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**Arts education in emergency humanitarian aid: educational issues with young people living in camps in conflict areas in the Middle East**

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**Abstract:** Armed conflict is a major obstacle to enrolment and persistence in school and access to quality education. More than 125 million children and young people affected by violence and in urgent need of educational support. The major reform of the humanitarian sector in 2005 contributed significantly to the emergence of the field of education in emergencies (EiE), which is currently developing mainly in emergency humanitarian responses. Artistic interventions with psychosocial objectives are increasingly deployed with children affected by conflict, particularly to promote well-being. In response to the many social and educational challenges and theoretical gaps, our presentation aims to contextualize the scope of arts education activities for education in emergencies, and to present some results related to the well-being of our field experiences in a participatory action research. We contribute to defining what well-being is within the framework of artistic workshops with children in an IDPs camp in Iraq.

**Keywords:** conflict areas; humanitarian aid; education in emergencies; art education; art practices; middle east

**Résumé:** Les conflits armés constituent un obstacle majeur à la scolarisation et à la persistance à l'école et à l'accès à une éducation de qualité. Plus de 125 millions d'enfants et de jeunes touchés par la violence et ayant un besoin urgent de soutien éducatif. La réforme majeure du secteur humanitaire en 2005 a contribué de manière significative à l'émergence du domaine de l'éducation dans les situations d'urgence (EiE), qui se développe actuellement principalement dans les interventions humanitaires d'urgence. Les interventions artistiques ayant des objectifs psychosociaux sont de plus en plus souvent déployées auprès d'enfants touchés par des conflits, en particulier pour promouvoir le bien-être. En réponse aux nombreux défis sociaux et éducatifs et aux lacunes théoriques, notre présentation vise à contextualiser la portée des activités d'éducation artistique pour l'éducation dans les situations d'urgence et à présenter certains résultats liés au bien-être de nos expériences de terrain dans une recherche-action participative. Nous contribuons à définir ce qu'est le bien-être dans le cadre d'ateliers artistiques avec des enfants dans un camp de déplacés internes en Irak.

## I. Context

### 1. War and displacement

Conflicts are intensifying as much as they cause protracted crises and have an impact on the long term, particularly on the fate of the populations affected (Wieviorka et al., 2014; ICRC, 2016). Alongside life in these sclerotic war zones that we are trying to escape, global structures are impacted by migratory flows: more and more people are displaced or refugees because of conflicts, i.e. about 68.5 million people in 2018 and according to the latest UNHCR, more than 70.5 million people in the world today (UNHCR, 2019).

More than half of the world's forcibly displaced persons are children, for whom displacement is particularly harmful (INEE, 2016). The origin and expansion of the terrorist group Daesh over the past fifteen years conflict is its peak in Syria and Iraq from 2013 led to the destruction of many cities. In 2014, Daesh took control of Iraq's second largest city, Mosul. Tens of thousands of people are fleeing in the midst of atrocities. Today, both in Syria and Iraq, Daesh is officially wiped off the map. More than five years after Daesh occupations, massive displacements have taken place in the north and centre of the country, there are still active war zones and millions of Iraqis and Syrians displaced, some of them particularly traumatized by long years of war.

Emergency situations present a number of threats to the safety, mental and physical health and development of children and youth. Children are subject to significant sources of stress due to war-related fears (including concerns about the family remaining in Syria), as well as their own traumatic experiences and educational problems (Hassan et al., 2015). Suffering is multiple during direct exposure to conflict (violence, confinement, war chaos), displacement (separation, disruption of feelings of security and normalcy), precarious settlement (adaptation to a new context, conditions and various deprivations) and eventual return exposes children to several cumulative risks to their physical, emotional and social development (UNHCR, 2017). Domestic violence and parental stress, economic pressures and confinement in the home also contribute to children's distress (ibid.).

## 2. Humanitarian field and education in emergencies

These emergencies have had a significant impact on the entire education system, including teachers and education authorities, infrastructure and the functioning of the education system and services (INEE, 2016). Armed conflict is thus a major obstacle to enrolment and persistence in school and access to quality education. The right to education is considered as a right and a lever for obtaining other rights (Hamer et al., 2010 ; INEE, 2004). Despite the many international legal instruments governing this right, one in four school-age children in the world, and 75 million children are already deprived of an education, receive a poor-quality education or are at risk of dropping out of school completely (UNICEF, 2017). Since the 2000s and particularly since the major reform of the humanitarian sector in 2007, aimed in particular at the integration of education as the fourth pillar of humanitarian aid, a common reflection has made it

