those who still have a strong connection to their countries of birth. Some reported that they often perceive many differences between their country of origin and Austria and that, depending on where they are, they always have to adapt (13y/o, female, Slovakia). In contrast, some stated that they feel the same no matter in which country they are (13y/o, male, Afghan). Others expressed that they do not want to be associated with the stereotypes of their country of origin. For instance, one long-term migrant child emphasized that people always assume that there is war in all parts of Afghanistan. He also told that it annoys him to be asked about Afghanistan repeatedly: "I don't care because I don't belong there. Because I was born in Pakistan and I'm not from war" (14y/o, male, Pakistan).

Feelings of safety

Regarding the feeling of safety, the long-term migrant children shared different opinions. Some long-term migrant children emphasized that they are afraid to have a different opinion than the majority because "they could be beaten up for it" (16y/o, female, Afghan). However, one child said that he would defend himself in a dangerous situation (13y/o, male, Macedonia). One long-term migrant child associated feelings of insecurity with certain places in Vienna. For instance, he associates the 10th district with "danger" and "bad people". He explained that knife attacks occur there and that this frightens and stresses him. Nevertheless, he generally feels safe in Vienna and especially likes the Danube (14y/o, male, Syria).

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

In general, the content of the interviews indicates that most long-term migrant children perceive many opportunities in Austria concerning their future and career prospects. For instance, some children perceive their future opportunities in Austria as better than in their countries of birth (13y/o, male, Macedonia; 13y/o, female, Slovakia). Thus, obtaining a good education was the reason for some to come to Austria (13y/o, male, Afghan; 14y/o, male, Romania).

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

The following part presents the long-term migrant children's perceptions, values, attitudes, and opinions regarding equality, intercultural dialogue and conflicts, cultural and religious pluralism, migrants and migration as well as racism.

In general, most long-term migrant children pointed out that there is a lack of **equality** in general. Nevertheless, some shared the opinion that "everyone is a human being, even if someone has a different language or religion or comes from a different country" (14y/o, male, Afghan).

However, in the interviews also gender equality was stressed. For instance, one long-term migrant child pointed out that in Syria men have more rights than women. In Austria, nevertheless, "women and men have the same rights, everyone is equal here". As an example, he mentioned the headscarf, which is mandatory for women in some countries but not here in Austria (14y/o, male, Syria). Social inequality was also mentioned, such as not having an apartment and living on the street. While here some long-term migrant children would give away money if they were rich (16y/o, female, Afghan), others felt that the homeless need to find a job and are responsible for themselves (13y/o, male, Macedonia).

In general, the long-term migrant children knew **cultural conflicts and dialogues** that were linked to their migration history. Many long-term migrant children had a wealth of knowledge about different political and social circumstances in their countries of birth (13y/o, male, Macedonia; 14y/o, male, Romania). However, different religions or beliefs were mentioned in some interviews as a major aspect of cultural conflict. For instance, one child talked about conflicts between Muslims and Christians (13y/o, male, Macedonia).

Similarly, one girl shared that many wars are started because of religions. Since this is a matter of faith, she concludes that there will be no solution to these conflicts (16y/o, female, Afghan).

Regarding **cultural and religious pluralism,** some long-term migrant children stressed that all religions are similar: “Even if they pray differently, they all believe in something” (13y/o, male, Macedonia). However, some expressed the perception that some religions are favored compared to others in Austria. For instance, one child pointed out that he feels that the European Union does not like Islam and he does not understand why (14y/o, male, Syria).

Most long-term migrant children shared the opinion that **migration** is something “good” and that everyone should be welcome in Austria (13y/o, female, Slovakia). Some stressed that migration is something “normal” (12y/o, male, Ukraine). In addition, some shared that they cannot say that migration is bad because they are migrants themselves (14y/o, male, Afghan). One child shared that asylum seekers do not come to Austria because of work, but because they want a good future, as there is war in their country of origin (13y/o, male, Afghan). Similarly, one child pointed out that she is annoyed by Austrian politicians who want to send asylum seekers back to their country of origin. She stated: "We came here to live. We are just human beings, and we don't want to die in war. Some politicians don't want us to be here. That makes me sad. If there was a war in Austria now, many would flee from here, they would get the same feeling as we do when they are not accepted in another country. Then they would understand how it is when you are not wanted" (16y/o, female, Afghan). Besides, some pointed out that leaving their country of origin was not an easy decision (14y/o, male, Afghan). Moreover, arriving in a new country can be difficult (15y/o, male, Bulgaria). A boy stressed "after fleeing to the new country you have to do everything new, like learning a new language, finding new friends and a new place to live. It's all new and that can be quite hard for children" (15y/o, male, Bulgaria).

On the other hand, one long-term migrant child emphasized that migration has "good and bad sides". He stressed, "the good side is that you can learn something and become ‘useful’ for Austria; the bad side is that some have to learn more because they have a different culture and behave differently. Some are aggressive, some behave well" (14y/o, male, Romania). Further, he emphasized, "If the migrants are good, then there is a lot of room for them in Europe. But if they are always aggressive, the borders are closed, and the migrants are sent back" (14y/o, male, Romania). Here, a distinction is made between "useful" and "not useful/aggressive" migrants.

Concerning **racism,** one girl defined racism as "discrimination based on appearance, religion or origin". She pointed out that there is racism in Vienna (16y/o, female, Afghan). However, others mentioned that they have not experienced racism in Austria, but know that racism exists in the United States of America and perhaps in Austria as well (14y/o, male, Syria).

Some long-term migrant children told in the interviews that they learned about racism in school (12y/o, male, Ukraine). Some children also emphasized that they had experienced discrimination at school. For instance, one girl emphasized that peers bullied her in her class

because of her appearance. She mentioned that she never felt accepted in Austria and experienced bad things (16y/o, female, Afghan). On the other hand, one child expressed that skin color makes no difference to her. She pointed out that it was more important to have fun together (14y/o, male, Syria).

In addition, some stated that racist behavior is a way to make themselves feel better while belittling others. It was also mentioned that it is possible to be unaware of one's racism (16y/o, female, Afghan).

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

The following section provides insight into long-term migrant children's understanding of integration, including how they perceive integration and what benefits, weaknesses, or good practices they have experienced in this context.

Perception of integration

The long-time migrated children described feeling integrated, in the sense of feeling well in Vienna, differently. In general, long-term migrant children mentioned that friends are important for the integration process because they can help each other (15y/o, male, Bulgaria). Additionally, one child shared that he thinks "you have to treat others well to be treated well". He added that knowing the language and religion and having a good job is part of feeling well in Austria (14y/o, male, Syria). The importance of work was also emphasized in a focus group (16y/o, female, Afghan). Besides that, some would like more financial support from the state and found learning cultural rules relevant (12y/o, male, Ukraine).

On the other hand, a long-term migrant child believed that integration means adapting. One child stated that one must first adapt to Austria to feel comfortable. As a second step, he mentioned accepting that life in Austria is different than in other countries. After that, he said, one can "have a good life" if one finds a job and an apartment. He concludes that if one behaves "normally", everything will be fine (14y/o, male, Romania).

Advantages

Having social contacts in the new country is perceived as an integration advantage. Especially the possibility to be together with family members after a period of separation is perceived as a resource for well-being and the feeling of not being lonely (13y/o, male, Afghan). Family reunions are therefore experienced as important. For instance, one long-term migrant child shared that in the beginning, he cried with his aunt every day until his uncle and cousin came and they "weren't alone anymore" (13y/o, male, Afghan). Additionally, having friends to help with language and orientation are an advantage (14y/o, male, Syria). Moreover, one long-term migrant child pointed out that she had the advantage of having teachers who spoke her mother tongue. Thus, the teachers could help her understand everything and especially help her learn German (12y/o, male, Ukraine). In addition, some expressed that it was an advantage to have a sense of humor to feel

"welcome" (14y/o, male, Pakistan). Furthermore, German courses were also seen as an advantage (14y/o, male, Afghan).

Weakness

In general, a lack of German language skills is perceived as a disadvantage for integration (16y/o, female, Afghan). In this regard, the importance of speaking German was emphasized. One girl stated that "when I came to Austria, I didn't know the language. And I couldn't read, write, calculate, and so on, so actually nothing. I learned all that from television, so speaking and talking and so on, of course also in school. And I was also bullied at school because I couldn't speak and I was never really accepted. Yes, that's my experience" (16y/o, female, Afghan). Not being able to communicate is thus seen as a weakness.

Besides, the long-term migrant children criticized, for instance, that there are no German courses for everyone. Furthermore, the lack of learning support in initial reception facilities was highlighted (14y/o, male, Pakistan).

Good practices

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 so

5. Executive summary -long term resident migrant children

The following report focuses on data collected with "long-term migrant children" between the ages of 10 and 18 who attend secondary school in Vienna, Austria. Long-term migrant children include all children in the sample who were not born in Austria but have lived in Austria for more than four years. The sample varies widely in terms of legal status, duration of residence, migration history, country of origin, and other factors such as gender and school type. On the one hand, some have permanent residence status or have already acquired a residence title or citizenship. On the other hand, some are still in the process of applying for asylum. What the long-term migrant children have in common, is that they all lived in different countries before coming to Austria. The aim of this report is to gain insights into the perceptions of children with a long-term migration background regarding their integration process in relation to the Austrian education system. The study was conducted using child-centered methods and focused on the following research questions:

How do children with long-term migration background perceive and experience the integration process?

How do pedagogical staff approach integration processes and how do they deal with them?

In terms of a child-centered approach, research was done with an understanding of children as experts on their lives and integration processes. Participant observation, qualitative interviews, and focus groups as well as a quantitative survey were conducted with the sample of long-term migrant children. The results of the report show that experiences of exclusion such as intercultural conflicts or prejudice against peers were very rare among migrant children. Rather, migrant children had open attitudes toward their peers and emphasized that they felt it was important to give everyone a chance. Nevertheless, negative experiences such as racism are to be expected in their daily lives from time to time, but more likely outside of school and from parts of “host society” than with peers, teachers, or other migrant children. Another finding of the study with children with long-term migrant backgrounds was the lack of multilingualism in Austrian schools. The results therefore suggest that children with long-term migration backgrounds in Austrian schools would like to see more discussion of intercultural issues and sharing of experiences with classmates and teachers on the topic of diversity. Schools need to become more diverse in terms of teacher diversity and multilingualism as well as in terms of teaching materials and curricula.

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POLAND

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1. Introduction

This report aims to highlight the integration processes of 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). The research aimed to gain a better understanding of integration experiences of the three types of pupils with the following objectives:

- **Newly Arrived Migrant Children:** 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;

- **Long-term Resident Migrant Children:** To improve our understanding about how migrant children with long-term residency have experienced integration in host societies, how are they satisfied with their new life, what are their needs and future ambitions, to get insight into their 'strategies' of inclusion which they employed after coming to new social environments;

- **Local Children:** To capture the nature of the integration processes from local children's perspective and explore how local children and peer groups can be involved in the more successful integration of newly arrived migrant children.

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. In this report we focus on the results gained from the filed-work with **long-term resident migrant children**.

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?

Children in this group are usually well-integrated in the classroom, sociable, with good command of Polish. Some have solid friendship relations (S3). Those children, according to teachers, went on a long journey of integration, usually with amazing effect. Children in this group still feel obligated to perform, be good students, and want to help others in achievements. Some of them became leaders in their classrooms. There were individuals with extraordinary achievements, taking part in regional and national school contests. In this group, a slight tendency to assimilation was observed. It is coherent with the information given by teachers interviewed in the WP4 part of the study who also perceived assimilation attitudes in Ukrainian children.

Children in this group usually do not pay attention to someone's origin. They are noticing differences in circumstantial situations that do not translate into attitudes. Polish children come along with migrant children whenever the latter make the first step to get acquainted

(S3, S7). Local children have a cooler attitude toward education and schooling. They pay less attention to school performance, achievements, not so much engaging in learning. They are less caring. Local children often show a disrespectful attitude towards lessons and teachers. Such behaviour, in their opinion, makes them popular. As a result, it often happens that local children are rude, loud and misbehave while such attitudes are not common for migrant children. This sometimes causes tensions and makes migrant children feel uncomfortable. Furthermore, the loudness and more easy-going behaviour of local children make migrants stick out from the rest of peers.

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

Apart from one person of Belarusian origin and one of Armenian origin all other respondents were Ukrainians. Most of them were above their fifteen and came to Poland to continue learning in secondary schools. Some of the interviewees emigrated from regions that were suffering from the armed conflict or Crimea and did not imagine a return to the country of their birthplace.

