We are nowhere.

The situation of Roma children and youth from Ukraine in the light of community-based participatory research

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF EXPERIENCE IN WAR
AND PEACE THROUGH THE LENS OF COUNTER-NARRATIVE AND SENSITIVE
CONTEXTS

REPORT

Edited by

Urszula Markowska-Manista, Małgorzata Kołaczek, Joanna Talewicz

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Authors of the report:

Urszula Markowska-Manista, Małgorzata Kołaczek, Joanna Talewicz, Nektaria Palaiologou, Eleni Samsari, Georgios Nikolaou

Cover illustration

Alicja Olejniczak, 2023, *Home*. The artwork was displayed on the wall next to the room where the research was conducted. It was admired by the research participants and their legal guardians at the centre in Nadarzyn

Place is always significant.

For everything has its place.

Somewhere events unfold, somewhere meanings arise,

through which we understand reality,

and within it, we understand ourselves, with a more or less clear,

but always present sense of connection with the place.

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(Maria Mendel 2006, p. 21)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our special thanks go to the children and adolescents and their families from Ukrainian Roma communities residing in Poland, for trusting us, taking their time and sharing their voices (verbally and in the form of artwork) with us as part of a study initiated by the Foundation Towards Dialogue.

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Sincere thanks also to all those who supported our project. We would especially like to thank the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the German Federal Foreign Office for their financial support of this initiative. We are glad that the need to conduct participatory research with Roma children has been recognised and believe that it is the first, and certainly not the the last study of this kind in Poland. We would also like to thank all those people who will read our report, explore the research findings and talk about them in their communities, initiate discussion, polemicise, continue the research effort, publicise and advocate. Your role cannot be overestimated, because together we can change the reality of children and adults from Roma communities.

We hope that you will find this publication not only interesting but also useful for future practical activities and research with refugee children and youth.
We invite you to read and reflect on our report.

<div align="right">Urszula Markowska-Manista, Małgorzata Kołaczek, Joanna Talewicz</div>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report consists of several key elements - pieces of a jigsaw puzzle shedding light on the context of the study on the Roma from Ukraine in Poland, as well as a description of the study and the research findings, which consist of narratives, opinions and perspectives of Roma children and youth from Ukraine as war refugees residing in and around Warsaw, and the narratives of those working with them in a variety of initiatives.

In the report, we present key aspects of the situation of Roma children from Ukraine who, at the time of the research, resided in Warsaw and at the PTAK EXPO Humanitarian Aid Centre in Nadarzyn. We share conclusions from the qualitative research conducted with this group through a participatory approach. The study aimed to explore and understand the challenges and dilemmas of living in a new place faced by Roma minority Ukrainian refugee children and adolescents, as well as their perceptions and perspectives on the daily life around them, their dreams and opportunities to improve their well-being. We explored these subjects through the lens of context, narratives as well as children's and adolescents' artwork. The study was conducted between May and October 2023 in two locations: Warsaw and Nadarzyn.

The report also identifies the needs of Roma children in their new places of residence in Poland. The data collected by the researchers as well as information from the literature review and analysis of relevant sources (legislation, NGO reports, media resources) provide a comprehensive view of the situation and challenges facing Roma children and, more broadly, the Roma community from Ukraine in Poland.

The study highlighted several closely correlated themes: memory; longing for a familiar place - home and all that is familiar; a sense of being "in-between" – between the known and unknown (and so - still uncertain) and being in a process in which they experience categorization and division; the need for support in education in new places of residence and to foster integration through and for education, support for the mental health and psychosocial well-being of adults who take care of children (mainly mothers, grandmothers and cousins) - refugees from Ukraine, and their integration into Polish society in the so-called sensitive context of war.

Despite the unprecedented solidarity with refugees from Ukraine and legislation treating Ukrainians as "different (better) category" refugees compared to those from other countries and continents, the situation of Roma as refugees from Ukraine has often left much to be desired.

While the 2022 and 2023 solidarity of civil society in Poland with Ukrainians (Digidiki et al. 2024) who arrived as war refugees was unique, solidarity with Ukrainian Roma as refugees fleeing war proved limited, patchy and fragmented. This study calls attention to this sensitive context and the vulnerability of the group as well as the response that the Foundation has given through its work for and with the Roma from Ukraine to fill this gap in support.

The report concludes with recommendations that can help the adult community, aid organisations and educators to understand the situation of children and youth from the Roma - refugee community in the host society.

ABOUT THE FOUNDATION

Since 2012, the Foundation Towards Dialogue has engaged in anti-discrimination, research and advocacy projects as an expert organisation created with and for the Roma community in Poland. The Foundation conducts workshops for, inter alia, journalists, local government officials, representatives of cultural and educational institutions, teachers and the police. It pursues its educational activities through, inter alia, lectures, publications, reports and patronage. The Foundation also carries out long-term advocacy and research activities.

Since 2022, the Foundation has been active on behalf of Roma people fleeing from Ukraine, including in Warsaw, Przemyśl and Nadarzyn. In July 2022, in response to the need to provide special support to the Roma community fleeing war and experiencing discrimination (as assistance offered to refugees), the Foundation opened a Roma Community Centre in Warsaw. The Foundation's team provides educational, legal, psychological, assistance and intervention as well as self-empowerment support.

In September 2022, the Foundation collaborated on a report on the research and intervention activities of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, "Human rights, needs and discrimination. The situation of Roma refugees from Ukraine in Poland". Almost a year later, in July 2023, the Foundation published another report – "They are not refugees, they are travellers. The situation of Roma refugees in the Podkarpackie Voivodeship. Monitoring report 2022-2023" with financial support from Humanity Now.

This year, 2024, we are sharing with you this report.

INSTEAD OF AN INTRODUCTION

Małgorzata Kołaczek

Foundation Towards Dialogue, Jagiellonian University

malgorzata@fundacjawstronedialogu.pl

Joanna Talewicz

Foundation Towards Dialogue

joanna@fundacjawstronedialogu.pl

Having worked for many years with Roma communities in various Polish cities, and observing the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border, we predicted that Roma refugees from Ukraine would probably need additional support due to the high level of discrimination against the Roma in Poland, as well as expectations on the part of the mainstream society that the small Roma community in Poland (20,000-30,000) would provide for the Roma from Ukraine. Our predictions unfortunately proved to be true. This is why, together with fellow activists Paulina Piórkowska and Agnieszka Caban, we initiated an informal support group for Roma refugees - Poland-Roma-Ukraine. We did that already within the first days of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Roma communities in Ukraine are numerous and diverse - it is estimated that before the war there were around 400,000 Roma living there (although this is probably an underestimate), representing fifteen Roma groups. Between the start of the invasion and the beginning of April 2022, around 100,000 Ukrainian Roma had fled the war, as reported by the European Commission Vice-President Věra Jourova, Helena Dalla, European Commissioner for Equality, and Olivér Várhelya, Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement. Today, we are unable to determine precisely how many refugees of Ukrainian Roma origin are in Poland. By mid-2023, it was estimated that the number could be as high as 50,000-70,000. The majority of this group are children and their female caregivers - grandmothers, mothers and daughters whose husbands, sons and other relatives stayed in Ukraine to fight for their homeland. However, based on our experience so far, Roma children and women are at risk of multiple discrimination and face discrimination wherever they go, and unless they are provided

with comprehensive support, they will be at risk of social exclusion. Unfortunately, Roma women and their children are by no means a group that has received an eager welcome at any reception site, while the level of social acceptance for supporting them was and continues to be far lower than for non-Roma Ukrainian citizens fleeing the war. This often translates into difficult access to support in four key areas of both social life and integration for refugees and migrants - health care, housing, labour market and education.

It is this last area that has been the main focus of activities of the Foundation Towards Dialogue since 2012. From the beginning, our motto has been to initiate social change through education and to provide reliable knowledge and effective tools to build greater understanding between the mainstream society and minority communities, with a particular focus on the Roma. Promoting inclusive and anti-discriminatory attitudes has been an integral part of this mission. This has been particularly important for us, as the presence of minorities in the educational context in Poland has, in our opinion, been overlooked and ignored for decades. The problem does not lie in legislation, which is not discriminatory, but in the reality in which shaping attitudes and building mutual relationships in a diverse environment should be one of the key aspects of education. It is clearly absent. After all, we cannot deny that the Roma, who have lived in our country for centuries, are one of the minority groups in Poland that continues to arouse negative emotions. The stereotype that people belonging to the Roma minority have an almost innate aversion to education is one of the most damaging. Unfortunately, to this day, such opinions can still be heard in the public space. The consequences are painful, as they lead to marginalisation and exclusion. The low level of education of the Roma is blamed on the Roma themselves, while the circumstances that led to this situation are ignored.

It seems that now, after 24 February 2022, efforts to counter these stereotypes and promote inclusive activities for minority groups, including migrants and refugees, have become essential at every level of education - both informal and formal. However, while third sector organisations have long addressed this issue in their activities, the same unfortunately still cannot be said for formal education. In the 2011 report of the Anti-Discrimination Education Society "The Great Absentee. Anti-discrimination education in the formal education system in Poland", attention was drawn to the need to analyse the content of textbooks from the point of view of equal treatment and counteracting discrimination based on gender, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, political views, age, sexual orientation, marital and family status. Aspects of the teacher education and in-service training system as well as the system of

education for children and young people were also examined in terms of the extent to which both systems equip adults working within it and those for whom education is an obligation under Polish law with competence in anti-discrimination education. Unfortunately, the research findings show that the formal education system carries a lot of stereotypical and exclusionary content concerning minority groups (pp.5-9). This does not sound optimistic for at least two reasons. Firstly, since the publication of the research report in 2011 until today (2024), little has changed in this regard despite the urgent need for this change. Secondly, Poland has been home to minorities for centuries. What is more, there are currently nationals from Ukraine living in our country - refugees who were forced to leave their homeland - as well as migrants from various countries, including Romanian Roma. Their children attend Polish schools and, if only in this context, one can hardly agree with the oft-repeated cliché that we do not need this type of education. The presence of people from Ukraine is certainly a challenge for teachers, but also for these children and young people. It is not so much their presence that is the problem, but rather the non- inclusive Polish education system, which fails to meet today's challenges. This does not change the fact that many people teaching in schools enhance their knowledge and competences related to intercultural competences and counteracting discrimination. They do this at their own initiative, since Poland does not have a programme that prepares teaching staff for working in a diverse environment. It has been said for years that there is a shortage of staff with glottodidactic training, that teachers try to broaden their knowledge on their own by attending workshops organised by NGOs. For these people, these are not niche topics, since they are the ones who face the challenges mentioned above and the responsibility for what happens in schools rests on their shoulders. And a lot is happening. Tensions are rife, and foreign pupils are often accompanied by a sense of confusion and hopelessness. It is therefore difficult to accept arguments continuing to be heard that intercultural competences are not crucial in our country. One may wonder what reasoning lies behind such opinions and decisions. Yes, we are not an immigrant country like Canada or the USA. And yes, Polish diversity can hardly be compared with that in France or the UK. Moreover, after decades of communism, we needed time to acclimatise to the reality of open borders. Nevertheless, one cannot escape the impression that we have overlooked a great deal. Poland has become not only a stopover, but also a home for many immigrants. It is thus unjustified to see Poland as an ethnically homogeneous or transit country. Particularly today, when children and adolescents from Ukraine, including Roma children, are attending Polish schools. The circumstances and context

are tragic, yet paradoxically, precisely this current situation may force changes in the Polish education system, which will also benefit other minority groups. We cannot forget the children who, as a result of this conflict, remain, as it were, between systems, living in Poland and declaring online learning in Ukrainian schools or being completely outside the education system - either since forever or since their arrival in Poland. They are either in between or precisely nowhere. It is difficult to identify their needs, their dreams, their situation, as the system, and so primarily school in the case of children, has no regular contact with them. This is why, in founding the Roma Community Centre in July 2022, we were greatly motivated to reach out to Roma children from Ukraine who are outside the system. Many of them have been helped by the Foundation's staff to enrol in school in Poland, despite many challenges from the system and sometimes also from their parents. To this day, we are able to support these children, who had a very limited school experience in Ukraine and have now chosen online education, with Polish language lessons and tutoring in various subjects. The aims is to prepare them for participation in the Polish education system if their families stay in our country. Finally, precisely these children were an important group of participants in the participatory research discussed in this publication, which was coordinated by Dr Urszula Markowska-Manista and implemented with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the German Federal Foreign Office. We wanted to ensure that their voices and expression of needs (verbal and non-verbal), as documented by the researchers from Roma communities, are included in the debate currently gaining momentum regarding changes in the education system. These are changes towards a more effective inclusion of migrant, refugee and minority students as well as developing new solutions or adapting existing ones. The children talked about their memories from Ukraine, their experiences in Poland, drew their dream houses, cooperated, and sang. They voiced the difficult experiences of their mothers, grandmothers and aunts caring for them. They shared their dreams. They helped each other. Some of these children are becoming better integrated into the environment in Poland. Some of these children are no longer in Warsaw, they are not in Poland. They have returned with their families to Ukraine, or left for another country. With the closure of the PTAK EXPO Humanitarian Aid Centre in Nadarzyn, some have been placed in private centres in smaller towns and villages. These are usually people from the most excluded communities in Ukraine, from the most deprived backgrounds, with a very difficult socio-economic situation. Frequently, non-formal education is their only contact with the process of acquiring knowledge and competences. Sometimes there is no place for

them in Polish educational facilities. Sometimes Polish parents do not want Roma pupils from Ukraine in the same class as their children. Sometimes Roma parents are also reluctant or afraid to send their children there, either because they themselves have not had much educational experience or because they have heard from other Roma parents that their children have faced discrimination at school. Both compulsory schooling and the right to education are important foundations for the functioning of the education system in many democratic countries, including Poland. As of September 2024, refugee children from Ukraine, including Roma children, are to be included in compulsory education, as announced by the Ministry of National Education. Details of the systemic solutions preparing the Polish system for this change will most likely be known in June 2024. We will actively work to ensure that both the children's opinions shared with us and presented in this report are taken into account when considering these solutions. We also encourage a broader view, both in terms of using the experience of inclusive intercultural education - described in this report on the example of working with refugees in Greece - as well as interclusion and participatory method as useful tools for including both the voices of children and parents from minority communities, including migrants and refugees. Let us ensure that the representatives of these groups - both children and adults - have the space to express their opinions, the opportunity to influence the proposed solutions, and to have agency. This is what the Foundation Towards Dialogue is striving to do, to the best of our ability, and this publication exemplifies our efforts. There are more initiatives of this kind, but their results and effects must become a point of reference in the discussion on the future and shape of Polish schools, Polish society, Polish multiculturalism and interculturalism. Let us decide and take responsibility together.

