

# K REPORTERS

MARIE SKLODOWSKA CURIE ACTIONS

## D2.1 Diagnosing local contexts using a common tool

### Local context: community support and social interventions

- Be an intersectional, decolonial, and non-adult-centered social worker using a rhizomatic tool
- Reassembling policies across children's cultures to develop intersectional pedagogies

Reassembling policies across children's cultures to develop intersectional pedagogies

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## Summary

Deliverable 2.1 "Diagnosis of local contexts with a common tool" is a brief comparative synthesis report **of conflict and post-conflict areas** focusing on contextualising selected sites to support the broader objectives of Work Package 2 (WP2. Local contexts: community support and social interventions). The main objective of this document is to identify and collect relevant information and contextual data from the participating countries and territories using a common tool. This information gathered will guide future research tasks of networking groups, including understanding how community support and social interventions work in these areas (like in WP4, WP5 and WP6).

To achieve this, the report addresses several key areas. It begins by developing the understanding of key concepts such as 'children's communities', 'local contexts' and 'community-based organisations'. This is crucial to ensure consistency of analysis across different sites. The report then moves on to the identification and selection of specific territories for ethnographic study, taking into account various factors such as institutional presence, informal living spaces, and social, cultural and demographic characteristics.

The focus is then on the diagnosis of local contexts, where we collect data on the specific sites. This analysis focuses on local dynamics, social interventions, and policies that impact children's agency. In addition, the report includes the creation and use of community maps, developed with the participation of children. These maps are designed to visualise children's lived experiences, their lives and resources and their mobility in their local contexts.

All these elements are an integral part of two main tasks of WP2: to design a common tool for diagnosing contexts and to create maps of children's lives in local contexts. The deliverable will conclude with a brief comparative summary that highlights the unique challenges and opportunities in different conflict and post-conflict areas, serving as a basis for future research and interventions under the project.

# Introduction

## 1. Presentation and approaches

This document is designed as a methodological guide for carrying out local diagnoses in the contexts studied, adopting an intersectional and decolonial perspective, and therefore proposing to child and youth professionals to position themselves in a non-adult-centric perspective.

The objectives of this tool are:

- To provide educators with critical, practical and conceptual instruments that will lead them to develop situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988) from/for intersectional and decolonial visions of childhoods;
- To foster processes based on collaboration and co-creation with children in order to better understand their own visions on the relationship with the environment in which they live (institutions, people, objects, etc.);
- To enable educators to identify local configurations of children's agency spaces, relationalities and mobilities;
- To analyse information on local contexts after the data collection process, in a rhizomatic and kaleidoscopic (i.e. networked, cross-sectional and multiple) way.

The local diagnosis of the different sites where the *K Reporters* project intervenes has been carried out as the research and the mobilities of the research teams progressed, adopting a reflexive approach to meet the challenges of the project.

After the introduction, this document is divided in two sections, the themes of which each will be taken up in each country description sheet, making it possible to give an account of the specific approaches in each of them, showing different positions and conceptions, particularly with regard to the organisation and role of social intervention. This choice will allow the reader to build his or her reading of the local and global dynamics and the issues that arise in each context thus discussed<sup>1</sup>.

We recognise that children are shaped by complex realities in which communication, self-narration, and the construction of meaning with others depend deeply on the intentions, histories, and circumstances of each place. In this sense, we do not intend to settle a debate or draw definitive conclusions based on fixed concepts. On the contrary, we open a space to continue reflecting on and problematising what the relationship between childhood and community means today —a relationship that, in many cases, appears

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<sup>1</sup> One element worth highlighting at this point relates to the discussion developed within Work Package One of the study, which engages us in understanding the particularities of context as a fundamental condition for research on childhood, situated practices, and cultural rights. As colleagues have rightly pointed out, the perspective of cultural rights **for and with** children emerges as a fundamental need that must be addressed. It is essential to acknowledge what has already been established, identify existing gaps, and make visible and document the practices present in local contexts, with the aim of fostering dialogues that contribute to the reconfiguration of children's rights from a perspective of reciprocity and shared responsibility (Afua Twum-Danso Imoh, *K Reporters* International Workshop, 2024).

fractured or diluted, whether due to digitalisation, hypercommunication, or the forms of subjectivation imposed by capitalism, which tend to fragment community bonds.

This document proposes an active and committed perspective. It invites both readers and researchers to observe, feel, and reflect on how childhoods and communities today represent conditions of possibility for building new ways of living together. In what ways are children's vulnerabilities reconfigured within communities? How do children disrupt Western views of childhood? How do they resist, through their agency, the forms of exclusion and violence they encounter in their everyday environments? These questions continue to be nourished and transformed by the experiences, research, and sensitivities of those who engage with them.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, we would like to point out that some of the concepts presented in both the report and the broader research contain certain tensions, due to the contextual aspects each one brings when it comes to interpreting and experiencing the issues surrounding childhood. These tensions are also linked to the ways in which boys and girls shape their processes of subjectivation within the contexts they inhabit.

One example is the concept of well-being: is it truly an imagined ideal, or a concrete possibility for children? Does it refer to an actual state of "being well," or rather to practices of resilience developed in response to the adversity they experience in their environments? Is well-being something children are able to attain, or do they live in a constant state of discomfort, albeit shaped by resilient or sublimating strategies in response to the difficulties they face?

On the other hand, the concept of childhood can also generate tensions. While it seeks to recognise children's agencies and adopt a non-adult-centered perspective, it is sometimes framed in a protective tone that ends up defining children from the outside. The goal is not to idealise childhood, but rather to open up questions and acknowledge the everyday experiences in children's lives—whether or not they are considered resilient. It is about listening to what they express through their own ways of acting and understanding the world.

Similarly, the concept of community is marked by tensions, but also by diverse perspectives. It appears in highly contextualised ways, depending on the country and territory. Therefore, it is not a matter of offering a generalised definition of community, but rather observing how this concept shifts and transforms, acquiring different meanings based on what each specific context brings into being.

Finally, research fieldwork is another key element that connects with ethnography, yet it also varies depending on each researcher's experiences, emotions, and ways of

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<sup>2</sup> In addition to the above, and as discussed in Work Package 1 of the *K Reporters* research, understanding childhood as an integral part of shared, chaotic, and diverse contexts contributes to the development of innovative approaches and pedagogical practices in the fields of childhood and education studies. Likewise, colleagues in Work Package 1 agree that engaging with critical and diverse perspectives enables the exploration of how children's rights—and childhood itself—can be, and indeed are, addressed through decolonial and intersectional lenses.

interacting with the population. Ethical positioning, participant involvement, research intent, and the personal impact on the researcher can lead to different approaches and understandings of what fieldwork means.

In summary, this text does not seek to close debates, but rather to open them. It is not about defining what each concept is or should be, but about contributing to the imagination of a more just and responsible horizon in the relationship between childhood and its various contexts, through multiple voices and perspectives

## 2. Concepts for practice

As said, this deliverable aims **to provide an tool for a comprehensive diagnosis of local contexts** in selected conflict and post-conflict areas, with a focus on how these environments shape and are shaped by community-based organisations and social interventions, but also by children.

Social intervention is apprehended here from a critical perspective, in coherence with the issues of the project, and will therefore seek to analyse the root causes of existing social problems and social relations to reconfigure social relations with children. It is therefore about questioning the functioning of community organisations in order to understand the place of children that children occupy in them, and the way in which these will structure the local context for children and enable, or limit, children's subjectivities.

Similarly, it will also be a question of understanding the context from the children's point of view. But which children are we talking about? Do they identify with a "community of children"? Do "children's communities" really exist or are they mainly constructions of institutions and adults? Or are they hybrid communities in which both children and adults weave together words, actions, feelings, and experience their conflicts with one another? What is the role of ancestral, cultural, and social transmissions? (historical experience suggests that these communities are often shaped by outside forces rather than by the children themselves<sup>3</sup>). Are there specific places that re-create this sense of belonging? Furthermore, what are the contextual structural factors of oppression and how do they navigate their situation when experiencing intersected subordinations<sup>4</sup>? What spaces for *manoeuvre* do they perceive in their lives?

The above raises other questions such as What could a community of children be? How can we consider and interact with children who do not have "places" where they can maintain social connections –such as for unaccompanied migrant youth who do not form homogeneous communities? What might be the relationships between childhood and

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<sup>3</sup> The International of Children's Republics in the Post-Second World War Period. Encyclopedia for a New History of Europe (EHNE). <https://ehne.fr/fr/encyclopedie/th%C3%A9matiques/%C3%A9ducation-et-formation/%C3%A9ducatations-politiques-%C3%A9ducatations-%C3%A0-la-politique/%E2%80%99internationale-des-r%C3%A9publiques-d%E2%80%99enfants-dans-%E2%80%99apr%C3%A8s-seconde-guerre-mondiale>

<sup>4</sup> Subordination caused by adultism, sexism, racism, colonialism, etc.

community? What discourses, practices, and ways of doing things define them? Are there spaces that could still allow for supportive and empowering sociability?



Figure 1. Mapping the main concepts

To address the complexities described in the introduction using intersectional, interdisciplinary and decolonial lens, we began by discussing terms such as "children's communities," "child-caregiver-parent communities", "local communities," "local contexts," and "living spaces." The tool is kaleidoscopic because each country offers different definitions and coordinates. We are particularly interested in the way in which the notion of community is defined and used as a category of analysis for children, particularly in contexts of conflict and various manifestations. This understanding will help us to approach and analyse the specific sites where the research takes place and give the social worker and educators some keys to understand their context.

Thus, these terms are crucial to understanding how diverse environments shape and are shaped by community-based organizations and social interventions, and encompass questions such as How do children live in subordination and produce emotional richness? How do adults' conceptions of children and their sense of belonging to a community shape their representations, experiences, and thoughts? How could a limited notion of war and conflict make the experiences of some children invisible? What are the diseases and ailments that are building up in the community? What can we learn about mobile and minoritised children? What are the mechanisms of resistance to exclusion and violence? What are the implications of working with these subaltern children who are supposed to receive legal treatment as human rights subjects, but in fact we have very little empirical and theoretical means to understand their history and experiences? How do children develop a culture of resilience and post-conflict? In what ways do boys and girls subjectivise themselves (both symbolically and existentially) through the conflict they experience? Are their everyday life narratives expressions of how they think and feel about reality?

