



Guide on developing and implementing diversity school policies and action plans

Elaborated by KMOP



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Introduction

During the past years, Greece, Italy and Spain faced one of the greatest migrant/refugee influxes. A large proportion of this population were children, some of which were, in fact, unaccompanied minors, making their documentation difficult. As MIPEX (2015) underlines, EU countries do not seem to have a consistent integrative support to newly arrived migrant/refugee children. As the research reveals, there is an eminent need for these children's integration in education, as the countries were not ready to incorporate them in the school environment. Worth mentioning is also the fact that, according to UNHCR, only 23% of adolescent refugees go to school.

To elaborate, in 2016 Greece welcomed 64.000 TCN children, 19.000-20.000 of which remain in the country up to this day and represent 15% of the entire migrant/refugee population. Italy documented slightly less than 200.000 TCN children to attend school lessons in 2017. However, this population has not been equally distributed to all regions, as northern areas accumulate a far greater percentage of students. When it comes to Spain, the number of newly arrived migrant or refugee students in schools drops to 30.513; the number represents the children that have been included only in obligatory secondary education. Nonetheless, students that are later integrated in classes fall into the category of students with educational support needs, with the support focusing only on the children's support needs.

The project "Promoting Meaningful Integration of 3rd Country National Children to Education" (IntegratEd) supported by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) Programme of the EU aims to "Strengthen the successful participation of newly arrived third-country national children (TCN) in education and to contribute to the combatting of discrimination against TCN children in the educational environment in Greece, Italy and Spain, and the EU in general". This will be achieved through the implementation of an Educational Support Model, which will support students on academic matters, will promote

their integration in the educational system and contribute to the tackling of the discrimination that these people suffer.

For this purpose, research was conducted to identify the educational needs of these children, existing gaps in the school curriculum, training needs of the teachers, as well as the possible occurrence of any form of discrimination and problems these children face in their everyday school life.

The present report was developed in the context of IntegratEd's Work Package (WP) 2 "Development and pilot implementation of educational support model for TCN children", which aims to:

- Develop and implement an educational support model for TCN children in Greece, Italy and Spain to enhance their participation in education, which will contribute to the smooth integration of TCN in the host societies.
- Enhance the capacities of secondary schools to address TCN students' needs and incorporate diversity, tolerance, recognition and respect of difference within the school community, including parental involvement.
- Strengthen the academic skills of TCN students.
- Promote the participation of TCN parents in school life.
- Enhance the intercultural competences of secondary school teachers.

The general objective of the action is to "Strengthen the successful participation of newly arrived third-country national children in education and to contribute to the combatting of discrimination against third-country national children in the educational environment in Greece, Italy & Spain, and the EU in general". This will be realized by:

- Raising participation in education and the rate of attainment of (high) school-leaving certificates among TCN children/youth in GR, IT & ES to enable them to achieve personal independence and active participation in society.

- Supporting the academic performance of secondary education TCN pupils.
- Enhancing the competences of teachers, school heads and staff, so that they are able to better take into account increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse environments.
- Facilitating and promoting the involvement of TCN parents in their children's education and school life.
- Enhancing the knowledge of TCN pupils and their parents on the education systems of Greece, Italy & Spain.
- Enhancing mother tongue & culture knowledge of TCN pupils.
- Fostering exchange of experience and good practices on successful integration of TCN children in education and promote comprehensive educational support model(s).
- Raising public awareness on the role of education in promoting inclusive societies, valuing diversity, &
- Promoting increased attention to diversity, inclusion and intercultural competences in policy planning in education.

To date, the development of the learning modules for strengthening the capacities of teachers and the creation of the Education Support Platform have been completed. With the aim to further support schools to tackle disadvantages and consequently Early School Leaving (ESL), while enabling success for migrant, refugee and TCN students, and strengthening the collaboration among all members of the school society, the present document involves the development of a methodology for the elaboration and implementation of school diversity policies and action plans. The aim is to promote the integration of newly arrived refugees and migrants (and other groups) and to foster tolerance, recognition and respect of difference in the school environment.



Methodology

As mentioned in the EU publication “Education policies and practices to foster tolerance, respect for diversity and civic responsibility in children and young people in the EU - Examining the evidence” (2016), it is widely acknowledged that schools have the potential to help young people become active and responsible citizens in today’s multicultural Europe. This implies moving away from traditional education systems which focus solely on one culture, to ones that enable youth to connect to the multicultural reality around them and become citizens of the world.

