



**Children Hybrid Integration: Learning Dialogue
as a way of Upgrading Policies of Participation**

Deliverable

D8.4 Policy Recommendations

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Introduction

This document is proposed, at the end of the research activities of the CHILD-UP Project in May 2022, as a synthesis of possible inputs for the present and future policy making at the different institutional levels. Not all recommendations are formulated in a classic operational way, as they have different nature and require some contextualisation work.

From the project perspective, innovation processes in this domain are scaling up more effectively when they emerge from good practice at a local level and are progressively transferred from a local context to the next local context through an active contribution of local stakeholders fully engaged in the dissemination process. Nevertheless, a reflection on how some lessons learnt from the CHILD-UP research can inform and inspire national and European level public policy on inclusive education may also produce favourable conditions for a systemic, quicker and certainly necessary improvement of integration policies and approaches.

While the first set of two epistemological recommendations addresses the use of two core concepts of the CHILD UP project, namely hybrid integration and children's agency as a way to think of integration in a non-conventional way, the four recommendations that follow have a methodological nature and point out that a bottom-up perspective does not exclude the intervention of public policy in terms of plans and orientations able to transcend the logic of a "project after project" progression.

The emergency created by the massive flow of children from Ukraine has contributed to the general perception of a sense of urgency that unfortunately was not there before: at this stage policy makers are searching for practices that can be adapted and reproduced, instruments that can be immediately used to support schools, teachers and other professionals in the integration of children with a migrant background (CMB). CHILD-UP offers evidence of what works and free access to tools like the multilingual archive of school practices, the guidelines and the training resources, which may actually support teachers and accelerate the process of hybrid integration, giving children more chances to be active knowledge producers.

The following series of 9 recommendations clearly refers to school practices and is useful for grassroots professionals like teachers and mediators, but their implementation requires policy orientation and support, in terms of directives, organisational flexibility, encouragement and reward for achievement, creation of opportunities for exchange of information and network building.

The practice-oriented recommendations are therefore followed by 5 recommendations that have a major focus on creating education policy orientations suitable to actually encourage and consolidate the recommended practices. For instance, the recommended shift of focus from children's performance to children's agency implies a profound review of the way teaching and evaluation are organised at school.

The last series of 5 recommendations is directly addressing the education and in-service training of teachers and other education professionals, challenging much of the current practice in this field and calling for a substantial review of how teaching, assessment and learners support functions have been codified in formal education.

This text will be presented and discussed at the CHILD-UP Final Conference on 9th-10th June 2022 and will be then revised according to the feedback received.

CHILD-UP contributions to education policy

The CHILD-UP research outcomes can inform and support educational policies through two basic epistemological recommendations, followed by 4 methodological recommendations and 19 recommendations about specific improvements in the education system.

The two basic epistemological recommendation

First. The use of the term “integration” is not neutral and is critical according to several organisations and activists working with CMB, since it suggests a process through which these children should adhere to the social and cultural conditions of the host country. The rather frequent suggestion to use the term “inclusion” does not seem sufficient to account for the specific social and educational conditions of CMB. We recommend the use of the concept of “hybrid integration” which stresses that integration is not based on the reduction of cultural differences, but on the interlacement of different personal cultural trajectories that leads to conditions in which new hybrid forms of narratives are produced in communication.

Second. In school contexts, hybrid integration is based on the interlacement and mixing of personal cultural trajectories, which can be supported by children’s exercise of agency, rather than by children’s reception of adults’ choices. It is therefore important to empower children to become authors of choices and knowledge, by narrating their personal trajectories and dialoguing with other children and adults. Children’s agency means authorship of choices based on dialogue. It is also important to support communication with children’s parents in order to involve them in their children’s experience of school. The combination of children’s agency and parents’ support of this agency, both based on teachers’ action, can enhance children’s authority in producing important knowledge on their personal cultural trajectories and changing the social and cultural context in which these trajectories are produced.

