

Policy Recommendations Paper

For policy makers at all levels to adapt their policies and methods aimed at ensuring an efficient pedagogical integration passage from reception to education

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Introduction

Based on the implementation, on the experiences and evaluation of the PASSAGE project actions and results, the present Policy Recommendations document is establishing a set of policy recommendations for policy makers at all levels to ensure that newly arrived children with migrant or refugee background receive sufficient support in entering school life. This document aims to support high-level and school-level policy makers to adapt policies and methods aimed at ensuring an efficient pedagogical integration passage from reception to education.

This paper is written by all project partners and edited by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) as the coordinator of the Work Package 4 of the PASSAGE project. The Policy Recommendations Paper, which contains the best practices for pedagogical integration at primary and secondary school will be reflected in national, regional, and European policies and directives.

The aims of the project

The PASSAGE project aims to develop innovative and urgently needed solutions to ensure that newly arrived children with migrant or refugee background receive sufficient support in entering school life. PASSAGE seeks to foster inclusive learning and quality education for newly-arrived students from the early stages of the integration process by adopting a two-fold approach that focuses on: (1) providing teachers with the much-needed tools and resources that will empower them to deal more effectively with systematic pedagogical challenges and (2) designing and promoting a “role-model” programme through which current or former students of local schools can support the successful integration of newly-arrived students.

The consortium

The PASSAGE project, running from January 2021 to January 2023, is a common effort of 7 partner organisations, representing 6 EU countries, namely Ljudska univerza Ptuj (LUP, Slovenia – coordinator), Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (Cyprus), CESIE (Italy), Symplexis (Greece), Center for Social Innovation (CSI, Cyprus), Casa do Professor (Portugal), and Jaunimo Karjeros Centras (JKC, Lithuania).

Main activities and outputs

MAPPING OF CURRENT NEEDS AND PRACTICES

PASSAGE’s desk and primary research on National and EU level mapping the current needs and practices has successfully managed to analyze the existing situation and identify the key challenges that school systems face in the educational integration of newly arrived children with migrant and refugee background. The outcome of this extensive research, based on the existing literature and on interviews, focus groups, online surveys that were conducted with teachers, stakeholders, and policy makers, was published in 6 National Reports. Each partner published its National State of the Art and Gap Analysis / Data Collection and Analysis, identifying gaps & obstacles in existing policies and best practices and



pedagogical approaches in each participating country (Italy, Portugal, Lithuania, Greece, Cyprus, and Slovenia).

An EU Passage Report and a Transnational Report, summarizing the literature review of the pedagogical models and administrative structures, practices in ensuring the integration of children with a migrant background who enter a new school environment, and the collected data from the focus group research, were also published. The reports aim to serve as a comprehensive reference on the level of understanding, knowledge, and awareness in all participating countries in issues related to the educational integration of newly arrived students in the EU.

CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

Online course for teachers

The 4-module online course, entitled “How to welcome migrant and refugee students in my classroom”, was designed in the framework of the PASSAGE project and aims to support teachers in dealing with diversity, managing intercultural communication, promoting social inclusion and collaboration among students and the educational community. Through a series of various sources and study results, short videos and real testimonies, activities and additional materials, the course seek to equip teachers with pedagogical approaches useful to welcome and integrate migrant and refugee students. The online course is open and available on the online platform (Moodle) in the PASSAGE partners’ languages through the [project website](#).

Workshop Training Manual

In addition to the training course, a 12-hour **workshop** on “**Mentoring and Role Models**” was also designed by two Portuguese pedagogical experts to enable teachers and students to function as role models in the integration process of newly arrived migrant and refugee students. The PASSAGE mentoring model will aim at supporting the newly arrived student’s integration to the linguistic context and school environment, enhancing their personal, interpersonal, and academic development, while promoting friendship, sharing and cultural exchange. The Workshop Training Manual is openly available in English and the partners’ national languages (Slovenian, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Lithuanian) through the project’s website [resources](#) section.

Piloting

In order to train school staff and leadership to be able to offer an inclusive education and an environment that promotes participation, they need to be trained on how to evaluate the educational process and find the obstacles and the changes that need to be done. They also need to have available resources that will guide and support them through this process. The PASSAGE Intervention Protocol attempts to be the guide to partners and institutions that acquire to train educational staff on how to promote inclusive education.

This document contains the guidelines and the necessary supporting tools for implementation of the activities of development, testing and fine-tuning of educative assets. It includes details on the strategy and action plan to be adopted by all partners regarding the development of the educative assets.



The Intervention Protocol can be used as a guide to partners and educational authorities. It offers simple steps and a procedure to be used when they acquire changes in the school culture and better integration of migrant students. With the guidance of this document, educational professionals will be able to learn step-by-step which is the more efficient procedure to introduce a new plan to be adopted by school staff and students and how to engage everyone in the process.

TOOLKIT

The toolkit is designed for the purposes of the PASSAGE project. It has been designed to help schoolteachers and leaders improve their professional skills in social inclusion education. It will be especially valuable to professionals working in teaching environments welcoming newly arrived children of third-country national background that are aiming for a more whole child approach and taking into consideration the best interest of the child. The results of the desk-research analysis for the first phase of the PASSAGE project showed patterns and good or bad practices for children's inclusion in contemporary educational systems across Europe. The analysis presented how schoolteachers and leaders most of the times lack the required expertise and resources on how to deal with the increasingly diverse and intercultural pedagogic environment. This toolkit aims to provide guidance and increase school competency in inclusive learning and pedagogic integration and underlines seven dimensions where schoolteachers and leaders should focus more to learn what they can do to help new students integrate into their school communities.