Children who came to Poland alone, without parents, usually return to the country for holidays or seasonal breaks (Christmas, Eastern) however, some kids do not return and reunite with families during those periods in their place of inhabitants, often another large city in Poland. Only one girl from the dormitory had not been returning to her country for holidays and stayed alone in Poland.

Children who came to Poland accompanied by parents are returning to their homeland more rarely, even if some members of the family (usually grandparents) stayed there. It must be underlined that the frequency of returns is affected by the periods of pandemic travel restrictions, not necessarily by the question of funds available or unwillingness to come back.

Poland is seen by the respondents as a better place to live and a new place of inhabitance usually is ranked as much more comfortable and better looking than what was left behind. The main reason for migration was in most cases a will to improve living conditions. Children very often speak openly about it if directly asked why they wanted to leave: “Well… just for the life to be better (19.03.2021.21M.BN.M13.UA.S6).

In many cases, the decision about emigration was largely spontaneous for all the families involved. Most children were willing to leave however, in a few cases, children felt omitted in the decision-making process and sometimes even forced to migrate. One of the boys did

not want to be separated from his sister who was left with grandparents in Ukraine. (25.03.2021.35M.YR.M14.UA.S6).

General life

Living conditions

Respondents evaluated conditions of living in Poland as good or very good. Most of the respondents who were long-term migrants lived in the dormitory in which conditions of living are not the best, however satisfactory for the majority of them. It must be noted that they are living in rooms with peers of the same ethnicity – three per room, which do not foster the integration process. Contact with Polish peers is largely limited and occasional. Most dormitory inhabitants appreciated the support and valued educators in the dormitory, however, complained about the necessity to abide by the rules and conditions of living in this house. It mostly concerned the condition of curfew after 8 P.M. (9 P.M. before the epidemics) and enforced hours for learning and homework. Inhabitants of the dormitory like Kraków as a city, but not necessarily the district where the house is located. Many appreciate living close to the school however, they do not felt fully safe in this district. They came across unpleasant situations where they suffered xenophobic behaviours from the locals. One of the girls with the overall warmth towards Poland is openly speaking about the Polish society xenophobic attitudes toward others: "well, in fact, I like Poland very much. I really love this country. I like language, culture, customs, heritage and history, and also some other more cultural things, as my interests are linked with it. But sometimes I feel bad because of people here, as this 3 years, already fourth and still I encounter such situations – this xenophobia from Polish, not only toward Ukrainians but also different others." (08.10.2020.20M.KA.K18.UA.2017.S1).

Children who moved with their parents appreciate Kraków, as the place of immigration, and have a positive view of their neighbourhood. We did not collect information on how the integration process is affected by the current place of living and community around.

Spatial and social positioning

The financial and social status of children who emigrated to Poland with their parents is currently better than in the country of origin. It was the primary aim of migration and it was fulfilled. Families decided to move to improve family income, find better jobs and not putting the burden on parents who were providing for their children. Children confirmed that their economic status was raised.

Children who are living in dormitories also estimate their living conditions as fine, however, some of them are taking part-time jobs (distributing leaflets, work in gastronomy) to enhance their finances and ease their parents in providing. Some of the respondents admitted they can afford to rent a room or flat in Kraków but stay in a dormitory for practical reasons – school proximity or because of attachment to peers or educators.

Inclusion in peer groups

Students in this particular research group are making bonds and other social relations in schools, and those living in dormitories and also in this environment. As they are already in Poland for several years now such relations are strong and tight. Respondents paid attention to the development process of such relationships, claiming that at first, they stacked to their national group. In the case of a dormitory, it was naturally facilitated by the habit to place people from the same nationalities in one room. Students openly criticised this practice as being not integrative and making learning a language more difficult.

Most of the respondents still have more social relations with peers sharing their nationality. For those who have friends differing ethnically this aspect of identity or humanity is irrelevant. They do not pay attention to it, it is transparent and does not affect if the relation is set or not. "No, for me it does not matter at all. I have many friends and mates from other countries. From Africa, Asia, America and for me it is completely irrelevant who they come from, who they are, what colour of skin they have, it is not important." (08.10.2020.20M.KA.K18.UA.2017.S1). Speaking about people she is befriended, if they are Poles or Ukrainians another girl responds: "It does not matter, because I am a friend of all of them…. I mean, not. I do not differentiate anyhow. (04.01.2021.11M.SA.K13.AR.2017.S0).

The participants usually did not have occasions to enter into closer relations with peers living in their neighbourhoods or areas around. It happens that among the foreigners' friends are Polish who started relations by doing sports together. It refers to boys mostly.

Maintaining relations with peers is a very important part of the daily agenda for interviewed children. The epidemic state visualized its significance. Apart from the fact that remote education was appreciated by some of the students, they would never abandon a real school education because of the importance of relations with peers. For the underage, the period of epidemic emergency was harsh, especially due to the restriction of movement and imposed curfew for teenagers.

Respondents did not declare any contacts with migration communities. They do not know any migrant organizations, they do not take part in events organized by such entities.

It was imminent that students broke their previous social contacts in the country of origin. Despite the possibility of maintaining online contact, those relations in most cases are getting less and less frequent as time passes, except those peers who are family members.

It is also interesting that most of the romantic relationships confessed by respondents were between persons of the same ethnicity/ nationality.

Involvement in leisure activities, sport

Most of the respondents are actively engaging in different spare time activities. Those include most often sports (this refers to boys at large), going to the gym, walks, watching movies, reading, less frequently artistic stuff. Respondents do not mention any time spending with smartphones, which might be surprising. It might be that such activity became naturally integrated into common daily habits and as it is, consuming so much time it is no longer considered as a separate spare time activity but become a form of internalized habit, a behaviour enacted without a conscience. This is confirmed by many research results (Vaidya et al., 2016; Wajcman, et al. 2007; Bianchi & Philips, 2005). The lack of possibility to train in the gym or engage in many other activities caused by pandemic restrictions is very frustrating to students. We did not assess any statements that would link spare time activities with integration so it is not possible to draw any conclusions about it from the interviews performed.

Some older respondents, who are living in dormitories complained of the lack of spare time as it was fulfilled by part-time jobs such as leaflets distribution or working in the gastronomical industry.

> *Before I was going to Macfit - a gym with girls. Now, I do not have time for that as I am in the final class and I go to work as well - so no time for leisure. If any, then gym. Yet before we had some additional classes in the first year. And sometimes, I can, but do not know how to express it, I do macrame, well if not, I am doing a blanket for myself. (29.09.2020.32M.DA.K.17.UA.2016.S1)*

Health (physical and mental health)

The vast majority of respondents declared a good psycho-physical condition. One of the girls interviewed had a depression episode, which was not observed and cared for by the community and she received help only upon her return to the country of origin (08.10.2020.20M.KA.K18.UA.2017.S1). A part of respondents felt a homesickness for the place they lived, family or friends, shortly after arrival to Poland. “I just wanted to go to my friends in Ukraine. To see them. I saw the video where all of them are having fun, and I was just alone here in Poland” (19.03.2021.21M.IA.K13.UA.S6). These feelings were not long-lasting ones as reflected by respondents. Students also encountered some minor anxiety and more frequently withdrawals from social activities due to inadequate language competencies. One of the boys had persistent anxiety for about half a year (25.03.2021.35M.YR.M14.UA.S6). In every school there is a pedagogue to whom a child in need may address its problem related to emotional functioning, however many of the respondents did not know about its existence or were not familiar with its duties and tasks. There was no single case in this group delegated to the Special Psychological and Pedagogic Counselling Center which is dealing with this kind of support.

There were no complaints about physical condition, but many suffered from a lack of possibility to perform sports. This might affect the physical fitness of some respondents.

Educational environment and system

Experiences of inclusion in school

The vast majority of students felt safe and good in their schools. They declared the belonging to their classes however in one case where the number of Ukrainian and Polish children were balanced an ethnic division between groups happened with strong rivalry and competition. These groups were exclusionary from one another not engaging in mutual contacts.

One of the interviewed girls felt not being accepted by the class, however, she mentioned not ethnically based reason, but rather the fact that after changing the school she arrived at a fully integrated class and students approached her with suspicion and distrust. The class was already divided into several friendship groups and it was extremely hard for anyone else to enter those circles. Most of the respondents praised the school as a friendly place. Foreigners were treated with interest and sympathy by their Polish peers. Many respondents after a long-lasting stay in Poland and its education system established durable and close friendships with the representatives of their ethnic groups but also with Polish peers. In the beginning, the language barrier was the greatest obstacle to inclusion. “At the start, it was maybe hard, but why it was hard? Because I had this language barrier so I needed to learn first” (08.10.2020.7M.DO.M18.UA.2016.S1). The other boy has not admitted the language problems to his family: “Yes. It was hard to talk and I did not understand a lot, well yes I did not say to my parents, that I wanted to come back home, but I stayed here just like that, and just lived, trying to learn this Polish. It happened that I stayed (08.10.2020.9M.HV.M18.UA.2016.S1).

Language & School language policy and practice

In everyday communication, during conversations with roommates in the dormitory, students residing there are using their mother tongues. For them, learning Polish was not a particular challenge as they belong to the nations using a group of similar, Slavic languages. All of them to some extent were learning Polish yet before their arrival to Poland (3-9 months of learning). After school enrolment, they had additional language classes from Polish as a foreign language, as well as subject tutoring for the classes they had the greatest language problems with understanding. Most often that was mathematics.

In the school, apart from the Polish language, Russian and Ukrainian were used, usually in informal conversations between peers. In several schools cultural assistants were present who used languages of the supported pupil also in more formal situations, helping students in understanding the matter of the classes they were doing. On the occasion, it happened that a teacher who knew the Russian language addressed foreign students in this language when they were not able to understand the message in Polish. Hence, more often the role of guides was taken by other foreign peers with more advanced knowledge of Polish. Some students tried to improve their language competencies by watching movies in Polish or reading Polish literature.

Peers

When it comes to interethnic peer relations their intensity depends on the number of foreign-born students in the classroom. If there are several students of the same origin they usually integrate with their group, as they are naturally supporting each other, helping with school tasks and sharing similar problems being solved together. It also concerns different interests from their Polish peers. Such a model of integration does not correspond with any exclusion or detachment practices from the majority of the class that is usually open and interested in foreign students. Close and more emotional contact between peers of diverse ethnicity in such classes is rather rare and singular. If it happens, it concerns boys.

Respondents thought that their integration would be faster whenever they could accompany Polish peers on every occasion. On the other hand, they did nothing to enter into closer relations with Polish students. It happened very often that friends gave helpful hands to other students, particularly when language understanding is at stake. "For me, it was helpful that many people in the class supported me with tasks and translated what teacher said" (04.01.2021.11M.SA.K13.AR.2017.S0).

In the situation where the number of foreign and Polish students in the class is balanced, it may lead to the conflict on the ethnic division which was described in detail by one of the respondents. He could not however explain how such a situation occurred and developed. "Yes, I do not know how it happened and why we are more divided for so-called groups, and when the time comes to make some decisions and we are in one place together, others in another place and we are not in common." (14.11.2020.43M.ER.M17.UA.2017.S2).

The negative or exclusionary events or situations are extremely rare. One of the girls was mobbed by Polish peers but it was not based on ethnic grounds but was simply sexist. She was attending branch school (tutoring professions) and was the only girl in the class. Apart from two cases, students did not feel discriminated against by their peers in the school community. In one of the classes attended by a girl the conflict started on romantic grounds and then escalated to ethnic bias. "With Polish girls, it was not so much because we had some problems in the school that one of the Polish girl's boyfriend stared at one of the Ukrainian and now all the Polish girls hate us. I do not know how it linked but that it was." (29.09.2020.32M.DA.K17.UA.2016.S1). In the other incident, a boy needed to change the school after being attacked by peers and suffering violence. The reason for the attack was not known as it happened at the beginning of his stay in Poland and a child did not understand what the offenders were screaming during the attack. (08.09.2020.20M.JM.M12.UA.S3).

In the case of three children that had been interviewed, it appeared that they do not maintain any relations with Polish peers outside of the classroom setting. It referred to siblings who were talking Ukrainian between themselves and as one of the girls claimed: "I always speak in Ukrainian, because I do not have friends here (…) I always speak with Inga and Bogdan (siblings – noted by the author), my cousin Vadim and his friend. We are always talking together. They do not understand us and that is why they do not want to play with us." (19.03.2021.21M.IA.K13.UA.S6).