Knowledge-wise, this enables students to become familiar with the increasing diversity existing in their society and community. Schools need to equip students with the knowledge and skills to become active and responsible citizens, embracing equality and democracy, as well as developing key attitudes such as openness, being non-prejudiced, tolerance and respect for diversity and human rights. Schools need to be themselves equipped to create the conditions for all children and school professionals to promote these skills and intercultural learning.

The methodology for the elaboration and implementation of school diversity policies and action plans enables participating schools (and potentially other schools in the partner countries and EU MSs) to achieve the above. The methodology will be widely disseminated and promoted at local/regional/national level so that it is used by more schools and mainstreamed in the regional or national secondary education systems.

By creating a sense of belonging in the school to migrant, refugee and TCN students (students feeling personally accepted, respected and supported), the students will become more socially integrated in the school environment, thus leading to higher academic achievement.



Concerning the activities of the current document, a methodology, with relevant guidelines, for the elaboration and implementation of diversity policies and action plans by secondary schools is created. The policy development process could take place over several days, months or during all the academic year.

For the elaboration of diversity policies, the methodology addresses aspects such as the values in the school and/or community, types of diversity represented in the school, existing specific concerns, or preventative action, specific prejudices that may need to be addressed, existence of a policy that addresses or partially addresses these concerns, existing process for addressing incidents do occur, how to build a culture of inclusivity, how to celebrate uniqueness; types of behaviours the school is trying to encourage, what the school does to encourage respect for diversity, local expertise that can be used (e.g. community organizations, civil society, migrants associations etc.).

The methodology includes strategies for the involvement of the parents of students (with focus on migrant, refugee and TCN students), because education is a shared responsibility between parents and schools, which should be based on mutual respect, trust and collaboration between the two. This part of the current document could and must be linked with the “Guidelines for developing school policy on TCN parental involvement”.

Parental involvement is of high importance for the life of the child in and out of school. It is also a means through which parents take up an active role in the education of their children. Now more than ever before the involvement of all parents is crucial, especially the involvement of migrant and refugee parents and children in education. This document provided information on the definition of parental involvement, the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children, some of the barriers faced by TCN parents that further hinder their involvement, general and explicit guidelines for the design of a



school policy and information on the Education Support Platform that could help in the parental involvement of TCN parents.

Parental School involvement can happen in many different forms and should not be measured by the frequency by which meetings organised by the school are attended. Even though it might be easier for the school to maintain relations that way other forms of communication should be sought. These might include regular exchange via social media channels, mails, phone calls and even home visits which will help teachers and/or other school staff to better understand the family situation of a student.

Parental engagement in their children's learning might take diverse forms from showing genuine interest in what happens at school, providing a calm environment for learning at home, taking children to the local library, promoting exchange with classmates, fostering their participation in extra-curricular activities, providing healthy food and clean clothes and should be valued as an important contribution to their children's well-being and forthcoming at school.

Schools designing and implementing a TCN parent involvement support policy are taking a step further in enhancing the development of the children to their full potential and create numerous opportunities for them in the education system.

In order to be successful on the long run and therefore sustainable, the participation of all actors is needed through the creation of a whole-school-approach in which all stakeholders take part to the implementation of individual measures to ensure shared ownership and responsibility.

Development of diversity school policy and action plans.

Why we need this document?

- To promote inclusion and integration of migrants, refugee and TCN students in school environment with a more formal / official way.
- To gather in one document Good Practices and their action plans that could be use by schools in order to help them with the integration of migrants, refugee and TCN students in school and in community too.

The purpose: To create a policy/action plan for supporting schools to tackle disadvantages and consequently ESL, enabling success for migrant and refugee students, and to strengthen the collaboration among all members of the school community.

- *...policies and action plans* are necessary as a basis and guiding framework for delivering services. They can provide important information about how relevant laws should be implemented
- *...policies* should also outline a plan for implementation, which may include how to increase services and resources incrementally, and how these services and resources will be funded.

The expected results of this work is to identify the most prominent need in terms of managing cultural diversity in the school environment, drafting a within school policy to ensure cultural diversity is respected and accepted and be able to create action plans to ensure it.

The Target Groups:

Teachers;

Students;

Parents;



School principals, educational stakeholders at the school level (school advisors, psychologist etc.)