Methodology

The CPI followed a specific methodology for data collection from all the partners over the implementation period, as it was described in the project's detailed description. More specifically each partner:

1. collected a number of policy gaps from their country
2. collected policy recommendations from teachers during the implementation period of the project; each partner focused on one of the seven sub-units (1. Whole child approach / An approach that fits the student's needs and abilities - *Ljudska Univerza Ptuj* 2. Teachers' support – *CESIE* 3. Communication and collaboration with parents and the community – *Cyprus Pedagogical Institute* 4. Social emotional needs of students and sense of belonging and equality - *Jaunimo Karjeros Centras* 5. Teachers' competencies – *Symplexis* 6. Students' educational achievements and language support - *Casa do Professor* 7. Intercultural education - *Center for Social Innovation*)
3. has given a "Questionnaire on teachers' recommendations for Policy Makers" to 15-20 teachers to capture the practice and experience. The Questionnaire was asking the teachers to rank five statements/recommendations on the seven sub-units mentioned above.

Moreover, during one of the dissemination events of the project organized by the CSI CY and hosted in Nicosia, Cyprus on the 3rd of October 2022 a focus group with an inspector and three school-level policy makers took place, who discussed the question "What kind of empowerment does the teachers need to help integration and inclusiveness?".

The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute which is responsible for Work Package 4 leveraged this data from the project partners and co-authored the present Policy Recommendations Paper. In order to help the readers of this Paper we have divided the Policy Recommendations of each sub-unit to two categories: the recommendations for high-level policy makers and the recommendations for school-level policy makers. This taxonomy is based on "[The policy paper on the integration of pupils with migrant backgrounds to the Cyprus educational system](#)" which is referred to the macro-, the meso- and the micro-level of the educational policy for migrant students. The macro-level refers to the educational policy expressed in each country's official policy (high-level policy makers), the meso-level focuses on the school and the interaction between the individual and society in the school context (school-level policy makers). Finally, the micro-level refers to the school classroom and the interaction and relations between teachers, students, and parents (reflected on all the recommendations) (NESSE, 2008).



Policy gaps

During the implementation of project's activities teachers mentioned policy gaps, which work negatively for the integration and inclusion of children with a migrant or refugee background. In this chapter, we have collected, organized, and present these policy gaps.

Important notes: (1) The list of the policy gaps is not exhausted, and (2) each policy gap mentioned is not necessarily applicable for all partner countries.

The preparation period for newly arrived children and refugees is not enough. Teachers would much prefer the "Swiss" approach which includes 1 year of this introductory or preparation time. This one should be spent only to acquire language skills and getting to know the culture of the hosting country.

Outdated National Guidelines. Teachers would like to have new and updated guidelines for the integration of newly arrived children in the classroom. The existing guidelines are out of date. These guidelines should be based on the current situation and the profile of the children that are arriving in the hosting countries. New and innovative approaches are gathered and presented in the clear way.

Lack of adapted school materials for integration of newly arrived children and refugees. Lack of innovative tools and handbooks adapted to integrate newly arrived children and refugees into the classrooms. There are only some basic documents that serve as guidelines, but not for the specific subject they teach (for example handbook for science such as Biology, Chemistry, etc.).

Lack of training for teachers. In order to be able to fulfill their role, teachers need to adapt their teaching methods, tools, and resources according to the needs and background of the newly arrived students. However, these are rarely provided by schools and therefore it is up to teachers to find them through searching online, attending seminars offered by the private sector or through personal experience. Also, most of the participants in the PASSAGE focus group stated that the knowledge they acquired during their studies was insufficient and additional training is needed to equip them with new and innovative ideas and knowledge. Teachers argued that it would be useful if trainings such as Passage Workshops would be conducted in every school for all teachers not just for those that attended it on their initiative.

Placing a child in a certain class/level based on their age rather than a skill level. One of the most pressing problems for teachers is that newly arrived children are placed in a class based on their age, rather than the skill level/knowledge they currently have. In some school subjects, the level of existing knowledge is not comparable to the hosting schools/country, and this is a big challenge for a teacher.

Educational programmes for migrant or refugee children mostly operate on the mainland, thereby leaving many children in reception centers on the islands and in the province out of education.

Absence of a systematic and consistent approach to the integration into the school system and language learning of newly arrived children with migrant or refugee background. Thus, relevant services, such as for example language learning, are provided ad hoc, by municipal and national



authorities, as well as by international organizations and NGOs, which, however, state that their proposals are rarely heard by the authorities. In other cases, the class has a big number of students and is not divided into smaller groups, as well as an insufficient number of hours for language learning is applied.

Most non-formal education programs are donor funded, thus implemented only for a limited period. The services and programmes offered by the third sector are usually subsidized or donor-funded and therefore offer only short-term solutions. Consequently, the issue of the lack of a consistent integration strategy is intensified.