Teachers/educational staff

The vast majority of students (except two) expressed very positive feelings about teachers and the support they received from them. The school personnel accept migrant children without any conditions and despite the language barrier is trying to help those children as much as possible. “Our school is sort very not of appreciate but it knows there are many foreigners, mostly Ukrainians and we get hm.. synonymously help and appreciation.” (translation from Polish with the used wording) (14.11.2020.43M.ER.M17.UA.2017.S2).

The school personnel to a very limited extent is engaged in any integration practices, at least none of the respondents noticed such activity. It may be the result of an overloaded curriculum or a lack of competencies. The Polish school system is much formalized and hierarchical so the child-centered approach is not existing.

Two respondents had negative experiences with teachers. One was on the ethnic background and one on both ethnic and gender background. “Teacher, he said something that informatics is not for girls. He just has something against girls, I do not know, some attitude, ok, and he told something that… on Ukrainians, he told something, I haven’t heard that, but it was something why we have come here at all.” (29.09.2020.32M.DA.K17.UA.2016.S1).

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

The most important thing about the integration process for our respondents was rising language competencies. No ability or poor ability to speak Polish is the major integration obstacle. Answering the question if the initial school experiences were hard or easy for her one of the girls responds: “Well, I can’t tell that I experienced it deeply as I was eight and did not care. I went to second grade but in the third, I still did not understand much. The teacher was saying something, asking if I understood, but I was sitting and could not say anything. (11.01.2021.14M.VA.K12.BY.2016.S0). The first day in school is often connected with negative experiences: “I remembered that on the first day in school it was mathematics classes and I nearly cried as I could not even count to ten in Polish.” (25.03.2021.35M.YR.M14.UA.S6). Another boy, describing his first day in the school said: “It was a hard day. I understood nothing for a month or two. I learned it language. No understand lessons. It was hard… Yes I wanted home.“ (08.10.2020.5M.MM.M18.UA.2016.S1).

It occurred to us that contact with Polish peers is very important. Behaviours such as asking migrant children to sit in the same row, grouping children for the workshops or projects according to ethnic origin, or placing children in one room on the same basis in dormitories do not facilitate integration and raising language proficiency. “I have still accent, which I cannot get rid of, maybe because when I came to Poland I had Ukrainian friends, and If I had only Polish guys I would need to always speak Polish, and because of that, the

problem went, that I get used to not speaking so much Polish". (25.11.2020.13M.JN.M18.UA.2015.S2)

Psychosocial support

In each school, school counsellors are obligatorily employed, but as already has been mentioned the contact of respondents with them was very limited. Children most often received psychosocial support from teachers and educators. It was especially visible in the dormitory: "Well, I only got such help that they look after me, they worry about me, if something happens to me, I know that they will worry. Well, such help was more intangible, and I got such spiritual help. And material help, I do not need such a thing " (13/10/2020, 16M.MM.M18.UA.2016.S1). An intercultural assistant also works very well, if employed at school. It would be worth supporting their employment, as they play the role of supporting not only children but also teachers in the education process, as well as the whole family. There are situations when the child's parents do not speak Polish and it is the assistant who can act as a mediator in contacts between the school and the child's parents.

Psychological help is demanded at the first stage of a child's presence at school when children experience the greatest fear and a sense of oddity. In the absence of an assistant, one of the teachers could be obligated to help the child during the first months at school.

Initially, most of the respondents felt alienated in the new environment, but the experience was not of a long-term nature. It was especially visible in the respondents who came to Poland without their parents and ended up in a dormitory, the educators even played the role of substitute parents for them. "Well, at fifteen I was a child coming to Poland without parents, and it was hard for me like I say that the tutors from the boarding school replaced my parents that they care about you, they ask something, do you feel well? How was school? (...) they just care about us so that nothing happens to us, that they know where we are and something like that." (13.10.2020.16M.MM.M18.UA.2016.S1).

Family and the wider community

Family

Family plays a very important role in children's lives. Unfortunately, very often in the case of our respondents, they are separated from the other members of their families. One of the parents lives in another city earning income to provide for the family or is staying in the country of origin. The situation is similar when it comes to siblings, who very often stayed under the care of their grandparents in the country of origin. Even when the family is together, children complain about the lack of time devoted to them by their parents, which was caused by job obligations, working additional hours, especially when only one of the parents emigrated to Poland. This was changed in some cases by the pandemic, where parents switched to remote work and children were taught online. This provided an opportunity to strengthen family relationships, although one respondent complained that due to limited space and a large number of household members, it was conducive to

domestic conflicts. The family usually does not play an active role in integrating children into a new country, which is most often caused by the lack of time, but also the lack of Polish language knowledge.

For children who came to Poland without their parents and lived in a dormitory, the family is also very important and often homesickness for their parents and siblings occurs. “Well, because the first two years were hard for me. It is not hard in this plan that I did not have friends here, or something, because I am such a man that I do not know, I can get along with everyone, that is, I can communicate with everyone and I just simply missed my grandfather, grandmother, mom, dad and so on "(13.10.2020.16M.MM.M18.UA.2016.S1). "I was 15 then and I wanted to see my mother all the time" (29/09/2020.15M.VA.K18.UA.2016.S1). Such children come under the supervision of a “legal guardian” (usually a person employed by parents by contract). This issue was already elaborated in the section for newly arrived migrants. Here, again it must be noted that such a caregiver may have even several dozen children under his care, which means that he does not properly foster his duties and the actual needs of children are not always important to him. One of the respondents says that, according to the arrangements with her parents, she was supposed to go to chosen school, but she went to another because the guardian placed most of the children in the other one. It was very frustrating for the girl: “I was without parents then, I couldn't do anything alone. I was 15 years old." (29.09.2020.32M.DA.K17.UA.2016.S1).

All children tried to maintain frequent online contact with their family, some of them did it on a daily basis, contacting them via Skype or another communicator. All surveyed children from this group during holidays returned to their country of origin or went to their parent’s place of residence (it is often a different Polish city). The vast majority also managed to meet their parents during the winter holiday break (mid term break). Interviews with this group were conducted to some extent even before the state of the epidemic was announced. Along with the closure of the schools, the dormitory was also closed. Children were almost forced to return to their country of origin or to find another accommodation on their own within one day's notice.

Migrant community, religious community

Respondents practically did not take part in the activities of the migrant diaspora. There are several migrant organizations in Krakow, but respondents either do not know anything about them, or in only a few cases knew that they existed, but did not feel the need to contact them.

The situation is similar with the Orthodox community. They do not participate in masses and events organized by the church. Three children explicitly stated that their families were not very religious. (03/19/2021.21M.BN.M13.UA.S6; 03/25/2021.35M.YR.M14.UA.S6; 03/19/2021.18M.Inga.K12.UA.S6). The practise of religion is considered private.

Local environment

Respondents were rather not visible in the local community and did not engage in community life. This fact did not affect their integration process. It seems that migrants themselves and local members of the community do not seek occasions to get to know each other. Neighbourhood and locally based initiatives, which are also aimed at involving migrants in organized events, are still under development in Krakow. Probably in a few years, the integrating function of the local community will be more noticeable.

Other

Any other relevant issues that have not been covered and are important for understanding the integration process of children

Conceptualizations of own well-being and life satisfaction

Self-perceived well-being and life satisfaction

The concept of wellbeing is not so much understood by respondents. The question asked directly with the use of this phrase was surprising and somehow weird. After explaining, all respondents declared that after coming to Poland their well-being was enhanced. This result is contradictory to quantitative research where this particular group had a problem with a positive evaluation of their social and economic position on the verge of success, which are important factors for the conceptualization of wellbeing. Our respondents linked the perception of wellbeing with economical and living conditions that improved significantly after arriving in Poland.

Some other perspective was drawn by the dormitory inhabitants who often complained about living conditions of living in the dormitory. Particularly an obligation to return on designated hours and enforced daily hours for learning and homework was declared as inconvenient. Despite this nuisance, children felt cared for and established close bonds with their educators. One of the girls confessed that in the dormitory she needed to grow up faster, take care of her matters to a larger scale including cooking for herself. (29.09.2020.32M.DA.K17.UA.2016.S1) In a few cases, well-being was affected by the anxiety caused by the pandemic outbreaks and uncertainty of the future.

Identification and belonging

At large, respondents identify with their countries of origin, however, most also declare some attachment to Poland. None of the respondents declared Polish identification. Several persons are part of mixed families, including those who are holding a Card of the Pole. It is particularly interesting that for our interviewees, ethnicity is something irrelevant. They are using it for identification purposes but this is just a label. They do not value such identification or wrap it with some emotional or social context content. Most in this group are multilingual. Apart from Polish they also speak Ukrainian and Russian fluently, and other Western languages at a certain level. The ambiguity with a clear ethnic identification might be caused by the complex linguistic situation in Ukraine. In their homes, they are using

Russian and Ukrainian interchangeably and are not able to decide which language is their national one.

People who declare a will to stay in Poland permanently after graduation have a greater attachment to this country, The attachment issue is linked with the social relations that were set during the stay: “Well with the whole of Poland maybe not, but with some people who are living here. I have many friends, my family is also present here, I have an attachment to people rather.” (25.11.2020.13M.JN.M18.UA.2015.S2)

It often happened that respondents had difficulties with defining identity clearly, especially about attachment to the homeland or new emotions for the hosting country as they were torn between two countries and worlds: “When we depart Ukraine and some agree with me, so when we depart from Ukraine we do not have a home longer. But when we arrive here it is still not yet our home so we are somehow in-between.” (08.10.2020.20M.KA.K18.UA.2017.S1).

Feelings of safety

In general, long-term migrant children feel safe in Poland. They have stable life situations and most already have defined their future plans. They feel safe also in Kraków as a city and in their schools. There is one exception for the participants of the dormitory located in Nowa Huta district. That respondents fear to leave the building after dark and get attacked by locals, who often being drunk were shouting xenophobic slurs under the dormitory building. “Yes, I feel very unsafe, and try not to go out after 18, even to the shop or to the yard (08.10.2020.20M.KA.K18.UA.2017.S1). In this area, there is also a problem with football hooligans who are much nationalistic, but also xenophobic. “Well, there was such a problem that I am Ukrainian… this is this nationality, history… this is this problem between Polish and Ukrainian. Football fans have this problem.” (08.10.2020.7M.DO.M18.UA.2016.S1).

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

Respondents positively value their current lives, observing that migration had a positive impact on them, giving better life perspectives. They felt optimistic about the future, however, when the pandemic started they lost partly control over their lives, got frustrated and restrained in their freedoms. This positive view on the future is present each time they are not focusing on the pandemic dynamics and probabilities of maintaining restrictions or further spread of the disease. Some respondents do not see their future in their countries of origin and despite the fact, migration caused quite a stir in their lives, presently they appreciate the decision about leaving their countries. “I missed a bit as I have siblings there, friends and so on, but the present situation is that, well I just not have future there, in Ukraine.” (08.10.2020.11M.NI.M18.UA.2017.S1).

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

All respondents have a positive image of equality, and for many of them, it is also very important.

Migration is usually perceived as a positive phenomenon, often also giving a chance to improve one's living conditions. It is seen as providing new opportunities (14.11.2020.43M.ER.M17.UA.2017.S2). Migration is also supposed to broaden one's mind: "I think it's something positive because when you change your place of life, you get some new impressions, new friends, you get to know a new culture" (08.10.2020.10M.EA.K18.UA.2017.S1). However, one of the respondents felt frustrated with the fact that she had to leave her country: "But also, I just still don't understand, sometimes, not always. There is a question: why couldn't my country give me the same diploma, so that they would accept it all over Europe and why, because I just know that from my parents, or other friends there, why I cannot get a normal job in my country? Also a normal paid for this" (29/09/2020.32M.DA.K17.UA.2016.S1). Migration is also often associated with some effort and sacrifice, although the scale of this effort may depend on migration destination: "It all depends on which countries. Not so much to Poland, because the language is similar. And, for example, to Germany, it is difficult, the most difficult, because the language is not similar" (03/19/2021.21M.BN.M13.UA.S6). Another boy has a similar opinion, which may prove that children are very aware of migration issues: "It depends, for example, if you come from Russia or Ukraine to China and look at the language and the letters there, then it is much more difficult than coming from Ukraine to Poland for example. Because in Ukraine I also learn English, for example, and letters in Poland are similar to English ones, so you can orientate a little bit "(03/25/2021.35M.YR.M14.UA.S6).

