

HUNGARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS ON WAR AND PEACE: DOES IT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH COMPETITION?

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The Hungarian immigration scene

- There is a lack of systematic data collection about the number of immigrant children in Hungarian schools.
- Precise data are even more complicated to gain by the fact that the institutions use different expressions/categories: "migrant student", "foreign student", "child of immigrant parents", "immigrant child", "non-Hungarian-speaking student", „student whose mother-tongue is not Hungarian”, "non-Hungarian citizen student" etc.

The history of immigration

- During the socialist system there were basically no immigrants in Hungary.
- **After the political changes from 1989 to East European countries entering the EU there was a big influx of ethnic Hungarian minority families from the neighbouring countries (mainly from Romania and Slovakia) whose mother tongue is Hungarian**
- Immigrants from mainly Asia mostly from China and Vietnam;
- Significantly smaller number of immigrants from of the Middle-East or North-Africa (eg. Egypt) or Turkey but typically without children
- Hungary is not a popular destination for migrants or refugees: they rather choose the more affluent Western or Northern European countries with more multicultural tradition and a more open society towards migrants
- There are not in the country large, ethnically homogeneous, multigenerational immigrant communities.

Numbers

- Although these numbers change slightly from year to year, it is a good estimate to say that the proportion of **non-Hungarian students is approximately 1%** in Hungarian public education.
- They live mainly in Budapest and the bigger cities. Non-Hungarian children are very rare in rural Hungary.
- The average number of non-Hungarian children in Hungarian schools is about **3 children** per school.
- In the majority of Hungarian schools no immigrant students at all.
- Papp (2017), the number of refugee children were 204 in the school year 2016/2017.
- Almost none of the unaccompanied minors, and only a part of the refugee children, make it to educational institutions – but their number is very low (in 2020 it was 2 unaccompanied children in 2021 only 3 such children)

The educational scene

- According to the most recent **Migrant Integration Policy Index**, migrant education policies in Hungary remain critically weak, ranking last among MIPPEX countries
- There are restrictions in law for certain categories of migrants to access compulsory and non-compulsory education.
- As research showed, the report also states that schools receive some of the least support to address the new needs and opportunities of immigrant pupils.
- Hungarian pedagogical culture does not pay enough attention to the successful integration of migrant students, to promoting the acquisition of Hungarian as a foreign language, the development of ways of maintaining relations with parents, and community integration.
- No specific **language courses** – „*swim or sink*”. If parents have money, they hire a private tutor of Hungarian (Chinese, Vietnamese).
- No concern of **dietary requirements** (e.g. Muslim students).
- **Religious holidays** are only informally accepted - depends on the school/home-room teacher. In Hungary the curricula and the textbooks are not culturally sensitive.

Teachers' support

- No specific training in most of the teacher training institutions
- The Intercultural Psychology and Education Institute at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest is the only such institution with educational profile as well
- Teachers are not trained in intercultural needs and skills, nor in the special needs and abilities of refugees and asylum seekers.
- No preparation of the school and the host community (teachers, students) for cooperation with the student and his parents

Parents' Support

- No adequate information and orientation are available to immigrant parents about the school opportunities.

NO:

- Preparation of the class teacher and head of class to receive the student,
- No preparation of the migrant child and his parents for school,
- All this happens spontaneously, no policy

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NGO's

Menedék – Hungarian Association for Migrants

- Have a student support programme: help the successful integration of migrant children
- Providing teacher forums in the partner institutions to share experiences and offering experts' lectures on educating migrant children
- Creating a parenting brochure in cooperation with the participating teachers and translate it to seven languages in order to help parents obtain all information on the Hungarian education system and the partner institutions.
- Fostering communication between parents and teachers supported by intercultural mediators and interpreters Parents also cannot contribute to their children's education, since they often do not speak Hungarian, so they cannot communicate with the teachers without an interpreter.