Lack of bottom-up pedagogical integration approaches. Although teachers' proposals are usually heard by school administrations, the top-down approach of the state in terms of strategy setting prevents these proposals from reaching the higher levels of administration. This means that valuable feedback and suggestions from people who are active in the field, such as teachers, and have daily contact with newly arrived children with migrant backgrounds is not considered.



Policy Recommendations

1. Whole child approach/ an approach that fits the student's needs and abilities

AUTHOR: DAVID RIHTARIČ, LJUDSKA UNIVERZA PTUJ

For teachers creating a school environment that is physically and emotionally safe, challenging, caring, and supported by qualified adults for the children is especially important. The whole child approach is therefore in their mind, as 91% of surveyed teachers marked these aspects of the whole child approach as very important for them, and none marked them as not important at all. Teachers are aware of the needs of today's students, and they foster their needs in the correct way through personalized learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGH-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Recognizing the whole child approach as part of the European framework to foster wellbeing of children

Whole child approach is adopted in many North American countries and its part of their curricula. Therefore, it could become part of national guidelines and be implemented into schoolwork to enrich school environment.

Fostering initiatives for child centred approach and teachers' competencies through international cooperation

It would be very useful if teachers would attend European roundtables and other gatherings of teachers that work with migrant and refugee children. Cooperation at E.U. level is becoming increasingly important; therefore, all sides can benefit from it. More emphasis on that matter could contribute to over the mainstreaming of the whole child approach on an international level.

Reallocation of European funds in the education sector

Allocate more funds to primary and secondary school teachers involved in the integration of newcomers. National school systems need new innovative approaches, such as the whole child approach, which will provide teachers with the necessary skills to enrol migrant and refugee children in a more efficient way. European guidelines and 1-year pilot program on how to adopt the whole child approach. Some more elaboration is needed from European countries which have already established a framework in which the whole child approach is implemented in the school curricula. A one-year pilot programme could be useful for schools and after that period the school could evaluate it and decide whether the approach works for its setting. Raising awareness campaigns for whole child approach.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Headteachers should promote a whole child approach among teachers to enrich their school approach

Regardless of national regulations and laws, headteachers could promote whole child approach in their school. However, it is also true that teachers are already using some aspects of the five tenets of the whole child approach developed by ASCD. Which confirms that this approach is truly efficient as is already part of the educational process.

Encouraging teachers to participate in international projects that are based on the whole child approach

European initiatives and projects are a particularly effective way to obtain the necessary skills and to get a bigger picture of international cooperation. School level policy makers should encourage decision makers to invest more funds in education and school related policies that include a whole child approach. Headteachers could form a smaller group of teachers and school staff that could write proposals and apply for various programmes.

Acquiring new skills for adopting the whole child approach at school level

School staff could start attending additional training on how to adopt the whole child approach. These classes should be part of official working hours, as many teachers expressed the need for such training, but they lack time to do that. Using innovative tools and approaches from international projects. There are many well-developed projects, tools, and innovative approaches, but there are sometimes overlooked. School policy makers should think about how to gather this information and how to present and include it in their everyday work. There are also many non-governmental organisations that use the whole child approach for newly arrived children.

Adapt multisectoral approach that would include all school professionals

Schools could form a smaller team of staff with different expertise to help newly arrived children in schools. This team of professionals could receive additional training on how to adopt the whole child approach and tailor it to their specific needs. This will enable them to treat each newcomer as an individual to help and support them in the areas they need the most support.



2. Teachers' support

AUTHOR: FRANCESCA BARBINO AND IRENE PIZZO, CESIE

Support for teachers within the educational system is a crucial element for the creation of inclusive schools, where diversity is encouraged and mapped, and learning and participation obstacles are eliminated: in this sense, teachers are seen as empowered agents of change, sharing values, knowledge and attitudes that permit every student to succeed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGH-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Promote training and learning opportunities for teachers

It is crucial to ensure that continuous teacher training programs are in place at institutional level to empower teachers as agents of change, to provide them with necessary technical skills, information, and knowledge, and to effectively identify students' prior experiences and skills. Through teaching and learning opportunities, teachers are motivated and empowered to better detect students' needs, and consequently tailor solutions, with the support of the whole school community. The trainings could be organized internally, within the school, or more openly among different schools. They could be recognized through a system of certification.

Create international and national network for inclusion in schools

It is also important, for policy makers working at local, national, or international level, to be aware of the different "allies", working outside the schools. It is recommended therefore to map external institutions, organizations or stakeholders that can have specific commitment and help for creating more inclusive schools. There are plenty of opportunities and projects aimed at creating inclusive society, starting from schools.

Promote the application of a whole school approach

A whole-school approach involves all parts of a school, including the leaders, teachers, school staff and families of the students. Applying a whole school approach means working together with all the parties involved, which will have their own responsibilities and commitments. Following a collaborative approach and creating open spaces for discussion, the whole school community can have the chance to share needs and ideas for solutions. In particular, the possibility of engaging families/tutors, and giving them the opportunity to actively participate in the integration process is an effective method for better integration and gives effective support for teachers.

