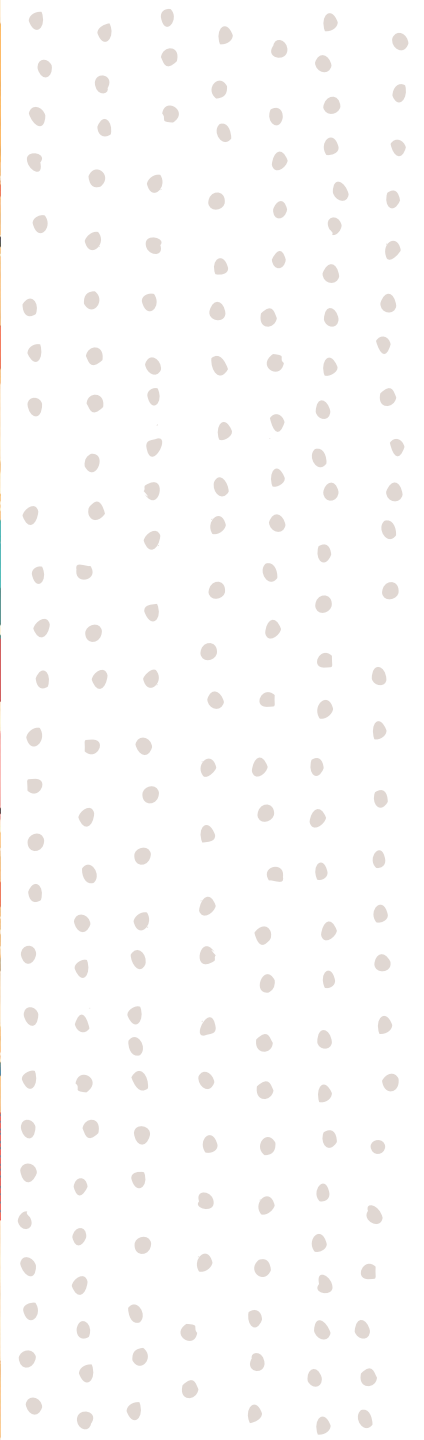




ECER 2022, Yerevan and ECER plus

Migrant children and youth in educational systems. The need for social support

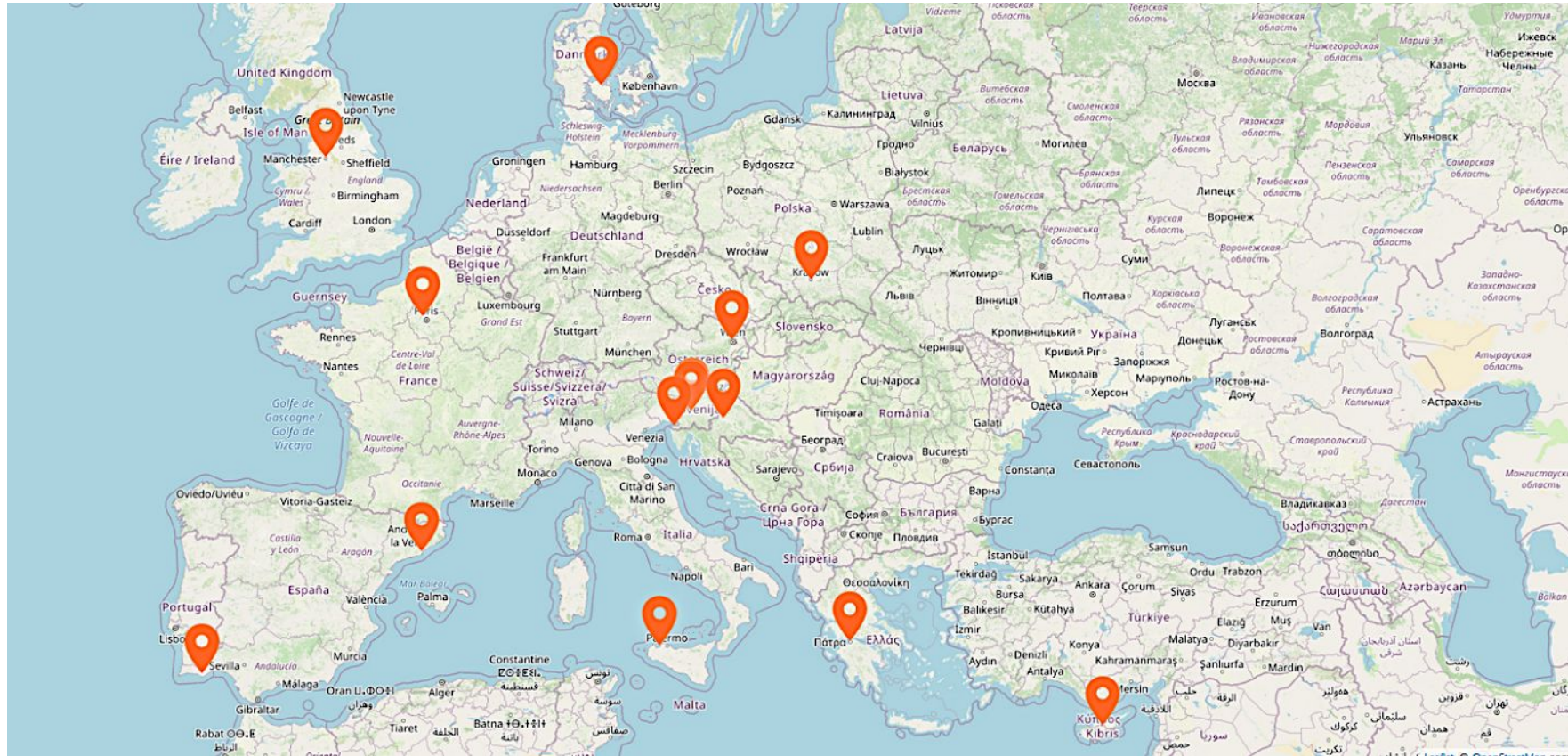
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European project MiCREATE

Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe

Grant Agreement number: 822664 — MiCREATE — H2020-SC6-MIGRATION-2018-2019-2020/H2020-SC6MIGRATION-2018



2019 - 2022 (10 European countries, and 15 institutions)



Aim and objectives of the research project

To explore and stimulate migrant children's inclusion in educational systems by adopting a child-centred approach at educational practice and policy levels.

1. Identify existing measures for migrant children inclusion at European, regional and local levels
2. Analyse the social impacts of inclusion programs through case studies
3. Develop inclusion measures and identify social investment in educational policies and school systems that aim to empower children.



Focus of the communication

The role of local and migrant families in the inclusion of migrant children in the Spanish educational and social system.

→ **Educational community in a wider sense in research.** Including not only teachers' voices, but also from school staff (social workers, psychologists, counsellors, etc.), families, and children/youth.

→ **Child-centered approach.** Using arts-based methods for a closer and confident relation with students.



Background

- ✓ Spain is one of the European countries experiencing one of the most significant impacts of the migration phenomenon.
- ✓ From the 1980s onwards, Spain went from being a country of emigrants to a country that receives increasing numbers of migrant population (Hernández-Hernández & Sancho-Gil, 2018).
- ✓ In 2000, 923,879 foreigners lived in Spanish lands (According to Sancho-Gil et al. (2021) → by 2020, the number had leapt to a total of 5,423,198 (IDESCAT, 2020).
- ✓ The maximum number of migrant students in Catalonia was 781,235 in the 2011-12 academic year (Ministry of Education and Science, 2018)
- ✓ In 2018, 13.8% of students were foreigners (GESOP, 2018), and 80% of these students attended public schools (Zapata-Barrero and de Witte, 2007).



Theoretical framework

- Schools and teachers do not educate alone (Sancho, 1998).
- Families' role is fundamental for children's school performance and social participation (Ball, 1998; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003) → Migrant families' involvement in school is vital to improving migrant students' learning process, engagement, and participation (López, Scribner & Mahitivanichcha, 2001)
- Migration processes and migrant backgrounds are very different between children and youth → It is essential to understand how migration shapes children's life stories and the grief they and their families can experience (Calvo 2005; Larriva 2017) for a better welcoming and accompaniment.



Theoretical framework

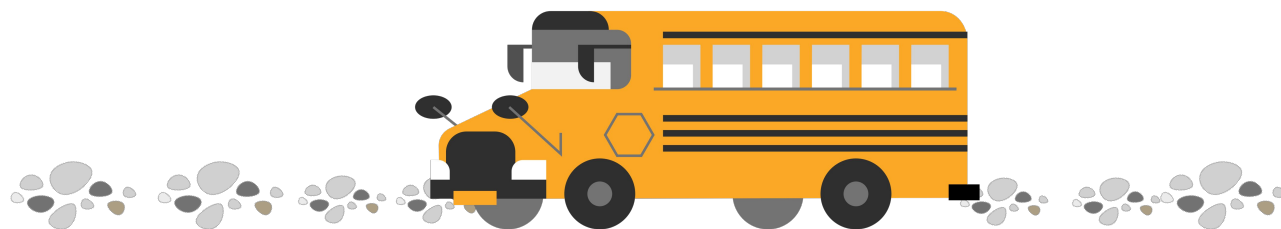
- There are several barriers and difficulties that families with migrant background face to be more involved in educational community (language, context, social and economical situation, etc.).
- There is a need for more in-depth and comprehensive studies aimed at a richer understanding of migrant children's, youth's and their families' social and learning needs, expectations, and challenges.





