


Editorial / Editorial

# Researching the well-being of migrant children

## *Investigando el bienestar de los niños y niñas migrantes*

**Mercedes Fernández\***   
Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, Spain.  
[mercedes@comillas.edu](mailto:mercedes@comillas.edu)

**Deidre Horgan**   
University College Cork, Cork, Ireland.  
[d.horgan@ucc.ie](mailto:d.horgan@ucc.ie)

**Maria Daniella Marouda**   
Panteion University, Athens, Greece.  
[danmarouda@hotmail.com](mailto:danmarouda@hotmail.com)

## INTRODUCTION

According to the [European Commission \(2024\)](#), on 1 January 2022, around 6.6 million children under 18 years old did not have citizenship in their country of residence in the EU. This accounts for 8.2 % of the total number of children living in the EU and 17.6 % of non-national residents. Migrant children in Europe face a myriad of vulnerabilities as they navigate the challenges associated with displacement and adaptation to new environments. Many arrive with traumatic experiences, having fled conflict, persecution, or poverty in their countries of origin. The vulnerabilities of migrant children are often exacerbated by language barriers, cultural differences, and the lack of a support system, making them susceptible to social exclusion, discrimination, and exploitation. Additionally, unaccompanied minors may be at heightened risk, lacking the guidance and protection of family members in unfamiliar surroundings. While recognising that migrant children are a complex cohort exhibiting both agency and vulnerability, ensuring their well-being and safeguarding their rights is crucial for their healthy development and successful integration into European societies.

The protection of migrant children necessitates a comprehensive approach that addresses their unique needs. Robust legal frameworks and policies should be in place to guarantee their access to basic rights such as healthcare, shelter, and legal representation. Social and educational programme are essential for fostering their integration, providing psychosocial support, and mitigating the potential long-term impacts of their migratory experiences. Notably, the education system is pivotal in this process, offering a structured environment for language acquisition, cultural adaptation, and socialisation. Inclusive and culturally sensitive education policies contribute to breaking down barriers, fostering a sense of belonging, and equipping migrant children with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate their new surroundings, ultimately promoting their successful integration into European societies.

\*Corresponding autor / Autor para correspondencia: Mercedes Fernández, [mercedes@comillas.edu](mailto:mercedes@comillas.edu)

**Suggested citation / Sugerencia de cita:** Fernández, M., Horgan, D., & Marouda, M. D. (2024). Researching the well-being of migrant children. *Revista Española de Sociología*, 33(2), a211. <https://doi.org/10.22325/fes/res.2024.211>

Integration, as defined by the [Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights \(2017\)](#) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2019), is a multifaceted process addressing challenges associated with migration while creating opportunities for social cohesion and enhanced well-being. Integration involves fostering mutual adaptation and understanding between migrants and host communities. It encompasses social, economic, and cultural dimensions, encouraging inclusive communities, providing economic opportunities for migrants, and celebrating the diversity they bring to the cultural fabric. The ultimate aim is to achieve social cohesion by recognising diversity as a strength, fostering a sense of belonging and participation for all, and creating resilient, harmonious, and interconnected societies.

Indeed, immigration profoundly affects the well-being of migrant children, with emotional, social, and systemic implications that significantly influence their integration process into a new society ([Salazar Andrade et al., 2023](#)). The challenges of adapting to a new cultural and social context, including language barriers and differences in cultural norms, contribute to psychological strain, impacting the emotional and social well-being of these young individuals ([Martin et al., 2019](#)). Additionally, the reception from the host country, whether marked by acceptance or discrimination, plays a pivotal role in shaping their sense of belonging and, consequently, their ability to integrate successfully ([Thomson et al., 2022](#)).

Access to essential services, such as healthcare and education, is a critical concern for migrant children ([Gyan et al., 2023](#)). Language barriers and lack of familiarity with host country systems may hinder their access to medical care and academic opportunities, impacting their immediate well-being and long-term integration into the host society ([Cimpoeru et al., 2023](#)). Legal uncertainties related to immigration status, economic strain, and fear of deportation add layers of stress, affecting their mental well-being and overall adjustment. Despite these challenges, many migrant children display remarkable resilience, highlighting the importance of positive family reinforcement, social integration, and access to support services in fostering their adaptation and successful integration into their new communities ([Cadenas et al., 2021](#)).