Four methodological recommendations

1. Bottom up interactional processes are crucial since they involve schools and stakeholders in constructing knowledge and practices. Listening and involving professionals in local practical activities is much more productive and effective than supporting national or international actions which are not sufficiently attuned to local conditions.
2. Knowledge of school and children’s daily life activities is extremely important. It is not sufficient to collect second hand reports or proposals. An effort to collect data on local practices and to compare these data is needed. In this way, effective sets of data can be constituted in national countries and Europe.
3. The construction of specialised and interactive digital archives is much more effective than big and general datasets. For instance, CHILD-UP has provided an archive with materials to support local schools and stakeholders in the implementation of new practices.
4. The support of sustainability for local activities should not be occasional or based on specific or sporadic projects. An accurate policy is based on a sustainable and systematic

implementation of plans that allow the enrichment of direct knowledge on what is important in school life to improve it in the direction of agency and hybrid integration.

Recommendations for education policies about specific improvements in schools and teaching

1. To support a focus on practices rather than values, in particular when dealing with sensitive themes, such as migration, intercultural relations, dialogue, citizenship, globalisation and so on.
2. To discourage the widespread use of monolingual classroom communication with CMB, in two ways. First, this means improving the use of language mediation when there are language barriers. Second, this means supporting opportunities for CMB to speak their mother tongue, through translanguaging, i.e. interrelated discursive practices that enhance and support all children's languages in the classroom, and the exploitation of external opportunities for learning and practicing.
3. To support a more friendly school as a meeting place, including non-hierarchical and more relaxed relations, reducing the distance between children and teachers, and including children's personal narratives about their feelings and experiences.
4. To support children's interest in participating in their own education, their responsibility for this participation, and their autonomous production of knowledge.
5. To increase efforts to support children's creative ideas, dissent and initiatives, which are rarely accepted and supported in schools.
6. To support activities through which children can actively participate in school decisions and classroom design.
7. To increase efforts to support engagement and solidarity in case of discrimination, and appropriate reactions to CMB's problems, in particular problems in the language of instruction.
8. To improve interactions with migrant parents through the systematic use of language mediation, and not only to provide information to parents but also to collect their points of view and discuss the meanings of agency and hybrid integration in schools and families.
9. To improve interactions among teachers, interpreters/mediators, social workers, reception centres and other agencies working in local communities.

To enhance and support these improvements, the recommendation is that educational policies make a strong effort in supporting:

1. The shift of focus from children's performances to children's agency, as a more appropriate way of improving learning, since exercise of agency can show children's abilities and competences.
2. The shift of the way of interacting in the classroom, from hierarchical to facilitative, by exploiting the availability of guidelines and archives showing what facilitative actions are, thus taking into account children's interest in methods that are open to their own needs and interests.
3. The use of facilitative actions in all types of school, since they can be used from early childhood to adolescence.
4. Teachers' responsibility for adapting facilitative actions locally, depending on age, gender, language proficiency, conditions of hybrid integration (e.g. number of CMB, time spent by



CMB in the local school system, conditions determined by their families, etc.) and their own specific abilities.

5. The use of facilitation in meetings between teachers and interpreters/mediators, as well as between teachers and any other professional or organisation in the local community.

Finally, since training is a pivotal action to transform educational policies into practices, the following training aims are highly recommended:

1. To increase teachers' and other professionals' recognition and ability to support agency and hybrid integration, rather than their knowledge about intercultural issues and practices.
2. To clarify the differences among hybridisation, value of cultural differences and forms of assimilation, which are frequently mixed in the view of teachers and other professionals.
3. To learn to use basic facilitative actions that can encourage, enhance and support children's agency.
4. To learn to support children's narratives of personal cultural trajectories and interlacements among these narratives, by using appropriate materials.
5. To learn to use basic facilitative actions to support the effective participation of parents, interpreters/mediators, social workers and any other professional working with the school from the perspective of the local community.