Inclusive intercultural education policies for refugee children: The importance of transformative learning

Eleni P. Samsari [1]; Nektaria Palaiologou [2]; Georgios Nikolaou [3]

[1] *PhD, University of Patras, Greece*; samsari.eleni@ac.eap.gr

[2] *Professor, Hellenic Open University, Greece*; nekpalaiologou@eap.gr

[3] *Professor, University of Patras, Greece*; gnikolaou@upatras.gr

Abstract

The worldwide increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers was considered to be the most serious migratory challenge since the end of the Second World War calling the host countries for addressing urgently the refugees' needs including the education of children. The role of the educational environment is crucial to the successful adaptation of refugee children and adolescents in the host country who are usually overwhelmed by their past experiences and the rising difficulties during their new resettlement. The current education policies for refugee students have a great impact on their cognitive, emotional, and social development as well as on their social inclusion The current study aims to shed light on the emerging necessity to adopt a more inclusive intercultural perspective on education policies for refugee children.

Inclusive intercultural education: The promises of a new transformative approach

In light of the prejudice and xenophobia against refugees prevailing in the European context and the rise of discriminatory behavior towards them reflecting the nationalist ideology, it is of great importance to promote education practices that are both inclusive and intercultural as a key priority to cultivate humanitarian values and social justice (Leeman & van Kooven, 2019). Notwithstanding that schools have never been homogeneous, nowadays educators struggle even more to develop strategies and techniques for working with diverse students in multicultural settings (Cárdenas-Rodríguez & Terrón-Caro, 2021). The increasing cultural diversity in both

the society and the school context creates educational needs, which intercultural education attempts to answer (Nikolaou & Spinthourakis, 2004).

The necessity to rethink the relationship between education and a multicultural society gave rise to intercultural education. *Intercultural education* offers the knowledge to understand and manage various and multifaceted issues that arise in socially and culturally diverse learning environments (Markowska-Manista & Palaiologou, 2022). The term "intercultural" is used to define a positive and dynamic process of contact among various cultural groups in society and as a result, the ultimate goal of *intercultural education* is not limited to the passive coexistence among different cultural groups but it concerns the peaceful and harmonious interaction in a pluralistic society (Catarci, 2016; Markowska-Manista & Palaiologou, 2022). However, the ongoing societal changes present an important challenge for intercultural education which is to confront the current educational inequalities (Gundara, 2012). Moreover, the national intercultural education policies should also take into account the international socio-cultural and economic factors in the context of globalization (Palaiologou & Dietz, 2012; Samsari, Palaiologou, & Nikolaou, 2022). Consequently, the concept needs to be re-examined and re-conceived concerning its dimensions in terms of the modern societies' features which set inclusion as a priority in all fields of social life i.e. access to healthcare, education, employment, mental health services, housing, etc (Markowska-Manista & Palaiologou, 2022).

Inclusive education is regarded today as the most powerful educational approach that aims to ensure equitable quality education for all. It has emerged as a new model since the 1990s for approaching diversity within the school context compared to other diversity management models such as assimilation and integration. Its basic assumption is that the education system has to be transformed with a prime concern to provide suitable learning opportunities for every child (Cárdenas-Rodríguez & Terrón-Caro, 2021). In other words, it embraces the idea that all students -regardless of their diversity features, their educational needs, and their difficulties-should attend the mainstream classroom and be provided with educational support and differentiated instruction.

For many years, the conceptual definition of the term "inclusive education" across Europe was limited mainly to students with disability and/or special educational needs (Bešić, 2020; Samsari, Nikolaou, & Palaiologou, 2021) ignoring other forms of diversity that were also present within mainstream schools i.e. different cultural, ethnic, racial or religious background, migrant process, different color, socioeconomic status, different mother language. Although

scholars and practitioners still argue nowadays about the definitions, the interpretation, and the dimensions of inclusion as well as about the policies that are applied among countries (Magnússon, 2019), an inclusive school environment reflects a common goal towards a more just, equal and pluralistic society through the recognition of all forms of diversity including cultural differences (Harðardóttir, Magnúsdóttir, & Dillabough, 2021). Compared to integration, diversity is not only regarded as positive and accepted but the interaction among students with diversity features is also motivated in inclusive education (Cárdenas-Rodríguez & Terrón-Caro, 2021). The interaction effect of seeing, meeting, and discussing with people from a different cultural background such as refugees seems to have a great effect on positive attitude development toward this minority group (Nikolaou & Samsari, 2020). Students belonging to various minority groups not only attend, but they participate actively in the educational process along with students from the majority group.

Inclusive intercultural education is a new approach aiming to design and implement transformative intercultural policies which foster inclusive practices in mainstream schools and create positive intercultural relations cultivating cross-cultural understanding not only in the school environment but expanding it into larger society (Elias & Mansouri, 2023). It focuses on accepting and welcoming cultural diversity in mainstream schools as well as on achieving an equilibrium between homogeneity and differences (Leeman & van Kooven, 2019). Furthermore, it adopts an intersectionality perspective which is concerned with how multiple factors such as socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, cultural, and religious disparities interact resulting in various discriminatory actions towards different student groups within the school context (Bešić, 2020; Leeman & Reid, 2006). In other words, it addresses issues of 'super-diversity' highlighting a critical intercultural discourse that moves beyond acknowledging differences into the development of transformative knowledge and greater participation (Elias & Mansouri, 2023; Palaiologou & Karanikola, 2021). Education policies in which students are only labeled by a unique identity feature cannot recognize the issues of intersectionality and as a result, students' diverse needs are not met and the educational and social inequalities are perpetuated as well (Bešić, 2020). Based on the principles of inclusive intercultural education, the intercultural model is regarded as the best diversity management model (Cárdenas-Rodríguez & Terrón-Caro, 2021).

The importance of implementing inclusive intercultural policies for refugee children

The literature on migration and education has recently adopted the relatively new concept of inclusive education (de Wal Pastoor, 2023). Inclusion in a mainstream school is a fundamental right for all children and adolescents. As refugee status is just another form of diversity, young refugees also deserve to attend an inclusive educational setting in the host country where social justice prevails and a sense of belonging is built among the school community members. Developing inclusive intercultural policies for refugee children means that refugee arrival is regarded not only as a challenge but also as a major opportunity for the education system across European countries (Dovigo, 2018).

Since the beginning of the refugee influx, refugee youth and adolescents as well as their parents have voiced a strong desire to continue learning as their top priority, often in the context of contributing to cultural understanding, engagement and integration, employment, and overall well-being (Jalbout, 2020). However, the recent mainstream migrant integration policy and practices have not focused on immigrant and refugee children as a group requiring specific support to achieve a successful school and social adaptation (Ali & Gidley, 2014). Although mainstreaming has been mainly related to diversity forms such as gender and disability, this concept is also used in the field of migrant integration but in this field, it cannot explain policy developments effectively (Scholten, Collett, & Petrovic, 2017). Moreover, it is not surprising that in some European countries certain groups of children who also need additional educational support such as Roma children, overlap with refugee children concerning the education policies (Jovanović, 2019).

Although the social inclusion of refugees has been the subject of scientific interest much earlier, the pace of inclusive education policies' development for refugee children -particularly the implementation of school-based intervention programmes- was very slow (Dovigo, 2018). The success of the inclusive intercultural education policies adopted by a country has certain conditions. Such policies do not focus only on refugee students' educational attainment, but they embrace a holistic approach engaging both the family and the community members who are important sources of knowledge and will contribute to managing the cultural and language barriers and facilitating cultural adaptation (de Wal Pastoor, 2023; Dovigo, 2018; Karakus, Hajar, & Aydin, 2023). As Guo-Brennan and Guo-Brennan (2019, p. 77) state, a welcoming and inclusive school for refugee students is "a culturally competent community that welcomes students and families from all backgrounds, demonstrates commitment to inclusion and equity and has the capacity to enable all students' development and well-being regardless of their

abilities, ethnicity, cultures, languages, gender, socio-economic status, religions and countries of origins".

Inclusive intercultural education policy for refugee students in Greece

Greece has always been a major entry point for people seeking safety in Europe, but in 2015 the country had to deal with an unprecedented number of refugees and asylum-seekers arriving in the country fleeing war, conflicts, and violence. The provision of free education to all refugee children and adolescents was one of the top priorities of the Greek education system, but various barriers hindered the successful inclusion of refugee students i.e. teacher mobility, inadequate teacher training, the lack of classroom space, the presence of bias (Gogonas & Gatsi, 2021). It seemed that the Greek education system was not prepared to accommodate all school-aged refugee children in public education and to ensure their school enrollment. Thus, the school year 2016- 2017 was characterized as a "preparatory year" emphasizing the smooth transition of refugee children from camps to school life and society (Palaiologou, Michail, & Toumpoulidis, 2018).

One of the initiatives by the Greek Ministry of Education to facilitate the inclusion of refugee children into education was the institution of *Reception Facilities for Refugee Education* (DYEP: the acronym in Greek). Reception Facilities for Refugee Education are a part of formal education and they operate either in accommodation centers (morning hours) or in public school settings (afternoon hours). Their objective is to prepare children to be smoothly integrated into mainstream education and during four teaching hours per day, they are taught Greek language, English, Mathematics, Physical Education, Computers and Arts/Civics. They are not regarded purely as inclusive education structures since refugee children attend classes in a separate learning environment from students from the culturally majority group. However, they serve as a pre-integration educational scheme addressing not only the language needs of refugee children (learning Greek as a second foreign language) but also strengthening their identity in the new environment they live in.

Reception Classes (Level I & II) operate in primary or secondary school structures within Educational Priority Zones (ZEP: the acronym in Greek) and they constitute the second type of the Greek inclusive intercultural education policy for refugee students aiming to increase the level of Greek language comprehension and communication (Samsari, Palaiologou, & Nikolaou, 2021). They differ from the Reception Facilities for Refugee Education because they

function alongside the morning school programme. Particularly, refugee children attend the curriculum in the mainstream class within the regular school hours and they also attend three hours in the reception class to receive additional Greek language support. Depending on their knowledge of Greek they attend ZEP I (no or basic knowledge) or ZEP II (moderate knowledge) class. Reception classes offer a less restrictive learning environment compared to Reception Facilities for Refugee Education as refugee children learn alongside their peers as much as possible. However, they have many weaknesses hindering the full implementation of inclusive education practices. On the one hand, children's bilingualism is not cultivated since refugee children are taught only the language of the host country and not their mother tongue. On the other hand, cultural and language barriers do not disappear during their co-attendance in the mainstream classroom, nevertheless, no additional educational support is provided.

Conclusions

Refugee children and adolescents are among the most vulnerable populations worldwide. Thus, their school enrollment and attendance within a safe and supportive school environment should be one of the top priorities of the host countries and it should be promoted by policymakers through the coordination of all actors. The education policies that are implemented, have a great impact on the adaptation and development of refugee children and adolescents, paving the way to citizenship and promoting their social inclusion (Block et al., 2014; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). Inclusive intercultural education emerges as a new promising transformative approach to managing 'super-diversity' in the school context taking into account the moral and political goals of education as well as the curriculum, the instructional strategies, the school culture, and the school policy (Leeman & van Kooven, 2019). It recognizes that there is a strong interplay among diversity, equity, students' background, and education which has unique dynamics and effects on the quality of the education provided to all students. Moreover, it gets along with the new challenges of modern societies -including the refugee influx- and the changes in educational policies so that the needs of all students are accommodated and their active engagement in school is supported. Adopting this transformative approach educators and students must commit to reciprocal vulnerability, reflection, and sincerity in order to foster an inclusive mindset whereas students' voices are heard and are used to improve the quality of education (Daniels & Schoem, 2020; Murdoch et al., 2020).

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Participatory research with vulnerable groups in sensitive contexts

Urszula Markowska-Manista

Faculty of Education. University of Warsaw

u.markowska-ma@uw.edu.pl

Introduction

Key research approaches in contemporary child-centred childhood studies are those that emphasise participation, non-discrimination and children's rights taking into account children's voices, involvement, and centrality in aspects of representation and presence (Spyrou, Rosen Cook, 2018). However, such approaches and concern for children's participation in matters affecting them is still a new endeavour in the sensitive contexts of war or migration, in research with vulnerable groups. This results in the area being dominated by research conducted by adults *on* children or research conducted by adults *about* children (Kellet 2010).

The research this text discusses is participatory research that incorporates children's perspectives and voices referred to as emancipatory research, which "prioritises children's participation" (Panter-Brick 2002) and stands in opposition to research in which the child's voice is still the great absentee. Research in these approaches takes into account the importance of creating and co-creating knowledge by and with children (Spyrou 2018) and using this knowledge to improve social practices of which children are the recipients and co-recipients. Participatory research shows that there is value in both traditionally recognised knowledge, generated by academics, and historically de-legitimised knowledge, such as that generated in minority communities and vulnerable groups (Center for Community and Civic Engagement 2024).

Participatory research also reveals the heterogeneity of children's voices (Komulainen 2007) and their polysemous nature, and points to the importance of a safe space in which these voices can be embodied and heard (Mazzei, Jackson, 2012). Research documents that children vary in the degree to which they are shaped by their developmental context. It also substantiates the social and political determinants of that context how children participate in groups and communities through a context informed by or disregarding a child rights perspective. It follows

that context, time, place and space are key categories indicating the sensitivity of this group in research and differentiating the situation of children.

Participatory approaches in research with children on matters that affect them as global citizens, educational participants or consumers, are a response to the widespread practices of victimisation, discrimination or marginalisation of the opinions of children and children themselves in the environments in which they function on a daily basis and in the spaces they use.

Research implemented in socially sensitive contexts, such as those of war, refugeehood or exclusion, allows us to address the perspectives of children who have no voice in dominant discourses and who, are "seen but not heard" (Ennew, Hastadewi, Plateau 2007). This means that research that includes children through participation provides a deeper insight into their everyday lives and allows for a broader perspective in analysing their diverse situations, dilemmas and problems. It also facilitates a multi-level exploration of the context and relationships along the line: children - adults - community. What is needed today, therefore, is not simply a postulate, but a practice of research implemented with children, as opposed to on children (Liebel 2017).