Migration studies have traditionally focused on adults, delimiting children's integration as part of their families, thus overlooking migrant children's engagement with their context and other issues focused on their well-being ([Vathi & Duci, 2016](#)). In contrast, the literature about children's well-being has expressly addressed the needs of migrant children. However, it tends to adopt an approach more focused on the objective and individual aspects of well-being as opposed to the subjective or collective dimensions ([Amerijckx & Humblet, 2014](#)). Most of the literature about the well-being of migrant children relies on data provided by other relevant stakeholders (their parents, policymakers, immigration officers, social workers, psychologists, nurses, etc.) rather than the children themselves ([Curtis et al., 2018](#)).

These gaps have recently led migration research to turn to more child-centred perspectives that emphasise how including children's subjectivity and, specifically, their perspectives about well-being experiences -their understanding of *doing well* ([Due et al., 2014](#))- can contribute to enriching the understanding of integration ([Fruja Amthor, 2017](#)). However, new methodological and empirical research must reflect this theoretical development.

## Providing context

The EU call *Mapping and overcoming integration challenges for migrant children*, seeks to take account of the complexity of migrant children's backgrounds, addressing issues related to gender, identity, achievement, well-being, home-school links and discrimination, among others. In addition, refugee and migrant children's lived

experiences and voices must also be taken into account (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). Finally, best practices supporting equal life chances should be identified with the involvement of stakeholders, maximising the potential of existing experiences.

This Special Issue presents preliminary research results for the three projects that received funding from the EU Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme Societal Challenges, called 'Mapping and Overcoming Integration Challenges for migrant children' (2018). These projects are the following:

- CHILD-UP (Children Hybrid Integration: Learning Dialogue to upgrade participation policies) aims to foster the understanding of migrant children's social integration through an innovative, relevant-stakeholders-involving-research approach focused on children's agency.
- IMMERSE (Integration Mapping of Refugee and Migrant Children in Schools and Other Experiential Environments in Europe) aims to define a new generation of indicators on the integration and socio-educational inclusion of refugee and migrant children in Europe, developing a co-creative methodology.
- MiCREATE (Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe) aims (1) to rethink the existing integration policies and (2) to promote the integration of migrant children by identifying their needs and well-being as they see and perceive them.

These projects kicked off at the end of 2018 and were expected to be finished in 2021/2022. However, research schedules were impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and they finally ran from mid-2022 to the end of 2023.

The three projects were devoted to fostering the integration of migrant children in Europe, from a comparative perspective, through the use of cutting-edge methodologies, improving data collection and, thus, contributing to the development of the EU research agenda on education.

## Methodological innovation in research with migrant children

Research with children has evolved significantly in recent decades, influenced by childhood studies and new sociology of childhood perspectives on children as agentic (James & Prout, 1997) and by the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 (UNCRC) by the UN General Assembly recognising children's right to have their voice heard and given due weight in matters directly affecting them (Article 12). Accordingly, innovative research techniques and participatory research methods with children have grown (Horgan, 2017). The importance of children's authentic involvement in research, particularly for marginalised groups such as migrant children, is increasingly acknowledged as essential to producing better research, better policy and better services (Edwards *et al.*, 2023).

While childhood studies place children at the centre of research, some argue that few studies are child-centred/child-led (Spencer & Thompson, 2022). There is scope to move beyond research with children, designed and controlled by adults, to a more collaborative approach. Participatory research holds value in ensuring knowledge is genuinely co-constructed and co-produced with children and young people by actively involving them in shaping research design and implementation. The use of the term participation in the context of research describes a wide-ranging spectrum of children's and young people's involvement in research, but at its core is the idea of the researcher being actively

involved in the research process. Their involvement can be at all stages or various stages of the process (Cuevas-Parra, 2020) and span different levels of involvement. Shaw et al. (2011) developed a model of participatory research with children and young people ranging from consultative (when children's views are sought on the research process) to collaborative (when the research is co-produced with children) to children taking ownership of the research.