Our discussions with our partners highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach that takes into account diverse educational, social, geographic, historical and cultural environments, while integrating a critical perspective on exclusion and inclusion. This approach is crucial to interpreting the complexities of childhood communities in a way that transcends traditional boundaries and recognises the varied experiences of children in different contexts. It is also crucial to situate our analysis in a broader framework that considers both the local and global dimensions and accounts for the past and present transformations that affect these concepts.

It also seems important to align our attention with practices in the field, even if these practices differ depending on the context. By mapping the themes related to these key concepts<sup>5</sup>, we aim to identify common elements that can be addressed in all contexts. This includes exploring how different countries approach the concept of community and incorporating ideas from various perspectives to develop a comprehensive understanding.

Our process involves the collaborative definition of 'local configurations of children's agency' through participatory inputs, with space for children and young people to shape the project and subsequent process, and detailed mapping of local contexts, which will guide our subsequent research and fieldwork.

### *Example of a site in the Netherlands*

In our site, we would like to consider the context of the conflict in the broad sense: struggles with new political scenarios, LGBT-phobic discourses, movements of solidarity with Palestine, etc.). We would like to offer you the opportunity to do ethnography in Groningen with different members of our team. We aim to understand 'children's communities', 'local contexts' and 'community organisations' and how participants engage with community organisations (and with social intervention in the broadest sense, professional or voluntary) to develop agency. Our analysis focuses on local dynamics, social interventions and policies that impact the agency of these youths. We will develop community maps, developed with the participants. These maps are designed to visualise their lived experiences, the resources they have and their mobility in their local contexts. We will apply intersectional, interdisciplinary, and decolonial lens and explore what community means to them (physical and conceptual). We will also be interested in their relationship with educational spaces (university or otherwise). The methodological approach of our projects is based on a multidisciplinary framework that emphasises contextual and participatory research. We would like to work with a small group of participants (6–8) over a period of one year with interviews every two months (being paid for their time). We will include interviews or other actions in their environments (organisations, activist spaces, educational spaces, leisure, topography development).

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<sup>5</sup> This evolving work is available here: [https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVKwyhhiM=](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVKwyhhiM=/)

## 2.1. Children's Communities

The concept of childhood has evolved over time, defined not only by age, but also by the dynamic interplay of cultural, social, historical, educational, and economic forces and perspectives that shape children's experiences (Wells, 2009). This evolution has highlighted the importance of understanding children as active agents in their environment rather than as passive receptors of adult culture (Davies, 2014). Similarly, the concept of community as applied to children often encompasses a broad and multidimensional understanding, which in turn reflects the diversity of the cultural, social, political and historical contexts of the region, as we shall see below.

In fact, the meanings of community have received great attention in all disciplines, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, education, history, and geography, but the concept remains ambiguous. In this report, we do not attempt to find a single definition, but it focuses on **what the community "constitutes"** more important than what it "is" (Jung, 2014).

In the academic literature, the community is often seen as a "container" in which children exist (Christensen & Levinson, 2003), but understanding **childhood communities** involves seeing them as socio-cultural spaces where children grow, learn, and interact. These are **spaces co-produced by children's agencies**. The development of childhood communities, where children engage with their environment, whether it be the family, school or wider social environments, illustrates the diversity of childhood experiences and highlights how children create, transform and are shaped by their socio-cultural contexts. Thus, these communities **can be physical**, such as family, school, or neighborhoods, **but also conceptual**, encompassing cultural, social, and educational experiences. Social and spatial factors are indispensable elements in defining and building community, and it is essential that we remember how the social, spatial, cultural, environmental, and even imaginative aspects of community are all intimately intertwined with each other (Jung, 2014).

As a result of these ideas, it is possible to notice **that a definition of community linked to children is inextricably linked to the idea of conflict**. At the same time, a specific context needs to be problematised as a conflict scenario, taking into account intersectional perspectives, allowing for the identification of different vulnerabilities in children and the dynamics between them. Moreover, in this analysis, it is important to put at the center the voice of children as capable of reading and giving a specific interpretation of their realities, crossed not only by their age, but also by their class, gender, race, ethnicity, cultural capital, subjective experience, etc. As Kohfeldt, Rae Bowen and Day Langhout put it: "they have critically engaged in the conflict and reaffirmed their identity as agents of change (...) as well as their commitment to representing the community" (2016, p. 288).

In the 1960s, Philippe Ariès suggested that children were once seen as *miniature adults*, with little attention paid to their distinct needs. During these early periods, children participated in adult activities and were treated accordingly. However, the 1959 United Nations Declaration

There is a lack of information on this aspect to reflect the diversity of views in the different regions.

of the Rights of the Child, and then the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, marked a significant shift in recognising children as individuals with the right to education, health care, and protection. In fact, it is this convention that establishes the international legal basis for determining who is a child: "means any human being under the age of eighteen years, unless under the law applicable to the child, the age of majority is reached earlier" (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). As in various UN documents, this definition was intended to protect the broadest possible group. These declarations stressed the importance of creating an environment in which children could flourish and prepare for life in society, free from exploitation and with full access to their rights. However, children's social environment has always been shaped by violence, exploitation and exclusion.

The 20th century, in particular, was marked by conflicts that disproportionately affected children, as highlighted in UNICEF reports (2021). Millions of children have been displaced, killed or injured in conflict, and many continue to suffer war-related trauma, with minimal access to support systems. In regions such as Latin America, childhood experiences are marked by deep social inequalities, exacerbating the difficulties faced by children from vulnerable populations. Similarly, UNICEF's latest report (2023, pp3-4) states that "From Gaza to Sudan to Ukraine and beyond, more than 450 million people – nearly 1 in 5 children – live in a conflict zone or have fled it". Even if the situation in war or post-war contexts represents cases of extreme urgency to act as an international community, it is important to ask how, in the multilateral system, the specific problems and experiences of some children of the South are not named. To some extent, this is the notion of war and conflict, which is usually quite legal in hegemonic multilateral contexts.

With regard to the Convention, it is also interesting to note that the concept of community appears four times. The first is to indicate the responsibility of families around children and how it is a duty shared with the community. The second is remarkably related, as it identifies that, in some situations, the direct responsibility of the child is something that concerns the extended family or community "as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other legally responsible persons"<sup>6</sup>. This is part of the principles of international law relating to children: "The protection of the child must be ensured by the family or, in the absence of a family, by society" (Médecins Sans Frontières, n.d.). The third community reference recognises the child's right to active participation in the community, which is specifically mentioned in relation to children with mental or physical disabilities. This is noteworthy since the Convention does not recognise this right in a general way, which seems to be an assumption that the rest of the children already have the opportunity to participate effectively in the life of their community. Finally, the fourth

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<sup>6</sup> Article 5 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1989

reference emphasises the right of children to live in community according to their ethnicity, religion or own culture, in the case of those belonging to minorities.

The Convention is considered one of the most relevant international treaties, due to its number of ratifications and the speed with which States have accepted it. Although this is qualitative progress in recognising children as subjects with their own rights, the truth is, as Machín (2022) aptly quotes: "the historical perspective has shown that childhood – as a living space – is socially constructed over time and has historical, social and cultural peculiarities (...) The history of girls, boys and adolescents implies talking first about their protection, not their freedom." This last point is very important to analyse from an intersectional epistemology, because this protection –or freedom– applies or is experienced in a differentiated way. As decolonised theories in general problematised the universalism of human rights, arguing that this course of action privileges Western views and experiences; researchers with similar approaches question the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to privilege the figure of Western and modern children, making the experiences of children in the Global South invisible.

Following Fonseca and Cardarello "human rights in their abstract and decontextualised form mean insignificant" (2004, p. 8). This is one of the key aspects of the criticism of the Convention, which is linked to the idea of progressive implementation. In this sense, the effective guarantees of the Convention depend on attention to two main contradictions: the concentration of power of adults and the fact that the responsibility for guaranteeing children's rights to defined states and families, which constitute the vast majority in Latin America and other precarious regions of the Global South (Bácares, 2020). In addition, from some points of view, there is the argument that with these kinds of legal instruments such as the Convention, it is enough to get the institutions and the people who work in them to adopt a different approach; in this case, move forward to guarantee the right of children to be considered subjects of all human rights. However, in Latin America, it is not true that other means of addressing the situation of children and public policies have been dismantled because of the Convention. Reality shows how precarious children – in their various expressions – continue to be treated as an object of protection or repression (Bácares, 2020); that must be taken into account in designing the experiences of children in institutions or in conflict/post-conflict contexts.

In the twenty-first century, childhood is increasingly recognised as a **complex sociological and historical category**. It reveals not only the reality of being a child in the present, but also the broader social, cultural, and political forces that shape children's lives. Children's experiences in different contexts, such as ethnic, migrant or displaced communities, are often marked by the intersection of multiple forms of exclusion. The concept of childhood communities becomes essential to understanding how these children navigate and build their identity in such diverse and often challenging environments.

From a **cultural point of view**, children are not only passive receivers of culture, but active creators and transformers of it. Studies in **sociology and anthropology** show that children, through their interactions and experiences, build their understanding of the

world (Horn et al., 2013). They develop unique cultural identities by engaging with their immediate environment, whether in their families, at school, or in community spaces, and interact with the wider world through play and imagination. This process of cultural identity formation is particularly relevant in diverse spaces such as migrant communities, displaced populations, and ethnic or gender groups. Based on this, recent research on children's urban geographies highlights that children are not only shaped by their environment, but also actively shape their communities. Previous geographic studies have largely neglected how children conceptualise their communities (Jung, 2014), but more recent work highlights the importance of understanding children's perspectives as dynamic and fluid, shaped by social, political, and cultural factors. Innovative methods, such as visual and participatory approaches, are being used to better capture children's voices, reinforcing the idea that children are active agents in building and transforming their communities.

