Aged-out separated children (those who are outside their country of origin, without their parent or customary/legal guardian and have recently turned eighteen) confront significant challenges as they navigate the transition to adulthood due to a lack of family support and because of their distinctly limited access to state support. It is imperative when developing new policies and attempting to resolve an issue as pressing as the displacement of people across Europe, that the contexts and concerns of those most affected are among the informing factors. Despite this, there is a lack of research on this highly marginalised youth population and their voices are rarely heard or considered. This research aims to share the perspectives of aged-out separated children by gaining a detailed understanding of their experiences of the transition to adulthood using a qualitative Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. The research examines the experiences of aged-out separated children in two European countries: Ireland and France. In both contexts, participants are invited to participate in one in-depth interview and a group project.

A PAR methodology has been chosen as it provides young people with a framework for encouraging social change and collaboration by supporting them to co-create new knowledge while reflecting on their own realities. However, despite of the benefits of using a PAR approach for social work research, the use of PAR, particularly youth PAR, presents several methodological, ethical and practical challenges. The aim of this paper is to reflect upon the use of a PAR approach with twenty aged-out separated children within the French context and to consider how the challenges associated with the implementation of PAR can be addressed.