Bilingual Schools

- In Budapest, the capital of the country a **Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual Elementary and Secondary School** has been functioning since 2004 with approximately 500 Chinese and Hungarian students.
- Since 2006 there is also an **Arab elementary and secondary school** in Budapest called **Al Wahda** which is run by Libya.

**SCHOOL CLIMATE VIEWED BY HUNGARIAN
TEACHERS and IMMIGRANT STUDENTS!**

Experience of discrimination or bullying

By other students

- *"And I was called a Nazi, so it wasn't such a good time back then." "So I thought they didn't really understand what they were saying, so I didn't take it that seriously,, (German-Israeli boy, age 11)*

- By teachers

"I had to write the National Anthem down and I could write it down, because I had learnt it well, and then the next class she (teacher) asked me why I couldn't learn the other poems like that. I told her that I could learn them, but that I couldn't recite them in front of the class. So, she asked me: What passport do you have? I replied: Hungarian. So, she asked me: What is your mother tongue? I replied: Hungarian. She said to me: Well, if this the case that you are a Hungarian citizen and you have a Hungarian passport, then you must know Hungarian" (Second-generation Syrian-Hungarian girl, aged 18, Hungary).

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Interracial-International Conflicts

- in schools with higher proportion of Roma and immigrant students the teachers and students sometimes experience inter-racial conflicts as well

„Oh, and then, isn't it such a small thing that, let's say, a Chinese and a Taiwanese sit in the same class, who don't necessarily understand each other in relation to the world political situation, and how is it that this conflict is sure to come up as in everyday life. So that surprising conflicts can arise from this.” (High-school teacher)

Communication with parents

- Limited contact
- Parents do not attend the usual Parent-Teacher meetings
- Children translate
- Google translator (mainly Chinese)
- Even the child's problems are discussed via the child itself –the child transforms the unpleasant content
- Messages are sent to parents in Hungarian
- If the teacher and the parent happen to have a common foreign language then it works

Cultural Clashes 1

„Well, for example, Chinese children are often... not typical of all of them, but they often make music in a more emotionless way. So with them, it is rather this technical what is surprising, or often even keeps them ahead but I often had the feeling that a colleague would like to slap his hands. Technical knowledge without emotions was not appreciated, so to speak, but I think that in Asian culture, the expression of emotions, I think, is still a problem. I think that the expression of emotions was not a very supported thing. For children this is difficult, you have to work with them many times more than with a European with a more liberated background...” (Piano teacher)

Cultural Clashes 2

- *We are quite free when it comes to food, so you can't order anything at school, but you can bring it from home as well, and as a result, I think that everyone can eat whatever their nationality, religion, taste, appetite demands. I'm not saying that this doesn't usually cause problems, so when Asian food like this arrives, with six-day-old fish like this, and you can smell it in the whole school, not everyone is happy about it. Well, then we actively try to ventilate the classroom and very gently try to tell him that he should not bring. But it's natural for him. So try not to bring this thing to school, but practically you can still bring it. So there is no such restriction that you cannot eat smelly food at school” (Teacher of English and History, highschool)*

Assimilation?

- *"If the aim is to integrate them [the international students] into society, it is difficult for them to be integrated into the community, where they carry on the mentality of their home countries. It's okay to cherish their roots, but they open up too late to the culture of the host country"* (Female Teacher, aged 67, Hungary).
- *"We have to find a balance between how far we try to accustom them to European/Hungarian norms of behaviour and how far we have to respect the fact that they come from a different culture/religious background"* (Female Teacher, aged 43, Hungary).

Peer relationships-safe cultural group

- In many classes there are only 1-2 immigrant children.

„So there was a time when we had a lot of Chinese, and then they expected us to treat them as a separate community, which we didn't really want, because practically the school is about community so it shouldn't be that the different nationalities are in such separate cliques. ” (English-History High School Teacher)

- *"I would really need a [translator] for the Russian girl. The only help I have with her is that there is another Russian girl at school who also speaks Hungarian, and if I really need her, she helps me out, but I can't keep dragging her out of her classroom" (Female Teacher, aged 24, Hungary).*

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