# Research data management when working with children and youth



DAY 1

Workshop Ljubljana, Slovenia 27 – 28 March 2023



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101008589







### Challenges in doing research with migrant children Mateja Sedmak, Science and Research Centre Koper



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## Introduction

# **1.** Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe (2019-2022)

http://www.micreate.eu

Horizont 2020 Research & Innovation Action

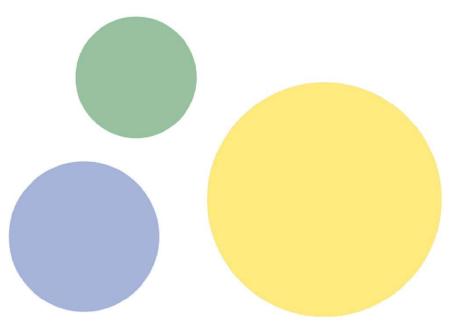


2. In whose best interest Exploring Unaccompained Minors' Rights through the Lens of Migration and Asylum Processes (2014-2015)

3. Children's Voices: Exploring Interethnic Violence and Children's rights in the School Environment (2011-2012)

### AIM

Challenges in research with (migrant) children



### MiCREATE consortium: **15 academic institutions & NGOs; 12 EU countries and Turkey; more than 70 researchers**

- Znanstvenoraziskovalno-središče Koper, Slovenia
- Manchester Metropolitan University, UK
- Centre national de larecherche scientifique, France
- Mirovni inštitut, Slovenia
- Univerza v Ljubljani, Slovenia
- Syddansk Universitet, Denmark
- Universitat de Barcelona, Spain
- Hellenic Open University, Greece
- Stowarzyszenie Interkulturalni Pl, Poland
- Universität Wien, Austria
- Hope for Children CRC, Policy Centre, Cyprus
- **CESIE**, Italy
- Udruge centar za mirovne študije, Croatia
- DYPALL NETWORK: Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Participação Cidadã, Portugal
- Fakulteta za dizajn. Slovenia

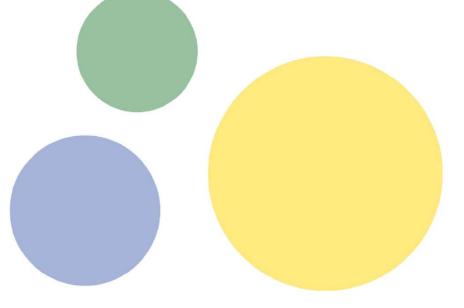
# MiCREATE project

### **CHILD-CENTRED APPROACH**

- To shift the focus from the prevailing adult-centred perspective to children's experiences and to consider children as experts of their own lives, rights holders and meaning makers
- Children as **relevant social actors** and bearers of rights
- **Competent and active** agents of their (social) lives
- To consider children voices, opinions and experiences (in methodology, research, policy etc.)

### AIM OF THE MICREATE PROJECT

Promoting the social integration of different groups of migrant children in European countries through a childcentred approach to migrant integration at the educational and policy levels.

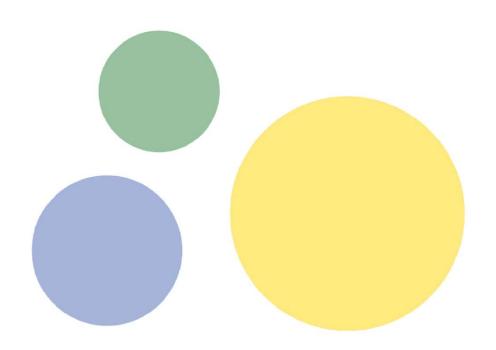


## RESEARCH

- Research activities with migrant and local children (and with educational staff) in schools, camps and asylum centres in 10 countries, namely Denmark, Spain, United Kingdom, Austria, Slovenia, Poland, Italy, France, Greece, and Turkey.
- Mixed methodological approaches: participant observation, arts-based methods, collection of autobiographical life stories/interviews, focus groups, and surveys.
- More than 6,000 newly arrived and long-term migrant children as well as local children were included in MiCREATE's research activities.

## CHALLENGES

- 1. Preparation phase
- 2. Implementation phase
- 3. Methodological issues
- 4. Critical reflection



### 1. Preparation phase

**1. ETHICAL PROTOCOL** (in each country the research was approved by **institutional Ethical commission** + **project's Ethical border** + approved by **EC**).

