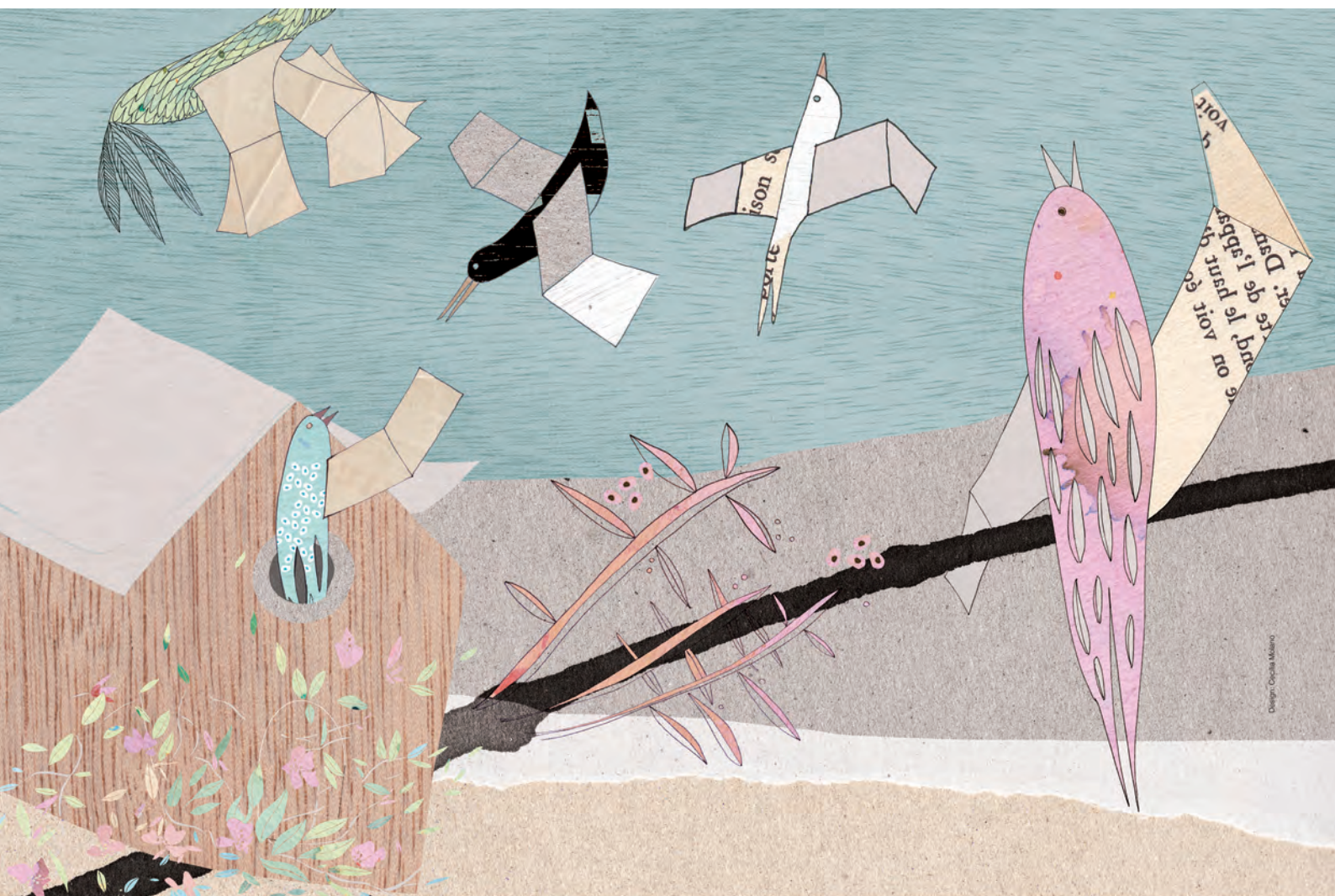




# PROMOTING EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN EDUCATION

SECOND EDITION

Professor Nihad Bunar





# PROMOTING EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN EDUCATION

## EXPERIENCES FROM SPAIN, SERBIA AND BELGIUM

### SECOND EDITION

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# FOREWORD

The present research originated from the fruitful cooperation between the European Sectoral Social Partners in education the ETUCE and EFEE and their shared interest to improve the situation of migrant and refugee children in education. The cooperation is valuable for a deeper understanding among the social partners and to build up trust that will benefit the future dialogue.

We would like to thank Professor Nihad Bunar for the careful research he has conducted and for a report that is critical and firmly based on facts that can be worked with. We would also like to thank Maria Gisèle Royo, who created the documentary around the project that helps to disseminate the message of the project into the wider public. We would also like to thank all those who helped to organise the case studies in Belgium, Serbia and Spain. All these countries contributed to our understanding of how migrant and refugee children can be integrated in the educational system and how specific difficulties can be addressed. Each of the case studies contributed to a general understanding of the challenges beyond the country-specific environment.

Building a shared understanding is a prerequisite for any successful dialogue. With this project, ETUCE and EFEE have brought to the discussion table the achievements and needs of all those involved in the educational inclusion of newly arrived migrant and refugee children: teachers, trainers, school leaders, and all other education personnel, education authorities and education employers and trade unions. With this new evidence and shared understanding, renewed trust and respect for the different positions, we are now ready to continue to discuss this issue, which is of crucial importance for the future of our European societies. We are now able to respond to this complexity with a shared perspective in order to bring about the change needed. The dialogue and cooperation among the partners have been crucial to identify recommendations on how to address such challenges even better, and to provide a support that is tailored to the needs and rights of children, teachers and school leaders, for an inclusive and quality education for all.

According to UN Conventions<sup>1</sup>, states have committed to provide access to education to every child, regardless of his or her migratory status. However, crossing the doorstep of a school is not enough. For an educational experience which is of quality and for an integration process that benefits future societies, Europe should put the rights and needs of migrant and refugee children at the centre of any initiative. The rising xenophobia and nationalist waves that can be observed across Europe today pose a real threat to the inclusion process. For us, the education social partners, it is clear that no child should be left behind, if we want to foster a prosperous future of Europe. Education is the key to inclusion.

**Susan Flocken**  
ETUCE, European Director

**Daniel Wisniewski**  
EFEE, General Secretary

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR (2010): Convention and Protocol relating to the status of refugees. Online: <https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html>

# PREFACE

Numerous organisations and individuals have provided the support necessary to conduct research within the project European Sectoral Social Partners in Education and to write this report. Many thanks to ETUCE, especially Susan Flocken, European Director, and EFEE, especially Daniel Wisniewski, General Secretary and Sarah Kik, for professional and fruitful cooperation. Paola Cammilli's firm leadership of the entire project and insightful feedback throughout the research process has considerably increased the report's quality. Thanks to the members of the project's advisory group for their support and comments on the report's drafts: Charlotte Holm, Koenraad Vandenbussche, Jean-Luc Barbery, Tanja Modrijan, Borka Visnic, Pantelis Nicolaidis, Brenda Lynch and Marisa Vico Nieto. Jean-Luc, Borka and Marisa have kindly organised field-visits in Belgium, Serbia and Spain. Without your help, commitment and work, this project would not have been possible. I am deeply grateful to all those children, parents, teachers, school leaders, NGOs staff, education trade union members and representatives of education employer organisations we met in these three countries and who shared their experiences of inclusion, educational needs, support measures, challenges and achievements. Some of the report's main conclusions have been presented at training seminars in Denmark and Cyprus, organised by Charlotte Holm and Pantelis Nicolaidis, and discussed with representatives of education trade unions and education employers. María Gisèle Royo, responsible for making a video-documentary has been a valuable partner for understanding the complexity of the reality we both recorded. Finally, thanks to Stockholm University and the Swedish Research Council, the Committee on Educational Research, for supporting my work on the report.

It is my hope that the outcomes will be used as a starting point for further discussions, reflections, social dialogue and ultimately for policy changes throughout Europe in order to promote integration and inclusion of newly arrived migrant and refugee children.

**Nihad Bunar**

Stockholm, September 11, 2019

This second edition has been slightly updated in order to more properly reflect geographical distribution of the ETUCE and EFEE member organizations, that participated in the survey on social dialogue.

**Nihad Bunar**

Stockholm, December 2, 2019

# SUMMARY

This report addresses policy and research regarding effective integration of migrant and refugee children in education. Various organisational models deployed throughout the globe in the light of theories and practices on inclusion and integration are presented and discussed. Additionally, support in learning, and relations and dialogue with actors from local and broader community, are brought up and discussed.

A major part of the report deals with research and empirical evidences from Spain, Serbia and Belgium. As evident from the empirical cases, there is an ongoing struggle among educators and educational institutions to provide equal and high-quality education to migrant and refugee students. In some cases, the national policy facilitates these efforts, and in some cases, it rather has a hampering impact. Among some of the most prominent conclusions of the report is a call for more support-based inclusive policies and practices, the active use of first language as a vehicle for learning, allocation of additional resources and professional development of teachers and more tailored models for promoting cooperation with parents, the local and broader communities.

Survey results indicate that social dialogue is used in less than a half of 78 reported cases (mostly in forms of consultations and communication) from ETUCE and EFEE member organisations from 41 countries. However, it is encouraging that reports from many countries illuminate a broad range of actions by education trade unions and employer organisations. From supporting migrant teachers and professional development of school staff, dissemination of information, lobbying, organising workshops and conferences to undertaking concrete practices in and outside of schools to support migrants and refugees.



# 1. INTRODUCTION





This report is written within the project European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting effective integration of migrants and refugees in education, led by the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE, the European trade union federation that represents education trade unions across Europe) and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE). The report deals with how certain aspects of the educational rights of newly arrived migrant and refugee children are described and analysed in research, prescribed in legislation and realised in educational practices across Europe and in particular in Spain, Serbia and Belgium. It also addresses the extent and forms of social dialogue used to promote effective integration in education.

## 1.1 THE PROJECT<sup>2</sup>

The background to the project 'European Sectoral Social Partners in Education promoting effective integration of migrants and refugees in Education' (hereafter the project) is cooperation between ETUCE and EFEE within the framework of the European Sectorial Social Dialogue Committee for Education (ESSDE). The role of ESSDE, set up in June 2010 under Articles 154-155 of the TF-EU Treaty, is to "bring together European employers and employees in education to agree on how to meet the challenges facing the sector."<sup>3</sup> As an important theme in their joint Work Programme, the ESSDE has been previously actively involved in promoting integration of migrant and refugee children in education in the EU and EU-candidate countries. One of the leading ideas is also to support the implementation and follow-up of the Paris Declaration on promoting intercultural dialogue and democratic citizenship (ETUCE 2017, p. 1). The presence of a relatively large number of migrant and refugee children in European schools from 2015 and onwards presented a set of new challenges, but also opportunities to intensify and deepen that work.

In 2017 ETUCE applied for funding to the European Commission to carry out the aforementioned project. The application highlights problems newly arrived students are facing in schools, in terms of inadequate support, poorly prepared teachers, and the absence of transparent organisations, and it also points at a number of initiatives and good practices launched and implemented all over Europe. Hence, the starting point of the project is partly identifying, analysing, and understanding challenges as well as proposing models for addressing them. Simultaneously the project sets out to identify, cultivate and disseminate the achievements of teachers, trainers, school leaders and other education personnel, as well as education institutions and education authorities. Subsequently, the application was approved and a project was set up for the period of February 2018 to November 2019. The project is led by an Advisory group consisting of members from six education trade unions in Denmark, Belgium, Cyprus, Slovenia, Spain and Serbia and two education employer organisations in Ireland and Belgium, with ETUCE and EFEE overseeing the overall management of the project.