Promote and create spaces of discussion for teachers

Spaces for discussion at different stages should be encouraged. Through the exchange among teachers, in every school, as well as collaboration among schools at local, national, and even international level, teachers will be more empowered to better frame each classroom/school environment and build



effective strategies to pursue inclusion. Teachers could also benefit from spending more time meeting parents and families to improve inclusion.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Create a school strategy for inclusion, which involves the whole school community

School leaders, staff and families should work together to define a proper strategy to be adopted by the school to ensure inclusion. The strategy will benefit all students: it will allow them to feel safe, accepted, respected and confident in approaching learning, because their needs are listened to and addressed. Furthermore, it will give the possibility to create an inclusive environment, allowing all classes to become a safe and healthy learning place, where students have equal access to educational experiences and share a sense of community. Students who benefit from tailored approaches, strategies and tools are more motivated to learn, to believe in their ability to learn, and in general empowered as human beings.

Create a position of Educational Support Teacher or Educational Assistant

The new role could provide extra time not only to help students in the classroom within curricular activities, but also focus on non-formal activities or give individual assistance to engage in the class events. The Educational Assistant can also have the possibility to keep on-going direct communication with the pupils' families.

Create a Communication Plan specifically on inclusion

When a school adopted a strategy to address inclusion in a cooperative way, it is also needs to develop a communication strategy among the parties involved. This could include tools and advice on scheduling time and topics to be discussed, guidelines on the channels available in the school for communication at different levels, including with families and/or tutors, as well as a system for collecting feedback and recommendations.

Map the allies at local level

Teachers in charge of the inclusion of newly arrived migrant students, as well as the whole school community, would benefit from a mapping of the existing external services working of the topic at local level. This map could be a list of organizations and services that provide support to migrant communities, for instance such as language courses.

Support professional development opportunities

Teachers are at the forefront when it comes to supporting the integration of students from migrant backgrounds in schools. Teachers will probably take on the bulk of the day-to-day efforts to promote diversity in the classroom. Schools should offer professional development resources to help teachers effectively respond to challenges and opportunities



3. Communication and Collaboration with parents and the community

AUTHOR: PANAGIOTIS SAVVA, PHD, MARIA PITZIOLI, MA

Parental involvement, both at home and at school, can translate into long-lasting benefits for children from early childhood through adult life. Parental involvement in children's learning is strongly associated with children's socio-emotional development, later reading proficiency and academic success, student engagement and enjoyment of reading, high school completion, as well as adaptation in society. The surrounding community also plays a critical role in educating children and often functions as additional support to parents in creating safe neighborhoods and a healthy learning environment for their children.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGH-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Strengthen communication and collaboration between schools, parents, and communities to foster equity in education

Specific policies should be designed to ensure that schools have the capacity to engage parents in ways that are meaningful and supportive of their children's achievement. Potential policy options include providing information in major immigrant languages and disseminating information by a web-based portal as well as by face-to-face consultation; establishing home-school liaison coordinators to facilitate contact between teachers, families, and communities; ensuring that schools develop plans for parental involvement; and providing training for teachers and school leaders on building partnerships with parents and communities. School boards also need to invest more to realize effective partnerships with all parents.

Enhance collaboration between community, parents, local authorities, organizations, volunteers, social workers, psychologists

Give the opportunity to migrant parents to follow afternoon language classes in the same school that their children attended in the morning. Additional language provision/exposure and other educational support can be realized through non-formal and informal learning. External partners can play a vital role in providing relevant services and should be more systematically. A clear definition of roles and tasks is however advisable to avoid conflicting educational environments for students. External partners sometimes have easier access to guardians and families of migrants, which can be essential for ensuring effective educational support. It is crucial to identify and collaborate with a range of local stakeholders depending on the local specificities. External partners can be social workers, youth services and organizations, psychologists, therapists (speech and language), child protection services, intercultural mediators, migrant associations, NGOs and other organizations from sport, cultural, environment and other sectors, but also local businesses.

Reinforce partnerships with other sectors to ensure student well-being in a digital world



Ensuring student well-being in a digital world means that schools are increasingly expected to work in partnership with other actors. These include parents and families, but also health professionals, psychologists, and law enforcement. Increasingly, they also include digital experts, cyber security professionals and programmers. Developing and maintaining partnerships with such a diverse set of actors, some of whom (for example those from the private sector) have different aims and goals, is a complex challenge. Although historically public and private partnerships have been limited in many systems, the speed of change of digital technology makes connecting to the expertise of the sector (the majority of which is concentrated in private tech firms) imperative.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Encourage good two-way communication

The school should encourage good two-way communication between families and schools which is necessary for students' success. These meetings should be supported by translators and/or culturally trained social workers. Not surprisingly, research shows that the more parents and teachers share relevant information with each other about a student, the better equipped both will be to help that student achieve academically. Opportunities for two-way communication include family meetings, family-teacher organizations, or school community councils, weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home for parent review and comment, phone calls, e-mail, or school website.

Improve communication strategies

The establishment of effective school-home communication has grown more complex as society has changed. The great diversity among families means that it is not possible to rely on a single method of communication that will reach all homes with a given message. It is essential that a variety of strategies, adapted to the needs of families and their schedules, be incorporated into an overall plan. Communication strategies could include translating school communication forms in migrant students first languages, personal contact, home visits (if applicable), telephone calls, and curriculum nights or open houses, seems to be the most effective form of communication and may be among the most familiar. Other strategies to consider include parent newsletters, annual open houses, inserts in local newspapers, annual grandparents or "special persons" days, board of education spokesperson or communications officer at PTA meetings, homework hotlines, annual field days, notices and handouts in local markets, clinics, churches, mosques, temples, or other gathering sites, website for the school, workshops for parents, communications that are focused on fathers as well as mothers.

