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

Local report (Germany)

How do you feel about school? Local report of interviews with children, and professionals on their school experiences

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Introduction

This report is based on templates for local reports about professionals' and children's perspectives which has been delivered by UJ for use by the partners in the research activities. Each partner has prepared and delivered two local reports, about the professionals' perspectives and the children's perspectives. Draft versions of the two final reports (about the professionals' perspectives and the children's perspectives) has been prepared and circulated among the project partners by UJ for reviewing. The revisions have been introduced in the deliverable regarding local reports. This report is divided in two parts, according to the differentiation between professionals and children. The final report (D. 5.2) will include a reflection on the data presented in this report and on the most important results emerging from the local reports.

The report included a methodological overview, followed by sections for each part of the two general sections (professionals' perspectives and children's perspectives). The section on professionals in organised, for each country partner, according to the views of different professional (teachers, social workers and mediators) about professional experiences, in general and for what concerns narratives on and relationships with migrant children and their families, the experience of pandemic and finally the recommendation for good practices. The section on children is organised, for each partner, in thematic subsections about the experience of schools, intercultural relations at school, identity and belonging, and final recommendations.

This report is part of the 'Children hybrid integration in the education system' CHILD-UP project (Horizon 2020). A total of seven countries are participating in the study. This report refers to the surveys in Germany. The contents of the report refer to the results of the qualitative survey of professionals in the occupational groups of teachers (in schools and daycare centers), social workers and mediators. The period in which the interviews were conducted was from May 2020 to October 2020. The participants work in different contexts and cities with children and families with a migration background; for example in pre-school, school, as an additional teacher in the Teach First programme, as school social workers, in fields of open social work and as translators and mediators. Building on the previous quantitative work packages (WP4), the surveys took place mainly in Saxony and Hamburg. In addition, two teachers working in schools in Berlin were included. A total of 36 professionals took part in the interviews. The interviews took place as both focus group interviews (5 focus group interviews / FGI) and individual interviews (20 individual interviews / I).

CHILD-UP WP5 local professional report: Germany

1 Methodology

1.1 Sample

Place of the study

The research took place in schools, day care centers (pre-school) and related institutions in Saxony, Hamburg and Berlin. In Saxony, teachers from three different day care centers participated. All three day care centers are located in cities with approximately 500,000 inhabitants. Two of the day care centers focus on intercultural education, and one on promoting children's participation. In Saxony, teachers, social workers and mediators from different regions were interviewed. Most of the participants work in urban areas. The people interviewed from Hamburg also work in an urban area (more than 1.8 million inhabitants). Berlin is the capital of Germany with more than 3.6 million inhabitants. The proportion of people with a migration background is very high in Berlin. For this reason, two teachers who work at Berlin schools with a high proportion of migrants also took part in the study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not always possible to conduct research in the same schools/day care centers as in WP4. Furthermore, no surveys could be conducted in reception centers because access was limited due to pandemic protection regulations and was not possible within the scope of the survey. The interviews in reception centers were replaced by further individual interviews with social workers.

A total of 24 interviews were conducted, of which 19 were individual interviews and five were group interviews with two to four participants. Eleven interviews took place face-to-face, eleven as telephone interviews and two as video calls (for further details, see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of interviews

Type of interview	I	FGI	In total
Face-to-face	7	4	11
Phone	11	0	12
Video call	1	1	2
Total	19	5	24

Sampling

The qualitative study (WP5) is linked to the quantitative study as part of a mixed method. The aim was to deepen the understanding of some aspects that we discovered in earlier steps. Therefore, we focused on the same target groups, but not necessarily the same people. The sample comprised the following professionals (see table) and was selected using the principles explained below.

Table 2: Sampling

Professional group	Number	From that in FGI	Own migration background
Teacher/educator	22	14	8
Social worker	9	/	1
Mediator	5	3	4

Principles of selection were undertaking regular work with children with a migration background, having a good knowledge of integration policies at the work place, and an openness to the CHILD-UP study.

The focus group interviews of the teachers comprised teachers who worked in the same institution but with different groups of children. The mediators who participated in the focus group interview also worked for the same organization but are employed in different institutions (day care centers and schools).

Relation to WP4 and WP6

We conduct all work packages independently but try to reach the same preschools and schools in all phases. Regarding WP4, we conducted interviews in two day care centers that already participated in the previous phase. We were unable to conduct interviews in the schools that have also participated in the questionnaire study. Regarding WP6, thus far we only could receive consent for both WPs from day care centers, where we will conduct FGIs with children. However, we are in contact with three schools that signaled openness to the project but pointed to the role of the pandemic and the uncertainty of schools being re-opened to external persons.

Potential risk, possible difficulties

As in WP4, the responsivity of schools – especially in the times of the pandemic – is quite low. Although stating their interest and the importance of the project's scope, the schools often refer to the lack of resources and capacities in supporting this extracurricular project work. At the same time, in order to enter schools we need approval from the Saxonian Ministry of Education. As in WP4, the procedure was quite extensive. The extent of the informant and consent forms addressing all the data protection information is quite large, making it difficult to reach parents and gain their consent, especially for children with a migrant background and families with lower socioeconomic and educational status.

1.2 Course of the study

The survey process was designed holistically regarding the achievement of objectives. The questioning of both children and professionals was about exploring the current integration conditions for children with a migration background, recognizing difficulties, discovering potentials, identifying development needs and opportunities for improvement. This overarching objective was implemented in practice in such a way that the respective groups of actors (i.e. children, teachers, social workers, mediators) were addressed with specific key questions. The aim was to include the respective perspectives to ultimately enable a comprehensive perspective.

Recruitment phase

The recruitment phase was already started during WP4, in which the contacts were checked for continuation and – if possible – addressed. These contacts were activated at the beginning of WP5. Unfortunately, not all contacts could be refreshed due to coronavirus – among other factors – and thus new interview partners were selected, sought and approached.
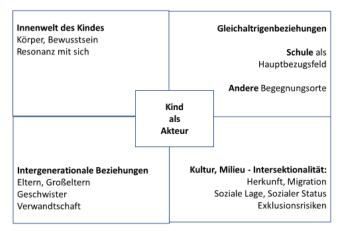
A total of 43 institutions (eleven day care centers, seventeen primary schools and fifteen secondary schools) in Saxony and Hamburg were approached for the teacher interviews. Three day care centers, four primary schools and four secondary schools agreed to participate. A total of sixteen social workers and social work organizations were approached in Hamburg, Saxony and Berlin. As the capital of Germany, Berlin was added because two social workers agreed to participate who had experience in the field of working with children and families with a migration background. Nine social workers took part in the interviews, as can be seen in Table 4. In order to recruit mediators, a total of three organizations were approached, two of which agreed to participate, as can be seen in Table 5.

Interview format

The focus of qualitative research is on understanding and improving children's agency, whereby all interviews were guided by this focus. However, the perspective of the respective group was precisely oriented towards this. In the case of professionals, this was the perspective of the teacher, the social worker and the mediator.

Basic model

We have presented the central model for the children's agency in a four-field scheme, which has the following basic structure:

Legend:

The focus is on the "child as an actor".

In the upper-left quadrant (Innenwelt des Kindes / inner world of the child) is the child with his/her needs, experiences and feelings.

In the lower-left quadrant (Intergenerationale Beziehungen / intergenerational relationships) is child in the family, their system of values and nor

In the upper-right quadrant (Gleichaltrigenbeziehungen, Schule, Andere/ peer relationships; school, other encounters) is the child in his/her social reference field outside the family.

In the lower-right quadrant (Kultur, Milieu, Intersektionalität / culture, milieu, intersectionality) is the child's field of social possibilities, descriptions and restrictions.

Process:

In the interviews, the perspectives of the respective professionals on this field of activity of the child were explored. Each profession has a relevant perspective (such as teachers on the field of "school") and distant perspectives (such as teachers on internal family processes). Since these actors are all important for the holistic integration success, their perspectives on all fields are interesting. The interviews were designed as

on-the-fly narratives. The process was based on so-called vignettes, which enabled addressing professionals on all important points, and there was individual freedom in terms of explaining the individual points. The interviews were carried out partly as individuals and partly as group interviews (focus group interviews). In both cases, the question impulses followed the vignettes, whereby in the focus group interviews there was also a careful moderation of the individual contributions.

Here, the vignettes are named with their heading. Under each heading, there were opening questions and in-depth questions. The application and sequence of the vignettes were implemented by the interviewer according to the situation. This was particularly helpful with the focus group interviews:

Vignette 1: Professional development, training, further education, fields of work

Vignette 2: Children with a migration background and parents / families / legal guardians

Vignette 3: Schools and other key institutions (social policy)

Vignette 4: Integration guidelines, integration support, possible improvement

Exit vignette: Final questions, hints

All interviews were recorded and later transcribed and thus prepared for the subsequent interpretation.

Interpretation

For the interpretation, we used the MAXQDA 2020 software. We developed the code tree based on the WP5 leader's suggested grids. The code trees of the three professional groups are quite similar (as an example, see the following code tree for teachers):

Table 3: Code tree

Codebaum / *Code tree*	Häufigkeit / *Frequency*
Codesystem / *code system*	1065
Corona Herausforderungen / *Challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic*	33
Gender / *Gender*	34
Agency / *Agency*	47
Partizipation / *Participation*	108
Inklusion / *Inclusion*	72
Andere Themen / *Other topics*	7
für Auswertung unwichtige / *Not important for evaluation*	11
Verbesserung von Maßnahmen, Policies / *Improving measures, policies*	3
Verbesserung der Integrationsprogramme / *Improving integration programmes*	14
Verbesserung in der Zusammenarbeit mit Institutionen / *Improving cooperation with institutions*	8
Verbesserung der Kommunikation / *Improving communication*	29
Empfehlungen von Programmen / *Recommendation of programmes*	10
Einfluss der Integrationsprogramme auf die Kinder / *Influence of integration programmes on children*	10
Bewertung/Evaluation von Integrationsprogrammen / *Evaluation of integration programmes*	27
Integrationsprogramme in der Arbeit / *Integration programmes at work*	86
Definition von Integration / *Definition of integration*	33
Zusammenarbeit mit Institutionen und Personen / *Cooperation with institutions and individuals*	59
Hilfreiche Fähigkeiten / *Helpful skills*	47
positive Erfahrungen / *Positive experiences*	9
beeinflussende Schlüsselfaktoren / *Key factors*	47
Arbeitsbedingungen und Strukturen / *Working conditions and structures*	73

Bedarfe und Gründe für Vulnerabilität bzw. Sicherheit / *Needs and reasons for vulnerability and security*	41
Zusammenarbeit mit Familien und Kindern mit MGH / *Cooperation with families and children with a migratin background*	122
Tätigkeitsbereiche: Schule; Träger / *Field of work: school; organization*	82
Berufliche Erfahrung / *Professional experience*	53

The process of interpretation was realized in a kind of a matrix, wherebh we horizontally analyzed one interview along the code tree and the interpretation categories. After we had analyzed all interviews in a horizontal way, we analyzed in a vertical way. Accordingly, in one category each, we interpreted the results of the horizontal analysis of all interviews into one result. These results are presented in this report under points 2 to 8.

Quotations from the empirical material are always italicized and marked by the position of the phrase in the MAXQDA analysis, e.g. G_T3_F, pos. 25 means: country/ profession/ interview number/ position. The translations of the participants' quotes are based on what was said. This authentic translation can lead to individual sentences being difficult to read due to sentence structure or language barriers. The quotes reflect the language use of the participants.

2 Methodological reflections

All interviews – phone and face-to-face interviews alike – were conducted in a comfortable situation, mainly without time restrictions. Depending on the participants' wishes, the face-to-face interviews took place at either their facilities or a neutral location, such as the research center. This allowed an atmosphere in which the interviewees could feel safe and comfortable. The atmosphere was open and research participants were interested and positive to open their perceptions and experiences about the topics of the CHILD-UP project. Interviews with professionals were conducted in German, and all participants had the language competencies to do so. After each interview, the interviewer prepared a memory protocol in which the atmosphere and important impressions were noted and own thoughts reflected. These first impressions and notes were included in the analysis.

2.1 Professional experiences: an overview

The experiences of the three groups are very specific and thus we divide the results in each topic into three points concerning teachers, social workers and mediators.

2.2 Professional experiences and professional experiences of working with migrant families and children

A. Teachers

The following table provides an overview of the key data of the interviewed teachers. This group includes teachers who work in schools as well as educators from day care centers. Focus group interviews are marked with FGI:

Table 4: Teachers

Profession	Years working as a teacher	Working with children/families with a migration background	Country of origin	languages
Individual Interviews				
T 1: History, Geography, Social Studies (Secondary school)	36 years	It depends from year to year; no data on current situation	Germany	German, English
T 2: Teacher for German as a second language (Primary school)	5 years	daily	Germany	German, English, Portuguese
T 3: Teacher for German as a second language (Primary school)	16 years	daily	Italy	German, English, Italian
T 4: Teacher for German as a second language (special school)	3 years	daily	Soviet Union	German, English, Russian
T 5: Teacher for German as a second language (Secondary school)	9 years	daily	Poland	German, English, Polish
T 6: History and social studies (Secondary school)	5 years	daily	Germany	German, English
T 8: Educator in a bilingual day care center	14 years	daily	France	German, English, French
T 9: Head of a bilingual day care center	9 years	daily	Germany	German, French, Swedish, English
Focus group interview				

T 7a: Teacher in an international preparatory class (for newly arrived pupils); Teacher for German as a second language (Primary school)	17 years	daily	not specified	not specified
T 7b: Teacher for German as a second language; Coordination of educational sponsorships at the Education Foundation (Primary school)	20 years	daily	not specified	not specified
T 10 (FGI):				
T 10a: Educator	13 years	daily	Germany	German
T 10b: Educator	7 years	daily	Germany	German, English, French
T 10c: Educator	42 years	daily	Germany	German, English, Russian
T 10d: Speech therapist in day care	3 years	daily	Germany	German, English
T 11 (FGI):				
T 11a: Educator	1 year	daily	Germany	German, English, French
T 11b: Educator	6 years	daily	Germany	German, English, French
T 11c: Educator	Not specified	daily	Not specified	Not specified
T 12 (FGI):				
T 12a: curative educator	24 years	daily	Germany	German, Russian
T 12b: Educator	1 year	daily	Uzbekistan	German, Russian
T 12c: deputizing management	9 year	daily	Germany	German, English, Russian,
T 12d: Head of an intercultural day care center	10 years	daily	Russia	German, Russian

T 12 e: Educator	7 years	daily	Peru	German, Spanish

A total of 22 teachers from the work areas of schools and day care centers were interviewed. Among them were five men and seventeen women. Both individual and group interviews were conducted.

The professionals work in different areas and functions. Some of them are teachers and teach in regular classes and others work explicitly with pupils with a migration background as so-called teachers for German as a second language (i.e. L2 teachers). Others work in different day care centers with children aged three to six years, in the functions of manager, deputy manager, curative educator and speech therapist. Overall, three of the 22 interviewees work as teachers in secondary education, four in primary education, one in a special school and fourteen in day care centers. Most of the interviewees stated that they have daily contact with pupils and families with a migrant background. In one case, it was described that the percentage of pupils with a migration background changes from year to year.

There are institutions where the percentage of pupils with a migration background is very high and schools where the percentage is rather low. For example, the percentage of migrants at one school is stated by a teacher to be at least 85%, while at another the specialist emphasizes that there are hardly any children at the school who were born in another country.

The working conditions are also different. The teachers interviewed state that they teach either only one, four or up to nine classes at a time in a school year. The size of the class and thus the number of pupils also strongly varies. Class sizes are given as nine, 21, 23, 26 and 30 pupils on average.

The sample group of teachers is characterized by diversity in their own cultural background. Their countries of birth are Germany, Italy, Soviet Union, Poland, France, Uzbekistan and Peru. Accordingly, they speak different languages.

Five of the 22 interviewees have a teaching degree with a master's degree, one has a master's degree, and in the day care center the professionals have different degrees, such as an education degree, a speech therapist degree, a home educator degree with a teaching qualification, a special education degree, a bachelor's degree in childhood education and a master's degree in education.

Nine of the 22 professionals state that they have gathered knowledge and experience on the topic of discrimination-sensitive teaching in their training or in the form of further and advanced training. A total of twelve of the interviewees state that they have learned something about the topic of gender-sensitive teaching in training or further education formats.

According to the interviewees' statements, there are opportunities for in-service and further training at their workplace. However, it is remarkable that the attendance of further training in the school context seems to be primarily based on the teachers' own initiative and motivation. Supervision and professional exchange are mainly used in the area of teaching German as a second language and in the area of child day care.

B. Social workers

The following table provides an overview of the key data of the social workers interviewed:

Table 5: Social workers

Profession	Years working as social worker	Working with children/families with migration background	Country of origin	languages
SW 1: social worker; Counseling	20 years	daily	German	German. Russian, Dutch, English, Czech
SW 2: educator, social worker	2 years	daily	German	German, English
SW 3: social worker (within the field of social work at schools)	18 years	daily	German	German, English, French
SW 4: additional trained staff at a school to support pupils (2-year programme)	< 1 year (11 month)	daily	German	German, English, French
SW 5: additional trained staff at a school to support pupils (2-year programme)	1 year	daily	German	German, English
SW 6: additional trained staff at a school to support pupils (2-year programme)	< 1 year (9 month)	daily	German	German, English
SW 7: additional trained staff at a school to support pupils (2-year programme)	1 year	daily	German	German, English, French
SW 8: Counselor for families with a migration background	5 years	daily	Arabs	Arabic, German, English
SW 9: educator, social worker, Counselor for people with a migration background	25 years	daily	German	German, English, Russian

A total of nine social workers were interviewed. Of these, seven state that they are female, one person states that he is male and one person does not wish to make a gender-specific statement. Even though only one person has a migration background himself, the interviewees also indicate other language skills besides German, namely English, French, Russian, Arabic, Dutch and Czech. According to their own statements, they all speak English well to very well. The ability to speak English is not highlighted by the professionals as a

particularly important resource; rather, it is described as a helpful skill enabling to converse with families with a migration background in their mother tongue. In particular, Arabic plays a major role here. Professionals who do not speak Arabic themselves integrate people of Arabic origin into their team or use interpreters.

The main group of respondents works in the field of school social work, more specifically as additional professionals in a nationwide two-year integration programme called 'Teach First'. They are trained to support pupils at schools with a high proportion of pupils from socially-disadvantaged backgrounds. The tasks that Teach First staff take on vary and are adapted to the needs of the students and the school. For example, they are trained to have some kind of oversight of the organization. They network with other organizations outside the school and they take on small groups of students to help them learn and support them. Some Teach First staff work as a second teacher in the classroom, while others offer their own courses or tutoring sessions. They are accompanied during their working hours by the Teach First organization, through which they receive further training, supervision and support. Other fields of work mentioned are open child and youth work and counseling for families with a migration background or refugee experience. In all of these areas of work, the interviewed social workers state that they have daily contact with families and children with migration background. All of them work in both group and individual settings.

Of all the respondents, four do not have a degree in the field of social work but are career changers. Some of them have a pedagogical background such as a teaching degree, while others come from non-specialist fields and are continuing their education through further training. All nine participants have an academic degree (one bachelor's degree, seven master's degrees and one doctorate).

The offer for institutionally-anchored supervision, professional exchange or further and advanced training strongly varies in the individual fields of work. Only the professionals who work in counseling for people with a migration background and refugee experience (SW 1, SW 8 & SW 9) and the social worker who works in the field of school social work have the opportunity to regularly participate in professional exchange meetings, supervision and further and advanced training programmes. By contrast, the four Teach First professionals report that they are able to take advantage of a variety of further training, exchange and supervision opportunities within their programme, but that there are no structurally-anchored and professional opportunities for the entire staff at the schools where they are employed, despite such a need. The social worker from the open children and youth center (SW 2) also reports a strong need but a lack of opportunities.

It can be seen as a common focus of their daily work that all interviewees speak of being a trustworthy contact person and networking. Networking among each other – for example, among the pupils or families with a migration background – plays a major role here, but also networking with locals and externally; for example, to other fields of social work and to authorities, such as the youth welfare office or the employment office.

C. Mediators/Interpreters

An overview of the mediators interviewed is outlined below:

Table 6: Mediators/interpreters

profession	Years working as mediators	Working with children with migration background	Country of origin	languages

Trainee	1 year	daily	Morocco	Arabic, French
Trainee	2 years	daily	Syria	Arabic
Trainee	1 year	daily	Romania	Romanian, English
Trainee	5 years	daily	Lebanon	Arabic
Social worker	15 years	no	Germany	German

The mediators of our sample are all female, and all but one has a migration background, including Lebanese, Moroccan, Romanian, and Syrian. Accordingly, the languages they speak are Arabic, French, Romanian, English and German. The mediators with a migration background are participants in a project for integration supporters and culture navigators. The German mediator is the coordinator of this project. All of the mediators with a migration background work in schools and day care centers as integration supporters and have regular supervision. The mediators' major resource is their cultural background and similar life circumstances as children with Arabic or Central Asian roots. It is easy for them to build trust in the first encounter and understand the challenges for a migrated child in the German society. Together with the German coordinator, they have an overview of the whole process of integration with the relevant dimensions and facets. We will present the key findings of this group within the main categories in the report. However, three aspects should be mentioned in advance.

(1) All work is based on reflecting their personal situation and experience.

In the case of the migrated mediators, it is their own experience of the challenges of the integration process:

> *So in the beginning it was a bit difficult for me because I'm a foreigner. I don't know the system exactly, like the parents here, like the new parents who come to Germany here, it was a bit difficult to understand the system, what is allowed to do what we are allowed to do, what is not allowed to do, but now it's a little easier for me I still need ... experience. It is not at all easy to work in kindergarten or with children* (G_M2_F, pos. 6)

The German mediator – the coordinator of the project – has a long experience in developing democratic behavior and democratic institutions. She is extraordinary involved in the process of integration of the participants, the parents and the children. She is also working closely with other institutions in this field.