The Advisory group decided that case-studies will be conducted in two EU-countries, Spain,

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<sup>2</sup> Information in this section is to a large degree retrieved from the application submitted by ETUCE to EU Commission (Call VP/2017/0027) and various websites. For more detailed information see the entire application (ETUCE 2017).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.csee-etuce.org/en/social-dialogue/29-european-sectoral-social-dialogue-in-education-essde>

and Belgium, and in one EU-candidate country, Serbia. To achieve the project's objectives, the ETUCE recruited two external experts. One to make a video-documentary. The other one to produce a scientific report, participating in peer-learning activities and disseminating the project's results. The present report is a first step in accomplishing that task.

## 1.2 AIM AND METHOD

The aim of this report is to:

- *Present* insights from previous research, generally and in particular from Spain, Serbia and Belgium, and identify obstacles and promising policy approaches to promoting integration of migrant and refugee children in education.
- Based on secondary material and fieldwork, *present* and *analyze* relevant legislation, local policies and promising practices, challenges and obstacles, organizational and instructional models, the experiences of migrant and refugee children and their parents, and cooperation of various stakeholders in five cities in Spain, Serbia and Belgium.
- *Collect* and *analyze* information from ETUCE and EFEE members on the extent and form in which social dialogue is used to promote effective integration of migrants and refugees in education.

The report is based on several empirical sources. First, a search for relevant previous research has been undertaken in international databases. The results will be partly and briefly summarised in chapter 2 and partly presented in relation to case studies, where articles, books and reports concerning the focus countries could be identified.

A second source of empirical material deals with legislation, policies, initiatives, promising practices and challenges, recommendations from Spain, Serbia and Belgium. This information was collected from governmental and non-governmental agency reports, open sources (websites) and prepared by the project's partners (education trade unions from the focus countries).

The third source is the empirical material collected during fieldwork, lasting two to three days, in five cities: Madrid (Spain), Antwerp (Belgium-Flanders), Belgrade, Sombor and Subotica (Serbia). Generally, the information has been gathered through interviews and meetings with more than 70 stakeholders comprising of government and local officials, school leaders and teachers, parents and students, NGOs, and representatives for education trade unions and employer organisations. In total seven schools were visited and, in the case of Serbia even two refugee camps.

Finally, the project has also conducted a short survey among ETUCE and EFEE member organisations to map social partners' actions in relation to integration of migrants and refugees in education. 78 answers (67 ETUCE members and 11 EFEE members) from 41 countries were collected.

## 1.3 STUDY LIMITATIONS

Due to a rather limited scope of fieldwork, the study does not purport to present its results as general, even for the cities where the fieldwork was conducted. The value of the report lies in thorough analyses combining insights from previous research, review of relevant secondary material and first-hand accounts collected from a large number of various stakeholders in three countries.

Another relevant limitation has to do with a high level of decentralisation in Belgium and Spain. In Belgium with Flemish speaking, French speaking and German speaking communities and in Spain with 17 Autonomous Communities responsible for education. The fieldwork in Spain was conducted in Madrid. Does that reflect the Spanish experience? Two schools were visited in the city of Antwerp, in Flanders. Can we claim results reflecting the Belgian experiences? Not really, in both cases. Consequently, in presentations of secondary material as well as empirical findings from visits and meetings in these two countries, it is carefully underlined that conclusions emerge from those particular local circumstances. By referring to other national and international literature, it is possible to link local observations to a broader context.

Concerning the previous research and given the intensified knowledge production and the transdisciplinary nature of the migration and education field, it is not possible to provide all aspects with (appropriate) space. Dealing with traumatic pre- and transmigration experiences, experiences of racism, discrimination and bullying, language teaching methods, teacher education, and psychological adjustment are some of very important subareas that, for reasons of limitations, cannot be addressed in the present study.

## 1.4 DISPOSITION

In the following chapter 2 a brief summary of some main strands in international research on migration and education is presented. Chapter 3 reports major findings from surveys on social dialogue. In the three subsequent chapters case studies from Spain, Serbia and Belgium are presented.

Case studies are structured in the following way. First, the country background will be briefly presented, including experiences of migration, organisation of educational system, and policies for reception and schooling of migrant and refugee students. Additionally, research specifically dealing with every country is presented, if available. Second, the presentation and analyses of material is ordered in several categories, mainly following the scope and depth of the material itself. Every chapter concludes with a summarising discussion.

The last chapter summarises major findings and offers some additional reflections on integration of migrant and refugee students in education.



## **2. MIGRATION AND EDUCATION**



Migration and its impact on various areas of society has been a prominent topic on the public agenda in many European countries for decades. Migration in all its forms, challenges and benefits, is not new for Europe. However, what happened and is happening in the wake of refugee arrivals in 2015 and 2016, is a new development. On the one hand, migration and migrants are, throughout Europe, discussed as one giant problem, threatening fiscal policies and ways of life, catapulting far-right parties into government positions, causing domestic and international quarrels about what should be done, about who is carrying the burden and who is falling back on old fashioned nationalism. We have witnessed stricter border controls, and serious proposals for setting up refugee shelters elsewhere for migrants arriving in the EU.

On the other hand, we have witnessed an unprecedented mobilisation among first-line professionals (most notably social workers and teachers), non-governmental organisations, civil society and ordinary citizens in many European countries, assisting migrants during transition, first weeks and months in new countries and facilitating integration in a long perspective. It could be argued that politically, the anti-migrant sentiments are currently gaining the upper-hand, and this is clearly visible in a number of policy measures adopted throughout Europe to curb migration flows. On the other hand, activities to integrate and include migrants and refugees in various social arenas, are intensifying. Transnational, national and local authorities, with help and support from NGOs and experts, are seeking solutions to challenges to labour and housing markets, with language acquisition, cultural rights (and obligations), and with inclusion.

The key concept in and the target group of this report, and the research which it is based on, is *newly arrived migrant and refugee children*<sup>4</sup> (or newly arrived students when strictly speaking about education). Obviously, even refugee children are, by definition migrants, and non-refugee migrant students often share the same challenges at schools as their refugee peers (Rutter 2006). By explicitly using refugee, the report highlights the refugee children's particularly dire position in the asylum-system and in education, as well as their transmigration experiences. How long a student is considered as "newly arrived" varies between countries, and there is often no plausible explanation as to why the limit is set at four or six years (Bunar 2017, Hilt 2017) or there is no limit at all.

Education offers newly arrived children not just opportunities for language acquisition, learning and a future career, but also a safe-haven which provides meaningful and structured days, psychological and emotional well-being, contacts with peers, and play. Internationally, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child grants all children, irrespective of their migration status, the right to education. Refugee, asylum-seeking and undocumented children alike not only have to be admitted to schools but also, as UNESCO (2018) puts it in the report *Migration, displacement and education*:

“ Ensuring that migrants and refugees attend and complete school is only the first step towards inclusion. The main challenge in fully including these students in the host society is to offer an education of high quality that ensures the prevention of prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination. (p. 93)

<sup>4</sup> Or short *newly arrived children*.

The education has also to be of high-quality, aiming at developing “each child’s personality, talents and abilities to the fullest” (Article 29 in the Rights of the Child). Thus, migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking students have a right to meaningful and equal education aimed at fully developing the personality, talents and abilities of every child (Matthews 2008, Morland and Birman 2016).

Despite legal requirements, according to Dorsi and Petit (2018), “migrants face various legal, administrative and practical barriers in the enjoyment of their right to quality education, and this even when inclusive and protective laws exist. Such barriers include: discriminatory laws and policies, temporary protection, documentation requirements, lack of educational structures or school closures, lack of information, schools (which are) geographically inaccessible, school fees and other costs, language of instruction, lack of qualified and experienced teachers, social integration issues” (p. 34).

How some of these barriers are addressed, through policy means and, in particular, through social dialogue in various European countries, are among the questions this report describes and analyses.

## 2.1 INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION IN TIME AND SPACE

International literature on the education of newly arrived migrant and refugee children has grown significantly during the last decade. Even more importantly, it has developed from a main focus on traumatic experiences and language acquisition methods to new scientific realms combining insights from sociology and pedagogy, from psychology and anthropology, from language and migration studies. Notable is also an increasing level of cooperation between research and policy, not just in an ongoing quest for transferable best practices, but also propelled by the urge to properly understand the challenges and to act accordingly.

Another distinguishing feature is a turn from an almost exclusive focus on shortcomings migrants have and the problems they face in their destination countries (Taylor 2008, Sidhu and Taylor 2007, Dolan and Sherlock 2010). Certainly, the problems and barriers are still illuminated and discussed, but increasingly also the strengths and resources which the migrants bring with them. Some of these resources – such as multilingualism, proper educational background, resilience, motivation and dedicated parents – are essential for explaining the migrant and refugee children’s educational success (Ferfolja and Vickers 2010, Ni Raghallaigh and Gilligan 2010).

Expansion, variation, policy relevance and focus on individual resources, as modern features of research on migration and education, are also helping to throw new light on areas that traditionally have been at the centre of empirical research. Organisational models and inclusion, instructional models and support in the classrooms and relations between schools, parents and community organisations are among the most noteworthy perspectives.

Discussion among researchers and even policy makers on organisational models for education is closely connected to inclusion, a concept at the same time notoriously difficult to define and an ultimate goal of policies across Europe. Inclusion is often confused with integration. There are similarities, which is why the concepts are sometimes used as synonyms in the report, but also some differences between the two. Integration is one of the basic sociological concepts, historically used to describe the level of coherence between various structures of a society, for example between the education system and the needs of the labour market (Mouzelis 1993). Later, it was used in urban analyses and in the sociology of education to describe a policy for mixed neighbourhoods and schools where the minority and the majority could share the same residential areas and schools. From the 1980s onward, it became closely linked to discourses, policies and efforts for immigrants to secure shared physical spaces together with the majority or simply to have equal life chances. The housing market, the labour market, democratic participation and education are at the core of integration policies. The concept of integration in education refers, in the context of this report, to a set of broader policies, discourses, and actions by various stakeholders, in schools (teachers, trainers, school leaders, other education personnel, non-refugee children) and outside of schools (policy-makers, social partner organisations, community organisations, parents, NGOs) aimed at supporting newly arrived students and even reforming those very policies, discourses and actions that generate inequalities in life chances. In the long run, integration implies no child is held back, in schools and in the society, by her/his migrant background.

The concept of inclusion has its foundation in the area of special pedagogy and discussions on which educational model is best suited for children with special needs: separate (special) schools or immersion in mainstream schools and classes. Since the same discussion has engulfed the thinking about the most appropriate models for newly arrived migrant and refugee students, perceived as students without language and thus missing the basic requirement to follow ordinary lessons, the concept of inclusion became eventually adopted into this policy area as well. Inclusion is about shared spaces, similar to integration, but in order to be successful it requires fundamental changes in envisioning and providing education for migrant and refugee children. Additionally, as pointed out by Watkins (2017), inclusion is about removing obstacles and barriers. The significance of inclusion for the school success of newly arrived students is strongly emphasised in research and international policy recommendations (Bunar 2017, European Commission 2017a, UNESCO 2018). In the context of this report, the concept of inclusion is thus used to refer to organisational models and measures undertaken in schools' daily practices to facilitate creation of common spaces of learning, while simultaneously providing tailored learning support to newly arrived students. As aforementioned, integration and inclusion are overlapping concepts and phenomena, and it is not always an easy task to define what is more correctly labelled as integration and what is strictly speaking inclusion.

Inclusion, and its empirical variations found in educational policies around the globe, is perhaps best understood on a time-space scale.

