



<http://www.pedagogiadelledifferenze.it/>

Anno LII, n. 2, luglio-dicembre 2023 – ISSN 2785-6895

**R. ANTONINI, R. RICUCCI**

***Managing the co-creation approach and methodology: Lessons learned from the KIDS4ALLL and NEW ABC H2020 projects***

**Come citare:**

Antonini R., Ricucci R. (2023), *Managing the co-creation approach and methodology: Lessons learned from the KIDS4ALLL and NEW ABC H2020 projects*, in “Pedagogia delle differenze – Bollettino della Fondazione «Vito Fazio-Allmayer»”, LII, 2, 117-136.

**Abstract**

Despite the re-definition of the children’s role and agency in constructing “their own lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live” (Prout, James, 1990, p. 8), “adult perceptions of children and children’s marginalized position in adult society” (Punch, 2002, p. 321) are still influencing how research with/on children is viewed and approached. Funding bodies as well as organizations invested in the protection of children’s rights have been advocating for a different approach to research with/on children by supporting and encouraging the implementation of co-creational and participatory methods of research that allow the voice of children and vulnerable groups to be heard and heeded. [...]

**Keywords:** co-creation, voice, education, children/youth with a migrant background, H2020 project.

## **Managing the co-creation approach and methodology: Lessons learned from the KIDS4ALLL and NEW ABC H2020 projects**

### **Abstract**

Despite the re-definition of the children's role and agency in constructing "their own lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live" (Prout, James, 1990, p. 8), "adult perceptions of children and children's marginalized position in adult society" (Punch, 2002, p. 321) are still influencing how research with/on children is viewed and approached. Funding bodies as well as organizations invested in the protection of children's rights have been advocating for a different approach to research with/on children by supporting and encouraging the implementation of co-creational and participatory methods of research that allow the voice of children and vulnerable groups to be heard and heeded. However, poor or tokenistic incorporation of children and young people's voices in educational policy-making has meant that children and young people with a migrant background have been largely absent at worst or included in tokenistic ways, at best. The overarching aim of the KIDS4ALLL and NEW ABC H2020 projects was to trigger and facilitate an effective and sustainable process of co-participated creation and implementation of new or existing good practices for the inclusion of children and young people with a migrant background in formal, informal and non-formal education. Following a brief description of the main aims of the two projects, this paper explores the co-creation methodology and illustrates the lessons learned in the two projects from the co-creation process with a specific focus on teachers' and associations' perceptions of collaborative partnerships.

Keywords: co-creation, voice, education, children/youth with a migrant background, H2020 project.

Nonostante il ruolo e l'agentività dei bambini nella costruzione "delle loro vite, delle vite di coloro che li circondano e delle società in cui

\* Università di Bologna.

\*\* Università di Torino.

vivono” (Prout, James, 1990, p. 8) siano stati oggetto di recente ridefinizione, “le percezioni degli adulti dei bambini e la posizione marginalizzata dei bambini nella società adulta” (Punch, 2002, p. 321) stanno ancora influenzando il modo in cui si fa ricerca con/sui bambini. Gli enti di finanziamento e le organizzazioni che investono nella tutela dei diritti dei bambini promuovono un approccio diverso alla ricerca sui bambini sostenendo e incoraggiando l’attuazione di metodi di ricerca co-creativi e partecipativi che consentano ai bambini e ai gruppi vulnerabili di far sentire la propria voce ed essere ascoltati. Tuttavia, la scarsa o simbolica integrazione delle voci dei bambini e dei giovani nella formulazione delle politiche educative ha fatto sì che i bambini e i giovani con un background migratorio siano stati inclusi solo in maniera simbolica o, nel peggiore dei casi, completamente ignorati. L’obiettivo principale dei progetti H2020 KIDS4ALLL e NEW ABC è stato quello di avviare e facilitare un processo efficace e sostenibile di creazione e attuazione co-partecipata di buone pratiche nuove o esistenti per l’inclusione di bambini e giovani con un background migrante nell’istruzione formale, informale e non formale. Dopo una breve descrizione degli obiettivi e dei risultati principali dei due progetti, questo contributo esplorerà la metodologia della co-creazione e illustrerà le lezioni tratte dai due progetti dal processo di co-creazione con particolare attenzione alle percezioni di questo processo collaborativo da parte di insegnanti e associazioni.

Parole chiave: cocreazione, voce, istruzione, bambini/giovani con background migratorio, progetto H2020.