> *I come from a different society in which there was no social work, because everything was laid down in a directive from above, in the GDR ... to this day ... I have noticed time and time again that the truth is getting thinner and thinner in a world that is getting wider and wider and more global ... and the moment I take the time and interest for consensus, then I start the other first to listen and maybe better understand your needs, ask questions and in the end you will probably come out completely different ... I wanted to understand better from those affected, what is about and what is the interest, what are the possibilities, what is the dream and for a future and how can I uh participate in how to implement it together* (G_M1_F, pos. 7-43)

(2) Creating and learning a special profession: integration supporter and culture navigator:

> *Integration assistant ... is the job of these women, they didn't really know at the beginning what their integration aid was. That not to say that to the mother, that means here um day care card and day care card means this and that, but that, that dealing with OUR OWN culture that doesn't exist here, the other one, I*

don't know yet. What am I doing now with my own? Can, how can I live here? She became aware of it, painfully aware, because that was no longer there, what she used to have around her normally. Now there is something different and but no religiosity on the other side. There are vi: I have dealt with a lot of religious women ... who REALLY experienced these adaptation processes painfully the first time and then very much only related to their family and CLEAR couldn't imagine anything else and the intercultural ones Activities could not come because it was too alien to them. (G_M3_FFF, pos. 624-636)

I would really like to start the apprenticeship, uh, then first I want to improve my language and learn the theory. Now I am learning the practice, yes, but I also want to learn the theory. (G_M2_F, pos. 76)

(3) Trusting relationship with the children as a person with an own migration background:

It's not that difficult for me, I've already worked in school in Syria. ... sometimes the children of neighbors come to us, then I have the feeling uh not so difficult for and I am very motivated when I was in school and the children got to know me and so and then in the end uh all the children came to me come ... I am very happy when the children really find love and it is important for the children to learn to love too. (G_M3_FFF, pos. 21)

3   The experience of migrant children from professionals' perspectives

3.1 Perception and interpretation of the situation of migrant children

A. Teachers

Regarding the situation of migrant children, educators and teachers express some ambiguity. On the one hand, they highlight that it is not the migrant background per se, but rather the fact that all children are different and have to be seen in their individuality. They highlight that age with accordant developmental tasks and challenges are more important in their pedagogical work than the migrant background. Hence, educators and teachers endorse similarity and equality between children with and without a migrant background, and they want to treat all children alike, even if they know about their experiences and potential traumata. Teachers aim at addressing their individuality and creating an optimal school experience not only for children but also for teachers and parents.

Sometimes you just forget that you have children with a migration background who have information in their heads that you just forget, because for us as teachers it's not so important whether the child is a foreign child or not, because it's just a child at a certain age with certain behaviours and they don't really differ. (G_T2_F, pos. 17)

But then I also try to (...) treat the child like a (.) normal child. For God's sake, traumatized children are also normal children. But I don't want to give uh (.) um the family or the children the impression, oh yes, you had it so hard, then do I treat you a little differently now." That/ I don't think that's okay either. (G_T3_F, pos. 353-357)

This understanding and endorsement of equality is also ascribed to the children, as a day care educator notes in the following statement:

When a new child with another skin colour or something that simply looks different comes into the group, then of course they have to know what's going on, where does it come from and why is it like that and why doesn't it speak German and so on. (...) And that's one day and then it's done. (...) And then the background that the child has, doesn't matter. (G_T9_F, pos. 223)

Thus, equality has a huge meaning for teachers. However, on the other hand, educators and teachers are aware of and acknowledge the peculiar experiences that migrant children have made, their needs and the

challenges that they are facing. At this point, language has a central impact on the situation of migrant children and their parents. More concretely, the lack of language competencies and communication skills is perceived as a crucial challenge for integration and participation.

The children really come with zero knowledge of German. But of course they should be integrated as quickly as possible and the parents, logically, usually also have zero or very little knowledge of German, so communication works with hands and feet. (GT_9_F, pos. 59)

For this matter, two levels of language competencies can be differentiated. On the one hand, teachers refer to language skills that are necessary for daily communication and interacting with teachers and peers, while on the other hand there is the relevance of subject-related and technical language. Competencies in the two types of language can be quite different.

So they want to play, boys especially want to play soccer. And I notice that there is hardly any communication, so there is negotiation about the game, but the communication that they need for the lessons, for mastering the lessons, for the technical language, that is not given. So it's um, yes it's nice when they play soccer and when they talk about it and also learn to deal with frustration. But that's not what's really so important for elementary school or for arriving in Germany, for the language they need (G_T2_F, pos. 152-165)

These two types of language use lead to another issue. On a fundamental level, teachers observe a lack of understanding regarding school tasks such as written math tasks or cloze, which in turn limits their competence to work individually and independently, and in the long run for the school success of migrant children.

But they lack the technical language and that is a big problem. A very big problem, because if they are eleven or twelve years old and can't understand a scientific text, even if it's very simple and they can't read it. (G_T4_F, pos. 27)

Finally, all teachers refer to migrant children's experiences, which can be quite different. They frequently mention experiences such as the flight and its circumstances (e.g. voluntariness of leaving the country, violence), a (temporary) separation from parents, or prior living conditions. Often they feel overwhelmed and wish to have more knowledge and further training in subjects such as traumata. Another problem is the lack of information on such experiences that eventually shape children's learning and participation.

And it's usually, in this case it's always been the fathers who have told a little bit, because they simply knew German better. And then you also get that out a little bit. And you can bring that into the teaching staff and say, here with them everything with caution, so and so is the background, you simply have to start very carefully with a parent interview or so. (G_T9_F, pos. 71)

B. Social Workers

Social workers usually experience the children in an inclusive way, i.e. their migration background is not used as a differentiating factor. It is only relevant in the case of detailed questions such as language or social behavior (e.g. co-determination), but even there it is not the case that a migration background explains everything.

I cannot answer the question whether there are migration-related differences or differences due to origin, I have the feeling that it is actually whether it is German, whether Syrian, whether from anywhere else, participation in the parental home is generally not that strong. And that is brought into the school and I wouldn't say now that I see significant differences. (G_SW6_M, pos. 207-209)

However, perception changes when there is a migrant background of one's own and this is visible in external features. From this perspective, discrimination in Germany is always present. This is a strong feeling especially among social workers who have a migration background themselves:

We have discussed this [racism] about four times, the topic and these hostilities. But yes. (.)
Exactly. That's always a topic and it can stay that way. I've been in Germany since 2004 and yes,
I experience that [racism and xenophobia] every day. (...) Exactly.. (G_SW8_F, pos. 157)

Children with a migration background often live in a linguistic gap, whereby German is required at school, it is their mother tongue at home and English is spoken alongside German among friends. There is a risk of speaking a mishmash language. Unfortunately, Germans fall into this mishmash language, and thus neither the mother tongue nor German is mastered well.

I felt with the students […] who had also been in elementary school for a while, they speak such a strange
language. Such a mixture of German and your mother tongue. So in everyday life too, they can already
speak German […]. In elementary school, they actually learn German pretty quickly. They can then, but
they have a completely different language. So they speak German to each other ... and have already spoken
to each other in their native language, mostly Arabic. Now it's either German or some strange mixture,
something like an artificial language. And the Germans take it on board and speak the language too. Such
a mixed language. (G_SW3_not specified, pos. 434-438)

C. Mediators

The mediators (except the coordinator) work as integration supporters with individual children or small groups of children. They have direct contact with the child, and they witness the process of belonging to the group. The mediators experience the development of the children and their commitment to finding a new role.

With each new child, the mediators learn again. One of the key convictions is that every child is unique and it is important to approach children in this way.

It is not at all easy to work […] with children because the children have different characters. Can't be used
like a method for all children. That it is different and then you also learn with the child. That means, when
a new child comes, it definitely means that you gain new experiences. (G_M2_F, pos. 6-8)

Every child has the ability to cope with most everyday requirements. They often do not need as much support as parents.

For the parents this mediation is very important, for the children I can say they can do it on their own. Well,
they don't always need my support, because they can do it. (G_M2_F, pos. 335-337)

3.2 Social, cultural or political factors that are considered crucial regarding the situation of migrant children

A. Teachers

Educators and teachers utter the importance of accompanying children with a migrant background in the educational system, preparing them and equipping them with skills and competencies. They perceive a huge responsibility laying on their shoulders. Overall, educators and teacher extract different social, cultural, and political factors that influence the school experience of children with a migrant background. For instance,

educators and teachers point to differences in the educational systems of the countries of origin and Germany.

But they also have to learn to work independently relatively quickly, that's a big handicap, that works very badly (...) the children also come from a frontal instruction and bring these previous knowledge and if they come from systems with suppression, then that is naturally still much more difficult to lead the children to such a free system, as we would prefer it actually. (G_T2_F, pos. 65-69)

Due to these differences, they see a lack of knowledge concerning the German system, and point to the risk of negative attitudes that stem from previous contacts with administration and authorities. Often parents have already experienced that the language of origin is seen only as a barrier, themselves as supplicants and less as persons who can contribute something. Often parents have also experienced that they were not seen in their individuality with their experiences and needs, which they now bring into the exchange with the educational institutions. Due to the lack of language, communication about what day care centers and school mean and what expectations and responsibilities parents and teachers have is hardly addressed but needs to be included in the pedagogical work.

(...) for the families it is so difficult with their other culture or with their other language that it is always seen only as an obstacle (...) that they perhaps dare less to participate (...) for example, what do authorities mean for the families here, what does school mean for the families, what kind of experiences have they had since the birth of their children, the women or the families, how long have they been in Germany, then also / or, or over how many generations, how educated are the families, what is also perceived and recognized as education, so to speak. (G_T7_FF, pos. 63)

Furthermore, the parental home has a central impact, especially if parents did not have access to schools or are – for instance – illiterate. As the following quotation demonstrates, educators and teachers perceive parents as important drivers of motivation, including to create a common understanding of day care centers and schools.

One can do it from the country or why does this child from the other region react differently or why can, does the [one child] have no problems learning, but the other child does, that can sometimes also be related to the educational policy of the country. Turkey, or children who come from Turkey, have simply brought other learning strategies, for example […], and the children who come from other countries, from Iraq for example, they bring partly NOTHING […] that are so many facets actually, also the question, are the parents illiterate or not. What motivation do they bring with them, why do they want this, do they even want the children to learn at school, is it important to them, the education system in Germany, or is it simply a safe country in which to live, so that is very comprehensive, so that can not be reproduced in a few words (G_T2_F, pos. 53-59)

While social, cultural and political factors seem important for the performance and working relationship in school, they seem less crucial for togetherness in the class.

I*: If we now go back to the togetherness in the classroom* […] *How would you say impact* […] *not only reasons of origin, but also* [...] *financial backgrounds, educational backgrounds?* T3: *Uh, that doesn't influence the togetherness* [...] *So the children are not uh/ envious of each other or um* […] *pff, uh make fun of another child. That not at all.* (G_T3 _F, pos. 548-569)

Educators and teachers also point to another understanding of participation, authority, and obedience.

My experience is uh that the students who come from the Asian language area are rather dependent. They are used to a different school culture, so where the teacher really uh says, "this is the topic now and this is what you're learning and this is/ these are the tasks." The independent working out of topics is now there in their school practice from the home country not really very anchored. And we have to teach that to the children. (G_T3_F, pos. 363-365)

Similarly, a day care educator utters:

And what I have noticed, especially with children with a migration background, is that I always find that they still need a little longer than other children to simply warm up to everyday life and to come out of their shells and to really participate actively in processes (G_T11_MFF, pos. 271-273)

There is also the perspective expressed that participation and autonomy has to be learnt independent of children's migrant background. On the one hand, this learning process is seen as a task of teachers and in the duty of day care and elementary schools, while on the other hand the role of the parental home in providing children with experiences of participating in decisions is another crucial influence factor.

Then I have to look, where could I now have uh resources that the children learn to really work together. […] other techniques or social forms in school, these must also be learned. […] And that is really independent of origin. With the DaZ children perhaps somewhat more pronounced […] In my eyes, it is also a task of the elementary schools to educate children to be independent. […] I usually always start with traditional […] frontal teaching // where the children work individually. And then the next stage is partner work. And the next […] stage is group or // small group work. (G_T3_F, pos. 383-424)

The transfer is not necessarily so easy with us, that is also from the linguistic side or also from the family background a bit difficult, because they are just NOT included in decisions there, for example, because they KNOW it differently and YES, there just notices yes socially weaker families somewhere, where that just also not so promoted. the thinking along, the co-deciding or as said, families with migration background quite often, but just NOT ALL, there are also other families, which promote this very strongly, but it is just nevertheless in a smaller number I say so (G_T2_F, pos. 385-391)

Finally, educators and teachers emphasize various structural and organizational barriers such as the lack of resources, fluctuation and a lack of competent staff, which hinders continuous work on topics such as autonomy and participation. It is criticized that the classes are too large, and that the coordination between schools and authorities is poor. Most of these problems are particularly relevant in so-called hotspot schools, which have a high ratio of students with a migrant background and low socioeconomic status. Moreover, particularly since the pandemic, there are pleas for a better digital equipment of schools, as well as migrant households. This is seen as a major challenge that is not mastered very well. Overall, there is strong variability between schools regarding these factors, but also concerning collaboration among the staff, the opportunities for supervision and further training, the degree of freedom in teaching, or the shaping of parental work.

Schools are simply overburdened, overworked. You probably can't blame the teachers either. This is a BIG problem, because later we will reap these fruits. The children, the educational losers, we will reap these fruits later. What's going to happen to them? Well. I don't know either. (G_T4_F, pos. 63-67)

Perhaps because the teachers themselves are overwhelmed. Perhaps they are overburdened with the class size, with the heterogeneity of the class, with yes (-) the pressure of the parents. Perhaps there are too few teachers with basic training. The lateral entrants are technically good, but they lack the pedagogical qualifications. (G_T4_F, pos. 63 -67 and 165)

B. Social Workers

Language deficits are mentioned first, even if they do not occur in everyone, but they mean that there is a need to catch up. At the same time, the identity issue arises that "I am not German":

You notice, there are children there who have only been in Germany for a few years, you just notice that they have backlogs that have to be made up, where it's your turn, but of course that, affects the whole class. Then it's like this, that the children […] come from different countries and […] that the children HAVE to deal with the question, or what they deal with, the point is, I am not German. (G_SW7_F, pos. 324-330)

The cultural differences of how a family is defined are decisive for siblings. In the case of protection and reunification, they do not belong to the family:

> *In general, all siblings are dropped, if a sibling is here in Germany, there is a legal right if there is refugee recognition only for the parents. This is the same for subsidiary protection, i.e. only the parents can apply for family reunification, the siblings do not belong to the core families and cannot travel with them.* (G_SW1_F, pos. 49-50)

Unfortunately, there is also discrimination against one another, as well as racism in the sense that people with darker skin are discriminated against more strongly, including with respect to the mediators.

> *We always talk about discrimination against foreigners. They are not fine with each other either. (.) So, in terms of belief, the color of the skin. […] So the darker your skin color, the more you will be discriminated. […] so we have experienced it here that a Syrian or an Afghan did not want to be advised by our cultural mediator because he had black skin color.* (G_SW9_F, pos. 161-169)

C. Mediators

The mediators perceive all children in the day care center/school as unique individuals. They very rarely describe them as children with a migration background. Therefore, as educators and teachers, they try to work with each child individually. On the other hand, they also see that attitudes and values are so different that mutual understanding is impossible and working together is difficult.

> I: *And when you talk about the children that is often the topic, the children with a migration background and those without, or is there not that much differentiation? -*
> Mediator: *No, there is no differentiation at all, only if integration is the topic, ok you are talking about children with a migration background, otherwise, no.* (G_M2_F, pos. 522-523)

3.2 Educational opportunities, aspirations and difficulties of migrant children

A. Teachers

Language plays a major role regarding educational opportunities and difficulties. However, there is a debate among educators and teachers on how to deal with this challenge, which is illustrated in the discussion about the usage of the language of origin during the school lessons. Here, the opinions vary from an endorsement of German as a common language that enhances the integration and participation of all students to the approval of a stronger reliance on the language of origin in classes. Teachers who adopt the latter position argue that the language of origin is often seen very negatively instead of recognizing it as a resource for migrant children and their parents.

> *But sometimes I have to stop it when it's only in the native language or in the language of origin. THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE. We've already had that, too, when there are a lot of Arabic speakers, that it then gets out of hand and that the communication goes over the heads of the others. […] but then children are excluded, who have just no other child of the language of origin there. I simply don't want to, therefore: I prefer German as the language of instruction. But I allow the language of origin if it makes sense in any case or if I notice that the child is now overwhelmed, that it is too fresh, that it can no longer concentrate, that it now simply needs the language of origin or it now simply needs a possibility to switch off, too. Because the whole day is, that is already for some children simply large load, especially at the beginning.* (G_T2_F, pos. 171-179)

There are also city 1 [A] wide in different languages, the Turkish lessons in the language of origin, because there are many studies that say that the better one speaks one's first language, one's mother tongue, the better one can read and write [...] in German. [...] that it is nice, that they speak another language at home. And our system and everything that we offer to the families has to be good enough that they still manage. But two, three, when they're in kindergarten, or then just in preschool, good enough, or to acquire the German uh that's good enough to graduate from high school (G_T7_FF, pos. 74)

They [parents with migrant background] make more of an effort to actually push their [children's] German. [...] This is also quite often the case, especially in refugee families, that they think their language of origin is worthless. So you have to tell them again and again, please don't speak funny German, but proper Arabic or whatever. (G_T9_F, pos. 319)

Implicitly, this balancing of German and the language of origin is also understood as an indicator of the "arrival" in school (and in Germany).

So I also try, when I do grammar or so, to include the language of origin if possible. IF children are able to write in the language of origin, then you can also very nicely:. Sometimes explain phenomena on the blackboard, according to the motto, the connection is just the same with you as with us or with you it is done like this, with us like this, but with you something changes. [...] I've noticed, well, once they've arrived in a language, then they don't want to have the language of origin in class anymore and they can't even get involved in it anymore, [...] because they really already think in the language of instruction [...]. (G_T2_F, pos. 181-187)

In a more dramatic way, a DaZ-teacher mentions:

But now here is the problem, actually probably a very broad one. I don't know how many children there are who fall through this school system, how many children there are who have language problems, who simply don't keep up at all in school. Children with a migration background. (G_T4_F, pos. 411-415)

To ensure integration, pre-school (i.e. the last year of day care) is seen as a good preparation for migrant children, particularly language-wise, but also regarding the demands of schools, such as understanding instructions and working on tasks, or in establishing the prerequisites for participation. Similarly, teachers also emphasize the importance of pre-school to parents to shape their understanding of education and the German educational system. However, migrant children have a lower likelihood of attending the day care institutions, making it necessary to establish a common base at the beginning of school. Given that children come with a wide range of prepositions and competencies, an individual consideration of the children is necessary.

There are many children who have a migration background, but who were born here in Germany. And you can't tell that they // have a migration background. [...] I'm thinking, for example, of Russians or also Europeans. [...] that is a challenge for us to find out which child needs DaZ lessons now. (G_T3_F, pos. 224-235)

Finally, from the perspective of teachers, grades and performance seem very crucial to migrant children. In their view, most of them are very motivated to achieve good grades and take it as a measure of success. This is contrasted by the fact that DaZ classes in Germany (are forced to) rely on verbal evaluations instead of grades.

I can't even say that, whether it [strong concentration on grades] really comes from the parents. I think it definitely comes very strongly from the children, that they have taken in somewhere that the grades are very important and the verbal assessment is NOT so important. Because we mostly do a verbal assessment and I see that the parents don't even look at it [...] They're as proud as horns, oh, we're writing a test tomorrow, then they're very excited about what's going to be in it. And the next day they see that I've only marked the

points, but I haven't written what grade it is, I can't give a grade. I'm not allowed to, so, then they are disappointed again, because they don't have a grade. (G_T2_F, pos. 332-347)

However, this motivation to perform is coincided by concerns and ambiguities about the future, and in the worst case a lack of future aspirations, as a teacher highlights. She criticizes that the children experience the future as abstract and vague, mainly focusing on the present.

And in, the view into the future, that's for some still just totally difficult, so that's already sometimes difficult with German children, but mostly the experience is that these children have no ideas about the future whatsoever. And also, the topic of wishes is mostly limited to I want a tablet or I want a cell phone, so that, so, that's it then actually already, (G_T2_F, pos. 287-289)

B. Social Workers

The school system is too focused on performance/grades, which blocks both students and teachers. In addition, there is little room for understanding because it is clear that graduation is the most important thing.

So I think, on the one hand, overwhelming. For many, what happens in class is just too difficult. and the awareness [...] that their chances in society in general are not so good. (G_SW4_F, pos. 258-261)

It is an integration advantage if older siblings have already successfully mastered German school.

And there is also a really important role that the older siblings play. That is noticeable. The fact that those who have older siblings who have already made it halfway through school, maybe study or have some kind of training, is extremely helpful for the younger ones. But the one who is the first or the first in the family has a pioneering role and probably, I think, in many cases less support. (G_SW4_F, pos. 151-159)

Integration is made more difficult by unreflected racism in parts of the teaching staff. In part, there is a refusal to integrate on the part of the parents. However, awareness has increased and the situation for children has improved.

Even if something is happening very slowly, something is happening in the education system. So I would say spontaneously that the support for children with a migration background was much worse twenty years ago than it is today. You can't expect it to turn right away, but such a bit of improvement is already there and I'm also relatively optimistic that it will - get better, because people network more, because there is more know-how because at some point a younger generation of teachers might just move up and see some things a little differently. (G_SW4_F, pos. 370-383)

C. Mediators

The mediators in our sample have no experiences regarding this issue.

3.4 Gender (and other) differences in relation to migrant children, and the situation of migrant children compared to children without a migrant background

A. Teachers

Generally, treating children alike independent of their gender is an essential value to educators and teachers. However, they also perceive gender as an impact factor regarding learning processes; for instance, it seems to play a role when migrant children settle in and are asked to collaborate in gender-heterogeneous groups.

No, for God's sake, nothing is separated. Well, we also have the boys who parade through the kindergarten every day dressed up as princesses and the girls who are waiting to see when soccer is finally going to be played. That is of course catered for. So there is no distinction made. And that is, here our boys princesses are the most beautiful, that is/ No, so there/ it is also not the toys somehow so distributed, that is for a boy, that is for a girl. Nah, of course not. (G_T9_F, pos. 235)

So the thing is, it comes in from the kids. And we try to resolve it. And we say, now listen, even if you're a boy, it's still necessary or it's good if you work with a girl. […] But sometimes you notice when you decide that a child should now repeat or a child should now: has difficulties or you now need another class for the child, then of course you also consider on the basis of the gender of the teacher. Is it now better off there or is it now better off there, what does it need now? (G_T2_F, pos. 759-777)

The parental home is recognized as an important key to the perception and endorsement of gender differences, especially if the school and home context differ in their perceptions and opinions.

I'll talk about it, but does it really have to be like that? Why does it have to be like that? What do you think is good about it? So that the children can simply reflect on it again, […] and there I just have to look and I just sometimes can't take them out of their circle. I mean I don't have a normal class, but a DaZ class and I just always have to make sure that they don't come home with ideas where they then get terrible problems at home? Then with their parents, too. Yes, it is sometimes a culture shock for the children and you have to be a bit sensitive about it. (G_T2_F, pos. 795-803)

There are often reflections about the impact of one's own gender; for instance, as children are looking for support and prefer contacts of the same gender, or as potential role models, especially when a father is missing at home. Here, it is a resource if one works in a gender-heterogeneous team, where the children can choose whether they want to interact with a male or female educator/teacher.

Then, of course, you also think about the gender of the teacher, is it better off there now or is it better off there now, what does it need now? So as a role model. Therefore, we do that in any case, and we have at least one man in each class. [...] That one simply looks at where is the child going now? Therefore, this boy is conspicuous because he needs a father figure because or he needs a mother figure because or he has more difficulties with a woman because. Therefore, that plays a role in any case, but I think most are so that they say, it does not play such a role and we do not WANT to keep these roles. (G_T2_F, pos. 759-777)

Educators and teachers alike acknowledge accordant difficulties in dealing with different attitudes towards gender. They acknowledge that these differences might result in tensions, making attitudes towards gender a sensitive topic in the work with parents and their children. Two female educators utter:

We then had (…) [a boy], who simply did not accept women, that is, he never accepted us as [female] educators, because (…) at home (...) women (…) simply have nothing to say, but the dad has something to say there (…) he knew, from women, so we had the feeling, I [the boy] do not have to be told anything. (G_T11_MFF, pos. 286-290).