Similarly, the developmental phases of childhood are intimately linked to the **psychological perspectives** that shape our understanding of children's roles within their communities. The Organization of American States (OAS) defines "early childhood" as the crucial period from birth to eight years of age, emphasising its importance in the development and formation of personality (Peralta and Fujimoto, 2015). Historically, childhood was often viewed through a more static lens, with children viewed as miniature adults with no distinct developmental needs (Stewart et al., 2021). However, modern psychological knowledge also emphasises that childhood is a dynamic and socially constructed phase where children's development and their active role in their communities are closely linked. This evolutionary perspective highlights the need for interventions that support both children's psychological growth and their engagement in their social environment.

In **terms of education**, we have the idea of **community as the educational spaces where formal and informal learning takes place**. This includes schools, different types of community centres and family environments where children acquire knowledge, skills and different abilities to understand the world and the context in which they live. In this case, research focused on formal education is very common and emphasises the role of schools and the educational community in promoting the social transformations needed to ensure children's human rights and well-being. In this regard, the global recognition of education as a fundamental human right in 1948 (Article 26) has led to efforts to improve access to quality education for all children. However, significant gaps remain, particularly in early childhood education. In many regions, including Latin America, there is a lack of access to pre-primary education, with a large proportion of young children not enrolled in educational programmes. Educational initiatives have sought to address this problem by developing comprehensive curricula that focus on the social-emotional, cognitive and physical development of children, while promoting their rights and well-being. In addition, there are other educational spaces, in particular through popular education, which is an important element in the education of children, in which social relations and the relationship to knowledge are configured differently.

Thus, conceptualising *childhood communities* involves recognising the varied and **dynamic** environments in which children live, grow, and interact. As we have said, these communities are not **only physical spaces**, but also **cultural, social, political and educational spheres where children develop their identities and navigate the challenges** posed by their environment. The term "childhood communities" can describe this interconnected network of influences.

For example, community-based childcare programs in Latin America offer practical examples of how children's communities can function: home visits and temporary care initiatives in Jamaica; comprehensive family and community care in El Salvador, Venezuela's comprehensive health care programs; community educational homes in Peru; the Cuban program "Educate Your Child"; Home Program in Colombia; comprehensive programmes for the care of children under six years of age in Bolivia; Tierra y Libertad Front Child Development Center and the Out-of-School Rural Indigenous Initial Education Program in Mexico (Betanzos & Villaseñor-Palma, 2019). All of them not only address the structural needs of early childhood, but also actively engage children as participants in their own development. These programmes illustrate how childhood is a socially constructed stage of life, where children's active roles and contributions are essential. It positions the child as part of a community, where development cannot be separated from his or her environment.

It is also part of the broader conception of **children's communities as dynamic and interdependent systems** where children's rights, development and social engagement are at the core. It also corresponds to the idea that children's communities have a **political approach**, where the analysis of power dynamics and social inequalities is at the center of the discussion. In this case, it examines how **power relations and socio-economic factors within a community influence children**. This includes issues of poverty, social justice, access to opportunities, social representations, among others. In this type of approach, it is common to analyse strategies to promote children's active participation in community life and decision-making processes, as agents with a particular point of view and their own voices.

In *K Reporters*, each partner proposed a definition of children's communities in their country, here are some to offer a kaleidoscopic vision:

#### *Definition of children's communities in Cuba*

A community of children is considered to be the group of children who share a space and time with a common goal, defined in a planned or spontaneous way. In Cuba, the school is considered a formal educational community in which children develop pedagogical, extra-pedagogical and extracurricular activities guided by educators, pioneering guides, among other personalities. In addition, in the community where the children live, they are integrated into the activities generated by the community-based organizations - the Federation of

Cuban Women (FMC), the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) and the socio-community and socio-cultural projects that are being developed in the community.

### *The idea of children's communities in Spain*

In the Spanish and Catalan context, the notion of "childhood communities" resists static definitions and emerges instead as a dynamic field of relational, legal, socio-educational and political forces. Rooted in the paradigm shift introduced by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children's participation is no longer conceived as a voluntary addition, but as a fundamental right and practice, encompassing access to information, the ability to express opinions, and the expectation that those opinions will be meaningfully considered (Massons-Ribas et al., 2023). As the literature indicates, "participation, in the strict sense, can only be understood from the recognition of the three dimensions that make it up: the right to information, to express one's opinion and to be heard, and to have one's voice duly taken into account in matters that concern them" (Massons-Ribas et al., 2023, p.3).

However, this is not simply a question of institutional implementation. The literature in the field emphasises that meaningful participation requires both structural conditions and affective and relational dimensions. As noted by Balsells et al. (2015), "social support is defined as the process by which the social resources provided by informal and formal networks are able to meet instrumental and expressive personal and family needs in everyday situations" (p. 407). Children's participation emerges through their relationships – with family members, peers, educators and professionals, and through interactions with systems and institutions. In this sense, childhood communities are not delimited solely by geography or schooling, but are woven together by networks of care, trust and shared meaning.

It is important to note that the concept of childhood communities is also informed by an understanding of difference and diversity. Catalan research increasingly recognises the complex interplay of identity, agency, and structural inequality. For example, the realities of children in kinship care, children involved in protection systems, or those navigating sexual and gender diversity challenge homogenising tendencies in universalist discourses on child development.

Educational institutions have been identified as critical spaces for this co-construction. Schools are not only places of learning, but also laboratories of democratic participation and identity formation. Adolescents are perceived as capable of meta-participation, i.e. to reflect on the terms of their own participation and to understand the power relations inherent in decision-making processes. "Participation becomes an educational tool that allows young people to build their own identity and to be an integral part of the educational community" (Balsells, Ciurana and Fuentes-Peláez, 2012, p. 18). This critical self-awareness is fostered by sustained relationships with adults who trust, listen, and co-navigate rather than dominate.

From an ecological perspective, children's agency, and by extension their belonging to communities, is not innate but situational, subordinated to the alignment of personal capacities and contextual affordances. As Martínez Sanz et al. indicate, "agency, of an ecological approach, is the individual capacity to act in concrete situations, considering that such a capacity is built by the interaction of individual efforts with the contextual and structural factors applicable in concrete situations" (Martínez Sainz, Barry and Urrea Monclús, 2020, p. 33). This means that children's communities are always on the move, influenced by structural opportunities and constraints, and by the degree of institutional and relational legitimization of children's voices.

In short, childhood communities in Spain and Catalonia are constructed in a relational way, politically situated, and epistemically plural. They emerge through participation, dialogue and recognition, but also through contestation, exclusion and struggle. To understand them, we

need to go beyond idealised notions of childhood to address the lived realities, diverse identities, and complex negotiations that children engage in every day.

### *Definition of children's communities in France*

In the French context, the notion of "childhood communities" is distinguished by its complexity and plurality, which also escapes any fixed definition. It unfolds at the intersection of relational, institutional, educational and political dynamics, in a landscape marked by the growing influence of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Since France's ratification of the CRC in 1990, the recognition of the child as a subject of rights and a social actor has gradually become part of public discourse and practice (Defender of Rights, 2023). An evolution is reflected in the multiplication of mechanisms aimed at encouraging children's participation, whether in municipal children's councils, college life councils or associative consultative bodies (Observatory of Child Participation, 2022). The child is no longer perceived only as a passive beneficiary of protection, but as an actor capable of contributing to collective life and to the transformation of his environment.

As the literature indicates, "children's participation cannot be reduced to a one-off consultation, it implies a continuous commitment and recognition of their ability to influence decision-making processes" (Brougère & Rayna, 2018, p. 45). However, the implementation of this participation remains a challenge, as it requires the articulation of structural dimensions (legal frameworks, institutional arrangements) and relational and affective dimensions. The work of French researchers insists on the importance of social support, understood as all the resources mobilised by family, school and associative networks to meet the needs of children in their daily lives (Danic, 2010). Childhood communities are woven through bonds of trust, listening and solidarity, within the family, the school, the neighborhood or associations.

In France, the notion of "childhood communities" is therefore not limited to geographical or institutional belonging. It refers to a shifting set of networks of relationships, shared practices and common values, which are built at the crossroads of individual experiences and social contexts. This relational perspective is particularly visible in working-class neighborhoods, where children develop specific forms of solidarity and mutual aid, but also in digital spaces, which offer new fields of expression and mobilization (Pasquier, 2019).

Diversity and inclusion are also at the heart of French reflections on childhood communities. Recent research highlights the plurality of children's backgrounds and identities, whether they are children from immigrant backgrounds, children with disabilities, or those placed under child protection. These singular experiences question universalist models and invite us to think of the community as a space for negotiation, recognition and sometimes contestation (Cochet, 2021).

The school occupies a central place in the construction of these communities. It is a place of learning, socialization and civic participation at the same time. School democracy mechanisms, such as student councils, allow children to experiment with speaking, deliberation and the co-construction of collective rules. This experience of participation promotes the emergence of a critical conscience and a civic identity, in connection with adults who accompany, listen to and value children's voices (Rayou, 2014).

From an ecological point of view, children's agency and community membership are not given in advance, but are built in the interplay between individual capacities and the opportunities offered by the environment. As the research points out, "children's engagement depends on the institutional recognition of their voice, but also on the quality of the relationships they form with adults and peers" (Danic & Delalande, 2019, p. 62). Childhood communities thus appear as dynamic spaces, crossed by tensions, inequalities and possibilities of emancipation.

In short, childhood communities in France are built in the plurality of experiences, relationships and spaces. They emerge through participation, recognition and dialogue, but also through the confrontation of exclusion and inequality. To understand them, it is necessary to adopt an approach that is sensitive to the lived realities, diversities and power dynamics that run through contemporary childhood.