Cultural pluralism is also perceived clearly in a positive way (in one case neutral), as something that is supposed to mutually enrich us. Religion seems to play a less and less important role in the lives of the respondents, hence religious pluralism was not referred to so often, rather the children did not have an opinion on this phenomenon.

According to one of the respondents, intercultural dialogue is necessary, according to many it was an incomprehensible term.

The question about the interethnic conflict very often led to reflection on the subjects of discrimination and conflict, which they experienced themselves, although these were not frequent situations and were described in earlier parts of the report. Conflict is judged as negative for children.

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

Perception of integration

Respondents did not encounter problems during their integration process. They had difficulties with the evaluation of the migration model as they had not been familiarized

with existing practices, how it could look like or what they might receive. Hence, when asked directly about integration efforts from the host society the opinion on the integration support was simply laconic, concluding with satisfaction on received support and aid after their arrival.

All respondents took part in additional language classes and additional subject tutoring to minimize differences between the school educational systems. The language classes were highly valued, however, we encountered opinions that from a certain stage of learning it shall happen by live contact with Polish peers in real situations. “In my opinion I could have learned Polish better just by being in Polish society and learning, for example, those classes, learning what we need to learn, and this sort of influenced our ability to speak more than those additional courses.” (14.11.2020.43M.ER.M17.UA.2017.S2). This what was evident in the respondents’ statements and referred to the integration model concerned the problem of insufficient contact with Polish peers and which could have been facilitated by school or dormitory staff. It was postulated to introduce a mixed system in rooms’ selection and encouragement for pairing regardless of ethnicity in the class rows. Contact with peers from hosting countries is particularly important at the beginning, during the first months, when language barriers occur, a sense of otherness that could result in withdrawal. At the later stage interethnic rooms, teams or mixed rows would significantly benefit the integration. One of the girls even claimed that lack of contact and conversations between migrant and Polish peers led to antipathies. “I believe you need to have some friends, to talk to them, as classes are one thing and real life is another.” (13.10.2020.14M.IA.K.16.UA.2015.S1).

The respondent who had some integration classes on which other cultures were presented to Polish peers evaluated them as highly useful. (11.01.2021.14M.Vasilisa.K12.BY.2016.S0).

By the vast majority of students, integration is seen as teachers, school and its personnel obligation. Sometimes peers were added as actors. There was however no interview where family or household would be perceived as co-responsible for integration.

Children were aware of the importance of integration, especially in terms of language integration, which may directly warrant school success. One of the respondents directly noted that through integration and good language skills you can achieve success: “In our school, the best student, the best female student, is a student from Ukraine. The Ukrainian is like the best student at school and this is kind of ... not strange, but an interesting fact." (14.11.2020.43M.ER.M17.UA.2017.S2). Two of the respondents achieved success in the Russian language inter-school contests, and many people had achievements in artistic fields.

Advantages

What do children perceive as positive in existing integration models? What could be done better/differently?

The vast majority of students appreciated the ability to take additional language classes and tutoring for subjects making it difficult to follow the curriculum.

People who attended schools where a coordinator for foreigner students was appointed appreciated their support.

Respondents did not directly speak about their proposals to change the integration model as they focused on praising all support they received.

Weakness

What do children perceive as weak points of existing integration models? What could be done better/differently?

One respondent noticed there is no systematic support of the child entry into the school from teachers or assistants. They do not inform children about the organizational issues, how school works, what it's architectural layout is, who it is and what kind of obligations students have. (11.01.2021.14M.VA.K12.BY.2016.S0)

Children also raised a problem of the length of the legalization process and difficulties they had with obtaining temporary residence and overcoming all the formalities. (29.09.2020.32M.DA.K17.UA.2016.S1).

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Good practices

One of the good practices recognized was the work of the so-called coordinator in the school attended by some of the study participants. That was the Ukrainian coordinator as most of the foreign children learning there came from this country. The coordinator is appointed usually by teachers coming from children's countries of origin and sharing their language. Its task is to introduce migrant children to school, their obligations, all amenities and functionalities and provide support on request. The coordinator might ease the first days of a child in the new environment, improve his physical condition and foster the adaptation process. "Well, of course, the first such period, maybe the first two or three months, where I felt such discomfort in the fact that I did not know something, everything is not known to me. All people are strangers to me. The language and the whole structure, education and the country, of course, new, and so I felt such anxiety in this, but fortunately we had a Ukrainian coordinator at the beginning, who helped us, answered all our questions and it helped me to adapt to this part of life here." (14.11.2020.43M.ER.M17.UA.2017.S2). This position is not legally embedded in educational law. It is more titular. It takes advantage of the employment of teachers from the same country from migrants who came by obligating him/her to help those children. It is worth considering introducing some legal regulations fostering such appointments.

In our opinion. It is good that many schools have decided to employ cultural assistants. Kraków as a city and its local government is pioneering in this field having almost as many

assistants as in all other cities together. Nevertheless, this institution is still underdeveloped in the Polish education system; it is still not professionally coded for rights, duties and social job positioning, despite being one of the best children integration practices in the school environment. Apart from lack of proper requirements referring to such personal competencies (the only requirement is bilingualism with Polish/children language) an assistant is signed in as a help for a certain child, and when a child disappears the assistant's position becomes unstable. Supplementing it with the coordinator who would be responsible for all children from a certain country is seen as the fulfilment of the gap apparent in many Polish schools considering the care over and support for the children with migration backgrounds.

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 – long term resident migrant children

This group of children is not so common in Poland. As immigration on a larger scale began in Poland in 2015 there are not many children who stayed here over three years period. Most of the twenty-three children in this group migrated to Poland to continue their education in

the last grades of primary school or to enrol in secondary schools. Due to the length of their stay, their social relations within the school community were much more stable in comparison to the newly-arrived group. Sometimes they played role models and supportive "buddies" for the freshmen. This was considered a particular breakthrough in the integration process of those newly arrived. They are still very focused on learning and performance and gaining also extracurricular achievements. Long-term migrants have a slight tendency to assimilate themselves in the new country rather than integrate into the society. This was assessed as a problem by their teachers who discovered a tendency to fast acculturation with strong detachment toward their own culture. From children perspective, this process was however perceived as natural and positive. Their social relations and bonds to countries of origin, except the family ones, were getting weaker as time passes. The position of those children in the school environment and neighbourhoods is very diverse. Some of them became the leaders in their communities, while others refrain from more vivid contact with local children and rather socialize within their national clusters. The migration experience had a positive impact on their lives and for most of them, the economic status had improved. Again this assessment was contrary to those derived from the quantitative study. On the other hand, the survey answers might be culturally driven by some kind of distanced and more polite/insecure approach that is absent in more intimate relations of the interviews. Children within this group have also better insight into the adaptation process and were able to distinguish factors deteriorating and fostering integration into the society. The language proficiency, possibility to engage in social contacts and ability to mix with Polish students were considered as something essential, while institutional barriers were also mentioned. Among these formal separation was mentioned as the most significant deteriorating factor. It is worth emphasising that most long-term migrant children do not maintain contact with their diaspora, especially are not taking part in the events, services and support provided by the minorities organizations and initiatives. These children are also multilingual and can take advantage of this asset. Children in this group are least attached to any religion. The majority has also a fluid identity. Causally they do not pay attention to the issue of identification but when asked directly they show ambiguity. There is no strong attachment to their national identity, but also not yet transformed into the new one – e.g. Polish. Such discriminative factors are beyond the categorization perceived by children who were interviewed. The process of integration was assessed as a positive experience, thus children could critically evaluate areas that need improvement.

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SPAIN

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1. Introduction

This report contains the principal results of Work Packages six 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 inclusion in host societies, focusing on long-term resident 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.
- 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 four main items: 1) participant observation; 2) long-term migrant children: focus groups & Interviews/autobiographical stories/narration of location; 3) discussion which reflects the most relevant issues and 4) abstract. 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

SCHOOLS							
	Type of school (public/private)	School level (primary/secondary)	Location (urban/rural)	The number of total students	Migration rate (%)	Languages	Religions
S1	Public	Primary	Urban	Approximately 500	Approximately 51%	Catalan, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, others.	Hindu Christians Muslims, others.
S2	Public	Primary	Urban	500	Approximately 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 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

Source: own elaboration.

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

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 teacherinteractions.

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 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?

We did not perceive a difference between long-term migrant children and locals since most students have migrant backgrounds (parents not born in Spain).

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

All long-term migrant children participating in data collection (32 in total) mentioned their country of birth. However, their pre-migration and migration experiences were far from homogeneous, something essential to highlight since there is often a tendency to universalize and simplify the scope of these experiences (Anwaruddin, 2017).

In this research, we collected different kinds of migration experiences: children that moved from one country to another; children that moved several times and throughout other countries or cities; children that left their place of birth when they were very young; children that returned to their country of birth after migration and, once again, they came back to the new country; children that lived some time separated from their parents; among others.

For instance, some children reported multiple migration experiences, movements well depicted in the drawings of their lifelines. In S1, one child (S1, girl 1, 13 y/o, LT) explained that she had lived in 3 different places, so she divided her lifeline into 3 (even though she had spent different periods in each country). Another girl from the same school (S1, girl 7, 12 y/o, LT) drew footprints that showed the transition through colours, indicating the movement from one country to another.

Figure 4. A drawing of a long-term migrant girl in S1 (PS).

Another experience that children commonly reported was coming into the new country after their parents. The children in S1, S4 and S6 stated that their father or mother came to Barcelona a few years before the family came to Barcelona. These experiences were often hard for children since they missed their parents and didn't want to separate from them. For instance, one child (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT) reported: *In my father's case, he was the first of my family to come to Spain and his first year was the worst of the worst that happened in his life. As he had a hard time not knowing how to speak the language and having to go to work, there was discrimination at that time (and there still is). I know my father had a tough time here his first year.* (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT)

Another essential element that characterizes children's migration experience is their affective relation with their relatives and friends who live in their country of birth. As Zembylas (2012) points out when researching transnational experiences, we should consider the diasporic attachments with the homeland. Furthermore, it is also essential to pay attention to the bereavement of migrant children, as the migration experience does not end once migrants are in the new country (Calvo, 2005; Mas Giralt, 2019). For example, in S1, one girl (S1, girl 1, 13 y/o, LT) explained that she was very close to her cousin who still lives in Bangladesh. In S3, one participant (S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT) also explained that his father and other relatives still live in the Dominican Republic, so they talk regularly via video call.

Regarding the emotional experience of migration (Anwaruddin, 2017; Zembylas, 2012), children also reported very heterogeneous views. Some participants expressed that it was a difficult time for them. In S1, one girl (S1, girl 7, 12 y/o, LT) said she was sad when she arrived in the new country. S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT explained that he left the country without solving a conflict with his cousin, so he would like to return to his country of birth to sort it out. Another participant, S6, girl3, 15y/o, LT, shared mixed feelings during the migration experience: she felt sad but also happy to see her mother again. Another boy, in S3, expressed the desire of not repeating the migration experience:

> *The truth is that I was not particularly eager to move because every time I moved, I had to change schools, and that has made me very angry because starting from scratch to make friends and losing those people you have known for a long time makes you very angry. My mother now says that she wants to move and I don't want to, she wants to change me to another school, and I told her that I don't want to, I don't care if I have to take the underground or the train, but I want to keep coming to this school.* (S3, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT)

Only one girl from S3 (girl 3, 13 y/o, LT) experienced the relocation positively even though she felt pity to leave her country of birth. She explained that he could not have male friends in Algeria, so living in Spain was great. However, she is soon to move to France. Her father is a doctor, so they moved for work reasons, and she is thrilled. This was not the case for S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT, who explained that the reason for migration was to look for a better life, as his country was in an economic crisis, so he and his family did not want to move. These examples highlight the emotional difference in the migration experience depending on socio-economic status. Following Alcalde-Campos (2010), the kind of migration route affects

"the degree of acceptance and conformity by the minor of their own migratory project (imposed, negotiated), which not only influences the family relationship but also their state of mind and the process of adaptation to the society of destination and the new school environment" (p.151)

Finally, in the cases of children that came to Spain when they were young (S2, boy 6, 10 y/o, LT), they expressed that they would like to remember more about their country of birth. In the cases they remember it, they explained it nostalgically: talking about the things they liked from their home, friends, family, among others.

Thus, migration stories were complex and multiple, and, as Skribis (2008) claimed, they were "linked with the experiences of adjustment, settlement, nostalgia, a shattered sense of belonging, renewal, loss, discrimination, abrupt endings, new beginnings and new opportunities - all potent sources of emotions' (p.236). Moreover, as we could see during the research, these experiences were always contextual and relying on each child circumstance far from being universal.