**Table 1. Inclusion on a time-space scale**

Time	Space
Short	Separate
Long	Shared

Countless organisational models and policy solutions – including their underpinning and often ideologically motivated and conflicting arguments – emanate from combining aspects of time and space. Thus, in some countries and school districts students are placed in “refugee-only” schools (separate space), with the expectations that this de facto exclusion (and even physical segregation) in a long perspective will lead to better chances for inclusion. As the argument goes, in separate schools, the refugee students are taught by highly-skilled teachers, used to work in multicultural settings and with second language acquisition, and education is offered in a safe environment, without racism and discrimination. After completing their education, the students will be equipped with knowledge and self-confidence, ready to deal with everyday life (Bartlett, Mendenhall and Ghaffar-Kucher 2017, Mendenhall, Bartlett and Ghaffar-Kucher 2017).

In the majority of countries, an organisational model of temporary separate classes is deployed, granting students access to general shared spaces (school building and leisure facilities), but education on a daily basis is provided in separate classes with other newly arrived students (see Vogel and Stock 2018, Svensson and Eastmond 2013). As noted above, the notion of temporality could be extremely flexible, stretching from a few weeks to several years. Hence, separate classes might run a risk of being transformed into “mini refugee-schools”. This model of inclusion through separation is expected to lead to partial inclusion in a short-time perspective, due to access to shared spaces during breaks and after-school activities with other students. On the other hand, and using the same arguments as in the case of “refugee-only” schools, this model is expected to entail circumstances for a more or less complete inclusion in a long-time perspective.

There are examples (i.e. in Sweden) where education in separate spaces to a certain extent must be combined with education in shared spaces (mainstream classes). Even this model is expected to lead to inclusion in both the short and the long-time perspective (Bunar 2017).

In some countries (Italy, England and Wales) and some self-ruled districts in decentralised education systems, the only model possible to deploy is direct immersion into ordinary or mainstream classes (Pinson and Arnot 2007, Grigt 2018). In order to work, this model of ultimate inclusion must contain strong elements of support. Otherwise, the risk is that shared spaces in mainstream class will lead to, at least temporary, exclusion. Supporting services are thus provided, either in the classroom, through the presence of a multilingual teacher or a two-teacher system, or outside of the classroom, through either shorter pull-out classes or through extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, all measures and activities that may require pulling newly arrived children out from ordinary classes and educating them in separate settings, must be pedagogically motivated and with attention to the children’s special needs.

An inevitable question arising from the above reflections is: Can we, with reference to scientific research and independent evaluations, claim which model is “the best”? A short answer is: No, we can’t really in every case, because individual circumstances of refugee and migrant children vary significantly and the organisation of education should have these circumstances as a starting point and not organisational models. Besides, there are no flawless models and even theoretically informed and empirically grounded models, proved to work in one educational setting, could in the process of inadequate implementation lead to obstacles in another.



However, what we, with a high degree of certainty, can argue, is that inclusion as an ultimate goal of all these (sometimes) conflicting models, benefits if models based on the idea of inclusion through separation are restricted to a set of special conditions. It could be in the event of a sudden arrival of a large number of refugees to a local community or for children without any formal education or other similar circumstance. If inclusion is a policy goal, why can't it be its starting point as well?

Inclusion is also important in the context of two other, in research often invoked, important areas: various classroom interventions aimed at supporting learning and relations with local community, its formal and non-formal organisations and, of course, with newly arrived parents. In the following sections we turn to a brief discussion of these two.

## 2.2 SUPPORT IN LEARNING

Research on pedagogical practices, instructional models and support measures for newly arrived students is diverse and difficult to concisely summarise. In any event, the major strand of research has evolved around strategies for second language development. As evident from previous section, even discussion on inclusion is strongly conditioned by concerns about second language acquisition. Will students learn a second language faster in ordinary classes or in separate classes or in separate schools? The assumption in the latter case is that separate education forms can pull together human resources and expertise, while ordinary classes can draw on language resources provided by the presence of other, non-refugee students in the classroom.

Appropriate instructional models for second language acquisition and the importance of the social environment are just two aspects of ensuring newly arrived students are adequately supported from the outset. As proved in research, there are some other crucial aspects here to consider.

The first one is the awareness that newly arrived students have diverse backgrounds and diverse educational needs (Shapiro and MacDonald 2017, Block et al. 2014). Consequently, those needs ought to be approached individually and collective strategies, treating all newly arrived students as one single "group-in-need", abandoned. This awareness and its concomitant strategies are not something that just happen. They must be actively supported and cultivated, which leads us to the next aspect.

Professional development of teachers, trainers, school leaders and other education personnel alike, is in research and evaluations, continuously being pointed out as an inevitable aspect of efforts to provide newly arrived students with equal, meaningful and high-quality education. Working in multicultural settings, catering for students with interrupted schooling, recognising and dealing with traumatic experiences, finding a way to communicate with parents and ethnic communities, are just some of the topics professional development strategies should address. Professional development is not just about attending seminars and lectures. It is first and foremost about getting involved in learning communities (Timperley 2011) with other teachers, where experiences and practices can be shared and disseminated.

Another important aspect is a need to properly understand and recognise newly arrived students' previous experiences of learning in formal and non-formal contexts. Learning about a child's strengths and challenges in a structured way and subsequently building pedagogical strategies can substantially improve the effectiveness of deployed measures. Sweden is a country that has been using the approach with initial mapping of newly arrived students' background since 2016, consisting of: a) collecting basic information on schooling, skills and life experiences; b) assessing literacy and numeracy and; c) assessing the attained level of knowledge in subject matters according to age (see Bunar 2017).

The fourth important aspect of devising instructional models, pedagogical practices and effective support measures, is an openminded approach to and active use of the children's first language. Researchers around the globe are more or less consistent in their stance that further development of the first language, by no means, slows down or in some mysterious way "damages" the successful development of the second language (Yazici, Ilter and Glover 2010). For newly arrived students, still without sufficient proficiency in a second language, their first language could be used as a vehicle for learning. Briefly, bilingual staff is employed to initially support students' learning in their first language (or any other language the student feel comfortable with). Language support teachers work together with and following instructions from ordinary teachers. As the students' language skills gradually improve, the need for language support diminishes (Warren 2017, Davila and Bunar 2019).

Nevertheless, the following is important to underline: Language support teachers and their activities are a temporary support, intended to assist newly arrived students in learning subject matters during a transition period (often one to two years). On a weekly basis, the assistance is limited to one to two hours. This does not in any way threaten the supremacy of the majority language or weaken the message to newly arrived students and their parents regarding the need to master the majority language.

## 2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONS

A conclusion that can be drawn from international research and policy recommendations is that cultivating relations between schools, parents and formal and non-formal organisations from the local community is an integrated part of supporting newly arrived students in, as well as outside of, school (McBrien 2005, Rah, Choi and Nguyen 2009, Detlaff and Fong 2016, Chrispeels 2015, Stewart 2011, OECD 2015, Suárez-Orozco, Pimentel and Martin 2009). In a review of migrant education in Ireland, Taguma, Kim, Wurzburg and Kelly (2009), argue that:

“*International research highlights the importance of parental involvement in education for improving achievement of students, independently of their socio-demographic background. However, such involvement is not always easy for immigrant parents as parental involvement in schools can be influenced by language proficiency in the language of school instruction and cultural influences. Priorities now should be to ensure that information is disseminated to all immigrant students and their parents, and to encourage immigrant parents to participate in their school's parent councils, board of management*

*and other school-based activities. In order to ensure immigrant parents become involved in their child's school life, it is important to take an integrated approach, in which not only the HSCL [The Home School Community Liaison] co-ordinators but also the whole school team actively engage with parents. (p. 10)*

Despite this broad agreement, there seem to be significant obstacles which are difficult to overcome. There are plenty of research contributions, based on qualitative interviews with migrant parents, showing their discontent with the nature of relations with schools (Bunar 2015, Osman and Månsson 2015, Matthiesen 2015). On the other hand, the educators seem to lack a basic understanding for how to reach out to migrant parents, how to find a way to communicate despite language barriers and ultimately for what migrant parents are supposed to contribute with (Hamilton and Moore 2004, Stewart 2011, Szente, Hoot and Taylor 2006, Devine 2011, Isik-Ercan 2012, Koyama and Bakuza 2017). Many teachers complain also about lack of time and stressful days, leaving them with limited time to engage in anything outside of the curriculum. That is why actions such as the aforementioned HSCL are of crucial importance to set up and support in order to bridge the gap between schools and migrant parents. Exchanges of information, learning further about a child's educational background and life experiences, correcting potential misunderstandings and clarifying eventual cultural differences, are just some important outcomes strong relations can help to achieve.

## 2.4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on this brief research review and its most conclusive aspects, several recommendations could be suggested.

- Inclusion, combining shared physical space and support measures, and adjusted to students' individual needs is a backbone of every organizational model.
- Educational background and life experiences of newly arrived students should be assessed early and using scientifically grounded material.
- Professional development of all school staff and school leaders in the area of multicultural education, migration and language development should be mandatory.
- First language should be acknowledged, valued, further developed and effectively used, for example through language support teachers, as a vehicle for learning.
- Parents should be acknowledged as a vital partners for schools in promoting learning and well-being of newly arrived children.



### **3. SOCIAL DIALOGUE**

– CREATION OF  
UNDERSTANDING  
AND COPRODUCTION  
OF POLICY



In order to attain a more general knowledge on the activities of education trade unions and employer organisations with regard to the integration of migrants and refugees in education, and especially through social dialogue, the project has conducted a short survey among member organisations of both ETUCE and EFEE.

Significant as it is and being part of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, social dialogue appears somehow elusive to precisely define. Its scope varies from negotiations to exchanges of information, from sharing good practices to binding agreements, it can be bipartite and tripartite, it can occur at company level, sectoral and cross-sectoral level. According to the European Commission's (2017b) practical guide for European social partner organisations and their national affiliates: "There is no uniform definition of social dialogue at national level – each Member State has its own rules, customs and practices which define social dialogue" (p. 4). Thus, social dialogue is a practice of formal, semi-formal or informal institutional interactions continuously being defined and refined in the ongoing process of its implementation in various socio-political, economic, cultural and historical contexts. Social dialogue is essentially about creation of understanding and coproduction of policy.

One of the most-used definitions is that coined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO)<sup>5</sup>, where social dialogue makes up all type of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between, or among, public bodies (e.g. representatives of governments), employers and workers, on issues of common interest. Social dialogue can take different forms, such as:

- Negotiation – parties engage in collective bargaining at the organisational, sectoral, regional, national and even multinational level. This form of social dialogue usually leads to a formal outcome agreed by the parties (e.g. collective agreement).
- Consultation – it requires an engagement by the parties through an exchange of views which in turn can lead to more in-depth dialogue or even into conclusions that are binding on the parties involved. Organisations (usually trade unions) are invited to submit views. The counterpart (e.g. the government) can decide to accept or not to accept the views submitted.
- Communication – various parties sharing information. In itself, this basic form of social dialogue does not imply real discussion or action on the issues but it is nevertheless an essential part of those processes by which dialogue and decision take place.<sup>6</sup>

The three levels could also, although not necessarily, be perceived as subsequent steps, where communication and exchange of information about certain topic lays groundwork for closer consultation, which eventually may lead to negotiations and an agreement.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/ifpdial/areas-of-work/social-dialogue/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

These insights, and particularly the ILO definition have been taken as a starting point in devising the survey. Apart from background information, the survey consisted of five questions:

1. To your knowledge, in the past five years, did your organization undertake any actions to address the integration of migrants and refugees in education?
2. If yes, have these actions been undertaken through any form of social dialogue between education trade unions and education employer organizations?
3. Please describe shortly this/these action(s).
4. Which form of social dialogue pertinent to integration of migrants and refugees is most frequent in your country: Negotiations, Consultation, Communications?
5. At which system level is social dialogue, pertinent to integration of migrants and refugees, most likely to take place in your country: National, Regional, Local, Institutional?