Surprise a parent

Parents are not accustomed to hearing unsolicited positive comments from teachers about their children, especially in a phone call from the school. School-home communication is increased through personalized positive telephone contact between teachers and parents. Remember, when a phone call from school conveys good news, the atmosphere between home and school improves. When you make calls to share positive information with parents, be prepared for them to sound surprised-pleasantly surprised.



4. Social-emotional needs of students and sense of belonging and equality

AUTHOR: Z. BALTRENIENE, JAUNIMO KARJEROS CENTRAS

Social and emotional learning provides a foundation for safe and positive learning, and enhances students' ability to succeed in school, careers, and life. According to the Alliance on Mental Illness, children report a significant increase in stress, anxiety, isolation, loneliness, and grief. It is important for children to shape social/emotional skills to increase more positive attitudes towards oneself, others, and tasks such as enhanced self- efficacy, confidence, persistence, empathy, connection and commitment to school, a sense of purpose, and more positive social behaviors and relationships with peers and adults.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGH-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Encourage and support international cooperation of schools

School administrators and teachers during interviews and trainings implemented in the context of the PASSAGE project, highlighted that international cooperation helps teachers' professional development, educational tools and recourse sharing. Unfortunately, due to limited financial recourses only a few schools can afford it. They specified that it would be especially useful if teachers could attend European forums and other opportunities to share how to work in an intercultural classroom and reinforce socio/emotional needs of students at international level.

Support development and publishing of educational resources on socio-emotional and equality subjects

Teachers are in great demand of high-quality, collaborative educational resources and tools to work on social/emotional and equality issues with immigrant and refugee children. Many teachers do not acquire sufficient foreign language skills and cannot have easy access to internet resources. They need up-to-date innovative approaches and suggest more funds to allocate for the development and publishing of teacher supplies.

Teacher training institutions to adapt the pre-service teacher training curriculum to the new challenges and needs to work in a diverse classroom

During the focus group meetings, teachers pointed out that their preschool university training did not provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with socio-emotional and equity issues in an intercultural environment. Attention in higher education should be given to the fields of fostering socio-emotional learning in education and discussing conceptual and methodological issues related to culturally sensitive assessment.

Support educational NGOs that stimulate active learning and offer in-service teacher training



Teachers underlined that NGOs offer relevant, update training, and provide appropriate educational materials, but the courses are most often fee-based, so either teachers will have to pay, or schools may offer to support them. It was recommended that EU funds be allocated to NGOs so that schools can order the necessary training and acquire the necessary skills and competencies.

Adjust national language learning policies for migrant students

Language is one of the essential instruments in socialization, the essential key to social interaction. Within this framework, the development of second language competence should be facilitated by learners' participation in cultural, linguistic, and historically formed settings such as family life and peer group interaction, and in institutional contexts like schooling, organized sports activities, and workshop places. Ministry of Education must adjust the national language as a foreign language learning to up-to-date circumstances and accommodate a second language program that is meant to provide students with social and emotional skills in order to facilitate academic success.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Advocate the importance of sharing good practices and networking

Networking at local level has been highlighted as the most important policy, which can lead to an effective migrant's inclusion by all the interviewed stakeholders. Persistent investigation and exchange among teachers, surrounding institutions and policy makers is often more important than resources, to be able to cope with evolving socio-emotional issue. School leaders should encourage community based educational support, create open environment, and establish networks of schools for sharing and communication.

Support socio-cultural mediators

In the past decades, the numbers of students who speak languages other than the national language, has increased significantly. The growing numbers of emergent bilingual students make it imperative that all teachers learn how to competently teach them, thus a respectable number of them have limited or no experience in how to deal with these students. School leaders should support teachers to build bridges with students through sociocultural mediators. School administration must look for socio-cultural mediators among language teachers, retired teachers, their non-specialist colleagues, university, or high school students, and even immigrant family members. In a meaningful and constructive manner, mediators will help connect two areas: students' home and school lives.

Support collaboration with families

A student's reality, such as responsibilities outside of school or financial resources, also influences social-emotional development. Collaboration with families is important in addressing cultural differences, and in understanding and responding to a child's difficulties; It is thus important to devise a model of care and consultations that incorporate a continuous sharing of knowledge, expertise, and support. Within the model, issues such as success in education, the need for interpreters, needs of other professionals



can be addressed. Contacts with migrant families will also bring teachers in contact with the diverse ways migrant parents may understand and respond to a child's difficulties.

Ensure an ongoing socio-cultural education support

It is essential that the school administration supports socio-cultural education, with involvement of multiple stakeholders such as teachers, education officers, local authorities, children, families, and parents' organizations. School leaders should support actions, such as community mobilization campaigns on the right of education for all, partnerships with local media developing inclusive media programs, and periodical household visits to convince the parents to support their children learning in school. They should encourage teachers to welcome and appreciate diversity and help them to carry out inclusive coaching practices, such as peer mentoring, role modelling, team-based social actions, which will make school more equitable for all.