### *Approaches to Children's Communities in Colombia*

In the Colombian context, at least two main approaches can be identified that have addressed the concept of children's community: the sociocultural approach and the political-pedagogical approach. Sociocultural Approach: From this perspective, children's communities are understood as spaces constructed through children's everyday interactions, their games, narratives, rituals, symbolic exchanges, and specific forms of socialization. This approach highlights children's capacity to produce culture based on their own experiences. However, it also emphasises the importance of understanding "children's communities" as active participants in the logics and values of a broader community that gives them meaning. They are not isolated spaces but active links within a broader social and cultural fabric.

Tapiero Celis (2023, p.247) states that, within the framework of childhood, "the community makes me, and at the same time we make each other,"<sup>7</sup> a phrase that underscores the relational, symbolic, and generative dimension of childhood within the community. This approach is also linked to the recognition of children's cultures as symbolic universes, with rules, languages, and forms of interaction that develop in dialogue with adult institutions. Suárez Galvis (2021) analyses how children's voices, in contexts of conflict, shape subjectivities that challenge adult-centered forms of representation. Similarly, Padró and Zapata (2023) document experiences in Colombia where children's participation reinforces the sense of community and the symbolic construction of a collective.

Díaz (2010) emphasises that children's communities are not closed structures or normative categories, but relational experiences. Her studies reveal that childhood is not confined to isolated family units but is an active part of a social fabric in which symbolic and emotional logics are deeply embedded. In this sense, children's communities are relational spaces where intergenerational ties, worldviews, and everyday practices are interwoven and reconfigured from the beginning of life.

The political-pedagogical approach is situated within a critical tradition that understands children as rights-bearing subjects, endowed with voice, thought, and transformative capacity. This approach affirms the political agency of boys and girls in the creation of community and challenges institutional structures that restrict their active participation in collective processes.

Torres Carrillo (2009) suggests thinking about childhood from the perspective of popular education and emancipatory paradigms, as fields that enable intergenerational encounters and exchanges beyond the normative frameworks of the traditional school system. Bácares Jara (2020), in a review of discourses around children's rights, warns that many official models continue to overlook children's political capacity by treating them as tutored subjects rather than as active participants in their communities and in the experiences those communities undergo (including the armed internal conflict). Quintero and Ruiz (2021), meanwhile, work on the notion of child citizenship and propose that the school can become a privileged space for democratic practice in childhood, when the power relations operating within it are reconfigured.

This approach posits that "children's communities" are also expressed through forms of organisation, mobilisation, and expression that children activate in defense of their

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<sup>7</sup> Omaira Tapiero Celis, *Infancia, palabra y comunidad: de lo individual al bien común*. A propósito de los 20 años Cátedra UNESCO, publicado en la revista *Infancias Imágenes*, volumen 21 (núm. 2), en abril de 2023, p.247

territories, identities, or collective interests. In Colombia, experiences have been documented in which children participate in school assemblies, community media projects, or processes of historical memory (Vargas et al., 2022). From this perspective, the childhood community is not only a space of symbolic interaction but also a collective arena capable of contesting meaning and promoting social justice.

## 2.2. Local communities, local contexts and living spaces

Within local communities, children and young people live and interact in similar (geographical) places and share a common environment, such as a neighbourhood, a city or a town. Interactions, collaborations, and connections are central to these spaces. These communities can foster a sense of belonging and support. As local communities are increasingly shaped by technological developments, this broadens our perspectives of a "community" as a place that is strongly determined by its geographical location. Within these local communities, certain local dynamics, social interventions, and pre-existing policies affect the ability of young people to navigate these spaces and build community.

Local communities are closely linked to local contexts, as the local context establishes the foundations in which a local community operates. A local context refers to a certain environment, setting, or specific circumstances. A local context is influenced by the social, economic, environmental, historical, cultural and political dynamics of a certain moment in time. In order to understand the needs and experiences of a local community and how they interact and collaborate, it is fundamental to understand the local context (e.g., needs, resources, policies, attitudes, beliefs, physical environment, historical context).

## Part 1: Being an intersectional, decolonial, and non-adult-centered social worker or educator using a rhizomatic tool

An intersectional, decolonial, and non-adult-centric social worker or educator could be described as a professional that aims to establish egalitarian relationships with children and young people, and to do so, adopts a critical posture in the face of systems of domination and power, refusing to impose normative frameworks stemming from adultocentrism, colonialism or Western universalism. It considers children and young people as active subjects, bearers of unique knowledge and experiences, and not as mere recipients of predefined solutions.

**Intersectionality:** The facilitator analyses each situation by taking into account the multiplicity of power relations (gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, disability, etc.), which intersect and produce specific forms of vulnerability as resistance. This process aims to make the experiences of minorities visible and to combat the reproduction of inequalities. It also helps to highlight our own position as social workers and educators in

relation to the axes of inequality; and works to make minoritised experiences visible and fight against the reproduction of inequalities.

**Decoloniality** : It challenges colonial legacies in social practices, values local knowledge and the voices of people from racialised, migrant or indigenous groups, and seeks to co-construct responses with the communities concerned rather than applying imported or hierarchical models, including by adults. Decoloniality is seen here as a decolonisation of brains and not only linked to colonial and post-colonial periods, as well as to a Euro-centric vision.

**Non-adultocentrism**: It refuses to consider children and young people as "becoming" or "incomplete" beings, but recognises their agency and their ability to define their needs, priorities, desires and solutions, creating spaces for dialogue where their words have real weight in decisions. This speaker acts as a facilitator of social justice, attentive to the complexity of situations, listening to marginalised voices, and engaged in collective, creative and emancipatory practices. This posture makes it possible to reposition social workers at the heart of the ecosystem and not only to act on the consequences.

**The methodology** outlined below considers a repertoire of questions, with the aim of addressing them before the intervention, in order to understand local contexts and how they relate to different perspectives. The methodology proposed below integrates these questions in order to build a reading of local contexts, prior to the intervention that crosses perspectives. We designed a series of questions that can support reflection on what this egalitarian perspective to reflect on how your positionality as educator-researcher influences the analysis of the context, and in a same way the production of data.

- **Gender approach**: -How would you define gender equality in your daily life?, -Have you experienced or witnessed situations of discrimination based on sex? (e.g. at work, with family, in public spaces), -Do you think there are gender stereotypes that limit people's opportunities? Could you name a few? , -What actions do you consider necessary to promote gender equality in your community?, -How do you think traditional gender roles affect men and women today?
- **Race and Ethnicity**: -How would you describe your racial or ethnic identity? Do you think this influences the way society treats you?, -Did you feel that your racial or ethnic background was a ground for discrimination or privilege?, -Do you think that in your country, different cultures and traditions have the same value? What for? , -What measures do you consider important to combat structural racism?, -Do you know about anti-racist movements or struggles in your community? -How could they be strengthened?
- **Economic discrimination**: -Do you think a person's economic status affects their education, health, and employment opportunities?, -Have you been a victim or witness of discrimination based on economic grounds (classism)?, -In your opinion, what is the impact of economic inequality on social relations?, - What public policies do you think are necessary to reduce the economic gap?, -Do you think access to economic resources is related to race, gender, or geographic origin?

- **Decolonisation:** -What do you mean by "decolonisation"? -Do you think this is a relevant topic in your company? , -Do you consider that the official history of your country has made certain groups (indigenous, Afro-descendants, etc.) invisible?, -Do you think that education, art and culture should include more of the national in the process of educating the new generations?, -What individual or collective actions could promote the decolonization of your environment?, -How do you think the media influences the perpetuation of colonial narratives?
- **Cross-cutting issues (gender, race and class):** -Do you think that people facing multiple forms of discrimination (gender, race and class) have more difficulty accessing fundamental rights?, -Have you been involved in an initiative that promotes equity in any of these issues?, -What changes would you like to see in your community to make it more inclusive and just?

**Inspired by the metaphor of the rhizome** (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972), this approach is neither linear nor hierarchical, but should adapt to situations, unfold in networks, and encourage the emergence of multiple links, singular paths and horizontal collaborations. It makes it possible to navigate through the different dimensions of experience, to link various knowledge and practices, and to build collective and evolving responses, outside of fixed patterns or institutional categories.

## 1. Building local diagnoses from an egalitarian perspective

*K Reporters* focuses on analysing children's democratic discourses and practices to understand how children build well-being in adverse social situations, regardless of the country. Most of them feed the essence of this international research project as they join universities and institutions. As we will see, **conflicts and post-conflicts are seen as shaping our daily lives and construct geopolitics in the countries participating in the project.** The following table maps the countries involved in the project and the criteria we used to select the conflict and post-conflict areas that the research and innovative processes encompass.



Figure 2. Map of areas and countries

Although children's lives in these areas may be marked by hardship, we aim to explore the creative strategies they develop to navigate conflict and discomfort. A central question is: To what extent do these locally embedded conditions support or restrict children's agency? Despite the difficulty of children's lives in these areas, we will look for their

creative strategies to deal with conflict and discomfort. A main question can be: **How do these viewpoints situated in local contexts allow or not the agency of children?**

### *Presentation of the global approach*

We present a methodological approach tested during the site selection and contextual analysis phase, grounded in a framework that prioritises contextual sensitivity and participatory research. It is based on a multidisciplinary framework that emphasises on contextual and participatory research. We systematically collected and curated contextual data at multiple scales, focusing on local spaces where children's agency can be observed and analyzed. The research uses qualitative and quantitative methods, combining workshops and common tools for data collection, like questionnaires, interviews and participant observation, ensuring consistency in data collection across different research sites. But also community mapping and working directly with children to capture their perspectives on their communities and sense of belonging. This participatory approach ensures that children's voices are at the heart of the analysis, providing a nuanced understanding of how they navigate and negotiate their autonomy in various local contexts –although in the *K Reporters* project, this step comes when researchers are engaged in the fieldwork. These tools provide detailed information on community-based organizations, social interventions and the experiences of children in conflict and post-conflict areas. These results need to be synthesised in order to identify trends and differences between sites, paying particular attention to children's mobility and the intersection of local and national policies that affect their lives, we propose some avenues of reflection for this intersection in conclusion.