## **1. Introduction**

A review of ongoing and past European projects as well as reports by international organizations reveal how the attitude towards the involvement of children and their participation in research has changed. The UN convention of the Rights of the Children in 1989, and its subsequent ratification in the following decades by many countries, contributed to a paradigm shift in the sociology of childhood that determined a significant change in the perception of the children’s right to be considered as active participants in society (Lansdown, 1994; Hall, Sham, 2007). Moreover, across Europe and beyond, various approaches appear to dismantle the social construction of the children of immigrants’ exception; and the concepts of ‘inclusion’, ‘interculturalism’, ‘language’, ‘street level bureaucracy’ can be used

to compare and contrast what each social reality gives to education, thereby generating a specific policy negotiated between the city's governance, schools and the various non-formal educational environments. Indeed, a growing body of evidence suggests that educational practices in both formal and non-formal environments may play a strong role in the lives of both first- and second-generation members as well as either enhancing or mitigating against integration challenges and power inequalities.

Facilitating migrant children's inclusion in educational systems is one of the most significant societal challenges to reduce the performance discrepancy and to foster social cohesion. Formal education, indeed, is commonly understood as a key to migrant children's futures, enabling their insertion (or inclusion or integration, according to various scientific perspectives) into host societies. Integration, indeed, is a contested concept, and what counts as successful integration may have gendered implications and differ depending on the perspective from which it is defined. Migrant children have varying access to education during their migration trajectories, and it is well-established that many children of migrants suffer from educational disadvantage (Seeberg, Goździak, 2016). They may also struggle to be included and to feel that they belong in school once they do have access. Furthermore, changes in policies and in inclusive practices could affect the futures of migrant children in Europe, and thus what they need in order to prepare for their futures, have become much less predictable. In this scenario, the role played by associations and other NGOs in collaborating with formal education in supporting migrant children and their families seems to be crucial (Alagna, 2023). Non-formal educational organizations can be an important bridge between immigrant families and the school because it is often easier for immigrant parents to communicate with educators<sup>1</sup> than with teachers. Often, in these organizations, there are people of the same cultural or religious backgrounds, and parents feel free to share their doubts or their concerns about their children education. Another important aspect that characterizes non-formal educational

<sup>1</sup> Educators are those who work in associations, NGOs with a specific degree in educational topics.

contexts is the relationship between peers. Non-formal educational favour interaction with other young people, that is essential for the development of positive self-esteem, self-confidence and a sense of identity. As already pointed out “youngsters can teach each other and make improvements together. The cooperation principle is also central within the classroom, where the high scores of classmates can motivate the student (through competition or social influence) to work harder” (Cingolani *et al.*, 2023, p. 46). In addition to this, non-formal educational activities are crucial in supporting young people, and mainly those who belong to LSE families, to learn and to be proficient in those social skills that they could transfer at school in their daily interactions with classmates. Less bureaucratic and evaluating environments can be the safest place for learning and testing social skills, particularly for those children who feel themselves at risk to be not well-accepted due to their lack of language or due to their migratory background.

The two projects described in this article, Key Inclusive Development Strategies for Lifelong Learning (KIDS4ALLL, <https://www.kids4alll.eu/>) and Networking the Educational World: Across Boundaries for Community-building (NEW ABC, <https://newabc.eu/>)<sup>2</sup>, are funded by the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 framework, under the topic H2020-SC5-MIGRATION-2018-2020 – Mapping and overcoming integration challenges for migrant children. The scope of this topic was to explore and build upon existing formal, informal and non-formal educational good practices or co-create and implement new ones with all actors and stakeholders in education to find solutions to address cultural, linguistic, ethnic and socio-economic barriers to the integration of children with a migrant background (including children of refugees and asylum seekers, and unaccompanied minors) in schools and more broadly in society. The H2020 funding scheme encouraged the use of co-creation methods and work in the design and implementation of inclusive educational practices. This paper will discuss the pros and cons of co-creation

<sup>2</sup> KIDS4ALLL was supported by the European Commission under Grant 101004807. NEW ABC was supported by the European Commission under Grant 101004640. The views and opinions expressed in this article are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

methodology in fostering the inclusion of children and young people with a migrant background in formal, informal and non-formal education.