The limited literature identifies the potential of Children's Research Advisory Groups (CRAG) as a collaborative and co-reflexive activity that can inform research design (Horgan & Martin, 2021; Mercieca & Jones, 2018; Moore et al., 2018). Some of the research studies presented in this Special Issue demonstrate their value in testing interview questions, validating workshop methodologies, etc. However, their potential is significantly impactful in data analysis and dissemination of results to policymakers, service providers and child and youth audiences (Horgan et al., 2024).

Research with children has generally been adult-led, seeking children's and young people's views about their lives or experiences to build knowledge to inform the development of legislation, policy, and services (Lansdown, 2010). However, there is growing recognition of the value of participatory research in shaping policy by capturing children's views and lived experiences in all their diversity and enabling children to deliver a solid evidence-based message to policymakers (Kennan & Horgan, 2024; Lundy et al., 2021; Pösö, 2018). With such approaches, decision-makers can ensure that policy is responsive to children and young people's needs or interests. Nevertheless, much work remains to be done in this space, with Nolas (2014) commenting on the wealth of research across the social sciences on children's and young people's everyday lives, which remains largely unknown and untapped by policymakers. Much of the literature in this area speaks to the need for adult allies (Checkoway, 2011), particularly for those children and young people with intersecting forms of marginalisation, as instrumental to child and youth participation.

In summary, incorporating migrant children's perspectives and agency into research on integration is vital for obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing their well-being. By recognising children as experts on their own experiences, researchers gain insights into the subjective aspects of their lives, including cultural nuances, priorities, and needs. This approach empowers migrant children by validating their agency, fostering trust, and promoting social inclusion. Moreover, it ensures that research findings are culturally relevant, sensitive, and directly applicable to developing effective policies and interventions. The inclusion of migrant children in the research process contributes to ethical considerations, respecting their autonomy and rights, and ultimately leads to a more holistic understanding of their integration journey, encompassing both challenges and strengths.

## The IMMERSE project: evidence-based considerations and critical issues

IMMERSE, as an EU-funded H2020 challenge, comprised eleven collaborators from 6 European countries – Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Spain - aimed to map children's integration in education across a range of indicators identified during the first phase of the project employing a new integrated methodology, composed of innovative research tools and digital solutions<sup>1</sup>.

The project addressed that the challenges confronting EU and its member States in developing effective integration techniques. Many shortcomings are evident in the socio-educational experiences of migrant-background children, who are exposed to the risk of limited access to school, low performance, early leaving, and limited future expectations.

---

1 For more info, visit <https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/it/> For more info about national results and recommendations, consult IMMERSE national policy papers available on the project website <https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/publications/>

In this context, the IMMERSE project highlighted the gaps in data collection. It developed an innovative and integrated set of indicators to measure and monitor the state of the art of migrant-background minors' socio-educational integration from a multidimensional, children-centred perspective and a whole-school approach.

## **The methodology**

The added value of the IMMERSE Project, as highlighted in the current issue, revolves around the well-being of refugee and migrant children and their sense of belonging and trust in the host societies. Employing responsible and innovative research, IMMERSE defined a new generation of indicators on the integration and socio-educational inclusion of refugee and migrant children in Europe. Partners incorporated all key relevant stakeholders in co-creating and validating a dashboard of indicators for socio-educational integration. In that respect, the method of co-creation included the voices of migrant and refugee children, their families and those who work directly with them in schools or other non-formal education settings, for example, in shelters hosting Unaccompanied Minors or in other NGO premises. In this way, IMMERSE researchers, during data collection and through qualitative research, leaned on these stakeholders direct experience to depict a more meaningful definition of integration through their eyes. A Children's Research and Advisory Group was central to all key phases of the research from design of research instruments through data analysis to dissemination of results.