possible to structure educational intervention strategies (Davies et Talbot, 2008). Coordination's have thus developed, boosting new capacities (INEE, 2006), means and educational offers standardized by ideological structures legitimized by international organizations and the humanitarian government in this field (Agier, 2013, 2014 ; Boltanski, 1993 ; Martuccelli, 2004). For example, participation and school attendance can protect children from recruitment into armed forces and from conflict-related risks such as gender-based violence, recruitment into armed forces and groups, trafficking, child labour and early marriage (Gladwell & Tanner, 2014; UNICEF 2016). For these reasons, education is considered by the populations themselves as a priority for emergency intervention during an active conflict (Gürle, 2018). New evidence shows that, for the majority of children and young people affected by conflict or disaster, school routines improve mental health and resilience and help them recover from the extreme distress they have faced (Burde et al., 2015 ; Gürle, 2018). Access to formal education in conflict situations is often limited or non-existent, so non-formal education (NFE) is a privileged recourse in these emergency educational situations. In addition, the education sector is particularly used to work to improve the mental health and well-being of the targeted populations.

### 3. Art education in emergencies settings

The recognition of the many benefits and relevance of the use of artistic practices by emergency humanitarian NGOs, operating in both formal and non-formal educational settings, is unanimous (Bamford, 2006 ; Bamford et Wimmer, 2012 ; Winner et al., 2013). Arts education in non-formal education is often deployed in humanitarian contexts. Artistic approaches are thus continuously used in emergency child protection programs and in emergency education activities.

Artistic approaches would contribute to the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, but also to the promotion of the well-being of the children and young people who benefit from them (INEE, 2004; INEE 2010). In addition to promoting academic persistence and thus preventing drop-out, it would also be a means of developing cultural learning and thus of considering prospects for participation in social development without the structural characteristics of conflict situations (Boateng, 2017 ; Jordans et al., 2010 ; Tyrer et Fazel, 2014). It shows two complementary approaches to teaching and learning "of" or "by" the arts (UNESCO, 2006; Bamford, 2009). We consider arts education as

referring to all educational processes whose mediation aims to transmit a cultural heritage to individuals and to enable them to understand and create their own artistic language, both through theory and the experimentation of cultural or artistic materials in a creative way, according to (Bamford, 2006, 2009 ; Botella et Lubart, 2016 ; Colignon, 2015 ; Jacobi, 2018 ; Lesain-Delabarre et Colignon, 2015 ; Smilan, 2009). From the point of view of experience, art would be the act of "feeling the meaning of what one is doing and rejoicing in it: uniting in the same fact the unfolding of the inner life and the ordered development of material conditions, that is, art" (Dewey et al., 1906).

### **I. Practices for the children well-being**

Many interdisciplinary research projects focus on the potential links between art and well-being. This work is undertaken in a wide range of contexts and aims to demonstrate the possible effects and impacts of arts-based programs or more specifically on the benefits of arts education on the development and well-being of young people. In particular, they aim to demonstrate that arts education invested with learning processes is structurally different from other disciplines in formal education and thus complementary. It appears that arts programs encourage group interaction, concentration and retention, particularly with boys or marginalized students (Bamford, 2009). Several studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of artistic interventions as an interdisciplinary pedagogical support, demonstrating a growing interest in this field and posing challenges for traditional learning methods that shape current pedagogical practice. Art-based pedagogy would improve learning processes (Mastandrea et al., 2019).

Arts education in emergency and post-emergency situations offered through structured, meaningful and creative activities in schools or non-formal learning spaces improves the emotional and behavioural well-being of young participants (Burde et al., 2017). Psychosocial objectives implemented through the acquisition of personal skills (perception, resilience, emotional management) and social skills (communication, conflict resolution, respect, cooperation) accompany the development of the child experiencing conflict while offering him/her the acquisition of new knowledge. The recognition of the many benefits of artistic practices by emergency humanitarian NGOs, acting within the formal or non-formal educational framework, appears to be unanimous (Winner et al., 2013; UNICEF, Art in the box, 2016, Save the children, HEART program,