There are actually, differences. I feel that sometimes parents are more interested in promoting a boy than a girl. As if they would already uh their role uh as later as a housewife or yes that there is actually. I have also experienced that. […]That is then crap is that. If such conditions prevail, because the girls I don't know, in this culture whether one culture at all nor whether one may say that culture. [...] but I say that where the children HAVE come from (-). I say it this way, it is probably usual to marry the girls very early and the boys must then, so to speak, are the progenitors and must then. Girls do not go to work, they are only housewives who are then prepared for the activity as a housewife and that is not possible here. That the children must also learn something here, the girls must also learn something. We are with us there are no differences, in the sexes. Now you even talk about which gender you feel you belong to, yes. Therefore, we are developed quite differently than (-) I say as a leading industrialized country. (G_T4_F, pos. 247 – 255)

At the same time, they realize that gender stereotypes are deeply rooted within themselves and society, and thus they also tend to reproduce gender differences. Indeed, this results in an ambiguity between their striving to implement equality, and everyday routines and practices.

I think so, but sometimes you're so stuck in your basic attitude. I see that from the outside, too, that I say, well, now you've done something so typical of girls again. That's how it really has to be now. I mean one can promote girls just as boys also ne. And if a girl enjoys math, then that's great and if she can explain it to a boy, then even better. (G_T2_F, pos. 767-775)

And I'm also glad that I have four male colleagues. Because they have a different way of dealing with the children. And that's good. Therefore, that's a good/ it has to be a mixture. Only women for boys is not good. There/ logically you can't get out of your skin as a woman either. So if that/ uh if the boy somehow whistles up the tree and stands free-handed on top and says, look, and so, then all my female educators go, ah, come down there and so. While the male educator says, try to see if you can get a little higher, ne, so. Or climbs behind (G_T9_F, pos. 231)

B. Social Workers

The first noticeable feature is that girls use open offers more often than boys. Girls seem to be more flexible and open here.

With the help of the documentation, you could now see what a very large excess of girls we have. Especially with the older ones so that we have almost no boys over ten more than visitors. Yes, where the question was, what is the reason, or are there just no bigger boys out and about in the neighborhood? Which actually can't be, but yes, the older guys are missing a bit. But things can have changed again in a quarter of a year. (G_W2_F, pos. 617-622)

Differences in behavior show that boys are allowed to do more or bring themselves to the fore more aggressively, while girls tend to be cautious in mixed groups.

A lot of girls are really very, very shy and just… feel more comfortable in groups of girls. (G_SW4_F, pos. 160-193)

C. Mediators

Mediators referred to the role of brothers and sisters. It is very helpful that siblings can support each other in the day care center. The mediators emphasize that it is very favorable in Germany that the siblings stay independent in their own development despite this helping relation.

Siblings so they give support. Um, but here in Germany or in the day care I think it's really nice that the child remains independent of his brother or sister. For example, we have a couple, i.e. siblings, the girl is five or six years old, the brother is three years old and he always gets support from the sister [...] the girl always stays in your group and she watches how it works with her brother. (G_M2_F, pos. 306-313)

Furthermore, they report gender differences according to the behavior of boys and girls and with that they quite critically refer to traditional gender roles and appropriate educational practices of parents.

The boys do a lot of nonsense, they just want the attention [...] And mostly the girls stay quiet and the boys who [...] are really extremely active. So they scream or well they want the attention. (G_M2_F, pos. 251-257)

4 Working with children and their families

4.1 Working with children

A. Teachers

As outlined above, educators and teachers point to the heterogeneity among and the individuality of children and the need to assess individual needs.

[They] are mostly children who also have learning difficulties, not only deficits in the German language, but directly problems in attention or problems in learning or problems in concentration too. And there I have to just say that my group so in contrast to a special school is very heterogeneous. […] here I have this heterogeneity in terms of abilities, skills and knowledge and in terms of age. (G_T4_F, pos. 13)

Accordingly, one DaZ-teacher mentions as a strategy:

I actually try to interview every family that comes to our school for the first time in a detailed conversation, which I also do with a language mediator. In order to find out what is really so important for me to know, what do I have to take into consideration, what do I have to be able to respond to or can the child be triggered when I deal with certain topics, for example. (G_T2_F, pos. 27 - 33)

As one impact factor, the work in small groups is reported as helpful. In their work, educators and teachers try to address and use the strengths of the children to motivate them, as well as using their strengths as a starting point for learning and development. Additionally, they try to initiate self-reflection about the competencies, strengths and weaknesses.

So in a small group I can definitely respond more individually to the children and also build up a different relationship with the children and say, here listen, your parents may not be able to read and write, but I think it's very important to them that you learn that and, that the motivation comes from the child and that the parents also support that, so you have to be in constant contact (G_T2_F, pos. 67)

If there is then such a complex performance, there are always points on a reflection. So just, we worked together. Or: Why did I work alone? How did I succeed? Where did it work, where not? Where do I still have to help? (G_T6_F / 20_C_I_T_18.08.2020, pos. 943-945)

Another approach is the disclosure of relevance, either to subjects and regular class contents, or to children's daily life, their experiences, or their future aspirations and dreams. More concretely, it is helpful for teachers to draw on children's lives, asking about their experiences of certain things. On the one hand, this can refer to the school routine itself; for example, to the subject lessons and tasks that have already been worked on in them. On the other hand, it can also relate to wishes and needs that are not directly linked to school, but rather to the family, leisure activities or dreams for the future. Subjective relevance is a bridge that makes it possible to find a common language with the children.

Exactly, when teaching learning strategies, exactly, I try to refer to the material of the class. So that they see, ah, that is also done in the class, thereby the effort to participate and to understand that is greater than if I now, so to speak, bring in my own material, my own pictures [...], then they are more motivated and then they usually also say, I know that from the class too, we've already done that (G_T2_F, pos. 231-233).

Sometimes you can ask a question in the morning circle or however, and with just these children this question causes something. […] that was in religion class. And it was about miracles.[…] And a girl from Afghanistan spoke up, because my question was: Has anyone already experienced a miracle? And then, of course, the children told me all sorts of things, yes. Suddenly the light went on in my room, even though I didn't turn it on, or things like that. And then this girl comes forward and just tells that they were on a boat and that then / I don't know, and that it already looked like they were, uh, the boat was sort of tipping over. And that was very dangerous. And they were all praying, and, uh, and then the boat still, uh, still / So that

didn't happen after all. So, and then you realize: Oh, no? So, that is already such a confidence that she tells that, because that is also in front of the class, and the class, that the relationship to the classmates is good, that she dares to do that. Uh, but as a teacher you are not necessarily prepared for something like that. (G_T5_F, pos. 139)

We often have conversations […] about professions, about goals, about wishes and if you have goals and wishes and dreams then you can also align your behavior and yes that is our goal. Because the children enable themselves that they can go into life and to that. And I praise them small step by step […] for example one I look what where do the children have interests for example and then how do they go how do they work or which and then we talk about what do you think what do you want to be and you can do it so super well. Maybe this job would be something for you, this work, this training. Have you ever thought about that? We sometimes get so crazy, we have such daydreams in the break we sometimes think about it, when I'm in the room we talk a lot about such things. Actually, I don't have the problem that the children can't express their wishes (G_T4_F, pos. 35-43)

Educators and teachers emphasize that they want to include children and create opportunities for children's participation; for instance, when setting up rules in the class. For example, if the children get into an argument, they want to discuss with the children how to resolve it, and what rules to follow in case of conflict.

All the children are involved, for example, when it comes to setting rules for the garden, for the room, and so on. But also to realize their ideas. So there is no difference between the German, the non-disabled and the migration children. (G_T9_F, pos. 163-165)

I would never stand in front of a class and say, "now you have the rules here, and this/ this is how it works for me." That is always negotiated together. And those are the things, right? Where I say, this negotiation, this communication with each other, rules of conversation. But also really paying attention to what is expressed, what could hurt or offend others during the breaks. (G_T6_F, pos. 145)

Finally, teachers try to foster integration among the children and establish a community. One measure to do so is through tandem projects, in which older children – who are familiar with the school – are partnered with younger school beginners, explain to them school routines, are open for questions and offer support to enhance arrival and integration in the school. Older tandem partners share their knowledge and thus are able to experience agency.

And that's why we're now tackling the tandem project. Where the third grade, for example, always takes over a first grade as a monitoring, so to speak, where everyone gets a godchild. And then you also do things together, in the hope that they will have someone, an ally in the schoolyard, so to speak, but not to ally against others, but simply to have support in questions of general orientation, language, learning mentorship, etc. (G_T2_F, Pos. 471-473)

B. Social Workers

It is important to provide individual care, i.e. to offer the children space in which they can develop optimally. It is more important to recognize and promote individual resources than to focus on supposed burdens or deficits, which are potentially linked to the migrant background. Empathy and acceptance of culturally different perceptions help in this respect.

That children have the space and also the time and contacts to develop according to their strengths. Or that you also somehow use or recognize strengths in a more targeted manner or first find out. It also depends on the teacher, to what extent one responds to the individuals or also recognizes them. (G_SW3_not specified, pos. 190-196)

This underlines the necessity to be reflexive against some kind of stereotyping, e.g. regarding needs for the support and integration of children and their families or school's expectations towards this supportive work,

etc. All creative forms of integration are very helpful, which are not solely focused on language, but address migrant children in a more comprehensive way.

> *In the all-day offer we had a project for spraying graffiti. [...] with the aim of beautifying the school grounds. ... And that's just one thing where students can participate. They were also very enthusiastic.* (G_SW3_not specified, pos. 222-234)

Such creative measures provide migrant children different opportunities to express themselves and get in touch with other children without being limited by language proficiency. Hence, creative measures of integration might enable dialogue and communication between all participants regardless of their origin and regarding migrant students they might help to promote their self-efficacy and sense of belonging when avoiding potentially disavowing contexts. The integration of individual children works better if this is included in group processes or involves other students to actively guide, support and some extent guard migrant students.

> *So I've always tried either that students who really come to us now and actually want to discuss problems, that they also bring someone with them. That you might also be looking for someone to be by your side, that you don't have the feeling you are not alone and when children are integrated into a class, regardless of whether they speak a different language or whatever. That you are already building a network or that a class representative is there.* (G_SW3_not specified, pos. 468)

Social workers do not explicitly deal with traumatic experiences of the children (e.g. flight). Loose forms have proven their worth, including in cooperation with other institutions (e.g. foreigner's council). Some children do not want this open and cognitive engagement. Considering their preferences and to provide substantial support if necessary, social workers should first create a secure social context – e.g. within open youth work – where these children can be as they wish and to some extent they should be available as reliable persons if needed. This may include negotiating cooperation with network partners. It is essential is to respect the individual interests and preferences of migrant children instead of focusing on any kind of supposed problems, diagnostics to be expected, etc.

> *It's different. Some children don't want that, they quickly switch back. Sometimes they break out in tears* [...] *Sometimes that's just a brief flare-up* [...] *Many are already looking for help themselves or through their families, which then actually somehow go to therapy or somehow make their own rounds or advice centers. And with the students, we once had a foreign council as a partner, which is also highly recommended.* […] *It was always actually very positive, also for the teachers, to experience them differently and of course for the students to just be outside and play.* (G_SW3_not specified, pos. 449-450)

C. Mediators

First, there are some attitudes for working with migrant children, e.g. to build trust. This is often a difficult but necessary step:

But I believe with strangers, it takes a little time. not easy with raising children. Really difficult with children. […] *Yes. It's also about building trust at all.*" (G_M3_FFF 3, pos. 21)

Working with children always involves working with parents. The main problem is different values and norms between school/day care center and the family. The child is seen as the battlefield and needs support. One

supporting and indispensable tool is the education of the parents and another is the education of the pedagogues/teachers:

The parents get the rule wrong here in Germany. Really get it wrong. […] the children learn at school - you can decide what you want by yourself. The child learns this way at school, comes home, has to do what the parents prefer. (G_M3_FFF, pos. 39: 71 - 39: 672)

4.2 Working with families

A. Teachers

With few exceptions, teachers highlight the meaning of working with families with (and without) a migrant background. However, they also mention that they lack resources and time, which makes work with families challenging.

And uh so it's very very different ... some need great support from parents, of course you notice how the parents' house as a whole stands to the school. Always more positive to the school or always critical to the school or do not care at all [...] the parental homes play a very important role. (G_T1_M, pos. 144)

Again, the importance of language and the need to overcome language barriers are endorsed as critical points. Most of the educators and teachers perceive parents and family as a valuable resource, which they try to incorporate in teaching.

So, there is only one family, where really the parents do not know any / no German at all. With / With Persian, for example. Those who speak Arabic, they can speak a little German. So that one, if one speaks relatively slowly, uh, that it works. And if you then give them things again in writing, um, you can already communicate. I have actually explained a computer program to someone on the phone. And that took a long time, but it worked. It works, yes. But now and then there is really a family where the parents don't speak German. And that is difficult. (G_T5_F, pos. 247)

We try to get the children to bring it with them, to ignite the children into a flame, so that they are also interested in the matter, in the project ... Then they tell it of their own accord. If I'm not interested, I don't tell them. And we try to make it very transparent through notices, through pictures, so that the children tell their parents about what we did there." (G_T10_FFF, Pos. 496-498)

Here, it is helpful if the team of educators and teachers is diverse themselves.

But I think it's important to have a team, a diverse team. Especially if you also / so that is already important to be able to address the target group of parents and children, of course, in the sense that you want it. (G_T12_FFFMM, pos. 80)

There is a width in ways of incorporating parents reaching from doorway conversations to a parents' café (e.g. presentations on certain topics) and parents' school (e.g., offering information on school and formulation of expectations). Rather distant communication channels such as notices, emails, and social media chats are also seen as a ways to interact with parents. These offers aim at providing information – for example – on the educational system and the meaning of education, but are also seen as a way to build a relationship, a working alliance. However, it is highlighted that offers such as the parents' café do not always

work – for instance, in DaZ classes – and that it is more about establishing an individual contact or accepting that you cannot get in touch. Overall, the functionality is strongly dependent on the attitude and engagement of educators and teachers, as well as the interest and the motivation of the parents. It is therefore highly variable and to some extent individualized. For example, while some teachers hand their phone numbers to the parents and are involved in the chat, others reject the possibility of a private channel and mainly look for contact with the parents if problems in the school occur.

> *Our goal is simply to build a bridge between the education we want to impart, i.e. primary school education, on the one hand, and adult and parental education, on the other hand, by trying to build a partnership with the parents, to get them on board (…), to take away their fears of institutions and schools, and that they can ultimately learn a lot from us and experience it through active participation, so that they are also a bit more capable of building up a written culture at home and promoting language, focusing on language in all respects, not just German as a language of education, but also everyday language and the languages of origin* (G_T7_FF, pos. 31).

Other ways of participating with parents include projects in which parents talk about their life, reading aloud, planning, organizing and joining festivities, theater plays, music and sport events, or other joint activities. At an institutional level, schools and day care centers also have a parent-teacher association, which is used as a channel of exchange. Independent of specific measures, language mediation is given strong importance in the exchange and the communication between teachers and parents.

> *Another building block is our language and cultural mediators. (...) They are // a bit our interface with the/ with the families who (.) still speak very, very little German and who also (.) sometimes have inhibitions/* (G_T3_F, pos. 79-83)

> *I have a translation app on my phone. I can talk with each parent and what I want to bring across, that comes with the parents, I am very sure. I am able to put it in short sentences, in simple language, so that the device translates what I want to have, but whether what the parents want to say to me is received by ME, that's another question. I can say whether I can lead a dialogue, but I am able to create the child a translation possibility and thereby it can also continue to learn. But the strategies, I can not then convey to him.* (G_T2_F, pos. 829-833)

Some of them also mention that part of teaching is educating the parents and that it is necessary to reach parents, make them changing in order to reach their children.

> *And also // for the families, because if you work um (..) with uh families with migration background, you also have to take (.) the parents (.) by the hand and accompany or, in quotation marks now, educate them. Because they don't know how school works, how life works in Germany. Of course, you have to teach that to the parents as well (.) um (.).* (G_T3_F, pos. 45-47)

This teacher also illustrates this point with the example of participating migrant children in committees:

> *That will never be one-to-one. […] And that's why it's not bad if these children's committees mostly consist only of German children. At some point, the children with a migration background will also be brought there. We are working on it, that they will be led there. But it won't happen overnight. […] And especially in Arabic-speaking countries, such democratic bodies do not exist in schools. There the parents even have*

difficulties to accept something like a parents' representative. There are / the teacher. The teacher says. Uh and uh here in the Central European area, the teacher says, but there is also the parents/. who maybe have a different opinion or have a suggestion about it. So it's just a democratic voting and a democratic um speaking. And that just doesn't exist in these Arabic-speaking countries. That's what // we have to teach the parents now. So that they also (.) little by little uh in these committees. So find courage to join these committees. And if that happens with the parents, then of course it will happen with the children. (G_T3_F, pos. 803-827)

Two exemplary examples of this kind of co-educating are a pre-school for parents (complementary to the children's pre-school) as well as parents' representatives for parents with a migrant background.

And there the children have a more intensive preschool. In the same time parallel a kind of parent school takes place, where we explain to the parents how to keep a homework book, what do you also expect as a school from the parents, for example feedback, constantly // in homework book well check it. We have the platform LernSax, you also have to explain to the parents how that works. Um, because communication takes place via the homework book AND via […] LernSax. That is such a (.)/ building block. Uh another building block are uh the parent representatives for the DaZ students. These parent representatives are (.) classes, so goes across the grades. So usually one parent representative […] one [class]. These (.) parent representatives are simply responsible for the DaZ families. (G_T3_F, pos. 55-65)

Finally, working with parents might also imply balancing differing expectations of DaZ teachers, teachers in the regular school, and parents, which in turn affects children's promotion:

Mum […] now thinks that he (her son) has already made progress through these remedial lessons with me, because the teacher has graded him at school very well. Well, then I also thought: Okay, if they see progress […] [but] what I see is that he struggles with himself […]We have talked to his mother many times, but she is of the opinion that no, he has already progressed, he is now going into third grade, whereas his twin sister is still in grade two and yes. What can I say then, when the mother sees it that way and the teacher says: No, he's already progressed. (G_T4_F, pos. 151)

B. Social Workers

Working with families is inseparable from working with children. So take the fear out of school for parents to have a positive impact on the integration of students and families. Parents should be more involved in all subjects and able to contact all teachers:

Is more and more that this is totally super, super important, no matter what subject, no matter what you want to organize, if you somehow have a reasonably good relationship with your parents. . […].. I think it is good not only to contact your parents if there are problems, but also to call and say, well, she is really good (G_SW4_F, pos. 354-365)

Additional offers for parents are seen as helpful; for instance, a family get-together once a week, which is supported by many migrants. In this way, the popularity among the respective community (e.g. Arabic, Russian) can be improved.

Then the family get-together is also there and you notice that in district 1 [A] that is unbelievable: we have an Arabic-speaking colleague who also fled from Syria and she was a teacher there. And

yes, without them, the Arab community wouldn't be at the start for a long time. (G_SW2_F, pos. 86-96)

Further on, these spaces fo getting to know a culture/society should open up for personal stories and encounters to enable understanding.

In the direction of adult work [...] *spaces are needed where one can live out one's identity. Where you don't have to try to be German.* [...] *We have country evenings once a month at the family get-together and they are always very well attended.* [...] *we have now sat down together and thought that perhaps from this space for a society there must also be space for individual stories, where you can then easily get recognition for what has been personally experienced.* [...] *this recognition of life's work.* [...] *when it comes to getting to know people or breaking down prejudices, the personal story is still somehow what works best. And to make friendships or to think: Hey crazy what they, so easy to see (-) yes that's not just the woman with the headscarf, but much more.* (G_SW2_F, pos. 641-660)

Parent work in the women's meeting place can strongly promote integration, because it helps to see one another with others through personal exchange:

So we have now also started a women's meeting where you or wherever it gets very personal [...] *and where we just talk openly about the résumé and this: I'm not alone, others feel the same way. Is also incredibly invigorating. And that's where super nice dynamics arise. Talking about things you normally don't want to talk about because you think you'll make a drama out of it. But somehow five others are doing the same and they are just as bad with it. So it can't actually be a drama, the situation just isn't one. And this recognition, yes, not to be alone.* (G_SW2_F, pos. 662-672)

A challenge is the restricted communication with parents with a migration background due to language barriers.

Working with parents is difficult because many parents do not understand us either. [...] *you can't reach them and so on.*" (G_SW5_F, Pos. 13)

Support is possible through the opportunity to hold development discussions with parents and pupils and work together (as a team) on goals, whereby this context enables building a relationship to talk to parents.

In other words, the school conducts target and balance sheet discussions, so to speak, one-on-one discussions with students and parents [...] *They look at* [...] *performance development and social behavior and set goals for the near future. That happens together with the parents, in that context I got to know many [parents].* (G_SW5_F, Pos. 177)

C. Mediators

The mediators develop a basic relation with the parents, and in particular they talk about the day in the day care/school and explain some ordinary things. Mediators accompany parents to the doctor and other institutions.

Mostly my work is with parents. [...] *well, every day when they pick up the child, I describe how it was in day care, what made the child special.* [...]*Sometimes I also go to the doctor with the parents, but only when that has to do with the kita, that is, when an examination takes place, when the kita needs an examination* [...] *Then there is the topic of early intervention. A lot of parents don't understand what this is about. Is something wrong or the child is not doing something well? The parents don't understand - it's not about that, it's just about the child's development.* (G_M2_F, pos. 105-124)

Working with children is always interwoven with working with families and the pedagogues (as mentioned above). This constellation needs special response. In first place, we have to challenge this constellation, address it in programs and look for partners in supporting institutions.

Well, it just bothers me that a lot of parents don't know anything about daycare and certainly about school and I would like the organizations to take up the topic, which I find really interesting [...] *Yes there are organizations all over the city* [...] *or children's clubs.* [...] *There are many organizations and I think they work, they do a good job and they have a good relationship with the parents.* […] *we can also work together, for example, staff from the day care center and we do a little program, maybe a presentation; maybe work together* […]. *Yes, I hope the educators, the teachers have more patience with the immigrant children. I understand them. They are under pressure, sometimes me too; sometimes I also lack the patience. We are all human, but um, how we do it for the children for the child well in the end, they are children, some have experienced bad things in your country, some unfortunately have strict parents and some do not get enough attention.* (G_M2_F, pos. 573-580)

5 Framing integration and evaluating policies

5.1 Integration: definition and personal and institutional involvement

A. Teachers

Teachers' definitions of integration recognize different dimensions and aspects and at least practical implications for daily life. First, integration does not mean a unidirectional business of adaption or assimilation, but rather a bidirectional process that affects newcomers as well as residents of the receiving society.