#### 2. CONTENT OF ETHICAL PROTOCOL:

a) **General ethical principles** on which the research will be based

b) **Ethical principles** related specifically to the research of (migrant) **children** (vulnerable group)

### c) **Informed consent for parents/guardians & <u>children</u>** (information letter and informed consent - emphasize

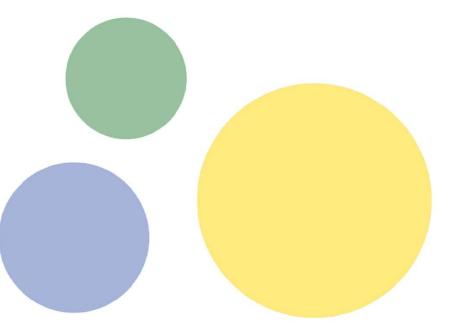
<u>voluntary participation</u> and the possibility to <u>terminate</u> <u>participation at any time</u> in the process, information on anonymity, recording, use of data, data storage and sharing etc.)

#### d) Methodology (implementation of the research)

e) **Data protection** and protection of privacy of participants

#### **3. SPECIFIC CHALLENGES**

- research in several countries at the same time (country specifics)
- cross-cultural adaptation



### 1. Preparation phase-Research Data Management Plan

### 1. DATA COLLECTION:

#### 2. DATA PROCESSING AND STORAGE:

- purpose of data collection
- connection of data collection with project objectives

#### **IMPORTANT!**

Be in touch with National data archive before beginning of the research

- type and format of collected data
- estimated data size where/how the data will be stored
- reuse of data (personal data, anonymization)
- for whom the collected data will be useful, etc.

## 2. Implementation phase

- Before the start/implementation of any research activities: signed Informed consent by children and by parents.
- Consent letter should be written in a simple way; ensuring that children truly understand the content of the consent, the purpose of the research and the consequences of participating.
- **Time is crucial** *"*take your time". Follow the rythm of the child.
- Listen carefully, use compassionate and sincere communication, avoid any presumptions, use simple and clear terminology,
- Use child centred approach the least adult role; consider children's experiences, opinions, feelings ...
- Children want to please you and they respond to your reactions
  be careful to
  not encourage such behaviour!
- Select appropriate methods & start with certain methodologies and than continue with others (start with participatory observation phase, art based approach before survey or interviews, etc.)

# 3. Methodological issues

- Some methods more appropriate than the others (especially true for migrant children, refugee children, unaccompanied minors, children with special needs etc.)
- Some methods are **more child-centred**!

**1) Participatory observation phase:** particularly useful: 1) for collecting information, research data & 2) establishing the intimacy, familiarity, contact with children

**2)** Art based approach: especially appropriate method to express in alternative waysdrawing, making photos, videos, dancing, using body.... 1) for collecting data & 2) as a starting point for application of other methods

**3) Survey:** language challenges; translate questionnaires in all needed languages! Cultural adaptation of items, terminology...

**4) Interviewing:** language challenges, problem for more introvert, traumatized etc. children; using different languages or cultural mediator and/or translator; using less structured and more narrative interviewing technique as collection of autobiographical life stories etc. that give children more opportunity to express and talk about the topics that are important for them/to capture the "real picture"

5) **Research Cocreation**: involve children in a form of **Children Advisory Boards** or/and as **coresearchers** (involved in research design, implementation and interpretations, presentation of results)

### 4. Critical reflection – what we learned?

#### • It is really hard to be child-centred.

We are living in an adult centred world. We as adults have power to overrule the children, we have authority as researchers, teachers, politicians.....the continuous auto-reflexivity is needed

• Time is crucial

#### Methods matter

Some methods are more appropriate than others. Art based approach techniques and participatory observation methods

#### • Are we truly ethical?

How truly voluntary is the participation of children? Are we trully following all ethical standards?

#### • Personal Influence/influence of researcher

As researchers/persons we influence the research and results by our personal expectations, feelings, attitudes etc. and by interiorized prevailing discourse on vulnerable (migrant) children – **trauma discourse** & **deficit discourse** (they have a deficit because do not speak our language, do not know our culture etc.)

#### Monoculturality is still a norm

Involvement of cultural mediators, translators & researchers from the same ethnicity

### • General Reflexivity

Situating ourselves socially and emotionally in relation to respondents is an important element of reflexivity.

How our individual position (being female, middle-age/young local or with migrant background, etc.) influences the research process, data collecting process and translating data into theory.

Also how researchers' emotional responses to respondents shape our interpretations of their accounts.

Selection of methods, data analysis and interpretation are impacted by personal, interpersonal, emotional, institutional, and pragmatic influences.

In the reflection process of fieldwork with vulnerable groups the influence of *power differences* must be considered all the time.

# **Discussion & questions**