While, prior to IMMERSE, academic and international institutions made numerous attempts to measure the integration of refugee and migrant children in Europe, there were gaps affecting data collection that negatively impacted the development of the integration systems and policies. For instance, the most relevant indicator systems are the Zaragoza indicators, the OECD socio-economic indicators, the PISA socio-educational indicators, and the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). Although these sets of indicators provide practical comparative perspectives across countries in the European region, they were designed to reflect adult realities, overlooking children's perspectives, experience and definition of integration (Bajo Marcos et al., 2023). Moreover, most frameworks were not built to provide a comprehensive overview of all dimensions of integration, limiting their scope to the legislative, the socio-demographic, the economic or the educational dimensions. To reflect the multidimensionality of children's integration experience, IMMERSE Partners considered it crucial to acknowledge all aspects, including socio-emotional and ecological factors, that influence children's growth over time (ibid.).

## **The main products**

The Dashboard of 30 indicators came as a result of qualitative research inputs<sup>2</sup>, a literature review, and a content (Delphi study) and ecological (CARA methodology) validation process (Bajo Marcos et al., 2023), encompassing a co-creation method to collect the perspectives and acknowledge the agency of all relevant stakeholders, including children. The Dashboard measured personal and situational factors and incorporated stakeholders' points of view and needs. This innovative and integrated set of quantitative and qualitative social and educational indicators can now be applied to measure and monitor the state of the art of migrant-background minors' socio-educational integration from a multidimensional, children-centred perspective and a whole-school approach<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> See, i.e. Martin Sh., Marouda M.D, Report #3 on Psycho-social Wellbeing of Refugee and Migrant Children, Integration Mapping Indicators, IMMERSE Horizon 2020 -2024 at [https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/IMMERSE\\_D1.3-Extended-edited.pdf](https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/IMMERSE_D1.3-Extended-edited.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Data and indicators are available at <https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/es/>

A vital outcome of the IMMERSE research is developing an interactive dashboard that includes interactive consultations with children and other relevant stakeholders. The indicators allow a comparative overview of the degree of integration experienced by children in different countries, monitoring its evolution in time and identifying areas of future intervention in a given context. More specifically, indicators include fundamental aspects of three levels of integration, namely micro (children and their families), meso (educational centres, educative community and neighbourhoods) and macro (society and institutions). The final Dashboard with a total of 30 indicators was validated by experts in the fields of migration, education and integration and ecologically validated (to grant adaptation to a natural environment) by children, educators, public authorities and policymakers at the local, regional and national levels in six European countries. Of these 30, 14 indicators refer to "integration results", and 16 refer to the "barriers and facilitators" of integration results at the meso and macro levels. The integration results are divided into five dimensions: 1) access to rights, 2) language and culture, 3) well-being, 4) connectedness and 5) educational achievements. The barriers and facilitators are related to 1) political leadership, 2) school segregation, 3) learning support, 4) mental health services, 5) negative attitudes, and 6) school organisation and teachers.

During the second phase of the project, based on the IMMERSE dashboard of indicators, IMMERSE partners conducted quantitative research to map the socio-educational integration of minors with a migration background in the European countries taking part in the study: Spain, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Greece, and Belgium. Each partner country adopted different sampling strategies, not representative of the national or EU-level target population. Therefore, the data is only descriptive of the sample. Still, the sample comprises many child respondents, whose answers provide an essential contribution and perspective across EU countries.

Moreover, apart from the actual data collection in schools and acknowledging the various obstacles to access to formal education, IMMERSE included a particular focus on under-represented groups of children - mainly unaccompanied minors - whose experiences may not have been fully captured in the large-scale quantitative survey (Marouda et al., 2023). Therefore, research partners identified non-formal environments where children excluded from national education systems could participate in the research to ensure their voices would be heard. Research teams across the six countries had to overcome significant access issues and employ innovative ways of locating children in non-formal education activities to conduct these case studies.

In the course of the research, IMMERSE partners identified 60 good practices aiming at inclusive education and social innovation to provide a wealth of contextualised data and crosscutting features regarding the landscape of implemented or ongoing socio-educational initiatives targeting minors with a migration background across Europe and to stimulate ideas and projects for a common model of integration and a more welcoming school<sup>4</sup>. Regarding integration outcomes, each proposed good practice found correspondence in the IMMERSE Dashboard, reflecting the multidimensionality of the socio-educational inclusion path. The analysis focused on the financial aspect, as funds catalyse the development and sustainability of high-quality integration initiatives.

