

EMN Luxembourg Annual National Conference: “Children in Migration - Access to Education”

Thursday 23 November 2023, University of Luxembourg, Belval Campus, Maison des Sciences Humaines – “Black Box” and online via Webex

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Opening and welcome words: Dr. Robert Harmsen & Adolfo Sommarribas (10.00 – 10.10)

- Adolfo Sommarribas gives an introduction
- Main question: How do we manage the integration of unaccompanied minors? → Focus on access to education
- Dr. Robert Harmsen follows up by introducing EMN Luxembourg

1. Children's rights and migration & EU level developments – (10.10-11.15)

Sara Lembrechts (Migration Law Research Group, Ghent University): Keynote speech – Children and Young People on the Move: Navigating Contemporary Challenges at the Crossroads of Children's Rights and Migration (10.10 – 10.50)

Introduction

- Works as a PhD researcher at Ghent University on the rights of children and young people in Belgian appellate asylum procedures
- Multidisciplinary approach: intersection of law, childhood studies and anthropology

Aim of the presentation:

- Cross-cutting contemporary challenges
- Through a lens of children's human rights
- Dilemmas of agency and vulnerability
- 2 overlapping aspects of children in migration: "Being a migrant" and "being a child"

Overview:

- 3 cross cutting challenges:
 - 1. Definition → *Who do we talk about?*
 - 2. Children's rights → *How can we understand the human rights of children on the move?*
 - 3. Images of childhood → *How do we reconcile children's agency and vulnerability?*

Challenge 1 – Definition

- Age: 0-18 → Not yet adults
- Heterogenous group
 - The needs of a toddler are very different to the needs of an adolescent
 - Not only regarding age but also regarding ethnicity, gender, ability, resources, power etc.
- Children share that they have limited political and financial power and are dependent on adults
- Why are children migrating? → Children might have different reasons to be on the move, examples are:
 - Forced migration due to an armed conflict → Involuntary choice; we frequently think about this as a driver
 - There are many other reasons why children migrate
 - Some may migrate voluntarily (e.g., family reunification), others are forced to migrate (e.g., fear of persecution)
 - Some are traumatized, while others are not
 - Some problems might be specific for children or groups of children (Genital mutilation, child marriage etc.)
 - Migration might take place based on free movement agreements, here the stress for children / the family is often not as strong as for people who are forced to flee
 - Parents might move and children migrate with them or the family is reunified later

Children on the move

- Not all children migrate to the global North
- Not all children cross borders when migrating
- Some children are moving alone, while others migrate with their families → This is a very important distinction
 - UAMs have much stronger legal safeguards than children and young people migrating with their families, even though having a family while migrating doesn't necessarily make children less vulnerable
- Recognizing migrant children's vulnerability is crucial, but so is their agency
- Childhood in migration is more than just the migratory experience

Conclusion

- Children on the move are not a homogeneous group
- They have very diverse experiences; this has to be recognized
- Be attentive to where differentiation is needed in research, policy and practice
- Agency vs Vulnerability
 - Some aspects experienced as relatively unproblematic, other as traumatic and stressful, others as empowering

Challenge 2: Human rights of children and young people on the move

- Interactive part → Question: How can we understand the human rights of children and young people on the move?
 - Short poll: Participants scan a QR code to reply
 - 3 participants present their answers to the other participants
- Children's rights = human rights of children and young people 0-18 → including children on the move
- Interactions with children and young people
 - Legal dimensions: Laws, instruments, legal frameworks
 - Social/ relational dimension: Attitudes, beliefs, images, convictions

Legal dimensions

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - All children without discrimination, including children on the move
 - Focus on the children's best interests and their right to be heard
 - There are lots of other relevant provisions
 - Privacy, family unity, identity, education etc.
 - Specific provision on refugee and asylum-seeking children
 - Protection, provision, participation → Age assessment is often a problem (Authorities do not believe that they are minors)
 - Vulnerability vs. Agency
 - Ratified by almost every country
 - Legal obligation of States to implement rights

Social / relational dimension

- Not codified, less visible
- Attitude, beliefs, convictions about children on the move → Are really important when defining children's rights
- Images of childhood in migration determine how our policies, laws and research questions are constructed
- Vulnerability (protection) vs agency (participation)
- Very often, only the legal dimension (tip of the iceberg) is discussed → Below the surface there are a lot of aspects that are not visible and do not frequently appear in discussions (Social / relational dimensions)
 - Aim: Make this hidden part visible through critical (self-) reflection

Conclusion

- Legal and social/Relational dimensions are interrelated
- Legal: States to create a safe and enabling environment for children on the move
- Social: Understand what lies below the surface to improve the children's interpersonal experiences

Challenge 3: Images of children on the move

- Interactive part → Question: How can we reconcile children's agency and vulnerability?
 - Short poll: Participants scan a QR code to reply
 - Statements were presented where participants had to choose between different options

Images

- Gliding scale between agency and vulnerability
- Reflecting on:
 - Assumptions underlying laws, policies and personal preferences
 - How both parts of the iceberg play out in our personal lives, our professional environment and our policies
- Bias for protectionist approach → Children on the move = vulnerable and in need of protection, often overlooking children's agency
- Children as developing human beings
 - Body, mind, emotions
 - Capacity for self-protection and autonomy
 - Dependent on others to realize their rights
- Specific situation of children on the move
 - Traumatic experiences and stress
 - Aggravation of pre-existing vulnerabilities
- Recognize agency of children on the move → Listen to children on how they reflect on their own trajectories

Conclusion

- Agency and vulnerability occur simultaneously

How do I apply this in my own research?