### 1.1 *The KIDS4ALLL project*

The Lifelong Learning (LLL)<sup>3</sup> approach promoted by the EU-Commission as paradigm of 21st century education recognizes that competencies encompass a range of ‘life skills’, that support individuals’ participation in wider society; they are thus essential to encounter the learners’ diverse backgrounds and to build synergies among them where- and whenever possible, in an era where time-limited, context-bound and ‘traditional’ education patterns (Tuschling, Engemann, 2006) are a thread, rather than an opportunity. In the same vein, policymakers underline the urgent necessity to promote learning in highly-diversified settings towards a lifelong, lifewide and life-deep perspective. These presumptions tie into current literature on collaborative peer-to-peer processes, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, supposed to promote friendship and socio-emotional skills (Gogolin, 2011) and able to foster a greater sense of belonging (Qvortrup, Qvortrup, 2018). Lessons acquired during the pandemic era can be useful for deepening the understanding on how to module and differentiate cooperation and distance interaction practices according to the specific characteristics of students.

In this framework fits KIDS4ALLL, which aims to implement a pilot action that will experiment a learning method and learning environment in formal, non-formal and informal educational contexts to address the integration challenges of migrant children. The KIDS4ALLL learning method draws on (1) knowledge acquisition (2) skills training and (3) attitude transfer to convey lifelong learning competences as a whole within a collaborative and co-creative learning process. As a response to the educational needs of children, in particular of migrant children, and of educators as pathfinders for

<sup>3</sup> The lifelong learning approach recognizes that competencies needed by children and adolescents today are not only technical but encompass learning to learn as a competence in its own right, and other ‘life skills’ which support individuals’ resilience and participation in wider society (EU, 2018).

continuous lifelong and lifewide learning, the project is grounded on three Key Inclusive Development Strategies (KIDS) towards LifeLongLearning (LLL), which represent the specific objectives of the project: 1) Fostering acquisition, maintenance and cultivation of competences related to the 8 LLL key areas; 2) Enhancing the methodological competences of educators towards inclusive and participatory teaching, training and intercultural dialogue; 3) Testing the concept of peer-to-peer learning in the form of buddyship collaboration (guided pairing of learners) with the lifelong and lifewide dimensions of learning. The learning method has been corroborated by the online and offline instruments that represent the KIDS4ALLL learning environment. The KIDS4ALLL project team has envisaged implementation of the pilot action in formal, non-formal and informal institutions in 8 countries all chosen because of their specific and variegated migration and educational contexts, and reaching approximately 1000 members of the principal target groups defined by the project.

The project's basic assumption is that every individual should be enabled to access high-quality and inclusive education, training, and (re)qualification opportunities throughout life that may contribute to the development of those key competences which the EU has recognized as key skills to be developed along the life-path. The project core activities test a 'buddy collaboration' (guided/intentional pairing of learners) scheme with the lifelong and lifewide dimension of learning in formal, informal and non-formal educational contexts. Children involved in the project, indeed, have worked on developing learning contents related to 8 LLL competencies through theoretical understanding, applied contents and interactive co-creation activities, where they have developed authorship and agency and enhance their intercultural, linguistic and socio-emotional skills.

Children and youngsters involved in the project pilot phase will work on learning contents related to 8 LLL competences through theoretical understanding (know.what), applied contents (know.how) and interactive co-creation activities (work.it), where they developed authorship (guided by educators) and agency on the 8 LLL issues and enhance their intercultural, linguistic and socio-emotional skills. The framework of the KIDS4ALLL method is summarized in the following scheme (Figure 1):

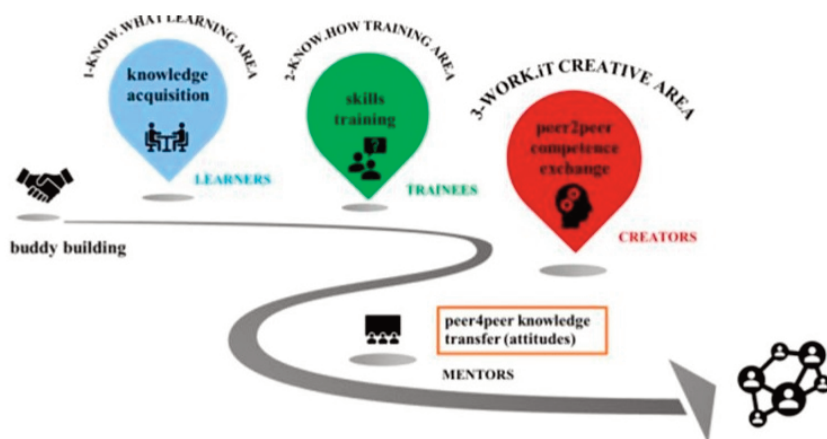


Figure 1: The KIDS4ALLL project learning path.

Whereas the first station (know.what area) presents ‘traditional’ and interactive learning contents (diversified according to TG learning needs and objectives), the know.how training area combines the learn-to-learn and learning-by-doing concept with tutorials that shall guide and train learners on how to prepare and implement appealing, creative and informing learning material and actions. The learned contents were then applied in the last station of the learning path (work.it area) that encourages the learner (buddy) couple to produce and present own learning material.