Children as vulnerable groups in sensitive contexts

Although geographically in many parts of the world children form a very diverse majority of the population, or a significant part of it, in the social perception of adults they are perceived and treated as a fairly homogeneous minority whose well-being is determined and debated by adults. This is due, inter alia, to the dominance of adult-centric discourses, discourses about care and protection and discourses about children entangled in issues of discrimination, dependency and social exclusion. It also comes as a result of power relations. Especially the latter, by drawing attention to the asymmetry and discrimination of children's voice and will, seem to reinforce the narrative of victimisation. What is more, discourses of inclusion and taking children's rights into account, in the spirit of child-centred approaches, still seem to be on the margins of adult practices, despite being present and recognized (Markowska-Manista & Liebel, 2023). They are also often replaced by care-centred, educational and child-friendly or individualised approaches aimed at treating children with respect so that they feel safe, encouraged and satisfied. The child-centred approach, both in research and in practice, is based

on children's agency and participation (Gornik & Sedmak, 2021). It focuses on children as human beings in terms of already being, as opposed to becoming, as Janusz Korczak argued a century ago when he wrote: "Children will not become, they already are human beings".

Opposing approaches and a rather one-sided perception perpetuate a different outcome of looking at the child. This results in a process of infantilising this important group in both practice and research. This, in turn, leads to a situation where, being part of a non-dominant community, children experience power relations based on systemic and non-systemic adultist practices that are part of the colonising discourse on childhood (Liebel 2020; Liebel and Mead 2023) in the communities and groups children are part of. Adultism is a common form of discrimination against children, characterised by the belief that life experience is strongly linked to age and social status (Liebel, Meade, 2023) and sometimes still based on the slogan "children should be seen and not heard". It therefore assumes that an adult, as a person with experience and higher status, is usually wiser and so their opinion and decisions are more important than the perspectives of younger people (children). It is a classic form of abuse of adult power over and in relation to children, based on dependencies rooted in thought and action as well as on the reproduction of established structures (Markowska-Manista 2020). This abuse is not limited to the practices of the environment closest to the child (on a micro scale) and so the home, pre-school, school, backyard, and neighbourhood. This adult approach is also observed on a macro scale, e.g. in the practices of subordinated parenting, which does not take into account the rights of the child as a citizen, the holder of inalienable human rights. It is also present in the practices of militarising childhood, bringing children up for war rather than peace in states ruled by dictators or in states attacking neighbouring countries, and finally states experiencing armed conflict and war.

These asymmetrical relationships and treatment that limit the unwritten and written rights of children (as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child) are reinforced by and simultaneously reinforce discourses of social, political and economic marginalisation. They also perpetuate centuries-old practices of indoctrination, enslavement of children, social violence and discrimination against this group in different social, cultural and political contexts. As a vulnerable and very malleable minority group, children are exposed to discrimination and marginalisation by the dominant adult group. This vulnerability is always context-dependent and based on power relations (von Benzon & van Blerk, 2017). Vulnerability in this aspect reflects the socially constructed perceptions and sometimes realities of a particular group.

Importantly, it positions the vulnerable group as more at risk and builds on the opposition - the majority versus the vulnerable - highlighting differences, increasing social distance and distorting the dominant perspective.

While in many countries of the world, in the era of postmodernity, children have been allowed the status of partners in relationships with adults, as well as the status of social actors, and given the right to co-decide on matters important to them (in many cultures, such as indigenous societies, this status and unwritten rights have long been enjoyed by children), there is still a clear division between adults and children, and the relationship between them is based on a power structure based on the power and privileges of the stronger party (Cannella, Viruru, 2004). Consequently, childhood is closely linked to geographical location, place of residence, social class, social status, gender, culture of origin and health, not only of children but also of adults. Childhood is therefore subordinate to and dependent on adults.

By implication, children's social participation is socially constructed and depends on how power relations are established between marginalised children and adults and non-marginalised adults (Tisdall and Punch, 2012).

The absence and under-representation of children in activities involving social participation - resulting from a failure to recognise their important role and thus not allowing them a voice (including in and through socially useful research) - means that adult advocacy for children in societies they are part of and they live in, is incomplete and unsustainable. In addition, restrictions on children's individual autonomy inhibit their ability to learn and lead to passivity in participation, education and civil society. The concept of social justice attempts to change the status quo (Hanson & Nieuwenhuys, 2013). This participatory concept respects the complexity and diversity of vulnerable - non-dominant groups as well as their perspectives and involvement. It focuses on differences in outcomes and opportunities, resulting not from a lack of potential, but from unequal access to goods and resources, as well as from political, educational, social, environmental, racial and class differences that affect the trajectories of vulnerable groups' lives and their daily functioning.

In this context, it seems crucial to initiate participation and build social competences among children (in environments aware of the value of adult participation) so that they can resist the manifestations of such phenomena and be aware of the processes of multiple victimisation and exclusion. These processes are caused, *inter alia*, by social inequalities and factors emerging from contextual differences or lack of knowledge about the realities of their world. However, a

comprehensive development of adult knowledge and skills, focused on the importance of children's social participation, also seems crucial here, as without adults' awareness of what participation is and its significance, it is difficult to initiate and enhance children's participation. It is, therefore, a matter of development that would foster the realisation of children's subjectivity. It should emphasise the quality of children's participation in the community or a group as a step towards achieving social justice. In addition, adults need to understand this process and see its potential.

A participatory approach to research with children in the sensitive context of social justice

A way to understand and address children's rights to participate in matters that affect them is through a participatory and critical approach to social justice theory (Ball, 2012). Participatory social justice builds on the potential of individuals and groups. It respects the complexity and diversity of the lives of non-dominant groups and looks for mechanisms of social change in the strengths of individuals (resources) and their living environment.

The diversity of participatory discourses allows us to find new ways of thinking and talking about participation, to connect and operationalise spaces and narratives about participation, and to position children's participation in matters that affect them. It provides a space to see children as capable of acting, empowered to speak about their matters and to evaluate how they are treated and what is offered to them. It also allows us - adults to see and analyse the ethical challenges of interacting with children- groups identified as "vulnerable and at-risk of violence", while reinforcing the need to seek participatory and inclusive strategies and approaches in social justice research and interventions precisely for the world's youngest citizens - children.

The concept of social justice, which includes participatory approaches (Sutton, 2007), enhances social and educational opportunities for groups that are unheard and marginalised in the dominant discourse. It can be used to implement the principles of transformation and social action that can help engage these groups in activities that affect them, in an ethical and effective way and based on their needs.

The participatory approaches in research on children and their childhood discussed in the academic literature are related to the so-called participatory turn that occurred in the 1990s and are based on the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasising the

subjectivity, participation and agency of children. These approaches primarily refer to two types of research: research with children and research conducted by children (Kellet 2010). It is child-centred, focused on children's potential and largely human rights-based, as it allows children to participate and engage (as participants and co-researchers) in research with their own perspectives, expectations and ideas.

Among the many participatory approaches currently used in community-based research and practice for social justice that involve children at different levels of action are R. Hart's classic "Ladder of Participation" model, P. Treseder's "Degrees of Participation" model, H. Shier's "Pathways to Participation" model and L. Lundy's "Participation Model". The following will give an overview of the specifics of these models with a focus on aspects of children's participation.

The model of the ladder of participation was developed for children and adolescents by Roger Hart in 1992, taking as its matrix the model of adult participation developed by Sherry M. Arnstein in 1969. Hart's ladder model, now over 30 years old, still helps to identify levels of participation and avoid manipulation, tokenism and other forms of children's false participation in activities implemented with children. It is widely applied as a useful tool to assess children's level of participation or non-participation in various activities or projects. Hart's "ladder of participation" consists of two parts. The bottom of the ladder has three rungs (manipulation, decoration and tokenism) representing adult-initiated practices that simulate children's participation and have little to do with children's participation understood as children's right, inclusion and agency. The next five levels define children's participation in activities that affect them. At these levels, we see that children can make decisions that bring about real change (decision-making, opinion exchange, agency). Importantly, the author of this model prioritises the upper rungs of the ladder in line with children's capacity, potential and engagement in activities.

Phil Treseder developed a non-linear model called "Degrees of Participation" (1997) consisting of 5 equal types of participation (based on R. Hart's model, but avoiding a hierarchical structure). In this model, the author highlights different but equal examples of good participatory practice, between which there is no hierarchical relationship. Modifying the five degrees of participation from R. Hart's ladder of participation, Treseder (1997) points out that there is neither a progressive hierarchy nor a specific order in which children's participation can be developed. Children perform the role of experts here, adults do not impose their ideas or take

the lead, but offer their knowledge to young people to be analysed, considered and taken into account. The author of the model also argues that there should be no limitations to involving children and youth in activities, but they need to be empowered to participate fully. Not only should children's views be taken into account, but they should also be involved in decision-making (Treseder,1997). He therefore adds to his model the five conditions of D. Hodgson (1995) that should be met to achieve participation and to empower children and young people. These are: access to authority figures, access to relevant information, availability of real choices between different opinions, availability of support from a trusted person, and the ability to appeal or complain in situations that should not happen.

Following his work in Nicaragua and Ireland on children's rights and participation (with a particular focus on children's empowerment), Harry Shier developed the "Pathways to Participation" model as well as tools for analysing children's participation in decision-making. These tools and his approach are widely used in social justice work with children and communities and oriented towards children's rights. His concept of participatory research with children was explained in the article: "Children as Researchers. Nicaragua: Children's Consultancy to Transformative Research" (2015).

Shier used Hart's model to design a pathways model of participation, but without incorporating the levels of non-participation. His model comprises three degrees of commitment (openings, opportunities, obligations) and five levels of participation: children are listened to, children are supported in expressing their views, children's views are taken into account, children are involved in decision-making, children share power and responsibility for decisions with others. This model allows for a critical and reflective evaluation of the practices and research in which children participate and enables the identification of ways to modify and improve them.

The framework of children's right to have a voice and be heard, central to social justice work, is reflected in the "participation model" developed by L. Lundy (2007). This model is based on the findings of a study in Northern Ireland entitled "'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child". It builds on children's rights enshrined in the Convention and in particular Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This article, dealing with the need for adults to take children's views, opinions and perspectives seriously, and thus to take children seriously, became the central axis of the model. The right to participate is implemented in the Lundy model in four practical steps. The first step is "SPACE" - in which children can feel free to form and express their opinions, views and

observations in a safe environment (without pressure or manipulation from adults). The second step is "VOICE" - children's voice that is not merely physically audible, but trully heard as a verbal or non-verbal communication. The third step is "AUDIENCE". Children's voices must be heard and listened to. There must be a fourth step for the right of children to participate to become a reality, i.e. their voice must exert "INFLUENCE". This influence defines the boundary conditions for children's participation and is an important measure of cooperation (pro-participatory approaches and tools) between children and adults, as well as adults and adults (Lundy 2007). Lundy's model draws attention to the value of children's collective participation and their importance as valid social actors in their communities and contexts.

By understanding the importance of children's participation and implementing participatory approaches to research, we (as adults) support a paradigm in which the topic of children, their childhoods and children's rights can be more deeply and reliably researched, described, interpreted and practiced (Liebel, 2018). Through children's voices and perspectives, we also provide a multi-faceted understanding of the complexity of children's realities in different parts of the world. A participatory approach to research offers an opportunity to deconstruct and decolonise orientalist "knowledge" about the child and childhood in communities that have been colonised, become dependent or are still viewed through the lens of many dependencies and stereotypes.

With the growth of postcolonial childhood studies and research focusing on children's rights, participation, subjectivity and agency, there is a growing belief that participatory approaches in interventions and research with children on matters that affect them are crucial to understanding their situation in the context of the communities they are part of. These approaches also give space to neglected, bottom-up discourses, thus promoting social justice (Budde and Markowska-Manista, 2020). After all, how can we understand the perspective of children - experts on their childhood - by ignoring their voices?

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Participatory research with Roma children and youth from Ukraine

Urszula Markowska-Manista
Faculty of Education. University of Warsaw
u.markowska-ma@uw.edu.pl

Introduction

The escalation of military conflict and the outbreak of war in Ukraine (on 24 February 2022) precipitated a refugee crisis described as one of the largest since the Second World War in central and eastern Europe. Over the course of several months, hundreds of thousands of people - adults and children - fled across the Polish-Ukrainian border seeking safety and refuge in, among other places, neighbouring Poland.

Almost overnight, Poland became a country hosting one of the largest refugee populations in the world (Digitiki, Bhabha, Markowska-Manista, Dobkowska 2024) with children and women dominating. Data shows that in a very short period of time, Poland received more than 2 million refugees from Ukraine (UNHCR 2022, Office for Foreigners 2022). This group also included Roma refugees from Ukraine. The Roma community came from different parts of Ukraine deciding either to stay temporarily in Poland, travel further to other countries or return to Ukraine soon after arrival. Scholars point out that "the Roma entering Poland come mainly from eastern Ukraine, from the Kharkiv, Donetsk, Odessa and Zhytomyr regions (...)" (Mirga-Wójtowicz, Talewicz, Kołaczek 2022, p. 8). These include groups such as Servitka Roma, Madziarska Roma, Kishinevska Roma, Ruska Roma, the Kalderash and the Lovari (Mirga-Wójtowicz, Talewicz, Kołaczek 2022). Among the groups mentioned above, Poland also hosts the Roma from Transcarpathia.

In a broad context, the refugee experience, the social, educational, health or economic situation of Ukrainian refugees in Poland is diverse. The refugee community receives support (to varying degrees) both from the third sector and at the institutional level. Their situation is monitored and studied by various teams and agencies. There are also minority groups within the group of Ukrainian refugees, e.g. the Roma, who receive little attention both from the research community and from intervention and support programmes. The majority of interventions to help the Roma community from Ukraine "are undertaken by Roma activists

and organisations. Polish NGOs are involved in helping the Roma, however, the specific nature of their problems sometimes goes beyond the capacity of the volunteers" (Mirga-Wójtowicz, Talewicz, Kołaczek 2022, p. 4). Given their complex experiences of racism, anti-Gypsyism, discrimination and marginalisation in their country of origin and subsequently in Poland as a country of refuge, the Roma from Ukraine are a specific refugee group. As a group that is particularly vulnerable to human rights violations (Amnesty International 2023), experiencing diverse forms of discrimination and exclusion, they have difficulty accessing resources offered to other refugee groups, i.e.: information, temporary accommodation, employment opportunities, as well as material, legal, educational and psychological support. This situation affects how both adults and children function and widens the gap between the host society, other refugees and the Roma. Past and present experiences can determine the ways in which children and adults perceive reality, their choices and strategies for acting.

