



HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL?

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF
QUESTIONNAIRES FILLED BY
CHILDREN, PARENTS AND
PROFESSIONALS ON THEIR
SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

CHILD-UP Project



Horizon 2020
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Executive summary

The CHILD-UP survey collected quantitative data for providing insights on condition and hybrid integration in education of migrant-background children. The target group of migrant-background children includes (1) first and second generation long-term resident children, (2) newcomers, including refugees and children recently arrived through family reunification, (3) unaccompanied children, who can be both long-term residents and newcomers. The overall aim of the research is to collect quantitative data and analyse it to answer questions related to children's integration. The survey was conducted in the following areas: Belgium (Flemish and Walloon regions), Finland (Tampere and Seinäjoki regions), Germany (Saxony and Hamburg regions), Italy (provinces of Modena, Reggio Emilia and Genoa), Poland (Małopolska and Lubelskie regions), Sweden (Malmö area), UK (Boroughs of Barnet, Bromley and Merton).

Specific objectives of the survey were the following:

- To get a detailed and multi-angled understanding on the circumstances and integration of migrant-background children.
- To focus on how the participation of children is present and absent in relation to integration and everyday life in schools from the viewpoint of children, their parents or guardians and professionals working with them (teachers, social workers, interpreters/mediators working in schools).
- To investigate essential factors in children's integration, i.e. gender, country of origin, language skills, family composition, length of stay.
- To study how the schooling system and social protection systems at large interact with the migrant-background children and with one another to enhance integration.

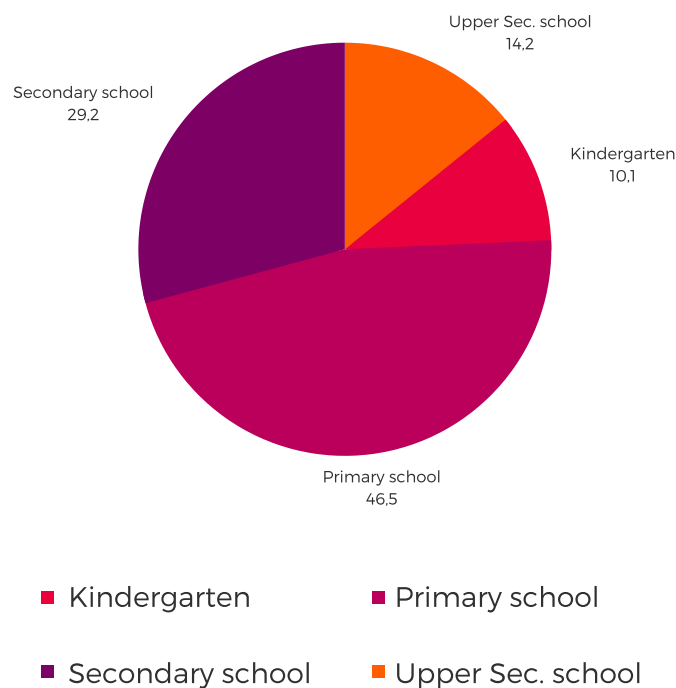
Participation

3959 children and 2213 parents participated.

Children: 10,1% in kindergarten, 46,5% in primary school, 29,2% in secondary school and 14,2% in upper secondary school.

Distribution of migration background children: average of 36,7%.

The survey has highlighted some relevant issues that will be explored in the next phase of qualitative research.