### 1.2 *The NEW ABC project*

NEW ABC is a project that mobilizes a consortium with 13 partners in nine European countries, who share a marked and continued interest in the education, psychological development, and social inclusion of young people with an immigrant background. To ensure that the broader themes and objectives of the NEW ABC project are tackled from multiple, interconnected, and complementary perspectives, the project draws upon the expertise of the consortium which includes both academic and non-academic partners specialized in: art, education, gender studies, interpreting and translation studies,



journalism, law, psychology (cultural-developmental and social psychology), linguistics, migration, multilingual education, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics (sociolinguistics of language and immigration), sociology.

In order to find effective solutions to the integration of children and young people with a migrant background through and in education the NEW ABC project explored the following research questions:

- What is the most effective way to make the voice of local stakeholders in education heard, particularly children and people with a migrant background?
- How can effective synergies amongst local target groups and stakeholders and policymakers be built?
- How can successful bottom-up practices be trickled-up to inform policy-making in education?

The answer to these questions will allow to attain three set objectives:

- 1 Develop real-life co-participated actions by stakeholders in education that tap into their real needs and can be used to inform policy makers on effective solutions to overcoming challenges to integration.
- 2 Empower and develop the capacity for agency, inclusivity and to have voice of all the stakeholders involved heard, particularly children in diverse communities.
- 3 Ensure the development of integrated approaches at the local and (inter)national level during and after the end of the project.

To achieve these aims, nine innovative pilot actions (each comprising several activities, events, labs, and workshops) have been co-created, implemented and evaluated with various target groups and stakeholders. These nine pilot actions have been tested in nine partner countries and, at the time of writing, are being re-tested in nine other partner countries with the aim of assessing their scalability, sustainability and up-take.

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that “the views expressed by children may add relevant perspectives and experience and should be considered in

decision-making, policymaking and preparation of laws and/or measures as well as their evaluation”. Furthermore, article 13 emphasizes that children should have opportunities, through participatory methods, to express their opinions, and their participation should be the foundation for an intense exchange between children and adults regarding the creation of policies, programs, and measures in all aspects of children’s lives. The nine pilot actions developed by NEW ABC through the participatory and whole-child approach have given different stakeholders, especially children, an opportunity to voice their needs and the knowledge and methods to implement innovative actions in formal, informal and non-formal learning settings. While there is a wealth of studies and data available on immigration, data on the education of refugee and migrant children (particularly unaccompanied minors and children of irregular migrants) is more limited “making it more difficult to design policies and programmes to support these groups” (Nicolai *et al.*, 2017, p. 10). NEW ABC takes a bottom-up approach designed to actively involve refugee and migrant children and youth as well as stakeholders in education to stimulate awareness-raising on their real needs, and the co-creation of nine innovation pilot actions to ensure:

- i that stakeholders, foremost children and young people, make their voices heard by becoming active co-participants in co-creating adaptable and sustainable practices that facilitate integration and foster sense of belonging;
- ii that the co-created actions address their real-life needs determined by various and different cultural, linguistic and socio-economic challenges;
- iii that through the two-phase testing, these practices can be adapted and scalable (in terms of costs and number of people involved) to deal with different challenges, contexts and stakeholder groups involved;
- iv that the co-created new knowledge and actions are shared through the creation of a shared platform;
- v that the skills, as well as social, cultural and emotional wellbeing resources built through the participation and collaborative activities in NEW ABC will develop capacities for agency in

vulnerable children and young people, enabling them to become initiators of future actions.

NEW ABC adopts a three-pronged strategy with the goal of promoting the active involvement and empowerment of stakeholders in educational contexts. This strategy encompasses the whole-child, bottom-up, and care and compassion approaches. Firstly, the whole-child/school/community approach prioritizes the holistic needs of diverse stakeholders, including students, educators, families, policymakers, and community members, placing them at the heart of the research initiative (ASCD, 2014; Lewallen *et al.*, 2018; Yoder, 2014). As regards students in particular, this approach underscores the importance of addressing not only their academic achievements but also their emotional, psychological, physical, and social well-being. Secondly, the bottom-up approach is committed to ensure a trickle-up flow of customized solutions from local communities to policymakers, thereby fostering collaborative efforts to create and disseminate effective innovative solutions for the unique challenges faced by migrant children and youth in accessing equitable education. Small-scale actors and community-level stakeholders play a vital role by contributing context-specific knowledge on local needs, addressing specific issues that may elude larger actors (Sinatti, Alvarez Tinajero, 2011). Lastly, the care and compassion approach accentuates the significance of building inclusive practices that provide a welcoming and acknowledging environment for all stakeholders. This approach gradually cultivates a sense of belonging within specific social groups, promoting a supportive and compassionate atmosphere (Scuzzarello, 2015; Sirriyeh, 2018).