The survey was electronically disseminated to all member organisations – 132 from ETUCE and 41 from EFEE – in the early Spring of 2019. In total 78 valid answers (45 percent response rate) have been received from 41 countries. 67 are members of ETUCE and 11 of EFEE. Some of the countries with the largest number of answers are Denmark 5, Belgium 4, Croatia 4, Portugal 4, Cyprus 4, Slovenia 3, Finland 3, Ireland 3, France 3 and Romania 3. In the rest of this chapter the answers will be presented and analysed following the survey questions (see further Appendix 1).

## 3.1 ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN AND THROUGH SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The first question aimed at collecting information on whether the member organisations undertook any actions in the last five years to address the integration of migrants and refugees in education. The informants could respond with Yes, No or I don't know. The results are presented in the diagram below.

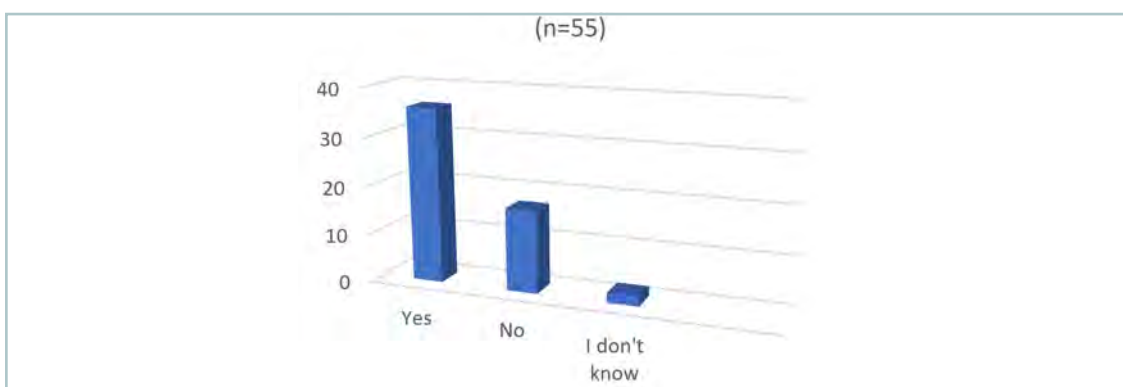
Diagram 1. Actions undertaken



55 or 70 percent of all participants in the survey (eight EFEE and 47 ETUCE members) responded that their organisations did undertake some actions. 22 responded with No actions (two EFEE and 20 ETUCE members). One organisation (an EFEE member) responded with I don't know whether any actions are undertaken.

The second question aimed at collecting information on whether the actions among those 55 organisations have been undertaken through any form of social dialogue between education trade unions and education employer organisations. The informants could respond with Yes, No or I don't know. The answers are presented in the diagram 2 below.

Diagram 2. Actions undertaken through social dialogue



36 organisations or 46 percent of all participants in the survey (four EFEE and 32 ETUCE members) responded that they use social dialogue as a process to develop and undertake actions. 17 have responded with No and two with I don't know. Hence these 19 respondents will be excluded from the following analysis (questions 4 and 5) since our primary focus is on forms and levels of social dialogue. However, it is interesting that many of these organisations nevertheless attempted to answer question 3 (some even 4 and 5) in the survey even if they were explicitly asked about further information on social dialogue. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind the importance of other actions undertaken, beside and beyond social dialogue. Some of these will be addressed when comments (question 3) are accounted for.

## 3.2 GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

No country in Europe is unaffected by migration. However, the sources of migration as well as reasons for why certain individuals and groups are seeking shelter in some countries differ vastly. In the following three tables the geographical distribution over the countries who answered in different ways to questions on actions undertaken and through social dialogue are accounted for.

We start with table 2 where Yes actions undertaken and Yes through social dialogue is presented. Within brackets is the information on how many organisations from that particular country responded with Yes to both questions. If there are no brackets it means the country has submitted only one response.



**Table 2. Actions undertaken through social dialogue, geographical distribution (n=36)**

EU countries			Non-EU countries
North-West	South	East-Central	
Belgium (3)	Cyprus (2)	Bulgaria	Armenia
Denmark (3)	Italy	Poland (1)	Kyrgyz Republic
Finland (1)	Malta (2)	Romania (1)	Moldova
France (2)	Spain (1)	Slovenia (1)	Montenegro (1)
Germany (2)		Estonia (1)	Norway (1)
Ireland (2)			Serbia (1)
Netherlands (1)			
Scotland			
Sweden (2)			
UK (2)			

30 of 36 organisations which responded Yes to actions and through social dialogue were from EU countries, 19 from North-West, six from South and five from East-Central EU. Six organisations were from non-EU countries.

In the next table 3 there is the geographical distribution of the countries which answered with Yes actions undertaken and No, I don't know or No answer through social dialogue. Within brackets is the information on how many organisations from that particular country responded with No, I don't know or No answer on both questions. If there are no brackets it means the country has submitted only one response.

**Table 3. Actions undertaken, No, I don't know or No answer through social dialogue, geographical distribution (n=19)**

EU countries			Non-EU countries
North-West	South	East-Central	
Austria	Greece	Poland (1)	Albania
Belgium (1)	Portugal (2)	Slovenia (2)	Montenegro (1)
Denmark (1)	Cyprus (1)	Lithuania	Switzerland
Finland (1)			Iceland
France (1)			Norway (1)
Netherlands (1)			

14 organisations from EU countries responded that they undertake some actions pertinent to integration of migrants and refugees in education, but not through social dialogue. Five non-EU countries responded in the same way.

Finally, 23 organisations answered that No actions were undertaken on that they were not aware of any.

### 3.3 WHAT KINDS OF ACTIONS?

Trade unions and employer organisations were asked in the survey (question 3) to briefly describe the actions undertaken through social dialogue.

Actions described by 49 respondents can refer either to joint social partners' actions or to individual organisations' actions (trade union or employer organisation only). The following categories, supported by a selection of examples, are often referred to in the comments.

#### SUPPORTING MIGRANT TEACHERS

Supporting newly arrived migrant teachers through social dialogue with social partners or through other projects is an activity accounted for by a number of respondents. Migrant teachers represent an untapped resource for the host societies in at least two ways. First, and given their language skills and the knowledge of the education systems newly arrived migrant children are coming from, they can support both children and their teachers. Second, and given the looming shortage of teachers in some European countries, migrant teachers, as skilled and experienced professionals, could alleviate that shortage. A necessary precondition in both cases is provision of organised and structured supports including information and guidance, language acquisition opportunities, recognition of previous credentials and experiences and a formalised path towards resuming the profession.

An example of how such a system of support could look like is presented by the Swedish education trade union (Läraryrket). The union negotiated with the government the induction of the Fast Track programme for newly arrived teachers consisting of a 26 week long introductory course. Thereafter, a study plan is produced for each individual considering previous education, experiences and attained skills in a second language. The ultimate goal is having them working as teachers in Sweden. A similar project has also been set up by the Union of Education Norway (UEN). CRSTESA from Armenia reported actions related to the right of Syrian refugee teachers to resume their careers in the country, through information dissemination. The Scottish trade union EIS raised the need for more concerted efforts to integrate refugees into the teaching profession with a wide range of public bodies. Another action is a call on the UK government to add teachers to the Shortage Occupation List as one means of diversifying the intake and enhancing refugee integration. The union even provided evidence to the Scottish government to support its work to diversify teaching and highlighted the need for greater valuing of linguistic and ethnic diversity and for routes into teaching for refugees and migrants.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL STAFF

Professional development of school staff (teachers, trainers, school leaders and other education personnel) is one of the most important actions to promote effective integration of migrants and refugees in education. Migrant children have various experiences, and indeed their migrant experiences do matter for education and learning. But a student can never be reduced to only one aspect of his/her identity. Thus, to recognise and transcend the migration background is a fine-tuned balance, teachers must master to ensure the academic success of their students. Additionally, educational needs cannot be solely reduced to a linguistic issue of a second language acquisition. Newly arrived children must be recognised as learners, not just as language learners, which implies access to wide range of subject areas. For all that, school staff need to know more about and have tools to reflect on the impact of their instructional practices and organisational models on newly arrived students.

Indeed, many social partners are accounting for projects and actions aiming at professionally developing teachers. Thus, the Bulgarian trade union SEB was involved in a project “Teachers obtaining competences for working with migrants and refugees and helping them in the process of inclusion through education” in 2017-2018. The union presented its work in the project to regional representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science within institutional social dialogue settings, expanding their involvement into the process of helping the integration of children migrants in the educational system. The Finish trade union of education (OAJ) made Integration Compass with proposals on how to ensure that every immigrant has access to education and working life. The Serbian education trade union (TUS) is involved in promoting migrants’ education and integration in the regular education system and in supporting teachers’ need for additional training. The Polish trade union ZNP has been participating in the Education International project “Teachers mobilise for the rights of refugees”. The aim of this action is to formulate solutions that would result in better education conditions for foreign children and would increase their comfort while learning in school.

## INFORMATION, LOBBYING AND WORKSHOPS

A philosophy behind social dialogue was previously in this chapter designated as a process of building mutual trust and understanding, which might lead to the development of formal, semi-formal or informal institutional interactions, continuously being defined and refined in the ongoing process of its implementation in various socio-political, economic, cultural and historical contexts. Following this and the ILO definition, it is not surprising that many of member organisations who participated in the study, refer to activities conducive to cultivating relations and acting through interactions with social partners. A particularly important element is timely dissemination of correct information on newly arrived students, their predicaments, strengths and educational needs, broadly to the public, and more targeted to certain stakeholders such as schools, policy-makers, parent organisations etc. Social dialogue helps to build mutual understanding; therefore, it is also about opportunity for social partners to exchange information and learn from each other, based on their particular perspectives. In the long run this can contribute to more meticulously designed policy solutions for the effective promotion of integration through and in education.

Some of the examples provided by the social partners are as follows: The Dutch trade union AOb reports briefly that they are involved in information dissemination and in organising workshops for members who work with migrants/refugees. The Slovenian trade union ESTUS reports organising two conferences in early 2016. VBE from Germany has organised “consultations, communications and round tables”. Estonian UNIVERSITAS has also organised round tables in January 2018. The Danish Teachers Union arranged a public hearing on the teaching of refugee children in the parliament in April 2016. The association also organised a theme day in cooperation with the union of school leaders on bilingual pupils in elementary school in January 2018 for schools, both teachers and school leaders. The Union of Education Norway prepared press statements and lobbied in the parliament on the right to education for all. Italian UIL-SCUOLA reports organising conferences to discuss challenges and best practices. Belgian unions are actively involved in the VLOR<sup>7</sup> commission on diversity.

## DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL POLICY ACTIONS FOR NEWCOMERS

In the literature review, presented earlier in this report, some of the policy models, instructional and relational approaches were accounted for and discussed. The conclusion was that promising policy models are constructed on the ideas of inclusion, support, first language use and promotion, professional development of teachers and school leaders and positive relations with parents, to mention just some of the most reiterated aspects. A number of respondents shared some of their policy initiatives and models. As evident, some of them are in conjunction with international research and some are quite different, most notably concerning separate educational models. Nevertheless, the example from the UK below sheds a light on an interesting and comprehensive initiative.

The teachers’ union NASUWT from the UK has developed a “Refugee welcome schools”<sup>8</sup> project which works with community organisations and education employers to accredit schools that are going above and beyond to welcome refugee and migrant children into the education system. Schools applying for the accreditation develop:

1. A Refugee Welcome Plan detailing how they intend to create a welcoming environment for refugees, to make sure those seeking sanctuary in a school, and its wider community, experience a warm and generous welcome. This encourages the school to think about the systems and processes they will put in place to make refugee pupils and their families welcome in the community. For example:
  - a) A buddy system for all newly-arrived refugee pupils.
  - b) Considering parents of refugees for Teaching Assistant or other staff roles.
  - c) Hosting a welcome celebration and engaging the wider community.