Roma children and adolescents from Ukraine are a special group who have recently been impacted by armed conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, war and refugeehood. Researchers on migration and refugee health distinguish several stages in the migration experience of refugees: the pre-migration stage (life in the country of origin before leaving/fleeing to a new place), the migration stage (fleeing one's own country marked by dynamic situations, uncertainty, often with a sense of loss, exposure to severe stress), and the post-migration stage, which involves starting a new life in a new place in the host country (Danilewicz 2010; Bhugra, Becker, 2005). The final stage involves negotiating one's place in the new linguistic and cultural environment, searching for strategies to operate in the new place and dominant society, coping with challenges and problems, and seeking strategies to understand the opening/closing policy of institutions and services to refugees (Januszewska, Markowska-Manista 2017).

Assumptions and theoretical framework

The decision to conduct a participatory study with children (Markowska-Manista 2021), which unlocks the transformative potential of the participants through co-participation, reaction, interaction, involvement in a variety of educational, integrative and social activities, was dictated by the presence of large groups of children and adolescents with refugee backgrounds in Polish society, in particular the presence of Roma children from Ukraine. The mere presence and residency in a new place do not make this group of children and young people active

participants and agents. However, it is the first step towards taking action for their participation, activation and emancipation (Zwiernik 2018).

Research through a participatory approach assumes that not only experts and academic researchers but also ordinary people (adults, children) are causal and generate and reproduce knowledge that is useful for bringing about change and development and raising awareness among the mainstream society of the need to critically reflect on the challenges of social inequalities. In this respect, both the contexts, methodologies and tools are important, as well as the research process itself, which "can be an important platform for bringing about change" (Dyrness, 2011, p. 203). For this reason, we opted for two models of participation as the theoretical framework for participatory research in and with the community of children with refugee backgrounds. Both models take into account an orientation towards community and involvement as well as adult and child agency.

There are many models of participation that include and involve children and young people at different levels of practical and research activities. For the purposes of this study, we followed the models discussed in the previous section: R. Hart's "Ladder of Participation" (1992) and L. Lundy's 'Participation Model' (2007), as our theoretical framework. One advantage of applying these models is that they enabled a multifaceted look at the situation of children, including children with refugee backgrounds as a group deprived of participation (on many levels) or with limited participation. Secondly, they allowed for an understanding of participation in context - in asymmetrical relationships: children-adults, children-the community, children-the host society. Thirdly, they provided opportunities to examine the context in which these children operate. It is a context in which children's right to participate in matters affecting them (Article 12 of the CRPD), based on a non-adultist approach (Liebel, Meade 2023), ensuring that children's voices are considered (James 2007) and that children and adults are involved in joint activities is still rarely exercised in efforts to integrate and include refugee children and youth in the community and the host country environment.
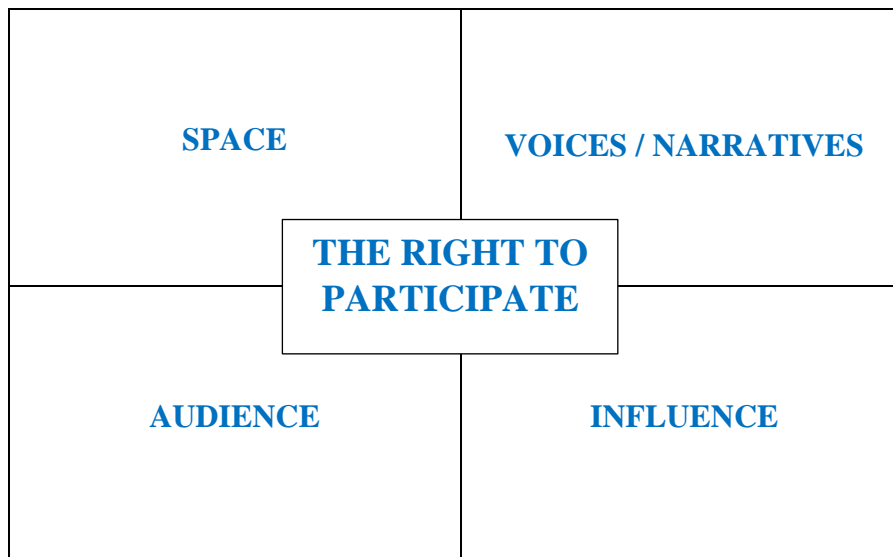
Fig. 1 - A model for child participation based on: *The Lundy model of child participation* (2007)
https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-12/lundy_model_of_participation.pdf

Methodology

For much of the research implemented through participatory approaches, taking into account the narratives and perspectives of minority groups, humanising methodology is used as a point of reference (Reyes et al., 2021). Humanising methodology gives space to the stories of individuals from minority groups, those who are usually described by the mainstream society as "others", as an out-group, those whose lived experiences are not told at all or often, and who are still viewed from the perspective of power and domination (Markowska-Manista 2023). One group perceived in this way are children (Liebel, 2020). This methodology is based on a reflexive approach, on the relationships of the research team, co-researchers, study participants and others involved in the study, and on a transformative approach in education (Martens, 2021). Participation in shared activities, ones that are perceived as meaningful and useful, makes people in a particular context and place want to (co-) investigate and (co-) analyse their position, situation or experience in order to improve their circumstances (McTaggart et al. 2017).

Transformative approaches enable the discovery, re-interpretation and enhancement of social justice and human rights as responsible and socially useful research practices. This is because through practice, research participants engage in constructing and deconstructing and thus

transforming activities. As such, they are (become) active agents. Transformation is possible when the study participants, as a non-dominant group, also reflect, draw conclusions and take action in relationships and based on jointly reached decisions (Freire, 1970). Consequently, they become key actors in initiating transformation and social change. The goal in research oriented in this way is thus not merely to present the findings of the study, but to conduct research based on co-participation, cooperation as well as to provide theoretical contributions in the area of children's rights in a social justice perspective (CohenMiller and Boivin, 2022). What is crucial to this is the process itself and what happens in the relationships in particular activities.

Participatory action research on a particular community or group and its context, enables us to focus on and explore what is happening in that particular group or community based on that particular context, and so to focus on the particular case, rather than what is happening anywhere and everywhere in a broad perspective (McTaggart et al. 2017).

Consequently, this approach enabled us to decode and understand the situation and so the challenges and dilemmas of being in a new place faced by Roma minority children and youth from Ukraine. This was done through the prism of the context, narratives and images - the artwork of children and young people. It also allowed us – based on their voices expressed through their artwork - to capture fragments of their perceptions and views of the daily life around them, snippets of their dreams and opportunities to improve their wellbeing.

The report also identifies selected needs of children from the examined group in their new places of residence in Poland. The data collected by the researchers as well as information from the literature review and analysis of relevant sources (legislation, NGO reports, media resources) complete the overview of the situation and challenges faced by children and, more broadly, the Roma community from Ukraine in Poland.

The study highlighted several closely correlated themes: memory; longing for home and the familiar; a sense of being nowhere, "in-between" – between the known and unknown and being in a process in which they experience categorization and division; the need for support in education in new places of residence and to foster integration through and for education, support for the mental health and psychosocial well-being of adults who take care of children (mainly mothers, grandmothers and cousins) - refugees from Ukraine, and their integration into Polish society in the so-called sensitive context of war. *Some of these children's fathers are often there fighting on the frontline. This is the reality of war* (Ania).

The study also exposed the need to create a "culture of possibilities" in which host and refugee communities learn from each other and exchange knowledge by including refugees in activities. In a "culture of possibilities", refugees can challenge existing dominant practices that do not serve their interests and the interests of the community (Yosso, 2005). Additionally, using their potential and social capital, they can counter discourses about deficits.

We also applied the method of counter-narrative in the study. It questions the dominant discourse (of the dominant society) about refugees, making it subject to debate by revealing the danger of a "single story" (Adichie, 2009). However, no counter-narrative is neutral either, as it exposes someone's words, someone's representations of certain realities, someone's subjective experiences, emotions and interpretations. Its potential lies in differentiating dominant narratives, which become multi-threaded, in introducing asymmetry and in influencing how individuals and groups think.

In this study, counter-narrative produced by integrating activities with co-creating and co-producing knowledge and communication (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) provides a framework for verbal and non-verbal (drawings and other artwork) voices of children (Frankel, 2018) with refugee backgrounds. Scholars Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define the use of counter-stories as a specific method of telling the stories of ordinary people. Our intention was to try to highlight the importance of counter-narratives (expressed in words and images) as key categories in considering the voices and deciphering the situations of individuals experiencing war and refugeehood, based on the following questions:

- Who usually speaks for children with refugee experience?
- Who and how do they speak about these children's daily lives and situation?

Verbal narratives and stories told through images by the child-participants in the study provided an opportunity to explore the context and situation, provoking reflection on the day-to-day life and context they are immersed in "here and now" as child refugees.

When conducting research with children in a diverse group (socio-cultural and linguistic factors, factors related to age and a sense of belonging, factors relating to cooperation experience), we supplemented traditional data collection methods with participatory methods and approaches involving the children.

As a collection of complex approaches and strategies in field research, ethnography enabled in-depth observation and analysis of what happens within the activities of a community-oriented project. Participatory and engaging methods, for their part, enabled us to listen to and analyse the statements and artworks (drawings, collaborative art and photo projects) together with the participants.

In order to ensure that our study was relevant to the participants, who in classic research "about children" may have difficulty expressing themselves and would not provide a truthful depiction of their experiences, we additionally relied on the mosaic approach (Clark, Moss 2011). "This approach most fully expresses the idea of taking children seriously, embodying the participatory research model, at the core of which lies the conviction of the need to respect, also in research inquiries, the principles of democracy invoking the validity of the voice of those affected by the research (...) namely children" (Zwiernik 2015, p. 99).

The idea behind the mosaic approach is that researchers, together with children and people from their environment (their immediate surroundings), collect data using a wide range of strategies, tools, methods and means referred to as individual puzzles or pieces of the mosaic. Once the activities are completed, the task of the research team is then to find consistent elements and combine these individual elements into one big image - creating a mosaic depicting a spectrum of perspectives and narratives (Azunre, Sowrirajan, 2021). This approach offers insights into the situation of a particular group (here children and their environment) in a way that more "scientific" and traditional research approaches do not.

This approach offers a creative framework for listening and hearing children's perspectives. Based on L. Lundy's model, we co-participate. We do it through joint speaking, acting, creating, analysing and observing events, listening to what children and adults around them are saying and asking questions as well as through creating a pictorial and descriptive message in non-verbal communication. Participation refers here to activities in which children express their opinions and share their experiences (through words and images), while their participation and voices (Mortari, Mazzoni, 2009) are important and taken into account (Markowska-Manista, Dobkowska, Balkan 2023). Children are key informants in relation to their own viewpoints and experiences and, consequently, research that is about them is strengthened in terms of quality and perspective (Alderson, 2008).

The aim of the study was to understand how children cope with the adaptation process in Poland and thus to gain a grasp of how children perceive their situation and everyday life. Additionally,

the project aimed to identify the potential challenges and difficulties children may face during this process. When investigating the data obtained, we focused on the categories of well-being, situationality and standard of daily life as well as education in the context of school performance in the new place of living.

The following research methods were used in our qualitative study: review of thematic literature, analysis of primary sources, analysis of research notes from observations, analysis of short notes from research diaries of the researchers from the community as a basis for interviews with female researchers from the community and the organizer of the study, analysis of material obtained from interviews, analysis of secondary sources: selected educational materials, images, drawings and other artworks by children, analysis of photographs and drawings.

When a drawing becomes the child's voice

We have to be very observant, namely: we will hear some things from an adult but we won't hear it from a child. So, we have to observe children and their artwork very closely, in detail, to see these messages, the messages that children won't say. And they have the right not to say them, because they are more honest than adults...For me it was interesting and difficult at the same time (Sonia)

In this study, the children's drawings and other artworks proved to be a safe, relevant voice preferred by the children. In the situation of a heterogeneous group and the challenges of communicating in foreign languages (Polish, English, Ukrainian) and different dialects, their perspectives were expressed through drawings, as art helps children with migration backgrounds to find their voice (Vega 2023). With their experiences of subjugation, refugeehood, change of educational and linguistic environment, the participants used drawings to tell their stories, express their dreams and create a space for conversation. Drawing and creating, and so co- participating on their own terms, enabled the children to avoid the discomfort of symbolic violence under which they might be forced to express themselves verbally. In this project, according to the Lundy model, freedom of expression and participation allowed for the co-creation of a safe space and its gradual taming. This safe space enabled the children's verbal and non-verbal voices to be empowered. *The children were free to make their own choices during the activities, they were not assigned fixed seats, they followed their own*

formula of cooperating. There were spontaneous moments, casual play, outdoor acivities, open-air work - activities that were non-imposing but offered space (Alice).

The children recorded their narratives in drawings, which enabled them to develop a sense of belonging in a new context (Brooker, 2014 , p. 32).

The images became a foundation to then verbally express themselves and their relationships with their environment. Central to this was the approach of the researchers from the community: not imposing artificial rules but creating a space for collective action by listening to how the children wanted to work and express themselves.

Ethics in participatory research with vulnerable groups

Children's participation in matters affecting them is a fundamental right and one of the basic principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989). This is emphasised in Article 12 of the CRC, which highlights the right of children to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters concerning them as well as to have their opinions considered and taken into account.

Our work ethics were informed by the humanising methodology we employed and were based on a transformative approach in which the reflective researcher confronts the question "As a researcher, have you ever wondered if you're doing your research 'right'?" (CohenMiller & Boivin, 2022, p. 1). The project's research ethics referred to key aspects of cooperation in the activities implemented in and with a community. It also involved a reflexive, non-discriminatory and rights-based approach acknowledging that the research was conducted with a minority community, with sensitivity to situations and topics that might emerge as so-called difficult topics and difficult research situations (Kuzma 2013).

Children's safety and rights, and thus ensuring the autonomy and subjectivity of those participating in the study at every stage, were the top priority. Firstly, ethics concerned obtaining consent from parents and legal guardians and the centres where the children and their families resided. Of equal importance was ensuring that children and young people felt safe. To do this, we introduced a preparatory stage and organised activities in safe and interesting spaces both indoors (the Foundation's headquarters in Warsaw and the building of the centre in Nadarzyn) and outdoors (in Warsaw's and Nadarzyn's open spaces).