5. Teachers' Competencies

AUTHOR: GRIGORIS CHRYSIKOS, SYMPLEXIS

Over the past few years, the wars in the Middle East and Ukraine have dramatically increased the number of TCNs seeking safety in the EU. Among them, a significant number are children, thus changing the landscape in schools in host countries by creating intercultural classrooms. Teachers will therefore have to adapt to these changes by creating a supportive and inclusive educational environment that will act as a shelter for the newly arrived children and equip them with the appropriate skills that will lead to their integration. However, in many cases they have neither the necessary resources nor have they received the appropriate training to fulfill this role.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGH-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Adapt basic teacher training to the needs of a diverse classroom

During the focus groups organized by the PASSAGE project, teachers stated that their basic studies did not provide them with the necessary knowledge to meet the needs of a diverse classroom. Indeed, according to the Migrant Integration Policy Index, in most countries teacher training is not required to include intercultural education, and where it is included, it is usually on an ad hoc basis or is not given the appropriate focus, resulting in teachers not receiving adequate training. Intercultural education and diversity should therefore be an integral part of teachers' basic training and should include elements such as cultural diversity knowledge, cross-cultural communication, inclusive curricula development, etc.

Promote continuous professional development of teachers

The educational environment is dynamic and constantly changing. Teachers are therefore required to constantly adapt their teaching methods and practices to meet the new challenges brought by a diverse classroom, which means they must develop a lifelong learning mentality. However, this mentality should also be supported by the state mechanisms through easily accessible training programmes, seminars, workshops, etc. with the aim of continuous professional development. At the same time, incentives should be provided for attending these programmes.

Provide teachers with high-quality resources and tools

As mentioned above, teachers need to constantly adapt and apply new and innovative educational ideas and methods. However, to do this requires educational resources and tools, which teachers do not have easy access to and therefore turn to searches on the internet, the private sector, or their personal experiences. Also, especially in countries affected by the economic crisis, there is a lack of technical resources such as projectors or smart boards. Thus, platforms must be developed through which teachers can have open and free access to educational material and resources, and schools must be equipped with the appropriate technical resources.

Develop a culturally sensitive and flexible curriculum



For a teacher to be able to apply the knowledge, skills and educational tools they have acquired, there must be an appropriate framework/curriculum. The curriculum should therefore be culturally sensitive and flexible and based on a holistic approach, thus giving teachers the necessary guidelines but also enabling them to adapt their teaching method according to the needs of the students and the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Involve local authorities, academics and the third sector

Involving individuals and organizations with the relevant knowledge and expertise can be beneficial for the school. Professionals and NGOs working with TCNs could train teachers on issues related to cultural diversity, the problems faced by newly arrived children and ways in which barriers and gaps between TCNs and locals can be eliminated. More generally, creating a network between schools, individuals, and organizations in the community with the common goal of educating and including newly arrived students can foster the development of the conditions that will help achieve this goal.

Engage students in the educational and integration process

The integration process of newly arrived students can become a process that involves students through mentoring programmes in which local students help the newcomers to learn the language and adapt to the new school environment. This would benefit not only the students but also the teachers, who will now have support in a task that they currently bear the greatest burden.

Promote dialogue between teachers and students

Dialogue between teachers and between teachers and students can improve the quality of the educational and integration process, as through exchanging views with colleagues and receiving feedback from students, the educator can gain information on the effectiveness of his/her methods, acquire new educational methods and tools, and adapt more quickly when needed. This dialogue can be fostered through group or one-to-one meetings between colleagues or teachers and students, by regularly sharing questionnaires or by creating an online platform/forum to exchange views.



6. Students' Educational Achievements and Language Support

AUTHOR: ISABEL VIEIRA, CATARINA VIEIRA - CASA DO PROFESSOR

When all the efforts are gathered to properly integrate refugee/migrant students in the educational system, besides making sure that the students feel well integrated in the schools, it is also mainly important to focus on their school achievements. Considering that these students come from countries where the language is different from the language of the hosting school, there is a strong and inevitable relationship between the students' educational achievements and the language support. It is practically impossible to achieve success at school if language support is not provided. For this reason, language support should be one priority in the process of the students' integration, not only for schools but also for high-level policy makers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGH-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Translate and provide the schools with the set of Toolkits designed by the Council of Europe to assist Member States to provide language support for refugee adults and children

The Council of Europe has designed a set of toolkits to support organizations and teachers in the process of welcoming newly arrived students with no or little knowledge of the language of the new country. Nine tools focused on the school environment for children have been designed. However, they are only available in Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Slovak/Czech, French and Italian (neighbouring countries with the largest numbers of refugees from the war in Ukraine). These tools should be translated and adapted into every Member States national language and provided to the schools as supporting and useful guidelines to implement the process of language support.

Provide language tuition for parents and families

Free language courses should be available to newly arrived migrant students – including those of irregular status – who do not speak the language of the new country. This tuition should be provided by school boards, school parents' associations or by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including migrant worker associations. Parents and families that start learning the language of the new country will feel more integrated and, for this reason, will support and help students learn the language of the hosting country.

Promote intercultural approaches in education through the curricula

Intercultural education should be integrated into the educational systems and school programs by facilitating the development of intercultural schools and promoting tolerance. This involves adapting and regulating teaching and learning in line with the different needs of each student and circumstances at each school. The Constitution, educational legislation and State policies for education should all be based on a school system that not only respects gender, race, language, geographical origin, and religious differences, but also the needs of each student.