Integration is not that kind that people, who come to Germany, have to integrate in the German society. We, who we are here already, have to stick our hands too. (13_G_I_F, pos. 217)

Integration in the meaning of "sticking our hands" requires some prerequisites like acceptance and respect, the willingness to appreciate different cultures and see their potential to contribute and enrich the receiving society.

For us [it] is important that we not only accept the families with their backgrounds and their languages of origin, but to see these backgrounds and their mother tongues as a potential that needs to be unfold. To make them clear that they are a part of the society. This is very important to us. (G_T7_FF, pos. 36)

Thus, integration relates to communication, and the ability, openness and will to understand each other.

You have to understand each other, have to be open-minded. Communicate, communicate, and communicate. (G_T9_F, pos. 325)

Integration in the meaning of communication and understanding requires not only open-mindedness but also patience and perseverance. Integration – mentioned as a bidirectional process – requires the ability and willingness to reflect individual values and normative orientations and with that an open-minded and honest reflection of the necessities, requirements, and consequences of integration beyond the commonly-appreciated concept.

I think, integration during the last years was seen and discussed a bit too optimistic. We are all good. We all love each other. It will work. We will make it. Of course, we will make it. However, integration also means to reflect one's own values and perhaps reorganize it. It might mean to be confronted with something, which I do not really like but have to accept it in the meaning of tolerance and integration. (13_G_I_F, pos. 1119-1131)

In this way, integration represents a consciously-tackled task of conflict regulation, discussing and adjusting values, learning and practicing tolerance and in a way changing attitudes and expectations regarding anyone, especially adults, professionals and parents.

> *There have been three parent couples, namely Christians, who have vehemently opposed to it at the beginning. However, we insisted referring to cosmopolitism and to the fact that those attitudes are not of interest for children and did it. At the end, all have been very happy with it. We asked an Algerian mother, who told about Ramadan and about the traditional practices.* (G_T9_F, pos. 35)

> *Some of the parents try really hard that their children are quite integrated, speak German very well. However, there are other parents, who almost never speak, send their children, who translate.* (G_T10_FF, pos. 424-426)

Regarding children and promoting children's integration, teachers and educators describe different needs and strategies. Addressing migrant children, it might be the case that some of them – including as adults – have to learn about social life and societal rules in Germany from teachers' perspective.

> *Some children come from countries with dictatorship and here in Germany we have a different form of society. Children have to learn about this, which for me means integration. Parents may experience some problems, but they can solve these problems intellectually. Children grow up here and there has to be the opportunity to grow into the society.* […] *This is an important point in preparing children for their future life. Living in a democracy means communicating opinions and respecting the opinions of others. This is quite important.* (G_T4_F, pos. 395-401)

Unlike adults, children's integration in this meaning can be described as casual but at least conscious education. However, regardless of particular experiences or perceptions of political, religious or cultural representations – which are probably related to manifest or imputed educational needs – the idea of participation is inherited in children's integration.

> *For what concerns I am a little bit sad is that, but this is in process, not finished yet: Most of the children are children with migrant background. However, there are only German children in these committees* (students committees, the authors). *This is not really bad. Nevertheless, I would prefer that these committees represent the demographic structure of the school. This is where we start and why we started with the parent's speakers. They all have been German as well.* (G_T3_F, pos. 787-795)

Integrating migrant children and their parents in this example means enforcing children's and parent's engagement in institutionalized forms of participation in school, which most of them did not know so far. Accordingly, this strategy is related to learning about rules and rights of participation as well as strengthening children's and parents' participation in a somewhat practical way. This sometimes needs time, patience, some kind of a plan and communication, in this case to open the parents' council consciously to migrant parents. Therefore, these strategies do not address deficits or needs but provide experiences of being respected and accepted as a member of a certain social context, which implies that migrant children will contribute to social life. Concerning – to some extent – the assimilative side of integration, which addresses language learning and social knowledge, respect, acceptance and openness reflect the contributive, enriching side of integration and thus the hybrid character of integration processes, which are considered as bidirectional.

> *Actually, I will start a course in Italian language for the children. This is not about learning Italian at all. Important to me is to demonstrate that children's mother tongue, mine is Italian, is another than German and that it is worth to be brought into school. That is, what I want, to be some kind of model. We here have the possibility to teach in children's language of origin. However, this is something from outside. I would be happy, when children or parents say: 'I want to provide something, maybe a project, cooking with Misses X or something like that' (laughing).* (G_T3_F, pos. 1039-1131)

Regarding children themselves, an educator from a day care center said the following.

When a child wants to tell something about his country, then we will take it as a topic like that everybody can tell something about his or her country, what animals there live etc. You can make a project about it. However, it might be possible as well that the Spanish child likes firefighter Sam. In this case, the topic is firefighter Sam. This has nothing to do with migrant background; it is just the interest of the child. This interest is essential for any activity. (G_T9_F, pos. 168-173)

Among others, a migration background is one characteristic of an individual child that possibly requests some attention, depending on the context and – above all – the current interests and needs of the child. The child is in focus, not necessarily the migrant child, which can be seen as an integration of a casual educational business considering diversity.

To sum up, teachers' and educators' definition of integration underlines its character as a multifaceted, bidirectional process that affects all participants and thus must be shaped actively by them. According to origin, age and social contexts differences that could be observed, they concern certain educational needs of migrant children and their parents referring to social rules and values in Germany. This might address some kind adaption, which is mentioned as necessary. On the other hand, it endorses the opportunity to actively contribute to social life and be a part of the society. Accordingly, the mention of a migrant background concerning integration is considered ambivalent. On the one hand, mentioning helps in improving sensitivity and providing adequate support.

It should be the aim not need to mention migrant background. This would indicate successful integration. However, we need this term to communicate and to be able to act supportively. (13_C_I_F_02.07.202, Pos. 1134)

On the other hand, a migrant background should not be necessarily in focus, even when supporting the integration of children and their families. As reported above, being a migrant children might indicate a certain need for help, support and understanding. Nevertheless, the core element and aim of integration should be to focus on children as children, appreciating their interests, contributions and personality.

It means to be a part of the society, without losing themselves in it. I know, who I am, what I can provide to the society. Possibly this way. A little bit weird, but yes. That I don't have to wear a mask to ensure that people accept me or like me. I can stay and I can contribute to social life. That is, I think, my understanding. However, this is a process, which takes years. (G_T5_F, Pos. 163)

B. Social Workers

For the social workers, integration strongly relates to language, language sensitivity and communication. Very different areas play a role here. In general, it can be said that it is important for them to recognize and name migration, with the overarching goal of identifying individual needs and being able to apply for funding. However, it is also important for social workers not to stigmatize people:

For me, there are actually a lot of people out there, but I think you actually have to name them in order to be able to better point out disadvantages [...]. Then there is also the question of funding [...]. There is always the question of how much migrant background there is [...] and then there is more [money]. (G_SW2_not specified, pos. 588 / 596)

With the suspicion of stigmatization and the term "migration background", the desire for language sensitivity and the need for the practice for a more meaningful and non-discriminatory but appreciative term arises:

I haven't found the right term yet, the others all sound so awkward. [...] I have [...] sometimes said pupils from other countries. Sometimes you say [...] whose language of origin is not German [...]. I don't really

find migration background a nice word. But it has probably [...] become so ingrained. (G_SW3_F, pos. 108)

However, naming a migrant background concerning potentially disadvantageous life situations does not automatically means stigmatizing, but rather it might help in requesting sufficient resources for supporting migrant families.

Linguistic understanding and communication are also seen as making a very important contribution to successful integration in the process of integration. Communication problems are named as obstacles to integration, especially in the context of school. Teaching basic language skills is seen as the first step towards integration:

I would like to see [...] pupils who have language problems [...] integrated into the class group as soon as basic communication is possible and to try to help each other and learn from each other. [...] For this, there would have to be basic language support at school [...] Differentiation, yes, is certainly somehow necessary in order to impart such a basic knowledge of the language, if it is not present, but then try to resolve these differences as quickly as possible. (G_SW6_M, pos. 397-403)

In the open social work and counseling of people with a migration background, the beginning of integration is not the teaching of language basics, but rather understanding the other person and perceiving their needs:

We have looked for people from the communities who can mediate, who can establish mutual communication, who can tell us what people need. (G_SW9_F, pos. 149)

C. Mediators

Integration is a process of coming together with respect and openness for others. This process is difficult due to misunderstandings in communication. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge this and be careful with each other.

It is also difficult sometimes, especially with foreigners, because with us the mothers do almost everything for the child and they think that they will take care of the child. They think that they always do something nice for the child, but here in Germany, no […] How do you do that? Sometimes we ask the parents or, as we say, we start with the children step by step. […]So we try to motivate the child. But it is really difficult for the children who are not at home by themselves. ... Then uh, the help from the parents is very, very important. (G_M2_F, pos. 450-461)

One of the most challenging things is the joint meal in day care centre and school. All participants mentioned it and they have explained it lengthy and detailed. It was surprising.

There are several misunderstandings, either on the side of the parents or on the side of the educators. And several times I explain how it is with us and that one is not rude. It's just that we think so, we talk differently […] that's why we talk a lot about the difference between cultures. […] well, that helps.[…] for example when eating, like the Germans eat with a knife and fork. The educators have many problems showing foreigners how to eat with a knife and fork. Some educators say that's bad, it doesn't work, then I'll explain. We eat most of the time with a spoon. […] sometimes there are children who don't eat meat and they tell their parents that there was meat and they ate meat. What is wrong, the child simply tells how there are specialties here that really look like meat, but are only vegetables […] and then the parents come and say, we said the child shouldn't eat meat. And there you have to explain that. […] Yes, I find it difficult to eat because some parents do not want their children to eat meat, but they do not explain to their children that they are not allowed to eat meat in daycare. Some children cry, they protest. […] Well, the parents have to

work with their children on the subject of food. Because it's difficult when everything is on the table and one child is not allowed to take or one child is allowed to take all the children and then we say: No, you don't. (G_M2_F, pos. 337-359)

5.2 Policy instruments and experiences

A. Teachers

In terms of policy instruments and experiences, teachers recognize different programs and structural conditions. In this context, the institutional framework of second language learning reflects a main topic. It becomes clear when mentioned that second language learning or preparation classes are the most important instruments in promoting the integration of migrant children into school and within the German school system. However, experiences and perceptions of this program are differentiated and quite ambivalent to some extent. Essentially, second language classes are considered as important arenas providing diverse opportunities of learning and development according to language learning and beyond.

We have children, who attend L2-classes only, because they do not speak German at all. They have to learn several things. Here they have the opportunity not only to learn German, but to learn how school works as well. They have the possibility to enter regular classes step by step, for one or two hours or in the afternoon in after school care. However, in this way L2-classes are some kind of shelter at the very beginning. (G_T3_F, pos. 475-483)

L2 or preparation classes in this perception not only provide the opportunity of language learning, but safety, space and support for newcomers to arrive in Germany in general and in the German school system in particular. Moreover, L2 classes are considered as arenas of social learning concerning participation and communication, and thus they provide opportunities to experience social integration.

Perhaps this will transfer to the L2-classes. Because, things are done in regular classes (students' participation measures, the authors), are installed in L2-classes as well, right. Therefore, they will be included and as more responsibility is given to them, as more they will learn to take this responsibility and perhaps come into dialogue with other children. This, for sure, is my hope, that they will communicate and participate. Things sometimes missed out. G_T2_F, pos. 147-151)

However, teachers stress the crucial character of language proficiency concerning the educational success and accordingly the importance of second language learning in preparation classes. Teachers describe meeting this as a challenging task concerning the different levels of children's language competencies.

A challenge for instance are beginners, as I told. Many children with migrant background come to us. However, migrant background does not automatically mean that children need L2-classes. There are many children, who have migrant background, but are born in Germany. You cannot see that they have a migrant background. I think about Russians or Europeans. It is a challenge to figure out, which child needs support of a L2-class. (G_T3_F, pos. 227-233)

Children with different levels of language proficiency as well as experiences with school in general and German school system in particular as well as different grades might learn together in one L2 class, which requires individual diagnostic and support but is usually limited by time and personal capacities. Additionally, the fact that there are children of different grades within one course challenges L2 teachers regarding the different requirements concerning subject language and lesson contents.

Another challenge specific to second language teaching is that it should prepare for lessons in regular classes. This requires negotiation and coordination according to content and time. This might be difficult, when considered that there are students of different grades in one L2-class. (G_T3_F, pos. 234-239)

Accordingly, cooperation with subject teachers becomes essential, where teachers reported quite different experiences reaching from good cooperation to almost complete disinterest on the part of the subject

teachers. This is critically considered as a substantial issue, because a closer cooperation between L2 and subject teachers from teachers' perspective might promote language learning as well as individual success in school and finally the social integration of migrant children when considering and supporting their individual interests and capabilities.

> *Here we have a dedicated system of gradual integration, which means I have children without language proficiency, who come to me on the very basic L2-level. And then I have them for around 15 lessons and after this lessons they will be integrated into regular classes step by step. This means that I develop individual timetables and in this context, I try to integrate them quickly into Math classes, because they usually are very interested in Mathematics and this helps them to learn German faster. They get into the classes and learn German in a casual way. This works well in physical education or art. Concerning more language intensive subjects as German or Science teaching they come to me and thus I have small groups during the lessons, so I can children support more individually.* (G_T2_F, pos. 63)

Although L2 classes are considered as very important elements of individual support and integration of migrant children concerning language learning, social experiences and participation, teachers addressed some critical aspects like the segregating and potentially stigmatizing character of those classes. A teacher illustrates that children can experience themselves as stigmatized and have the wish to be part of the regular classes to lose this stigma.

> *At the beginning, it is quite easy to work with the children. However, when they are in regular class, it becomes more and more difficult. Maybe it is a bit different from school to school. We have more than 60% migrant children and they all want to leave L2-classes. They want to be ordinary persons, gain good ratings and that's it. I don't know, why L2-classes are considered this way, but it is the aim of the children, ok.* (G_T2_F, pos. 301-319)

Migrant children to some extent experience their status as L2 students and their belonging to dedicated classes or courses as problematic in terms of highlighting their migrant background and their exclusion from ordinary school life, regardless of the purpose of this exclusion. This potentially segregating impact of L2 classes is illustrated by the following statement, which highlights another aspect.

> *We have the house of cultures here, they provide many things that children are not left alone, but experience social activity. That they do not watch television or play PlayStation the whole day, but make an excursion, to be more integrated. You know? I am not sure how to explain that children should be provided a better access to the society and not stay on their own and have only contacts with Arabic children, that is Arabic children with Arabic children, but have contact with German children as well, that it is more multicultural. This is sometimes difficult. […] Actually, I have only Arabic children and one from Afghanistan and one from Venezuela. Almost Arabic children, but it would be nice there would be more contact with German children, for language reasons too. They spend much time in L2-classes, later they possibly attend regular classes. But then they got older, and I am not sure, because of their perception, if they get along with the other children. How do they find access? They are almost among themselves.* (G_T4_F, pos. 331-333)

One side of dedicated integration programs like L2 classes might be the risk of segregation and thus promoting separation of groups of children, when those classes represent a separated and separating space or are perceived as such. In a more general sense, some teachers critically mention structural problems according to scholarship and related risks of unintentionally promoting cultural separation.

> *Together with the ministry we try to control the number of Arabic children. This is not because we do not want them here. The reason is to provide contact, more contact with the German language, because this is a prerequisite for their social success later here in Germany.* (G_T3_F, pos. 743-745)

These critical considerations might underline the importance of close cooperation between L2 classes and regular classes, as well as their practical shaping as a space of comprehensive social experience beside language learning with connections to different aspects of social life in school and beyond. Furthermore, they address questions concerning structural challenges like considering cultural diversity of children and families across schools regarding their quota in a general sense.

If I had a wish for free, then I would prefer smaller classes, with less migrant children respectively children with other mother tongues. Whereas I would not talk of migrant background, but prefer to talk of children few German language proficiency. However, those children should not be more than 50% of all children in class. And, what would be an advantage is more staff, a second teacher in class. (G_T3_F, pos.926-945)

In terms of what concerns schools besides the mentioned necessity of internal cooperation amount and qualification of staff, the number of children in classes and finally the quota of migrant children and sensitivity to their origin represent crucial aspects of integration programs. Regarding promoting the social integration of migrant children in general, programs and activities in school represent an important element. However, there are other important factors like opportunities for social contact and their promotion outside school or family background.

From the teachers' perspective, cooperation between schools and parents is considered as important as it is challenging, especially regarding parents' language competencies in particular. In this context, mediators play an important role not only regarding translation.

We have the mediators' project here. We can order a mediator for a particular language. For meetings with parents for instance and this is a big support in our work. If this person is competent. […] Concerning mediators, I expect that they have the knowledge and can tell me about particular aspects. When I cannot figure out why this child does not look me in the eyes, while other from the same country do, why react this child from this region in a particular way, why has this child no problems with learning, another has. (G_T2_F, pos.47-35)

Because mediators play an important role as language- and culture-related agents, problems according to capacities, availability and budget limit the appropriate support opportunities, which teachers regularly criticize. Bureaucracy in the application process makes it difficult to reach and use mediators when needed.

Uhm, there is a pool of mediators and interpreters, I can apply for. However, this takes time and money and, of course, there is no dedicated budget. (G_T9_F, pos. 105*)*

From a general perspective, regarding the socioeconomic situation of migrant children and their families teachers mention the so-called education and participation package, a social political program that provides disadvantaged families with children attending day care or school additional money.

There is this education and participation package, from which many thing can be paid, e.g. all excursions with children. […] Accordingly, they do not need money for paying transfer to swimming lessons for instance. (G_T7_FF, pos. 109)

And there is this wonderful education and participation package, which provides every child in need financial resources. For school supplies, tutoring, excursions and so on. This means, no child at a German school has to miss something due to financial reasons. Those things will be provided, which is rather correct. (G_T3_F, pos. 559-569)

However, looking at the big picture, programs to ensure social security on a material basis are important because they guarantee children's participation in school. Nevertheless, promoting the integration of children from teachers' perspective requires a broad and differentiated spectrum of approaches, programs and activities, of which schools are one part. Accordingly, schools and teachers essentially play an important role in migrant children's integration. To play this role properly, dedicated programs are necessary, useful and important, but it also needs adequate structural conditions and substantial relationships to families and institutions outside school.

B. Social Workers

The political regulations on family reunification in Germany are demanding and can be an obstacle to integration:

When underage refugees are here, they usually only have a legal right to have their parents join them. But if there are still siblings in the family, then by law they are not allowed to come with them, which is of course extremely complicated for the integration, for the history of the people, the young people who are here, because they were usually sent ahead by the families to then catch up with the entire family. And now that is not possible by law, so that there are quite a few catastrophes, yes, holes, which of course also has an effect on integration. (G_SW1_F, pos. 4)

The difficulty is that while the policy instruments seem workable, implementation is difficult and often severely hampered, e.g. by deadlines, funding or for reasons that are not transparently communicated to the respective institutions.

Well, there is a project that is just coming to an end, which is a shame because it worked really well [...]. *The program is still there, but the Senate has unfortunately cancelled it. No one really knows why.* (G_SW4_F, pos. 211-215)

The social workers who work in schools are particularly critical of the strongly prescribed framework for action. They would like to have more possibilities to deal with topics that arise situationally in the individual classes, such as the following example with a focus on diversity and racism in the class.

And at the moment they don't really understand what they are saying, but of course it is totally racist. Um, to pick up on that at that moment and to create the framework for it [...]. *There are so many topics for which one would like to create space that is not there. Because racism is, of course, one topic and in a class with so much diversity, it is definitely a good idea to talk about this topic because, of course, statements have to be classified and talked about, but the question is always, how much time and space do you get for this in the narrow learning plan?* (G_SW7_F, pos. 486-502)

Promoting integration that enables diversity, agency and participation among the children, families and the team of the respective institution is rated as positive. For example, projects are mentioned to accompany the transition from school to work:

This is a person who, I think, usually starts in the tenth grade with kids where it's already clear that it won't go so smoothly after school and then accompanies them even after the tenth grade. And having someone who can handle this transition is {of course} super good. Because it is often the case that after the tenth grade, all the support measures that existed in the context of school completely break down again. And to have a person there who continuously accompanies them into training or second-chance education or whatever else they do. (G_SW4_F, pos. 213)

C. Mediators

Main instrument is the project „culture guide" or integration assistants:

Integration assistant [...] *is the job of these women who didn't really know at the beginning what their integration aid was. I still know that it is not about telling the mother that means here after-school care card and after-school care card mean this and that, but that it involves dealing with your OWN culture, which does not exist here, the other not. What am I doing now with my own culture?*
(GEUAFR19 (2_A_I_T_18.05.2020): 624-636)

One effective way is music. Music builds bridges and invites children and parents to join the group without fear:

> *Music is really like a language. [...]. I noticed when there is music, all the children play together, sing together, or sit together ... yes, I think it's really nice, for integration for all children.* (G_M1_F, pos. 238-241)

5.3 Inter-institutional cooperation (good practices)

A. Teachers

Teachers describe inter-institutional cooperation regarding work with migrant children, diversity and integration along different reasons and aims. In a very general sense, inter-institutional cooperation provides experiences, educational occasions and appropriate places for learning and education outside school.

> *We cooperate with the police, starting from traffic education until drug abuse. Of course, we collaborate with other institutions. We do excursions within several subjects, visit several learning locations. We did an excursion even in mathematics this year.* (G_T1_M, pos. 331-333)

> *We have the French institute in the city. And I try to visit the institute once or twice per month together with the children. There we can visit the library or watch cartoons.*" (G_T8_M, pos. 669-671)

Concerning integration and education, the reasons for such cooperation differ, they cover aspects related to contents of certain courses within school, and should provide enhanced experiences and knowledge or access to new or alternative social and cultural resources. Furthermore, inter-institutional cooperation of this kind provides insights, enables contact and thus promotes integration and participation.

> *We asked two colleagues for cooperating with the municipality, which know much about the city. Both are members of the community representation. However, of course, in my teaching we visit many learning places outside school. We met the major during the ninth grade within social studies course. I did many projects, where we visited enterprises etc. We use many learning places outside school.* (G_T1_M, pos. 29-30)

Other reasons for inter-institutional cooperation concern certain requirements, needs or difficulties that might be related to the migrant background of children and their families. First mentioned in this regard are mediators and interpreters, who in Germany do not work at dedicated schools.

> *Interpreters are an important resource to us indeed. Because, like a refugee family has no experience and knowledge about social life and school system in Germany, so we do not have any knowledge or experience concerning school in Syria or Vietnam. What means school there and what means school here, what is the position of a teacher? This is something we have to learn and to know.* (G_T3_F, pos. 185-191)

Interpreters and mediators – as mentioned above – are important not only to enable communication between school, children and families. Moreover, considering teachers' experiences as well as expectations, their role also includes cultural mediation, providing information about different aspects of social life, school system, traditions etc. in the different countries of origin as well as supporting sensitivity and understanding according to the possible experiences or families and children during their escape to Europe.