- **Challenge 1** – Definition → Include accompanied children as a priority for research on child-friendly justice in the asylum courtroom
- **Challenge 2** - Children’s rights → Defining children’s rights ‘from below’, based on a combination of legal and relational perspectives
- **Challenge 3** – Images of childhood → Highlighting simultaneous occurrence of agency and vulnerability inside the asylum courtroom

Anna Schmidt (DG Home Migration and Asylum Unit): Children in Migration – EU level developments (10.50 – 11.00)

- Short input by Anna Schmidt from the **DG Home and Asylum Unit**
- It is very important to highlight the EU acquis and the asylum acquis, as well as all the relevant frameworks → **Best interest of the child** is central and crucial
- **Children in migration is a priority**
- 2017 communication from the Commission to the European parliament and the council: “The protection of children in migration” → Is still followed up upon, some aspects are covered in the ARM by EMN NCPs
- Some aspects are once again on the current agenda → Some points on children in migration are included in the Asylum and Migration Pact
- More than 1/3 of the 4 million people fleeing from Ukraine are children
 - This is a very particular issue: Separated children that do not come with their parents (They are however not unaccompanied either because they often come with guardians or family members)
- **Drastic increase of UAMs arriving in the EU** → COM doesn’t expect this to change in 2024
- Different phenomena regarding the **age of UAMs**:
 - There is an interest in age assessment → A lot of children arrive in the transition phase to adulthood
 - A lot of children claim to be adults so that they can move on → This is another challenge
- It is very difficult to say much about the **Migration and Asylum Pact** because negotiations are ongoing
 - Children in migration are a central aspect
 - Vulnerability assessment is being done as soon as they look at children
 - Appointment of guardians / representatives → Aim = Faster appointments
 - Balance between agency and vulnerability is important
 - Integration is another important point; responsibility lies with EU Member States → EU only has an indirect role
 - Women and children arriving, including childcare, is another important subject (especially regarding the influx of people from Ukraine)
- **Current acquis issues**:
 - Language learning in education
 - Early education for children
 - Teacher training

- Educational achievements and the mutual recognition of those achievements (education is travelling with the person and should not be exclusive to a country) → This point is very high on the agenda
- COM receives data on **school enrollment** → They don't see a lot of changes, which is quite concerning
 - COM would like to see higher enrollment rates
 - Achievement rates are another important point
 - COM wants to be able to follow up more, not only on enrollment but also on achievements
- Comment by Sarah Tausenfreund (School Integration and Welcoming Service - Luxembourg) addressing Luxembourgish enrollment rates → 99% of Ukrainians are enrolled in school

Q&A (11.00 – 11.15)

- **Q.1: Question from the chat:** How can you guarantee access to proper education, when the group of children is so vast?
 - **Answer from Sara Lembrechts** (*Ghent University*): She is a lawyer, so she is not particularly knowledgeable on this subject
 - Good practices must be shared
 - **Comment from Adolfo Sommaribas** (*EMN Luxembourg*): There is a lack of resources and a lack of teachers → The system is overwhelmed
 - **Comment from Anna Schmidt** (*DG Home*): previously worked in Jordan for the EU → In Jordan, the system is completely overwhelmed by Syrians
 - How can you expand the system when you don't have enough qualified staff? → People that have some teaching qualifications can help to buffer up to capacity (e.g., Ukrainians with teaching capacities)
 - Human resources constraints are key issues
 - Tool kits for teachers that are dealing with multicultural classrooms can be provided
 - EU is responsible for funding and learning
- **Q2: Question:** How does EU law protect children and guarantee the access to education?
 - **Answer from Sara Lembrechts** (*Ghent University*): Question has partly been answered by Anna Schmidt
 - **Comment by Anna Schmidt** (*DG Home*): No real competencies to intervene by the EU
 - EU has an action-plan on best practices and joint activities
- **Q3: Question:** How do language barriers impact the education experience of immigrant children? What can be done to overcome this challenge?
 - **Answer by Adolfo Sommaribas** (*EMN Luxembourg*): Some of the children that arrive in the EU have another alphabet or have never been to school
 - **Answer by Anna Schmidt** (*DG Home*): Rolling out of special support and learning
 - **Answer by Karl Johannes Zarhuber** (*University for Teachers Education in Lower Austria*): Children have to learn the language of the host country. What helps is having first language teachers, that help overcome the language barrier and increase the appreciation of the language and the culture.
- **Q4: Question by Charel Schmit** (*OKAJU*): Are their ideas for organizing access to vocational trainings in order to regularize children in Europe? There are a lot of children who won't be recognized as

refugees but won't ever leave Europe. Can those children be regularized so that they have access to education and other services?