Provide regulations and recommendations of the provision of additional language of instruction classes to migrant students

This can be done either within or outside school hours, at all or some educational levels. Migrant students would receive specified periods of instruction with primary focus on grammar, vocabulary, and communication rather than academic content areas. Academic content is addressed through mainstream instruction. The goal would be to make the transition to mainstream instruction as rapidly as possible.

Set limits on class sizes

Setting upper limits on class sizes will ensure better learning conditions or providing specific teaching material adapted to the needs of students. This will also enable teachers to individualize their teaching methodologies and practices, and, consequently, give the needed attention to the pupils that have specific difficulties related to the language. Pupils will be able to learn according to their own rhythm instead of trying to follow the peers.

Set procedures for recognition of equivalence of Diplomas for teachers coming from countries facing war

For example, in Poland, to support education, the Ministry of Education and Sciences has eased rules on teaching so that Ukrainian teachers who migrated to Poland can teach in Polish schools as teaching diplomas obtained in Ukraine will be considered equivalent to Polish teaching diplomas through a recognition process. These teachers will be a crucial element in the integration of the refugees since there will be no language barrier and the pupils will see these teachers as someone who can help them when they cannot express their needs in the language of the hosting country.

Define an educational scheme for refugee children considering “Reception classes” in schools

“Reception classes” are part of the educational scheme for refugees in Greece. In reception classes, children receive instruction in Greek as a second language for two to three hours a day –the very first hours of the timetable– and attend the regular classes they are enrolled in for the rest of the school day, i.e., for another two to three hours. In these separate classes or lessons, students are provided with intensive language teaching and, in some cases, an adapted curriculum for other subjects. The intention is to give them a sound preparation before fully integrating them into mainstream classes. These schemes could be adapted and implemented in the schools of all the European countries as a (mandatory) stage of the integration of refugee pupils.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Promote multilingualism in schools

Here are some ways for schools to promote multilingualism provided in the article “Five ways your school can support multilingualism” (Eascriffield). Embrace all the languages spoken in the school, both



in word and in deed. Use visual support around the school, verbal support in and out of class, and affective support to let all children know that their first/home language has value. Encourage children to share together their different languages, and to understand how they are different and similar. Show through positive modelling that all languages are of equal value in the school environment, even if one is more “useful” for school purposes. Let children use their first/home languages together to help them learn content and ensure understanding when they are still learning the school language. Involve parents. Children who have parents who speak another language often believe that this is something to be ashamed of – how many minority parents hear from their child “Mummy, please don’t speak to me in x-language at school – it’s embarrassing!” Bring parents into the school to read in their language to whole classes, to demonstrate that other languages are also used for communication and literacy, and to help the monolingual children better understand the position of the children who are language learners. Never make language a source of punishment. Languages – all languages – are important, useful, and beautiful. Punishing a child for their language use is not only unfair, but also cruel, and so very detrimental to their overall development in and out of school. There are positive ways to encourage children to use the school language without being punitive about their own language.

Assess the current levels of national language proficiency

From day one teachers can start to build up a profile of the learner to gain a broader picture of what support is needed. Observation and informal assessment can be conducted from day one, but any formal assessment should be postponed for two to three weeks. If a first language assessment is possible, that is extremely helpful. If not, it is still worthwhile to ask the learner to write and read something in their first language. A general impression of a young person’s literacy skills can be gained from seeing how confidently they approach the writing task and how fluently they write.

Provide teachers with toolkits available in different languages to support their work

Teachers need to be guided and empowered with tips, methodologies, and good practices to feel that they are implementing the good strategies in their classrooms. They need to feel supported both by the school and specialized institutions. They need guidelines such as the Tools developed by the Council of Europe to support organizations and teachers in the process of welcoming newly arrived pupils with no, or little knowledge of the language of the new country.

Implement role models and peer to peer mentoring programs among pupils

It is, indeed, important to consider role models in the integration process of migrant and refugee students. Besides the teachers, the students that will host migrant and refugee children in their classroom should also be trained to become role models in a way that they could help their newly arrived classmates. By introducing the concept of role models and implementing this strategy in the classroom, students will be empowered to help define and establish appropriate behaviours in the classroom. Making students reflect upon the characteristics of role models is an excellent way to introduce values in a youth-friendly way. Refugee students will learn from their mentor and vice-versa, which is also applicable regarding the language.



7. Intercultural Education

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The long-term goal of intercultural education is for all people to be comfortable about the place they come from, accept all people regardless of their culture and origin, avoid biases towards people of different race or ethnicity. It is not a one-time lesson, but an on-going process. Intercultural education should be integrated in all lessons and be offered regularly to students. It can be used to promote highly valued outcomes such as human development, education equality, academic excellence, and democratic citizenship (Banks, 2001; Nieto, 2000). There are different approaches to Intercultural education so it can be used to reform a classroom. According to the aims of the PASSAGE project, the intercultural education in the case of our program will be used to promote culturally sensitive school environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HIGH-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Invest in the intercultural training of teachers

Across many countries, there is a special emphasis on the intercultural training of teachers, who are provided with (obligatory) courses and modules throughout their education to teach them how to deal with children from ethnic minorities and how to incorporate minority cultural history into the preschool curriculum, which increases positive attitudes toward the educational system (OSI, 2007a). It is recommended that education policy makers find these opportunities or create their own unit to enhance teacher's knowledge on intercultural education.