> *And this is, from which we can benefit, when they have information about the countries of origin or possibly for themselves are educators or teachers, who escaped. This all can be useful, in exchange with each other.* (G_T2_F, pos. 423)

However, the fact that interpreters as well as mediators in Germany usually do not work at dedicated schools often leads to problems such as their availability, the continuity of collaboration – which might impair the trustworthiness of the relation between school and families – or with respect to budget.

Another important resource in terms of cooperation is social workers, who represent a professional resource for different reasons. Because social workers also work in schools, cooperation between schools and social work not only occurs in the case of individual problems and the need for help and assistance.

> *We closely cooperate with the youth welfare office. Though it happens that we talk about with the office, but first we always speak with the parents. We try to find a good solution and possibly the youth welfare office provides proper support, a family worker. This opportunity exists. Support of a family worker, when a mother is a single parent and has to go to shift work. […] Then she possibly needs a family worker, when she has two children and has to work in night shifts and there is no father, no husband or partner.* (G_T4_F, pos. 229)

Regardless of such cooperation, which addresses more or less specific problems and needs, social workers – especially those working in schools – are considered as professional resource with different competencies and opportunities to work with children and families.

> *Yes, social workers are of a different nature. From time to time, I collaborated with the social worker of our school club, because I had massive problems with a particular class. Not according human level. They just could not calm down during lessons. Therefore, we collaborated, went outside and beat each other with foam or something like that. This way we worked on our relationship.* (G_T6_F, pos. 737-743)

Nevertheless, there are critical statements concerning the collaboration with social workers, especially within school. Teachers – and here quite often L2 teachers – criticize a lack of interest among teachers towards social workers and the opportunities of cooperation. Such experiences and perceptions prevent opportunities for children and families and sometimes affect L2 teachers.

> *We more or less closely collaborate with the social workers of the school, this works quite well. There is less contact to the teachers. This affects children, who go to a regular school and this is quite difficult for me. I have to know, what is important for the teacher, what I have to focus during my lessons, what are the current topics. According to this, the cooperation is not so good.* (G_T4_F, pos. 21)

On the one hand, such experiences perhaps outline the old problem of the school as a rather closed institution that follows its own rules and practices and keeps other professions at a distance, if not outside. On the other hand, teachers described the importance of cooperation and collaboration with other professions and professionals in school. According to primary schools, after-school care – which in Germany usually is located within schools – plays an important role concerning migrant children's integration from the teachers' perspective.

> *However, of course, we need after school care. Not even as a place, but the educators, who continue during the afternoon what we started in the morning. Accordingly, we are interested in a close cooperation with our day care. On the other hand, colleagues at day care always were open to welcome children immediately. Of course, there are registration times, which are to be respected. But otherwise they also think that a child has the best chances to be integrated, to enhance language competencies, when it attends day care quickly.* (G_T3_F, pos. 651-661)

A kind of best practice represents the opportunity to provide individual support and promotion at one place.

> *We have multifaceted, in quotes, tutoring offers, which means trainings such as language training, learning training. In some cases we invite experts like occupational therapists, speech therapists and so on to school, so that parents do not have to go somewhere with their children, rather they can be supported in many ways here in school.* (G_T7_FF, pos. 109)

To sum up, cooperation of teachers regarding work with migrant children and their families has to face some problems like the availability of experts, budget or seemingly old-fashioned professional and institutional borders. If cooperation and collaboration works, it is multifaceted, includes professions and partners outside and inside school, and addresses different aims and needs, reaching from the idea of opening access to new experiences to support in case of individual challenges or problems.

B. Social Workers

Since the focus of the social workers is above all on networking and they do not understand integration as total assimilation but rather as linkage and needs orientation, they work together with many different inter-institutional cooperation partners. In particular, enabling people to help themselves and empowerment are also in the foreground when working with people with a migration background:

We then approached a youth club here [...] and had a brief exchange about the possibilities and then agreed with them that we would [...] come by with pupils from the DAZ class and [...] visit the youth club. We simply showed them the place, played table tennis and table football, spent an afternoon and showed them that this place exists, that you can come here, that there is a holiday programme here and, um, yes, what you do with it is your decision, but we showed them that there is a place that is open and welcomes them, where there are also other people who they can get to know and with whom they can exchange ideas. (G_SW6_M, pos. 121-127)

In addition, contacts are established with state social aid and support programmes. The focus here is primarily on the exchange of information, cultural mediation and getting to know the institutions and their working methods, so that low-threshold access can be possible for the families, if required:

We also invited the Youth Welfare Office once, because when we talk about the Youth Welfare Office, our clients are immediately afraid of the Youth Welfare Office, our children and, and we then tried to correct that, why does the Youth Welfare Office come into play at all? And that's why we invited the Youth Welfare Office. They explained exactly how it works and so on, and these are topics that are not [dealt with] at all in our countries, for example. Yes? And that is important, to know about it. (G_SW8_F, pos. 105-107)

Cooperation with the Addiction Officer, who noticed that we have enormous access to the users, a culturally sensitive addiction prevention project. This will continue until the end of the YEAR. (G_SW9_F, pos. 203)

In addition to cooperation with state institutions, informal networks are also being expanded and evaluated as positive and supportive, because these networks might work preventively, provide support below an official intervention, and they can mediate to official agencies in case of more intensive need of assistance; for instance, to youth welfare offices, which regardless of their work sometimes are mentioned as strictly intervening.

What is often mentioned in our team discussions are support structures that are not state-run. Not the Youth Welfare Office, but external people who just drop by, who can be contacted, which is not immediately connected with fear ... The Youth Welfare Office is ... actually a good thing, they are actually there to support you, but the view there is: Ok, if the Youth Welfare Office is in, it can happen very quickly that the children are gone. ... and to have such an independent authority ... that only sees the parents as deficient, but says: Ok, we can somehow manage it together. (G_SW2_F, pos. 686)

Independent of these networks and cooperative relationships, social workers also report difficulties in cooperating with other institutions due to a lack of professional acceptance towards social work. Especially in schools, social work sometimes finds itself in a subordinate position, at best responsible for supporting individual difficulties and relieving everyday school life of such cases. In this context, the school sometimes refuses to share responsibility for the comprehensive support of migrant children, which can affect access to and the effectiveness of integration measures or programmes.

SW6: *As I said, there is the youth migration service, there is a socio-educational counselling centre, there is a vocational counsellor, so these services exist.*

I: *And how do these programmes affect the children or are they well received?*

SW6: *Very little. But that also has to do with the staff at school, that [...] social work is very, very poorly accepted, very, very poorly communicated, and is often viewed rather pejoratively by the staff, because there is (-) yes, one can only speculate, a lack of competence or the question of why we need such social workers here at the school at all.* (G_SW6_M, pos. 269-275)

C. Mediators

The starting point of the culture guide project was a network around the university. Later there was a good cooperation with the day care center (municipal day care management). Developing good cooperation with other institutions was possible but needed staying power.

First tried to find something in their area and then found out that it wasn't that easy and then they had to find something quickly and during that time I found a counterpart at the daycare management level. (G_M1_F, pos. 225-231)

5.4 Impact of inclusive programmes on children/communities

A. Teachers

Teachers consider the impact of inclusive programs and activities regarding the school context in quite different ways, whereas explicit programs are perceived in a kind of framework for activities and experiences.

We are very active in exchange with other countries, participate actively in ERASMUS-program since many years. We had exchange with the United States and other countries. Beside ERASMUS we had further exchange with Finland and other countries. Our students where in almost all European countries, from Estonia to Romania, from Spain to France quite a lot. […] We worked on a topic concerning refugees, integration and what is done within different countries in Europe. Values, traditions, morals etc. in these countries also where of interest. The diversity of Europe. (G_T1_M, pos. 239-274)

Participation in such programs might have an influence on the social climate in school and thus promote open-mindedness and initiatives of students and teachers regarding integration when the same teacher reported different examples of engagement and participation.

We worked together with a reception center, where students of ours gave tuition to children there and other things. We did many other initiatives. (G_T1_M, pos. 235-236)

However, if educators and teachers mention impact in a quite direct way regarding migrant integration, they refer to resident children as well as those with a migrant background.

We had once; the initiative came from this girl. She was Muslim, I do not know from which country. Moreover, here was a stage presented play last year. I actually cannot remember in detail, but I have seen this play by myself. Oh yes, its title was 'I am Muslim'. Muslim women did it. It was played in Theatre. And this girl initiated that these women came to us and made a performance for our students, for the older ones. Afterwards we had a discussion. (G_T5_F, Pos. 207)

They joined with other students to initiate a student coffee shop in town. […] They want to build a meeting place open for all students in the city. Cross-school, a meeting place for students. […] For leisure time. It is currently discussed. The municipality provides rooms our students do not prefer. So, there is some struggle. However, most of the members of the city council basically agree. It is a question of costs. They already found a sponsor organization. (4_C_I_T, 52-64)

In these examples, impact materializes as concrete actions and initiatives undertaken by pupils regarding migrant children, dialogue and integration. In a more general meaning, as these examples also demonstrate, participation, engagement, empowerment and self-confidence might be effects of integration programs or simply activities. Teachers' reports suggest that school – regardless of particular programs – should be shaped as a social context that enables social experiences, provides opportunities to encounter for building bridges into communities, develop and grow individually. It is interesting that a migrant background in these contexts was mentioned differently, but overall seemed to have an important but somewhat subordinated impact.

> *And I think, this has a little more impact. I am a foreigner, yes? Children know me and trust me, yes? They come to me with their concerns, when there happened something bad at home, when they have a secret. I am the educator, and I am there for the children. But I am the foreigner. […] Possibly I am the only foreigner the children actually know. I believe that when they go to school, when they are in foreign countries, they remember: I know a foreigner. Anyway, from where he comes, a foreigner is a foreigner. For me this is interesting and exiting that children have contact with a foreigner at this early stage of life.* (G_T8_M, pos. 171-175)

> *But it is not important that somebody cares for the children. Of course, it is important. However, the thing is that children should stay in school as long as possible to have contact with the German language and to develop their social competencies.* (G_T3_F, pos. 669-673)

Although these examples refer to a migrant background from different perspective, they focus on the individual development of children, the experience of diversity and thus the promotion of tolerance, respect, and open-mindedness.

> *And it is usual in our groups that new children are accompanied by a tutor. This works very nice. This is an older child or a child of the same age, it depends, who is responsible to show the newcomer, here is the place for your shoes, now we must go to brush our teeth etc. And this works fine with foreign children, who do not speak German, as well. Because our children know what is going on and they are proud as hell. They try to teach the other child. And children learn a language so quickly. So, it works.* (G_T9_F, pos. 59-63)

Regarding this, school and other educational institutions might provide the institutional and social context that addresses children with or without a migrant background to convey experiences of mutual recognition, respect and tolerance.

Concerning children with a migrant background, besides dedicated educational efforts and impacts – e.g. second language learning – teachers and educators reflect on the impacts regarding building a social context, which might and should provide security, trust, and a sense of belonging to migrant children.

> *I believe that we took care of the children, who came to us, in a way, that they, I do not want to say repressed or forgot, surely not. But they are feeling well here, they are safe, found a new home and that was the plan.* (G_T9_F, Pos. 71)

> *And this girl told us when she was on a boat and then, I do not know, the boat seemed to overturn. It was very dangerous. All prayed and finally nothing happened. Then you recognize: Really? There must be a lot of trust that she tells us about, facing the whole class. This indicates a good relationship to her peers in class when she dares to do so. As a teacher, you are not prepared that something like this happens, right. It is quite moving sometimes.* (G_T5_F, pos. 139)

However, teachers also reported quite critical perspectives upon school regarding the integration of migrant children and thus reflecting not only problematic aspects of school, but also certain given limitations that are difficult to overcome.

> *We are part of a greater context. Of course, we should prepare the child for the next step as good as possible. But it must be clear that we cannot prepare a child, who came to Germany at the age of ten, for the middle school or high school as we can do with a child, who was born in Germany.* (G_T3_F, pos. 573-578)

B. Social Workers

Projects such as the Together Café – which takes place once a month – create a safe and trusting framework for transcultural exchange. People from different nationalities (e.g. from Germany, Eritrea, Syria and Afghanistan) meet and talk about previously-announced topics such as faith. The discussion is divided into workshops and accompanied by social work professionals. In order to facilitate a transcultural understanding, commonalities between the diverse cultures – in this case faiths – are first sought. This enables the participants to get to know diversity, recognize commonalities, get closer to each other, adopt different perspectives, and see common goals. This has a strong impact on living together and awakens the participants' need to engage further with the respective topic. Furthermore, this form of exchange contributes to feeling welcome and understood:

> *For many years now* [...] *we have been holding so-called Together-Cafés, where we meet very regularly, at least once a [year]* [...] *but this sometimes extends into the open area, where we simply discuss the topics further.* [...] *So I'll give you an example, last Saturday there were 18 people from Germany, Eritrea,* [...] *Syria, um Afghanistan. Men, women, children* [...] *and dedicated themselves to the topic: And what do you think? With the aim, so to speak, of getting close to each other, uh, in the question of whether there are not COMMON values? Whether faith is more disturbing or more helpful? So to talk very openly with each other.* [...] *So we had a very rigid Coptic Christian there, an Orthodox Christian from Eritrea,* [...] *uh, REALLY STRONG in his views and at the beginning with a great lack of understanding, why here in Germany/* [...] *no one believes in God* [...] *And so what he then presented here as an insight, so in this conversation was enormous. So, that he realised that he believes in God* [...] *But the INTERESTING thing was that he said: "I have met SO many people. It didn't matter what they believed,* [...] *they were GOOD people. And he had NOT thought that was possible in 2015.* (G_SW9_F, pos. 207-223)

Furthermore, the influence of social work support can empower migrant people and families to become self-reliant and empowered:

> *And there are some who, the parents have become a bit more independent. Only if there is a problem or something, I am a contact person. For example, the school can call me and say: Yes, it hasn't been clarified yet. We have talked to the family and so on. But not, um, (.) intensive support like at the beginning. With some families it's still like that because the parents themselves, it's also difficult for the parents themselves, what do you call it, to have everything in their hands and so on. But there are (clever?) parents, very strong parents, who in the end have almost all the work in their hands.* (G_SW8_ F, pos. 19)

Nonetheless, some opportunities for support or scope for action are not used and accepted as expected by the social workers. For example, it can be observed that in some cases the students do not take the opportunity to contribute and shape their own lives within the framework of participation, or that structures and network partners for people with a migration background are not taken seriously by locals – for example, by peers or superiors – but are rather devalued. This influences the uptake by pupils with a migration background.

> *But I also have the feeling that they don't really want to get involved because then somehow, for many, the identification with the school doesn't exist, the lack of a class network [...] and then of course the commitment doesn't grow out of that, so I know that there used to be a student council [...], but then it was partly a teacher-controlled or teacher-presented event, which is not the point of the thing, and when the responsibility was supposed to be handed over to the pupils, it fell asleep and nothing more happened, so, yes, pupils actually have possibilities, rights and things they can do, but they are not used because they are not aware of it and because they are not really interested in putting a lot of time into it..* (G_SW6_M, pos. 165-177)

> SW6: *As I said, there is the youth migration service, there is a socio-educational counselling centre, there is a vocational counsellor, so these services exist.*

> I: *And how do these programmes affect the children or are they well received?*

SW6: *Very little. But that also has to do with the staff at school, that [...] social work is very, very poorly accepted, very, very poorly communicated, and is often viewed rather pejoratively by the staff, because there is (-) yes, one can only speculate, a lack of competence or the question of why we need such social workers here at the school at all.* (G_SW6_M, pos. 269-275)

C. Mediators

The "Kulturlotsen-programm" (culture guides program) project brought integration into the community, foreign (partly unqualified, but also masters and doctorates in other areas) accompanying women of academics at the university (often with temporary contracts).

The project was started as a part of the Dual Career Service in cooperation with the day care center Dresden), initially through German courses and a women's café, and later training as an educator and at the same time working as a cultural guide in day care centers, schools (forms and frequency vary depending on the provider/place of work).

In addition to the benefits for the women (and their husbands, the university and the city), the project aims to improve the school and pre-school situation of children with a migration background (sometimes over 50% migration background; very heterogeneous requirements), i.e. children support them in becoming independent together with their parents; Culturally (especially linguistically) familiar people welcome the children and accompany them and their parents:

And then we made a leap into vocational training with them.[…] *Then they got a permanent employment contract in training* [...] *then they studied part-time, so they learned to be an educator ... with an international background* (G_M1_F, pos. 66-101)

6 School during the pandemic

6.1 Situation of pupils during the pandemic

A. Teachers

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant a severe disruption in the social lives of most children (and adults). In 2020, day care centers and schools were temporarily closed for several months and only open for emergency care for children whose parents work in so-called system-relevant occupational groups. For pupils, this means that classes were cancelled, contacts with other children and teachers were restricted, and school material was reduced to a minimum (e.g. reduced to so-called main subjects such as math and German). Since education is a matter for the federal states, there are sometimes very different regulations from state to state, but also between different regions (e.g. depending on the incidence value). Overall, the reduction or the lack of contact with other children is perceived as one of the greatest stresses.

It's so difficult at the moment, because the children need this social contact. Because otherwise they become dull. But they also have to be able to touch each other or put their hand on their shoulder or fight a bit. (G_T5_F, pos. 111)

Regarding learning and accordant support, educators and teachers point to the variability, often also tied to factors such as migrant background and socioeconomic status. On the one hand, this addresses the digital equipment at home, on the other it is tied to the (non-)availability of parental support. Here, teachers see the danger that the gap further widens.

Well, that's what Corona has shown now. Therefore, it already started with the fact that there were children who had no devices at home. […] So these are just so two girls. So one from Syria, the other from Vietnam, exactly. So they just didn't have computers at home. And then the lessons were online. Yes, we then organized tablets for these children from the school, but you only find that out when you call there and talk

to the people. Uh, so it's noticeable: The child doesn't send any assignments. But, uh, this coming behind and not generalizing and saying: These are somehow lazy children who do nothing, but try to find out: Why doesn't the child do anything? Maybe because it can't / doesn't do anything. […] But even / more dramatic is, I think, the situation then, so at least now been, uh, children who had a support at home, the parents, and children who were really on their own completely. And then, when such a child sits in front of such a computer, and there is some program, which it doesn't know yet, which it can implement, then it is very, very difficult. But I think we've had a really, really big lesson now, where we see what works, but also what doesn't work. (G_T5_F, pos. 216-219)

During the pandemic, different ways of communicating were established, mainly dependent on aspects such as teachers' capacities or attitudes towards communication technology.

But if the now to Corona, there I had now set up an e-mail address myself for the children, if they wanted, they could ask questions. Where I was approachable. […] They then also had a high need to communicate, how things were going. And (.) that I then said, okay, watch out, I can also send something of/ from me every week. And then I always had a student in the class who was a contact person for me, so to speak, for the class WhatsApp group. (G_T6_F, pos. 647-649)

Educators and teacher reported that they seek contact by phone, expressing the peculiar circumstances of the pandemic.

So you also accompany the families, of course. That's clear, because, um, now just in the time, um, where we had online lessons, I have also phoned here, there, with the parents, also partly translate then the children. Not all parents speak German. So, um, it's / it's also, uh, about: What does the family itself need? So not only the child. (G_T5_F, pos. 97)

So I personally email. And, as I said, during the Corona period, I actually spoke to every child on the phone. And sometimes also with the parents, yes. But otherwise I wouldn't have done that. My privacy is also important to me. And I don't have to be available everywhere and, uh, for everyone all the time. (G_T5_F, pos. 105)

However, educators and teachers also observe positive side effects. For instance, due to the contact restrictions, one solution in day care centers and schools was to create smaller groups and classes. Sometimes, this resulted in an increase of cooperation and integration in these newly-formed groups. Accordingly, one DaZ teacher mentions:

At the moment we have, a compulsory community in a DAZ class. Because I HAVE to look after ten children, so that the group sizes are as small as possible, (...) and now of course constellations have formed that were unthinkable before, (...) [they] cooperate with each other, that really only works now (…). And yes, the children have to concentrate on each other, so they know that if they behave badly now, then of course it's also in the class, everyone sees that then (…). And they have to communicate with each other in a completely different ways. Our wish would be almost that it stays like that, but of course that's utopian, because they can't just have math, German, and science, they also have to get other subjects again (G_T2_F, pos. 441-443 and 484-505)

They simply have more FREE space in the class, more room for maneuver, so to speak, and that definitely has an advantage, well, you notice that now also under Corona, because a few children are out, in the DAZ classes in that the class sizes are smaller (G_T2_F, pos. 663-669)

Not only the children benefit from the smaller groups, but the teachers also notice positive aspects of this new situation. For instance, the smaller classes and groups are easier to manage.

Well, as a teacher, it's quicker. Because they don't mix with lots of other classes in the schoolyard, and they can't spread out around the building so that you can't see them. (G_T2_F, Pos. 484-505)

They are also acknowledged and reflected positively about their work with the children, as the following statement reveals.

If the DaZ lessons have to be cancelled more often, as is the case now, for example, due to corona, then a child often stands in front of me and asks, "When is DaZ?" and the experience is that the children enjoy the DaZ lessons because there they are picked up where they really are. (G_T3_F, pos. 463-467)

Another gain is that children are forced to become independent, as a day care educator details.