General life

Living conditions

Talking openly about living conditions was challenging for the children. We only addressed these issues with those we had a relationship with over time (e. g. children that participated in all creative labs, focus groups and interviews). When discussing their living conditions, children reveal issues related to economic status, power relations in social life, demographic data and other sensitive subjects. Consequently, most of the data collected on the living conditions of the long-term migrants who participated in the research were obtained during the interviews, as they were a confidential space where children could express themselves freely without fear of being judged or questioned by other participants. Besides, personal interviews guarantee the possibility of speaking about private topics that they do not usually talk about in front of their schoolmates.

Some of the participants in S3 and S6 described how removals and house changes affected their living conditions. In some cases, migratory experiences are linked to a significant number of removals. In these cases, changes of home, city and country are a significant factor in the lives of migrant children. Moreover, these removals do not always involve moving to a house in optimal conditions but sometimes imply flat sharing, living in dilapidated or small buildings, or living in temporary housing. S6 girl 3 (S6, girl 3, 15 y/o, LT), a 15-year-old girl from Honduras, explains that since she and her family arrived in Spain, they had to move four times, twice to transitional housing or shared flats. Similarly, S6 boy 3 (S6, boy 3, 15 y/o, LT) explains that since he arrived in Spain, he never had a bedroom of his own until this year and always has been obliged to share a room with others.

Sometimes the living conditions of families directly affect the social, cultural, economic and material thinking of migrant children. In some cases, the family's economic difficulties affect the concerns and aspirations of migrant children (Dreby, 2019). The intervention of S4 boy 1 (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT) during the Focus Group 1 in S4 reveals this point:

> *In the past, we had economic problems, so [when I grow up] I would like to return to my mother everything she has done for me and make her life as good as possible* (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT).

Spatial and social positioning

In recent years, the growing migratory flow in Spain has stimulated different rhetorical forms of labelling and representation of migrants and their communities (Stuardo Concha et al., 2021). These labels, generally promoted by mass media representations and political party discourses, highlight specific scenarios such as symbolic racism (Sears, 1988), fictional representations on a "political enemy" (Mbembe, 2006) and social partitions that "delineate differential forms of inclusion [and exclusion]" (De Genova et al., 2014, p. 3). Negative discourses and prejudices affect migrants' living conditions by creating prejudices and stereotypes. We can see this reflected on S4 boy 1 (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT) interview:

> *My father told me that, a time ago, people used to come to Europe to bring their families forward. But now, with the virus, they take wrong paths and get into crime, smuggling… That's why we [migrants] have a bad reputation. As my colleague mentioned, people see all of us as criminals.* (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT)

For many long-term migrant children coming from South American countries, streets from Spanish cities are usually perceived as "safe places" compared to their cities of origin, as Focus Groups 1 and 2 in S6 had revealed. However, the spatial positioning of children and young people in their environment depends on the urban planning, social structure and atmosphere of their living place. Some children live in the centre of big cities such as Barcelona, while others live in the slums or small peripheral towns. Focus Groups carried out in S2, S3 and S7 reveal that many participants living in areas with a low or low-middle per capita income index perceive their neighbourhoods as a noisy and unsafe place where crime is a usual occurrence. This is a common concern among pupils of these schools, either newly-arrived, long-term migrants or local children. Specifically, long-term migrants participating in Focus Groups expressed: *"I like my neighbourhood, but you have to be careful not to go down the wrong path. [...] People are not what they seem, somebody could stab you"* (S3, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT); "*It is a bad place because there is a lot of noise and the neighbours below are always smoking weed"* (S7, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT). Moreover, participants from S3 highlighted several urbanistic deficiencies in their neighbourhood: *"There are no places for sport or leisure activities"* (S3, girl 3, 13 y/o, LT); "I wish there were more trees" (S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT).

In contrast, long-term migrant participants of S6 described their neighbourhood as an enjoyable and familiar place. For instance, S6 girl 3 (S6, girl 3, 15y/o, LT) pointed: "I feel good here. It's convenient because there are a lot of great places you can go" (S6, girl 3, 15y/o,

LT). Similarly, a 15-year-old boy explained: *"I like my neighbourhood because it has everything you need to live and much more. [...] "*.

In terms of domestic space, several participants expressed the importance of having their place at home and agreed that their bedroom is their favourite place of the house. During the interviews, these participants described their room as "intimate", "personalised", "enjoyable", "peaceful", and "safe". Nonetheless, children do not always have a room of their own and at some point in their lives had to share it with brothers or other relatives — cousins, uncles, brothers-in-law, nephews (S6, boy 3, 15 y/o, LT). In addition, the vast majority described Wi-Fi and TV as the most valuable assets. Finally, a long-term girl migrant from Pakistan pointed out that she has the perception that houses in her home country are more significant than in Spain and that she doesn't like to live in a small flat (S6, girl 2, 15 y/o, LT).

Inclusion in peer groups

Some participants described the group of friends as one of the most relevant social circles for them. Nonetheless, friendship groups also were presented as challenges in the process of arrival and inclusion in school. One boy (S6, boy 3, 15 y/o, LT) described the discomfort experienced at his arrival. Until he became friends with his mates, he suffered exclusion: "*At the beginning, there were some classmates from that group that maybe they expressed rejection, a bit of mockery... Not directly to me, but I could already feel the mockery. [...] They didn't accept me at that time*".

Similarly, in S4, one boy (S4 boy 6, 15 y/o, LT) pointed out that his school-mates treated him differently because of his migrant background: *They treat me the same as the others. But sometimes, they make comments to me that they don't make to others. [...] Here at school, I get comments from them in confidence, among friends. Not on the streets*. (S4 boy 6, 15 y/o, LT).

Involvement in leisure activities, sport

Children identified aport, outdoor activities and non-formal educational activities as relevant spaces for children of different ages. The sports described by the participants are parkour, basketball, football, chess, trekking, swimming and boxing. However, the COVID situation affected the sports habits and aspirations of some of the participants. In S6, one boy (S6, boy 3, 15 y/o, LT) explained that he used to go to a gym for boxing training before the pandemic, but now gyms are closed because of health restrictions, so he and his colleagues train outdoors. In S3, one girl (S3, girl 5, 13 y/o, LT) 5 explained that she would like to join a basketball team, but she could not due to the pandemic situation. Furthermore, sports have very important for children's inclusion. For instance, in S6, a boy explained that football played an essential role in his inclusion in school's social life:

> *I remember one day in sports class, we were playing football, I scored a goal and I played very well, and the next time I wanted to play with these classmates, because they didn't accept me at that time, they told me "hey, come and play with us!" and so on. And well, that's when the bonds began and so on, and from there, we generated friendship.* (S6, boy 3, 15 y/o, LT)

Another critical factor in children's inclusion is the involvement in non-formal educational activities. In Catalan, the word "casal" describes an educational and cultural space, either public or private, that offers non-formal educational activities during the summertime and after-school hours. It includes sports, outdoor activities and pedagogical activities. Several long-term migrant children spoke about *casal* in the interviews and focus groups and described it very positively. Leisure time was commonly associated with friendship groups. The majority of the long-term migrants explained that they usually spend free time meeting friends in the open air and the streets.

Some of the participants chose shopping centres and malls as their favourite places to go at the weekend, usually with their families. Participants described outdoor activities, such as strolling through the city, visiting friends in other cities, and going to the beach and restaurants. Finally, some children explained that they use their smartphones or their computer to join social networks and play videogames in their free time.

Health (physical and mental health)

The issue of health has been a challenge in framing questions for interviews and focus groups in a non-invasive way. For the researchers, it was impossible to pose questions directly about mental and physical health during the focus groups since sensitive data and issues that were kept private could emerge and make the participants feel uncomfortable. Topics related to mental health usually emerged during personal interviews, mainly indirectly through anecdotes, descriptions of emotions, and memories related to trauma and physiological and social changes.

As mentioned above, some participants expressed that the experience of migration was emotionally difficult for them, and some of them experienced hard times, especially during the initial months in the new country, such as a sense of loneliness, sadness and shame during the first period. For instance, a girl in S6 (S6, girl 2, 15 y/o, LT) explained that she felt sad because she and her family would move to another country once she finished secondary school. She pointed to the mental and psychological difficulties of moving to another country for the second time in her life: "I'm *leaving my friends and all this... It's sad for me. [...] Then it's all over again, it's hard all over again*". Similarly, a boy in S3 (S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT) explained a sense of loss directly linked to his migratory background and the distance from his family: "*I am lost and I want to go back to my country. Not to live, but to see my family*". On the other hand, other children from secondary schools pointed out that they had experienced emotional changes in the last few years, specifically on the development of resilience and self-responsibility. In the interview, a boy in S6 explained his complicated integration process at school, and his schoolmates marginalised him. These episodes

affected him considerably, and he remembers them as a part of the past that have provided him with resources to relativise the effect that the opinions of others have on him at present:

> *To be happy is to have a child's innocence and know how to say "I don't care". Because if you hold this for five seconds [he holds a pen in his hand in the air], you don't get tired. But if you hold it for three hours, your hand is going to burst. It's the same with feelings: if you think about it for a second, nothing happens. But if you keep thinking about it all day long, it snowballs, and that is not good for you.* (S6, boy 3, 15 y/o, LT)

Similarly, S6 girl 3 explains that she perceived a change in how she takes self-responsibility with her actions and decisions now.

Another essential element that children stressed out during the research was the impact of the COVID related restrictions on their mental health and well-being. The current pandemic has strongly affected the mental health of children and 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). In S4, a boy (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT) explained that the lockdown provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic affected his social habits: Similarly, S4 girl 1 argues that since the pandemic started, it is more difficult for her to go outside and meet friends because of the health restrictions and the fear of contagion: Furthermore, the majority of the participants in Focus Group 2 in S6 agreed that their social life was affected by the pandemic situation and that now they spend more time at home.

Educational environment and system

Experiences of inclusion in school

In general, long-term migrant children reported feeling "comfortable", "happy", and "welcomed" in the school. For instance:

> *I feel very comfortable at school (...) I love it. Sometimes I'm very nervous because things happen to me, and here they make you keep your mind busy and not think about what you're thinking about at home (...), and you get distracted a lot. In most cases, students perceive the school environment as a welcoming and accepting space; they were very open and talked to you. They asked you where you were from (...), and if you were alone, they'd call you. Things like that.* (S6, girl3, 15y/o, LT)

On the other hand, some communicated feeling excluded during their first months in the host country. According to their perceptions, it was hard to come to a new country and start from scratch; adapting to school was complicated and making friends because some peers tended to ignore them. Children shared anecdotes about language acquisition and the impossibility and difficulty to explain themselves in an unknown language. For instance:

> *Some girls bothered me, and I was alone sometimes, and I had a hard time. My mum couldn't speak either, and I couldn't tell anyone. And I had a hard time* (S6, girl2, 15y/o, LT)

> *As I didn't understand most things, instead of helping, some people passed by. So I didn't talk to them, and others helped me. Then, as time went by, we got together in classes and started to talk.* (S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT)

In addition, one girl expressed feeling excluded due to cultural traditions (S6, girl2, 15y/o, LT).

> *In primary school, we went to the swimming pool and in my culture... My parents didn't let me go to the swimming pool, so I was left alone and everyone went to the swimming pool, and I was alone here*

Some children reported feeling excluded in previous schools but not in the current one. When we asked when and how they started to feel included, most of them pointed out to a specific friend or classmate, *"I had a friend, we became good friends at the beginning and he was doing things for me. For example if I had any questions, I would ask him and he would help me"* (S6, boy3, 15y/o, LT).

In some cases (both in primary and secondary schools), children reported that sport was also a key aspect that influenced the integration process. Sports can provide spaces where newly-arrived, long-term and local children and teenagers can establish a relationship that otherwise would not be possible and "therefore have a significant impact on their commitment, well-being, and sense of meaningfulness" (Flensner, Korp & Lindgren 2020, p. 5).