- **Answer by Anna Schmidt (DG Home):** The child's rights guarantee is an important aspect of the work done by COM → Member States work on action plans regarding all children (including migrant children).
 - A lot of work is done regarding children's rights, migrant children are always included.
 - COM is very aware of the issues that UAMs and children with irregular stay encounter → Some Member States are looking at alternative pathways.
 - Ultimately, children's rights apply regardless of migration status
- **Comment from Adolfo Sommaribas (EMN Luxembourg):** EMN Netherlands has launched an Ad-hoc query on children staying without legal recognition

2. Institutional Panel – (11.15-12.15) – Moderator: Charel Schmit (Ombudsman for Children and Youth)

- Introduction by Charel Schmit; he explains the role of the Ombudsman for Children and Youth (OKAJU)
- Charel Schmit specifically mentions the importance of focusing on UAMs in Luxembourg → Mentions their report on UAMs in Luxembourg that was published on 20 November 2023 in collaboration with UNICEF
- OKAJU is often contacted by parents because their children are not automatically enrolled in schools
 - Applies to primary and secondary schools
- Charel Schmit mentions the lack of teachers that impacted the creation of school classes for migrant children at the beginning of the current schoolyear
- Lastly, Charel Schmit introduces the panel and raises a central question: What would you do if you had 3 years to provide education to an unaccompanied minor?

Dr. Evgenia Partasi and Maria Pitzoli (Both teacher trainers - Cyprus Pedagogical Institute): Students with migrant background in Cypriot schools: latest developments

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute:

- One of the Directorates of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
- Ensures the continuous professional learning of teachers in Cyprus
- Promotes the Ministry policy and the upgrading of the quality of the educational system
- Coordinates and presides the "Interdepartmental Committee for the Integration of children with migrant background"
- The Cyprus **educational system is centralized** → Everything comes from the ministry
- More than **15% of students have a migrant background**
- Since 2016 the ministry has created several papers, action plans, recommendations etc. for students with migrant backgrounds
 - Currently, they have actions plans that run until 2025

Action Plan pillars:

- Policy paper
 - Mapping students
 - Reception
 - Teaching Greek as a second language
 - Teacher's professional learning
 - Intercultural and antiracist dimension in school life and curricula
- Peer counseling review report
 - Reception phase
 - Supporting teachers and school leaders
 - Schools
 - Educational Policy
 - Diversity

Recent developments and challenges:

- There have been a lot of challenges
- Development of an **online platform collecting and reporting student's data**
 - Challenge = Under-reporting (lack of data from some schools)
 - Utilizing student's data for pedagogical decisions at the different levels
- Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation uses a validated specific **Greek language test** for the Cyprus context (primary education)
 - Upon moving to secondary schools, information regarding migrant student's Greek language competencies are passed on from primary schools

Teaching Greek as a second language: Syllabus

- Curriculum / syllabus for Greek as a second language was published recently
- Unified curriculum for all levels of compulsory education
- Indicators for 4 language skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Multilingual awareness
- Methodology: Combining language and content learning
- Introducing migrant students to Cypriot society and culture
- Developing digital skills

Teaching Greek as a second language: Developing teaching material

- Primary and Secondary education materials have been introduced / revised in 2022 and 2023

Teaching Greek as a second language: Timetable

- Reception (1-3 months) → In or out of the school
- Transition period (1-2 years) → Participation in the mainstream class and intensive language lessons
- Integration (2+ years) → Integration in the mainstream class

Teaching Greek as a second language: Monitoring students learning – formative assessment and evaluation

- Initial, midterm and final assessments
- Aim is to standardize tests

Challenges

- Implement diverse and flexible paths for different migrant populations
- UAMs
- Children who have not achieved B1 after 2 years
- Procedures for continuing school education after attending L2 classes

Reception of newcomers

- Reception Guides for Pre-primary and Primary Education, Secondary Education and Parent-mediators
- Documents were translated in 11 languages
- Legislation of Cyprus requires that children are registered in schools, 3 months after arriving
- Children arrive in the educational systems throughout the year
- They use material and videos from different projects co-funded by COM

Teacher's Professional Learning

- Education of Migrant Children has become a leading focus in most of their programs
- They try to develop professional learning communities and networks for teachers that work with migrant children
 - Interactions between teachers and trainers
 - Exchange of teaching material
 - Quality teaching rounds for teachers of neighboring schools
- Use of the blended learning methodology

Antiracist policy

- Implementation across schools
- Annual reports of recorded incidents are collected at the end of each school year
- Schools are obliged to report any incidences that can be acknowledged as racist
 - There are a lot of challenges in this regard:
 - Teachers report that their colleagues are often unable or refuse to identify violent incidents as racist
 - Vast majority of schools do not appear to implement the policy
 - Under-reporting mentioned by teachers as the major obstacle for the recording of racist incidents
 - Lack of accountability for the implementation of the antiracist policy
- Based on a directive of COM against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and on international and European Conventions ratified by Cyprus

Teachers' perceptions regarding blended learning and networks

- Higher level of satisfaction with trainings through the blended learning method
- Reported improvement of efficacy of teachers
- Increase of satisfaction with the methodology among teachers
- *See PowerPoint Slides for additional perceptions and reactions of teachers and students*

Concluding remarks and steps forward

- Improving educational opportunities for children with migrant background follows the same path as improving the respective opportunities of pupils of the general population (taking into account structural and individual factors)
 - Emphasis: Developing general codes to regulate expectations, requirements and actions which respect each person as an equal member of the social and educational process