aptART, etc.). Arts education is thus increasingly used in psychosocial interventions for children affected by conflict and crisis (Burde et al., 2015, 2017 ; Jordans et al., 2010). They would contribute to the acquisition of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, but also to the promotion of the well-being of the children and young people who benefit from them (INEE, 2004; INEE 2010). In addition to promoting academic persistence and thus preventing drop-out, it would also be a means of developing cultural learning and thus considering prospects for participation in social, socio-emotional and psychosocial development without the structural characteristics of conflict situations (Boateng, 2017 ; Jordans et al., 2010 ; Tyrer et Fazel, 2014). A number of studies have been carried out on improving children's well-being from a psychological point of view through so-called "school-based activity" art education or on the broad field of research in "art therapy". This includes treating post-traumatic stress disorder (called PTSD or post-traumatic stress disorder) (Ainamani et al., 2017 ; Al-Hadethe et al., 2014). For example, through various previously established therapeutic methodologies, a collective artistic creation process of the theatre workshop type is conducted by teachers and artists over several weeks (Kollontai, 2010 ; Pisani et al., 2016). Based on a meta-analysis of 21 studies (Boateng, 2017 ; Tyrer et Fazel, 2014), they improve the well-being of intervention participants (Ager et al., 2011 ; Boateng, 2017). According to Malchiodi (2006) and Ager et al (2011), these artistic interventions allow participants to effectively express their emotions and thoughts in a unique way. It also allows them to acquire skills that promote resilience such as better emotional control and a more developed sense of adaptation (Huss et al., 2012 ; Rousseau et al., 2012). Fitzpatrick (2002) supports this and adds that artistic practices allow refugee children to feel a sense of community, control and structure, help them reaffirm their identity and mobilize their hope. The anxiety symptoms characteristic of children can be significantly reduced after artistic interventions, according to Urgulu et al. (2016). For example, we see in the literature a program of PSSA (school-based psychosocial activities) using art education forms (Ager et al., 2011). In addition, the role and practices of teachers and socio-educational staff are essential to consider positive effects on the well-being of young people, particularly in contexts of crisis and conflict (Beauregard, 2014 ; Burde et al., 2017 ; INEE, 2016)

The multiple links between well-being, art, conflict and displacement situations and socio-educational interventions are clearly visible. However, it is essential to understand "how art can be used in the context of social work practice and training" (Denov et

Shevell, 2019) and thus to provide more data on the link between arts education, cognitive development, health and well-being in terms of effects and impacts for participants (Bamford, 2009). The purpose of this research is therefore to advance reflection on potential indicators related to well-being through art education in emergency situations.

## II. Typology inspiration

We are inspired by the work of Bamford (2009) proposing a typology of influences for arts education: 1) **Technocratic art**: presents the view that the arts are comprised of a series of skills that serve the needs of industry and a desire for a capable skilled workforce, 2) **Child art**: views the arts as a natural development phenomenon of children, governed by the child's physical and psychological growth and the need to freely communicate their needs and emotions, 3) **Arts as expression**: occurs through free engagement in arts experiences that stress creativity, imagination and authenticity of outcomes, implying a level of therapeutic benefit to the individual, 4) **Arts as cognition** focuses on the art as a form of intellectual inquiry capable of being studied from a critical framework and the arts embody unique forms of thinking in the process of creating artworks, 5) **Arts as aesthetic response** explores sensory and perceptual definitions of art through disciplined inquiry into the principles underpinning the aesthetic, 6) **Arts as symbolic** communication treats the arts as a language form whereby people communicate, 7) **Arts as a cultural agent** accentuates the role of the arts in social action, social reconstruction and the role of culture in society and ; 8) **Postmodernism** challenges traditional definitions of arts and questions the physicality and performativity of the arts and the definability of a concept called "the arts".

Our field experiences show that the entire proposed typology is partially present, but two influences are particularly present in our conflict and emergency humanitarian contexts: **child art and art as expression**. These two types of art seem to be considered as privileged vectors for the development of well-being which is one of the priorities in emergency interventions.

## III. Research methodology

### 1. Epistemology



Considering the perspectives outlined above and the socioconstructivist theory on which we rely, the objective of this work is to contribute to the reflection on the meanings given to the concept of well-being for arts education in emergency situations through ethnographic research. In order to undo the dualism between practice and research, we will not dissociate the two and will hear our practices and the research developed as a dialectical whole. Notions of well-being are often based on a mentalist conception. We take into account the complex even if our present work aims to select elements of signifiers participating in the progress of the reflections. Artistic research is thus defined as a paradigmatic framework for a pedagogical method. Our ontology "includes epistemologies rooted in sensory, kinaesthetic and imaginary forms of knowledge" (Gerber *et al.*, 2012). It also includes the "ontological aesthetic concept that art is often the provider of truth or enlightenment in relation to self-knowledge and knowledge of the other, as well as the belief that the use of the arts is essential to the acquisition of self-knowledge and other knowledge through the exploration of pre-verbal knowledge patterns" (*ibid.*).