And that, I have to say, really works: And if you take the Corona time into account, our children have developed into independent beings, where the parents are flapping their ears. Therefore, they are left at the door and then they have to go to their groups on their own, so to speak. That's what they do, they don't even turn around to their parents. (G_T9_F, pos. 205-207)

There are students who are very independent right from the start. You could see that now, um, in the time when we had the school digital now, in the Corona time. Uh, there were really even in the fifth grade students who have done everything independently and confidently, and, um, so it was really a dream to experience that (G_T5_F, pos. 39)

B. Social Workers

Socially-disadvantaged pupils often live and learn under difficult conditions. During the Covid-19 pandemic, this has an even further negative effect. Social workers consider it important to offer children spaces to develop:

So now, through Corona, it's once again, as far as the education system is concerned, that it's simply that those who are already left behind are left even further behind. There would be a need, but I don't know how, but you would just have to change the education system, I don't know how, because we give tutoring once a week. A child is helped a little bit and I think it's incredibly important that there are spaces where they can be and be loud and be themselves and where they are simply accepted. I think that's very important, but you also have to be careful that you don't take yourself too seriously in your role. (G_SW2, pos. 635-640)

During the pandemic, it was also difficult for socially-disadvantaged children to network with each other in peer groups, exchange ideas and receive social support:

Emotionally and socially that is for sure, academically, for some yes, but that are actually those who already have relatively good grades and relatively few problems in the school system. For them. [...] [who don't get along well with the school system] there is, I think, little support among themselves. (G_SW4_F, pos. 234-237)

For this reason, it could be that pupils with a migration background have become increasingly withdrawn and distanced from locals and other pupils. Daily life mainly took place within their own families. There was a lack of social interaction and the challenge of learning and practicing a new culture and language:

Of course, they stay in their own families and their language skills suffer, their ability to integrate suffers and perhaps this distance is built up that should not actually be there. (G_SW6_M, pos. 51-55)

Language deficits, in the national language of children with a migration background, are the result:

Children, especially after the Corona period, when school started again, it was very frightening [...] that they really forgot their German words, which they actually already knew WELL or better before. (G_SW7_F, pos. 560)

From the social workers' perspective, a positive aspect of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting hygiene regulations and spacing rules is that educational settings comprise smaller groups. Accordingly, a professional can focus on the needs and resources of fewer children and has time to respond to them. This has a positive effect on strengthening the relationship between the teacher and pupil:

> *And* [I] *started giving online lessons* [...], *i.e. one-to-one lessons,* [...] *I* [tried] *to reach everyone. And a few* [...] *wanted to work with me. And then I started* [...] *to work on the tasks that* [...] *were set by our school with them and to somehow convey the feeling that there is someone there who directly supports them even in times of Corona. And I have also achieved quite good results with this, especially with regard to the bond between the pupils and me.* (G_SW6_M, pos. 27-29)

6.2 Measures taken

A. Teachers

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a restriction period during which teaching and work has been paused or even stopped. Furthermore, additional activities such as excursions and field trips were cancelled, and possibilities of interaction and exchange with pupils, colleagues and parents such as class councils, joint meetings, or parents' cafes were stopped. One challenge – especially at the beginning of the pandemic – was to find ways to stay in touch. This issue shows great differences between schools and teachers. While some report that the contact with their students has increased, other admit to having little or even no contact. Some educators and teachers tried new ways of making contact, such as emails or letters to parents. They either organized these different types of communication themselves or used school-based ways such as digital platforms or parents' representatives as a mouthpiece.

> *At the beginning I didn't know anything about the digital learning platform ... and that's when I made the first exchange via letters to parents. ... all the parents have my email addresses, they also have my telephone number, but very few of them have contacted me. I asked my parents' representative for an assessment and she wrote to me about what works with the tasks and what doesn't. Otherwise, I have no further contact there.* (G_T1_M, pos. 139-140)

Educators and teachers claim that the responsivity differs, ranging from parents who are very interested to a majority who are difficult to reach.

We then only exchanged via email, but there were only two parents who were also interested, who also wrote regularly. (G_T2_F, pos. 847).

This also affects their children, for instance, when the parental consent is needed to establish alternative communication channels.

> *It would have been good, I would say, to have a fixed time and to say, okay, now you can get in touch with each other. And not just me WITH YOU, but me with the students, but: and that's what I did, that I then suggested to connect certain children with each other, by saying, I ask the parents if I can give the phone number and that the children can exchange via WhatsApp. Or even then again meet in the park in pairs so they just have to practice talking. That actually also worked in a constellation, but again only with two children. So they actually communicated via WhatsApp, they then met. That was again such a small success, but of course that only works if the parents say, we also want that, we also support that* (G_T2_F, pos. 847)

Digital learning is viewed skeptically by educators and teachers, whereby most do not want this to permanently replace tried and tested methods and approaches and they have fears about the future of teaching. A majority of teachers also admit that they were not prepared for the digital learning.

> *So I suspect that knowledge will continue to decline. That is, what we used to call general knowledge. Because at the moment the prevailing opinion is that they only need to know (…) how they can acquire the knowledge. But the knowledge itself they don't need anymore. ... These are two fears that I have. The*

overemphasis on digitalization and the fact that the lessons are so unsystematic that the students become even more disoriented. (G_T1_M, pos. 368-376)

These challenges are also ascribed to the parents, especially those with migrant background

And of course it would be great if you could reach the children in a video chat. But that has been forbidden to us by the principal. For data protection reasons, or we are not yet involved in Lernsax, or I don't see that the parents can do that with Lernsax, because it is simply a system that was a bit difficult for us teachers, and if the parents don't speak German, someone would have to be on site to say ok, I'll install it on your phone. I'll set it up for you now. Then you need language mediators again. So theoretically, there would have to be a system administrator at every school to support you with something like that. THEN it would be optimal, then it could work. Otherwise I don't see it as profitable for our school. (G_T2_F, pos. 821-827)

Migrant parents as well as children were not only not prepared for online learning but also faced difficulties regarding language proficiency in German according to online content management systems, etc. They criticize the fact that many households are not sufficiently equipped.

Then there has to be the possibility that every child in the family has such a thing, and if six children go to school, then six children have to have such a tablet. However, as I said, at the moment I don't see the Internet. Um, some of them are fighting over the devices at home. (...) The transmission speeds we have here in Germany are far behind what I experienced in Mozambique in the village or at sea, I would say. So I was really amazed at the standard we have here and we are, as an Internet-tuned nation. (G_T2_F, pos. 835-841)

However, educators and teacher also perceive positive side effects of the pandemic. For instance, they have time for further education and administration matters, which often otherwise always fell away to the rear.

We have of course now had other opportunities, when we were at home in the time off from school, to tackle certain things (...) we are now taking care of certain other things that have otherwise been left undone (...) And now we simply had a bit of time for research and could simply look again perhaps in old teaching documents (G_T2_F, pos. 506-511)

Moreover, the pandemic also provided insights into their work; for instance, on the importance of parental work, as the following statement of a day care educator demonstrates:

We had in the Corona time where the parents come in here, I always wrote a weekly review for the parents, emailed it, and I have one Indian child, where the parents only English and then I actually translated that again for them. You don't have to do that, but it was like that for me, I had taken over the child, after two and a half years it was in, with another kindergarten teacher and she said to me, this is now the first time that I'm getting anything at all from the kindergarten everyday life. So really. Because we had translated it into English and in the parent interview there was also an interpreter. And then I thought, "Oh, that's actually really crass. They come here and know / hand over their child and des / don't get anything at all. That was such an eye-opener, where I thought there has to be a lot more parental work. (G_T10_FFFF, pos. 449-459)

B. Social Workers

To limit the further spread of the pandemic, various hygiene regulations and distance rules are observed. Work, school and life are increasingly taking place online. For this reason, social work tries to digitally empower people with a migration or refugee background to enable them to participate, including with a view to the future:

So now one of the focal points is also digital EMPOWERMENT, because we have noticed how little this is developed and how much it is necessary, i.e. pandemic-related and so on. [...] contacts that one has to CONNECT in a different way or to develop skills that are still necessary there. (G_SW9_F, pos. 189)

C. Mediators

Due to their different structural link to schools, mediators' opportunities and strategies to work with migrant children during pandemic situations have differed. At least one interviewed mediator reported to work with children in smaller groups or one to one, supporting them in doing homework by phone or by organizing some kinds of social events like a painting contest.

Since then I've always been in school until the Corona came and after that I helped the children with their homework on the phone. And it works. (G_M3_FFF, pos. 1574 - 1765)

Not at the moment, because there has been no contact with parents since Corona and then I started supporting children one-on-one in math. (G_M3_FFF, pos. 830 - 1001)

Organize events, but now, with Corona, it's a bit different and uh, [...] *we organized a painting competition.* (G_M3_FFF, pos. 472 - 1070)

7 Recommendations

The following remarks in this chapter summarize the recommendations of the professionals from the previous chapters, and the deficits or difficulties mentioned, which we formulate as relevant challenges in the ductus of the professionals. We first name the challenges and then present the recommendations (sometimes several recommendations for one challenge). Since all references follow directly from the previous chapters, we have only added a few quotations here again.

A. Teachers

(a) Challenge: Tension between recognizing the individuality of all students and teachers and the necessary, specific support for children with a migration background due to negative effects of migration (trauma, language problems). Language problems are particularly important here. For teachers, they do not show up so much in everyday life, but rather in understanding scientific texts. The use of the mother tongue in class is controversial.

Recommendation: Teachers want specific further training to meet the challenges caused by migration, which also includes methods of multilingual schooling.

Recommendation: Regarding work with children, the individuality of each child can be addressed by referring the subject matter or teaching methods to the children's world.

Learning the German language is a prerequisite for successful integration. Special classes (L2 or preparation classes) have proven themselves. These classes provide not only the opportunity of language learning, but also safety, space and support for newcomers to arrive in Germany in general and in the German school system in particular. Moreover, L2 classes are considered as arenas of social learning concerning participation, communication and thus they provide opportunities to experience social integration. However, it is sometimes also stated that there is a risk of segregation and stigmatization.

(b) Challenge: Teachers and educators see it as their responsibility to enable children with a migrant background by providing an optimal education. In doing so, they feel a great burden, in particular due to

different school systems, learning attitudes and knowledge of the requirements in Germany. This includes ideas about children's independence and participation.

Recommendation: Looking at the big picture programs to ensure social security on a material basis is important, because they guarantee children's participation in school. Promoting the integration of children requires a broad and differentiated spectrum of approaches, programmes and activities, of which schools are one part. Accordingly, schools and teachers essentially play an important role in migrant children's integration. To play this role properly, dedicated programs are necessary, useful and important, but it also needs adequate structural conditions and eventually substantial relationships to families and institutions outside school.

Recommendation: Participation, independence (e.g. regarding family) and independence should be approached as an independent task of the training.

> *In my eyes, it is also a task of the elementary schools to educate children to be independent.(…) I usually always start with traditional ... frontal teaching // where the children work individually. And then the next stage is partner work. And the next but one stage is then group or // small group work.* (G_T3_F, pos. 383-424)

Recommendation: The willingness to participate should always be supported in practice, e.g. in representative bodies, in far-reaching decision-making processes to which as many children as possible are invited.

Recommendation: School and teachers should have sufficient resources available for this integration work (smaller classes, pre-school for day care; specific further education or training for teachers).

(c) Challenge: Success at school is often at risk given that parents neither capture the organization and requirements of the German school system nor the specifics of the social challenges.

Recommendation: There should also be a pre-school for parents or corresponding forms of contact and trust-building. There is a width in ways of incorporating parents ranging from doorway conversations to a parents' café (e.g. presentations on certain topics) and parents' school (e.g. offering information on school and the formulation of expectations).

(d) Challenge: Gender-specific problems are not mentioned as a general distinguishing feature at school, whereas the family influence of gender tends to be.

> *I just always have to make sure that they don't come home with ideas where they then get terrible problems at home? Then with their parents, too. Yes, it is sometimes a culture shock for the children and you have to be a bit sensitive about it.* (G_T2_F, pos. 795-803)

Recommendation: There should be offers to work sensitively with parents about this, but at the same time it must be seen that gender stereotypes are often deeply rooted in society and have to be solved there.

B. Social Workers

(a) Challenge: Language deficits or gaps in language acquisition and practice. The greatest challenge for the children's integration and agency is language deficits. They make communication, learning and working together more difficult.

Recommendation: Include other forms of communication (such as music, art), work more in small groups and in individual lessons.

(b) Challenge: Prejudice and discrimination. Migration is seen as a deficit, and migration is used as the main differentiator for people.

Recommendation: Demonstrate empathy, individual perception and respect for individuals and what they have already achieved. Professionals should be enabled to apply this in a targeted manner, whereby it is urgent to offer supervision and reflection in the team.

(c) Challenge: Finding one's own identity, whereby the major danger in the integration process is to reduce other people to supposed cultural or gender characteristics.

Recommendation: Show openness in all interactions with children as well as parents. It is important to enable encounters between cultures/individuals and gently moderate these encounters if necessary.

This also applies to gender differences and gender roles. The professionals often see boys as dominant in group situations, but girls are often much more open to new projects and exchange opportunities. This is to be seen individually and accordant activities to be strengthened.

Recommendation: Understand integration as a two-way process. Therefore, name misunderstandings and irritations without stigmatizing. Personal perspectives are important and should be allowed. Mutual perspective and needs should be made visible. Solutions can only be found together.

(d) Challenge: The school puts performance requirements before social integration.

Recommendation: Expand social work in schools. The school should revise its strict performance orientation in favor of participation, agency and recognition. There should be an acceptance of projects that are holistically promoting integration (e.g. transition from school to professional life).

Recommendation: Provide rooms and use the social environment. Small groups and one-to-one support are beneficial for integration and personal development, as well as learning success. Moreover, if necessary, enable gender-homogeneous groups, in personal issues can be discussed. Use of the social environment (e.g. classmates) to reduce fear is necessary.

(e) Recommendation: Make use of cooperation with other institutions.

Cooperation facilitates the integration of children, but also facilitates and improves the work of one's own institution; It is important to involve migrant self-initiatives and the civic communities. It is recommended to expand networks, including to enable better project funding. There is strong potential here for the integration of families. Networks and cooperation with migrant self-organizations also offer the potential to encounter and overcome prejudice and discrimination.

(f) Learning from the coronavirus period

The restrictions of the coronavirus period show the already problematic situation of integration in classes that are too large, under a poorly-organized exchange culture and under spatial limitations.

Recommendation: It was recognized that direct encounters and smaller groups significantly improve learning and integration success.

C. Mediators

Challenge: Misunderstanding in the communication is not only a language problem but also a cultural problem. Sometimes misunderstanding reaches deep into social relationships and appreciation. In everyday life at school and day care centers, different cultural interpretations and values often make integration difficult, which is particularly evident when it comes to eating together, belonging to the family, and religion.

Recommendation: Find common solutions through participation (e.g. for meals or religious festivals). Finding a solution helps optimally to understand! Note: Eating seems to be marginal for integration, but this is not the case at all, because the sense of taste is also otherwise the decisive sense in social distancing, since it starts directly with our self-image (Barlösius 2000).

Recommendation: Use family as a resource. It must be avoided that children are left alone and stressed between the demands of the family and school/daycare. The integration of the children must be inseparable from the integration of the parents/family. The inclusion of older siblings can be helpful if they are already better integrated. Ultimately, the integration of parents is a main field of work for the integration of children.

Recommendation: The most important and urgent requirement is an elaborated kind of understanding (Wilcke 2009). Understanding has to be seen as a multidimensional, multifaceted and mutual process. The dimensions are as follows:

(a) Child – day care centers /school (the children understand the education system; school understands the children's situation and their behavior)
(b) Child – other children (Children can play and learn with each other, regardless of their origin)
(c) Parents – day care centers/school (the parents understand the education system, especially the tasks of the educators and the methods of education / upbringing)
(d) Parents – own child (the parents learn that their child is facing new tasks; the child is supported in this)
(e) Teacher/pedagogues – child, parents (the teachers recognize their task of integrating children and parents and have the opportunity and support to acquire the necessary skills)

The facets are as follows:

(1) Behavior (especially greeting, eating, learning)
(2) Expectations (support, activities, responsibilities, participation, agency)
(3) Role models (child, parents, pedagogues, kita/school, teacher; gender roles)

It is not only understanding on the side of those who have come, it is also LEARNING to understand, also on the side of those who were here, […] because they make room for the other, make compromises of their own or renounce their own or realize that is not important to me at all. I mean all of this as understanding (G_M1_F, pos. 614-622)

The mediators pled for a continuous process with the following steps:

Step 1: Children feel welcomed and can create trust (language, familiar habitus and trustworthy person).

Step 2: Parents are involved in the integration process of their children and at the same time they too are integrated.

Step 3: The educators recognize that they too have to think about their identity and thus promote integration.

Step 4: In common practice, role models are developed that enable the optimal integration of all children.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Key findings

What is needed first is a practice and atmosphere of mutual understanding. This is never seen as a one-way street, but rather everyone involved should be included. The groups of professionals see this as a common task, and combine different emphases depending on the profession.

Teachers think first of school success, which can only be achieved if teachers as well as pupils and parents how learning should or could be achieved.

Social workers focus on forms of co-existence in terms of recognition and respect. The aim is here is the identity of the children.

Based on their own experience, mediators strongly advocate a cultural understanding. The aim is mutual support and peaceful living together. Mediators and teachers with an own migration background complain daily about subtle racism in any direction (child – child; child – teacher/mediator; pedagogies - parents – pedagogies).

The participatory attitude of children with a migrant background is best achieved through diverse practice:

- in class through step-by-step participatory methods and through participation in finding topics for special offers.

- in school / daycare through students council committees.

- in the municipality and region through internships, visits to politicians / managers and through regional explorations (small research projects).

All three areas require the design, supervision and moderation of the pedagogies or teachers!

Learning the German language remains the declared basic goal of integration. However, different language skills should in no way become an obstacle to integration. This is why all forms of non-linguistic integration (music, art, sport / movement) are to be used. Moreover the children's own mother language should be used as a source of strength for learning German.

The integration of the children only works with the integration of the parents, which requires time, resources and opportunities for exchange in school and day care. Furthermore, parent integration only runs through mutual understanding processes (not through messages, information, rule references).

Finally, the integration of the children only takes place through increasing and strengthening the competence of the teachers/pedagogies (for teachers is on top: coping with trauma; deeper and more important: unconscious exclusion, stigmatization). Supervision and team consulting must become a basic part of the integration.

8.2 Situation of migrant children in the era of Covid-19

Due to the impact and safety regulations of the Covid-19 pandemic, schools and day care centers were often closed or only opened for emergency care. Contact with family members outside the household and with friends had to be suspended, and classes were held at a distance. This means that the subjects were partly taught online and partly with the help of worksheets. A strong variability between day care centers and school existed; for instance, regarding methods applied and contact with students and parents. This was particularly challenging for children from socially-disadvantaged families, but also for children who did not yet have a good command of the language of instruction (German).

In the interviews, pupils with migration background and refugee experience were reported as not having the necessary materials and infrastructure (e.g. internet access, computer, printer or similar) to work on tasks or participate in online seminars. Some children and families with a migration background found it difficult to contact the school themselves. The reasons for this could be language barriers, shame, no hope of support, or uncertainty in the unknown pandemic situation.

At the same time, it was also difficult for professionals to reach children and parents during the lockdown. Some professionals have tried to maintain contact with their students and their parents via chats, phone, emails and letters. Children often had to translate and mediate between their teachers and parents in these cases, ascribing them a huge responsibility.

For children with migration-related language difficulties, it is also difficult to understand and work on the tasks given by the school. Often, their parents are also still learning German and can give them little support. Teachers and classmates are more difficult to reach and cannot be asked for help spontaneously.

Social support, exchange and playing together in per groups was hardly possible during the pandemic. Children with migrant background became increasingly withdrawn and distanced from locals and other pupils. They spend most of their time with the part of the family that lives in the same household, which often are smaller, more crowded, and worse regarding equipment. The mother tongue is spoken there. This resulted in a lack of social interactions with locals and a lack of practice of the German language. However, both active exchange and regular listening and speaking of the national language can contribute to successful integration.

In the interviews, it was repeatedly emphasized that the smaller group sizes that have arisen due to the hygiene measures – both in school and leisure and counseling offers – are especially helpful for children with a migration background. Due to the smaller groups, the needs and abilities of the respective children can be more intensively addressed and promoted.

8.3 Theoretical implications and reflections arising from the research

In the theoretical preparatory work, integration was seen as a two-sided process of those present and those who were added. It was defined as a common learning process and design process. The professionals have a fairly good overview of the integration process for children with a migration background and their parents. They concentrate on the respective area of their profession. Some also see that they are part of the integration process.

The goal of making children independent and responsible people is recognized by everyone. Every profession tries to explore and try out ways of participation, whereby there is often talk of step sequences and additional methods.

The success of integration is seen very strongly and directly dependent on the relationship with the parents and the family, while having a migration background or social disadvantage is rated much lower. Gender disadvantage is rarely mentioned and then it also relates to family involvement. On the other hand, racism is often reported, which is particularly attached to externalities (darkness of the skin; clothing, food). Racist behavior is also reported by children with an own migration background and it is also directed against educators (including women here). This makes it clear that mutual understanding and tolerance must be vigorously promoted.

The child's perspective (cf. the four-pen diagram in Chapter 1.2, interview format) is hardly taken up by the professionals, most likely by the mediators. Thus, the focus is already on the interviews with the children.

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CHILD-UP WP5 local report - children's perspectives – Germany

1. Methodology

Table 7: number of interviews

Age group	Female participants	Male participants	Participants in total
ISCED0 (includes five to six year olds)	22	28	50
ISCED1 (includes seven to twelve year olds)	12	4	16
ISCED2 (includes 13 to 14 year olds)	2	1	3
ISCED3 (includes 15 to 20 year olds)	8	2	10
In total:	44	35	79

Age group	Focus group Interview	Interview	Conversations in total
ISCED0	21	2	23
ISCED1	2	12	14
ISCED2	0	3	3
ISCED3	0	10	10
In total	23	27	50

Language

The interviews were usually conducted in German. Two interviews were conducted in English. While this was not the mother tongue of the two participants, they felt very confident in the language and could speak fluently and share their thoughts. In one interview, an older sister was present as an interpreter. Since most of the interviews were conducted with students whose mother tongue is not German, the words and sentence structure are not always entirely correct. It was also attempted to maintain this language barrier in the translation. The following quotations are often not proper, but rather based on what the children said.

Matrix of analysis

For the interpretation, we used the software MAXQDA 2020. We developed the code tree based on the WP5 leader's suggested grids.

Codebaum / code tree	Häufigkeit / Frequency
Codesystem / code system	1105
Identität und Zugehörigkeit / identity and belonging	9
Sprachgebrauch / language use	23
Nationalität (Herkunft, Deutsch) / nationality (origion, German)	11
Familie / family	11
Interkulturelle Beziehungen in der Schule / intercultural realtions at school	23
Unterstützung /support	12
Freundschaft / friendship	21
Sprache / language	31
Agency / agency	77
Konflikte / conflict	40
Schule / school	1
Ideale Schule / ideal school	103
Reale Schule / real school	152
Objektive Beschreibungen / objectivs	33
Corona in der Schule / coronavirus in school	40
Isolation / isolation	3
Beziehungen & Kommunikation mit anderen Schülern / realtionship & communication with other pupils	15
Online-Schulunterricht / online schooling	26
Unterstützung beim Lernen / support for learning	47
Vorbilder in der Schule / role models in school	2
Schule und zukünftiges Leben / school and future live	21
Aspirationen / learning aspirations	49
Familiäre Unterstützung / family support	17
Lehrer- und Schulbeziehung / teacher & school relationship	103
Freundschaften und Peergemeinschaften / friendship, peers	55
Schülerbeziehungen / pupil relations	86
Gefühl zur Schule / feelings about school	47
Migrationshintergrund / migration background	15
Gender / gender	32

2. Research result School as a Lived Space

2.1 Real school / ideal school

Young children - Kindergarden

For young children in pre-school (ISCED 0) the day care center is above all a place to play, but also a place for social contacts and learning together. Children in the real day care center mainly look for the difference between quiet and active types of play. Here, the children particularly emphasize their own agency. For example, by rejecting the explicit requirement to take a nap in the day care center.

The children's ideal day care center can be divided into five different categories:

-   Variant a) is the idea of a fantasy day care center in which fairy tale characters, superheroes and fantasy creatures and objects are present.
-   Variant b) refers to the possession of more toys
-   Variant c) refers to the community and social context of the Kindergarten. In this category, the children want activities and adventures that involve the whole institution.
-   Variant d) describes a more "beautiful" nursery
-   Finally, variant e) describes a day care center where the children are allowed to determine the rules and have more agency

Despite a general feeling of well-being, some of the children's statements indicate that they would like to spend less time at the kindergarten and more time with their parents. There are also children who do not feel so comfortable in the day care centers because of bullyism.