[Anssi Pirttijärvi](#) (Senior Specialist: Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture - Department of early childhood education and care): Inclusion of migrant children in the Finnish education system

Some words about Finland

- Independent for 160 years, before it was part of Russia or Sweden
- Official languages → Finnish & Swedish
- Stronger immigration only started on the 1990s
- In comparison to Cyprus's centralized education system, Finland's system is the opposite → Strong decentralization of education systems
 - Law is drafted on the national level → Local curriculums and providers exist
 - 300 municipalities provide education in this decentralized system
 - Local actors have a lot of autonomy
- Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for higher education

Education System

- Early Childhood Education and care: Age 1-6
- Pre-Primary Education: Age 6
- Basic Education: Age 7-15
- General Upper Secondary Education / Vocational Training: Age 16-19
- Mandatory age of education was increased to 18 several years ago → Finland doesn't have mandatory school going, parents have the autonomy of taking care of their children's education

Early Childhood education and care (ECEC)

- There is a national core curriculum for ECEC
 - Content is however quite heterogenous depending on the local education system
- ECEC is a good environment to learn Finnish and Swedish and interact with other children
- Of children aged 1-6 75 % were in ECEC → In 2013, only 62% of children from this age group were in ECEC
- Increasing segregation is a challenge → Especially in cities
- The state provides need-based funding for municipalities
- The fees that the parents must pay have been recently reduced
- Children that have other mother tongues other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami:
 - Age <3 → are less often in ECEC than children with those mother tongues
 - Age >3 → are more often in ECEC than children with those mother tongues

Basic Education

- Pre-Primary Education
 - Pre-primary Education one year before Basic Education
 - 20 hour per week and is free for all children
 - Free for all Children
- Preparatory Education for Basic Education
 - Funding for one year / 9 months
 - To improve Finnish / Swedish and Studying Skills
 - Integration to Basic Education
 - Personal plan → Not mandatory
 - Different ways of local organizing, there is a lot of flexibility
- Basic Education
 - 624.000 in Pre-Primary and Basic Education
 - State funding for:
 - Additional instructions in Finnish or Swedish as a second language
 - Teaching of pupil's own language
 - Other support
 - 43.000 in Finnish as Second Language - Syllabus
- After Basic Education
 - Preparatory Education for Upper Secondary Education
 - Basic Education for adults
 - Liberal Adult Education
- Ukrainian Children and families
 - Temporary protection → After 1 year people with temporary protection can apply to be added to the registers and get officially registered in the municipality where they live
 - Every child has the right pre-primary and Basic Education, children with registered municipalities have full rights to ECEC
- Upper Secondary Education
 - Trend that more migrant children go to vocational training
 - To participate in secondary education, high language skills are required

Challenges

Preparatory Instruction:

- Integration together with Finnish/Swedish speaking children promotes integration and language learning
- More cooperation between local teachers that are teaching migrant children and other teachers is needed
 - Problem: Not having enough personnel and dealing with pupils individually is a problem
 - Some providers of education don't have knowledge about the funding that is available from preparatory institutions
 - Pupils have very specific needs once they arrive in the secondary education age

Finnish/Swedish as a second language

- School personnel is required to address individual needs of the pupils
- In-service training and resources must be increased
- Some parents don't want their kids to receive Finnish/Swedish as their second-language education
- Mother tongue of the children could be used in education

The governmental program

- Integration measures must be increased when addressing adult migrants in Finland
- More language tests → Aim: Get better social security and citizenship
- Possible preparatory education for 2 years
- Finnish/Swedish as second language education must be evaluated

[Aigul Alieva \(Research Associate: Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research - LISER\)](#)

Long (hi-) story short (1910-now)

- 1910: → German & Italian migrants came to work in the steel industry
- 1950s-1970s → Bilateral agreements with Italy, Portugal and Spain allowing family reunification
- 1990s → Refugee influx due to the Balkan war
- 2004 → Migration from Central and Eastern European countries following their EU Accession
- Today → Heterogenous migration, including highly- and low-skilled migrants. War, conflicts and political persecution are major drivers.
- Secondary school population over time (2003-2018) → Father's country of birth as a reference
 - Strong diversification during the 21st century
 - 2003: 65% Luxembourgish → 2018: 35-40% Luxembourgish

Educational inequalities in Luxembourg

- 2-fold stratified education system: Transition from primary to secondary education at the age of 12 (which is very early) → Second transition 3 years later from lower to upper secondary school at the age of 15 (selection of specialization)
- In other countries there is no 2-stage transition system → Migrant children have more time to catch up to native children (mainly regarding the language levels)
- In Luxembourg: Multilingual education policy with rigid language requirements
- Growing population heterogeneity → Migrant population and linguistic diversity & socio-economic inequality
- Transition from primary to secondary education → There is a potential bias on teacher's recommendations
- Largest achievement gaps in reading and mathematics but not for all immigrant groups
 - Ex-Yugoslavian students nearly close the gap in German language knowledge in secondary schools, but other immigrant groups do not
- Second-generation performs better than first-generation → In line with international research
 - Gap between migrants and natives still exist here
- Schools attended by immigrant children frequently cite shortage of teachers and disruptive climate

- Occupational aspirations: e.g., Yugoslavian aim at safe professions (electrician, nurse, etc.) / Cape-Verdeans have ambitious visions (CEO, football star, etc.)
- Immigrant students are less likely to enter tertiary education and are also more prone to drop out