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<sup>7</sup> VLOR stands for de Vlaamse Onderwijsraad, The Flemish Education Council. It is the official advisory body on the education and training policy of the Flemish Community.

<sup>8</sup> Presentation of the project is based on information provided by the representatives of NASUWT, partly through answering question 3 in the Survey, and partly through reporting a case-study to ETUCE-EFEE first Training seminar in Copenhagen, March 14-15, 2019.

2. A Refugee Awareness Plan on how they will educate all pupils, staff and the wider school community on the issue of refugees and the importance of welcome. This invites the school to think about how they can make sure all pupils and staff are educated about the importance of welcoming refugees over the course of a year. For example:
  - a) Using Refugee Week as an opportunity to theme assemblies for every pupil.
  - b) Assign a class to make posters about welcoming refugees for display in the school.
  - c) Identify parts of the curriculum within which pupils could learn about refugee protection.
  - d) Engage with staff to encourage participation among teachers and support staff.
3. A Refugee Action Plan to participate in community campaigns aiming to improve the lives of refugees in the UK. This challenges the school to think about how it can participate in community campaigns to improve the lives of refugees and those seeking sanctuary. For example:
  - a) Run a 'listening campaign' to identify problems for refugees in your area.
  - b) Campaign for refugees with teaching backgrounds/aspirations to be supported to develop their career.
  - c) Join a local Citizens alliance, and support efforts to resettle more Syrian refugees, such as through Community Sponsorship.

Among some other examples the respondents shared is proposals by the Teachers' Union of Ireland to government for increased, targeted resourcing to enable schools to address the needs of migrants and refugees. Additionally, the union was involved in advocacy on behalf of individual migrants or refugees in Further or Higher Education to help them to remain in the education system.

The Greek Federation of Secondary Education Public School Teachers submitted proposals to the Ministry of Education regarding efficient methods of integration of migrant and refugee children in education units; local unions submitted proposals to local administration (local councils, mayor) regarding the problem of providing proper accommodation to migrants and refugees as well as ways of integrating them into schools. The Trade Union of Education and Science Workers of Kyrgyzstan reports that on the initiative of the trade union, on the basis of the Trade Union Agreement and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Ministry of Education and Science approved the Provision on additional (non-formal) education and introduced general educational organisations of the country, which contributed to the reintegration of children with knowledge gaps (including migrants) in formal education.



## OTHER POLICY AREAS FOR NEWCOMERS

There is a group of organisations that report on other policy areas than education, of concern to migrant and refugees. These examples show a broad variety of initiatives the trade unions and the employer organisations are involved in.

Thus, the Ministry of Education in Montenegro brings up the efforts to build capacities for unaccompanied minors. The Greek Federation of Secondary Education Public School Teachers refers to local unions having several times assisted groups of migrants and refugees, particularly on the islands financially as well as with food and medical supplies. The Cyprus Turkish Secondary Education Teachers Union offers support in cooperation with the Refugees Right Association in after-school activities. The Malta Union of Teachers works with Integration Hubs (language courses for adults). FUURT from Finland reports that the union has been active in promoting union activism among early career researchers that come from third countries, although not primarily refugees. The Trade Union Federation of Education and Science of Albania (FSASH) refers to a rather limited number of refugees in the country, but there is a dialogue with the Ministry of Education.

## NOT A PROMINENT POLICY QUESTION

Finally, member organisations from a number of countries, i.e. Albania, Estonia, Slovakia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Romania, Serbia (higher education), reported that integration of migrants and refugees in education is not a prominent policy question for their particular organisations, mostly due to a generally small number of migrants in the country or due to a small number of migrants forming a target group for a particular organisation (i.e. migrants in higher education or migrant teachers). Although the range of specific characteristics might differ when dealing with accommodating internally displaced persons, minority groups' integration or even returns of previously emigrated people, challenges of inclusion and integration remain.

## 3.4 FORMS AND LEVELS OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Question 4 in the survey asked: Which form of social dialogue pertinent to integration of migrants and refugees is most frequent in your country? The total number of organisations who valued negotiations, consultations and communication from 1 to 5, as well as their median value, is presented in table 4 below.

**Table 4. Social dialogue forms pertinent to the inclusion of migrants and refugees in education (n=36)**

Value*	1	2	3	4	5	No action	Median value
<b>Negotiations</b>	4	5	9	6	4	8	<b>3</b>
<b>Consultations</b>	2	5	5	13	10	1	<b>4</b>
<b>Communication</b>	1	2	5	15	11	2	<b>4</b>

\*1 is least likely and 5 is most likely

As evident from the table, the largest number of organisations (15) graded communication and 13 graded consultations with the value 4, which represents high likelihood. 10 organisations graded consultations and 11 communication with the highest value, 5. The median value shows that communication and consultations are more likely to be deployed (median value 4), while direct negotiations between education trade unions and employer organisations is the least likely used form of social dialogue (median value 3). It should be also added that the largest number of answers indicating no actions are taking place are to be found in relation to negotiations. Only one organisation reported no consultations and two no communication is taking place.

Question 5 in the survey asked: At which system level is social dialogue, pertinent to integration of migrants and refugees, most likely to take place in your country? The total number of organisations who valued national, regional, local and institutional level from 1 to 5, as well as their median value, is presented in table 5 below.

**Table 5. The level of actions undertaken through social dialogue (n=36)**

Value*	1	2	3	4	5	No action	Median value
<b>National</b>	5	4	6	10	7	4	<b>4</b>
<b>Regional</b>	3	7	6	7	6	7	<b>3</b>
<b>Local</b>	2	6	10	8	7	3	<b>3</b>
<b>Institutional</b>	2	7	8	4	13	2	<b>4</b>

\*1 is least likely and 5 is most likely

Social dialogue appears to most likely take place at national and institutional level. Thus, 13 organisations graded institutional level (i.e. within a school) of social dialogue with the highest likelihood (value 5). The local level is slightly behind, while the regional seems to be least likely.

## 3.5 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the survey was to collect basic information about the scope, forms and levels of activities, and in particular through social dialogue, education trade unions and employer organisations are undertaking to promote effective integration of migrants and refugees in education.

Based on this survey, it could be concluded that the majority of the respondents indeed are engaged in integration matters, although not necessarily through social dialogue. Social dialogue is most likely to occur through communication and consultations and at national and institutional level. It is less likely to take place in East-Central EU countries and non-EU countries than in North-West EU countries. In Southern EU countries, there appears to be a more equal distribution of the kind of actions, if any, and of the method used to formulate and to undertake it.

Additionally, the overview has also presented an insight into the content of various activities. Supporting migrant teachers, initiating professional development for school staff, dissemination of information, lobbying, organising conferences and workshops, are some of the most prominent. It is unequivocally evident that education trade unions and employer organisations are actively engaged, in different forms, levels and scope, in integration matters. This is perhaps the most important conclusion emanating from this chapter, since it is the first time this question is being assessed with the support of firm empirical evidence.

In the upcoming empirical chapters several aspects of coproduction of policy for effective integration of migrants and refugees in education, between social partners and in conjunction with other stakeholders will be illuminated.



# **4. SPAIN** – “ARE WE REALLY A COUNTRY OF IMMIGRATION?”

In this chapter the case study on Spain is presented and discussed. The fieldwork was conducted in the city of Madrid.

## 4.1 SPAIN AND MIGRATION

“*Spain’s migration policies are characterised by steady efforts aimed at stemming irregular migration flows, expanding processing and reception capacities for asylum-seekers, returning unauthorised migrants to their countries of origin, notably by building partnerships with origin and transit countries such as Morocco, as well as integrating refugees into the Spanish society. (Bocek 2018, p. 2)*

Spain, with a current population of about 47 million, has for many years been a country of emigration. Today, Spain has the fourth largest migrant population in Europe, after Germany, the UK and France, counting to more than 5,8 million (Janta and Harte 2016), or 12,7 percent of Spain’s population. Almost 40 percent are from Latin America, and 2 million are from other EU countries. Catalonia hosts the largest number of migrants in Spain, more than 1,2 million. 10,9 percent of all children of 19 years or younger are international migrants.<sup>9</sup> Children arriving from Latin America make up 47 percent of the total migrant child population, followed by arrivals from other European countries (25 percent), and those from Africa (24 percent). According to Huguet (2014), more than 20 percent (or around 150,000) of all migrant students in Spain attend schools in Catalonia.

Recently, Spain became one of the final destinations for refugees along the three so-called Mediterranean routes (UNHCR 2018a). The other two are Italy and Greece. According to UNHCR (2018a), 28,349 refugees arrived in Spain by land and sea in 2017, which is a considerable increase from the two previous years (14,404 in 2016 and 16,263 in 2015). In 2017, 77 percent of refugees were men, 9 percent women and 14 percent children. The largest countries of origin were Morocco (5,500), Algeria (5,100), Guinea (4,400), Côte d’Ivoire (3,800), Gambia (2,700) and Syria (2,200). Although the number has increased, it is relatively low as compared to Italy and Greece. Thus, only by sea Italy received 153,842 refugees in 2015, 181,436 in 2016 and 119,369 in 2017. Greece received by sea 856,723 refugees in 2015, 173,450 in 2016 and 29,718 in 2017. However, in 2018 and after a new Italian government announced a more strict migration policy, boats with refugees crossing the Mediterranean were increasingly directed to Spanish ports. In 2018, a total number of 63,755 migrants arrived in Spain, 57,250 by sea, compared with 23,206 by sea to Italy and 32,092 to Greece.<sup>10</sup>

According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM 2017, p. 1), between January and September 2017, 2,430 children arrived in Spain by sea and land, most commonly from Morocco (962), Syria (740) and Algeria (218). Due to an increase in arrivals to Spain in the

<sup>9</sup> [https://migrationdataportal.org/data?cm49=724&focus=profile&i=stock\\_abs\\_&t=2017](https://migrationdataportal.org/data?cm49=724&focus=profile&i=stock_abs_&t=2017)

<sup>10</sup> <http://migration.iom.int/europe?type=arrivals>



third quarter of 2017, the number of child arrivals also increased by 44 percent compared to the first half of 2017 (995). The largest proportion of children, along the Mediterranean route, came to Greece (37 percent). 13 percent of all refugee children in Greece were unaccompanied minors, while in Italy, where 15 percent of all refugees in 2017 were children, 91 percent were unaccompanied minors. The data for the proportion of unaccompanied minors and separated children in Spain is not available.

Increased diversity demands new policies and measures to cater for the welfare and educational needs of new arrivals. And these needs are changing as new groups are arriving under different circumstances and with different backgrounds. In the last decade, with increasing refugee immigration from the Middle East and Africa, but also some poorer EU-countries, the Spanish teachers and policy-makers are facing a new challenge: How to promote integration and inclusion of newly arrived migrant and refugee children in education, children without Spanish language, with interrupted schooling and traumatic experiences? How to make sure children are included in social and pedagogical practices of their schools? How to work together with parents and community organisations to improve learning conditions and health for these children? How to alter attitudes among the domestic population? And how to achieve all that under financial restraints in education, possible redundancy of teachers and clashes over limited resources? These are some of the questions we turn to in the next section.

## 4.2 EDUCATION OF MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN IN SPAIN

Drawing on meetings and discussions with stakeholders and after reviewing the case-relevant literature, the following themes could be identified as the most prevalent in the material: a) provision of education in a highly decentralised system; b) segregation and diversity; c) various initiatives to promote integration and inclusion of migrant and refugee students.