## 2. An ethnographic approach for a typology of action

The typology of action is based on the experiences we have had. The aim is to advance what is called "well-being" through concrete indicators. Our practice allows us to say what exists to propose a breakthrough. Our typology refines the category that we consider dominant: child art and art as expression. This reflective work is based on an ethnographical study "Artistic experiences and hope: identity issues of displaced children", on the experience of the displacement of children and their parents who have found refuge, mostly for the past five years in Camp Ashti, Sulaymaniyah, Iraqi Kurdistan. Camp Ashti is rich in complexity as it is home to different communities: Sunni Arabs, Yazidis, Shabaks and Turkmens. It is the only camp holding this originality in Iraqi Kurdistan. The trajectories are diverse, so are the situations and hopes.

The objectives of this study were to make children's lives and hopes understandable and known through contextualized words, but also to experiment, through participatory action research (PAR) and artistic research, with the appropriation of the potential future of children affected by conflict in displacement situations. The ethnographic survey took place over 3 months with a full-time researcher dedicated to this task. The COD/Foundation Danièle Mitterrand team of 4 facilitators was also involved in this

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project and Zhwan is a professor at the University of Sulaymaniyah in the Department of Visual Arts. This collective work highlighted identity issues and representations of children and their families about their living conditions in the camps and their future. This cycle of artistic workshops also focused on how imaginary ideas and ways of thinking about the future are sketched out by drawing, particularly through the reflective approach of artistic research. Five different workshops were conducted with two groups of 20-25 children, for a total of about 60 children and young people from 6 to 15 years old.

### 3. Cultural symbols and ethics

(Hassan *et al.*, 2015) demonstrate that interventions to mitigate the effects of war and promote psychosocial well-being must be adapted to the specific culture and context of participants and situations to have effective and sustainable effects. Thus, among war-affected Syrians, particular attention is paid to the narrative of the self (individual metaphors, expressions and idioms) specific to the Syrian socio-cultural context. For example, individual suffering is much more a "sociocentric" and "cosmocentric" conception of the self than an individualized narrative of emotions. These elements of understanding were taken into account in the overall approach of the study. They were systematically analysed collectively with the various stakeholders in the study. (Denov et Shevell, 2019) report that many researchers have highlighted the dangers of focusing on individual trauma approaches, particularly for war-affected populations. They add that "social work practice and education continue to rely too heavily on approaches based on these same assumptions". Ethics and the ethical relationship with war-affected children are more directly studied and valued through participatory artistic methods that involve the production of artistic creations such as photos, videos and drawings (Akesson *et al.*, 2014 ; Mitchell *et al.*, 2019).

### 4. Drawing tasks

There is considerable evidence of the potential of artistic approaches such as Photovoice, participatory video, digital storytelling, drawing, painting, mapping and image theatre as a method and intervention that simultaneously aim to empower and actively engage war-affected children and youth (Akesson *et al.*, 2014 ; Mitchell *et al.*, 2019). Drawing tasks

are essential to help children express themselves verbally and tell stories. Drawing would be part of a natural language, familiar to children. Especially in cases of trauma and victimization as well as complicated loss or grief, drawing helps to reduce anxiety levels and make children more comfortable in the process of outsourcing their traumas (Veronese *et al.*, 2010). Drawing helps children to come into contact with positive thoughts related to self-esteem and a sense of protection in the family, and to restore feelings of safety in places that are experienced daily as dangerous and unsafe (Veronese *et al.*, 2010). A drawing is always meaningful to the child, because it reflects the child's interests and intentions and conveys meaning (Denov *et al.*, 2012; Hopperstad, 2008).

The dream (understood hope) has been used as a theme for artistic activities. This was in response to our desire to see how children can overcome the situations they are currently facing to enable them to project themselves into the future. Thus, it made it possible to go beyond the current material and social conditions to identify an imaginary mobilizer. Instructions were provided by the facilitators and the artist. This approach can be likened to "positive drawing", where the aim is to guide children in the development of drawings that make them feel secure and comforted. In a synergistic and collaborative way, and based on the experiences and observations of previous workshops, interviews and productions carried out over time, we have carried out five different workshops: 1) The dream workshops, 2) Self-portrait, 3) Inside the home of my dreams, 4) Outside the home of my dreams and, 5) My dream on a canvas. This process was led by the artist and facilitators to help children produce positive stories organized into coherent and aesthetic stories.

The task of tracing and visually explaining their drawings to researchers to accompany the in-depth qualitative interview proved to be an invaluable source of information, consolidating the research themes that emerged from the interview data and even guiding and informing the interview questions. The evaluation of phenomenological art includes the meaning that children attribute to their art in the context of specific cultural realities (Huss *et al.*, 2012; Malchiodi & Riley, 1996). Thus, the combination of phenomenological and cultural perspectives to understand children's art can lead to a more global understanding of art as an access to stressors and signs of well-being and resilience. We rely on all these methodological elements to identify the following areas of analysis:

## I. Results and discussion

### 1. The educational environment to improve well-being

Our observations suggest that the educational environment itself has a central role to play in promoting the safety and well-being of children in conflict-affected areas. The community and teachers play a key role in this regard. However, the implementation of additional conflict-sensitive educational policies and practices has an important role to play. Through training in non-formal education; and careful selection and design of teaching materials and good child management, children regularly attend the workshops of the team of facilitators. A relationship of trust has been developed: children share their ideas and needs during the workshops. Even though intercommunity relations are tense and almost non-existent, children from both communities collaborate in the same space between the two ethnic groups.