Pioneering policies and practices tackling educational inequalities in Europe

- Different factors are important when making education more or less challenging → Intersection of several axes
 - Migration background
 - Linguistic background
 - Language capital
 - Socio-economic status
 - Gender
 - Disability
 - Etc.
- Primary school's composition has a long-term impact on academic success in secondary education
- Linguistic diversity is sometimes seen as a "handicap", rather than an asset
- Primary focus on newly arrived children, but much less in immigrant children born in Luxembourg with language struggles
- Potential reform fatigue in Luxembourg → In Schools; overload on teachers

Recent developments – Middle East and South Asia (2015-)

- Children from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan → They don't know a lot about them their integration and the academic outcomes: Support of national actors would be appreciated
 - One of the recent fast growing sub-populations
 - 2,4% of the total student population

Recent developments – Ukraine (2022-)

- Majority of students are directed to the public international schools with English as primary language of instruction
 - Once integrated, they can choose German or French language programs
- PIONEERED project → Qualitative research in Luxembourg, Poland and Ukraine
- Main concerns of parents:
 - Reception classes have large age ranges
 - Long transition phases between reception and regular classes
 - High concentration of Ukrainian speaking children slows down the English-learning process
- Some parents insist that their children continue distance education in Ukraine
 - Creates a double burden for children, how long can they realistically maintain being in 2 educational systems at once
- Parents appreciate child-based approach in Luxembourg
- Education = priority for parents → Great emphasis also on extra-curricular activities (largely driven by school/municipality resources)
- There are 2 groups of parents
 - 1. Those that are determined to stay

- 2. Those that are hopeful to return

Relatively recent reforms and measures

- Since 2016 – public international schools (6 currently) → Instruction in English, German or French
- 2017 – multilingual education in ECED
 - 20 free hours of education and care
 - Single parents and low-income households benefit from additional support
- 2017 – Restructuring of the Orientation Centre → One location for all information and services
- Since 2022/23 – Help with homework for primary school children
- Since 2022/23 – Free after school care
- June 2023 – Centralized School Integration and Reception Service

Concluding remarks

- Substantial governmental efforts and actions towards offering equal chances to all children
- Luxembourg follows a centralized entry support model when dealing with newly arrived migrant children
- Increased collaborative activities between research community and policy makers
- We enable the access to skills, but to what kind of skills? → We need to give migrant children the “right” diploma and not just any diploma that won’t serve them in the future!
- We need to learn more about the integration of families from the Middle East
 - We know substantially more about the Integration process of Ukrainian families
- Immigrants from Brazil, China and India → Recent trends which also must be studied

Q&A

- **Q.1: Question to Aigul Alieva (LISER): How do you define migrant children? More than half of children in Luxembourg have at least one foreign parent.**
 - **Answer by Aigul Alieva (LISER):** She doesn’t have a clear answer to this question
 - Definition depends on the institution and the researcher
 - We must have as much detail as possible to discover underlying dynamics
 - **Reaction from Charel Schmit (OKAJU):** It is difficult to differentiate between children whose migration backgrounds go further back (several generations) and children with refugee backgrounds
 - **Comment from Adolfo Sommaribas (EMN Luxembourg):** Talks about different migrant groups and mentions Asian (e.g. Chinese) migrants and draws a comparison to migrants from the Middle East and Latin America
 - Ukrainians have received a VIP-approach; We were lucky to have international schools and necessary facilities
 - The Ukrainian government has put a lot of pressure on European governments to keep Ukrainians that have fled the war
At some point we need to start talking about integrating them fully because the reality is that a lot of them won’t go back to Ukraine
 - **Comment from Charel Schmit (OKAJU):** Talks about unaccompanied and accompanied migrant children

- Parents with different migrant backgrounds experience different types of pressure
- **Comment from Karl Johannes Zarhuber** (*University for Teachers Education in Lower Austria*): Explains a problem that they observe in Austria, where children refuse to go to school because they are going back to Ukraine anyways → He insists that those children are obliged to go to school in Austria
 - **Comment by Aigul Alieva** (*LISER*): It is indeed true; they have come across this problem in the Austrian context during their research
 - The problem is however much worse in other Eastern-European countries
 - There are a lot of children that are missing → They are not turning up in European and neither in Ukrainian statistics
- **Comment from Anssi Pirttijärvi** (*Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture*):
 - They do not have information about how many Ukrainians are in school
 - They observe that Ukrainian children are mostly drawn to the Finnish language education
- **Q.2: Question from the Chat: Problems when accessing/completing tertiary education is mentioned: Are language requirements important here?**
 - **Answer by Aigul Alieva** (*LISER*): This isn't a problem in Luxembourg
 - There is enormous upwards mobility when migrant children participate in tertiary education → This can be difficult
 - In Luxembourg, psychological and social concerns are more important than language barriers when it comes to migrant children in tertiary education
 - **Comment from Charel Schmit** (*OKAJU*): Language is obviously very important
 - In Luxembourg, language skills are social filters → This has been the case for a long time
 - International schools have been important to counteract these filters
 - Alphabetization in French (primary education) is another important step of counteracting this
 - Implementing the alphabetization in French has been discussed in Luxembourg since the 1970s → It is only now that this project is actually being realized