### 4.2.1 PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN A HIGHLY DECENTRALISED SYSTEM

Authority over provision of education in Spain is devolved to 17 regionally based Autonomous Communities (AC). Only the tiny enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, located on the tip of North Africa have their education system governed by the national Ministry of Education and Science. Despite decentralisation, some central powers remain in the hands of national government. For example, defining minimum common curricular contents, scholarship policies, degree recognition and standardisation, and coordination of AC education administrations.<sup>11</sup> Primary and secondary schools have limited autonomy (OECD 2018, p. 4).

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<sup>11</sup> <http://lawsdocbox.com/Immigration/86654844-Migrant-education-in-spain.html>

Spanish education was severely hit by the economic crises between 2010 and 2013, with austerity measures and budget cuts across the system. During meetings with stakeholders and social partners, virtually everybody was, in one way or another, referring to the effects of the crisis. However, OECD (2018) reports that public expenditure has been increasing since 2015.

“Currently, one in four Spanish school teachers has an interim contract, the highest rate since 2009. To reduce this, the government decided in 2016 to replace 100% of permanently employed retiring teachers (rather than only 50% as in the previous years) and opened recruitment competitions for permanent posts in the public sector in early 2018. In 2017, Spain allocated EUR 115 million to training and improving competences and mobility of teachers at all education levels. Other recent initiatives aim to address the challenge of providing teachers with digital skills. Teachers' unions consider that budget cuts during the crisis have deteriorated their working conditions (e.g. with an increase of teaching hours, fewer opportunities for professional development courses and tightened requirements for leave). (OECD 2018, p. 8)

With regard to migrant and refugee students, there are no nationally determined binding rules on how schools should proceed in organisational and pedagogical matters (Lopez-Cuesta 2018). These are left to the discretion of Autonomous Communities and their schools, school leaders and teachers to handle. However, there is a legislation on national level granting all children, irrespective of migration status, access to schools. According to Dorsi and Petit (2018, p. 48), “in Spain for instance, the constitution guarantees that every child, regardless of his or her immigration status, has the right to receive free and compulsory education. Under Law 2/2009, the right to education extends to all foreigners in Spain, legal and illegal migrants, displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers included. Therefore, all foreigners under 18 years old are not only entitled to education but obliged to it, which means access to a basic, free and obligatory education.”<sup>12</sup>

The Autonomous Communities have taken different stances regarding the education of newly arrived children. Some have detailed rules and regulations, and others do not.

“Each autonomous region's administration is responsible for enacting adequate regulations and policies to address these specific needs. In Catalonia for instance, Law 10/2010 on the welcoming of migrant and returned persons sets out an obligation by the regional and local authorities to take measures to facilitate the welcome process of migrant persons in several areas, including education (among the suggested measures are special classes, school support and Catalan language training). In Madrid, the regional authorities have put in place the Welcome Schools Programme (Programa Escuelas de Bienvenida) aimed at supporting and improving migrant children's access to education. In Andalusia, the Integral Plan for Migrants sets out the measures to be taken by the authorities to facilitate the reception and integration of migrant children into education programmes.

<sup>12</sup> Law 2/2009 available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/doc.php?id=BOE-A-2009-19949>

*Specific steps have also been taken to improve the knowledge of Spanish among migrant children (temporary language classes, language support programmes for migrants, virtual Spanish classes, Spanish classes for foreign persons). (Dorsi and Petit 2018, p. 53)*

According to UNESCO (2018, p. 48), "Spain has three main models. In temporary classrooms, students attend during part of the school day, the time decreasing as language skills progress. In language immersion classrooms, students stay for a great part if not the entire day before they can join a regular classroom, where they can receive additional support. Madrid's Aulas de Enlace ('Link classrooms') is an example of this model. The financial crisis decreased immigration rates and cut budgets, which led to a reduction in the number of these classes by 70% between 2006 and 2015 (Silió, 2015). Intercultural classrooms extend the focus beyond language, establishing links between families and schools (Rodríguez-Izquierdo and Darmody, 2017). While regions tend to follow one of the three models, there is considerable flexibility. In the autonomous community of Andalusia, in addition to temporary classrooms during school hours, there are language support programmes for immigrants during extra-curricular activities and a distance training programme (Junta de Andalucía, 2018)."

Castano, Gomez and Bouchra (2015) found in their literature review just a few research contributions pertinent to the organisation of education for newly arrived students. Most of the research criticises those special classes, among which two programmes stand out: Workshops for educational adaptation and learning basic skills (TAE) in Catalonia, and Temporary classes of linguistic adaptation (ATAL) in Andalusia, now used throughout Spain (p. 39).

Some of the AC are officially bilingual, with the consequence, according to Rodríguez-Izquierdo and Darmody (2017), that they grant different degrees of autonomy to schools in developing measures of linguistic support. Researchers go on saying that in the bilingual AC, Balearic Islands, Catalonia, Galicia, the Basque Country and Valencia, "the legislative language policy development in such Communities tends to be more advanced compared to monolingual Communities" (p. 19). Official bilingualism implies newly arrived students have to acquire two new languages.

Furthermore, Rodríguez-Izquierdo and Darmody (2017) argue that "although in Spain, the measures taken to support migrant student vary significantly between Communities, what can be affirmed is that one of the measures taken to support migrant students is the provision of 'specific linguistic classrooms'. These classrooms have received different denominations in the different Autonomous Communities in the Spanish State. The diversity of designations is an indicator of the heterogeneity of the regulatory framework in which they are framed (Orders, Royal Decrees, Plans, etc.) (Fernández & García, 2015). The main aim across these classrooms is to ensure that newly arrived migrant students acquire the language(s) of instruction to move as quickly as possible into mainstream classes" (p. 11).

Thus, as indicated in the research, newly arrived students, across Autonomous Communities, tend to be placed in separate classes, and sometimes even initially in separate institutions, with intensive instruction in Spanish language. As soon as the level of proficiency is deemed sufficient the students are transferred into ordinary classes. Some students can share their time between ordinary and intensive language-learning classes. Obviously, decentralisation and different perceptions of the most suitable organisational models reach down all the way

to classrooms. No tuition in heritage language is provided in schools (Rodríguez-Izquierdo and Darmody 2017).

During the meetings with social partners and other stakeholders, the issue of decentralisation and education of migrant and refugee students was recurrently referred to. Two perspectives dominated. Firstly, the absence of a clear and compulsory national policy prompted schools to invent their own models, often based on past experiences or a few staff members' ideas about "what works", rather than on research and evaluations. Partly, the absence of national policy degraded the importance and obscured the need of urgently addressing educational conditions for migrant and refugee students. As one of the participants in the dialogue expressed it: "No central policy, no priority". Another participant from an education trade union argued that programmes for promoting diversity have seen their budgets cut by up to 50 percent, and that "there is no policy, no programmes to get migrants integrated into education and society". Yet another participant, from an NGO, criticised the passivity of the national government. One representative of an education trade union pointed to several recommendations from the EU aiming at improving education for these students, but they are not implemented. The representative even pointed out the precarious situation of unaccompanied minors. Access to education is often delayed and many run the risk of being denied asylum and deported.

Secondly, the situation in Ceuta and Melilla, and especially for unaccompanied minors is particularly worrisome. Apart from being surrounded by Morocco, and receiving a number of unaccompanied minors from that country, both enclaves have been seen by migrants and migrant smugglers as entry points into Europe (Lopez-Cuesta 2018). It is a gloomy picture of the situation for migrant and refugee children in the enclaves which some of the participants in the meetings presented. In Melilla, according to a representative of a locally active education trade union, around 200 migrant and refugee children are not enrolled in schools at all. Furthermore, many do not seek shelter in the government run asylum centres, but rather live in the streets, and under the risk of being exploited and occasionally getting involved in criminality. According to Bocek (2018, p. 3), "the accommodation provided to unaccompanied children in the autonomous cities raises particular concerns due to heavily overcrowded facilities. In an effort to counter the irregular migration pull factor, these children are not permitted to go to mainland Spain until they turn 18 years old, which is when they are handed their residence permits and can continue their lives autonomously in the country."

The local population, according to a representative of a locally active education trade union, is becoming increasingly hostile towards asylum-seekers. A representative from the national government confirmed the depiction and presented some projects the ministry is running to support local authorities and schools. Extra resources to NGOs and education trade unions to implement various programmes for newly arrived migrant and refugee students is one of them.

#### 4.2.2 SEGREGATION AND DIVERSITY



*As Gibson and Carrasco posit (2009) despite official efforts to welcome immigrant youth, the Spanish education system operates, paradoxically, in ways that are unwelcoming, relegating immigrant youth to the margins of school life. (Rodríguez-Izquierdo and Darmody 2017, p. 19)*

According to the OECD (2018, p. 18), “there are three types of schools in Spain: public schools, subsidised private schools and non-subsidised private schools. In 2015-16, 74.3% of schools from ECEC to secondary education were public and 21.8% were private-subsidised, leaving just 3.8% private unsubsidised. Subsidised schools must meet more extensive MECD conditions than other private schools. The share of general education students in public schools that same year was 51.4% in first-cycle ECEC, 67.6% in second cycle ECEC, 67.7% in primary education, 65.6% in compulsory secondary education, and 73.4% in conventional upper secondary. In PISA 2015, 68.7% of 15-year-old students attended public schools, well below the OECD average of 82.4%.” During meetings with education trade unions and parent associations, many pointed out the widening gap between public and private-subsidised school, in terms of student composition, but also financial conditions and general treatment by the government. It was even argued that private-subsidised schools are favoured by the government and that resources are reallocated from public to private-subsidised schools.

The prevalence of segregation between public and private schools and especially pertinent to migrant students is a recurrent theme in Spanish research as well as in narratives of the interviewed social partners. Castano, Gomez and Bouchra (2015) found in their literature review several possible explanations for migrant students’ concentration in public schools, ranging from culturalist (“they want to stick together”), socioeconomic (lack of means to get enrolled in private schools) to “white-flight” explanations (Spanish families opting out of schools with increasing migrant student population, see Ahedo 2010).

Dorsi and Petit (2018) argue that “in Spain, migrants, displaced people and refugees face segregation in education due to the high concentration of migrant children in certain public schools” (p. 40). Segregation is also a key notion in the previously mentioned discussions about provision of education through separate classes. These classes are envisaged as offering the newly arrived a safe and integrated (that is all students are in more or less same situation) environment primarily focused on learning Spanish as a second language. The critics, as pointed out by Castano, Gomez and Bouchra (2015, p. 39) “demonstrate the risk of isolating new students, arguing that it aggravates the difficulty of establishing relationships between immigrant students and the indigenous students, and Jiménez (2004) states that language acquisition comes through interaction with peers.”



Bourgonje (2010) concluded in a report about, among other countries, Spain, that “the main problems as formulated by the interviewees included segregation practices, such as the EBE<sup>13</sup> project; the lack of proper attention to teaching in a multicultural setting during teacher training; and a lack of adequate curriculum for educators working with children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. A pressing issue that needs our immediate attention is the existence of so called ‘hidden’ children to education” (p. 64).

A representative from the Spanish alliance of parents’ associations found school segregation to be one of the largest challenges for migrant students, as well as for those born in Spain. He suggested that it could be difficult achieving inclusion and integration of migrant students if the segregation is not addressed properly. A representative from an education trade union corroborated this view and referred to housing segregation, areas where immigrants congregate, as a propelling force behind school segregation. Another issue raised is an urgent need for programmes aiming at preventing and fighting racism in the society.