## **The results**

In conclusion, the IMMERSE Project has proved essential in documenting the reality faced by refugee and migrant children in schools and non-formal educational settings in 6 EU member states. The Dashboard of indicators, the data collection survey, and the

---

<sup>4</sup> See "Collection of good practices at the national and EU level", available at [https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/IMMERSE\\_D4.1\\_Extended.pdf](https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/IMMERSE_D4.1_Extended.pdf). All 60 good practices can be explored in depth on IMMERSE's Online Digital Database <https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/online-digital-database-of-good-practices-and-resources-in-social-integration-of-refugee-and-migrant-children/>

qualitative activities, with the direct participation of children, revealed the existence of good integration results, as well as numerous shortcomings, some evident, others challenging to detect, such as how we can reconcile the trust children show to their teachers with high school dropout rates for high school refugee children and UAMs. The data show the importance of school in creating a sense of belonging and providing opportunities to make friends, develop language skills, and experience 'childhood', which is evident, notwithstanding some difficulties accessing appropriate education and experiences of bullying and racism in education settings. Legal/administration challenges encountered by the young people included obtaining residency and following the rules of accommodation centres. However, citizenship was a valued goal for the freedoms and benefits it would bring. Friendships provide a sense of security and belonging for children and young people, with education settings seen as central to building these peer relations. The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on participants in terms of unsatisfactory virtual learning experiences was inescapable, with some participants lacking essential requirements and support structures for remote learning, many speaking of loneliness and loss of interaction with school friends but also family because of restrictions on travel. The importance of children and young people's families was highlighted along with the tensions between the cultural and religious norms of the host country and the 'home' country.

IMMERSE research results go, therefore, beyond the state of the art of the socio-educational integration process of migrant-background children in Europe, with a specific focus on IMMERSE partner countries, showing the positive developments and the challenges that need urgent intervention. As a result, IMMERSE partners provide tailored recommendations for policymakers and the EU-level educational sector to encourage the development of a common model of inclusion based on a more systematic and integrated approach and inspired by a vision of cultural diversity as a resource that benefits all.

For the current monograph, it is important to highlight the indicators around the well-being of children. The cross-country comparison shows that, on average, 81% of migrant-background children feel happy in their host country. The rest of the respondents feel unhappy, a negative feeling that increases with age. Especially surveyed migrant-background children who define their gender "in another way" with respect to the binary distinction male/female, feel unhappier compared to female and male peers. Only one out of two migrant-background children (48%) feel a high sense of belonging in schools, with differences across countries. Notably, the percentage of migrant children with a high level of belonging at school remarkably diminishes as they grow: from percentages of high belonging to around 70% of minor children to 30-50% in middle and late adolescents. Considering gender, children who define their gender "in another way" show a lower sense of belonging than their peers.

Moreover, on social connectedness, over half of migrant-background children surveyed in the six partner countries declare high support from friends and peers (54%). Overall, on a cross-country average, a marginal proportion (5%) report low levels of support, while 2 out of 5 children (40%) receive medium support. However, on a cross-country average, 2 out of 3 migrant-background children trust their teachers and schools (66%), but the levels of trust considerably diminish with age. Still, 12% of migrant-background children declare a distrust and 21% are unsure. Differences across countries' results are signs of the heterogeneous experience that EU countries offer to migrant-background children.

## Introduction to the articles of this issue

The articles presented in this special issue comprehensively explore the well-being and integration of migrant and refugee children in various European contexts. Each article emphasises the multifaceted nature of well-being, acknowledging its intricate ties to the specific experiences, challenges, and contexts these children face during migration and their

subsequent integration into host societies. The issue comprises six papers, one introductory article, another offering theoretical insights and four qualitative empirical developments.

In the first paper, entitled *Good practices and educational innovation for improving well-being of migrant and refugee children*, Fabretti et al. highlight the need for improved exchange and sharing of good practices on the socio-educational integration of migrant and refugee children and offer a methodological approach for their analysis and collection. The theoretical part of the monograph is run by Bajo et al. In *A theoretical framework of child well-being and integration*, the authors underscore the intersectionality of knowledge about migrant and refugee children, emphasising a child-centred theoretical framework.