All spaces in which we need to intervene (whatever they may be, for example, children's unions) must be seen as opportunities to understand children's **real political participation** ("social situations that emerge in reality", Sen, 2009) in order to enrich democracies and improve universal children's rights. Intersectional theory makes it possible to question the ideal of childhood and children's participation, based on a diversity of socio-economic backgrounds, gender identity, age, racialization, abilities and sexual orientation.

Participation spaces for children are often conceived as symbolic spaces for involvement without political legitimation, and they do not receive enough support from local and global political agendas to strengthen their rights in the different areas occupied by the children. However, at the local level, there are areas and spaces independent of institutions that also contribute to improving children's living conditions: neighborhood associations, informal support networks, community leaders, etc. These spaces seem to build alternative and autonomous sites of empowerment and education to address social issues that policymakers, institutions, and the neoliberal educational agenda do not consider essential for good educational development and social inclusion.

In this part, we present the different stages of the work and the useful tools to build a local I&D (Interseccional & Decolonial) diagnosis, within the framework of the *K Reporters* project, or for any other researcher or social worker engaged in work with children.

## *Step 1. Systematically collect and organise information*

Systematically collect and organise information on the places of intervention (municipalities, neighbourhoods), on the population of children concerned, on the policies developed over the last decade (particularly those relating to children's autonomy), on local civil society and stakeholders, as well as on other aspects that stakeholders consider important and relevant to the objectives of the project.

- **Background Context:** Key demographic, economic and social characteristics of the region and municipality, compared to other municipalities.
- **Statistical and demographic data**
  - **National statistics.** Up-to-date data on population demographics, poverty levels, infant mortality, education and employment rates to provide insight into the socio-economic conditions that children face.
  - **International databases:** search for reports on children's rights, education, well-being, and social services. The Ministries of Education, Social Development or Justice may have data on children's living conditions and political participation. (for example. UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, UNESCO, Save the Children... or other NGO/charity reports for cross-country comparative data on child well-being, education, health, and socio-economic status in conflict or post-conflict regions)
  - **Local government reports on** children's living conditions, education and health services offer more data on particular sites.
- **Media, art, and current affairs analysis**
  - **International news agencies.** Global media outlets such as Reuters, the BBC and Al Jazeera frequently cover conflict zones and can cover issues relating to children.
  - **Visual media, documentaries and artistic projects** focusing on conflict or post-conflict areas often highlight the role of children and the local context.
- **Policy and legal frameworks**
  - **National and regional policies:** review existing education, child welfare and social protection policies in the countries concerned to analyse how these rights are (or are not) implemented.
  - **International conventions**
- Main characteristics of the ethnographic field (equipment, housing situation, public services, etc.)
- Main characteristics of the children on the site (history of their presence here, demography of the group, housing situation, other general information).
- With regard to rights: social and public policies in this area, the existence of regulations, specific laws and existing forms of action in relation to access to children's rights and services.

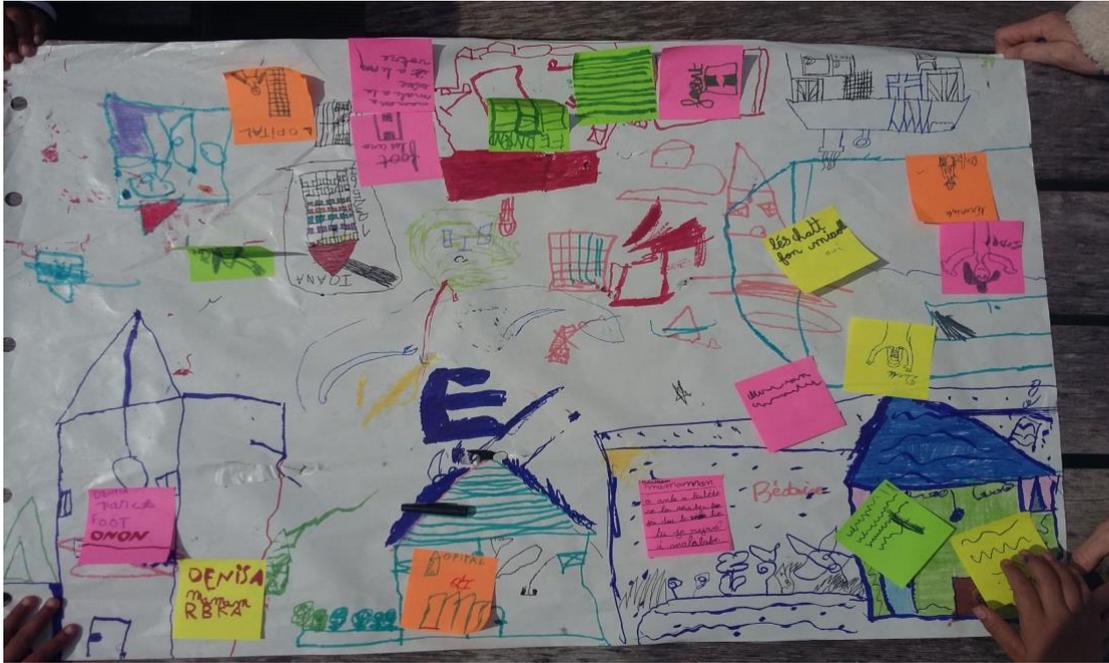


Figure 3. Drawing as a tool for social cartography

- **Configuration of social intervention** by identifying **the actors** (community development and social, formal or informal intervention) and their modes of operation, the logics of intervention (individual, collective, assistance—cf. different modalities of direct intervention) and the type of spaces (living spaces, educational spaces, leisure spaces, mobility and movement of children between these spaces). They can be carried out over the long term, by social workers, children and anyone interested in the issue.
  
- Here, **social maps**, developed as a result of community mapping exercises, are interesting to carry out because they make it possible to represent perceptions of the relationships between the different actors, power relations and social vulnerability links. These maps can reflect local perceptions and symbolic meanings, rather than external classifications, thus offering insight into the lived experiences and subjective social realities of the participants.
  
- Mapping the data collected using a digital mapping application to reveal the different points of view on the contexts studied. Organising and showing the data with a digital mapping application to reveal the different aspects, points of view, on the contexts studied.

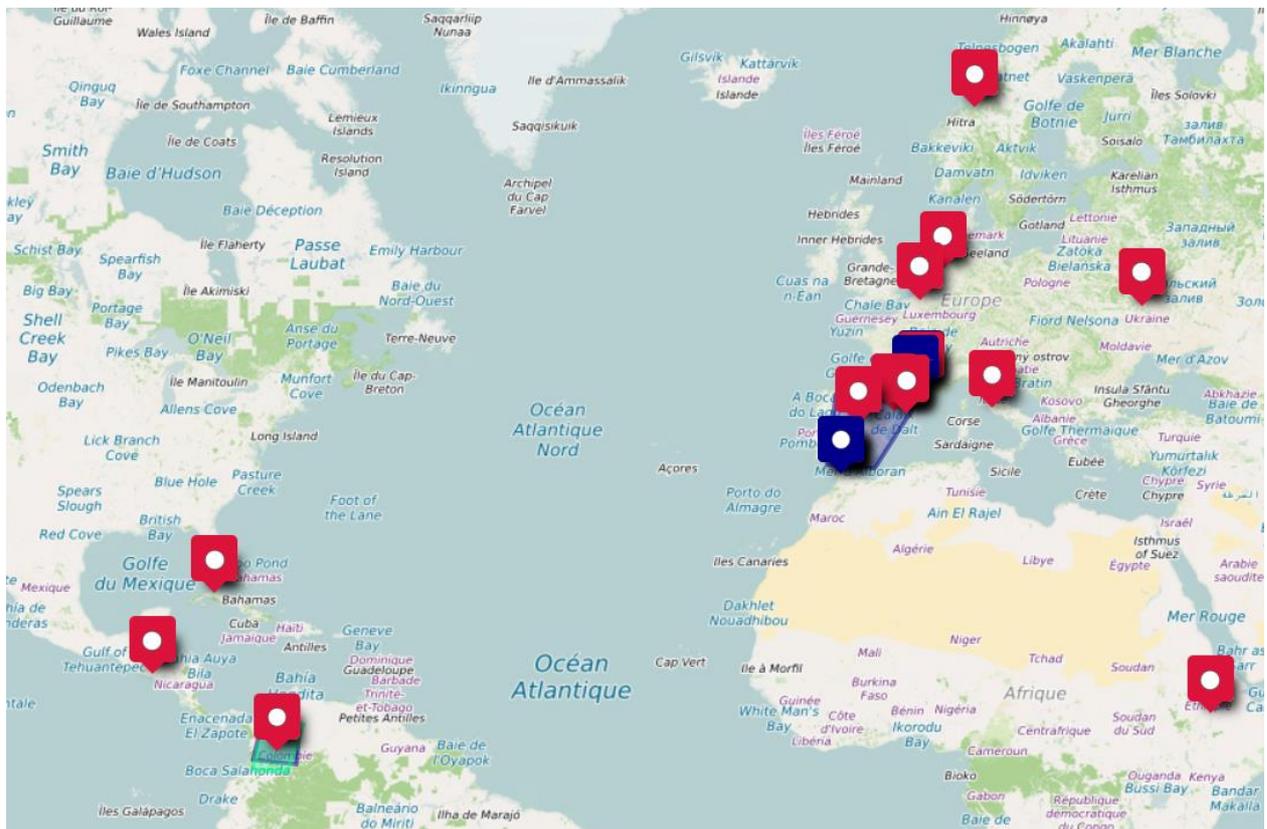


Figure 4. Mapping the sites of the project

This is an example of the mapping we are developing at *K Reporters* in the different countries where fieldwork is taking place (WP3). It is open access to the participants of the research, and the information can be uploaded by any participant involved in the project.

### **K'Reporters Local contexts – uMap – Online map creator**

The map provides access to resources that will help to continue the diagnosis of the selected sites, to enrich it and to cross-reference different points of view on the same context. The aim is to have a solid base of knowledge about the regions before engaging in more in-depth ethnographic work. The selected key data allow for a comprehensive understanding of the social, political and cultural contexts in which children's democratic discourses and practices take place.