Parental involvement based on the Guidelines for developing school policy on TCN parental involvement which analyses educational strategies that contribute to overcome inequalities and promote social cohesion, particularly focusing on vulnerable and marginalised groups.



The instructions

Why we need instructions?

In order to promote inclusion and integration of migrants, refugee and TCN students in school environment with a more formal / official way. With the below instructions, the adoption of school policies and further of their action plans will be in an official way by schools. There are pre and post implementation actions that schools must take into considerations before starting have diversity school policies integrated into the school.

First of all, in the pre-implementation phase, identifying needs should be the first step that the coordinator/responsible person will take. (e.g. Migrant children do not spent enough time with native children; migrant children face several difficulties in the schools of the host country; native children do not understand the difficulties faced by migrant children in the new environment. The need could be to bring students together and, support them to understand and accept diversity, others; culture etc.). The second step can be the identification of who will take lead responsibility; the participation will be voluntarily a can be a relevant education professional and/or school principal, educational stakeholders at the school level (school advisors, psychologists etc.) and/or involvement of parents. Appoint one person or a small team (up to 4 people). The responsible person/the coordinator for the creation of the school policy should pay attention to:

- the relevant values in the school and/or community;
- the types of diversity represented in the school;
- existing specific concerns, or preventative action in the school or in their area's educational community;
- existence of a policy that addresses or partially addresses these concerns;
- existing process for addressing incidents do occur;
- ways to build a culture of inclusivity and celebrate uniqueness; and

- the types of behaviours the school is trying to encourage, what the school does to encourage respect for diversity, local expertise that can be used (e.g. community organizations, civil society, migrants' associations etc.).

Note also that the process requires research, consultation; discuss with other stakeholders (other schools, parents, professionals from the ministry or directorate of education etc.) and policy writing tasks. The coordinator should develop a plan of what tasks need to be done, by whom and when. Also, as a third step can be the preparation of draft version of the School Policy recommendations. Each school can create their own Policy in their language and specialised to their needs and create their action plans based on them, or can adapt the draft given in Appendix 1 to the school needs and specifications. This aforementioned draft version of this Policy document could be reviewed internally or externally. Internally by the responsible teacher/coordinator with their team. Externally by the others teachers, school advisors, family associations, etc. The fourth stage can be the creation or the adoption of the action plans. Note that the creation of action plans could be more productive with the parental involvement of all students in schools (with focus on migrant, refugee and TCN students), trust and collaboration between the two. Examples of mentoring, of socializing activities are given in Appendix 3, which a school can use if they fit their own policy. Following formal adoption of the policy, it should be communicated everywhere throughout the school area. In the case that the policy recommendations and action plans is not well communicated, it may fail. Last but not least, the strategies for the parental involvement of students in schools (with focus on migrant, refugee and TCN students), trust and collaboration between the two because education is a shared responsibility between parents and schools, which should be based on mutual respect; impacts positively on students' academic results, attendance, motivation and self-esteem; increases the amount of available resources; leads to specific actions for each school because decisions are taken together and knowledge from both professionals and families are combined; positively impacts on families' expectations towards children. Increase relatives' skills and parental empowerment; transforms home interactions around learning; improves multicultural



coexistence, as well as relationship between students, teachers and families. Actions proposed to ensure the above are included in Guidelines for developing school policy on TCN parental involvement.

Regarding the post-implementation of the school policies and action plans the above mentioned needs to be monitored, reviewed, and revised if necessary to deal with the ongoing needs of an ever-changing environment such as the school environment. The implementation of the policy should be monitored. The policy may still require further adjustments and furthermore the reasons for the policies existence may change. The evaluation will be done by the end of the school year or at the end of the implementation of the actions (see template in Appendix 3). In this stage, note that the evaluation has a more informal character for schools and it is not necessary, it is for the self-evaluation for the further implementation of the policies and action plans.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Example of the elaboration of diversity school policy recommendations

Coordinator/Responsible person: (Complete with responsible person's name and position)

Approved by: (Who is the approval authority, persons, group/team (teachers' association, teacher-parent association) etc.?)

Date approved:

Review date: (if applicable)

The current policy recommendation aims to be applied by all the students, parents, teachers and education professionals of our school.