The four empirical papers share the common denominators of qualitative methodology and the focus on the children's self-perceptions and experiences. However, they cover a broad spectrum of the connections between well-being and integration. So, Medarić and Gornik's *Subjective perspectives on the well-being of migrant children in comparative perspective* focuses on the importance of family, friends, language learning, and a welcoming school environment. Rohr et al.'s *The Role of Peers in Children's Integration, Participation and Learning* emphasises the active role of children in shaping their integration and participation while exploring factors influencing perceptions of competencies and autonomy. The interactions of children with the dominant environment and their influence on their perspectives of integration are analysed in *The meaning and negotiation of integration, migrants' needs and well-being from the perspective of pupils in Vienna*, by Wolter and Sauer. Finally, Rodríguez-Ventosa et al. give voice to unaccompanied migrant adolescents, prioritising their emotional and relational well-being in *Emotional and relational realms of unaccompanied migrant adolescents*.

All six articles focus on child-centred, qualitative research, which Sime (2017) concludes has clear advantages in giving migrant children a voice and informing current policy, practice and debates on global migration and social justice. All demonstrate methodological innovation in accessing the authentic voice of children with a migrant background. The IMMERSE project, detailed in Bajo-Marcos et al. and Rodríguez et al., combed qualitative workshops, case studies, and large-scale quantitative research with children and young people aged 7 to 18. It developed innovative ways of ensuring children's voices were integral to and embedded in the research at various points, from the design of research tools to data collection, data analysis, and dissemination of findings to adult and child audiences. Wolter and Sauer conducted biographical narrative interviews with children as well as focus groups with children between 10 and 17 in Vienna who were either newly arrived, long-term migrants or local children who might have some family with experience of migration. Medarić and Gornik in their research with children across 7 schools in Slovenia, used a combination of participant observation methods in each school followed by open-ended narrative interviews and focus groups with migrant children attending primary school (9-18 years). Although part of a wider study which included preschool through to the second level, Rohr et al.'s article for this issue focused on the school-aged children's qualitative data from individual and focus group interviews conducted separately with school-aged children and professionals including teachers, social workers, and mediators in Finland, Germany, Poland, and Sweden.

In each case, the research methods developed were based on the principles of the child-centred approach, which focuses on children's experiences and perspectives and views them as experts of their own lives. Despite the myriad ethical and methodological challenges in such research with migrant children, it is valuable in contributing to our improved understanding of their specific life experiences and better service and policy responses regarding two-way integration.

Furthermore, the studies collectively emphasise the need for context-specific insights, acknowledging the influence of sociocultural factors, dominant discourses, and policy frameworks on the integration landscape. This shared commitment to context sensitivity reflects a sophisticated understanding of the interplay between individual experiences and broader societal structures.



A source of value added of these works is that they collectively enrich policymakers' understanding of migrant and refugee children's integration, providing multifaceted insights into challenges and opportunities. The overarching theme underscores the imperative of adopting holistic, inclusive, child-centred and context-sensitive approaches in policy formulation. These lessons collectively emphasise the importance of collaboration and knowledge-sharing among nations, particularly in addressing challenges associated with the scarcity of information hindering the assessment and transferability of successful socio-educational initiatives. The need for sensitivity in obtaining knowledge about migrant and refugee children is paramount to consider the intricate intersection of personal, political, and cultural factors.

Shifts in focus across the studies reveal additional lessons, such as the need to facilitate meaningful bonds and actively listen to the voices of migrant-background adolescents, ensuring their perspectives are incorporated into decision-making processes; the importance of tailoring approaches to different age groups or recognising the crucial role of family, friends, teachers, and a positive outlook on the future in fostering a sense of belonging and participation. Lastly, the active role of children in shaping their integration, mainly through peer relations, points to the need for policymakers to foster inclusive, supportive educational environments, recognising children's competence and autonomy while addressing challenges related to language and stereotypes.