3. Academic Research Panel – (13.35 – 14.35) – Moderator: Prof. Catherine Jones (Assistant professor in Digital Human Geographies, University of Luxembourg)

- Introduction: by Prof. Catherine Jones

Dr. Shirley Martin (Lecturer: School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork):
IMMERSE – Integration mapping of refugee and migrant children

Context and Overview

- IMMERSE is a Horizon 2020 funded project aimed at mapping the integration of refugee and migrant children in Europe
- IMMERSE is a 5-year project → Started out as a 4-year project, but was extended due to the pandemic
- 11 partners in 6 countries → 3 universities, 2 public administrations, 3 NGOs, 2 companies in social innovation and stakeholder participation and 1 technology company
 - Partners in Spain, Ireland, Germany, Belgium and Greece

- **Main Project Phases:**
 - Phase 1: Dashboard of indicators
 - Development of 30 indicators on the inclusion of migrant and refugee children
 - Phase 2: ICT Digital platform and IMMENSE Hub
 - Phase 3: Data collection
 - 24.000 children in Europe (60% of refugee and migrant background)
 - Case studies (Reception centers, UAMs, etc.)
 - Phase 4: Set of recommendations for the inclusion of migrant and refugee children
- **Children's and Young Person's Advisory Group (CYPAG)**
 - 18 migrant and refugee children living in Ireland → They advised, informed and piloted on instruments and key questions
 - They weren't research subjects but informants and researchers
 - An expert group, to reflect on the experience of children in general and represent their peers in this process
- **Data collection in Europe: UCC Work package leader**
 - 6 countries: Belgium, Greece, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Spain
 - 12 languages
 - 406 schools and non-formal education centers
 - 4 types of participants: Children (7-18 years), Parents, School principals and teachers
 - 13.880 migrant and refugee children → 24.000 total children
 - It was important to have migrant and non-migrant children
 - Enables comparisons between living situations of native children and migrant children in a respective country
- **Panel of 30 indicators**
- *14 integration outcomes → Grouped in 5 dimensions*
 - Access to rights
 - Academic achievements
 - Well-being
 - Language and culture
 - Social connections
- *16 barriers and facilitators → Divided in 6 components*
 - School organization and teachers
 - Learning support
 - Mental health services
 - Negative attitudes
 - Political leadership
 - School segregation
- **Dashboard of indicators on migrant and refugee children's integration**
 - Micro, Meso and Macro levels
- **Integration results**
 - Access to rights is generally met in the sampled countries
 - Educational achievement is lowest in Greece
 - Language and culture → Is going reasonably well in most countries; Greece is struggling
 - Wellbeing → Self-reported happiness is quite good

- When children were asked about belonging, well-being results were substantially lower → This generally needs to be improved
 - Social connections → Migrant children had more diverse friendship groups than non-migrant children
 - Low institutional trust in first generation migrant children, this trust increases for second and third generation migrant children
 - School segregation → Lowest in Germany and Belgium
- They also completed **qualitative case studies** because some aspects could not be captured by the large-scale data → Focus on under-represented groups of children (Unaccompanied minors)
 - Non-formal environments to reach children excluded from national education systems
 - 13 case studies with 91 child and youth participants
- **Interactive Dashboard: Open Access Data and Data Visualization Tool**
 - Publicly available
 - Identify areas for intervention at national and European levels
 - Present opportunities for cross-country comparison and learning
 - They are hopeful that this tool will be used in schools
 - Aim is to create interactions and provoke conversations
 - This tool has been tested with children
- **Other IMMERSE outputs**
 - For and with children: social media and campaigns, animated videos
 - Good practices collection and online data base of best practices
 - Policy recommendation report at the respective national levels and at the European level
 - Scientific publications
- **IMMERSE Hub**
 - Online community providing a common space to share experiences, ideas and concerns
 - Access relevant information and educational resources
 - For stakeholders interested in the socio-educational integration of refugee and migrant children
 - Need to register

Conclusions

- Significant cross-national variations in children's integration results
- Countries perform well on access to rights for compulsory education and healthcare
- Language competence and happiness levels exhibit promising results, challenges persist in areas such as belonging, intercultural ties, friendship diversity and educational achievement gaps
- Intersection in migrant children's lives and identities (gender, age, migrant generation, etc.)
- Challenges in relation to policies on citizenship and policies on permanent residency
- Policies that extend educational opportunities beyond compulsory education need to be reviewed

Nihad Bunar (Professor: Department of Special Education – Stockholm University):
Migration and Education – newly arrived migrant students (NAMS)

Introduction

- Introduces himself, he has been working in Migration and Education for 25 years

- Arrived as a refugee from Bosnia to Sweden 31 years ago
- Analyzed special schools for children with intercultural disabilities → He observed a strong overrepresentation of children with migrant-background (every second child had a migrant background)
 - Why is there such an overrepresentation?
 - No research existed on this topic

Research based tenets of educational ideology, policy and practices providing an educational structure of opportunity for NAMS (Newly arrived migrant students)