The international human rights' standards, detailed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), as well as in, but not limited to, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) and the European Social Charter, should not be considered a privilege, but fundamental rights that all children must have access to and benefit from. Discrimination against migrant and refugee student in our school is a prohibited personnel practice and the school strongly disapproves of such conduct. If any student believes that he or she is being subjected to discrimination, the student should personally and immediately notify a teacher, a school leader, or a headmaster for prompt and appropriate corrective action.

Our school is fully committed to providing a place free from inequality, diversity, discrimination, any form of bullying. It is committed to offering a intercultural educational environment to students and equal opportunities of participation regardless of country of origin. Critically, it supports diversity, inclusion, integration and as such prohibits the discrimination of any migrant and refugee student. The aim of this constitution/composition is to help the migrants, refugees and TCN children as well as the native children to fully

understand to coexist by understanding each other and their rights and values. This policy applies to all students, teachers and parents. The school shall cooperate with federal, state or local government agencies that have the responsibility to ensure our compliance with various laws relating to the school community. Any questions or comments regarding this matter should be addressed to teachers or school principal.

The educational community, individually and collectively has the overall responsibility of carrying out “The school policies on diversity” in their respective school. Complementary on this effort, the involvement of native students, and educational stakeholders at the school level (school advisors, psychologist etc.), and if possible the involvement of parents could be beneficial. In all policy documentation there is a responsible person that leads the activities. In our case, could be anyone by the educational community but it is necessary to pay attention to:

- a. the relevant values in the school and/or community;
- b. the types of diversity represented in the school;
- c. existing specific concerns, or preventative action in the school or in their area’s educational community;
- d. specific prejudices that may need to be addressed;
- e. existence of a policy that addresses or partially addresses these concerns;
- f. existing process for addressing incidents do occur;
- g. ways to build a culture of inclusivity and celebrate uniqueness; and
- h. types of behaviours the school is trying to encourage, what the school does to encourage respect for diversity, local expertise that can be used (e.g. community organizations, civil society, migrants’ associations etc.).

Appendix 2: Propose actions and Good practices for implementation

Notice that in each school should create actions that will put the policy diversity into practice to the school environment. The actions can be the ones used in other schools (following consultation and exchange with the other school) or could be ones created from the school community (teachers, parents, students etc.) in collaboration for this specific purpose.

Every host county has traditional activities and good practices that could be adopted during the implementation of the policy through the action plans. This way action tasks can include cultural activities from different countries, so that native students, parents and teachers learn about the migrants'/refugees' and TCN students culture and share theirs.

Fostering inclusion with Audio-Visual Media.

Section 1: Presentation

This programme aims to promote and enhance third-country national (TCN) students' socialisation and integration using music and audio-visual media. The activities may take place inside the classroom, or in between classes. It was inspired by the "Play it for Change-Raising Awareness and Empowerment of Girls and Boys for the Prevention of Gender Based Violence Through Audio-Visual Media and Music" (<http://playitforchange.org/>). A gym teacher used this method unofficially to enhance TCN students' interaction with their local peers. Despite meeting several objections by other teachers and neighbours, while listening to music kids did not care about ethnicities and differences. On the contrary, they all danced together, enhancing meaningful interaction. Furthermore, music and audio-visual media could work as tools to promote intercultural interactions and exchange of information between students.

Therefore, you could start with a pilot implementation one or twice a month. You could choose one hour to watch and discuss audio-visual material. Those could include from short

films, songs and video clips to newspapers' articles and/or excerpts from the radio or television that promote inclusion, diversity. Those could be presented and discussed individually or in comparison to others that do not promote inclusion, promoting a discussion of critical thinking and comparison of arguments. Of course, the extracts should be carefully selected to not include offensive/inappropriate language, to be able to be reproduced in class with young children. Then you will devote the rest of the time to discuss about the issues that arise, or concerns you or the students might have. Alternatively, you can make it into a playful, inclusive exercise, where children can find corresponding excerpts, videos, songs or video clips and bring them in class to discuss them together.

The following links are provided as relevant examples of Audio – Visual material that could be used. Educators are encouraged to use national content and videos.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/PlayingForChange>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sjd9qxZEWg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRwt25M5nGw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2hvibGdg4w>

Note that: If there is lack of availability of time this good practice could be used during music class.

Section 2: Resources

To implement this good practice, you will need a room, a personal computer (if applicable), Tablet (if applicable), Smartphone; Projectors (if applicable); Internet connection; Human resources (teachers, students).