## FUNDING INFORMATION

The research leading to these results received funding from European Commission Horizon 2020 Program under Grant Agreement No 822536 as part of the research project IMMERSE: Integration Mapping of Refugee and Migrant Children in Schools and Other Experiential Environments in Europe. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## REFERENCES

- Amerijckx, G., & Humblet, P. C. (2014). Child well-being: What does it mean? *Children & Society*, 28(5), 404-415. <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12003>
- Bajo Marcos, E., Ordóñez-Carabaño, Á., Rodríguez-Ventosa Herrera, E., & Serrano, I. (2023). Identifying the Core Indicators of Migrant and Refugee Children's Integration Using the Delphi Method: A Multi-Input Strategy for Definition of Consensus. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221149487>
- Cadenas, G., Sosa, R., & Liang, C. (2021). Immigrant Youth's Community Participation to Promote Immigrant Rights and Resist Psychosocial and Sociopolitical Challenges. In *Reference Module in Biomedical Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-818872-9.00024-8>
- Checkoway, B. (2011). What is youth participation? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(2), 340-345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.09.017>
- Cimpoeru, S., Roman, M., Roșca, V. I., Prada, E. M., Manafi, I., & Mureșan, L. (2023). Two-Speed Integration? A Comparative Analysis of Barriers and Resilience Strategies of Young Migrants in Vulnerable Conditions in Romania. *Social Sciences*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12020084>
- Cuevas-Parra, P. (2020). Co-Researching With Children in the Time of COVID-19: Shifting the Narrative on Methodologies to Generate Knowledge. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19, 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920982135>

- Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights (2017). *Fighting school segregation in Europe through inclusive education: Position paper*. <https://rm.coe.int/fighting-school-segregation-in-europethroughinclusive-education-a-posi/168073fb65> [Accessed 17 October 2023].
- Curtis, P., Thompson, J., & Fairbrother, H. (2018). Migrant children within Europe: a systematic review of children's perspectives on their health experiences. *Public Health*, 158, 71-85. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2018.01.038>
- Due, C., Riggs, D. W., Augoustinos, M. (2014). Research with children of migrant and refugee backgrounds: A review of child-centered research methods. *Child Indicators Research*, 7(1), 209-227. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-013-9214-6>
- Edwards, K. M., Orchowski, L. M., Espelage, D. L., & Temple, J. R. (2023). What Is Not in the Methods Section: Challenges, Successes, and Lessons Learned From Conducting School-Based Interpersonal Violence Prevention Research. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 38(3-4), 4507-4532. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221109881>
- European Commission. (2024). *Children in migration - demography and migration*. June 2023.
- Fruja Amthor, R. (2017). "If only I did not have that label attached to me": Foregrounding self-positioning and intersectionality in the experiences of immigrant and refugee youth. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 19(4), 193-206. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2017.1366862>
- Gyan, C., Chowdhury, F., & Yeboah, A. S. (2023). Adapting to a new home: resettlement and mental health service experiences of immigrant and refugee youth in Montreal. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01572-7>
- Horgan, D. (2017). Child participatory research methods: Attempts to go "deeper." *Childhood*, 24(2), 245-259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09075682166647787>
- Horgan, D., Martin, S., O'Riordan, J., Maier, R., & IMMERSE Children's Advisory Group. (2024). Migrant Children as Co-constructors and Advisors in Research. In B. Gornik, M. Sedmak, & Z. Medaric (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Migrant Children and the Child Centered Approach*. Oxford University Press.
- Horgan, D., & Martin, S. (2021). Children's research advisory groups: Moving from adult-research agendas to co-creation with children. *Child and Youth Participation in Policy, Practice and Research*, 168-181. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003099529-16>
- IOM. (2019). IOM Glossary on migration. In *International Migration Law* (34). <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>
- James, A., & Prout, A. (1997). *Constructing and reconstructing childhood: contemporary issues in the sociological study of childhood* (A. James & A. Prout, eds.; 2nd ed.). Falmer. <http://0-lib.myliblibrary.com.emu.londonmet.ac.uk/browse/open.asp?id=5056>
- Kennan, D., & Horgan, D. (2024). Contribution of Participatory Research to Policy International. In I. Coyne & B. Carter (Eds.), *Being Participatory: Researching with Children and Young People: Co-constructing Knowledge Using Creative techniques*. Springer International.
- Lansdown, G. (2010). The realisation of children's participation rights. In B. Percy-Smith, & N. Thomas (Eds.), *A handbook of Children and Young People's Participation*. Routledge.
- Lundy, L., Byrne, B., Lloyd, K., Templeton, M., Brando, N., Corr, M. L., Heard, E., Holland, L., MacDonald, M., Marshall, G., McAlister, S., McNamee, C., Orr, K., Schubotz, D., Symington, E., Walsh, C., Hope, K., Singh, P., Neill, G., & Wright, L. H. V. (2021). Life under coronavirus: Children's views on their experiences of their human rights. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 29(2), 261-285. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-29020015>