> *I think the adaptation was when... it was football (...) because I felt rejected, a little bit of mockery... Not directly at you, but you could already see the mockery. I remember one day in physical [education] we played football, I played goalkeeper, and I did very well, and the next time (...) they told me "hey come and play with us". And that's when the bonds started and so on, and from there, we generated a friendship* (S6, boy3, 15y/o, LT)

Language & school language policy and practice

In the vast majority of cases, children primarily talked about language acquisition. Pupils shared anecdotes and experiences focused on their first months learning the local language. Two figures were essential: some specific classmates and the teacher of the reception classroom:

> *On my first day, when I arrived at this school, I didn't know how to speak Spanish or Catalan. Thanks to a French friend, she used to translate for me until I learnt... I learnt some words until I got better.* (S3, girl 3, 13 y/o, LT)
> *Teachers helped me a lot. And it was complex but little by little.... (...) (name) who is the teacher of the reception classroom. She helped me a lot. I didn't know how to speak at all. I would go home and cry, and my mum would look at me and cry too because... I couldn't speak either, and I couldn't do anything, so... The teacher helped me a lot with the drawings. She would draw me things and put my name next to them. She gave me books to read.* (S6, girl2, 15y/o, LT)

As mentioned above, some pupils reported a sense of loneliness, sadness and shame during the first period. For instance, one girl in S1 reported:

> *In the beginning, I felt very sad, I didn't understand the language, and I didn't have anyone to play with within the playground. It helped me a lot to go to school with my sister because I could be with someone during the first months and play with someone who spoke the same language.* (S1, girl 7, 12 y/o, LT)

This feeling was also expressed in her artistic production (figure 5) and reflects the role of affective factors in language learning and the role of "culture shock", which would be those experiences in which learners face stress, anxiety and perhaps a feeling of rejection of the language (Arroyo, 2014).

Figure 5. Detail of a life-line representation (S1).

A large proportion of children coming to Spain come from Latin America, so they already speak one of the official languages of the state (Spanish). For this reason, the main difficulties related to learning the local language involved Catalan. This issue deserves special attention regarding the difference between conversational and academic language in schools (Little, 2010: 18). In general, almost all schools that participated in the research followed the same pattern. The Catalan language mediates academic contexts (classrooms, curriculum, or conversations between teachers and students).

However, Spanish was predominant in all informal spaces of schools (corridors, playground, peers dynamics, etc.). According to Little (2010: 19), one of the main distinctions is that conversational language usually involves paralinguistic aspects and non-verbal communication (such as gestures or intonation), and it is context-embedded (you can often understand the conversation due to the physical location). However, academic language "tends to be context-reduced: cues to meaning are primarily linguistic, contained in the spoken or written text we seek to understand or produce" (Little, 2010: 19). Also, in the case of children coming from Latin America, some reported that they changed their pronunciation when speaking Spanish because they used to be criticized or mocked by other classmates.

On the other hand, regarding the school policies on language acquisition, most newly arrived children reported that attending the reception classroom was critical in their integration process. Nonetheless, in the cases of long-term migrants, the scenario varies slightly. According to the Department of Education, the reception classroom may only attend international students who join the education system for the first time over 8-9 years old. For this reason, some long-term migrant children were not able to have this "extra" support during their academic trajectory.

Beyond the reception classroom, we did not find any specific school language policy addressing the different languages spoken by the children. Most of the schools that participated in the research allowed children to speak in their native languages in specific cases, such as in informal spaces (corridors) or when one pupil has just arrived and does not know Spanish or Catalan. Regarding this aspect, children shared their impressions about existing good practices and possible suggestions for improvements. For instance, one boy (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT) reported that their math tutor translated the exam into Arabic to make it more understandable to foreign children. Other children also proposed some ideas to promote spaces to take advantage of different languages present in the school. An example is having teachers who speak children's native language (e.g. Arabic, Chinese, etc.) or taking advantage of the richness of children's origins to support the learning of different languages in the school.

Peers

In most cases, long-term migrant children stated that their relationships with their classmates facilitated their process of arriving at school when they have newly arrived. In addition, the fact that schools have a high percentage of new students helps to develop empathy for the inclusion process since many of the children have experienced the same situation in the past.

However, sometimes the inclusion of migrant children was not facilitated by their peers. For instance, in S6, children shared that they used to make fun of newly arrived children in the past. In the case of S6, the 15-year-old students considered that their relationship as a group had changed over time. One of them shared that previously she was generating fights and was bullying a classmate. Nonetheless, she left that attitude behind and asked her classmate for forgiveness:

> *I was a person who loved to fight. And I was hurting a colleague of mine a lot. Psychologically, everything, hurting him a lot. Then, over time you realize that this is not right. You have to change, and that he is not the one affected, but you too, because then you don't feel well. Then things changed. We were talking, and I asked him for forgiveness. He accepted it, and now we are okay. Now, on the contrary, there are no fights at all... I mean, everyone has changed the chip.* (S6, girl3, 15y/o, LT)

Other children in S6 also stated that in previous years there were fights daily. But due to a maturing process, currently, there is much more group cohesion.

Overall, from the fieldwork with the children, we noticed that there is an ambivalent position in the models of relationships between peers, with caring relationships and fights and conflicts coexisting in all schools. The following quote is an excellent example of this ambivalence:

> *Q: What do you like in this school?*
> *A: My classmates, and that we help each other.*
> *Q: And what things do you not like?*
> *A: That people hit other people.*
> (S5, boy4, 10 y/o, LT)

In general, children consider that they have a good predisposition to generate good relationships with everyone and that their schoolmates are one of the reasons why they like school. However, in some schools, such as S3, S5, S6, conflict seems to be a more structural phenomenon:

> *Q: Now imagine that you're the Head of School. What things would you like to change?*
> *A: The bullying… I wish children didn't hit each other anymore, they didn't insult each other anymore, and they didn't fight each other anymore.* (S5, girl7, 10 y/o, LT)

Another school child also shares this perception:

> *I've some friends who always get angry and we fight* (S5, boy3, 10 y/o, LT).

Teachers/educational staff

Relationships with the teaching staff have been valued positively in all the participating schools. Children feel supported and recognized by their teachers in the academic field and recognize the vital role of the teachers in guiding them in their decisions about their studies. Furthermore, in S3, S5, S5, S6, and S7, children pointed out how teachers' support extends beyond the academic level.

In general, children considered that the teachers accompanied them personally and emotionally. Children explained they feel comfortable with their teachers and that if they need to talk, share a problem, or ask for help, they can count on the teachers:

> *Yes. They help a lot, yes. If something happens to you, they ask you. And if you need help, they give it to you. Yes, they indeed help you. They care about you, you know? Whenever I'm sad, feel bad or something, they try to understand me. Sometimes I don't tell them why because I wouldn't say I like talking about my things so much, I'm more reserved for some things. And they understand you, and they tell you: "well, I hope everything is fine..." and they encourage you. When you tell them something, they try to help you. And after they talk to you, they call someone else to help, to give you your place, your time …* (S6, girl3, 15y/o, LT).

As we see in these words, when necessary, teachers activate other mechanisms, such as psychological support or additional help from other school staff who have this function (counsellors, cultural mediators, social workers). Furthermore, children also recognized how teachers also cover a crucial role to encourage dialogue and conflict resolution.

Regarding their migration experience, in S1, S3, S4, S6 and S7, children recognized the role of the teacher in the inclusion process: "*I think that both students and teachers try to do that the person [newly-arrived child] feels as comfortable as possible, and can express themselves* (S4, girl 1, 15 y/o, LT)". This support in the reception process is not limited to the pupils but also covers families:

> *Q: When you arrived here in Catalonia, do you think there is a figure that has accompanied you in the process of coming to school?*
> *A: Yes, teachers helped a lot. Because sometimes my father came to the meetings because my mother couldn't, she understood Spanish better than him. So, when my father came, it was necessary to make an effort to understand what he said. And sometimes I went to help too, but when I couldn't, teachers tried to help him.* (S7, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT).

These perceptions about the role of the teachers point out how teachers successfully manage to generate other ways of relating with children that goes beyond the transmission of information. In this way, teachers build relationships that include recognising who their students are and the background they bring with them, as well as the affective and emotional components. This attitude facilitates the inclusion of migrant pupils, as well as the well-being of pupils in general. Finally, it is worth mentioning that during the pandemic lockdown, this care in pedagogical relationships acquired new dimensions.

Inclusion and integration practices regarding newcomers

From their point of view, language learning is a crucial aspect of the integration process: "A*t this school, we are lucky enough to have the reception classroom for newcomers. There you can learn the Catalan language and things about the city. This is the good fortune of our school"*

(S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT). This issue is extremely interesting mainly because of two details: on the one hand, due to the anti-covid measures, many schools have had to close the reception classrooms. Therefore, many pupils have not had this additional support during this academic year (2020-2021). On the other hand, it is also important to point out that the reception classroom is not available to all Catalonia schools. For the Department of Education to grant this aid, educational institutions need to meet a series of requirements. Finally, according to recent educational research, the Department of Education has been slowly closing the reception classrooms intending to offer alternative support (such as linguistic assistants in regular classes) during the last years. On the other hand, teachers claim that this additional help is not arriving at schools (Ballestín, 2017).

Another significant idea is that one child reported disagreement with some “integration” practices (additional support) because when students attend the reception classroom, they remain separated from the class group for a few hours:

> *I like it (that there are people from other countries), but sometimes I'm not too fond of it. Because... I don't know. When new students come, it's hard for them when they come, like it was hard for me, so we do different things, as we are in two separate classrooms, and I don't like that.* (S6, girl2, 15y/o, LT)

Psychosocial support

In most cases, long-term migrant children did not speak explicitly about any psychosocial support available. On the other hand, due to previous phases of the research, we have detected some beneficial practices and tools.

The reception classroom (S1, S2, S4, S5 or S6) is one of the most common tools, and it plays a crucial role in the integration process. Although the main objective is to learn the language of instruction (Catalan), in many cases, they also try to accompany newcomers emotionally, offer psychological support and make a deliberate effort to encourage children's well-being. For instance, in the case of one child in S3 who pointed out that *"the reception classroom was important to receive personalised attention*" (S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT). Nevertheless, due to covid restrictions this last academic year, schools had to make "stable" groups of students (mixing a maximum of two group classes). Therefore, it could be that some schools were not able to follow the routine established in previous years.

In some specific cases, schools have different figures with the aim of offering psychosocial support. In general, according to Arpal (2019: 196), the main objectives of this additional support are: promoting spaces for collaboration between the school and other organisations in the neighbourhood and the city; offering psychological, emotional and professional support to children or promoting intercultural competences. For instance, S1 has the "social team", which includes a social educator and a social integrator. S2 has the "social commission" composed of the management team and one social educator. S3 and S4 have one figure called social integrator, and S5 and S6 have one social educator, a "school

promoter" (mainly focused on working with Roma children) and the EMO team (care and welfare team), with a strong focus on improving children' emotional competences.

Family and wider community

Family

Concerning newly-arrived children, long-term migrant children were slightly more open in talking about their families. Specifically, most of them also include in their narratives, visual representations and descriptions some tensions and difficulties experienced by their family (e.g. divorce, health problems, etc.). This difference may be due to the lack of language barriers or a higher willingness to open up with the researchers.

Almost all newly arrived children reported that their families have a fundamental role in their lives and well-being. For instance, in the focus group in S3, all children expressed that they are united (even though separated physically in some cases), and they feel that their families support them and make them feel well. Similarly, a participant in the focus group in S4, one girl (S4, girl 1, 15 y/o, LT) expressed that the most important thing was her mother. Another one reported that what he enjoys most is spending time with his family.

This caring relation and the conceptualization of family as a place of well-being includes the nuclear family and other relatives. As in newly-arrived children, many children spoke about extended familial relations and the role of uncles, grandparents, cousins, etc., in caring, well-being and everyday relationships. In some cases, for instance, some children speak about living with extended family members or the role of the extended family in their migration process.

For instance, one boy (S6, boy3, 15y/o, LT) used these words to speak about his grandmother:

> *She was the one who raised me. I stayed with her, I think ... I don't know how many years, but I think four, or more, five, even. Because my parents came here and I stayed with her.*

Another child (S3, boy 9, 14 y/o, LT) similarly reported that his cousins were those who raised him.

These stories shed light on the relation between migration processes and familiar dynamics. As in the case of newly-arrived children, on the one hand, there are several cases in which the parents emigrated first to Spain while the children remained in their countries of origin with a family member. Only later were the children reunited with their parents in the host country. On the other hand, some children also described migration processes involving the extended family migrating to the new country in different moments. For instance, one pupil from Colombia (S2, boy4, 10 y/o, LT) reported that his parents, uncles, cousins and grandmother, all moved to Spain during the last years.

These patterns led to situations in which transnational ties are significant in children's lives and familiar dynamics. Several children spoke about family members who are still in their country of origin or live in other countries.