Pupils in primary education

For older children, pupils of primary education, ratings summarily draw a quite positive picture of school related experiences and perceptions. However, reported experiences and perceptions are differentiated depending on different factors and circumstances that might influence how children feel at school, what brings satisfaction to them and what is disappointing.

In the context of the social climate, peer relations represent a favored aspect as well as an issue. Being together with peers and friends is something that almost all children like, but from time to time classmates' behavior is considered as disturbing and disappointing. Especially girls criticize "disturbing" and describe it as typical for their male classmates. In addition to these experiences in age- and gender-specific behavior and related potentials of conflict, students reported experiences in bullying. Children who are different are obviously classified as weaker and worse, whether even physical and cognitive characteristics such as illnesses, gender or weight play a role here. Moreover, migrant background was reported as a reason for bullying and other types of stressful experiences.

Having a migrant background is also something impacting children in their self-insurance and efficacy. Schools not taking into account language proficiency may cause a feeling of powerlessness for migrant children comparing themselves with other pupils performing in their native language. Because school did not take their language proficiency into account in this example

2.2 Schooling during the pandemic

Consequences for school life

Overall, there is some variability in the coronavirus measures and their impact on children. On the one hand, this depends on the survey location (e.g. Hamburg, Dresden and wider Saxony), the school and the classes

concerned. For example, in Saxony, schooling in final-year classes was prioritized and the focus was placed on main subjects such as German and math. In addition, most schools provided emergency support; for example, for children of parents with so-called system-relevant professions. Accordingly, there is also variability in how children have experienced and dealt with the consequences of the pandemic.

At an immediate level, for the children the pandemic meant that (a) they had to wear masks, including in class and during breaks, (b) break and leisure rooms were closed, (c) certain areas in the outdoor area/schoolyard were cordoned off or divided and only available for certain groups at one time, thus limiting contacts with pupils from other classes, (d) they were taught by a limited number of teachers, and (e) they were not allowed to be picked up by parents. Thus, the measures clearly intervened with children's daily routines and daily life.

Girl, 10 years old: *So we are not allowed to go outside without a mask, for example, we have to wear a mask outside as well. (...) even when we are alone, we have to wear a mask. So some children have to wear masks the whole day, in class, in the schoolyard and (...) the parents are not allowed to pick up the children anymore. Because of Corona*. (G_F24_ISCED1_FF, pos. 264)

Girl, 9 years old: *We only do some subjects and we have to, we can't talk to other classes, play with other classes, we can't have contact with them. And we always meet together at one point, there we can't have contact with other classes either. And we always have to wear masks in class when we get up and in yard break when we get in line. When we go in to school, we have to wear our masks too. (…) We can't play with others and we always, always have to wear that stupid mask.* (G_I25_ISCED1_F, pos. 27 and pos. 31)

Girl, 8 years old: *Actually we had another teacher in art, but now because of Corona we can't be with other teachers like that. So we actually do it with our class teacher*. (G_I31_ISCED1_F, pos. 29)

In some interviews, children emphasize that these restrictions are essential to their learning and development, as the following statement underlines:

Girl, 8 years old*: Because of Corona we have four hours, but I wish six hours. We have only six hours in the second class. But because of Corona, we only have four hours.* I: *And you think that's a pity?* Girl, 8 years: *Yes.* I*: What's falling away then?* Girl, 8 years*: Learning.* I: And what lessons are dropped there, or how is that done, or is it just shortened? Girl, 8 years: Yes, just shortened and one hour is/ there we can't do anything for one hour. That's French. I: And you would like to do that though? Girl, 8 years: Yes. And we can't do ethics either. (G_I34_ISCED1_F, pos. 138-146)

Moreover, since no outside people were allowed in the school and extracurricular activities were cancelled, many additional offerings that were experienced as enriching by the children were cancelled. This encompasses meetings with external experts and practitioners, but also excursions and class trips or festivities.

Girl, 9 years old: *I think Corona is quite unfair, because we had planned quite, quite, quite a lot of class excursions before Corona and there always wanted to come over, for example, a policeman, or a fireman, (…), but unfortunately they couldn't come, we couldn't do any excursions either*. (G_F24_ISCED1_FF, pos. 266)

However, some of the kids also perceive the opportunities and positive sides of the pandemic. More concretely, they report a better support key (less children who are supported by few teachers) and more space because the areas are restricted for a certain group. One girl also mentioned that for her it was easier to get in contact with her new class.

I: *And what do you think about online classes?* Girl, 17 years old*: Online classes is the best for me actually, because I don't really like talking to people like you know in school, new people, making new friends and it's really hard for me. So online is better for me, because I don't really have to talk to anyone or to make group*

work or something. I: *(…) Did you get to know some of them [other pupils] or was there any chance to connect to them somehow?* Girl, 17 years *old: Like two people texted me from my class. Like asking and checking in, but it was, I don't know, it was like I was happy,* (G_I45_ISCED3_F, pos. 28-31)

Social contacts

There was considerable variation in whether children had contact with their classmates during the pandemic and – if so – what form that contact took. For example, a substantial proportion of children reported that they did not have face-to-face contact with their class members, but that their social life was limited to their family (and a few neighborhood children).

Girl, 9 years old: *So, I just thought it was a pity that I didn't see the others anymore and that it took so terribly long and is taking so long now*. (G_I23_ISCED1_F, pos. 169)

Girl, 12 years old: *So sometimes we [siblings] play together. Alone sometimes. Sometimes, in my old street I also have a friend, we can go to the playground with her and play.* (G_F27_ISCED1/ ISCED2_FF, pos. 288)

I: *And do you have contact right now, during Corona, with classmates and friends?* Boy, 13 years old: *Um no not (…) in the first months I met with my friend, we could do something but when it got weirder, we couldn't do anything and so I was always at home.* (G_F37_ISCED2/ ISCED3_MF, pos. 52-53 and pos. 190)

The extent to which pupils compensated for this lack of personal contact with communication via phone or social media differs. While some report having met outside with friends or phoned each other, others report that they have had no contact with their classmates; for instance, because they have no mobile phone.

However, there are individual children who report that class cohesion was strengthened by coronavirus, whereby they grew together more as a class.

Girl, 10 years old: [To comply with data protection, the quote has been removed from the public report.] (G_F30_ISCED1_FF, pos. 308)

[To comply with data protection, the quote has been removed from the public report.] (G_F30_ISCED1_FF, pos. 281)

Experience of home-schooling

Due to a lack of guidelines and regulations, there was a wide variation in how schools organized home-schooling. While some schools offered online home-schooling, others only worked with home work and worksheets. At the same time, they varied in the structure and number of tasks that the pupils had to work on. The experience of home-schooling during coronavirus depended on several aspects. On the one hand, it seemed to be very important which framework conditions were given by the school, but also in the home environment. On the other hand, it was crucial how well the children were able to structure their learning and themselves. For the children, this is evidenced by the fact that some children reported that they enjoyed learning on their own and organizing themselves, while others missed the structure, experienced working independently at home as difficult and felt overwhelmed.

Boy, 11 years old: *Yes, we have now free, I also love [to have] free, but not so much, not so long. (…) I love to work in school, not at home (…) In school I practice even better. Yes, many to work. (...) At home, I love to have free time. Is a little hard now. (...) When I do homework like that, I don't have so much time to play.* (G_I28_ISCED1_M, pos. 84-90)

Girl, 18 years old: *In the beginning I was a bit happy because we didn't have school. But then it became very difficult to do all the tasks and to hand in everything. It was very stressful and I couldn't do it anymore. So I*

didn't want to continue school. But then, school started again. So we still have assignments, but thank God less than we did then. (G_I40_ISCED3_F, pos. 78-81)

Girl, 15 years old: *Well, for me it didn't change that much. I was always at home before Corona, now I am always at home. Only before Corona I went to school, now I don't go anymore. But yeah, so it's mhm, if there is no school, it's hard for us to do tasks. When there was a teacher telling us, it was better than now because we have to do the assignments now alone from internet. But in school it was better than now. And now the: so before I always thought it would be better if I was always at home, if I could do the tasks at home and now I say it would be better if I go to school. Now I'm always bored at home, I always want to go out with my girlfriend, but I can't anymore. It is very boring now. (G_F37_ISCED2 / ISCED3_MF, pos. 187-196)*

Girl, 16 years old: *So Corona. Personally, I don't think it's so bad that we work from home. In fact, I think it's very good because I can manage my time better, I'm just a person who can work better late than during the day. During the day I'm still tired and I can't work so well. I would like to do something else than school. And then I can just decide when I want to work. But still I manage to do the material that I was asked to do. But I have to say, there were difficulties with some things. I just had to, I didn't know so well about things and in other classes you can't do that so well, I think, with {online} classes, that's why I find the option with alternating classes the best. Because you also have one week just the subjects, all / the subjects still have. you can get there just the subjects first explained and then have the work assignments for the next day. Yes. I think that way the time is used more efficiently. Than in class. Yes, maybe not, you learn less at home, but still I think it's better at home, because I don't have to talk so much with other people and I can work on my own. So I prefer to work independently than in groups.* (G_I43_ISCED3_F, pos. 91)

This was especially true for newcomers who were not familiar with normal school life, those pupils who are still learning German and have insufficient language competencies, and those who recently transitioned from one school to another (e.g. from primary to secondary school).

I: *And how was your first day, your first online lesson?*

Girl, 17 years old: *Oh it was a kind of scary, because like it was a new country for me, a new school and new people. So I was a kind of scared, but it went ok. I: What happened? Did they talk to you? B: Yes, my teacher introduced me to the course and people said hi and I was like hi, you know*. (G_I45_ISCED3_F, pos. 6-9)

I: *How was it in general during Corona for you?*

Girl, 16 years old: *(…) in this Corona time, she only came to Germany a few months ago before this Corona time and therefore the school was not open and she had to stay at home. That's why she thinks my German skills not very good because she didn't go to school for so long. (…)* (G_I46_ISCED3_F, pos. 149-156)

These students emphasize their need for face-to-face interactions as well as more structured support and more easily accessible information:

Girl, 15 years old: *//No. It's like so our L2- teacher said I can ask her if I have a question but it's not like how do you say? Face to face? So you understand better when we are together but now when I have a question she writes an email and tells but I don't understand that either. So that's why when something in task I don't understand, I ask my L2- teacher, she tells but I don't understand that either. It would be better if it was oral. So in: also: the most difficult now is also history. I have to read such a book what, write something after. Small bullet points is the most difficult thing for me. I have to do bullet points, I don't know how to do that. YES but in math or the other subjects, for example math, chemistry um they are not difficult than before, they are the*

same, but the other ones where I don't understand are more difficult now. So school now is more difficult. (G_F37_ISCED2 / ISCED3_MF, pos. 187-196)

Girl, 16 years old: *Now it is Corona and I don't go to school right now and for one year I didn't go, so I don't know anything. I missed online, there was no one told me. So I didn't expected my life to turn around like this. (…) So at the first lockdown what we should do without teaching us the lessons or we didn't had videoconferences or anything like that. They just put on the school website what we should do, but without an explanation and we had to do that. But how am I supposed to do something that I never learned? And they just don't think about that. Like German students can do it, but I was also like a new student. Because mostly I was in L2- class so I didn't do a lot of regular class work. When I was in grade seven I started joining the regular classes and that changed a lot. And then I went into eight grade. For a month I went to normal classes again and couldn't understand anything and it was all really messed up. I didn't get anything, I didn't understand teachers and no one cared about it. No one asked 'are you doing ok with the work' or 'how you are feeling' or anything like that. No one asked and no one cared. So it was really hard, but at this lockdown we have a few video conferences, but still it is not enough. Because they give a lot of work, but they don't explain anything and I don't know how they expect us to do something that we never learned before.* (G_147_ISCED3_F, pos. 48-50)

Other children reported that they were bored, spending increased time on distractions such as watching television or playing video games.

Girl, 9 years old: *I didn't even need two hours [to work on my tasks], it usually took me half an hour or three quarters of an hour, and I also played a lot of games during that time and watched TV, because what are you supposed to do? When you have school, you're at school almost the whole day and when you're sitting at home in the children's room, you don't know, (…) you only really think about watching TV or something when you have a TV. And that was just the case with me, we spent a lot of time on our Nintendo*. (G_F30_ISCED1_FF, pos. 300-304)

Girl, 16 years old: *I am kind of addicted to my phone, because there is nothing else I can do. And there is also Corona so there is nothing I can do except stay at home and play with my phone and I have nothing to push me to do other stuff. I don't feel motivated enough to do anything and my phone is the only thing I do during the day. I only play with my phone and nothing else.* (G_147_ISCED3_F, pos. 49-50)

One difficulty with online home-schooling was the lack of appropriate devices or problems with connection stability.

Girl, 10 years old: [To comply with data protection, the quote has been removed from the public report.] (G_F30_ISCED1_FF, pos. 308)

Girl, 9 years old: *it's just not really fun online and I never really feel like taking part somehow. I always think to myself, oh, today is Saturday again, so I have to sit in front of the iPad for three hours. You don't really feel like it because / and if you know that today is Saturday, I can go there, then it's somehow more fun, because online, it's already been the case that the Internet was down. And then it knocked me out and then I had to go back in. That was stupid* (G_F30_ISCED1_FF, pos. 314)

I: *So you were able to study well at home? Did you have peace and quiet and the necessary utensils, for example the laptop and everything?* Girl, 16 years old*: Yes. Well, I don't have peace and quiet now because I only have two rooms and my sisters, I have two younger sisters, are also in my room and I don't really have peace and quiet now. So if I had my own room now, this option with alternating classes would be just perfect.*

(…) I just had all the stuff. I have a laptop, a printer, and that should actually be enough. (G_I43_ISCED3_F, pos. 94-95)

Finally, the experience of online schooling was strongly influenced by teachers' competencies to adapt to digital learning.

Girl, 11 years old: *I find it a bit boring. But that is probably also more difficult to make the lessons lively, because she [the teacher] has now made it in the form of video conferencing. (…) And with video conferencing you get tired quickly, I think, especially in a subject that you already know relatively well, it's a bit boring. And I think the teachers are a bit stressed because at the end of the sixth grade we have to pass the evaluation exam (…) And now, of course, because of Corona, it's not so easy to learn and that's why I think the teachers are a bit stressed. Especially in the languages, (…) we are just, well, if I were to put it that way, we are not really up to the level of being able to understand it. And that's why it's so hard now. And I think with the teacher it's important to work a lot at the beginning, otherwise we'll be standing there next year and only understand half of it. Um yes, that's a bit stupid with the video conferences, that's something different than when you see each other in real life*. (G_I36_ISCED1_F, pos. 31)

Support during the pandemic

A large proportion of the children experienced the support of teachers as helpful; for example, the possibility of clarifying questions by telephone or via email. However, there could be more opportunities to receive support.

Girl, 18 years old: *We have L2-. But it's not every week. But in every two weeks we have two hours of lessons. Our L2- teacher, she always controls, for example, if we wrote a text or if we made a presentation (…) now we couldn't because of Corona quarantine and so on. Our current L2- teacher is good. But with my L2- teacher we couldn't do any lessons at all. (…) But now, because of this alternating instruction, we have many free periods and we can, for example, now I have lessons in the third and fourth period on Monday, for example [which can be used for instructions by the L2-teacher]. (…) I think that's better.* (G_I40_ISCED3_F, pos. 67-69)

I*: Mhm, I understand, ok. And is there anyone besides the L2- teacher, maybe outside of school that you can ask for help?* Girl, 15 years old*: Well um. Outside of school, I had a friend. She's going to high school now. She's the same age now, but she's going to 11th grade in high school. She used to tell me something before, but now we have no contact. But it would be better if I had contact with her. That's all I have except my L2-teacher.* (G_F37_ISCED2ISCED3_MF, pos. 187-196)

The children seldom refer explicitly to their parents as a source of support during the pandemic, although the interviews reflect that – independent on the coronavirus situation – most pupils perceive their parents as supportive in school matters.

Some of the children reported special programs established during the pandemic to reach children with special support needs (e.g. children with immigrant backgrounds, families in social risk situations). In the following interview, a girl talked positively about the "Corona school" (she was supported by her sister who translated):

Sister*: When she (Girl, 16 years old) wants to ask something, she asks her Turkish friends and she has a German, like big sister, she goes to University and she helps with geography. From the Corona school, it is from that time, due to Corona, yes.* I*: How did you find them?* B1*: I had a zoom this morning and she just help me everything I don't know or understand and she helps with geography and name 1 [my sister] understand geography very well with her help.* I*: Nice. Where did you guys meet the student?* B1*: It's a volunteer program for this time, it's called Corona School, so we know about this program through our friends and they said yes our kids don't go to school and so there is an organization for student volunteers, female students, that helps others with school* (G_I46_ISCED3_F, pos. 136-146)

An older girl who also participated in this project criticizes it because she did not want to be seen as a project, but is looking for social exchange at eye level:

Girl, 16 years old: *//Yes, there was a social project, it's called corona school. We signed up for that because we needed extra help with school with online school. And they send: they made us like an online conference with university students becoming teachers. And I learned with two teachers. The first teacher was a twenty year old boy: a man and he only taught me for one time and then he just left. And then the second one, I am still learning with her, she is a girl. She tries to help me with physics and math, but she looks at me like I am a project. Because Corona school is a social project for university students and if they join it's like better for them. So they look at me like I am a project for them, they don't really care also if I did it or not, if I understand it or not, because I am just a project in their eyes so they just (indistinct) and leave me.* (G_147_ISCED3_F, pos. 74)

3   Intercultural relations at school

Intercultural relations in school are part of all relations in school. The following remarks thus build organically on the findings presented thus far. While they are factually inseparable, in this chapter we want to focus directly on interculturality. We will present it based on central aspects.

Intercultural relations

Children report different experiences and degrees of exclusion and bullying due to intercultural differences. At the same time, it can be seen in the interviews that children show different experiences and a very differentiated view.

First a blatant experience:

Girl, 15 years old: *So before I didn't have racism. I was Turkish and the others were also Turkish. I didn't understand, but when I came to Germany, there was so much racism and I was so shocked. How can they be like that? I am also a human being and they are also a human being, but because of my hair colour and because of my skin colour they say 'you are bad, you are stupid'.* (G_F37_ISCED2/ ISCED3_MF, pos. 206)

Language and a lack of linguistic skills can have a separating effect, but the same language can also bring people together. Visual perception – i.e. appearance (color of skin; supposed racial characteristics) –also works in both directions.

Girl, 16 years old: *Because I look different from them. I don't have blue eyes or blond hair. I have brown eyes and brown hair and my skin colour is a little bit darker and they are a lot of whiter than me. And they: they can see it from my face that I am not German. And I: I don't think it's a bad thing not to be German, because we are all from the same earth, we are all in the same planet and I don't think that we should divide into race like 'oh you are German, you are the better one. Oh you are Turkish, you are the worse on'. It's just: it doesn't seem ok to me that we do it like that.* (G_147_ISCED3_F, pos. 92)

Important: for the children interviewed, plurality is good and unproblematic!

Experienced diversity leads to many children feeling accepted and well integrated. A Turkish girl tells that she feels very connected to her classmates and enjoys being with them a lot. Besides school, she also has other friends; for example, in the Turkish community or in the neighborhood. For a friendship, she does not care if children speak the same language as her or if they have the same interests (G_F24_ISCED1_F).

Moreover, in relation to the teachers, it does not matter to the students whether a teacher has a migration background or not:

I: *Do you know where the English teacher comes from? Is she from another country or is she from Germany?* Girl, 10 years: *Comes from Germany, I think, yes.* I: *Do you know if any of the other teachers come from another country?* Girl, 10 years: *No idea.* I: *Does it matter to you or wpould you wish for?* Girl, 10 years: *Actually it doesn't matter.* I: *Okay, the main thing is that they are nice or what is important? B: Yes, nice.* (G_I33_ISCED1_F, pos. 92-101)

A Turkish girl says: *my friend (...) comes from Iran and the two others come from Germany.* I: *And is that different somehow, or does it not matter?* Girl, 9 years old: *It doesn't matter. ... There are two from my class who go to after-school care. A white girl, a boy, I don't know where he comes from and one comes from Iraq.* I: *And do you think it's good that they are so different?* Girl, 9 years old: *Yes good and we are twenty-five children.* (G_F27_ISCED1 ISCED2_FF, pos. 56-58, girl 9)

In the case of closer contact, other less obvious factors are added that cause exclusion or integration, including origin, nationality, beliefs (religion, ideologies) and habitus (culture). These intersections correspond to those of intersectionality. It is important to note that none of the characteristics must separate or exclude, nor do they always exclude. This is due to a variety of conditions, including school climate, rules, attention from classmates, teachers and parents.

Negative experiences ignited by habitus (clothing, behavior) are reported by Muslim girls who would otherwise not experience discrimination (the girl says if she changed her clothes):

I: *So may I ask why you wear the headscarf?* Girl, 17 years old: *Because in our religion so/ (...) I was (...) thinking about (...) not wearing it for a short time because I was doing very badly at school and I just wanted to [be] (...) a normal girl. (...)* I: *Are you the only one at school who wears a headscarf?* Girl, 17 years old: *My sister still wears it. And there's only one left, I think. I don't know if she's still at school, but yes. At the most there are three of us.* (G_I44_ISCED3_F, pos. 85-92)

When discrimination is mentioned, Germans and foreigners are equally involved; however, apparently girls rarely discriminate against boys, but boys discriminate against both, and girls increasingly discriminate against girls only. A Turkish boy says the following about this:

Boy, 11 years old: *There are more boys, but there are no girls, that insulted me. And they also come to Germany, there are also foreigners in there that insulted me. Yes.* (G_I32_ISCED1_M, pos. 37)

Peer networks

The peer group is the place of direct engagement with interculturality in school. This is where it is decided whether a child feels integrated or not. The degree of integration is influenced by various factors, which in turn correspond with each other.

Common interests are important to many children, whereby large circles of friends also develop. Here, gender can play a stronger role than culture; for example, in football, cycling or being creative. In such cases, it is usually not mentioned whether someone has a migration background or not.

Girl, 10 years old: *I have a best friend who comes to me very often and I also come to her very often. And we have a unicycle club. Because we ride unicycles, (...) And then everyone started riding unicycles.(..). And then we just kept riding unicycles together, kept practising and got better and better. (...) And then I have [a girlfriend]. I often play with her, often during breaks and so on. They all play football and they all ride unicycles. And she also plays football very well. And yes.(...) And then I have my friends in the neighbourhoods. (...) And they are all my friends.* (G_I33_ISCED1_F, pos. 166-173)

Agency

The children's agency or self-efficacy can be seen not only in their personal charisma but also in observable aspects such as the networking in school and peer group (as was just made clear with the unicycle club), as well as what the person does and creates in school and everyday life.