Figure 2, which was also used to explain the project to all the involved actors and stakeholders, summarizes NEW ABC's theoretical and methodological underpinnings.

Through the bottom-up approach and thus the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders in education, the voices of children, vulnerable groups, local community, educators, and families find expression in the co-creation of innovation pilot actions that address a variety of challenges to integration in education.

The binding influence of Participatory Action Research (PAR) enables stakeholders and community/society at large to become

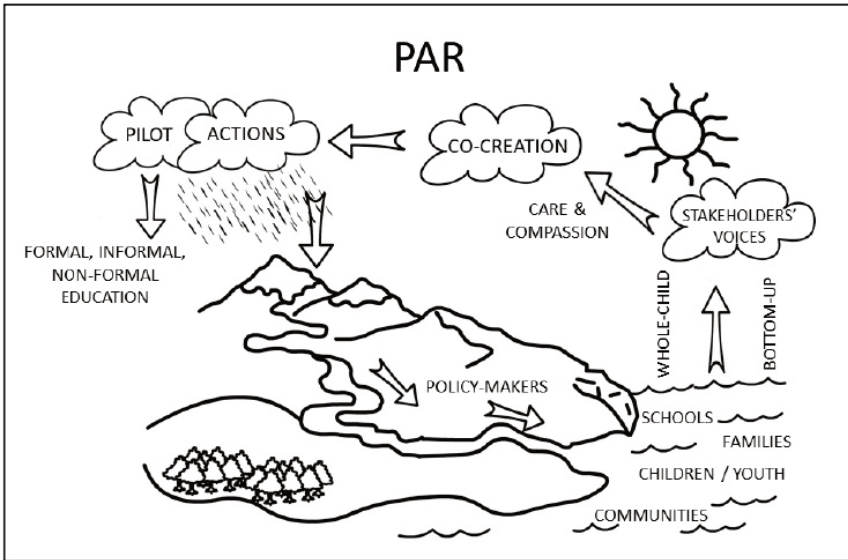


Figure 2: NEW ABC theoretical underpinnings.

empowered and continue to make their voice heard by becoming responsible for the proactive initiation of further actions and also by making their needs and the co-created solutions visible to policy- and decision-makers. PAR is a qualitative research methodology that goes beyond traditional research methods by emphasizing action and social change as integral components of the research process (Lawson *et al.*, 2015). It is a research approach characterized by its collaborative and transformative nature. Through the active participation of those affected by or engaged with a particular issue or problem in the research process, PAR seeks to empower participants, often marginalized and vulnerable groups or individuals, by involving them as co-researchers, enabling them to partake in the co-construction of knowledge (Lawson *et al.*, 2015; Kindon *et al.*, 2007).

## 2. The co-creation approach and methodology

In the past decade, funding bodies as well as organizations invested in the protection of children's rights have been advocating for the implementation of co-creational and participatory methods of research

that allow the voice of children and vulnerable groups to be heard and heeded<sup>4</sup>.

The KIDS4ALLL and NEW ABC projects operate within the methodological framework of co-creation. This approach seeks to engage both academics and local stakeholders in jointly constructing scientific knowledge, tailored to address the specific requirements and demands of these stakeholders. More specifically, all parties involved have the opportunity to actively participate in shaping, overseeing, delivering, and assessing the research process. By actively involving the target groups and stakeholders, co-creation also fosters their empowerment in designing practices that are well-suited to the local context and responsive to the real needs of the community and the individuals they serve. Additionally, stakeholders often possess contextual insights that academic researchers may lack, making their contributions to the development of pertinent scientific knowledge highly valuable.