For instance, one boy in S3 (S3, boy 5, 13 y/o, LT) reported that he currently lives with his mother, brother and stepfather, but the rest of his family is in his home country, and he misses them and has not seen them for five years. Similarly, another girl in the same school explained that she has relatives living in various countries (S3, girl 3, 13 y/o, LT). Several children also make explicit references to travelling for visiting the family members that are still in the home country. For instance, one girl in S4 (S4, girl 1, 15 y/o, LT) complained that this year, due to COVID restrictions, they were unable to travel to Morocco to visit the rest of the family. Similarly, in S1, one girl (S1, girl 1, 13 y/o, LT) remarked as an important moment in her life when she "travelled to Bangladesh to visit my grandmother and my uncles".

Therefore, the patterns of familiar reunification and transnational relations play a central role in children's well-being and inclusion process since they strongly shape their biographies, affects, and feelings.

At the same time, other reflections regarding the role of the families in children's migratory experience emerge from their experience with the language and familiar dynamics. For instance, many children (S2) report speaking different languages with different family members or in different situations:

> *Q: And what language do you speak to each other?*
> *A: It depends, when my father goes to work, I, my mother and my brother speak a little Spanish... and when we are all Romanian.* (S2, boy5, 10 y/o, LT)

Similarly, another boy in S7 (S7, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT) reported that he does not understand the native language of his father:

> *Q: Does your father only speak English to you?*
> *A: My father speaks English to me, and when he is with his family or friends, they speak Yoruba, but I don't understand anything.* (S7, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT)

These linguistic movements, between the language of the country of origin, the language of the host country and third languages within the same familiar structure, indicate multi-layered and multi-cultural identities that are constructed not only about a broader social context but also within family dynamics.

Migrant community, religious community

Almost any children spoke about a broader migrant or religious community, and only a few children mentioned their religious beliefs. We do not have a clear understanding of the

reasons behind this tendency. On the one hand, children may not integrate the concept into

their way of seeing the world and their environment. On the other hand, some children reported not being used to speaking about religious aspects in school. This attitude may be related to the secular tradition of the schools involved. For instance, one girl (S6) reported:

> *I am afraid to talk about different religions because there are religions that do things that scare me.* (S6, girl3, 15y/o, LT)

Local environment

Especially in the urban area, most children seem to spend much of their free time at home and sporadically visit some other part of the city either with their parents or with organized activities such as the "casals". Also, many of them, especially from S5 (a school located in a neighbourhood of Barcelona), reported that when they go out, they mainly visit commercial areas such as supermarkets or shopping malls. Instead, children from S4, located in a town in the province of Tarragona, reported carrying out a wider variety of outdoor activities:

> *Here we have soccer and basketball courts, routes to go by bike or spend a day in nature. Here in Reus, you can have a great time (...). You can play sports or go to modernist buildings in case you want to go around the city* (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT).

This tendency is consistent with data about the overall Spanish population, where only 18% of children reported spending their free time outdoors (Jover-Olmeda et al., 2018). Furthermore, this trend could even accentuate due to excessive urbanization, which mainly affects lower-income social groups and implies reducing spaces for children's play and sports.

Their references to visiting local emblematic places are mostly related to school activities. They seem to positively impact children, who referred to them as significant events in their lives.

For instance, one child in S5 (S5, boy4, 10 y/o, LT) explains about the school trips they went on with the school:

> *A: (We did) some school trips, like when we went to Tibidabo and PortAventura.*
> *Q: You went to Tibidabo and PortAventura, wow! So, you wish there were more school trips?*
> *A: Yes.*
> (S5, boy4, 10 y/o, LT)

To sum up, especially for children who live in Barcelona city, the relation with the local environment is relatively scarce and mainly mediated by school initiatives or afterschool programs. It would be relevant to consider educational and urban policies oriented toward supporting a more substantial relationship with the local environment from a policy perspective.

Other

In inclusion processes, schools need to offer a welcome beyond the pupils and include their families. For this reason, many schools in Spain incorporate the welcoming of families in the reception plan for international students. For example, in the educational project of school S5/S6 one of the pillars is the bond with the families, seeking to establish a relationship of care with them, not only in the reception period but permanently. However, some children pointed out that their families do not participate in the events and meetings organised by the school:

> *Yes, but my mother... What they do, she doesn't like it (...) I mean... As she doesn't understand the language [Catalan] or anything like that either... And as she's also busy with work and all of that, she can't.* (S6, girl3, 15y/o, LT)

> *No, my family doesn't participate so much. It's because my mum doesn't know how to speak (...) it's tough for her, so she says 'no, I'm not going.* (S6, girl2, 15y/o, LT)

From these examples, we can observe that sometimes the lack of knowledge of the school's language can limit families to participate in the activities organised at school, making it challenging to generate links. Furthermore, the working conditions and personal situation of some migrant families (e.g. precarious job positions, multi-employment) may create difficulties in joining school's activities during working hours.

In other situations, the barrier to creating a link with the families is not the language but the lack of involvement. It is common in the primary level that families maintain more significant contact with the school. Nonetheless, this contact weakens at the secondary level, and they often pay less attention to the events that schools propose for families and the meetings the teachers invite them. This situation influences not only the establishment of links between schools and families but also between different families:

> *Q: So, there are some activities, and does your family have any family friends?*
> *A: No, now at the secondary school as my father doesn't come to pick me up he doesn't know the other parents (...) he knows the ones who have been with me since primary school.* (S7, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT).

For this reason, schools must promote connections between teachers and staff with families. For example, S5/S6 organises once a month "Coffee with Families" and S9 "Afternoon Snack with Families" once a week. Also, sometimes schools facilitate different ways to communicate with the families who don't speak Catalan, such as a hired translator or to invite mothers who can speak both languages. These initiatives could make the inclusive process of migrant children easier.

Conceptualizations of own well-being and life satisfaction

Self-perceived well-being and life satisfaction

During the focus groups and interviews, all the children from the different primary and secondary schools linked well-being with their families. This feeling is not uncommon, as the family is usually the central image of migration experiences: "It provides a continuity and permanence sense of migrants with their origin place or in their subjective dimension of the entrenchment place and central nucleus in the interpretation of the personal stories" (Ariza, 2002: 63-64).

For instance, a boy in S3 (S3, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT) expressed that his life satisfaction was related to the possibility of the whole family together and happy. As he was separated from his mother for several years, he felt alone on many occasions. Another girl from S3 (S3, girl 3, 13 y/o, LT) explained that she was happy when visiting her family, who lives around the world; she also feels well when her relatives have surprised her visiting Spain.

In S6, 2 girls (S6, girl2, 15y/o, LT and S6, girl3, 15y/o, LT) related well-being to their childhood in their home country, as they could spend time with their relatives' children. One of them said:

> *A: I was in Pakistan, and my whole family was there. The cousins… We lived not together but in the same neighbourhood. So, I would go to their houses; they would come to mine. And now I'm here by myself, and I don't particularly appreciate living alone with my family. Without family, then ... And now, here, because I have friends now.*
>
> *(...)*
>
> *Q: And how do you feel living here?*
>
> *A: I don't like it.*
>
> *Q: You don't like it, because...?*
>
> *A: For the family. Because sometimes it is my cousin's birthday and the whole family is together, and we are here and... Sometimes I cry, that is why I'm not too fond of it.*
>
> (S6, girl2, 15y/o, LT)

Therefore, being away from the family is one of the reasons that diminishes the sense of well-being of long-term migrant children in Spain. Having the possibility to keep in contact increases it, but, in the end, some children believe that they have more life satisfaction when they can spend time with family and relatives. Moreover, as Alcalde-Campos (2010) pointed out, their sense of well-being is proportional to information on the migration plan provided by their families (when they could visit their family when they could come back...). The more information about it, the more life satisfaction.

On the other hand, as said above, children consider that leisure activities, school and friends contribute to their well-being. Nonetheless, all these dimensions were strongly affected by Covid related restrictions.

Identification and belonging

Long-term migrants' narratives revealed that senses of belonging and identification generate through multiple dimensions and trajectories. In this respect, identification is a process of becoming where subjectivities emerge and develop. Only one boy associated his identity with his country of birth and his "race" (S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT), and he described identity as the "blood, the race and the culture", and pointed out that his culture is different from the Spanish one (S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT).

In contrast, most long-term migrants participating in the research expressed that their identity emerged in a cross-cultural and cross-national way by developing senses of belonging to different cultures, territories and ethnic/cultural/religious groups. For instance, in S3, a girl from Algeria (S3, girl, 15 y/o, LT) expressed that she situated her identity between Algeria and France because of her family and linguistic links. Similarly, in S2, a boy 5 (S2, boy 5, 10 y/o, LT) explained that although his parents were born in Poland and Germany, he feels closer to Romania, where most of his family lives. During the interview, he expressed his sense of belonging to Romanian culture and drew the Romanian flag to represent his trajectories.

Some participants (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT; S4, girl 1, 15 y/o, LT; S6, boy 3, 15 y/o, LT) talked about cultural and national life trajectories identity diluted during the migratory process. S4 girl 1 explained that her father, who was born in Morocco and has lived in Spain for decades, was not recognised by the local community as Moroccan when travelled to Morocco for vacation:

> *Two years ago, in Morocco, a man asked my father, "where are you from?" My father answered that he was Moroccan, but he lived in Spain and was travelling for vacation. And then, the man said, "oh, well, yeah, so you are one of those", referring to the fact that he's a person who left the country and separated from the Moroccan people.* (S4, girl 1, 15 y/o, LT)

Similarly, one boy in S4 (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT) explained that his father was born in Algeria but has lived in Spain for many years. When he went back to Algeria, people treated him as a foreigner. In S6, a boy 3 (S6, boy 3, 15y/o, LT) explained that he does not identify himself as a Peruvian anymore and argues that he feels more Spanish since he has forgotten his life in Peru. Nonetheless, he has the feeling that if he visits Peru, he will recover all his memories and belonging:

> *I think that right now, I feel more Spanish than Peruvian. Not for any particular reason, but I don't have many memories from there. Nonetheless, I think that if I go to Peru, although it's just to visit, I will remember all the years I lived there. [...] Someday I would like to go there with my mother and find that part of me again that I lost… because it was a long time ago.* (S6, boy 3, 15 y/o, LT).

Finally, during the focus groups in S3 and S5, identification and belonging were associated with multiple categories and dimensions. In discussing it, children highlighted several factors influencing their subjectivity: Their family (S3, girl 5, 13 y/o, LT; S3, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT); the place where they live (i.e. their home, their neighbourhood, their environment) (S3, girl 5, 13 y/o, LT); the cultural traditions, such as dance and food (S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT); their gender identification (S3, boy 5, 13 y/o LT); the country where they were born (S3, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT) and citizenship (S5, boy 3, 10 y/o, LT). These categories overlap and generate complex entanglements where national and cultural identities result in hybrid subjectivities (Curiel, 2007). As a result, during focus group 1 in S3, girl 5 suggested that identitarian categorical possibilities are endless:

Q: Where do you belong?
Girl 5: To my home. (S3, girl 5, 13 y/o, LT)
Boy 6: To my country. (S3, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT)
Girl 5: To my bed, specifically. (S3, girl 5, 13 y/o, LT)
[...]
Q: I can see a lot of categories… A family is a group of people; the country is an abstract term, the bed is a part of the house… How many categories do you think there are?
Girl 5: Endless! (S3, girl 5, 13 y/o, LT)
Boy 6: In fact, there are a lot. (S3, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT)

Feelings of safety

A small number of children shared their attitudes and opinions regarding their feelings of safety. Usually, this safety addresses the school environment where pupils report feeling welcomed and valued and other spaces such as their homes and living conditions.

L: In your life, when would you say you feel safe? (S3 focus group)
S (LT): When I am at home, well, in my room.

Regarding the perception of their neighbourhood and despite the schools being in different areas of the city, in some specific cases, long-term children reported a feeling of "fear" and discomfort (S6 and S2).