During two-days of meetings in Spain, two additional reasons, with regard to the entire discussion on segregation, emerged. One is low expectations on behalf of migrant and refugee students in schools and what they might be capable of achieving, entailing a deficient discourse on migrant students. The other is the lack of diversity policy or, as a number of social partners put it, lack of an acknowledgement of diversity as a valuable foundation of the emerging multicultural Spain. How these two can work in combination is vividly shown in an article on cultural diversity management in Andalusian schools by Gomez-Hurtado, Gonzalez-Falcon and Coronel (2018). They argue as follows:

“ Although there are several factors explaining the cultural diversity of the schools analysed (ethnic diversity, religious diversity, internal migration, temporary pupils, etc.), the principals identify it mainly with foreign immigrant pupils. These pupils, in the principals’ opinion, present problems in their schooling process (poor knowledge of the host language, under-performance or lack of background documentation (pupils’ previous school records)). The immigrant body is thus defined as a group that entails problems. In one of the schools, they were even compared with special education pupils “Whether you say immigrants or special education kids to me, we’re talking about the same thing”. The discourse of all the principals revealed a negative concept of cultural diversity. (p. 448)

From education trade unions, it was even learned that the new budget proposal does not contain the word foreigner, anticipating there will be no extra budgetary resources to foreigner-related issues, whatever they might be. This is, according to partners from the NGOs and the unions, to appease right-leaning public opinion. It is a hint how some of the main stakeholders and social partners perceive integration policy in Spain. To put it simply, as non-existing.

13 According to Bourgonje (2010, p. 62) EBE (Espacios de Bienvenida Educativa) stands for Welcome Educational Centers in the small cities Reus and Vic in Catalonia. These are educational centres migrant children attend before they can enroll in the Aulas de Acogida (preparatory classes). EBE are generally located far away from regular public schools, where there is a high concentration of migrant children. Within these centres, pupils are taught Catalan and some basic knowledge about the place they are living in.

Representatives from the national Ministry of education had a divergent view and juxtaposed some actions undertaken to support students from minority communities. And this is interesting, since the government representative did not single out migrant and refugee students specifically. They were instead bunched together with Roma and LGBTQ students into a single targeted group: vulnerable students. Even if these students share some of the difficulties with discrimination and exclusion, their educational needs are in most cases completely different. Some of the actions the government representative mentioned were: Coexistence national observatory, following the situation for and coexistence of minority groups in schools; a hot-line offering advice to students who might have been exposed to unfair treatment due to their background; an annual report is published with the most common complaints; professional development of teachers in the area of radicalisation and hate-speech; projects about preventing bullying and promoting tolerance; cooperation with NGOs and community organisations.

Lack of genuine diversity policy and, as it appears, weak support for diversity may be partially explained by Spain's experiences of migration. The dominant narrative, in research literature and among social partners, is that immigration is a new phenomenon. Public and civil institutions and organisations seem to be well adjusted and used to an idea that "we are a country of emigration". Being a country of immigration requires assuming new responsibilities, and changes in policy and mindset. And this could be difficult, if not actively promoted and supported by state institutions and civic organisations alike.

#### 4.2.3 INTEGRATION PROMOTING INITIATIVES

Nevertheless, for all that has been said above, claiming that no projects aiming at promoting integration of newly arrived migrant and refugee students in education exist, would be an erroneous conclusion.<sup>14</sup> The point is rather that sustainable, structure-changing and future-oriented policy arrangements are largely absent. During meetings with social partners two initiatives, both supported by education trade unions, were presented: *Aula Intercultural* and *Somos mas*.

*Aula Intercultural* (the Intercultural classroom) started in 2002 with the goal of supporting schools enrolling migrant students. The project is based on three interrelated pillars: a) using research as a starting point for devising lines of b) action and c) implementation through participation of stakeholders. The main objective is to support students and teachers in creating inclusive schools, free of discrimination, bullying and exclusion. Seminars on racism, conflict resolution, emotional training, producing didactic material to be used in schools are some of the methods. Particularly noteworthy is a campaign *Education without exclusion* launched in 2014 targeting primary and secondary schools. The project has, according to its representative, worked with 6,500 students enrolled in 60 schools all over Spain.

*Somos mas* (We are more), was established in cooperation with Google and the Ministry of Education. This project's primary objective is to work against prejudices, racism and in partic-

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<sup>14</sup> See Lopez-Cuesta (2018) for an account of civil society and trade unions responses towards integration of migrant and refugees in education.

ular hate-speech. Interestingly, the project's representative underscored that none of the children they work with feel their schools properly address these issues in practice, only in general commitments. The outcomes of the project are videos, 120 seconds long, made by young people about their opinion on hate speech. 23,500 students have been involved, and the produced material has been frequently downloaded.

## 4.3 CONCLUSIONS

Spain is a relatively new country of immigration. Or at least that is a dominating discourse in research literature and among stakeholders and social partners. A number of the current system's weaknesses pertinent to integration of migrants and refugees in the society is attributed to this circumstance. A lasting impression is that many stakeholders are sort of stuck in this self-perception. But it is changing, because of a compelling reality in the form of millions of migrants arriving in the last 30 years and because of growing evidence that the education for newly arrived migrant and refugee students is not equal.

Another dominating discourse, of course emanating from factual circumstances but pervading perspectives of social partners to such a high degree that it could be considered as a compelling framework for thinking, is about decentralisation of the education system into 17 Autonomous Communities. Linked to decentralisation is heterogeneity of approaches to integration and inclusion of the newly arrived, offered in the ACs. Nevertheless, some common grounds could be identified. Segregation between public and private-subsidised schools along socioeconomic lines and an emerging pattern of ethnic segregation. Another form of school segregation is the concentration of migrant students in certain schools, due to housing segregation, thereby prompting "white-flight", further exacerbating school segregation. Newly arrived migrant and refugee students are part of these general population distribution movements. Additionally, they are running a risk of facing another segregation or rather exclusion challenge depending on how an AC decides to organise reception, in entire community, in some places or just some schools. Evidently, the majority of ACs use some kind of separate class-model, while some even, although initially, may use a separate school model. Thus, newly arrived students can be forced to deal with triple segregation.

Migrant and refugee children have a legal right to enrol in schools in Spain. But the country has no general pedagogical strategy for how schools should proceed once they receive a new child from another country, without proficiency in Spanish. There is no strategy on how to manage the increasing diversity in classrooms and local communities. As evident from research presented in the chapter, teachers need more professional development, but so also do school leaders. As Gomez-Hurtado, Gonzalez-Falcon and Coronel (2018, p. 454) put it: "School heads, ultimately, must acknowledge and assume their role as leaders sensitive to diversity. They are responsible for ensuring not only the schooling of immigrant pupils but also, and especially, the process of their social and academic integration from intercultural standpoints. The challenge of implementing an educational leadership committed to cultural diversity in their schools falls to them".

A third strong discourse, identified in literature and through dialogues with social partners and other stakeholders is about the situation in Ceuta and Melilla, two tiny Spanish enclaves on the African continent, accommodating proportionally pretty large numbers of immigrants from Morocco and the Sub-Saharan region. Especially challenging is the situation for unaccompanied minors. Many of them do not stay in official shelters, but rather live on the streets, a considerable number do not attend school. The Ceuta and Melilla education systems are the only ones directly governed by the Ministry of Education in Madrid. Furthermore, the unaccompanied minors are prevented from leaving for the mainland, until they turn 18, something that has been criticised by the European Council (Bocek 2018). Nevertheless, many are trying to illegally embark on vessels towards the mainland, jeopardising their health and life.





**5. SERBIA** – “WE ARE  
A TRANSIT COUNTRY,  
AREN'T WE?”



In this chapter a case study on Serbia is presented and discussed. This case is quite different from Spain and Belgium. Serbia is an EU-candidate country, with a poor economy, dealing with a considerable number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo and refugees from Croatia and Bosnia. Additionally, Serbia has been at the centre of the so called Western Balkan migrant route in 2015 and 2016 (Cekerevac, Perisic and Tanasijevic 2018) when, according to some estimates, more than a million refugees passed through the country on the way to Hungary and further to West and North Europe. But after Hungary closed the border in 2016 a number of refugees unwillingly remained in Serbia.

## 5.1 SERBIA AND MIGRATION



*On top of this, the system for the integration of migrants into society is underdeveloped, if it exists at all. This is probably partly due to the recognition of Serbia's transit position. Consequently, there are no structured and individualised plans regarding employment and integration for migrants. (Cekerevac, Perisic and Tanasijevic 2018, p. 117)*

Serbia is a country of around 7 million inhabitants situated on the Balkan peninsula. The population has decreased by 700,000 compared to 1994.<sup>15</sup> Serbia has experiences of both labour emigration, especially during the 1960s and 1970s to West European countries (Cekerevac, Perisic and Tanasijevic 2018), and refugee emigration, including minority populations of Roma, Muslims and Kosovo Albanians during the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. Throughout the period of 1991-2002, the country also turned into a major destination for refugees, although mainly ethnic Serbs from Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. Even if Serbia had recognised Bosnia and Croatia as independent countries, the treatment of refugees did not really follow the standard procedure according to the Geneva convention and its Protocol from 1967. These refugees were almost treated as internally displaced persons (IDPs) with from the outset granted citizenship and full social and political rights. Nevertheless, the sheer number posed a considerable challenge to the country's institutions and economy. And the country has a relatively underdeveloped economy and weak administrative structures. In 1991, the first year of armed conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Serbia hosted 45,823 refugees, mainly from Croatia. In 1996, after the peace agreement in Bosnia and Croatia, the country hosted 103,967 refugees. The peak was reached in 2002 with 327,587 refugees. The figures have been in steady decline since then, reaching 36,898 refugees in 2016. Partly, they have migrated elsewhere and partly they were integrated into Serbian society and no longer accounted for as refugees.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, there are around 200,000 refugees from Kosovo, also mainly ethnic Serbs, currently residing in Serbia, exclusively treated as IDPs. The reason is that Serbia does not recognise Kosovo's independence. In all official documents Kosovo is mentioned as an

<sup>15</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=RS>.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

autonomous province within Serbia. Human Rights Watch has criticised the Serbian authorities for making “little progress towards finding a durable solution for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the Balkan wars living in Serbia. According to data from UNHCR, as of July [2014] there were 44,251 refugees in Serbia, most from Croatia, and as of September 204,049 IDPs, a majority of whom are from Kosovo” (HRW 2015).<sup>17</sup>

With the war in Syria escalating from 2012, continuous conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and persistent poverty in many African countries, Serbia found itself in the middle of the so called Western Balkan route for refugees who fled via Turkey, over the Mediterranean to Greece. A further journey (by train, cars, or on foot) took the refugees to North Macedonia, crossing the border into Serbia and then into Hungary. Neither Greece, North Macedonia, Serbia nor Hungary were final destinations for the overwhelming majority of refugees (Bocek 2017). They wanted to reach Western and North Europe: mainly Austria, Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands, France, and the UK. Up to early 2016, when the Hungarian parliament adopted a new legislation on “Migration in the time of crises”, thereby effectively closing the Western Balkan route, Serbia was exclusively a transit country. Thus, more than 900,000 refugees travelled through the country in this period. Independent reports (Bocek 2017) witnessed a mobilisation of institutions, the NGOs and ordinary citizens to assist the refugees on their continuing journey. Food, water, and medical supplies were provided along the roads and in temporary shelters.

At the beginning of 2016 two international events redefined the nature of migration flows in Serbia. The first one was the agreement between Turkey and the EU on essentially paying Turkey to prevent Syrian refugees from embarking on the hazardous journey across the Mediterranean. The second event was when Hungary decided to impose harsh border controls and to build a fence along its border with Serbia, leaving just two entry points (in Tompa and Röszke) and admitting 10 refugees per day. The refugees remaining in Serbia turned to alternative routes and strategies, trying to illegally enter into Hungary, Croatia, to a certain extent Bulgaria and lately even into Bosnia. Many were caught and sent back to Serbia. Those who remained in Serbia (more than 7,000 among whom 1,000 unaccompanied minors, see Bocek 2017) had three options.<sup>18</sup> One option was to wait to legally enter Hungary, via lists that refugees themselves put together and submitted to Serbian authorities, who passed them on to the Hungarian border authority. As aforementioned, very few are admitted to Hungary<sup>19</sup> and many are also sent back via a revolving door installed at the border crossings in Tompa and Röszke. Another option is to apply for asylum in Serbia. The third option is to try again and again to illegally cross the border into neighbouring countries and continue to Western and North Europe.