Co-creation refers to the collaborative generation of knowledge, involving academics and stakeholders from various sectors working together (Greenhalgh *et al.*, 2016). It represents a shared, cooperative, concomitant, and democratic process of producing new material and symbolic value (Galvagno, Dalli, 2014). This process embraces the active participation of citizens, particularly local and community stakeholders, in any aspect of designing, managing, implementing, and evaluating public services (Osborne *et al.*, 2016). Co-creation has gained significant popularity recently, notably in business, public services, and healthcare, and it is also endorsed by EU and other organizations who promote an increased engagement and participation of citizens in policy-making. The terminology used in co-creation is characterised by conceptual pluralism and the term is often used interchangeably with co-design and co-production (Oertzen *et al.*, 2018; Voorberg *et al.*, 2015). However, the primary distinction lies in the emphasis placed by co-creation on i) prioritizing end-user value, ii) highlighting the implementation of co-created practices,

<sup>4</sup> Co-creation is one of the research and innovation priorities in the calls of the work programme of Horizon 2020 as well as Horizon Europe and their respective strategic plans. Other organization who have been promoting co-creation with children are, *inter alia*, UNESCO, UNICEF and Save the Children.

iii) incorporating broad dissemination strategies as integral parts of the initial design. Additionally, co-creation seeks to establish an enduring collaborative relationship between co-creators (researchers and stakeholders/end-users) that extends beyond the initial program or project. This involves creating synergies to ensure that the outcomes and practices are adopted by other stakeholders and policymakers (Jagosh *et al.*, 2012; Janamain *et al.*, 2014). Hence, while most co-creation processes involve citizens as co-implementers and co-designers, ideally, they should empower citizens to become co-initiators of further co-created actions and initiatives (Voorberg *et al.*, 2015).

In KIDS4ALLL and NEW ABC stakeholders were involved throughout the whole co-creation process. As co-designers, co-implementers they also contributed to the co-design of the evaluation tools and to the dissemination of the project outputs. The following sections illustrates how a series of Lessons Learned (LLs) from the co-creation process were collected in the two projects among, respectively, associations and teachers and how these LLs helped to identify some (at times unforeseen) challenges inherent to the co-creation methodology.

### **3. Lessons Learned in managing the co-creation approach and methodology in the two projects**

This section focuses on the lessons learned (LLs) in the two projects with regard to the co-creation process with a specific focus on teachers' and associations' perceptions of collaborative partnerships.

LLs serve as essential tools employed both during and after a project to capture and share knowledge about effective practices and opportunities for improvement across the project's planning, management, and execution phases. They facilitate knowledge transfer from one team or project stage to another, aiming to impart valuable experience-based wisdom. LL reports offer an analysis of significant project events, with the overarching goal of helping guide others down the road and promoting desirable outcomes in future projects by preventing the recurrence of past mistakes (Rowe, Sikes, 2006). The primary objective of LLs is to:

- foster a culture of continuous learning among all project stakeholders,

- enhance comprehension of potential or actual challenges,
- propose solutions,
- avert common pitfalls,
- offer suggestions for refining strategies and execution,
- highlight successful practices worth replicating, and
- streamline the workflow by avoiding redundant tasks and practices that have already proven effective.

In the specific context of the KIDS4ALLL and NEW ABC projects, LLs encompass the observations, reflections, and problem-solving strategies of pilot teams as well as involved stakeholders and target groups related to the inclusion of children and young people with a migrant background in education and society. Furthermore, LLs were also integrated into the evaluation processes, serving as a valuable component for monitoring and evaluating contextual factors, implementation processes, and impact mechanisms.

In this framework, the results of both project activities offer several inputs in setting up activities in the field of co-creation and cooperative work in fostering education and promoting social inclusion of migrant children and, beyond them, of migrant families.

In general, activities and methodologies were considered successful when they:

- elicited positive emotional reactions from teachers, children, and their families,
- successfully facilitated active participation by children and involved them in all stages of the collaborative creation process,
- encouraged the social inclusion of children and young people within their communities.

Based on the above-mentioned principles, strategies contributed to the successful and efficient development of the activities and that facilitated the relationship with stakeholders in the field, specifically in terms of engagement, flexibility and reliance on the participants' know-how. For example, suggesting different strategies to enable trust and overcome stakeholders' diffidence at the beginning of the co-creation process (e.g., openly discussing the aims and expectations of all participants involved). Moreover, stressing the importance of ensuring a flexible approach as a key element during the pilot actions.

In both projects, participants also stressed that educational institutions such as public schools are often already implementing good practices for the social inclusion of children and youth, regardless of their participation in a specific project. Therefore, it is strongly important valuing and giving visibility to pre-existing good practices and to stakeholders' own strategies in the field.

Many of the LLs provided ideas and solutions to overcome problems and challenges, namely in terms of engagement, dealing with unforeseen difficulties, the co-creation methodology, and the relationship with the participants.

