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INTEGRATION MAPPING OF REFUGEE
AND MIGRANT CHILDREN

Press release

19 October 2023

IMMERSE Project Reveals Results on the Integration of Migrant Children in Schools and Educational Environments, Led by Pontifical Comillas University

Migrant minors in Spain lead in key indicators for socio-educational integration, such as a sense of belonging and happiness

- The IMMERSE project, which collects extensive data on child and youth migrants, is the first of its kind in Europe.
- 68% of migrant children in Spain feel they have strong support from their teachers, and 61% acknowledge substantial support from their peers and friends.
- Over 24,000 children across Europe were interviewed (7,199 in Spain), with 60% being migrants or asylum seeker.

Madrid, 19-10-2023. - The Institute for Migration Studies of Pontifical Comillas University (IUEM) and the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE) presented the results of the IMMERSE project (Integration Mapping of Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe) today. This comprehensive European study examines the level and quality of socio-educational integration of migrant and refugee children in schools and other educational environments in their countries of residence.

"The IMMERSE results provide insights into various aspects of integration, language acquisition, well-being indicators, social connections, access to healthcare, and academic support," says Mercedes Fernández, director of IUEM. Many of the statistics from Spain in the study, including levels of happiness, integration, language proficiency, and a sense of belonging, surpass those of the other five European countries involved in this consortium project.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement 822536. The dissemination of results herein reflects only the author's view and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.



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The study results indicate that in Spain, 60% of migrants have a strong sense of belonging at school, exceeding the other consortium countries (Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, and Spain). Furthermore, nearly half of first-generation and second-generation migrants – 49% and 46%, respectively – feel close to both their culture of origin and the host society. These findings are related to the happiness levels of migrant children in Europe: happiness levels are quite similar across the three groups, with 83% for first-generation migrants, 82% for second-generation migrants, and 88% for natives. Additionally, 87% of migrants exhibit a high level of competence in Spanish, likely influenced by the presence of a Latino community among migrants.

Regarding the educational context, IMMERSE has also analyzed intercultural values as part of the school curriculum. The majority of school directors in Spain (86%) state that intercultural values are a central feature of their school, though paradoxically, less than half of the teaching staff (48%) agree with this statement. Nevertheless, 68% of migrant children feel they receive substantial support from their teachers, once again surpassing the other consortium countries.

All these and many other data related to the socio-educational integration of migrant children can be found in the interactive indicator panel that will be published on [the project's website](#) in November. This panel allows users to filter data, observe differences between countries, and make comparisons based on other key demographic characteristics of children. In addition to reflecting the reality of migrant minors in Europe, the study aims to provide evidence-based policy recommendations to European institutions, drawing from on-the-ground data collected in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, and Spain to support appropriate measures for the socio-educational integration of refugee and migrant children. "Data collected on the ground in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, and Spain."

Karoline Fernández de la Hoz, director of the Spanish Observatory on Racism and Xenophobia (OBERAXE) and a consortium member, emphasized that the results and tools presented "constitute a fundamental milestone in defining and supporting public policies for integration at a time when immigration is one of the major challenges we face as a society in Spain and Europe. It is also one of the key topics on the political agenda of the Spanish presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2023."



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- More information on the IMMERSE website: <https://www.immerse-h2020.eu/>



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