their well-being. A restructuring of practises and reorganisation of daily routines is necessary so that they can live more autonomously and have more influence over their lives.

Being able to stay with family and friends is crucial for migrant children's well-being, especially in terms of safety, support and socialisation. Children reported that family and friends help them maintain a sense of security and well-being. When children are placed in institutions (e.g. detention centres, asylum centres, refugee camps), separation from family or people they trust (relatives, friends) should be avoided.

School is usually the **first and often only place of integration** and socialisation with local peers and interaction with the local society. However, many children in transit do not attend school nor participate in regular programmes with local children. Particular attention should be paid to the question of how to ensure more effective access to education within the framework of regular programmes, in order to increase the well-being and social integration of migrant children.



MICREATE



You can find more information about the project and its results at **http://micreate.eu**.

Feel free to contact us at **info@micreate.eu** or using social media.

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Key Findings From Research With Migrant Children in Transit

MICREATE

Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe

Introduction

The MiCREATE project conducted research with asylum-seeking, refugee, undocumented and irregular migrant children in 6 European countries and Turkey. These case studies involved migrant children in transit, where they are no longer in their countries of origin but have not yet started a life in the destination country. The studies involved children placed in refugee camps, asylum homes, reception centres and informal camps.

Research Sites

In Italy, the research included migrant children from reception centres for unaccompanied migrant minors in rural Sicily. In Poland, the research took place in schools in Bezwola, a village in the Wohyń municipality, and in the Tagówek district in the capital Warsaw, both of which taught children from nearby reception centres. In Austria and Slovenia, the research was conducted in asylum homes in Vienna and Logatec. In the French case study, there were several study sites, including informal camps, day centres, and overnight shelters in Calais. In Greece, the study took place in the Skaramagas refugee camp, while in Turkey, the researchers selected neighbourhoods in the city of Şanlıurfa, the fourth largest city in Turkey, which has the highest number of Syrian refugees compared to the provincial population.

Participants in the Research

A total of 158 migrant children were interviewed for the case studies, both male and female, born in third countries including Syria, Sudan, Iran, Libya, Eritrea, Tunisia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, Mali, Egypt, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Yemen, Chad, Palestine, Russia, and Algeria. Their ages ranged from 7 to 17 years.

Research Focus

The main aim of the case studies was to explore migrants' subjective experiences of reception, support and integration measures, as well as their well-being and daily life in transit. Although the national contexts and institutional settings for migrant children vary considerably from country to country, the findings point to some common insights and needs for improvement at policy and practise levels.



Key Findings

The case studies have shown that a **lack of information** has a negative impact on the well-being of migrant children. The information that migrant children receive is often not sufficiently culturally sensitive and age appropriate. On numerous occasions, migrant children stated that they did not understand the procedures properly. They showed an apparent lack of knowledge about the follow-up procedures and expressed confusion about their rights. Better legal advice and information about their options and especially what will happen to them in the coming days, weeks and months would be welcome. Migrant children should be better informed about all legal procedures, possibilities, and opportunities, including future education and employment prospects.

A caring approach by staff in the various institutions (police, social workers, administrative staff and asylum officers, etc.) is crucial for the well-being of migrant children. Some children were satisfied with the treatment they received from staff in the facilities, while others felt that they were treated without **adequate care and respect**. In order to make reception procedures and care services more responsive to the needs of migrants, additional staff resources should be made available at all stages of reception and extra efforts should be made to train staff working with migrant minors, especially on culturally sensitive communication, children's rights and working with vulnerable groups.

Asylum procedures are not fully adapted to the needs of children. Migrant children often need special support to articulate their claim for protection and to disclose their story during the asylum procedure. Furthermore, children's cultural background and abilities are not always taken into account by decision-makers, which often has a negative impact on the final decision on the child's asylum claim. There is an urgent need for additional training for interviewers, translators and decision-makers to adapt procedures to children's age, abilities and cultural background.

The social integration of children in transit (refugee children, asylum-seeking children, undocumented children and children of irregular migrant children) **is not taken into consideration** by local and national authorities. These children mostly live in spatially segregated or ghettoised areas and have little contact with the local community. Promoting social contact and inclusion in the local community must be done as early as possible.

Migrant children in institutions often live in **inadequate accommodation** (lack of space, privacy, mixing with adult migrants, etc.) and receive **insufficient financial and material support**. Improving their living conditions and providing additional financial support are essential for their well-being.

The well-being of migrant children depends on them having agency. In particular, children housed in asylum centres are subject to regulations that **limit their agency** in many ways. Limited leisure opportunities and the inability to make decisions about their daily routines have a negative impact on

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