- Martin, S., Horgan, D., O’Riordan, J., & Maier, R. (2023). Refugee and migrant children's views of integration and belonging in school in Ireland—and the role of micro- and meso-level interactions. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2023.2222304>
- Marouda, M., Koutsouraki, E., Martin, S., Horgan, D., O’Riordan, J., & Serrano Sanguilinda, I. (2023). *IMMERSE - Analysis Reports After Carrying Out the Research Across Countries in Reception Centres and Other Experiential*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10119248>
- Martin S., O’Riordan, J., Horgan, D., Maier, R., Marouda, M. D., Koutsouraki, E., & Farakouki, L. (2019). *Report on psycho-social and wellbeing of refugee and migrant children*. INFODEF. [https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/IMMERSE\\_D1.3-Extended-edited.pdf](https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/IMMERSE_D1.3-Extended-edited.pdf)
- Mercieca, D., & Jones, P. (2018). Use of a reference group in researching children's views of psychotherapy in Malta. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 44(2), 243-262.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0075417X.2018.1481130>
- Moore, T., McArthur, M., Death, J., Tilbury, C., & Roche, S. (2018). Sticking with us through it all: The importance of trustworthy relationships for children and young people in residential care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 84(October 2017), 68-75.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2017.10.043>
- Nolas, S. M. (2014). Exploring young people's and youth workers' experiences of spaces for "youth development": creating cultures of participation. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(1), 26-41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2013.793789>
- Pösö, T. (2018). Experts by Experience Infusing Professional Practices in Child Protection. In A. Falch-Eriksen, & E. Backe-Hansen (Eds.), *Human Rights in Child Protection: Implications for Professional Practice and Policy* (pp. 111-128). Palgrave MacMillan.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94800-3\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94800-3_8)
- Salazar Andrade, A., Sala Roca, J., & Rodríguez Pérez, S. (2023). Children's emotional and behavioral response following a migration: a scoping review. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 7, 100176. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2023.100176>
- Shaw, C., Brady, L., & Davey, C. (2011). *Guidelines for research with children and young people*. National Children’s Bureau Research Centre.  
<https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/research-and-innovation/research/Assets/Documents/PDF/NCB-guidelinesCYP-2011.pdf>
- Sime, D. (2017). Challenging barriers to participation. In R. Evans, L. Holt, & T. Skelton (Eds.), *Methodological approaches* (pp. 135-157). Springer, Singapore.
- Spencer, G., & Thompson, J. (2022). Reproducing Power Asymmetries Through Voice, Collaboration and Change: Opportunities for Children to Re-Shape Contemporary Global Challenges. In S. Frankel (Ed.), *Establishing Child Centred Practice in a Changing World, Part A* (pp. 9-23). Emerald Publishing Limited.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80117-406-020221002>
- Thomson, K., Magee, C., Gagne Petteni, M., & Gadermann, A. (2022). Changes in social support and the emotional health of immigrant, refugee, and non-immigrant children across middle childhood: A three year follow up study. *International Journal of Population Data Science*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.23889/ijpds.v7i3.1923>
- Vathi, Z., & Duci, V. (2016). Making other dreams: The impact of migration on the psychosocial well-being of Albanian-origin children and young people upon their families' return to Albania. *Childhood*, 23(1), 53-68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568214566078>