We propose to collect links in each marker that can help to better understand the search contexts (statistics by country, documents, videos, images, etc.). A user manual is available [here](#).

## *Step 2. An intersectional and decolonial questioning to build and read the contextual data collected*

Once this data has been collected, it is essential to examine them in order to understand where the relations of domination are nestled, in order to better take them into account in future work. Here we present a new series of questions, formulated by the project partners, which may help inform our interpretation of the data:

- What data sources (quantitative, qualitative, testimonies, disaggregated statistics, etc.) are used? What organism do they come from? What are the sources that are invisible?
- In what value system is this data produced? How do you avoid reproducing power dynamics or colonialist logics in the collection, analysis and restitution of data?
- What would we hear from people outside the country that would allow us to take a step back from the data produced?
- In what ways does your work challenge norms, concepts, or categories from Western or Eurocentric traditions?
- Does the data collected make it possible to compare views and avoid generalizations?
- How does the approach take into account the historical, political and social contexts that structure relations of domination?
- What elements of the context (geography, access to services, laws, public policies, local history, etc.) influence the living conditions of different groups?
- Are there crises, institutional dynamics, specific systemic discriminations that are invisibilised by these data?
- What are the power relations, the privileges and/or the marginalisation involved in the data collected?

## **2. Making children's spaces of agency visible to educators through community mapping**

After the data collection is completed with the aim of analysing the different contexts in which the ethnographies will be conducted, we propose cartography as a way to collect contextual information with the children (and the agents that contribute to their well-being). Cartography is a mode of graphic representation and symbolic transcription that has historically been used as a tool for representing the world and its different dimensions. This spatial representation has also been a way of conceiving a regime of knowledge often originating from the spheres that hold power. In the K Reporters project, we see cartography and the act of mapping as a way of tracing counter-narratives, and as a tool for gaining a better understanding of contemporary childhoods. This action of mapping is intended to be carried out collaboratively with the children participating in the project. To carry out this co-creation of knowledge, we propose to make both visual and audio community maps with the participating children.



Sources of images:

- (1) <https://childreninemergencies.org/2016/08/16/community-mapping-with-children/>
- (2) <https://invisiblechildren.com/blog/2018/04/05/community-mapping/>

We see the community map as a way of reconstructing the journeys and relationships of children with their everyday environment. Mapping is like narrating a story, creating relationships and making visible the stories of each person in relation to the space they inhabit. Space and our relationship with space is constructed as we inhabit it, bearing in mind that the past influences the construction, and memory preserves this inhabiting (Ramon Soriano, 2018). This means that mapping how children inhabit the spaces they move through not only informs us about how they construct this relationship with space, but also makes visible the stories that shape their relationship with the space they inhabit. Mapping with them the places that are important to them, the places that make them feel safe (or less safe), the spaces in which they play, and those that are more restrictive, supervised and controlled, can help us to better understand children's relationship to space and its elements. As underlined by Jung, we hold that "social and spatial factors are indispensable elements of defining and constructing community, and it is critical that we remember how social, spatial, cultural, environmental, and even imaginative aspects of community are all intricately related to one another" (2015, p. 724).

In this sense, this participative mapping provide nuance and clarification on the power dynamics in children's daily lives through special attention to their capacity for action and mobility. This process, by placing stakeholders in relation to the problem and to each other, promotes awareness of each other's experiences and visions. The collectively produced maps thus become supports for dialogue, negotiation and the development of common solutions, while making it possible to identify areas of convergence and divergence. We will therefore, with the support of community mapping, collect and systematise contextual information on the sites selected for ethnography.

The community maps will be completed by the children, with the support of the researchers, in each area of research. In the construction of the "community maps" tool, these dimensions and elements should be considered:

- How do children identify resources in their territory? What types of resources are involved? What information should be included regarding the intersectional approach? What information should be provided regarding the capacity to act?
- Co-creating maps with children and young people (summary);
- Co-creation involving children and young people from the outset, and giving them significant decision-making power in the research construction process (how to measure their participation?);
- Intersectionality and decolonial perspectives: encourage the children and young people taking part to share their ways of seeing and representing their experiences. Also, visually shift the adultocentric gaze of cartographic representation, and open up to other ways of seeing and representing the world;
- Ethics of care: focusing on ethics that are situated, conscious and linked to everyday life, in a non-hegemonic way, through an ethics of care perspective;
- Generating a safe space for constructing (counter-)cartography: this means establishing trust and reciprocity, being sensitive to issues of privacy (including when writing or publishing work), working from a perspective that takes account of lived experience, questioning existing and ongoing power dynamics between adults and young people, as well as adult-centred practices;
- Approaching the fieldwork in a horizontal way: have an established (working) relationship or one in the process of being built, but also understand the context and space in which the children are navigating;
- Go beyond 'geographical' maps: include power dynamics, emotions, historical perspectives or future (post-conflict) and imagined/desired spaces; use different forms of expression through different artistic languages to create these maps (photography, digital sources, drawing, music, dance, etc.); use cartography as a process in constant movement and transformation.
- Participatory and transformative approach: Decide with children and young people what they want to share from the work they have created, and how they want to share it and make it visible (organising events, co-authoring products such as videos, reports, exhibitions, etc.).

### *Resources for organising a community mapping activity with children:*

This tool is designed to create a rich image:

[https://mispguide.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/3misp\\_tools\\_rich\\_picture\\_3.pdf](https://mispguide.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/3misp_tools_rich_picture_3.pdf)

Another very interesting tool --> the participatory Photo Mapping:

[Youth-led participatory photo mapping to understand urban environments Samantha Teixeira\\*, Rachele Gardn erb](#)

This tool is specifically designed for stakeholder mapping:

[https://mispguide.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/5misp\\_tools\\_stakeholder\\_identification\\_5.pdf](https://mispguide.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/5misp_tools_stakeholder_identification_5.pdf)

*Example: Body mapping with minors in street situations, by Chaimae El Mansouri & Mustapha El Bouyahyi, AICEED, Tangier, Morocco.*

This activity was inspired by a previous workshop we conducted on **mapping**. In this first activity, we asked the miners, who live on the street, to create maps of the city from their point of view. The aim was to understand how they perceive their environment, including identifying places they consider **unsafe** or **safe**. The results were surprising, even for us, despite our own knowledge of the area. The mapping exercise really helped us better understand their daily experiences and survival strategies. Based on this success, we decided to apply the same concept to the **body**, calling it a **body map**. The research questions were:

What are the main reasons why girls run away from shelters? Can we attribute the cause to the lack of freedom within the shelters? Is this due to the weak or insufficient infrastructure of girls' shelters? Is there a lack or absence of workshops and activities tailored to the needs of girls? Does not involving beneficiaries in decisions about their future contribute to their escape? Are they victims of neglect or violence in shelters? Is there a lack of empathetic human communication between staff and girls? Do they feel that the shelter administration has excessive control over their lives? Could the problem be related to differences in language, culture, religion, age or identity between the girls and also with the staff?

Here's how we structured it:

**Head:** Dreams – Goals – Inspirational Thoughts

**Hands:** Talents – Hobbies – Things they do well

**Heart:** Family – Love

**Feet:** Strength – Where they want to go in life

Of course, not all miners followed this structure to the letter – some interpreted it in their own way – but the results were still very significant.

**Key observations:**

**Dreams of emigration:** About 90% of the miners expressed the dream of going to **Spain**.

**Talents and interests:** We discovered things we didn't know: some like **to cook**, others are passionate about **football**, and many expressed a desire to **learn new skills**.



**Appreciation:** Many shared their gratitude for our presence and support. For us, this also served as a form of **self-assessment**.

**Family and Love:** A recurring theme was their deep love **for their family**, especially their **mother**.

**Emotional struggles:** On the other hand, some cards revealed painful realities. One miner wrote, "There is no love" and drew a smoking boy with a scarred face. At the previous city mapping activity, the same boy had said that he only felt safe when he was **alone**.

This activity helped us to better understand not only their external realities, but also their **inner world**, what they feel, what they dream about and what they struggle with. This gave

us a better understanding of the **roots of their challenges and how** we could support them more effectively.

Before conducting these maps with the children, a few questions must be asked **to carry out this work with the children from an I&D perspective**, it is necessary:

→ To know the group of children and young people:

1. Who lives or acts in this context? (age, gender, origin, socio-economic status, disability, etc.)
2. How will children, young people and other minority groups be included in the work?
3. What identities and intersecting affiliations structure local experiences? (gender, race, class, age, religion, etc.)

→ To support the self-determination of children and youth:

4. What do the children think of the subject? How did their perspectives influence the research questions?<sup>8</sup> What are the informal ways in which children practice political action in their daily lives?
5. What methodological devices promote the active participation and self-determination of subaltern or marginalised groups?
6. How do you ensure reciprocity and respect in the relationship with participants (especially minors)?
7. What mechanisms ensure the inclusion of participants who are often excluded from research processes (children, young people, non-white people, people in precarious situations, etc.)?

→ To empower children and youth to participate

8. Are children and young people considered as subjects of knowledge and not only as objects of study? Is their participation really valued rather than symbolic?
9. How do I find the information kids need?
10. How will you inform children about the study, ensuring that the information is age- and context-appropriate?
11. What survey tools or methods are appropriate for the diversity of participants, including age, language, culture or ability?

→ To make your positionality and commitment when working with children and young people:

12. Have you provided spaces for critical reflection throughout the research process?
13. How do you deal with the tensions between institutional requirements (academic, ethical, financial) and the needs or expectations of participants?
14. How does the restitution of results enhance local, indigenous or alternative knowledge?
15. What are the risks of reification or simplification of intersectional identities in your analysis?
16. How does your approach make it possible to identify and question privileges, including your own?
17. What analysis strategies make it possible to account for the complexity and plurality of lived experiences?