A major challenge revolved around recruiting willing main target groups and stakeholders to participate in the project. To pre-empt difficulties in engaging educational institutions and individual stakeholders, which could potentially lead to delays, it is important to have contingency plans in case originally involved stakeholders are unable to participate. Teachers and students, as well as educators and families, often have tight schedules and programmes that must be taken into account when planning. Therefore, the establishment of an initial, collaboratively crafted schedule for pilot action activities was deemed essential.

Another challenge experienced by the two projects in the field was the limited participation of target groups (i.e. children, students, teachers, educators) and stakeholders in the activities. Several activities struggled to capture the interest of young people/students, who sometimes exhibited disinterest in the pilot action. In such cases, research teams had to adapt the activities to align with students' expectations and interests: e.g. trying to much more link contents and activities to their very specific school environment, involve co-peers already well engaged for stimulating involvement. In other instances, children and youth participated, but their involvement was problematic and deemed inappropriate by researchers and other participants: in these cases, we went back to teachers and educators trying to find with them – the best-informed persons about children's characteristics – the right way to adjust their behaviour and commitment to the activities.

Another challenge arose in the relationship with children and youth, some of whom had limited language skills and complex socio-economic backgrounds. To address language barriers, several research



teams suggested using documents in multiple languages and adapting activities to the communicative abilities of all stakeholders. Concerning the social status of participants, some researchers encountered difficulties in dealing with unaccompanied minors and refugees due to their mobility and personal histories. Additionally, legal barriers posed a challenge in initially engaging these stakeholders and their legal representatives. The teams suggested that a “peer worker” (an individual with a similar background to the participants) could assist in addressing these issues, serving as both a role model and a cultural mediator in the field.

Finally, all pilot partners reported the time-consuming effort required to collect privacy and consent forms. First, several partners faced challenges related to the bureaucratic constraints of the projects, struggling with consent forms and privacy policies that stakeholders could not comprehend. Second, some researchers had to negotiate with participants regarding the digital channels through which activities would be disseminated.

#### **4. Concluding remarks: from experience to practice-transferability**

The results obtained and the collected reflections made it possible to point out proposal and suggestions from a practice-transferability perspective. First of all, the necessary training of teachers and pedagogical (and voluntary) staff working in the third sector is highlighted. The presence of foreign children is a constant challenge, as they bring with them a variety of backgrounds, family histories, biographical paths, languages, life contexts, and cultural elements. Therefore, methods, activities, and educational content must be constantly updated and adapted to heterogeneous classroom contexts characterized by great diversity. As became clear during the implementation of the activities

Most teachers still use traditional pedagogy and mainly conduct frontal lessons. They should be thus prepared and get ready to change their teaching methods and to adopt the principles of independent, constructivist learning, according to which the children consolidate knowledge on their own through research, dialogue, and feedback processes (KIDS4ALL fieldnotes).

Nonetheless, even when teachers are open to integrating new methods and projects, as one of the teachers interviewed for NEW ABC remarked

Unfortunately we have deadlines, we have commitments and everything is tightly scheduled, [...] we have objectives that we must necessarily achieve. [...] Once you are given the tests [the national tests, ed.], you are more or less forced to stay within those contents, without wandering too much. We don't have so much time.

Therefore, co-creation often becomes a balancing act that needs to take into account many different and at times conflicting variables.

Secondly, educational opportunities must be accessible and therefore adapted to be usable in any educational context, including reception camps, refugee camps, precarious and/or peripheral situations where situations of social and material deprivation make educational work difficult.

Another aspect is the strengthening of cooperative methodology as a cross-curricular method and as a fundamental element of a teaching approach in intercultural contexts. And not only within the school, as the project participants emphasize:

the challenge of creative peer work and the related dialogic approach must be continuously fostered in education. Indeed, most students still need to learn how to deal in a constructive way with the free space and the chance to fill it with their own ideas, knowledge and interests (KIDS4ALL fieldnotes).

However, when they learn to do so, as reported by some teachers: “They often lead you to places where you would not arrive by yourself”.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alagna F. (2023), *Civil Society and Municipal Activism Around Migration in the EU: A Multi-Scalar Alliance-Making*, in “Geopolitics”, 1-27.
- ASCD (2014), *Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child. A Collaborative Approach to Learning and Health*, retrieved from <https://files.ascd.org/staticfiles/ascd/pdf/siteASCD/publications/wholechild/wsccl-a-collaborative-approach.pdf>