Researchers from the Roma community participated in a comprehensive training on how to implement research with vulnerable groups[1], such as children with refugee backgrounds. The training also addressed issues on how to work with parents, legal guardians and the community to 'do the best' research with children in such varying contexts. At the same time, based on the ethics of participatory action research, taking into account the safety and active participation of children (Powell et al., 2011), they were authentic and did not hide their position as researchers. This approach allowed for critical self-reflection while participation in educational activities enabled the participants to be integrated and develop their awareness of human rights and thus benefit from their cooperation with the research team (Pittaway, Bartolomei, Hugman, 2010). The research concept was consulted with the international MACR research team in Potsdam in May 2023 and at the Participatory Research with Children seminar at the Faculty of Education, University of Warsaw. Linguistic support and the presence and involvement of a pedagogue and psychologist as well as assistants from the Roma community were provided throughout the study.

Informed consent from the participants and their parents/ legal guardians was obtained through forms adapted to the context and provided with assurances that the participants' privacy would be respected and that all information would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and used only for the research. In the case of the children, informed consent was obtained with their approval and willingness, using verbal and activity-based methods such as discussions, expressing consent through handprinting (stamping their hands dipped in paint), or choosing their colour from among red, green and blue. Both adults and children were informed about the aim of the study and the rules involved in the cooperation and activities. The participants' statements and artworks were coded and analysed in the context of the community.

Research limitations

This study has limitations that must be taken into account when discussing the findings. To begin with, we were limited by topography. Our study covers a location in the capital city of Warsaw and a location near Warsaw (Nadarzyn), hence it does not provide an exhaustive

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[1] U.Markowska-Manista, Training: participatory research with vulnerable groups (children), Fundacja w Stronę Dialogu (Foundation Towards Dialogue) Warsaw, 2023.

analysis of the situation of Roma children with refugee backgrounds from Ukraine in different parts of Poland. It should therefore be regarded as a case study. Secondly, due to the relatively short duration of the study (spring and summer months 2023), the results cannot be expected to apply to a broader temporal framework. This is an important limitation, bearing in mind the factor of migration movements, both their frequency and the diversity of migration flows within Poland and migration to other countries or return to Ukraine. Participatory research is oriented towards a process. As such, considering the time limit as well as mobility and migration of refugees, the study documents a process that occurred in a specific time frame with the participation of specific groups of children and adolescents. Due to continued migration, some of the children who participated in the first stage of the study in Warsaw left Poland with their guardians and so were not involved in later stages of the research.

Despite the limitations above, this study adds to the existing discourse on the situation of refugee children by highlighting important issues of being "in-between" and feeling "out of place" or nowhere – neither at home in Ukraine, nor here... Our study also provides a basis for continued broader-scale research incorporating the narratives and perspectives of Roma children and the Roma community, as children are the experts on their lives (Tisdall, 2017).

Time and location of the study

The study was conducted during the spring and summer months of 2023 in two locations: in and around the headquarters of the Foundation Towards Dialogue in Warsaw and in Nadarzyn. In each location, three stages of activities were implemented with different groups of children and adolescents so as to constitute a process based on mutual cooperation and participation. All activities were held both indoors (pre-designed places, spaces and resources) and outdoors - in the field, oriented towards an exploration of places and providing opportunities for familiarisation and contact (based on the hypothesis of intercultural contact).
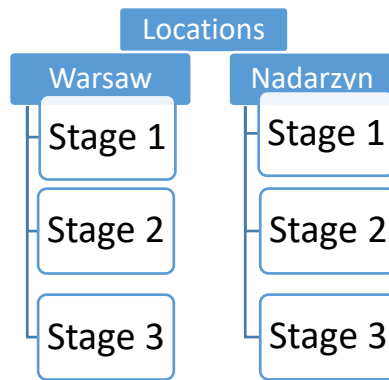
Fig. 2 - Own elaboration

Description of the sample group

The research participants comprised 4 researchers from the Roma community as well as 30 Roma children and youth from Ukraine with refugee backgrounds (Nadarzyn 17, Warsaw 8, Warsaw 5). The group of children and youth was diverse in terms of age, refugee background and language(s) of communication (Ukrainian, Roma, Polish, Russian). Their age range was from 6 to 17 years old (with younger children being the most numerous group) and in another location (Nadarzyn) between the ages of 5 and 13.

The key criteria for participation in the study were: being part of the Roma community from Ukraine, refugee status (under the provisions of the Special Act), and residence in Poland (at centres in or around Warsaw) for a minimum of six months. Further criteria involved the children's readiness to participate in the project and the children's availability for activities organised in their free time and after school.
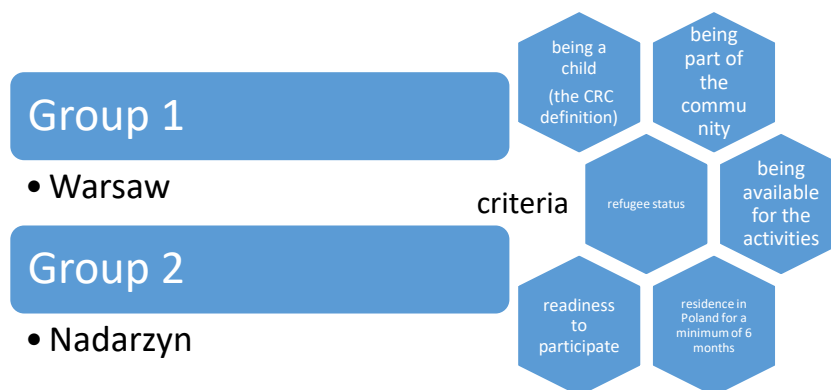

Fig. 3 - Own compilation

Stages of the study

The research was implemented in the following stages: preparation, meet-and-greet and integration, involvement and inclusion, as well as stages of diverse activities including free time, meal time and recreation.

The stage we referred to as stage "0" involved preparing and training the team with regard to conducting research with children and research ethics. It consisted of training workshops and activities to prepare adults from the Roma community to implement the project based on L. Lundy's *Participation Model* and incorporating R. Hart's *Ladder of Participation*. Both of these models provided a point of reference to adult practices and a framework for children's participation. Each team prepared its own scenarios and resources and developed its own concept for the implementation of each stage. In doing so, attention was paid to motor games, differentiated cooperative methods and strategies as well as an individual approach to children, their engagement, needs and leisure time. Each stage was followed by a feedback session with the children, an exhibition of the artworks, a conversation, an exchange of insights, an analysis, preparation of notes and supplementing them, as well as the preparation of photographic material. All stages were concluded with an interview with the research coordinator and an evaluation session with the research organizer.

Stage 1 proper involving meeting the research participants, familiarising oneself with places, group members and the context was based on activities related to the hypothesis of intercultural contact. It allowed time for getting to know each other, spontaneous reactions and decisions, e.g. an outing for ice-cream, a walk, as a stage for communicating and initiating cooperation and co-decision making. This stage involved the use and adaptation of selected materials from "Mapping words and cultures. Sketchbook for walking. Language and culture guide"[2] (2023), developed by U. Majcher-Legawiec and Interkulturalni PL (The Interkulturalni PL Association). The resources served as a stimulus for discussion and conversation concerning travel, linguistic, cultural and topographical biographies, places that are important, and that children like (or dislike), that they want to describe, remember, and interpret in different ways. The selected materials made it possible to position the places identified by the children and

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[2] https://interkulturalni.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Sladami-slow-i-kultur.-Spacerownik-miejski-1.pdf

locate them topographically in the context of the children's experiences and memories. At this stage, the children created pseudonyms for themselves, which they used throughout the project and which made it possible to encode their work and identity.

Stage 2 consisted of a discussion about home (my place) and a workshop on building a shared house (based on the concept and research activities of the team: Markowska-Manista, Dobkowska, Balkan 2023) or (in the case of one group and its idea) a model consisting of the houses of all the children taking part in the workshop (houses made of plasticine or different pieces of paper products). The aim of the workshop was to provide a safe space for children to work and have discussions around categories that are key to the formation of children's identity as well as their ideas of the closer and more distant world (Markowska-Manista, Dobkowska, Balkan 2023). During joint activities, the children discussed various subjects related to the meanings and symbols characteristic of a home. In other words, the discussions addressed familiar and new places, places associated with family, security, and sanctuary, which are fundamental for the child as a point of reference and a source of multiple experiences.

The category of home rooted in a territory (a tangible space) triggered reflection and a discussion on a "deterritorialised home" (an emotional space) (Wójcikowska, 2012, p. 229), "(…) in which children - especially in crisis situations - see a reference point for internal cohesion and a sense of security. In a situation of war, which for Ukrainian children was followed by the loss of home in a symbolic and often physical sense, reproducing and preserving the aspects of daily life that had to be abandoned became an additional dimension of the workshop." (Markowska-Manista, Dobkowska, Balkan 2023). In its final part, the workshop envisaged telling stories about their homes, which the children would interpret and finish with their own ideas (with words and/or images).

Stage 3 was designed as an identity workshop based on the children's counter-narratives elicited through making drawings of their hands. It aimed to qualitatively explore children's perspectives taking into consideration their well-being, daily life and living standards, as well as school performance in the new place[3]. The session consisted of activities related to the so-called "hand of my identity" - a cut-out hand template as a matrix evoking a narrative/ a story about children's experiences and dreams. The children then continued this narrative, this time while making their own hand puppets. At this stage, while drawing, painting and creating a

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[3] These are categories constructed in adult language for the purpose of this study.

portrait of identity and 'dreams' for the future, conversations took place with the children based on their narratives and dialogues. *The children told us what they were doing, e.g. that they were cutting things out, attaching hair and sticking eyes to the puppet, they wanted to create and talk about the process of creating. You could read a lot from this process, how they work together and how they engage with each other (Sonia).*

In this way, a collaborative process of creative activities and collecting data relevant to the research goals was occurring in a safe space. It was a research process based on a variety of activities, through observation, listening, asking questions, discussing and analysing the context and searching for one's own place.

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Presentation and discussion of the findings

Urszula Markowska-Manista, Małgorzata Kołaczek, Joanna Talewicz

Research and its analysis in cooperation with: Anna Bułat, Patrycja Mroczek Wajs, Roksana Mroczek Wajs, Alicja Olejniczak, Sonia Styrkacz

Introduction

Our places of origin shape who we are whether we like it or not (Chawla, 1992, p. 66).

The following discussion of the research findings covers the data collected by a team consisting of researchers from the community and researchers coordinating the project and the study. This section refers to all activities carried out at every stage of the project. The researchers prepared to implement the activities in teams. They developed their own scenarios for each activity, built strategies based on combining different communication and research methods and tools, and participated in consultations and monitoring. Additionally, they collected field notes in field research diaries and completed them based on research assumptions. Finally, they participated in the closing evaluation of the project as a whole. Every adult co-implementing the project's activities was guided by an inclusive, participatory approach, open to children's voices, reflecting the principle that "in order to really learn children's perspectives, it is necessary to offer them ways of expressing themselves that take into account their diverse competencies, needs and interests" (Zwiernik, 2015, p. 99).

The study has identified a number of adaptation challenges faced by the children that arise from the change in their living environment and the situationality associated with the place in which they temporarily reside, being in transit. The following material presenting the research findings contains quotes by the researchers from the community and the organiser of the study reporting the testimonies of the children and their mothers.

Adaptation challenges arising from the change of the living environment

In the first stage of the study, the children engaged in a rhythmic activity with colourful clap clap song cards and showed interest in an animation scarf. Further on, the children were introduced to the purpose of the study and the rules that applied in all three stages (Alicja). Also, a programme of joint activities was presented and discussed. A group ruleset was established as collaborative work by the children and the researchers. By drawing their hand outlines on a large sheet of paper, the children declared their participation and chose pseudonyms for themselves. The theme of "PAW Patrol" or invented names were very common.

In the first group, we developed activity rules together with the children and began by choosing pseudonyms for ourselves. The most common ones were characters from the cartoon "PAW Patrol", but there were also other ideas. Very quickly, the group started calling each other by pseudonyms. The children liked this idea very much. All the children were very keen to be involved in creating the rule code. When signing the code in the form of handprints, everyone wanted to do it at once, so there were some difficulties, but we divided the children into smaller groups and quickly brought the situation under control (Roksana).

A similar situation happened in the second group. *The children were very engaged and enthusiastic about taking part in this type of activity. The process of developing the ruleset was chaotic at first, but we agreed on a rule whereby a certain number of children would go to a specified place to trace their hand and then return to their designated place* (Alicja).

There was a lot of interest among the children in the 'Sketchbook for Walking' and in creating their portraits. Some of the children only drew images, as they were not competent in writing. Most of them drew and signed their cards with pseudonyms. Sometimes there were also communication problems, most children communicated in Ukrainian but also in Romani and Polish.

I was intrigued by one of the boys with the pseudonym "ROCI", who communicated with us in Polish, but also in Romani and Ukrainian. In my conversation with the boy, I obtained information that he had been learning Polish for a year (Alicja).

During the initial meetings introducing and involving the children in activities in a shared space, the children in one group (Warsaw) did not show enthusiasm and were not very cooperative. *The children seemed to be in an emotional state that indicates a lack of enthusiasm and energy*

(Sonia). There may have been several reasons for the children's lack of enthusiasm to enter into new relationships and engage in the activities with their own ideas. Firstly, this could have been due to fatigue and a sense of isolation in a new setting and a new context. Secondly, the children may have needed time or may not have understood the idea and therefore initially approached the activities with a lack of interest due to their lack of experience in this type of activity. Thirdly, a prolonged lack of real interactions with school and peers, owing to remote learning and earlier experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic, may have been a factor. Their inability to enter into real (non-virtual) relationships with their peers may have affected their motivation and readiness (or distance) to cooperate. Finally, they may have simply missed their previous surroundings and children from Ukraine, which affected their mood and need for more time to decide whether to join the activities (on their own terms).

In summary, some children's lack of initial enthusiasm to be part of a team and participate in the activities was probably influenced by a number of factors: fatigue, feeling isolated, negotiating their place, balancing between two worlds (there and here), lack of understanding of the underlying idea (due to lack of previous experience), experience of remote learning and lack of face-to-face interaction with peers, and homesickness. However, the key factor seems to be the children's lack of motivation to participate, which may have been a result of their general situation - a change of environment, absence of familiar peers or the routine associated with participating in the same activities, as well as a lack of experience in school education.

STAGE 1 *A linguistic view of the world*

During this stage, we spoke to the children about the places they liked in their previous locations, their homes and the places they like in Poland. This was done based on adapted materials: "DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, COMMON EXPERIENCES", "MY JOURNEYS, BIG AND SMALL", "MY HOME" and "MY LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL BIOGRAPHY".