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<sup>8</sup> Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (3rd ed.). Zed Books

### 3. Conclusion and recommendations: crossing eyes through layers

Through this report, the aim was to compare views and consider the intersections where conflicts nestle, by proposing a method that makes visible the plurality of aspects of local contexts. The different layers of analysis –conceptual approaches, contextual data, configuration of social intervention, maps carried out by the children– offer complementary inputs for reading the complexity of a territory. It therefore becomes essential to cross-reference this data and to put it up for discussion, in order to enrich collective understanding and to bring out shared courses of action.

Participatory mapping is a central tool, because it makes it possible not only to graphically represent the areas of tension and conflict, but also to make visible the different positions in the space of the social relations of the groups involved. The superimposition of these different representations of a place allows for an enriched vision, which shows the complexity and the superimposition of "layers". This approach is in line with Deligny's perspective<sup>9</sup>, for whom tracing is not a simple tool for reproduction, but a means of crossing trajectories, experiences and possibilities, thus opening the way to a plural and dynamic reading of the territory.

It is therefore a question of articulating several levels of analysis by:

- a dialogue between peers, in spaces of non-mixing or constructive confrontation, in order to allow the expression of minority or marginalised points of view, it is a question of bringing to life "spaces of conflict",<sup>10</sup>
- the triangulation of methods and sources, combining interviews, observations, participatory mapping and documentary analyses, to strengthen the robustness of the analysis; and,
- reflexivity, by constantly questioning the position of the researcher/speaker, his hypotheses, his biases and his blind spots, in accordance with Deleuze's work on micropolitics and the transformation of reality through experience.

The main objective of this project is to conceptualise conflict: it is not only a space of tension or opposition, but also a place where synergies, learnings and new solutions can emerge. This vision is in line with the analyses of Deleuze<sup>11</sup>, for whom conflict is a space of creation and potential, and those of Deligny, who insists on the need to cross paths in order to open up new possibilities. Situating oneself in a perspective of interstionality facilitates this crossover.

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<sup>9</sup> Deligny, F. (2013). *Camérez. About beings of flight*. The Arachnean

<sup>10</sup> Bulle, S., & Tarragoni, F. (2021). *Sociology of conflict*. Armand Colin

<sup>11</sup> Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1980). *A Thousand Plateaus*. Les Éditions de Minuit

Finally, this work aims to re-anchor social workers and educators in a radical social work perspective: it is not only a question of supporting individuals, but also of transforming power relations and promoting the emergence of new forms of solidarity. This involves analysing social dynamics and relations of domination, questioning the modalities of access to rights, resources and participation, and practising a constant reflexivity on one's own involvement in the process. Crossing perspectives, methods and experiences is therefore to open the way to a finer and fairer understanding of local contexts, while laying the foundations for collective and transformative action.

## Part 2: Diagnosis of local contexts

### Preamble

The present brief comparative synthesis report of conflict and post-conflict areas focuses on contextualising selected sites in conflict and post-conflict areas to support the broader objectives of Work Package 2 (WP2: Local Contexts: Community Support and Social Interventions). The primary objective of the present undertaking is to identify and collect relevant information and contextual data from the participating countries and territories. They are intended to inform future working groups, with a particular focus on enhancing comprehension of how community support and social interventions work in these domains.

In order to achieve this objective, the present report has addressed several key areas in the first part. The initial phase entailed an examination of the conceptual underpinnings of 'children's communities', 'local contexts' and 'community-based organisations'. This is of crucial importance in ensuring consistency of analysis across different sites. The subsequent section of the report identifies and selects specific territories for ethnographic study, taking into account various factors such as institutional presence, informal living spaces, and demographic characteristics.

The emphasis is then placed on the diagnosis of local contexts, wherein data on the selected sites concerning local dynamics, social interventions and policies that have an impact on children's agency was collected and synthesised as the mobilities progressed. Moreover, the report encompasses the creation and utilisation of community maps, which have been developed with the involvement of children. The objective of these maps is to provide a visual representation of children's lived experiences, the resources available to them, and their mobility within their local contexts.

These elements constitute an integral component of the two primary tasks of WP2: the development of a common tool for diagnosing contexts and the creation of maps of children's lives. The deliverable will conclude with a brief comparative summary that highlights the unique challenges and opportunities in different conflict and post-conflict

areas, serving as a basis for future research and interventions under the project. This comparative approach will be undertaken once all the mobilities on this part of the project have been completed and the data representing all the countries has been collated.

This document is a living entity, characterised by its evolution and its rhizomatic nature. It is a representation of a progressive work process, one which is intended to facilitate a deeper understanding of each local context. This is achieved by the addition of successive layers of understanding which traverse various perspectives. The document will be subject to continual revision as researchers continue to move around. The presentation below provides access to the diagnostic elements produced in the different contexts.

### Sites proposed for the ethnographic fieldwork

The methodological approach of this study is based on a multidisciplinary framework that emphasises contextual and participatory research. A systematic collection and curation of contextual data at multiple scales was undertaken, with a focus on local spaces where children's agency can be observed and analysed. The approach adopted was the result of a combination of workshops, site selection and the development of common tools for data collection, ensuring consistency across different research sites.

These tools provide detailed information on community-based organisations, social interventions and the experiences of children in conflict and post-conflict areas. The research employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, encompassing community mapping and direct engagement with children to ascertain their perspectives on their communities and sense of belonging. This participatory approach is predicated on the premise that children's voices are central to the analysis process, thereby engendering a nuanced understanding of how children navigate and negotiate their autonomy in various local contexts. The results are presented here in order to identify trends and differences between sites, paying particular attention to children's mobility and the intersection of local and national policies that affect their lives.

The initial collection of data enabled the construction of an initial representation of the sites proposed for ethnographic work, based on the researchers involved in each country. Each partner was invited to identify sites for ethnographic work. The proposed criteria are outlined as follows:

- **Minimum number of sites:** The objective is to provide coverage of at least nine of the twelve **conflict and post-conflict** zones. The objective is to incorporate all 12 countries.
- **Site selection based on experience:** It is imperative that the partners have prior experience of the site, in order to facilitate the integration of the research team.
- **The presence of a diverse range of stakeholders and geographical locations** is a key consideration. The objective is to incorporate a diverse range of stakeholders and geographical locations.

- **No age limit for children and youth:** No age restriction will be in place. The focus has shifted towards a more nuanced understanding of how age is constructed in different contexts.
- **Access and relationships:** The coordination of fieldwork is invariably the responsibility of a **mediator or facilitator** from the host university or organisation.

Different sites have been identified for ethnographic work and proposed to researchers for ethnographic work. The following elements emerged:

The areas are mainly urban: 6 rural areas out of 21 proposed sites

Link with conflict and post-conflict, interpersonal / between community / structural – social: The proposed places are both spaces of conflict, and spaces of post-conflict, the articulation between the two, translates into physical violence, symbolism, discrimination, exclusion):

- Within the family
- Within the family – In the community and the environment
- In the living spaces
- Related to life trajectories (gender transition or migration)

The majority of the places offered are formal, institutional places (schools, accommodation structures, etc.). Informal places would be interesting to study. The children and young people concerned are between 4 and 30 years old, most between 12 and 18 years old

The main themes dealt with in these sites:

<b>Main Theme</b>	<b>Number of sites concerned</b>
Participation/agency of children/youth	10
Migration and displacement	8
Social inclusion and diversity	7
Food sovereignty	2
Violence, conflict, post-conflict	8
Education (formal and non-formal)	12
Gender/Gender Identity Justice	3
Mental Health/Psychiatry	1
Rural-urban/territorial dynamics	5

Detailed of sites :

Country	Site	Relevance to KR	Relationship to Conflict/Post-Conflict	Previous experience	Localization	Background Summary	Type of space	Actors involved	Details for children and young people
Colombia	Vereda Cariaco, Consacá, Nariño	Supports food sovereignty & decolonial goals	Avoids direct conflict but faces environmental and resource challenges	5+ years of ethnographic research	Rural, family plots	Community of 150 families, with a private farm-school	Rural Farm-School	Community members, farm workers, educators	30 children (5-18 years old), rural cultural identity...
Colombia	Sierra Nevada, Magdalena	Indigenous Education & Decolonial Approaches	Area affected by environmental and territorial conflicts	Arts & Education Integration with Indigenous Groups	Wiwa Indigenous Rural Community	Aboriginal farming community, cultural practices	Indigenous Authority & Rural Areas	Elders, community leaders, Métis farmers	50 children, cultural activities with seniors
Colombia	Nidos-CREA, Bogotá	Urban Arts Programs for Vulnerable Children	Affected by migration and displacement due to armed conflict	Pedagogical approach on alternative narratives	Disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods	Areas affected by migration, displacement & violence	Public and residential spaces	Social leaders, families, children	30-50 children, migrant families involved...
Colombia	Cerro Norte neighborhood, Usaquén, Bogotá	Construction of collective identity in rural-urban transition	Urban area at risk of violence and gang recruitment	No direct experience	Peri-urban, rural family roots	Peri-urban area with displaced families and strong community	Community Action Council, Local School	Environmental collective, teachers, social leaders	At least 30 children of all ages involved
Cuba	Pastorita Community, Matanzas	Youth Development and Inclusion	No armed conflict, but economic and family stress	Collaboration with the community project "Victoria"	Urban, population diverse	Urban area with schools, recreational facilities, amphitheatre, beach	Schools, parks, amphitheatre	Teachers, social workers, NGOs	Students (CM2-4e), community activities...
Cuba	Community of Carbonera, Matanzas	Impact of migration on vulnerable families	No armed conflict but migration and family problems	Sociocultural Project "Culture and Community"	Rural, mixed socio-economic conditions	Rural area with schools, medical centre, tourist sites	Schools, tourist sites, public spaces	Social workers, educators, NGOs	Students (CM2-4e), community activities
El Salvador	CDI & École Milagro de la Paz, San Miguel	Combating poverty and gang violence	Post-conflict, high violence, gang dominance	Collaboration with local	Urban, marginalized	Poor area with gang activity & migration	Schools, social programs,	Teachers, social workers, NGOs	150 children, mostly rural