#### *a) Bodies and postures*

We observed that children were meticulous in the choice of materials and tools to carry out their production. A first step was to draw before painting or colouring. This first step was often of high quality: the drawing was finalized and the attention to detail was permanent. We notice a risk-taking and development of self-confidence. When the young people realized that their production was not "bad" during the first workshop and that it was valued, we felt a safety in the following workshops. We note a significant improvement in self-esteem.

In addition, some of the children are used to coming and going during the workshops or arriving late. This was not the case during this series of workshops. The children stayed



to finish their productions after the scheduled end time. Some of them were there early, before the workshop. It should be noted that we worked during the summer school holidays, as the children did not go to school, these activities were the only ones in the camp. The material conditions during the workshops were diverse. We have moved the location of the session several times. As Figure 1 shows, young people are focused on their tasks. Even if there are chairs, the girls are leaning over their drawing as if to focus their attention and care on it. The attention to their production and the desire to be expressive in the productions have led to a significant concentration. The groups were particularly calm in this first phase of creation.

*Figure 1 : Young children painting for the first time at a workshop about identity*

Young people and children have taken the time and their brushstrokes are often the first ones. Many children have never painted. They are careful as much as they want to make a beautiful painting / drawing. Figure 2 shows us a group of young children guided by two facilitators who draw their faces. They paint for the first time, change posture regularly

and then follow one of the animators in the way they take the brush. The children's postures are generally in the adherence to the activity and integrated into the collective. This active participation is, in our opinion, a positive sign that children are able to connect and assimilate into a group, following a common activity.



*Figure 2. Young children painting for the first time at an identity workshop*

We observed and analysed the interactions during our workshops. Interactions focus on particular times. First, children turn to the animators or the artist when they need material, a need for security when applying colours or what they consider to be a mistake to be made up for. Then at the end of the workshop, a large proportion of children spontaneously show their drawings to one of the facilitators, the researcher or the artist in order to have a kind of evaluative endorsement. This reveals an openness to cooperation and trust in the adults around them. The fact that the children, visibly proud of their production, show it to the others, reveals both a need for confirmation and recognition as well as a gesture of gratitude for the collective work they have done.



*Figure 3. Open interaction between facilitators and participants and collaboration between peers*

The facilitators' postures were rather withdrawn in order not to interfere with the young people's experience even if some of them tended to help children by taking the brush instead of them. A facilitator wanted to help them so that they could succeed in their production. The children were coming to them when they needed it (Figure 3), children seek validation from their peers but communicate relatively little about the content of their individual productions. The main interactions involved the drawings, shared material or sometimes external subjects (another absent child, a party, what they will do in the afternoon, an older brother who has left for work). The atmosphere of the workshop is punctuated according to the tasks to be accomplished but it is conducive to exchanges that are serene and positive because the children reveal their current concerns but are especially focused on their ongoing work. The feeling of being free to express oneself in a secure space and to collaborate serenely is a sign of well-being as the show of their production to the others.



*Figure 4. Improvised workshop on dreaming by a facilitator*

In addition, unlike the multiple sources of violence in the camp (Buriel, 2017), we did not have a negative behaviour problem to deal with. Artistic work has obviously fostered cooperative and targeted behaviour as well as problem solving. We have seen that this has excited the facilitators, one of whom has taken the initiative to make an improvised artistic workshop for the first time( Figure 4). As the workshops could not be addressed to all the children in the camp, the facilitator decided to hold a workshop on dreams with children far from the usual place in the public space of the camp. Figure 4 shows how the facilitator sees the interactions during this workshop. These are small groups of participants who can interact freely. The facilitator also saw the benefits of the first workshops and felt able to lead it alone and freely. We also noted that when the two camp communities are present in the same workshop, there are far fewer inter-community interactions than there are between Yazidis or Sunni children. Nevertheless, we have been particularly vigilant about possible tensions, but we have not detected any. It seems that artistic workshops with creative topics tends to reduce such frictions, which are nevertheless visible in public spaces.