Research highlights

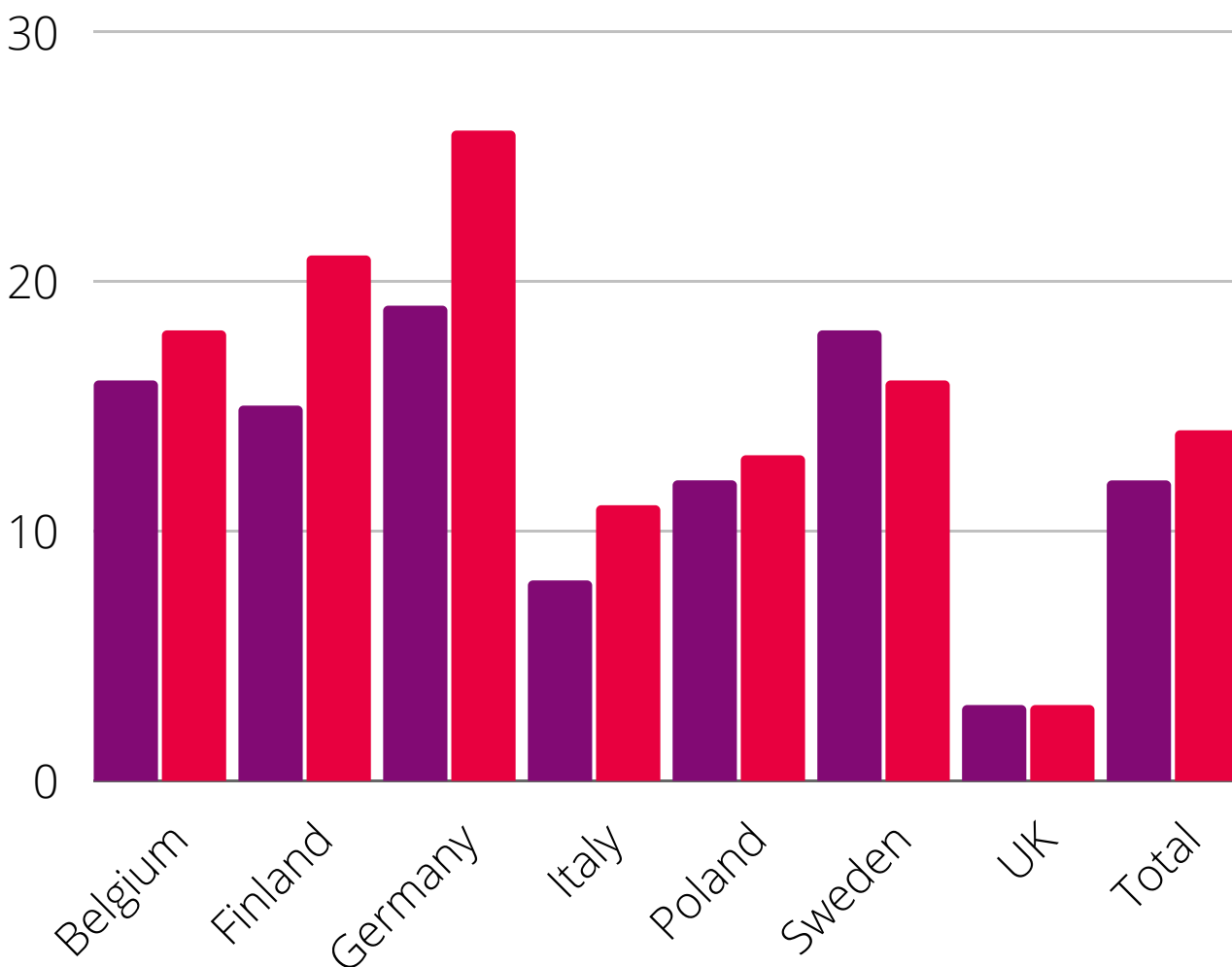
About children

It is important to pay attention to children's experience of school, in particular for what concerns children with a migrant background. The majority of children is quite positive about their competencies. For instance, most of them believe that they understand teachers, have good skills for schoolwork or can manage school tasks as other children.

In general, when comparing the groups, they tend to answer in similar patterns. Children with migration background are in many cases even slightly more positive concerning the general feeling towards school and less confident to their skills when compared to other children, but this data varies depending on countries. Problems seem to be more frequently perceived (or at least declared) in Italy and less frequently in Finland, Poland and Sweden.

Despite these generally positive responses to school experience, it is obvious that not all children find schoolwork as positive: in general, from 30% to 40% of children do not agree with this positive assessment. Thus, it is important to seek the best practices that enhance all children's participation and support everyone's agency.

Children's trouble (%)



This analysis leads to two important results:

- there are differences and relations between children's autonomy, on the one hand, and collaboration and help from parents, teachers and peers on the other;
- professionals' support of agency is mixed with traditional ways of teaching.

However, further investigation is required for what concerns children's opportunities of personal expression and participation in decisions making. Some challenges and difficulties are particularly important for children with migrant background (MB), as shown in the chart. Findings about children's troubles highlight the necessity of reflecting on unfamiliar situations for migrant background children and creating a school environment where children feel safe and able to express themselves. This finding suggests that both migrant and non-migrant children can benefit from dialogic learning practices that can help all children in the classroom to feel more heard. These findings can also point to a lack of communication between parents and children about children's everyday school experiences, and the fact that that parental involvement in children's education is often lacking.