- Cingolani P., Ricucci R., Schroot T. (2023), *Changing educational roles and competences during the COVID crisis. A case study from Turin, Italy*, in A. D'Angelo, D. Carrasco, R. Ricucci (eds.), *Supporting migrant students through the pandemic and beyond / El apoyo a estudiantes inmigrantes durante y después de la pandemia*, Bellaterra, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
- European Commission (2018), *Proposal for a Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning*, Brussels, European Commission.
- Galvagno M., Dalli D. (2014), *Theory of value co-creation: a systematic literature review*, in “Managing Service Quality: An International Journal”, 24 (6), 643-683.
- Gogolin I. (2011), *The Challenge of Super Diversity for Education in Europe*, in “Education Inquiry”, 2 (2), 239-249.
- Greenhalgh T., Jackson C., Shaw S., Janamian T. (2016), *Achieving research impact through co-creation in community-based health services: Literature review and case study*, in “The Milbank Quarterly”, 94 (2), 392-429.
- Hall N., Sham S. (2007), *Language brokering as young people's work: Evidence from Chinese adolescents in England*, in “Language and Education”, 21, 16-30.
- Jagosh J., Macaulay A.C., Pluye P., Salsberg J., Bush P.L., Henderson J. (2012), *Uncovering the benefits of participatory research: Implications of a realist review for health research and practice*, in “Milbank Quarterly”, 90 (2), 311-346.
- Janamain T., Jackson C., Dunbar J. (2014), *Co-creating value in research: Stakeholders' perspectives*, in “Medical Journal of Australia”, 201 (3), 44-46.
- Kindon S., Pain R., Kesby M. (eds.) (2007), *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods. Connecting people, participation and place*, London, New York (NY), Routledge.
- Lansdown G. (1994), *Children's rights*, in M. Berry (ed.), *Children's Childhoods: Observed and Experienced*, London, The Falmer Press.
- Lawson H.A., Caringi J.C., Pyles L., Jurkowski J.M., Bozlak C.T. (2015), *Participatory Action Research*, New York (NY), Oxford University Press.
- Lewallen T.C., Chesa H.H., Potts-Datema M.W., Zaza S., Giles W.

- (2018), *The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model: A new approach for improving educational attainment and healthy development for students*, in “Journal of Service Management”, 29 (4), 641-679.
- Nicolai S., Wales J., Aiazzi E. (2017), *Education, migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, in *Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, Overseas Development Institute, <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12422.pdf>
  - Oertzen A.-S., Odekerken-Schröder G., Brax S.A., Mager B. (2018), *Co-creating services – conceptual clarification, forms and outcomes*, in “Journal of Service Management”, 29 (4), 641-679.
  - Osborne S.P., Radnor Z., Strokosch K. (2016), *Co-Production and the co-creation of value in public services: a suitable case for treatment?*, in “Public Management Review”, 18, 639-653.
  - Prout A., James A. (1990), *A new paradigm for the sociology of childhood? Provenance, promise and problems*, in A. Prout, A. James (eds.), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood*, London, New York (NY), Routledge.
  - Punch S. (2002), *Research with children. The same or different from research with adults?*, in “Childhood”, 9 (3), 321-341.
  - Qvortrup A., Qvortrup L. (2018), *Inclusion: Dimensions of inclusion in education*, in “International Journal of Inclusive Education”, 22 (7), 803-817.
  - Rowe S.F., Sikes S. (2006), *Lessons learned: taking it to the next level. Paper presented at PMI® Global Congress 2006, North America, Seattle, WA, Newtown Square, PA, Project Management Institute.*
  - Scuzzarello S. (2015), *Caring multiculturalism: Power and transformation in diverse societies*, in “Feminist Theory” 16 (1), 67-86.
  - Seeberg M.L., Goździak E.M. (2016), *Contested childhoods: growing up in migrancy: migration, governance, identities*, Springer.
  - Sinatti G., Alvarez Tinajero S.P. (2011), *Migration and Development: a Bottom-Up Approach: A Handbook for Practitioners and Policy-makers*, EC-UN Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMIDI).
  - Sirriyeh A. (2018), *The Politics of Compassion: Immigration and Asylum Policy* (1st ed.), Bristol University Press.

- Tuschling A., Engemann C. (2006), *From Education to Lifelong Learning: The emerging regime of learning in the European Union*, in “Educational Philosophy and Theory”, 38 (4), 451-469.
- Voorberg W.H., Bekkers V.J.J.M., Tummers L.G. (2015), *A systematic review of co-creation and coproduction: Embarking on the social innovation journey*, in “Public Management Review”, 17 (9), 1333-1357.
- Yoder N. (2014), *Teaching the Whole Child: Instructional practices that support social-emotional learning in three teacher evaluation frameworks. Research-to-Practice Brief*, Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, American Institutes for Research, Available from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED581718.pdf>.