The children were able to identify where they had lived before and describe the towns they lived in, along with the surrounding buildings. *Although we did not write down exact addresses, the children were able to name the towns (Sonia).* We also listened to stories about their journey to Poland, asking, for example, where they were born. Most children were able to provide the names of towns: *My grandmother is from* Kharkiv *(Pikachu 1),* while some gave general

descriptions, such as *a place next to a park*. Others emphasised their knowledge of their birthplace in the following words: *I know where I was born, I know very well* (Tony Stark). This was an important step, demonstrating the need to talk to each child to understand their personal experiences and perceptions of space as well as the role of places in their lives.

At this stage, the children were free to share their ideas, each of them showing their involvement and creativity. The atmosphere in the room was noisy, but the children did not mind, they were already used to the situation, each of them chose their own place to sit and did not change it (Roksana).

This part of the study allowed us to identify important information such as the children's age, origin, and the languages each child communicates in. Another important piece of information also emerged here concerning the children's desires and dreams related to home. As it turned out, relocation resulted in children drawing their homes or their dreams associated with lost homes as well as places they feel connected to, miss and have memories of.

We also observed the relationships that were established during the activities. We obtained information on children's journeys and the similarities they found in different countries - all from their perspective (Alicja).

The difficulties encountered in the joint activities regarding the children's inability to express their identity and being unkind towards others may have been due to various factors. First of all, as the children were refugees from Ukraine, they may have experienced the stress of migration, homesickness and difficulties in adapting to their new environment. This may have affected their readiness and ability to express themselves, to engage and participate and so open up to others. Moreover, the children may have found it difficult to express their identity and be kind towards others, as their identity may have been in the process of forming, they were searching for their own space.

The children's reactions to the tasks varied and depended on many factors, such as age, individual abilities and the children's motivation to work. While the children were initially cautious about the introductory activities, the motivation and the presentation of the material made the atmosphere conducive to work.

Migration, a change of the child's environment and adaptation to a new culture can affect their identity and the way they perceive themselves and others. This is why it was important to take into account these specific challenges and adapt the approach and methods to the needs and

limitations of children with refugee and migrant backgrounds when conducting this type of activities.

Already at this stage, the children became mediators in multilingual communication. In order to simplify and illustrate the context of the activities, the researchers used examples to make the tasks more accessible to the children.

During the lunch break, the children played various games such as hide-and-seek, ran around the rooms and in the courtyard, and sang Ukrainian songs. Some children knew songs only in one language, others in a different language, but they sang together. This seemed to evoke a kind of nostalgia.

At this stage, it was not possible to implement a hundred per cent of the planned activities due to communication challenges. For this reason, additional resources were prepared for subsequent meetings to assist the adults in communicating with the children. Interpreters who spoke the native languages and dialects of the children's primary means of communication were invited to join the activities and this made communication more effective.

During the activities, spontaneous breaks for small refreshments were also planned, and it became apparent with time that through the shared work the children in the target group were bonding. *Despite the age difference and in some cases the language barrier, the children shared their meals with each other and showed a high level of personal culture. They thanked for each meal and asked if they could take some refreshments for their siblings or invite them to a meal. It was evident that the children had acclimatised to the environment they found themselves in (Alicja).*

It was very surprising to see the gratitude and joy of the children as they said goodbye after the first stage of activities had ended. The next day, the group was waiting in front of the centre and in the room, looking forward to more activities.

STAGE 2 House of kindness

Starting each session, we tried to introduce positive energy by organising motor games and energisers. We selected activities that were attractive to the children and helped them to relax. For example, we organised games where the children cooperated with each other, which helped them to open up and feel comfortable in the group (Sonia).

The aim of this stage was to create a "house of kindness" with the children, which meant building an atmosphere of acceptance, support and mutual respect.

At the beginning, we moved to the (...) stage of building a house. We asked the children to start by imagining their dream home. Then, on a large billboard, Patrycja painted a large house with rooms with descriptions that we presented to the children, encouraging them to imagine their dream kitchen, bathroom and to choose rooms for themselves. We labelled the rooms with the children's pseudonyms (Sonia and Patrycja).

This stage included a variety of activities, such as discussions about what it means to be kind, making drawings and telling stories about kindness, as well as practising kindness in everyday interactions. It was challenging for some children to express their feelings and needs, which affected their ability to fully participate in the activities. We were able to create an environment where the children could feel comfortable and accepted, but achieving this fully was a challenge because of the difficulties mentioned. *The building of the house was quite quick, but the children grew a little tired by the end of the work, so we decided to have a pizza break. The children chose the taste of the pizza themselves (Sonia and Patrycja).*

During the second stage in Nadarzyn, all children who were present at the previous stage attended the session. Younger children also participated and were very interested in the team activity. The meeting started with a motor and integration game. Then the children arranged the rooms (of the project house) based on their own ideas and using the available materials. *During the activity I noticed that the children showed each other their pictures and inspired each other. One of the participants turned on his music, which put the participants in a more cheerful mood* (Alicja).

No ideas were imposed on the children, they created their house of kindness themselves. *There was a friendly and warm atmosphere during the activities; one of the boys (among the oldest participants) (...) tried to attract attention to himself. After a conversation and time spent together it was apparent that the child needed attention and further activities* (Alicja). The children then sat in a circle around the "House of Kindness" they created. Going clockwise, they began telling a story about home using the word house as inspiration. The story was initiated by one of the researchers and soon the children joined in to continue it. *Each of the children gave one example of what they associate with home, initially not very imaginatively but becoming more and more personal* (Roksana). The children's contributions very often revealed their hidden dreams, such as that of a dog, a motorbike, a car, a dressing table, a room

of their own, a console, cosmetics, toys, a bath tub, a parrot, a fireplace, a carpet, an armchair, a house window, Lego blocks, a camera, a wardrobe, a blanket, a sofa, a mirror, a watch, books, or a lamp. *I've always wanted a room upstairs* (Pikachu 1) - the boy chose the attic as his room. (...) *I've always wanted a computer* (Pikachu 1)- the boy's reply to the question why the computer is in both the living room and the bathroom of the house they drew together. *This was one of the most touching parts of our research process. After the conversation, we had a surprise film show (the children watched a cartoon in Ukrainian)* (Alicja).

STAGE 3 identities and counter-narratives

Stage 3 centred on reflecting on the space in which the children currently reside and involved conducting interviews with the children.

We decided that it would be best to show the children a map of Poland and tell them a little more about the country they were currently in. We explained to them where Poland was on the world map, then showed them where the different cities in Poland were, including Warsaw, where they were currently staying (Sonia and Patrycja).

We asked the children to say what they would like to see in Poland. The answers were varied: *I want to visit parks, I want to see the sea, I want to visit different cities*. They seemed to have already encountered some information about Poland.

At this stage, we focused on supporting the children to explore and express their identity. We conducted a handprint activity where each child had an opportunity to talk about themselves in different aspects such as: "me as a daughter", "me as a friend", "me as a student", etc. (Sonia). Going through this stage was unique as it allowed the children to reflect on different aspects of their identity, which often led to important conversations and reflections on challenges, such as dealing with difficulties in their relationships with peers or at school.

One challenge in this part of the study was that some children found it difficult to express their feelings and experiences. Despite this, we were able to implement a few successful activities that helped the children to better understand themselves. The children also made puppets that allowed them to express themselves directly, which encouraged them to speak more easily.

I cut out palm templates and asked the children to describe who they were, pointing to each finger. Tony Stark began describing each finger in Ukrainian. Pikachu 1 and Pikachu 2 were not keen to do this exercise. One girl decided to redraw the palm and make a new one, using

coloured fabric. She drew a ring on one finger and painted the nails (Sonia). The girl later commented*: I like this colour, I sometimes paint my nails too (a girl). Finally, we asked the children to make a puppet* (Sonia).

During the evaluation, the children commented that they would like to have more of these types of activities, but this was quite contradictory to what they demonstrated during these activities. When asked: do you like the activities? (Sonia), *they unanimously answered: Yes.*

It is difficult to conclusively assess why their engagement was not as high as we had assumed from an adult perspective. We can suppose that this could have been related to the children's tiredness, as they may be affected by the anxiety and fatigue of adult carers, and the children's need for rest (as concluded by Roksana, Alicja and Sonia). Despite some fatigue evident by the end of the session, the children showed an enthusiasm for co-operating and creating, which was apparent as they cut out and glued various objects, also creating a garden at the request of one of the group members. *However, the energy came in waves, as was evident during the pizza break, which the children chose themselves* (Sonia).

Overall, although the children expressed their desire to participate in more such activities, their level of engagement during the activities varied. Some children changed their pseudonyms throughout the study, which may indicate their developing sense of identity or simply a desire to experiment with different names. A possible explanation for some children's low levels of engagement may have been fatigue and a need for rest. This may suggest that the children need more support including interest from close adults, in managing their time and energy in their new setting, and in developing skills to express their feelings and needs. The incomok of the study showed that some of the adults responsible for children face many challenges and difficulties and are not always in a position to see the challenges their children face. The predominant group of carers were mothers struggling with the daily reality of life in a completely new country.

During Stage 3 in Nadarzyn, some younger children who were very keen to join in also took part in the activities. The meeting opened with a motor and integration game using an animation scarf as a way to welcome the children. Then each child drew his or her palm and individually talked about different aspects of their identity - me as a daughter, me as a friend, and me as a student. All children were eager to complete Stage 3 despite the language barrier. *After the activity, we went for a walk with the children and their legal guardians to a nearby clearing. Surrounded by greenery, it fostered a friendly atmosphere and, importantly, the*

children did not associate this place with their current, challenging situation (Alicja). In consultation with the children's parents, the researchers arranged for the parents to stay nearby during the activity by organising a picnic with refreshments. The children worked outdoors making their own puppets with which they spontaneously acted out scenes. After discussions and once this stage was completed, the children received their puppets and took part in the picnic.

Daily life, well-being and situationality

The children were more engaged in the stage that allowed them to express their creativity, which suggests that such activities can be an important part of their daily lives. The 2nd and 3rd stages of the research were definitely the most interesting for them (Sonia).

From the conversations and their responses, we can conclude that some of them were already familiar with certain aspects of life in Poland, such as the city of Warsaw and its parks, playgrounds near their centres, and places of residence. This indicates a certain level of adaptation to the new environment near where they live. However, most of them limit their topographical perspective to certain typical places associated with sparse activities that allow them to explore only a few new places and spaces in their new country of residence.

The daily life and standard of living of Ukrainian Roma children in Poland varies and depends on many factors, such as family situation, or where they live. The incomplete families and the conditions in which they currently reside are not favourable for the children in my opinion. Despite this, the children are happy and spend their time actively at the centre (Alicja).

Some children who came to Poland from Ukraine grow up in the space between the Polish environment that surrounds them and the family environment on migration. As with any other child, their experiences and conditions of growing up may vary depending on individual circumstances and family situation (mostly the situation of mothers). *Despite the fact that the conditions in which they find themselves are not easy (centres), they are eager to discover Polish culture by learning both the language and customs* (Alicja). *In terms of their well-being, based on observations and conversations with the children, they find it difficult to navigate the new situation, even more so after this trauma, dealing with this situation in their lives and facing a language and cultural barrier. Our cultures are different and it is clear that you have to find that middle ground* (Alicja).

Educational situation and school performance in the new location

The children are subject to compulsory education in the Polish education system. We did not obtain direct information on the children's school performance. We also do not know to what extent mothers - the Roma from Ukraine are able to understand how, for example, Librus[4] works, whether they are able to use it and navigate their way through the Polish school system when the language and distance form a barrier in education. The Roma from various groups who arrived in Poland have very different aspirations and experiences, which translates into how they see their children's education and the different challenges and difficulties they face in the new country. This information is usually kept within their own cultural circle.

Virtually all of the school-age children either pursued distance learning - *most of them declared that they study online at a school in Ukraine* (Patrycja) - or did not pursue education at all. *Some children said they had completed a class in Ukraine. Others didn't mention school at all. Still others mentioned school, but their literacy was low* (Alicja). Upon their arrival in Poland, *there were problems to enrol the kids in school. The parents' fear was quite visible. They were simply afraid of how the children would cope in this school; they don't speak Polish,* [they don't know] *what kind of children would be there, whether the teacher would protect their children...There were these kinds of protective comments* (Sonia: citing the mothers' comments). Some of the older children were not enrolled in school on time and were not accepted *because there are no places for our children in this* school (Ania: citing the mothers' comments).

The children didn't really want to talk about school. (...) some went to school, some don't want to go and it's not a fun topic (Ania). There were also opinions that *the language competences of children who had been in Poland for more than a year were starting to develop. When I talked to the children and asked them about the Polish language, they said that they had been learning Polish for a year and they were communicating really well. However, I noticed problems with writing and reading in the case of some children* (Alicja, based on the children's and their mothers' statements).

As one of the children's grandmothers commented: *well, it's all nice that these things (school supplies) are there, but these children don't want to go to school.* School in a completely new

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[4] The Librus app is an alternative way for a parent to access essential information about school and the child as a student.

place, in a foreign context, with a strong language barrier, prejudice against children, peer rejection - *I can imagine it can be difficult for them (...). But, for example, the school for children organised by the foundation at the centre, learning Polish once a week, it was a nice event for them* (Ania).

By contrast, some of the children were keen to talk about their education in Ukraine – in various ways. They reported having classmates there: *There was Louisa, from my backyard, she stayed in Ukraine (Princess 1).*

The children's educational responses varied widely. *We have anxiety reactions - reactions to school, where the kids want to have friends, they want to have classmates, they want to go outside their space, but they are afraid to go to school* (Sonia, based on the children's and mothers' statements).

Children's difficulties observed in the study with tasks such as drawing or writing may indicate educational deficiencies, lack of previous experience in this area or different learning habits. *At this stage, I observed big deficits in writing and reading. The parents of the children declared that the children were learning, but this was not evident in their activities* (Patrycja).

Difficulties may also be related to distance and to the varying degrees of proficiency in using languages: Ukrainian, Polish and Romani. It is important to add that in one of the groups, Tor, who understood the Roma language best, and Pikachu 2, who understood Polish best, supported the whole team in communicating with each other. By doing so, *the children became intermediaries of communication* (Sonia) in the process of carrying out the various activities.

One important aspect of the process observed was the cooperation between the children, who, *despite the difficulties (...) helped each other, used the phone when, for example, they were unable to point to a place on a map. They knew how to mobilise each other at key moments. (...) Cooperation. I noticed here that the children got involved and cooperated. They enjoyed working together* (Patrycja).

