



Refugee and migrant children integration Report on Gender Issues

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INTEGRATION MAPPING OF REFUGEE
AND MIGRANT CHILDREN

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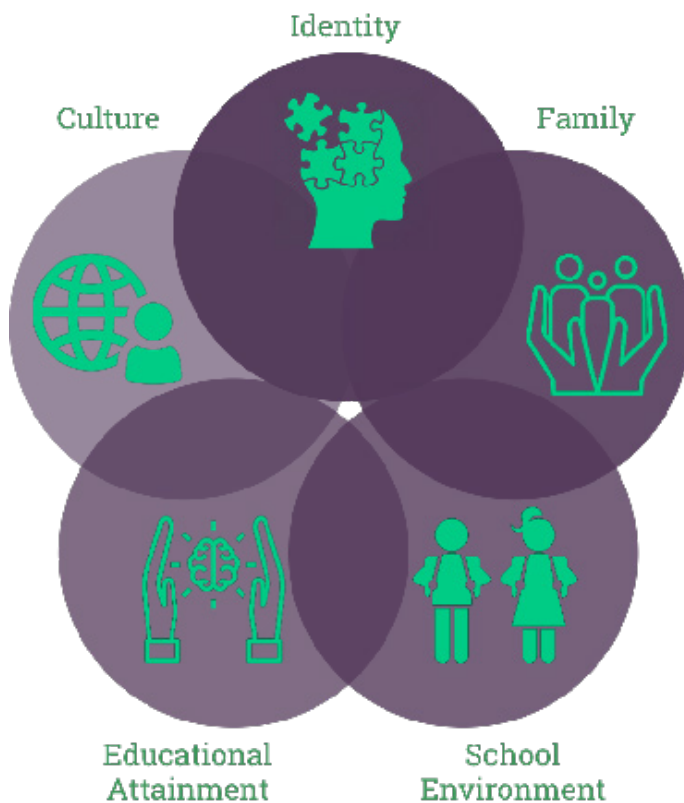


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Migration is a source of major challenges and opportunities in Europe, as more and more people are seeking new homes across the continent. International migrants constituted approximately 11% of the total European population in 2019, of which more than 7 million are refugees and migrant children. Therefore, the successful integration of these children in their host countries is at the center of migration policy in Europe. IMMERSE collects the voices of more than 400 of these children considering that their perspective is essential to understand their lived experiences and to help plan appropriate systems of social and educational integration. This report identifies indicators of the socio-educational integration of migrant children. Research teams from Germany and Belgium carried out qualitative research focusing on the theme of gender and its relation to integration through the lens of educational and school experiences of migrant and refugee children in their host countries.

Dimensions on gender and migration

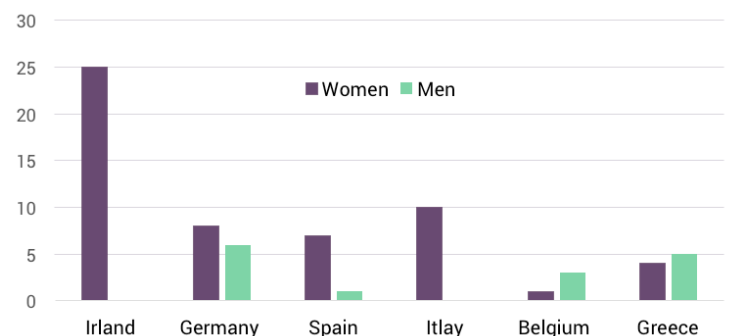
The study has identified five dimensions connected to gender at the intersection with migration and socio-educational integration of refugee and migrant children, which were common to all six countries (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy and Spain):



Gender breakdown of the children participating in the study by country



Gender breakdown of the parents participating in the study by country





Overall findings



Gender has a high degree influence on bifactor and trifactor jeopardy of these children, as it intersects not only with migration and education but also with ethnical prejudice, racism, and discrimination. In other words, this means that gender doubles or triples vulnerabilities at the intersection with migration and education and vice versa, as well as with psycho-social wellbeing and intercultural competences.



In terms of health, gender has an impact on who's educational success is affected. Previous trauma can affect both mental and physical health of the children and enhance vulnerabilities even more dramatically. According to a new policy paper issued by the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report on *Education as healing: Addressing the trauma of displacement through social and emotional learning*, trauma prevalence in migrant and refugee children is high and it significantly effects learning.



Born out of the wish for the empowerment of girls and women, gender mainstreaming can be criticised as the engendering policy-making process as well as the respective practices. Concerning educational equality, it can be argued that conditions have shifted in a way that puts boys at a disadvantage.



As the **main facilitators** gender sensitive policies, curricula, and training (CPD for teachers) have been identified. The **main barriers** included gender bias (towards both genders), gender-based discrimination, and missing or insufficient gender-related protection services.



A sense of belonging in school can only be achieved when teachers as well as social workers are well versed in and practice gender sensitivity. In fact, the vital role of teachers and an overall gender sensitive school climate fosters success, satisfaction, as well as stability for migrant and refugee children and helps them to integrate and succeed academically.





Major educational gender disparities

Female students

While **girls overall outperform boys** in educational performance, they **present** at the same time a **greater social vulnerability**.

Girls and female adolescents may be **prescribed per their family's religious tradition to observe certain rules** – such as **wearing a hijab** – which when not allowed in schools poses a **direct threat to educational accessibility** for female students.

Rejection of certain outward appearances based on prejudice creates extra stress and thus **hinders the general well-being of girls**.

Early and forced marriage effects girls disproportionately more often than boys. The practice not only **threatens the overall well-being** but also **undermines the educational performance early on**, and in many cases obstructs the way to secondary and higher education for girls.

For **unaccompanied and separated mothers** (children with children) education poses a major problem. Teenage mothers face **challenges associated with discontinuing their education, stigmatisation, protection, health, and an unclear future**. Even in a European context, **they represent a highly underrepresented and vulnerable group**.

Male students

Findings of both the qualitative research and the research literature found that male students present a **greater overall risk of lower educational attainment**.

Especially within the **13-16 age groups**, male students presented a **higher propensity for missing classes, confrontations with teachers and other authorities**, and other behavioural problems.

Early school drop-out rates are higher within the male student population than in the female.

Since, **almost 90% of all unaccompanied adolescents are male** it must be considered that this group is particularly vulnerable. Their vulnerabilities are gendered as much as they are challenged by gender bias and stereotypes coupled with discrimination due to origin. **In many cases, they are perceived as a threat, face special vulnerabilities, and their rights are often denied**.

Asylum policies, administrative inconsistencies, and other structural problems keep these male boys and adolescence from entering school more than any other vulnerable group.