Improve the educational conditions of ethnic minorities via the ESF+

The ESF is a significant source of funding for initiatives aiming at enhancing the educational opportunities for racial and ethnic minorities. This fund can support programmes offering tutoring to students or projects organizing preparatory classes for children that don't speak the national language. All member states should find these opportunities and take part in these programmes.

Search for projects that promote intercultural extracurricular activities

There are initiatives that provide intercultural extracurricular activities like music, art, and literacy, as well as intercultural events and instruction, all of which are likely to increase understanding of many cultures and traditions (European Commission, 2010a; REF, 2010). It's important for education policy makers to find these opportunities and promote these projects in schools.

Provide schools with the necessary resources on cultural diversity

This is an important challenge, as children are the future generations. They need to learn about different cultures and backgrounds in order to develop a deeper understanding of the world around them and increase the empathy for other people. Each school should be equipped with books, art and learning resources to acquire this knowledge.



Supplying instructions for checking for unfair bias and stereotypes, aid schools in evaluating other materials

Education policy making should assist schools with evaluating other materials by providing guidelines for screening for unfair bias and stereotypes. Examples of federally reimbursable activities and materials that have been identified include (1) Posters, charts, and other classroom decoration (which may include world maps); (2) Books; (3) Films; (4) Tests; (5) Other curriculum resources used in the classroom; (6) Libraries with textbooks or other instructional materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL-LEVEL POLICY MAKERS

Discover opportunities in Erasmus+ programmes

The Erasmus+ programmes is a funding scheme to support activities in education, training, youth, and sport. Schools can take part in these programmes and benefit from the training they provide in different topics.

Hire professionals to offer training to school staff

The school administration should discover a specialist in intercultural education and offer in-house training for their teachers to learn about different cultures and learn innovative methods to teach them to children. It's very important at this point to also motivate teachers to think outside the box, avoid the traditional teaching techniques and try new innovative methods.

Communicate the values of the schools regularly

A school that promotes intercultural education should communicate the values of the school regularly with teachers and students, as well as with parent and families. They should then decide on common goals and which actions can support these goals. At last, they should evaluate their progress frequently to find what works and what doesn't.

Re-evaluate your hiring strategies

School administration should be more open and consider recruiting teachers from different cultures. These teachers can become role models to students from migrant or refugee backgrounds that struggle at school. Also, according to the article "Hiring Teachers from Diverse Backgrounds", students reported that they feel cared and academically challenged by their teachers of colour. The same article emphasized how the exposure of white kids to teachers of colour can also be advantageous and prepare them become "global citizens".

Introduce intercultural education as a program that needs introduction and studying

It will improve educators' understanding of diversity to read books on culture, language diversity and professional literature (Manning, 1996). This will also help teachers identify any misconceptions they have about different cultures and overcome their biases. School administration should encourage book



night where each teacher must read a book on a different culture and introduce it to others while presenting what they found difficult about the book and how this book helped them teach later with their children about this culture.

Support teachers in talking about racism and discrimination

McGee Banks (1993) underlines that facing the hard facts is a must for fundamental change in schools. Therefore, it is recommended for teachers to talk to students about incidents of racism and discrimination so they can understand and discuss the effects on society, School administration should keep an open mind about this and support teachers in these discussions.



Conclusion

According to Eurydice Report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2019: 9), a student who is well-integrated into the education system both academically and socially has more chance of reaching their potential. Students from migrant backgrounds, however, face a number of challenges in this respect that can affect their learning and development. According to the academic research literature, three types of challenges can be distinguished:

1. those related to the migration process (e.g., leaving the home country, having to acquire a new language, adapting to new rules and routines in schools, etc., and the impact of these acculturation stressors on migrant students' overall well-being) (Hamilton, 2013);
2. those related to the general socio-economic and political context (e.g., policies affecting the availability of resources to education systems and schools for promoting integration as well as policies promoting inclusion and equality more generally) (Sinkkonen & Kyttälä, 2014); and
3. those related to student participation in education, including the limited scope of initial assessment, which does not always take account of both academic and non-academic aspects (i.e. social, emotional and health issues); inappropriate grade placement; language provision that is not adapted to the needs of students with a different first language; insufficient learning support and a lack of social and emotional support; teachers who are not trained and/or supported to deal with diversity in the classroom; insufficient home-school cooperation; and a lack of or inflexibility in funding to provide adequate provision and support – to name but some (Reakes, 2007; Hamilton, 2013; Nilsson & Axelsson, 2013; Trasberg & Kond, 2017).

Our small-scale survey in the context of the PASSAGE project showed that these data is valid, and they are common in the partners' countries and each country is making its own effort to overcome these challenges. The Present Policy Recommendations Paper is a joint effort of the partnership of the PASSAGE project with the Policy Recommendations elaborated in the form of guidelines for high-level and school-level policy makers regarding the securing of the best interest of children with migrant or refugee background at primary and secondary school in order to ensure their full inclusion in the local society. The Present Policy Recommendations Paper will be sent to the relevant policy makers in the participating countries and at EU level as a part of the dissemination of the project results and deliverables.



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