Q: What do you think of the neighbourhood?
A: It's good.
Q: I mean, how do you feel in the neighbourhood?
A: I don't go out in the neighbourhood much, but when I do go out, it's okay. Sometimes I'm afraid to go out alone because there are people who... I don't know; it scares me.
Q: It makes you distrustful.
A: Yes, and I don't go to a street where there is no one around. I go from here to home and from home to school. That's all.
(S6, girl2, 15y/o, LT)

What I don't like is that they steal a lot. (S2, boy6, 10 y/o, LT)

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

Children showed a heterogeneous panorama about their possible futures. Most secondary school students imagine themselves with a pleasant life in the future and a well-recognized job (e.g. lawyer, veterinary, computer scientist, athletes, economist, policeman, psychologist, etc.). Younger children, instead, tend to refer to possible futures more related to fantasies or ongoing trends (e.g. being a famous YouTuber, living in the forest). Concerning newly arrived children, long term migrant children seem to have a clearer understanding of the path they need to follow to reach a specific position or a particular job (e.g. you need to study, go to the university, etc.). This issue could be related to how the educational system and socialization processes in the host country could have helped them build a clearer vision of paths and opportunities.

On the other hand, several children also speak of the importance of economic wealth and their willingness to "make money".

> *It is essential to have money.* (S2, boy3, 10 y/o, LT)
> *In my dream, I am a millionaire in a big house. A jacuzzi ... I feel like that when my family comes to say: "Wow!" do you understand?* (S6, girl3, 15y/o, LT)

This tendency may indicate the relevance of their families' economic situation in their lives and the influence of a consumerist and neoliberal society.

Regarding their willingness to stay in the host country, most pupils imagine themselves living in their host country in the future or another western country. Most of them express their lack of intention toward moving back to their home country. This willingness is indicative of positive well-being and process in the new country. Only one child reported his willingness to move back to the host country.

Finally, a last relevant consideration addressed the relation between their perceived opportunities and their parents' status. Specifically, one girl explained:

> *Yes, my mother wants me to break the… she explained to me about a circle. That all have followed the same path. He wants me to break that circle, to make another one. For others to follow the other circle.* (S6, girl3, 15y/o, LT).

On the one hand, this perspective accounts for children's willingness to social transformation and changing their conditions concerning the family's situation. On the other hand, it points out children's feelings of being capable of achieving this goal.

Perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions

Different children affirmed that they like being with students from diverse countries of origin and cultural backgrounds in terms of interculturality in school. When children have

peers from the same country, they enjoy talking about commonalities. They also like to meet people from other places because it is a way to learn from other cultures. In particular, they stressed the benefits of learning about other habits, words in other languages or about other cultures.

> *Look, in my class, there is no one in Spanish. We're all Latinos, or we're half Spanish, half Moroccan or something like that. And it's excellent because, for example, I learn things from them (...) For example, my classmate is Argentinian, he talks like this, like "teach me". Or the other one is Moroccan, and she teaches you words (...). We also talk about traditions, a party, school, and how we complain because we finish school at midnight in my country, and here we finish at 5 o'clock.*
> (S6, girl3, 15y/o, LT).

However, children also identified racist attitudes and comments in their schools. Nonetheless, in most cases, children perceived commentaries as jokes. Another issue related to racial stereotypes and racism arose in conversation about sexual harassment when two girls affirmed that usually, men who harass them are Pakistani, Moroccan, Spanish, and Latin America. Nonetheless, another boy in the same group pointed out that these are racial stereotypes.

Different students showed high sensitivity towards migration, borders and social justice in terms of values and perceptions about migration. For example, a boy (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT) felt hurt because he knew that migrants in the Canaries[3] were dying and living in bad conditions. Another girl expressed her dreams about a world without boundaries, with cultural diversity but without violence and death.

> *If I could... I know it's something you can only dream of... goodbye to borders. We are on a planet that is not ours; we are the invaders. We should realise that. It's something you can only dream of... okay, there is a cultural difference, but if there were no borders... the world would be a better place. There would be* fewer deaths and less crime *because there would be more opportunities for people. I'm not talking about one continent; I'm talking about the whole world.* (S4, girl 1, 15 y/o, LT).

Another student defined "exclusion" as not wanting somebody and putting them apart because they are different (for example, their skin colour). She also affirmed that exclusion is something inevitable in society. Finally, when we asked them how to promote inclusion, a student considered that the first step has to be language to communicate. The second step should be learning about the others' cultural differences.

[3] In 2020 Canary Islands (Spanish archipelago located at the Atlantic coast of north-west Africa) experienced a high arrival of the migrant population. As a consequence, a humanitarian crisis was generated, with overwhelmed temporary camps. People were living in cramped and deplorable conditions, some sleeping in tents and others on sun-baked docks.

Q: In your opinion, what to do so that people from different countries with different customs and languages could live together with fewer inequalities?
A: I think first of all it is communication. Because communication is the most important thing, it's what makes things possible. The first thing is to teach these people who have different cultures a common language that they can all speak together, comfortably, to develop a little more awareness. After that, I think it would be interesting to learn about each other's culture: the culture of a child from India, a child from Mongolia, etc. Put the two together and see the differences between them. I think it's pretty fun. I try to see something new if I can.
(S7, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT, Italian).

(Perceived) Advantages and weaknesses of existing models of migrant children`s integration

Perception of integration

In general terms, children expressed that the implementation of integration plans can have three levels: the global (adaptation to the host society and the general environment), the educational (well-being in the school) and the individual (personal, psychological and emotional well-being). However, most of them claimed that they don't think equality already exists.

On the one hand, some children shared that, on a global level, politicians have the responsibility of making integration possible. They were critical of politicians and pointed out that politicians should listen to citizens' experiences, opinions, and visions. They also proposed some ideas:

If I were a person who had power, I would give the same rights to a man as to a woman, the same to people from other countries who need a home, such as people in need. I would shelter them because any animal can bite them, a rat can bite them and die in the street, and nobody notices [...]. I would let homeless people ... that is, people from Africa to enter Spain. I would create an orphanage but for people in need. (S3, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT).

We want to point out that discussing integration processes also implies intersectionality (Gandarias, 2017; Martínez Andrade, 2019). In one S3 focus group, all children agreed on political measures regarding the integration of migrant people, but not about the equality of women and men. One boy expressed the desire for the cancellation of the feminist route. Even if they do not doubt the need to fight for equality, some argue that feminism aimed to take rights from men.

Regarding the role of education, children expressed the need for equality in primary and secondary schools. In S4, a boy said:

> *Secondary schools have to have people from all places and countries. Think that in the class there is an Arab, a Moroccan and one from another country. If someone came from another country and did not know the language, the other could help. And also, all the schools should have varied people.* (S4, boy 1, 15 y/o, LT).

This consideration is relevant as the educational system in Catalonia still has some schools that host mainly local people. In contrast, others accommodate diversity in origin or socio-economic status (Estalayo et al., 2021). The last ones are called *high complexity schools* by the local government. This system perpetuates social exclusion, and children are aware of it.

They were also aware that the learning of the language in the new country is essential, so they think this is one of the main issues to be addressed at school for promoting integration:

> *I think that first is communication. Because communication is the most important thing, it is what makes things possible. The first thing is to teach these people who have different cultures a common language that everyone can speak comfortably.* (S7, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT).

In individual terms, they claimed the importance of the struggle for equality from a personal commitment. To live with equal opportunities, in S3, a boy (boy 6, 13 y/o, LT) expressed that we all should treat people as we would like others to treat us. In one focus group of S3, one child emphasised the need to adapt to everyone's needs when we relate to each other.

It was also interesting to see the role of social media in the integration processes. Children from S3 explained in a focus group that, for them, social media was creating inequalities. Finally, some children were positive regarding inclusion. For instance, one child from S7 explained:

> *I would tell people who come from afar not to worry. At some point or another, they will fit in. For me, it was a little late, but I now fit in* (S7, boy 6, 13 y/o, LT).

However, we think that the discourse about fitting in is dangerous and approaches assimilationist discourses. By giving responsibility to the newcomer, these discourses may run the risk of positioning the migrant person in an inequity position and taking apart the responsibility from the people already in the host country. Moreover, as Zembylas (2012) explains, this also maintains the "we" (hosts) and "other" (stranger) structure, promoting relations of power. The bounds between "we" and "others" cannot be separated in individual terms from a relational framework, as they constitute collective bodies that have agency in integration processes.

Advantages

In general terms, long-term migrant children expressed "comfortable", "happy", and "welcomed" feelings during their inclusion process in the school. Collaborative activities, such as sports and "casals", mainly were well-valued since they offer relational spaces where they could meet and interact with other children, so they were critical aspects for the integration process.

The role of the teaching staff during the welcoming process in the school has been valued positively in S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, S6 and S7. The interview with a girl in S6 (S6, girl 3, 15y/o, LT) reveals that teachers provide psychological accompaniment or additional help support when necessary.

Finally, some participants mentioned the reception classroom as a positive space that creates welcoming and inclusive spaces for migrant children who don't speak the local language.

Weakness

Pupils did not speak explicitly about the weak points of existing inclusive models. On the other hand, taking into account the fieldwork carried out in other phases of the project, observations and informal conversations with children, we can highlight different topics related to education:

- Children addressed integration policies regarding language acquisition. Participants emphasised the need for language acquisition policies in the case of newly arrived children. According to the Department of Education, the reception classroom may only attend international students who join the education system for the first time over 8-9 years old. For this reason, some long-term migrant children could not have this "extra" support during their academic trajectory. Language acquisition often unfolds mainly with teachers of some specific classmates. Furthermore, the specific case of Catalonia, where often there is a difference between conversational language and academic language (Little, 2010: 18), further complicates this process.

- Children also reported that all primary and secondary schools should have students from different countries (to promote the inclusion of migrant children). The educational system in Catalonia still has some schools that host mainly local people. In contrast, others accommodate diversity in terms of origin or socio-economic status due to the educational policies and the mechanisms for selecting and accepting students. The right of families to choose schools means that some schools have "live enrolment," so students can enrol throughout the school year. If these schools have not filled all the places, they can receive new enrolments, primarily for newly-arrived migrant children. Furthermore, these schools often have a high percentage of migrant students enrolled (Estalayo et al., 2021).

- Furthermore, some pupils expressed that it would be positive to have teachers who spoke different languages to communicate easily with them.

Good practices

During our fieldwork, the children did not mention the notion of "good practices explicitly". Nonetheless, from an overview of their contributions, we identified different good practices that are carried out both at an educational level as well as at a social level:

- Relationship with the teaching staff and the teacher's role: as mentioned above, almost all children valued their relations with the teaching staff very positively. They considered that the teachers accompanied them personally and emotionally. These considerations point out the importance of caring in the educational system and suggest the need to further incentive initiatives toward building strong emotional and caring policies in the school.

- Educational policies to build relationships between the family and the educational community: schools must carry out a reception that extends beyond the students and includes their families, not only in the reception period but also permanently. Nonetheless, difficulties related to language barriers or other personal issues may make this task complex for the schools.

- Leisure activities such as sports and "casals": These experiences are fundamental for children' integration and socialization processes. Although there are already several initiatives addressing these aspects, they consider the need for a further effort in this direction since these spaces offer opportunities to establish social relationships that otherwise would not be possible.

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

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 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- long-term resident migrant children

This report contains the principal results of Work Packages six 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 long-term 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 24 long-term migrant children participated in the individual interviews and 41 during the focus groups. We considered long-term migrant children as those children living in Spain for more than two years. 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**, stories were complex and multiple: students that moved from one country to another; students that moved several times and throughout different countries or cities; students that left their place of birth when they were very young; students that returned to their country of birth after migration and, once again, they came back to the new country; students that lived some time separated from their parents; among others.

Regarding their **school experience**, they described the reception classroom as one of the main advantages of the migrant children's integration models. Nevertheless, some participants pointed out that this system has limitations (there is a maximum time to attend to this classroom). We detected that some of the long-term migrant children interviewed did not speak Catalan fluently during the research. Furthermore, some students from secondary and primary school (S5 and S6) pointed out that they felt their academic level was lower and did not feel prepared for higher studies. Finally, almost all children valued their relations with the teaching staff very positively and considered that the teachers accompanied them personally and emotionally.

Regarding **their socialization processes**, long-term migrants indicated that their socialization processes were mainly related to the extended family and the school since they report difficulties in meeting and interacting with other children outside the school or familiar environment.

Regarding their **sense of belonging**, most long-term migrants participating in the research expressed in different ways that their identity emerged in a cross-cultural and cross-national way by developing senses of belonging to different cultures, territories and social groups.

Regarding their **conceptualizations of well-being and life satisfaction,** most secondary long term children imagined themselves with a pleasant life in the future and a well-recognized job. Instead, younger children tended to refer to possible futures more related to fantasies or ongoing trends. Finally, most children imagine themselves living in their host country in the future or another country. Most of them express their lack of intention to move back to their home country, and this willingness indicates positive well-being and progress in the new country.

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