Section 3: Duration

This good practice can be implemented once or twice a month in the beginning until it is adapted and integrated in the curriculum. If it is integrated, it is suggested that it is implemented on a weekly basis.

Section 4: Expected results

By implementing this good practice, you will:

- Promote intercultural exchange.
- Stimulate the learning of the host country language.
- Deepen the migrants' refugees' and TCN's sense of belonging.
- Create a contact network for the inclusion of migrant/refugee and TCN students.
- Enhance the performance of migrants, refugees and TCN students' secondary schools.
- Create a sense of belonging in the school.
- Build capacities including increased empathy, understanding and acceptance of difference.
- Raise awareness.



Mentor / Mentee Programme

Section 1: Presentation

Mentor/mentee programmes involve the creation of pairs of students, one older and one younger, which meet at least once every two weeks and discuss the younger students' social and/or academic difficulties. The process is mediated by a teacher, who is available to consult the mentor/buddy pair.

How to set up a mentor programme?

If you are interested in setting up a mentoring programme for secondary education your school or in your class, the following steps are proposed:

Step 1: Introduce the mentor/mentee programme to your school.

Step 2: Identify the students who would like to become mentors to migrant/refugee and TCN students. Those could be migrant/refugee and/or TCN students who have gained a sense of belonging in the host country and can help the newly arrived ones. Alternatively, they could be also native students.

Step 3: Discuss this possibility with the migrant / refugee TCN children that might be interested or the ones you believe might benefit from such a programme and with their parents.

Step 4: Match the pairs.

Step 5: Monitor that the pairs meet once every two weeks minimum and that both students are satisfied with the process. In case they are not mediate, whether they would like to change pairs or stop the programme altogether.

Step 6: Evaluate yourself first and the mentors and mentees second! After the end of the first implementation you should coordinate the evaluation of mentors and mentees for the



further adaptation of these action in your school. Feel free to self-evaluate for the better results and the better adaptation of the project concerning the needs of your school and the real needs of the newly arrived refugee / migrant children. The evaluation will help you and the whole educational professional at the end to decide if you will continue the programme or not, if you will need to add more actions or not and so on.

Section 2: Resources

To implement this good practice, you will need a room, a personal computer (if applicable), Tablet (if applicable), Smartphone; Projectors (if applicable); Internet connection; Human resources (educational professional staff, migrant/refugee students and their parents, and/or native students). Guides and guidelines for mentors. Educational material.

Section 3: Duration

The duration can vary, but it is recommended that for the benefit of the mentee student, the mentor/buddy programme last for a minimum of 3 months. Ideally, it should last for the whole academic year.

Section 4: Expected results

By implementing this good practice, you will:

- Create a contact network for the inclusion of migrant/refugee students.
- Promote intercultural exchange.
- Stimulate the learning of the host country language.
- Migrant/refugee students' integration into school and further into society.
- Deepen the students' sense of belonging.
- Succeed in the inclusion of parents from both migrant/refugee and native students.
- Share experiences between students.
- Enhance the performance of migrant and refugee students in primary and secondary schools.

- Strengthen collaboration amongst all members of the school community (school leaders, teachers and non-teaching staff, learners, parents/families).
- Creating a sense of belonging in the school.
- Capacity building increased empathy, understanding and acceptance of difference.
- Raise awareness.



Appendix 3: Evaluation Report

Please write a small review to give some feedback for the pilot implementation and its permanent adaption. In this stage, note that the evaluation has a more informal character for schools and it is not necessary, it is for the self-evaluation for the further implementation of the policies and action plans.

- a. Do you have the resources needed?
- b. Do you have more comments and addition?
- c. Did you involve the teachers? If yes, how many of them?
- d. Did you involve the students? If yes, how many of them?
- e. Did you involve the parents? If yes, how many and how?
- f. Can the program be permanently adopted? Can you allocate time in the context for this programme?
- g. How did children respond to the programme? The permanent adoption would be beneficial for the inclusion of the refugee and migrant children's in your school?
- h. Were there any difficulties, challenges and problems that you had to take into consideration during the implementation of the policy? How did you deal with them?
- i. Can you describe your thoughts about the policy implementation? Do you believe that you, the teachers, the students, and maybe the parents learned something new?
- j. Last but not least, can you propose any changes or ideas for the further implementation of this policy?

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