1. The artistic productions





*Figure 5 During the workshop "Inside the house of my dream"*

We had very few scenes of war in the drawings, first because few of the children have experienced the siege of ISIS and second because there were 3 years between them and the war. Finally, the children are living in a situation of "stability", despite the fact that he is in a temporary camp.

The whole team noticed major changes as the project progressed. We based our project on the children's drawings themselves to progress in the workshop process. The vast majority of children have designed a house during the first workshop. The houses were generally large, central and takes up the entire sheet of paper. We therefore developed a workshop on identity and then the inside of the house to finally take over the house to finalize and complicate the drawing expressing children's dreams. The theme of the self-portrait may be problematic in Muslim communities, as cultural models do not encourage the representation of the human form. Our self-portraits were intended for children to represent themselves as they would like to be in the future. We had to largely accompany the children during the identity workshop, but we emerged from a lot of information and were able to perceive their ability to project themselves in the future but also their desire to grow. We noted that the support of the facilitators was beneficial and that the use of artistic tools and supports certainly allowed the drawings to be made safe and refined. Children have added more and more symbols and have drawn themselves. He was no

longer only in figuration but was involved as a person in the elaboration of the production. At first, we see children finishing their drawing very quickly. They were guided to enhance their drawing, and this became a standard (Figure 5). There was therefore a consideration for "beauty" or "aesthetics". They gained confidence and make sure to fill their canvas in order to perfect their composition.



Figure 6. A boy drew himself with his friend playing football in his house

All the elements drawn and then painted by the participants were the expression of realistic reality and socio-cultural contexts. We did not see in the drawings or interviews the expression of any fantasy, of a dream that would not be achievable (Figure ). Children, even if they are guided by open coercion and clear instructions, seem to remain as close as possible to their past lives. Some describe a daily life that could be in the present with absent elements that give joy to children, in which they find living landmarks. However, the dreamed life is magnified because it refers of dreaming. At the same time, both boys and girls, whether during the act of creation, work quietly. Equally important are the scenes of nature, images, situations and feelings that accompany them. We saw how the dream workshops were a way to see a situation that went beyond reality with material support. Often, the dream scenes seem to take place in a past from which we can step back because we recognize, through the notion of dream, that it is a situation

that is only expected or hoped for. Productions are sometimes a mixture of a past environment and a present situation in a framework expected for the future. The future seems to have difficulty penetrating the imagination and a kind of regret of a past life seems to be the point of reference for the hopes for a future for these children. Thus, it is considered here that children caught in material constraints and instability, for a majority of them, understand waiting and try to cope with it through forms of resilience. It also seems to us that waiting serves to carry the present in order to sustain it and maintain the acceptable expectation of a better future.