Desires and dreams

The children expressed their desires for things they would like to see in Poland, e.g. they mentioned the zoo: *we want to go to the Zoo!,* or an amusement park. *Young children need change, for example, they mentioned the playground, the need to experience something colourful, while it is often the case that mothers, for various reasons, sit in the centres and don't*

go outside with their children (Sonia, based on the children's statements). The children were drawing their dreams. This shows that despite their initial lack of enthusiasm due to distance and knowledge gap, they have various interests and desires related to their new surroundings. The children's narratives revealed their hidden dreams. *Virtually all the children dreamed of a computer, they wanted a computer and a TV everywhere, e.g. in the kitchen, in the bathroom. In the dream house the children drew basic things: kitchen, fridge, essential items and a playstation* (Sonia, based on the children's statements). They also expressed dreams of having a pet, of material possessions such as a motorbike, a car, a dressing table, their own room, a console, cosmetics and toys. *These dreams were expressed very nicely during the activity of creating a common house. To us, it might seem like basic, ordinary things: a bed, toiletries. The children also shared dreams about having a toy track or a toy car. They were typical childhood dreams. What was special was that all the children dreamt of a house, their own rooms, their space* (Alicja).

The children showed a great need to spend time with us. During the study, it was the first time the children worked independently (Roksana).

Our observation of the children singing Ukrainian songs and their joy expressed with the words: *I know this song, it's my song (Princess1), I also have it on my phone (Tony Stark)*, suggests that they may miss their country and culture. What follows, it can suggest that they dream about returning to their country and familiar experiences. *This was confirmed in the second group, where the children shared dreams about* [returning to] *their homes, their places, they said they missed their families, their friends, they wanted to go back* (Alicja, based on the children's statements).

It is important to take this longing and the children's cultural connections into account when planning and implementing activities (Sonia).

What did we fail to learn and why?

Due to their "suspension" in time and place of temporary residence, we were unable to obtain information on the children's school performance and their daily routines. Some of the children are beneficiaries of educational activities organised by the Foundation Towards Dialogue. Their absence from the Polish education system is due to a number of very different and overlapping factors (e.g. insecurity; unfamiliarity with the language, context, structure and topography;

unfamiliarity with the system and the Polish school; lack of support; suspension between there and here; problems of mothers; a sense of exclusion; and, finally, systemic and social distance toward the Roma as refugees).

Despite the presence of researchers from the Roma community and so speaking the children's languages and dialects, we were not able to avoid some challenges in communication. This, in turn, may have posed a challenge for some children and may have affected their ability to understand and perform the tasks. For instance, participating in language activities, the children found it difficult to name their favourite superheroes, which may be due to their lack of knowledge of the names of superhero characters in Polish or Romani. Due to the diverse linguistic, cognitive and emotional experiences and the different spaces and places the children live in day-to-day as refugees, ensuring a safe space to open up to all of them is challenging even in activities like our project.

Challenges - the perspective of researchers from the community - concluding reflections

The study with refugee children from Ukraine at the centres in Wołoska and Kasprzaka Streets in Warsaw and at the centre in Nadarzyn found a number of important observations and challenges that are crucial for planning future interventions and initiating research with migrant children. The following are some of the key reflections:

Overcoming the language barrier was one of the greatest challenges. Some children struggled to understand both Romani and Polish. This highlights the need to adapt the communication method to the language level of the children and to take into account that different age groups have specific needs, behaviours and challenges.

Children found it difficult to choose their idols or favourite cartoon characters, which may indicate a lack of self-confidence or difficulties in expressing their identity. Future interventions should focus on developing children's self-esteem and identity through activities that help them understand and appreciate themselves and others, and above all by creating safe spaces for such activities.

The observation of children singing Ukrainian songs suggests that they may miss their country and culture. It is important to take this homesickness and the children's cultural connections into account when planning and implementing activities.

It was interesting to observe that the children became mediators of communication between us and those girls and boys who did not understand the language. This highlights the importance of having cultural or language mediators who can help with communication and understanding between the research team and participants.

During the lunch break, the children clearly enjoyed running, hiding and singing, which implies that outdoor and motor activities are an important part of the programme for children with refugee backgrounds.

It seems that those children who had difficulty choosing their superhero may have had self-esteem or identity issues. This may indicate a need for psychological support for children with refugee backgrounds who may be experiencing stress, anxiety or other emotional challenges related to migration and a change in their educational environment.

Although the children correctly marked Ukraine, Poland and Europe on the map, they may have a limited understanding of the wider geopolitical context they are in. However, they were able to identify key places they know from their daily lives in Poland and Ukraine. This was particularly true of parks and playgrounds, because as they pointed out: *we were there with Mum (Princess, Tony Stark).*

There is a need to expand the space through activities in different outdoor locations as well as to reduce distractions and take into account the children's homesickness and cultural connections.

Attention should also be paid to children's possible educational deficiencies and learning habits, which may affect their ability to adapt to the rules, participate and perform tasks as part of a team.

From our perspective as researchers, these activities were both a challenge and a valuable experience. They taught us the importance of adapting the pace and type of activities to children's individual needs and abilities, and how important it is to create a space where children can express themselves freely, even if it can be difficult for them (Sonia).

Having analysed the two stages, we see that the children were much more involved in stage 2, where they were given an opportunity to express their creativity through building their house. In contrast, in stage 3, where they had to reflect on a space they may not have fully understood, their involvement was much lower. We can conclude that children are much more eager to engage in activities that they understand and which they can invest emotionally in.

Communication difficulties and lack of enthusiasm may be due to various factors that we need to take into account in the subsequent stages of the research.

In participatory research, adults implement and actively participate in the planned activities together with the children and co-decide on potential changes. *For us, this meant that we were not only observing the children during various activities, but also actively participating with them. It was easy for us to establish relationships with the children in more casual, less formal activities, such as going for a walk or eating ice cream, as this helped to break the ice and made the children more open to conversation and cooperation. In contrast, we found it difficult to motivate the children to participate in more formal activities and energisers, which was surprising and required extra effort and creativity from us to accommodate their mood and needs* (Sonia).

We also noticed that the children struggled with expressing their feelings and emotions. *This required more empathy and care from us to create a safe and comfortable environment where the children would be able to open up. It was challenging as we had to find the right balance between being supportive to the children while encouraging them to express themselves and participate in activities. Overall, our involvement and active participation in the activities was key to understanding the children's experiences and building relationships with them, despite encountering some difficulties and challenges (Sonia).* Further reflection is needed on how children can be better supported in expressing their identity and kindness towards others. This could include activities that help children to understand and accept themselves and others, develop empathy and communication skills and build relationships with peers and adults. **Further research and interventions should be focused on designing and implementing strategies and methods to support the security and development of migrant children's identity, participation and agency**. **This should be done in collaboration with both children and adults (with adult involvement) in a community context.**

Conclusions

The findings of the research present a diverse view of the situation and experiences of Roma children from Ukraine after their arrival in Poland at different locations in Warsaw and at the Nadarzyn centre near Warsaw. Each case represents a child who experienced diverse situations involving asymmetry, misunderstanding, abuse, the suffering of war and refugeehood, and the

challenges of being in-between: between Ukrainian refugees and the host society in Poland. Behind each case, there is also a child with potential, dreams and needs, including the need for their own safe place with a window to the world, a sofa and a blanket, a room of their own or their own desk, a cupboard, a computer and a floor on which to play with Lego blocks.

The experience of being in-between, being "nowhere", involves the experience of a place that used to be home (the category of the past) and a place of new reality (the category of the present). The experience of being in-between so characteristic of the group participating in this study is the experience of being between different cultural orders and codes, and being between inherently opposing realities - individual freedom in one's place (of origin) and subordination to the support system in the new country of residence.

Spatial limitation and restricted access to space in new places of residence is one of the key barriers affecting how refugee children function. It relates to both spatial-social and physical dimensions. These barriers result from isolation due to systemic conditions[5] and are rooted in the fear of unfamiliar topography of the place and situational uncertainty. Also linked to this barrier is the "shrinking world of childhood" (Gill 2008), limited by adult control and supervision over refugee children's freedom to act and move. All this makes children less mobile than before.

It is also the experience of multidimensional inequalities both in terms of access to and use of services and the prospect of exploiting opportunities and possibilities, as well as impediments to developing one's potential due to being disadvantaged (Woodhead, Dornan, Murray, 2013). This experience is a relational phenomenon influenced by a range of factors and children's social relationships with other children and adults as well as relationships with material, immaterial, cultural and political contexts. The extent to which children with refugee backgrounds feel that they are balancing between worlds, are at the crossroads of different realities (war and peace), intersects with their past and present experiences, emotions, relationships and sense of belonging.

Some of the difficulties and challenges posed by the above situation can be prevented or mitigated. Some of them are a direct result of receiving vs. not receiving informational

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[5] Research by the Foundation towards Dialogue shows that the Roma "are isolated because of their ethnicity" https://fundacjawstronedialogu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/To_nie_sa_uchodzcy_tylko_podroznicy_Sytuacjaromskich_osob_uchodzczych_Raport_2023.pdf p. 45.

support or stereotypical perceptions of the Roma community from Ukraine. Others are due to the absence of initiatives to include and support this refugee group with the participation and cooperation of the Roma themselves from the refugee community and the Roma from Poland. The research findings also indicate the importance of inclusion and participation, which in this context means that "we are simply dealing with children: they all have the right to learn" (Bogucka 1997). Additionally, the study demonstrates the importance of children's participation in matters that concern them (Article 12 of the CRC). Inclusion thus implies the search for new strategies, solutions and ways of participation and cooperation in a linguistically, culturally, and nationally diverse social fabric.

The study also revealed that children create a third space as a type of personal safe space. They position themselves between their memories of Ukraine, communication with their relatives who stayed behind and their current, temporary place of residence in Poland. The fragility of this new place is marked by its temporariness and the uncertainty of continuing support and availability of resources. Short-term interventions are not enough if they do not include plans to meet the long-term needs of refugees and strategies to support individuals as well as organisations providing such assistance (Digdiki et al. 2024).

The data obtained from this case study reveal important topics for further exploration. At the same time, they enable reflection on designing further recommendations for supporting children from this vulnerable group in a sensitive refugee context as well as designing action and community-based participatory research. This participatory approach facilitates engaging children in inquiries into matters that affect their daily lives. Further research in this approach will help to transform and empower minority communities and make their voices heard and be included in programmes and projects addressing matters that affect them.

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Recommendations

If you want truly to understand something, try to change it.

(Kurt Lewin, in: Greenwood & Levin, 1998, p. 19)

The material collected as part of the research discussed here, based on thematic literature and field research, focuses on the voices and perspectives of study participants, i.e. children and members of the Roma community (the researchers), and emerges from the experiences of a range of individuals and institutions involved in support initiatives provided to Roma families and children - refugees from Ukraine in 2023. Therefore, the following recommendations directly reflect their situation, needs and context.

- **Recommendations concerning refugee parents**

Further research is recommended to understand the situation of parents - members of Roma communities in Ukraine - war refugees living in Poland. Key issues in this regard include:

- psycho-social and economic situation, discrimination, experience of living in Poland, other difficult experiences (with reference to the situation of their own children, e.g. experience of loss,) plans and opportunities,

- challenges and opportunities regarding assistance and activity in Poland and before displacement,

- housing conditions, standard of living, health care, psychosocial support, experience of living in Ukraine and Poland, discrimination,

- from the parents' perspective - their children's access to education and the attitudes of school staff (bearing in mind the time that has passed between their arrival and the present),

- the role and attitudes of families, their expectations regarding children's access to school and their children's performance, as well as expectations regarding the children's educational and leisure activities,

- challenges in integrating within the dominant society, e.g. different concepts of counselling and diverse experiences from the country of origin,

- challenges in addressing the needs related to resources,

- negative experiences and lack of trust towards the staff of public institutions (one possible reason may be that many institutions lack staff of different national origin; another reason is a lack of knowledge of the language),

- promoting the support for parents in integration activities implemented in crucial areas of social life provided by individuals from the Roma community or with knowledge about Roma communities (cultural assistants, cultural mediators).

- **Recommendations regarding a sense of security**

There is a need to initiate a safe, friendly social space with animation and educational activities for the Roma refugee children as well as their parents and adult caregivers, as a space for introducing and integrating them into the mainstream society during leisure time, education and cultural activities.

The following aspects appear to be relevant in this regard:

- bringing attention to the instability and uncertainty of the situation of refugees; the different ways, mechanisms and tools of understanding and interpreting the assistance and support they receive (or do not receive),

- addressing structural, systemic and social barriers, as well as ambivalences that limit their sense of security and readiness to engage in inclusive activities,

- focusing on space for children: for play, education and self-development activities (e.g. designated areas in reception centres and places where refugees live),

- inclusivity of places that should integrate rather than separate the Roma from persons from outside the Roma community,

- **interclusion,** i.e. inclusion and integration with the presence and cooperation of adults from the Roma community, which promotes communication and effective cooperation with Roma families.

- **Recommendations regarding education**

- empowering the voices of children with refugee backgrounds, based on their right to speak (Article 12. of the CRC). This aspect refers to inclusive (educational and integration) activities in which all children participate (have the right and should participate) and through which their

voices can be heard, acted upon and included in the discourse of the group, the classroom and the school.

- continuation and reinforcement of existing support in accessing and being part of the education system as well as exercising the right to education by Roma children from Ukraine.

- incorporating the support of Roma assistants from the refugee.

Of key importance in this respect seem to be activities informing parents about the system and the specifics of education in Poland, activities supporting the enrolment of children in school and their compulsory schooling, as well as the possibility of participating in additional classes, including classes in Polish as a foreign language.

- improving access to education for children and youth, as a tool for any refugee community to pave a way forward and create an alternative present and plans for the future.

It is also important to ensure access to school supplies and to identify which supplies children should be equipped with at a given stage of their education, as well as to inform how and where to get support in this aspect.

- **Recommendations regarding mental health and well-being**

There is a need to support parents, especially mothers who face new challenges in their new place of residence.

Mental health support seems essential given that a large group of men from the Roma community are fighting in Ukraine while their wives, daughters and mothers are left alone with their children. They often have to work through loss and grief on their own.

The health situation including mental health of mothers, being left alone to cope with their problems has a significant impact on the well-being (or lack thereof) of their children. The absence of support and opportunities for mothers[6] to receive assistance negatively affects children's functioning in their new place of residence and limits their opportunities for inclusion and integration into the outside environment.

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[6] Not all mothers have prams for their youngest children, for example, so they still carry them in their arms, (one mum in one location used a shopping trolley instead).