- Justice and Equity instead of medical discourse
 - Until 2005: 2/3 of the research came from the medical field (e.g., dealing with trauma)
 - The discourse has changed since then
 - He is against reducing migrant children to traumatized victims → Their situation is much more complex
- Inclusion
 - This is a policy concept which first emerged in the 1960s when discussing the integration of children with disabilities in education
- Holistic and Individual approach
- The asset-approach
 - These children have certain assets that we need to use in education
 - E.g. how do you use the multilingual competencies of migrant children (who often speak 3 languages or more)?
- Majority language **and** Multilingualism
 - He has never come across a migrant who said that the Swedish language is not important.
 - Migrants are aware that they need the national language to excel in society.
 - Objective circumstances exist; The will to learn Swedish is present in migrant populations
- Focus on all subjects, not just second language
- Cooperation between various actors within and outside of schools
- The children's agency acknowledged

These tenets are currently under attack - Simplicity instead of complexity

- Attacks from right wing groups
- No access to education for undocumented children, questionable even for asylum-seekers
- Separate educational forms for a prolonged period of time = collective solutions
- Extended education in majority language only
- The deficit-approach
- Instilling cultural values of the majority
- Individual accountability (children and parents)
- More decisive involvement of social services
- Zero-tolerance policy to disciplinary problems (expulsion, placement in alternative schools)

Sweden: Current policy

- NAMS = arrived after the ordinary school start (age 7)

- A status is bestowed up to 4 years after enrolling in a school in Sweden
- Currently: Around 50.000 children in elementary schools are defined as NAMS, including 15.000 children from Ukraine
- Access to regular education regardless of legal status
- Focus on learning and school success
- Support – general and through a separate support package
- Prevention of prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination in a wider school and society context
- The treatment of newly arrived students' educational needs has been upgrade from taking care of traumatized refugees and a sole focus on second language acquisition to justice and equity

Separate support package for NAMS

- Mapping of students' educational background
 - This is assessed instantly after arrival
 - They are moving away from the deficit approach
- Separate classes
 - Up to 2 years of partial placement
 - This is a very tricky subject
 - Together with a PhD student, he ran a research project on this matter
- Multilingual classroom support
- Guaranteed number of instruction hours
- Adjusted curriculum
 - Transfer of teaching hours from other subjects to Swedish language
- Priority subjects (age 13-16)
- Individual development plan (age 13-16)
- Professional development of school staff
 - Language and content integrated learning
 - LCIL

An equation for school success of NAMS

- All these factors must be added up:
 - Access, Justice and Equity
 - Inclusion
 - Separate and individually tailored support package
 - Promotion of multilingualism
 - Well educated teachers with enough resources
 - Cooperation
 - Careful enactment in practice

However

- What has to happen to have an actual success in education integration of NAMS?
 - The equation only works with accountability
 - What is promised? Who is responsible when the aims are not met?

- Why is the equation not working?
 - Responsibility for the achievement gap is solely projected on the students and their families
 - Major school actors tend to use the intentional flexibility of the policy to mask the absence of adequate and high-quality support measures
 - Ideological underpinnings are used to justify what and how is being done and provided

Finally

- Discussions about organizational or pedagogical models are fruitless
- The scientific and practical emphasis must be on the content and quality of what is provided to NAMS, regardless of what fancy words we attach to it
- Educators must be informed not to “hide away” the problems they encounter while enacting the policy, but bring the attention of policy makers to what support they need and what was promised to NAMS

Karl Johannes Zarhuber (Former Teaching Professional for pedagogical programs on Migration at the University for Teachers Education in Lower Austria – Pädagogische Hochschule Niederösterreich)

- 7 years of experience on this specific topic → Previously worked for the Red Cross

Background of the Project:

- Schools had to face the fact that more and more children and young people with refugee biographies were being integrated into Austrian school classes (intensified in the context of the influx of refugees in 2015)
- Task of Universities of Teacher Education: Create training based on research results
 - Cooperation with the Long Island University in NY in order to use the relevant experiences of the two countries

Aim of the Project

- Gain insights into how school and non-school educational institutions could promote the personal growth and educational success of young people with refugee and migration history

Research Question

- What factors contribute to academic performance and social integration in migrant and refugee youth?
- What contribution can the educational system make to promote students with a migrant or refugee background in schools and classrooms?

Qualitative Research Design

- Data collection: 9 group discussion with migrant and non-migrant students with diverse educational backgrounds, alumni, parents and pedagogical experts in Lower Austria
- Data analysis: thematically
- Lower Austria: Largest province of Austria → 24.000 teachers / educators
- **Findings:**

- Important role of school as educational institution and social live world in general
- Attitude of teachers in facilitating migrant youth's cultural integration
- Social capital acquisition through friendship between and within cultural groups of youth → Both are equally important
- Biculturalism and retaining own cultural identity

Core findings of the Study – Most salient factors for integration and successful school careers

- **Important role of school as educational institution and social live world in general**
 - School is not just a place for learning but a platform for building connections, fostering understanding and nurturing potential
- **Attitude of teachers in facilitating migrant youth's cultural integration**
 - Teachers are more than educators; they are cultural guides and mentors
 - Required competencies: Attitude, Commitment, integrative practices of teachers
 - There are teachers with discriminatory practices teaching in their schools → They have to acknowledge this and adapt the training to reflect this reality
 - Teachers are cultural guides and mentors
- **Social capital acquisition**
 - Through friendship between and within cultural groups of youth
 - Building and maintaining friendships among culturally diverse groups is crucial
 - Relationships help individuals connect with one another while preserving their unique identities
 - Friendship and support across cultural groups
 - Friendship and support within cultural groups
 - Peer activities as stress-relief process
- **Biculturalism and retaining own cultural identity**
 - Family is seen as a key support tool in the learning and integration process
 - Being proud of your own culture and language and caring about people in your own cultural community is important
 - Promoting biculturalism is primarily seen in the **context of language skills and language learning** in terms of support of first language courses
 - Getting the family involved
 - **Migrant teachers** play an important role as translators and act as cultural mediators
 - Bridge builders between teachers and parents