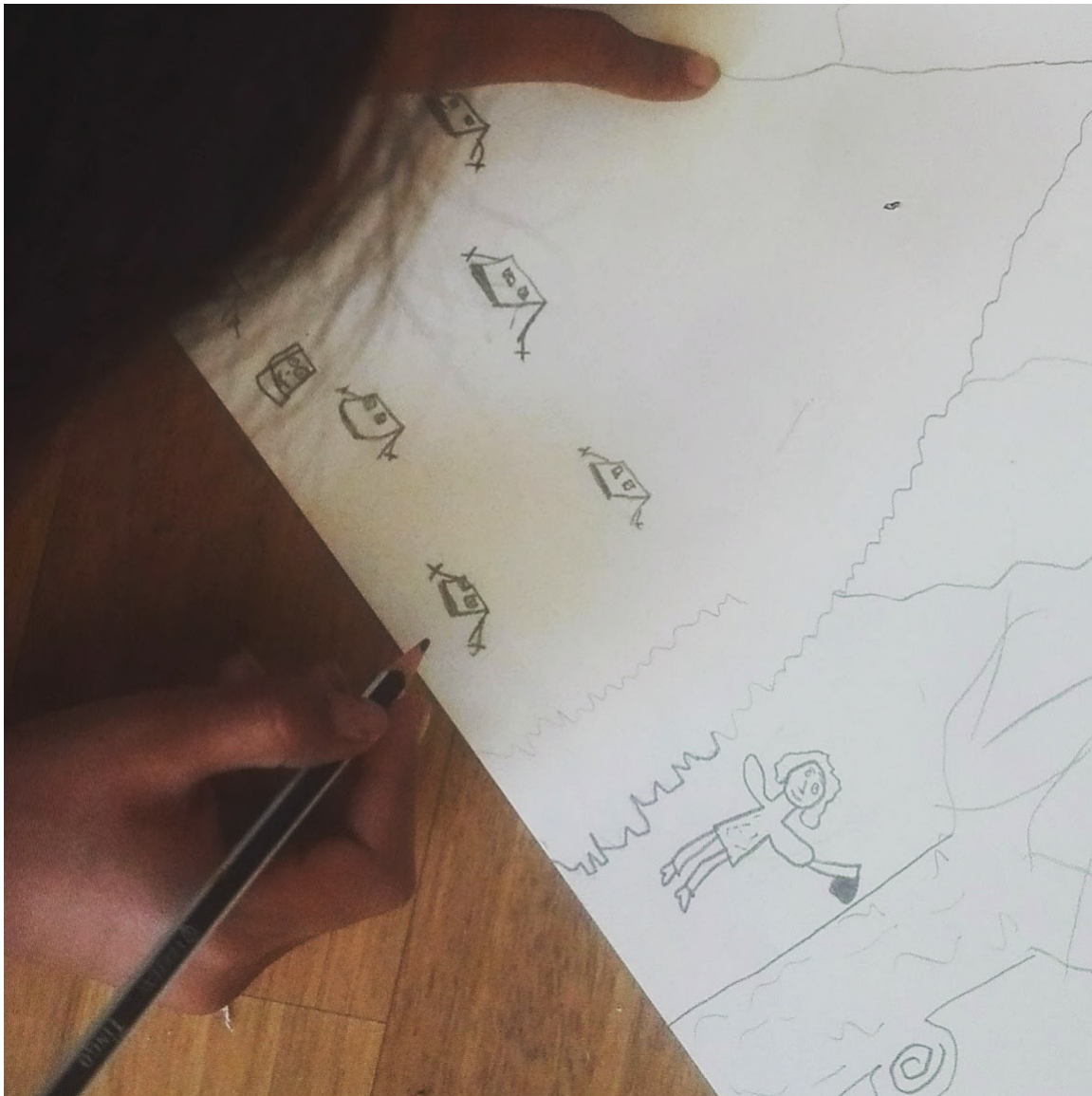


*Figure 7: A young girl has created the house of her dreams*

For example, we recognize different strategies or methods for integrating stress and resilience have been identified, such as: 1) the use of unrealistic collective symbols instead of realistic elements, 2) the exchange of a personal symbol for a political symbol (for example, colouring a sun or trunk with a Kurdish flag) and 3) the sublimation of reality by ornamentation (tents surrounded by flowers and various plantations). Some reflect an ideological context through flags, particularly the Kurdish flag for Yazidi children trying to get closer to a majority group and the Iraqi flag (on houses, cars, etc.) for children being in a Kurdish zone that is very different culturally from the rest of Iraq. We consider, as Huss et al (2012), that stress factors are also signs of resilience and that

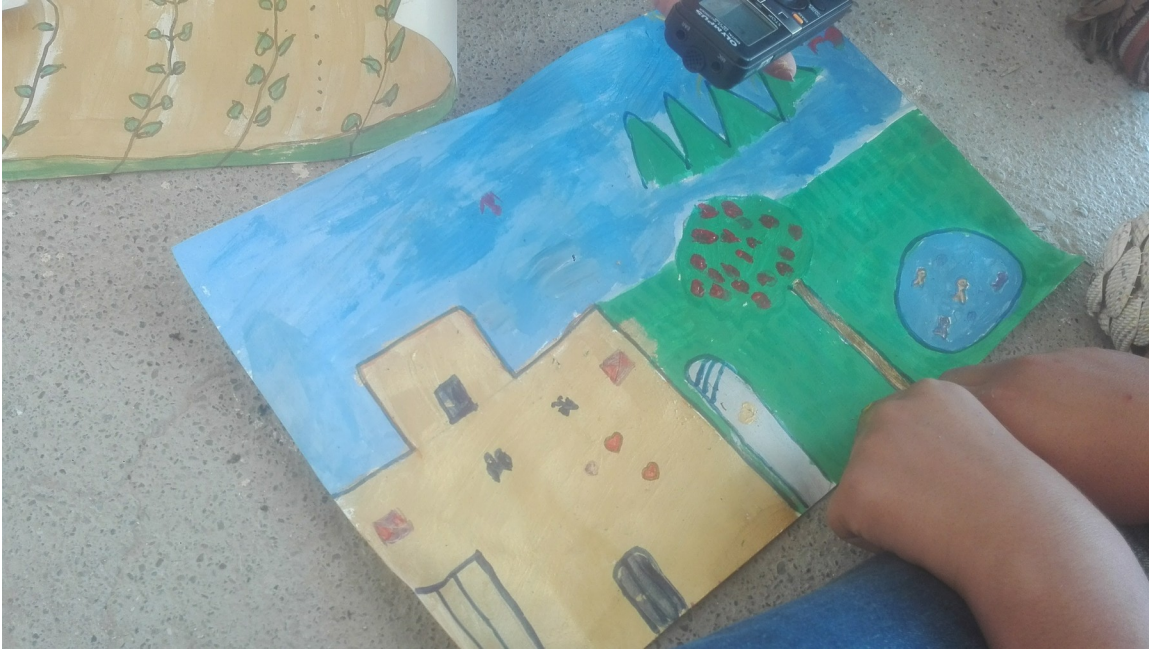
the strategies and methods of their integration into drawings are positive transition strategies to move towards well-being. We noticed as Veronese *et al.* (2018) that “the individual dimensions are closely interrelated to the domain of political wellbeing and, along with psychological and emotional well-being, is highly significant”.