Hence the need to raise awareness of children's access to free support services, which could be offered e.g. with the cooperation of Roma assistants and people from the Roma community involved in support activities.

- **Recommendations regarding participation**

- the need to strengthen inclusive activities in order to eliminate factors that block participation and are detrimental to children's well-being in peacetime and in times of war
- addressing children's diverse needs (the needs of children are not the needs of adults),
- raising awareness among the staff of institutions and organisations supporting refugees about child participation,
- the need to implement campaigns/ activities promoting children's rights as regards parenting methods as well as in the context of children's rights under *the Convention on the Rights of the Child*,
- the need to support children's access to social participation through the activities of intercultural assistants,
- access to a diverse range of educational, integrative and recreational activities through which children and adolescents can meet and spend time with their peers,
- information campaigns about the offer of activities targeting refugee children and youth promoted e.g. through community and information channels or telephone applications.

- **Recommendations regarding social inclusion and integration**

- the need to foster a sense of belonging to the new place of residence through involvement in joint activities,
- the need to organise information and support meetings (Help-Desk) for parents and carers in order to promote access to information, the exchange of knowledge, learning about how to function in the new country as well as promoting integration in leisure time,
- the need to continue this research in a broader context (nationwide) involving other key actors (parents, staff of NGOs and support institutions, media staff, members of the Roma community in Poland, refugees from Ukraine),
- the need for a support network of Roma and intercultural assistants,

- the need for a debate with the community to reflect on how to create conditions that strengthen the involvement of Roma children from Ukraine in the host society,

- raising awareness among the dominant society and minorities that barriers to contact and integration are complex and result from, inter alia, language barriers, limited social interaction, sometimes isolation, experienced discrimination and stigmatisation, as well as a sense of insecurity and mistrust. However, these are not the only barriers that need to be addressed when designing initiatives to support integration,

- the need for systemic change and an urban policy of intercultural opening towards children - as a vulnerable refugee group, so that they can be included, integrated as opposed to isolated and kept at a distance,

- raising awareness among the dominant society about the systemic and social consequences of anti-gypsyism,

- promoting an alternative image of persons from the Roma community by popularising good practices and success stories as a method of combating stereotyping and denying people from the Roma minority their individuality and defining them solely by their ethnicity.

Identifying both visible, tangible and hidden barriers related to individual and group adaptation and bridging them is therefore an important step in supporting Roma children with refugee backgrounds from Ukraine.
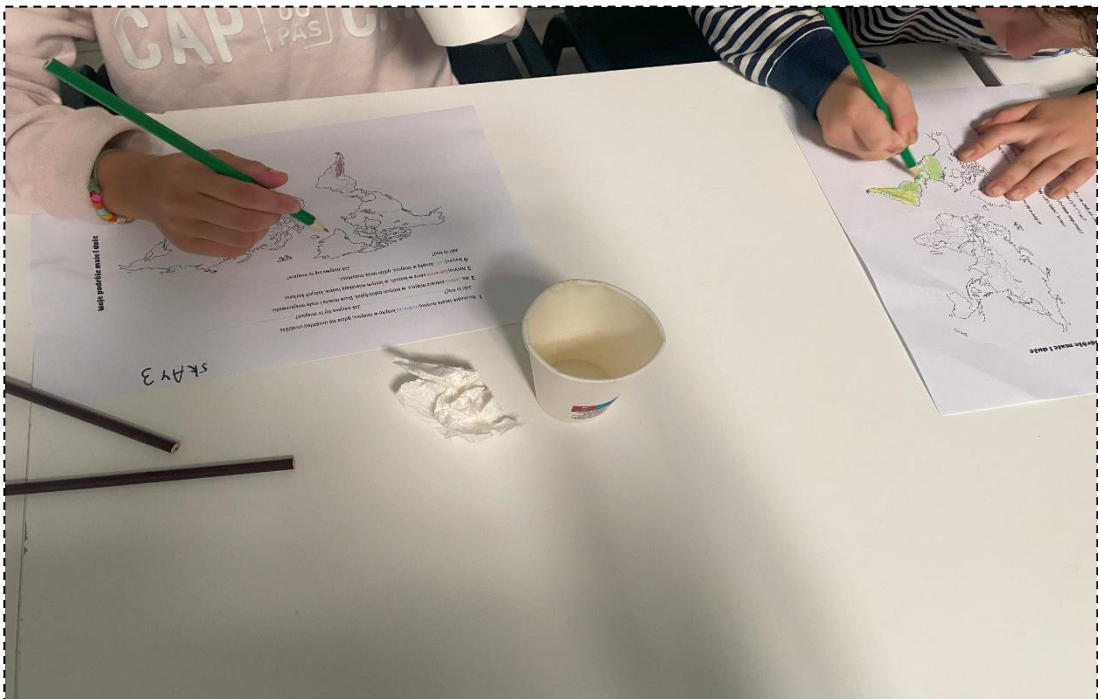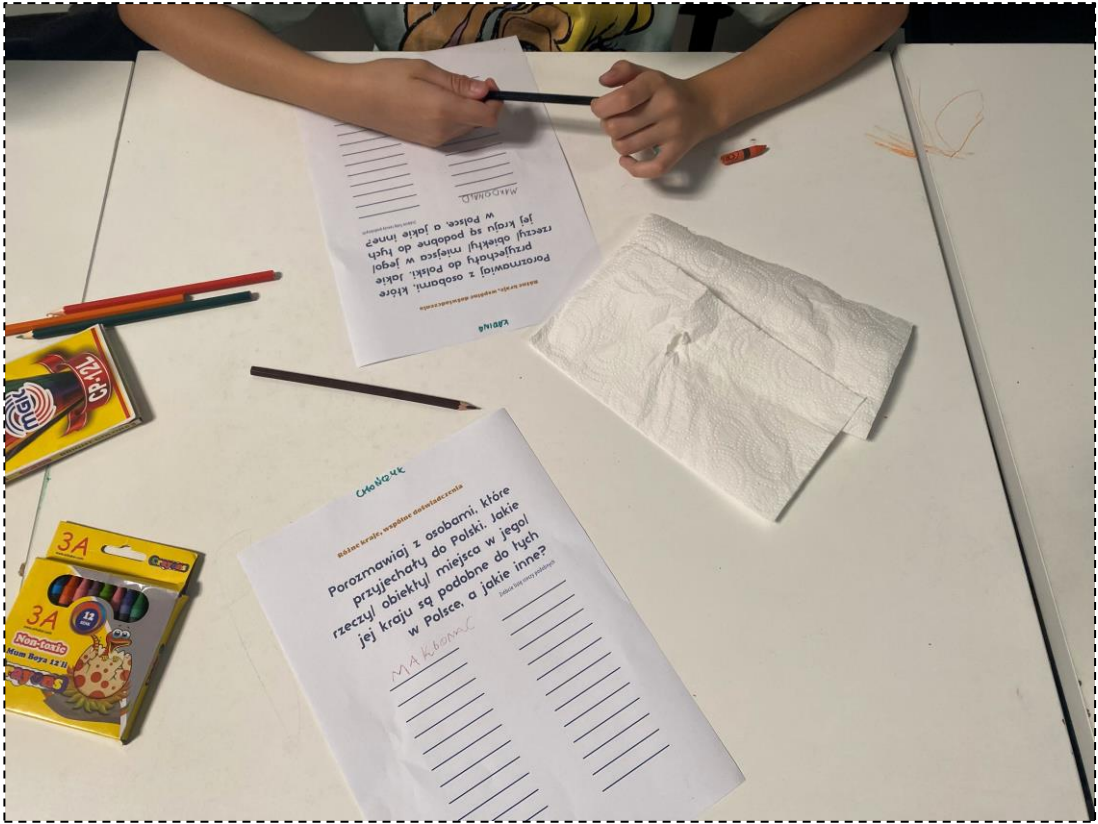
ANNEX

Photos documenting drawings – children's statements, taken by researchers

STAGE No. 1
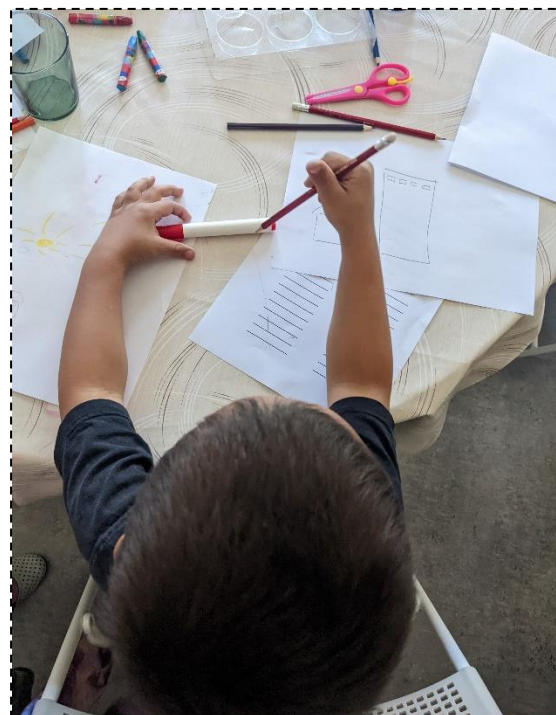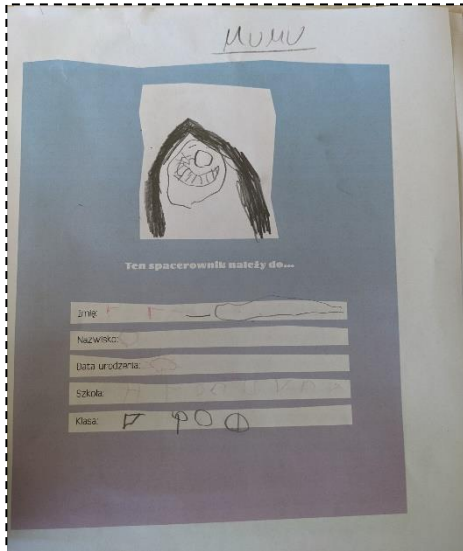
STAGE No. 2

STAGE No. 3

About the authors

Małgorzata Kołaczek – PhD in political science, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Intercultural Studies at the Jagiellonian University, where she also served as Deputy Director of Studies (202-2023). Vice-President of the Foundation Towards Dialogue. Founder of the Roma Community Centre. Co-founder of the Poland-Roma-Ukraine group. Review editor for the Romani Studies journal of the Gypsy Lore Society. Graduate of Public Relations studies at the TEU in Cracow and the Academy of Professional Coach at the Warsaw School of Economics. Her research and educational interests include issues of ethnicity, especially the Roma community and their situation in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as issues of migration, the public image and visibility of minorities in the media in Poland and globally. Author of books, scholarship holder of academic and didactic programmes, educator and anti-discrimination trainer. Coordinator of educational and research projects, author of educational programmes and tools.

Urszula Markowska-Manista – PhD in humanities, field researcher. Her research involves decolonial perspectives and participatory approaches in migration studies, childhood studies, education and children's rights in culturally diverse environments. She works as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Warsaw and as a lecturer at the international programme Childhoods Studies and Children's Rights, Fahchochschule Potsdam, Germany. Editor of Bloomsbury Education and Childhood Studies (Childhood and Youth), Bloomsbury Academic. Author of numerous publications on children's rights and situations in so-called sensitive contexts. Researcher in international projects, e.g.: "Impactful and sustainable policy change for migrant education" Sirius 3.0, "Building Inclusion, Sustaining Solidarity: Frontline Host Communities, Distress Migrants, and the Role of States" and co-author of the report: Digidiki, V., Bhabha, J., Markowska-Manista, U. & Dobkowska, J. (2024). Building Inclusion, Sustaining Solidarity towards migrants in frontline local communities: The case of Poland during the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis. Harvard FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Boston, USA.

Joanna Talewicz – PhD in cultural anthropology, researcher, educator, author, and activist. She has been involved in advocacy for the Roma community and minority rights for twenty years. Co-founder and President of the Foundation Towards Dialogue. Consultant in the field of Diversity & Inclusion. She worked as an assistant professor at the Institute of Intercultural Studies at the Jagiellonian University. Awarded the Olga Kersten- Matwin Batory Foundation Prize for ongoing integration, educational, psychological, legal and activation support for refugees of Roma origin. Scholarship holder of Columbia University, Leadership Academy for Poland. Scholarship holder of the Fulbright Scholarship Programme, Tom Lantos Institute, the European Commission and the US Department of State. Member of the Democracy and Belonging Forum at the Othering &Belonging Institute, UC Berkeley and the Polish delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Author and editor of books and academic articles. She has published, inter alia, in Gazeta Wyborcza and Newsweek.

Eleni P. Samsari, Ph.D. degree in Special Education, currently works as an in-service teacher in Special Education, also as part-time teaching staff member in the Department of Early Childhood Education of University of Western Macedonia (UoWM) in Greece. Her original work has been presented in numerous international and national conferences in Greek and in English, included at the conference proceedings. Her articles have been published in scholarly scientific journals and in edited volumes. She also serves as a reviewer for various journals and conferences in the field of Education. Her research interests focus on Intercultural Education, Inclusive Pedagogy and Special Needs Education as well as on School Psychology.

Georgios Nikolaou is President and Professor of the Department of Education and Social Work of the University of Patras in Greece. He is the writer of three books and many papers, published in Greek and international reviews. He is also a member of the Greek Pedagogical Association, of the Greek Association of Special Education and was President of the Greek Observatory for Intercultural Education. In 2000 he was elected as an Assistant Counselor of Intercultural Education at Pedagogical Institute in Greece. He has participated at national and international projects

Nektaria Palaiologou is Professor at the School of Humanities at Hellenic Open University (HOU), working at the University since 2005. Currently she is the Director of Language Education for Refugees and Migrants (L.R.M.) international master Programme at HOU.
Until today she has taught Intercultural Education, Migration and Refugee Education courses at six Greek and at two European Universities. In 2018 she was appointed as one of the two Vice Presidents of the International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE). She is also serving as Editor in Chief at the Intercultural Education Journal, Taylor and Francis, Routledge and is also Editorial Board member on frequent basis at seven international journals. She has edited three books in English and three books in Greek (as co-writer), translated and edited two significant books in Greek language (i.e. James Banks 2007 and Jagdish Gundara 2001). Nektaria has been participating as member of the scientific team at 15 international European projects so far with UoWM and HOU as partner, in the field of Intercultural Education, Migration, Refugee Education Studies, in collaboration with European Universities and Organizations.