Conclusions

- **School is a microcosm of society** → School is extremely important, it gives structure to migrant children's lives
 - Integration of migrant children might happen earlier than the integration of migrant parents, who usually have to wait longer to gain access to this structured societal life (e.g., access to the labor market)
- Children and young people need the opportunity to **maintain their own cultural identity, a sense of community and belonging, competent teachers** with a **welcoming attitude** who focus on **biculturalism** and see **cultural diversity as a norm, reality and enrichment**

- The school system needs **first- and native-language teachers** who are confidence-builders in the school community, especially with parents

Q&A

- **Comment from Shirley Martin** (*University College Cork*): Mentions that she works in teacher education → The role of the teacher is very important; she sees a lot of parallels in the 3 presentations of the second panel (Aigul Alieva agrees)
- **Q.1: Question:** Refugee children often live in very difficult conditions; how does this impact their education?
 - **Answer by Nihad Bunar** (*Stockholm University*): Living conditions have to be considered
 - They have observed overcrowded apartments in Swedish cities
 - There is a strange policy that refugees are placed all over Sweden. They subsequently move to cities where they have contacts, this results in overcrowded living situations
 - When there is a lack of living space, young boys are often kicked out first
 - Result = There is very intense ongoing gang criminality involving young boys and youth in Swedish cities (aged 14-16)
 - **Comment from Karl Johannes Zarhuber** (*University for Teachers Education in Lower Austria*): Children's impact on parents is discussed
 - He recounts an anecdote about a Syrian family where the father was the "boss" and is now dependent on the child because he is not able to translate important texts and documents himself
 - Mediators between schools and parents are important
 - **Reaction by Jessica Lopes** (*CEFIS and Former social worker in Luxembourg*) They observed that 8–10-year-old children were very skilled at managing documents and processes because they had to act as translators for their parents early on
 - This skill is not promoted in the traditional school setting
 - In this traditional setting, migrant children are presented as having a lack of skills, even though they possess an enormous skill set in the adult world
 - **Comment from Karl Johannes Zarhuber** (*University for Teachers Education in Lower Austria*): They observed that classes with 50% or less migrant children have "normal" dynamics. Classes that are predominantly made up of migrant children (>50%) have very different dynamics.
 - He wants to know if other participants have observed similar dynamic changes in their national contexts.
 - **Reaction from Aigul Alieva** (*LISER*): She experienced the same.
 - **Reaction by Maria Pitzioli** (*Cyprus Pedagogical Institute*): In Cyprus, they have similar concerns regarding classes with a large percentage of migrant children. One of the main concerns of parents and teachers:
 - Is the curriculum applicable for migrant children?
 - The focus is perhaps too much on the Cypriot context; should specific migrant schools have their own or adapted curriculum?

- **Reaction by Nihad Bunar** (*Stockholm University*): Observed that children from migrant dominated neighborhoods in suburbs started to drop out and join predominantly Swedish schools in the city centers
- Schools in the city centers were afraid that their own Swedish students would leave, so they stated that their schools were full.
- Question that emerges from the panel: What is the breaking point? How many migrant children should be included per class?
 - Answer: It is more about the social class and the migrant type and less about the percentage of migrant children in a class
- The socio-economic background of children affects their achievements, no matter the migrant background
- Lower educated teachers work in schools with high migrant percentages
 - Important factor
 - Those schools often receive fewer subsidies
- **Reaction by Pietro Lombardini** (*National Reception Office Luxembourg*): Referring to the percentage of migrant children in classes
- This could be an explanatory factor for school achievement
- The general number of students per class might be a very relevant factor too
- **Q2: Question:** Are there any good practice examples of schools preparing children for their return?
 - **Answer by Karl Johannes Zarhuber** (*University for Teachers Education in Lower Austria*): He is just aware of negative examples
 - Children disappear from schools / They are taken at 6am in the morning
 - Unfortunate because teachers invest a lot of time trying to integrate those children
- **Reflection from Catherine Jones** (*University of Luxembourg*): *The idea of "Us vs Them"* seems to be very relevant at the moment when assessing migrant children
- Concluding thought: We should look at all children as our children!

Closing statement: Adolfo Sommarribas

- Emphasizes the importance of having mixed classes and highlights that segregation doesn't work
- States that we don't need to integrate people, but we need to include them!
- Reflects that education = power → It is something that you cannot take from somebody
- Addresses the problem with dedicated research projects: What will happen to those projects, once their research period and their respective funds run out?
 - Problem: They are not followed up upon!
- It is essential that we guarantee access to education for everybody → We will create polarized societies if we don't do this!
- Children do not have political or financial power
 - They are vulnerable and neglected
 - This is the reason why EMN Luxembourg organizes this conference on an annual basis