While the drawings seem to be frozen between the past and the future, few of them represent any form of the present. There is a form of rupture or denial that some children express either by sublimating the camp or by being outside it. Figure 7 shows this well and the girl who represents herself embodies the break-up. The situation of cutting wood in the forest does not correspond to the geographical contexts of the camp in which it is at the time of drawing.



*Figure 8. During a workshop on the house of her dreams, a young girl drew the tents of the camp.*

## 2. Narratives through drawings



*Figure 9. A girl tells about what she drew and describes her dream*

When we ask the children, we realize that their dream home is either their old home or a "dream home" where they used to live (Figure 8). Uprooting is either directly underlined or suggested. Very few finally locate this imaginary house in the future. The houses are surrounded by many symbolic elements, such as flags or elements typical of the agricultural region from which they come. In addition, the different sessions on the theme of the house tend to show us houses inhabited by the family and friends of the children. These are the places where there is life, such as the lost "home".

However, it should be noted that all children express constructive thoughts for the future that they consider particularly positive both in their drawings and in the interviews conducted by the team. The displacement of these children limits their ability to dream, understood as the possibility of imagining an ideal future. The inability of their communities to return home is most certainly the cause. Nevertheless, children's ability to represent and oralize their losses is a first step towards resilience and the ability to

characterize their suffering. Thus, our analysis shows how much participating children have the ability to adapt and act in the face of adversity, as Veronese *et al.* (2018) also note in their study. We consider these skills to be signs of well-being that can equip these children for future challenges.



*Figure 10. Exhibition of children's works on the theme of dreams for the camp communities*

## **I. Conclusion and implications**

The specific context of Ashti Camp in Iraqi Kurdistan, the volatile geopolitical situation and the educational characteristics of the workshops conducted, in addition to our ethnographic method, limit the generalization of our results. Longitudinal research based on the experience of artistic creation by these young people in an arts education project of several months would allow us to measure new indicators of outcomes and impact on well-being. Analysis by type of action can be improved, particularly by documented counter-examples. There are often new and complex issues that arise due to the nature of participatory work with war-affected children, but also from the practitioners who surround them on a daily basis (Mitchell et al., 2019). The results of the initial study (Buriel, 2017) show that it is necessary to act at all levels of the community because

parents and all tribal members have direct influences on the well-being of children and in particular on their ability to project into the future.

Aesthetic experiences are offered in multiple contexts but are not well developed in emergency humanitarian programs while other creative and artistic content is offered. However, the aesthetic experience is a process that provides pleasure and can promote health and well-being (Mastandrea *et al.*, 2019) in addition to emotional and educational enrichment through knowledge acquisition. Nevertheless, we note the lack of presence of the **arts as aesthetic response** which could be associated to the **arts as a cultural agent** which accentuates the role of the arts in social action, social reconstruction and the role of culture in society". To do this, art must be given the power to vitalize the experience in the sense that Dewey gives it: by considering it as the place of a normativity without a predefined norm, which is experienced only in the present of the relationship to the world, and that the relationship to works educates and makes explicit (Fabre, 2015). Thus, transformation is a concept directly related to well-being in our context but which must be measured over a longer period of time than the time of this research but also a challenge because it "does not seem at first sight to be a deliberate process, but rather requires patience, time, transcendence, trust and openness of mind" (Gerber *et al.*, 2012). Transformation is an opportunity because it involves perhaps one of the most powerful phenomena - internal change caused by a "holistic experiential vision". It would thus be a "significant reconfiguration of perception and thought that results in a reduction in psychological constraint and pain, allowing the emergence of new psychological perspectives that contribute to a more creative life" (*ibid.*).

It is about responding to the four occupations of childhood: conversation, research, making things and artistic expression (Dewey, 1900) and to ensure that explicit links are established between art, culture and the environment, so that a socially responsible arts education programme can be broadly beneficial and far-reaching while ensuring the development of the whole child through the development of a strong citizen with an acute sense of social responsibility (Edwards, 2002).

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