

Trip Report: CiCea 2025 Conference - Education and Communication: Being and Becoming Citizens in An Interconnected World – Istanbul, Türkiye

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The purpose of this trip was to attend and present at the 2025 annual conference of the Children's Identity and Citizenship European Association (CiCea), held in Istanbul, Turkey. The event brought together scholars working in areas of identity, citizenship, intercultural relations, and youth development across Europe and beyond.

I attended the CiCea 2025 annual conference to present and engage with current scholarship on youth, identity, intercultural experiences, and citizenship in a rapidly changing world. As a PhD candidate researching intercultural romantic relationships among young sojourners, I was particularly drawn to the conference's emphasis on transnational belonging, educational spaces, and youth transitions. This conference and the community that came together across Europe and the world offered me an important opportunity not only to share my work with a diverse academic audience but also to reflect on the broader socio-cultural conditions shaping the lives of young people negotiating new and unfamiliar cultural contexts.

Summary of Activities

- **Presentation:** I delivered a talk titled *Romantic Relationships in an Interconnected World: How International Students and Young Expats Negotiate Their Identity and Belonging Through Close Relationships* as part of Session 12: Intergenerational Gaps and Gender Inequalities, under the thematic panel on youth, identity, and cultural transition. The feedback was constructive and highlighted the relevance of my cross-cultural approach to understanding relational dynamics and emotional well-being. The presentation sparked thoughtful comments and questions, especially regarding how romantic relationships function as protective factors in periods of instability. I believe this exchange helped clarify the interdisciplinary relevance of my research and opened new angles to explore relational well-being as a developmental concern.
- **Networking:** Throughout the event, I connected with scholars and doctoral researchers from the UK, Spain, Türkiye, and Hong Kong. Many are working on intersecting themes such as migration, education, citizenship, well-being, identity development, cultural adaptation, and belonging. I found these conversations intellectually stimulating, and I see strong potential for future collaborations, both in research and in possible publications.
- **Workshops & Panels:** During the conference, I attended several insightful keynote lectures and a practical workshop that complemented my research interests:

- “Understanding of Childhood in Türkiye: Looking from the Past to the Future”: This keynote provided a historical and cultural lens on childhood in Turkish society, which helped me think more critically about how early cultural contexts shape later identity development.
- **Workshop on Emotion Coaching:** This session focused on recognizing and responding to emotional needs in educational and relational contexts. I found it especially relevant to my interest in how young adults manage emotional challenges during transitional life phases, such as studying or living abroad.
- These sessions helped me to expand my understanding of identity formation, emotional well-being, and the broader educational frameworks that support psychosocial development in a globalized world.

Outcomes & Benefits

- **Academic Development:** The feedback I received helped me better articulate how my work on intimate relationships intersects with broader identity processes and coping strategies during mobility. It also reinforced the significance of including emotional and relational dimensions in intercultural and youth studies.
- **Theoretical Understanding:** Listening to scholars working in education, cultural psychology, and migration studies gave me new language and theoretical tools to frame some of the questions I have been exploring. It was especially helpful to see how others are linking lived experience to structural conditions in meaningful ways.
- **Professional Development:** This was a good event to meet early-career researchers and exchange ideas with them. I left the conference with a sense of motivation and clarity about where my work fits into wider academic conversations.

Reflections

This trip was an enriching academic experience. It allowed me to position my work within broader European discussions around youth, identity, and psychosocial well-being. Istanbul, as a culturally and historically very deep city, also offered an inspiring setting to reflect on my research themes in a lived context. I also appreciated the conference’s emphasis on relational, civic, and emotional dimensions of youth identity, a focus that is similar to my current work and long-term academic direction.

I am sincerely grateful for the financial support that made this trip possible. The opportunity to present my work, connect with scholars, and expand my academic understanding has been important. I believe the experience contributed to my academic development and research direction. Finally, I’ve also noted that this conference participation was subsidised by the Talent Support Council of ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.