To sum up, results concerning children's school experience, children's troubles and children's agency indicate the necessity to increase dialogue in the classroom, which is a core objective of the CHILD-UP project.

About professionals

It is important to pay attention to teachers' awareness of the migrant children's background that can have consequences to learning and participation. More specifically, the survey has highlighted that, in the local situational contexts of the research:





1. The availability of language support services varies a lot, from almost non-existent to fairly good. School initiatives above all concern foreign language learning, while language and **intercultural mediation and support of native language are much less frequent.** It is important to understand how much support and resources teachers can receive and are able and willing to use if they would like to promote such initiatives.
2. A lack of language support and a monolingual approach in schools and classrooms may have consequences for the students' opportunities to participate in different activities and therefore may hinder their learning and participation. To consider multilingualism as a resource in class, and not a deficit, may contribute to students' forming identities as engaged active learners.
3. The survey highlighted that there are different professionals' actual possibility to access multicultural training. It is important to investigate if and how teachers notice situations of cultural stereotyping or discrimination among children in school and how they enhance sensitivity on these topics, since the survey revealed difficulties in dealing with these issues.

It appears that the contradiction between the general content that both pupils and teachers express concerning schoolwork, and the negative publicity in media, is disturbing for the teachers. When school is in the news, there is usually something negative going on. The media tends to highlight problems in schools, even if research proves that schoolwork is mainly positive. This is an area that Child-Up should address by effective dissemination activities, present the positive research results and advertise the compiled good practices found in schools.

About parents


The experience of parents is also relevant, in particular for two aspects. First, their perception of children's experience is more positive than children's perceptions, thus showing that communication between children and parents, on the one hand, and between parents and teachers on the other, does not work very well. Second, as shown in the chart, the perception of parents and teachers about the functioning

of teachers-parents communication is rather different, which once again indicates some problems of communication between teachers and parents. To guarantee smooth communication between parents and teachers, a variety of channels would be welcome, but above all exchanging about their differing attitudes seems to be an important way of enhancing collaboration.

Communication between teachers and parents %	Perfectly or usually well		Perfectly or usually well		Perfectly or usually well	
	Teachers	Parents	Teachers	Parents	Teachers	Parents
Belgium	41.4	86.8	41.4	11.6	17.2	1.6
Finland	63.7	84.0	34.5	15.5	1.7	1.0
Germany	68.8	70.4	29.7	24.0	1.4	5.5
Italy	25.3	76.4	71.1	22.3	3.6	1.4
Poland	80.0	92.0	20.0	6.8	0	1.2
Sweden	51.3	78.9	41.0	10.5	7.7	10.5
UK	66.7	95.7	22.2	2.0	11.1	1.0
Total	56.6	83.5	38.9	14.8	4.3	1.9

On cultural differences

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There are important results concerning the representation of cultural differences, intercultural relations and inclusion, and in particular differences between professionals (teachers, social workers, mediators), and parents. In general, these representations show ambivalence and disorientation between representations of hybridisation, celebration of cultural differences, observation of problems related to intercultural differences and situation, and also, to less extent, assimilation. In particular, there are important differences in views between professionals and between professionals and parents (who seem more frequently interested in assimilation), as well as differences between country contexts, which reveal different attitudes of teachers to face integration.

Thus, in the involved European countries, it is possible to see different results and assessments of integration and awareness of hybrid integration, which needs to be improved for the benefit of inclusion of children with migrant background. In particular, it is important to investigate if and how professionals (above all teachers) notice intercultural problems and problems of integration, what meanings they give to these problems, how they can enhance sensitivity on cultural stereotyping or discrimination among children in school, how they can intervene to create hybrid conditions of integration.

Conclusions

Overall, these results indicate the necessity to increase children's agency and dialogue in the classroom, dialogue between schools and parents, awareness of opportunities and risks of hybrid integration. The conditions of agency, dialogue and awareness of hybrid integration are investigated in the second phase of research, including interviews, focus groups and observation of educational activities.



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See more results of the CHILD-UP Project at
www.child-up.eu



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