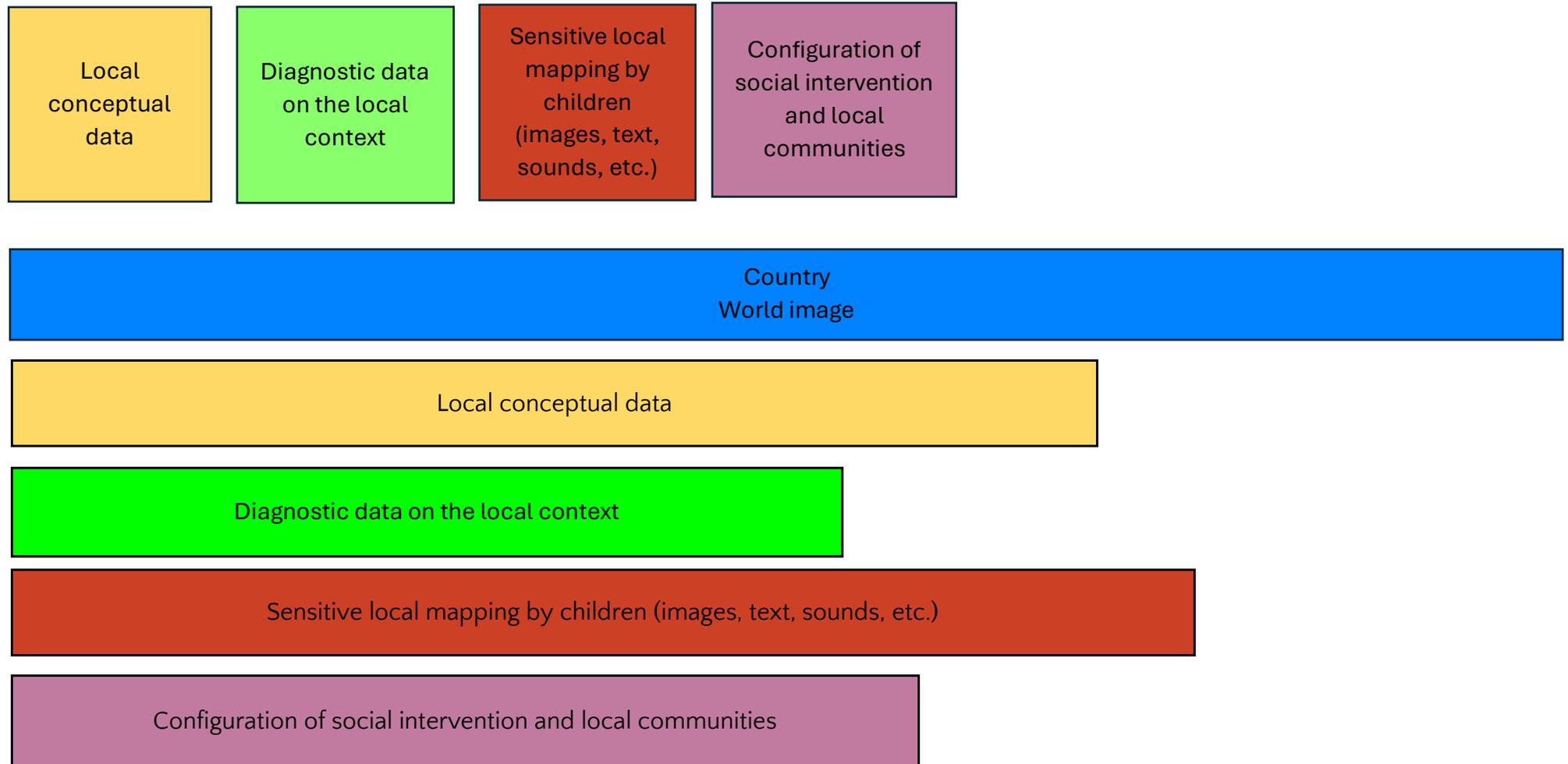
Country	Site	Relevance to KR	Relationship to Conflict/Post-Conflict	Previous experience	Localization	Background Summary	Type of space	Actors involved	Details for children and young people and marginalised...
		through education		organizations	neighborhoods		public spaces		and marginalised...
El Salvador	CORDES Bajo Lempa, Tecoluca, San Vicente	Educational & agricultural development for vulnerable groups	Post-conflict area with poverty and gang violence	Focus on child and female empowerment	Rural, marginalised area	Education-oriented region, still affected by poverty and violence	Schools, local organizations	Educators, social workers, NGOs	150 children, mostly from marginalised backgrounds
Ethiopia	Bole Sub-city, Addis Abeba, Selam Sefer	Studying childhood in a multicultural context	Conflict & Post-Conflict: Family & Community Rebuilding	No direct experience	Urban, low income, diversity	Diverse community, religions and cultures	Residential areas, informal spaces	Social workers, educators, community leaders	30 children from various backgrounds, 4-30 years old...
Ethiopia	Camps for internally displaced persons, Debre Berhan	Displacement & experiences of children in transition	Displacement due to conflict, post-conflict installation	No direct experience	Camp near urban area	Temporary settlement for displaced families and children	Camp, temporary shelters	CSOs, educators, aid organisations	Children in IDP camps, of various ages and genders
France	La Cimade, Béziers	Reception of migrants, decolonial perspective	Post-conflict, stability but local tensions	Initial exchanges for collaboration	Urban, migrant reception centre	Reception centre for families awaiting regularisation	Institutional space	Social workers, activists, educators	6-20 children/young people depending on the period...
France	La Blanquette, Montpellier	Reception of unaccompanied minors	Transition space: migration (conflict) & post-conflict (calm)	Initial exchanges for collaboration	Urban, home for minors	Transition home for unaccompanied minors	Institutional reception	Social workers, educators	50 young people (12-18 years old), shared living space
Morocco	Darna, Tangier	Youth Support Programs, Decolonial Perspectives	Migratory pressures, conflicts between migrants and locals	KR-WP2 Mapping with Youth	Urban, Youth in Transition	Vulnerable urban neighbourhood with street youth	Formal & Informal Spaces	Social workers, educators, community leaders	15 young people, especially boys (10-18 years old), addictions and violence...
Morocco	AICEED, Tanger	"Second Chance" School for Dropouts	Migratory pressures and social integration	No direct experience	Urban, school of second chance	School for marginalised young people, linking studies and migration	Institutional educational space	Educators, social workers	30 young people (15-18 years), gender-separated groups

Country	Site	Relevance to KR	Relationship to Conflict/Post-Conflict	Previous experience	Localization	Background Summary	Type of space	Actors involved	Details for children and young people
Netherlands	Queer Youth Spaces, Groningen	Queer activism and intersectionality	Spaces of discrimination and violence	Previous interactions with youth	Mixed rural and urban spaces	Queer youth navigate public and private spaces	Informal, public, institutional spaces	Queer youth, community workers, peers	16 young queer activist, 18 to 25 years old
Spain	Open Centers & Community Spaces, Barcelona & Terrassa	Agency for Children in Migration/Discrimination Contexts	Historical social exclusion and current migration challenges	Previous land under AGEncias R+D project	Spain, Barcelona & Terrassa	Multicultural neighbourhoods, peripheral neighbourhoods, ethnic diversity, socio-economic classes	Informal, public, institutional spaces	Children, youth, social workers, educators, volunteers, citizens, cultural/social organizations	Number varies according to availability and objectives...
Spain	Multifamily Traffic Groups (GFT), Barcelona	Trans Youth Agency	Discrimination & violence	Earlier field led by Ingrid Agud	Barcelona, Spain	Trans Youth Navigating Public and Private Spaces	Institutional Spaces	Families and/or caregivers, GFT facilitators, LGBTQ+ associations	Trans teens (13-17 years old) and their families...
Spain	Unitary Platform against Gender Violence & InteRed	Youth Gender Justice Programs	Discrimination & violence	Earlier pitch led by Berta Llos	Catalonia, sometimes wider	Urban and educational spaces, local communities, schools, advocacy networks	Mainly institutional spaces	Educators, parents, peers, community leaders/activists	Number varies according to availability and objectives...
Spain	Municipal nurseries, rural/secondary schools	Rural-urban dynamics, care practices, inequalities	Rural-urban tensions in adolescence/migratory impacts	Yes	Lleida, Spain	Medium-sized town with rural roots, agricultural heritage, socio-economic shift towards migrant work	Institutional Spaces	Teachers, social educators, families, citizens	0-16 years old; varying levels of interaction; 5-30 children depending on the school...
Spain	Toy libraries and parks	Children's experiences in community spaces	Rural-urban tensions in adolescence/migratory impacts	Yes	Lleida, Spain	Medium-sized towns, rural roots, agricultural heritage, socio-economic	Informal, public spaces	Toy library staff, families, citizens	0-12 years old in toy libraries, all ages in parks; 5-15 children in toy libraries,

Country	Site	Relevance to KR	Relationship to Conflict/Post-Conflict	Previous experience	Localization	Background Summary	Type of space	Actors involved	Details for children and young people
						change towards migrant work			variable in parks...
Belgium	Residential child/youth psychiatry near Ghent	Children's rights in institutional life	Conflict related to residential social assistance and psychiatrization	No	Ghent, Belgium	Highly regulated environment, focus on the effectiveness of children's rights	Institutional location	Psychiatrists, social workers, therapists	About 12 children (6-12 years old) in great difficulty; Families and therapists play a key role

## Local contexts by country

From these sites, we have undertaken a collection of statistical and demographic data that we present here. Each page will represent a partner country of the project. The content is organised in the following way. Thumbnails (which refer to other pages which can be: links, texts, images, or audio - sound file), show a path, a path in the construction of knowledge of local contexts (carried out by the researchers of the project), this path allows to show the data collected in different ways, and the I&D methodology to do so. A questionnaire is used to identify the sources necessary to understand the context. It is filled in as it goes by the project's researchers (Collect date). The information organised per country will be available in the website of *K Reporters*.



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