It is clear from the narratives that understanding backgrounds are an essential factor in self-efficacy:

A ten-year-old girl reports how she now better understands her own experiences of discrimination during primary school. An anti-racism programme at her new school has helped. Here, children learn to understand the context of racism and at the same time they are encouraged to take a courageous stance for understanding and intercultural cooperation. This has a lasting effect on the school climate:

Girl, 10 years old: *So in this situation I have to say quite honestly, it started from second grade. And I wasn't aware of it then, I didn't really know that it could be a racist prejudice and I thought it wasn't serious, they just wanted to annoy me.* (G_I35_ISCED1_F, pos. 41-42)

Later she continues:

Girl, 10 years: *Of course that wasn't nice [at the old school], but ... if I say [at the new school] that I have a migration background, then I know that I am accepted there because there are actually almost only people without racist prejudices there and there are almost no racists any more.* (G_I35_ISCED1_F, pos. 48)

A Turkish boy tells how he has learned and now reacts openly:

Girl, 15 years old: *There is only my class who are racists. The whole school, they are the worst. All the racists are in my class and the school is not so racist. I thought when we first came to Germany, the Germans are so bad, the Germans are so bad because of my class. But when I was with them: when I met nice Germans, I thought, oh they are not so bad, why the others, why do I have such a class. Now I like Germans. Only disrespectful people I don't like. They are not only Germans, they exist in the whole world. Now I know that, but before I didn't know that, but now I know that. They are disrespectful people. It's better if YOU say something then. When the disrespectful people come to you, it is better if you say something about it. If you don't say anything about it, it's worse. And I was like this before, I couldn't say anything, but not anymore. And now they can't say anything to me. My mother says they do what they see from their parents, so that's not their [fault]* (G_F37_ISCED2/ ISCED3_MF, pos. 211)

Hybrid integration

Integration at school is described from different sides. It is important to be accepted personally. If there is good integration in the family of origin, then the children are definitely open to the children and teachers at the school. It is often said that it is good to have more German children in the class.

Girl, 12 years old: *We are twenty-one children and they are all German.* I: *And what do you think about that? Would you like to see more children from abroad?* Girl, 12 years old: *No. (...) We are good like this now.* (G_F27_ISCED1/ ISCED2_FF, pos. 256-262)

A sixteen-year-old Iranian girl reports an interesting form of hybrid integration. It is a consequence of the family's hybrid way of life brought to the children by the teachers. The child arrived in Germany and is well integrated in the eyes of the teachers, but the parents are seen as not yet competent partners. This is often due to actual or often only suspected language deficits on the part of the parents. The daughter experiences herself in conversation with the teacher as "being like" her own parents:

So if I'm honest, they talk to me more than they talk to my parents. So for example in the LEGs [teacher-parent talks], my teacher talked more to me than to my mum. So my mum only said hello to her and then she only

talked to me. I don't know if it's because she thinks my parents don't understand German or what, but mostly my teacher only talks to me. About things that she might normally discuss with my parents. (...) And I find that a bit hm, critical?(...) So that somehow gives me the feeling that I am the parent of myself (laughs), because I am always addressed instead of my parents. That's / so otherwise it doesn't really bother me that much. It's the only thing. (G_I43_ISCED3_F, pos. 50-55)

4 Identity and belonging

People's identity is developed in their close social environment. Here, what is experienced, heard, told and felt belong closely together. As we have just shown, something like hybrid integration often happens with children from a migrant background. They are integrated into their families because there they find security, recognition and resonance for their experiences. In their families, they are included in rituals and narratives that fundamentally shape them. On the other hand, they come into contact with German cultures at school and among peers. While these considerably differ from each other (school in Hamburg and a rural school in Saxony), regardless of what this looks like in concrete terms, it challenges the children to develop personally. The extent to which this leads to a hybrid identity, the previous identity becomes largely stable and predominant or a new identity is quickly formed by assimilation must be considered in each individual case. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that it leads to personal developments in any case. Some aspects of this could be worked out in the interviews, which will now be presented.

Identity

The children feel strongly connected to their family, and they tell them about everyday life at school, but they distinguish quite precisely to whom they can and cannot say something. This is obviously strongly related to cultural expectations (e.g. about marriage topics only with the mother), or they consider whether they want to burden their parents with certain things (bullying).

Girl, 10 years: *They say that [about marriage] only to their mothers, some don't say that at all.* I*: Okay. Do you talk to your parents about everything that happens at school?* Girl, 9 years*: Yes.* Girl, 10 years*: Yes.* (G_F24_ISCED1_FF, pos. 394-399)

At the same time, peers from one's own culture of origin often exert a decisive influence on finding one's identity and on belonging.

Girl, 16 years old: *Well, I would like to add that I also get along better with people who have the same culture as me. I have a friend who I'm very close to and she's coming to visit, she's from Turkey / her parents are from Turkey and we have a lot in common in the household. So the food, for example, or the celebrations we have, the way it's traditional, so when we're at home / but there are also German students I get along with.* (G_I43_ISCED3_F, pos. 35)

Hybridity

For children with a migration background, the hybrid identity is first and foremost determined by important, concrete and different reference persons: on the one hand through parents and often more through grandparents, and on the other hand through teachers and classmates. Among younger children, the first determination/line is shown by the challenges of everyday communication with grandparents, and in the other line by the challenges of everyday communication with peers.

A hybrid identity is perceived sensitively and especially mutually by the children. For example, it can be seen there as an unresolved, dynamic state. A Turkish girl describes her friend – who probably comes from the Czech Republic – as "something in between".

I*: And your best friend?* Girl, 9 years old*: (...) she comes from the Czech Republic.(...) yes. Maybe not from the Czech Republic, I don't know exactly, she's actually also a foreigner, but also not. Because she's been [here] for five years and I don't know exactly anymore, I think she's something in between.* (G_I25_ISCED1_F, pos. 174-177)

Belonging

Belonging is closely related to identity. Belonging itself is characterized by a sense of security and self-evidence. Children find this – for example – in everyday activities in the family and familiar places:

Boy, 11 years old: *Yes, when I [am] in the big garden I have a bike and ... such a kickboard. Sometimes we go there in the big garden with my family [and] my friend's family ... make dinner. We have a table ... [And our] balcony I like ... because it's so good. We have a ... sofa on our balcony. We have a table, a green table. Where we play cards together then, our family*. (G_I32_ISCED1_M, pos. 83-87)

School is an important factor of belonging. Accordingly, security and a sense of well-being can be found at school, both of which help with integration. A Turkish boy who started school in Turkey and then came to Germany in the first grade says:

I: *And what was it like when you went to school here in Germany for the first day?* Boy, 11 years old: *I was a bit afraid of what it would be like. I didn't know how it would go.* I*: And how did it turn out?* Boy, 11 years old: *It turned out well, I always had fun. Yes.* (G_I28_ISCED1_M, pos. 201-204)

If children are not recognized at school and included in everyday communication, then it leads to exactly the opposite: school does not offer belonging and thus identity is made more difficult or prevented.

Girl, 17 years old: *So as a school, as an education or something, it's quite good. But how I feel in it is not so extreme, so good, yes. At the beginning it was even worse for me. So I felt somehow that everyone was looking at me. (...) well, is there anything, I don't feel like I belong there so.* (G_I44_ISCED3_F, pos. 4) And further: *So really the classmates were so fast and I always felt like I couldn't contribute anything good. So then group work and I always felt like such a zero person* (G_I44_ISCED3_F, pos. 32).

It is interesting that German as a second language classes [L2 classes] can offer integration, although the school as a whole is unable to do this:

I: *And how is it between you students in L2-?* Girl, 17 years old*: People, there are people like me. A lot of immigrants. And so we feel connected, because we are all immigrants in Germany and we are learning the same stuff and we are trying to learn the same language so we all understand each other. But in my normal classroom they all speak German and I am the immigrant one, so they don't understand how I feel among them.* I: *How do you communicate with the other students, with the Germans in your class?* Girl, 17 years old*: I don't. I don't speak at all.* (G_147_ISCED3_F, pos. 35 - 38)

Language

In the families, the language of origin is often spoken if both parents come from the same language area; otherwise, German is the family language, especially if only the father has migrated. In this case, the children learn the father's language like a foreign language, but with great eagerness, because they want to speak with the father's family of origin or share a language with the father.

Girl, 10 years: *So I like learning languages. It's just difficult, but I like it. And I want to learn French too. Then when I go to Africa, I can't talk to my grandma [father is from Senegal]. And I think that's stupid too, because*

I'm always standing around thinking: What is she saying? And I have no idea what I should do now. I just don't understand anything and that's stupid for me. (G_I33_ISCED1_F, pos. 130-137)

Girl, 9 years: *Yes, my father speaks Russian with me and I always go to the Russian school on Saturdays and so does my brother now (...). And there we always have Russian writing and grammar. Literature and mathematics.* (G_F30_ISCED1_FF, pos. 312-314)

Mostly German is spoken in the peer group if at least one child is present who does not belong to the same language of origin. only if everyone speaks the same mother tongue is this language of origin sometimes – but not always – spoken.

Girl, 9 years: *We always speak German. [And] I have other Turkish friends there who also live very close to us (...) Well, I speak German if they don't address me for conversation [in Turkish]* I: *And what's about you? When you speak [alone with a Turkish friend], do you speak German or Turkish?* Girl, 10 years: *Turkish.* (G_F24_ISCED1_FF, pos. 302-316)

The peer group is also the place where children learn colloquial and special languages. Peers are thus a central complement to school as a place of learning.

Girl, 16 years old: *I remember that I didn't know many words, many words that are not used at school. On the way to the place where we were going, on a class trip, I talked to a friend and she taught me words that are more part of a girl's everyday life, for example, pimples, pores or something. So I was taught something like that (laughs) by the pupils.* (G_I43_ISCED3_F, pos. 23)

At school, language behavior is sometimes regulated, whereby the aim is to improve German skills and ensure that no one is excluded from common communication:

I: *Do you speak German throughout the school?* Girl, 8 years old: *Yes. (...) We shouldn't speak anything but German because the others don't understand.* I: *And in which language do you speak when you talk to each other?* Girl, 9 years: *German.* I: *Do you speak German in the entire school?* Girl, 8 years: *Yes. (...)* I: *And do you think it's good to do it that way?(...)* Girl. 8 years: *Yes.* (G_I34_ISCED1_F, pos. 41-58)

One Turkish boy even thinks that it is good if there are more German children in the class, because then German is spoken more and better:

Boy, 11 years old: *No, I always wanted there to be more Germans. (...) Well, I don't know, it's better for me. (...) I speak even more with Germans. With foreigners I don't speak so much. (...) Even in my free time. With Germans I speak German, with foreigners not so much* (G_I28_ISCED1_M, pos. 76-82)

Transnationality

Language and belonging are also thought of globally. Children also learn languages to keep in touch with their friends or prepare for their future. There are apparently no limits to this, neither linguistically nor nationally.

To keep in touch with friends a nine year old girl says: *and she [the friend] has now gone to Japan, (...) Then I am sad, so now I want to learn Japanese. Because then I can talk to her.* (G_F27_ISCED1 ISCED2_FF, pos. 306)

And as part of life planning a 17 year old girl tells: *I want to learn Korean because I love their languages and their culture. (...) maybe I can live there or I can come back. It is nothing fixed right now.* (G_I45_ISCED3_F: 76-81)

Finally, it is said that a lack of language ability prevents belonging, especially when children are not very self-confident:

Girl, 18 years old: *So I usually can't make so much connection with native speakers because I don't feel so comfortable when I/ so, that I make a mistake or, I don't know, I understand sometimes quite not so/ little so completely. And that's why, or, I don't know, my speaking or my speeches might sound a bit boring to them and that's why I don't want to speak so much with native speakers.* (G_I40_ISCED3_F, pos. 65)

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Summary of all results

A total of 79 participants between the ages of 5 and 20 took part in the interviews. It should be emphasized that the majority of the pupils interviewed were children who were themselves born in another country and migrated to Germany. Based on the analysis of the interviews, the following conclusions can be made. The focus is placed on the topics of German as a teaching language, the assessment of teachers from the children's perspective, school as a social space and (not) experiencing opportunities of participation.

German as a teaching language

The interviews with the children emphasized how strongly education in school is tied to language, and thus also they confirm the view of the professionals, who endorsed the need to find alternative approaches and methods to support the togetherness and participation of children with a migrant background. For example, some of the children interviewed reported that they found it difficult to follow what was going on in class and keep up. On the one hand, this is the case when teachers choose frontal teaching and less activating methods, but it can also play a role in group discussions between the children; for example, when the children feel that they cannot contribute due to their lack of language skills. This is also tied to the usage of technical language – which is required in various subjects – which the children often still lack, and which is not promoted in L2 lessons to the extent that would be necessary, as some children complained. The children are very motivated and they want to take part and participate, but they are virtually slowed down by their lack of language skills and the large extent of language-boundness.

In this context, the extent to which language-boundness affects learning and inclusiveness strongly depends on the teachers and their support. There are differences here in how actively teachers approach children, offer their support and help, but children acknowledge teachers who seek an active dialogue with them, ensure that they have understood and are able to follow their lessons. A special role is played by the L2 lessons, which are intended to help the children to learn the language and integrate into regular classes as quickly as possible. This is ambivalent because children experience the L2 classes as a protective space in which they can learn German and receive support, but on the other hand they cannot participate in subjects such as biology, math or chemistry. Accordingly, the children understand very well how important it is to learn German quickly and participate and exchange in particular classes. The motivation of the children should be seen as a potential, which must be used much more by the institution school and the teachers.

Moreover, for the more informal relationships with peers and friendships between the children, language skills seem to play a greater role with increasing age, at least from the perspective of the children with a migration background. Some of these report that they are quieter in classes and engage less in exchanges, especially with native speakers. Sometimes friendships of children with a migration background who share the lack of language tend to form. On the other hand, it is evident that children find a common language. For example, they talk to each other in German when children with and without a migration background exchange information. Additionally, they have a considerable influence on language acquisition; for example,

by acting as translators, summarizing and communicating tasks in class, or teaching each other everyday terms and language.

Teacher assessment from the children's perspective

In summary, it can be seen that both the pupils and pre-school children rate the role of the teachers as important. Teachers have a significant influence on how children experience everyday life in school or day care. They play an important role especially for children with a migration background, because they might need special attention or support to a certain extent. Children with a migration background do not demand special treatment from teachers. However, they want sensitivity to possible language barriers and comprehension problems. It is interesting to note that all age groups (ISCED0 to ISCED3) indicate that they want teachers to be reliable, approachable and assertive. With the support of responsive teachers, children's self-confidence can increase. It can also help to create trust and motivation for learning and contact with other peers. Children want teachers to be welcoming, supportive and a moral, impartial authority.

School as a social space

Institutional educational contexts are important social spaces, especially for children and young people with a migration background, as they can offer them security and opportunities for social contact and social learning. This applies to both schools and day care centers. From the perspective of children with a migration background, day care centers as well as schools offer the opportunity to get together with peers and make friends. Students also emphasize the importance of school as a linguistic and cultural learning environment and in this context they usually highlight the positive learning climate in schools. Nevertheless, individual students report experiences of aggressive behavior, bullying and racism, which have a decidedly negative impact on their self-perception and their perception of school. Teachers in particular have the responsibility to notice and intervene in such behavior, whereby in the interviews it became clear that the affected students need and hope for the support of teachers, but do not always receive it. Therefore, there is a need for structural changes and further training of teachers. In general, the design of school as a social and thus inclusive space must be taken into account, as important bridges to social integration and social participation are created within this framework (Sime & Fox 2015).

(Not) Experiencing opportunities of participation

Participation plays an important role for the children interviewed in all pedagogical contexts, day care centers, schools and after-school care. The children perceive the given opportunities very precisely and use them just as much as they criticize them and formulate ideas for improving participation opportunities. According to this, participation is described as limited in two ways, especially in school contexts. On the one hand, its content is limited to topics that do not significantly affect the core of the school order, i.e. it refers to the organization of lessons, seating arrangements, etc., or those that are defined by adults. On the other hand, institutional forms of participation in school dominate, although these are also judged critically in terms of their effects. Nevertheless, students also describe examples of successful participation, i.e. participation that is perceived as substantial. Here, the attitude and personality of the teachers obviously play a key role. The results show that participation holds strong importance in educational institutions and that it should be systematically enabled and promoted. In this respect, teachers have a central position as they are the ones who can provide corresponding experiences or create the necessary framework conditions for children's substantial participation. This not only concerns forms and topics of participation, but also the conditions of

successful participation; for example, concerning the linguistic competences of children with a migrant background (see also 5.3).

5.2 Summary of the situation of migrant children in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic

Overall, the picture of the impact and coping with the coronavirus pandemic among the children is quite diverse. In general, the majority of children experienced restrictions on their own daily lives. In particular, wearing masks in and out of class, contact restrictions, and a reduction in classes (e.g. number of subjects, amount of learning) were perceived as major challenges. In addition, most pupils were disappointed about cancelled field trips and school excursions, which are otherwise a considerable part of social school life. Despite the negative consequences of the pandemic predominate, there are nevertheless also children who report positive consequences; for instance, on social cohesion within the class.

Overall, successful coping with the pandemic is highly dependent on the extent to which schools manage to provide a structure for learning and appropriate support from teachers, or whether children are able to structure themselves and build up a support network. This is evident – for example – in the amount of self-study material that needs to be offered in line with pupils' competencies to avoid being too overwhelming or underwhelming. Many students reported that they were able to draw on the support of teachers and parents in coping with the pandemic, although there were also differences between students and teachers in this regard. In isolated cases, reference was made to special support programs such as the "Corona school", albeit which were experienced as ambivalent.

For newcomers in particular, the pandemic posed a challenge. They emphasized their need for face-to-face interactions and personal exchange; for example, in the context of L2 classes. Finally, the experience of online schooling strongly depended on whether access to appropriate devices was available or not, and how competent teachers were in adapting to the new digital format.

5.3 Theoretical implications and reflections arising from the research

The empirical results of the qualitative study with children as well as the study with professionals emphasize that the representation of children's agency very strongly corresponds with the social and institutional conditions in kindergarten and school. In this regard, the findings on the possibilities and limits of children's participation hold particular interest. According to Baraldi and Iervese, agency can be understood as "a specific form of active participation [by children] that promotes unpredictable social change and thus shows children's abilities as possibilities for achieving functionalities, i.e. for achieving ways of acting" (Baraldi/Iervese 2015). Participation conceptualized in this way means showing "agency [which] means showing the capacity of choices of action to open up different possibilities of action, so that a particular course of action is one among different possibilities" (Baraldi 2014: 73). This highlights children's participation as a serious possibility to influence and change social situations and the social conditions of their lives.

If agency shows in active participation and active participation in turn means having a choice and thus having a substantial influence on communication, activities and circumstances in educational contexts as in school, children's participation according to their reports and their evaluations is quite limited. In their descriptions, it became clear that the given possibilities of participation were often not only limited to institutionalized forms. Moreover, regarding those formal possibilities and other forms of participation in daily life in school, the results show that children's participation was usually limited to the choice between options given by adults. Sometimes it was reported that the adults ignored the voice of the children, even in the contexts that are explicitly foreseen for their participation. The older children in particular are very critical of the possibilities and limits of participation, especially regarding formalized practices, and they attest that the

school has in some ways fallen out of time. They are also cautious – if not skeptical – about the prospects for a substantial improvement of participation opportunities for children in schools.

However, the results from the qualitative study with educational professionals highlighted that teachers report being aware of participating children and trying to enhance opportunities for children's participation. Against this background, it is the question of which understandings children and teachers and educators refer to when they speak about participation. In this context, the results seem to highlight two aspects. First, it becomes apparent that contexts and objects of participation are understood and interpreted differently by children and professionals. When in an interview a teacher emphasizes that she could not imagine presenting and defining rules in front of a class – i.e. without an exchange with the pupils – then in a certain way the object, framework and scope of exchange and participation are defined.

I would never stand in front of a class and say, 'now you have the rules here, and this/ this is how it works for me.' That is always negotiated together. And those are the things, right? Where I say, this negotiation, this communication with each other, rules of conversation. (G_T6_F, pos. 145)

However, it is not clear to what extent the children associate this with a form of participation and interpret and accept the teacher's "offer" accordingly. Second, this points to the fact that participation and thus agency in a fundamental sense are obviously defined specifically from different perspectives. The differences in this regard should be investigated in depth, because it cannot be assumed that one of the sides involved has – as it were – made false statements. Rather, it must be a matter of identifying the differences, analyzing them regarding their conditions of causation and thus making them a starting point for constructive reflection and change.

Finally, regarding the participation of children at school, structural factors become visible that exist to a certain extent beyond formalized participation opportunities and they can limit – if not prevent – the effective participation of children. For children with a migration background, language barriers are the main obstacle to be mentioned in this regard. Especially in formalized practices, effective participation is linked to linguistic competences that children with migration experiences sometimes do not yet have. Similar difficulties occur regarding their participation – for instance – regarding group work during lessons or peer relations at school. The pedagogical problem of children's participation is thus twofold, in that the necessary linguistic preconditions must first be created in the children concerned, which the school as an institution also presupposes in its pupils. It is true that individual teachers in the interviews address the need to actively and consciously involve children and families with a migration background in the existing opportunities for participation. On the other hand, findings on the language-bound nature of purely classroom-based participation suggest that no pronounced sensitivity can be assumed at this point. In this respect, the results on participation point in two directions: on the one hand, the need for a closer examination and thus possibly irritation of different perspectives on participation among children and professionals; and on the other hand, it is important to develop a migration-sensitive perspective that – with a view to participation, agency and thus integration – opens up possibilities to actively involve children with a migration background in school based on their competences. This in turn would mean not only actively involving these children in the social life of the school but also adjusting social life towards these children in the sense of a necessarily institutional practice. Regarding Baraldi, this would lead to a change of social conditions by migrant children, which is first induced by a conscious dealing with their needs and potentials, and second emphasizing particular opportunities of their participation on an aware institutional basis.

5.4 Recommendations arising from the interviews with children regarding their functioning in the school environment

In general, it can be said that integration possibilities at the institutions surveyed are generally good, but that there is also a clear need for action in some aspects. This refers to real participation, the ability to regulate conflicts at schools and the expansion of parental work. Here, some concrete suggestions are outlined, which were obtained either directly from the interview material (i.e. they can all be found in the report) or through interpretation. In the latter case, this was done in comparison with the interviews with the professionals, as well as in the reflection of the results with theoretical implications.

Interesting suggestions for improving participation and taking personal responsibility include:

- Weekly role reversal (teacher - pupil) so that both (!) see the difficulties of the other side.

- Continuously shaping the quality of the relationship by acting in a lively way that also allows for conflicts, but always developing new commonalities through joint action and play. This applies to peers as well as teachers.

- School must be lively, creative and people-oriented.

- Racism must be recognized (see, understand, act) and civil courage (also for climate protection) must be promoted (school, teachers, all pupils).

Concrete proposals:

- Re-address the language-bound nature of the subjects.

- Train teachers in how to deal with bullying.

- English as a third language or more use of language mediators.

- Promote friendships between children with and without MGH.

- Strengthening identity, regardless of language skills.

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