Methodology

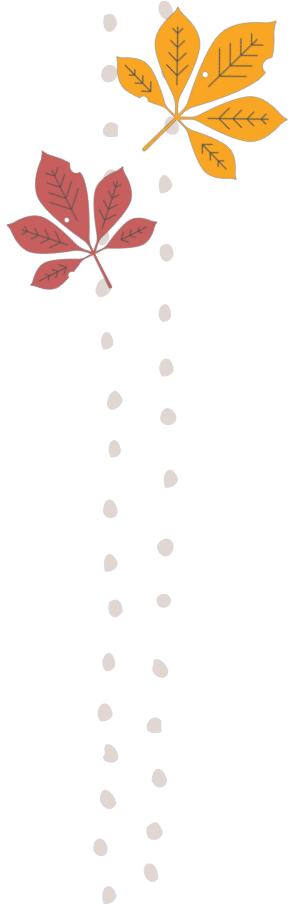
- ❖ This paper relies on the fieldwork carried out in Spain between June 2019 and December 2021 in 16 schools
- ❖ It was developed in four stages. Each one involved different participants, including experts from diverse fields and institutions, teachers and school staff, families, and students between 10 and 17 years-old.





Methods

- Literature review
- Semi-structured interviews
- Focus groups
- School observations
- Narrative, visual and art-based approaches (in fieldwork with children/youth)
- Thematic analysis and categorizations in: age, gender, religion, migrant background, social and economic situation, language proficiency



Overview of participants in the fieldwork

Stage	N° Schools	Methods	N° participants
1	–	Literature Review	–
2	–	Semi-structured interviews	14 experts from different fields: government and administrations, ombudsman, NGOs, educational institutions, researchers, practitioners and social worker
3	16 primary and secondary schools with high percentage of migrant children	Semi-structured interviews Focus groups	Interviews with school representatives from 16 schools: 26 school representatives Interviews and focus groups to teachers, families and school staff from 7 schools: 41 Teachers 19 Family members 14 School Staff
4	7 schools	Observations Arts-based workshops (Semi-structured interviews And Conversational groups)	104 Students (10-17 years old)

Source: Own elaboration.

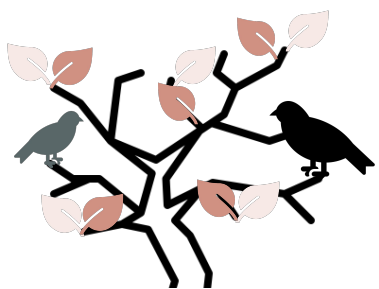


Outcomes

Outcomes relate to perspectives on the crucial role of families in their children's social and educational inclusion process in the host countries, their difficulties and schools' actions and institutional projects to foster family engagement.

This section exposes the main results about:

- 1) difficulties migrant families face to get involved in school life; and
- 2) practices that make their involvement easier in school life.



1. Regarding difficulties

- *Language barrier.* Migrant families usually do not speak the host country's official language.
- *Cultural clash.* Migrant families may have different perspectives than schools towards their children's education. If there is a poor valuation of school education in the family environment, they pass it to their children with a detrimental effect on them.
- *School segregation.* In Spain and, especially in Catalonia, there is the non-solved problem of segregation à uneven distribution of school enrolments.
- *Migrant families environment*
 - difficulties in communication
 - and emotional and social disadvantages of migrant families
- *Primary school vs Secondary school.* There is a difference between the involvement of families in primary schools (from 6 to 12 years old) and secondary schools (from 12 to 16 years old).

2. Regarding practices

General practices:

- Build an educational network involving families.
- Take advantage of relatives at the same school, especially newly arrived children.
- Facilitate the conversation between teachers and migrant families that don't speak the same language by:
 - Hiring a translator
 - Inviting family members who can speak both languages
 - Inviting intercultural mediators
 - Inviting social integrators
 - With the help of students who speak the language, etc.
- Enhance connections between migrant families and teachers to establish a space for relationships and trust.



2. Regarding practices

Specific practices:

- Collaboration with governmental and educational institutions, NGOs or non-formal education organisations.
 - Cambalache project;
 - Mus-e program;
 - Aprenem. Famílies en Xarxa (AFEX);
 - We Learn. Families in Network);
 - Open schoolyards (Patis Oberts/ Instituts Oberts);
 - Baobab Program;
 - Enxaneta Project (Projecte enxaneta);
 - L'Associació Mares enllaç (Mothers Link Association).





Scientific or scholarly significance of the study

Our research has provided evidence on:

- The inclusion process needs to be understood as a complex reality involving the entire educational community (school staff, municipalities, and local families) and society.
- The importance to consider the voices and experiences of educational communities dealing with the increasing migrant population and its related issues.
- The impressive work that schools and educators do is often carried out without the best possible conditions.
- The crucial role families have in the educational and social inclusion process of migrant children, considering prevailing cultural discrepancies.
- Schools, their communities, policy-makers, and society must be aware of families' different local contexts and cultural diversity in children's inclusion process.
- European projects such as MiCREATE must consider different points of view and embrace mixed methods that enhance the scope of the study; shedding light on relevant aspects is not always considered.

**Thank you for
your attention!**



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