In Serbian migration legislation there is a major difference between expressing intention to and actually applying for asylum. When a refugee is detected on the border or inside the

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/serbia/kosovo> In the context of this report it is important to underline that the presented legislation and practices regarding migrants and refugees in Serbia and Serbian schools do not allude to IDPs and ethnic Serbs who fled from Croatia and Bosnia.

<sup>18</sup> However, in a document prepared by Ministry of education, science and technological development of the Serbian government (MPNTR, p. 5), in June 2018, it is stated that after the Balkan route was closed almost 4,000 refugees remained in Serbia. 40 percent of them were children.

<sup>19</sup> During the field visit to a refugee camp close to the Hungarian border in September 2018, it was learned that Hungarian authorities currently admit only one refugee per day.

country, he or she is offered a possibility to express an intention to apply for asylum. When accepted the person is issued a registration card, proving they are not illegally in the country, and granted access to a reception centre. Formally, a refugee is obliged to show up in one of the reception centres within 72 hours, where he/she once again formally is given the opportunity to meet a task-officer in order to apply for asylum. However, very few refugees actually do it and even those who applied sought a way to leave the country. Hence, according to UNHCR (2018b, p. 4) "in total, some 583 applied for asylum and 89 interviews were conducted by the asylum adjudicating body (Asylum Office) in 2015. In 2016, 574 persons applied for asylum and 160 interviews were conducted. In the period between 2015 and 2016 cumulatively, 35 persons were granted refugee status and another 37 subsidiary protection, while 43 persons received negative decisions. From January to March 2016, the Serbian authorities registered 96,117 new arrivals out of which only 262 individuals applied for asylum."

The number of migrant and refugee children present in Serbia in February 2017 was 3,031, as stated in a document prepared by the Serbian Ministry of education, science and technological development (Vukovic 2017). According to Bocek (2017)<sup>20</sup> the total number of refugee children in Serbia in July 2017 is estimated to be around 4,000. Around 1,000 are unaccompanied minors.

## 5.2 EDUCATION OF MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN IN SERBIA

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that all children, regardless of their migration status, are eligible for free education at primary level. The countries should also make efforts to offer education, free of charge, at secondary level. The Serbian educational legislation through the Act on the Basis of the Education System, the Primary and the Secondary School Act (BCHR 2016) and through the Asylum Act, complies with these requirements. All children have legal right to education in Serbia. For many years, a rather smaller portion of migrant and refugee students were actually enrolled in schools.

The statistical figures vary from a few in 2013 and around 30 in 2015 (MPNTR 2018) to 200 in 2017 (Bocek 2017) and 523 migrant and refugee children attending 45 regular schools in Serbia and 83 in asylum centres in the academic year 2017/18 (Sokolovic 2017).<sup>21</sup> The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MPNTR) presented in June 2018 statistical figures of the number of refugee children enrolled in Serbian schools. The number varied between 391 in September 2017 and 574 in May 2018. Additionally, a smaller number (especially from April 2018) is supported by schools in asylum centres.

<sup>20</sup> Report to Council of Europe, of the fact-finding mission by Ambassador Tomáš Boček, Special Representative of the Secretary General on migration and refugees to Serbia and two transit zones in Hungary 12-16 June 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Here is an example of large differences in statistical figures. Bocek (2017) has received oral information from Serbian officials during the visit. The source for Cekerevac, Perisic and Tanasijevis (2018) figures is not disclosed. Sokolovic (2017), referring to oral information from the Ministry of education, science and technological development, presents figures for another academic year than the two previous ones. Difference between the previous academic year and 2017/18 could be that the Ministry decided to enroll all unaccompanied minors living in reception and asylum centres in schools.

Table 6. The number of refugee children enrolled in Serbian schools, September 2017 to May 2018

Month	Number of schools with refugee children enrolled	Number of children	Number of schools supporting education of refugee children in asylum centres	Number of children being supported by schools in asylum centres
<b>September 2017</b>	41	574		
<b>October 2017</b>	45	429		
<b>November 2017</b>	47	503		
<b>December 2017</b>	43	454	12	59
<b>January 2018</b>	42	452	12	53
<b>February 2018</b>	44	452	12	57
<b>March 2018</b>	38	391	12	47
<b>April 2018</b>	45	433	4	9
<b>May 2018</b>	43	427	4	9

Source: Ministry of education, science and technological development, Government of Serbi

According to information from the Serbian Commissariat for refugees and migration in August 2018,<sup>22</sup> 3,360 asylum-seekers (mostly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Syria) resided in Serbia. 344 asylum-seeking children are included in 33 schools and 33 are included in preschool education.

The reasons for the low enrolment during the period of 2015-2017, according to Bocek (2017) are of both a structural, practical and personal nature:

“ The low rate of children's enrolment in local schools is due primarily to lack of knowledge of the Serbian language. Moreover, parents are generally reluctant to send their children to school in Serbia as they think that this might reduce their chances of transfer to other European countries. There are also a number of other issues which limit children's enrolment in local schools, such as lack of information about their vaccination status as well as practical difficulties in making arrangements for children to receive their meals outside the asylum or reception centres where they stay. It should be underlined that these practical difficulties could be easily overcome; the right to education should not be denied on the basis of such considerations. (p. 7)

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.kirs.gov.rs>

In a report titled *Country report: Serbia*, produced by the Belgrade centre for human rights (BCHR, 2016), it is argued that:

“ Schools are obliged to organise language, preparatory and additional classes for foreign pupils, including stateless persons and refugees, who do not speak the language used in the schools or are in need of specific instructions in order to continue their education. In addition, the Asylum Act foresees that ‘an asylum seeker and a person who has been granted asylum shall have the right to free primary and secondary education’. In practice, asylum seekers and persons granted asylum are expected to enrol in primary and secondary schools on their own, with no real support from national asylum or educational institutions. This is particularly difficult given the fact that the majority of persons seeking asylum in Serbia do not speak Serbian or have any knowledge of the manner in which the national educational system functions. (p. 33)

Another issue pointed out in this and other reports is the absence of Serbian language courses. Even UNHCR (2018b) identifies the gap between legislation and the real access to education stating that:

“ The Committee notes that asylum seekers and persons granted asylum can access primary and secondary education free of charge; however, it is concerned that asylum seeking children accommodated in the asylum centres in the State party are not being enrolled in local schools (arts. 13 and 14). The Committee recommends that the State party enable access to primary education and facilitate access to secondary education, in line with the Law on Asylum, to all child asylum seekers pending consideration of their refugee claim. (p. 14)

Some major challenges facing migrant and refugee children in Serbian schools are listed in a document “ Education of asylum-seeking children in Serbia” – February 21 prepared by Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MPNTR 2017a, p. 1):

- Migrant and refugee children often do not have any documentations about their previous education.
- It is not possible to determine, solely based on their age, in which class the children should be enrolled. The recommendation is to place children in an age-appropriate group.
- Newly arrived children have been absent from formal schooling in their native countries for a long time.
- There are children who had never attended formal schooling, in their countries of origin or in transit countries.



- However, the majority attended some kind of schooling in transit countries, although often interrupted due to constant moving.

As a response to growing challenges and acknowledgment of the shortcomings in education of migrant children, the government has lately initiated a number of reforms. A pivotal document is "Instruction for inclusion of migrant/asylum seeking children in the educational system" (MPNTR 2017b) issued by the Serbian minister of education, science and technological development in May 2017 and disseminated to all schools in the country. This document has been clarified and supplemented in June 2018 in "Education of migrant students in Serbia" (MPNTR 2018).<sup>23</sup> One of the most important features of this instruction is that it prescribes five steps essential to follow for all schools that receive migrant and refugee students.

Step 1: A parent, legal guardian or the social services applies for school enrolment for a migrant child. A school must respond within five days whether it can accommodate the student. If a school for some reason is unable to provide a place it must clarify why and accordingly notify the local educational authority. Children who can verify their previous schooling are enrolled in an age appropriate group. Those without documents are supposed to get their previous school-related knowledge evaluated. However, it is unclear what this means in practice.

Step 2: Every school is required to set up a team for inclusive education. Its task is to provide a plan of support aiming at inclusion of a migrant child in school. The plan is supposed to contain activities in order to prepare teachers, parents and students in school for the arrival of a migrant child.

Step 3: A school has to set up another team for assessing the educational background of newly arrived children. Beside subject matter teachers, other professionals could be included in the team: interpreter, foreign language teacher, staff from social services, a parent etc. The task has to be accomplished within a week.

Step 4: A plan for supporting the children is adopted containing: a programme of adjustment and overcoming the stress; a programme of intensive learning Serbian as a second language through participation in instruction in ordinary classes and through extra-curricular activities; an individual approach from the point of view of every child's needs with regard to what activities should be available; inclusion in out-of-school activities through peer support.

Step 5: Compiling a portfolio for every child where his or her progress, attended activities, provided forms of support, challenges and strengths will be documented. If a student drops out of school or decides to move somewhere else, an extract of the portfolio is issued in Serbian and the English language.

Additionally, a detailed manual (150 pages) with many useful practical examples was produced in December 2017 to help schools implement these five steps in practice.

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<sup>23</sup> Among other initiatives, a working group for providing support in education of migrants in the educational system has been formed in the Ministry of education, science and technological development.

The government has also undertaken some steps to organise and carry out professional development for teachers and school leaders. Hence, in August 2017, 350 members of the aforementioned school teams participated in a two-days course and 320 teachers undertook professional development in Serbian as a second language. Additionally, the government has recognised the absence of material and instruction for learning Serbian as a second language and subsequently taken some measures to produce modules for intensive language learning (Vukovic 2017). This project is conducted by the faculty of Language at Belgrade University in cooperation with the Danish government. In March 2018, the Ministry issued a manual for teachers on how to provide efficient instructions in Serbian as a second language.

Together with UNICEF the government has disseminated smaller grants to 45 schools with migrant students in order to scaffold their work. School material and school bags have been purchased and handed out to migrant children, but also to Serbian children from economically disadvantaged families. Certain resources have been donated from different foundations to promote life conditions for unaccompanied minors, educational quality, engage mentors and advisers.

In the next section some main findings from the field visit, interviews and observations will be accounted for.

## 5.3 EXPERIENCES FROM FIELDWORK

In accordance with major aspects of successful integration and inclusion of migrant and refugee students in education, identified in previous research, this section is divided into three parts, each addressing the experiences of various stakeholders with regard to: organisation, internal work, and relations with migrant parents and community stakeholders.

### 5.3.1 ORGANISATION

The Serbian experience is very interesting since it showcases how a country faced with a new group of migrants and refugees, swiftly can adapt to new realities. Self-perception of governmental authorities that Serbia is either no country for refugees (except for ethnic Serbs from Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo) or a transit country for international migrants, permeated initial educational responses. No refugee children attended regular schools, many did not have access at all, yet some received education in refugee camps. Classes in refugee camps usually lasted two hours per day, led by teachers from local schools. In interviews, teachers told that they worked in camps in pairs on a rotating schedule. Commuting to camps was initially paid for by international donors, but when that support ceased, the city councils in Subotica and Sombor respectively stepped in. Main subjects were Serbian, English and German languages, science and art. The interviewed teachers expressed a positive attitude and great enthusiasm towards working with children in refugee camps. They felt it was a meaningful and important contribution. Nevertheless, under those circumstances their ability to provide high-quality and equal education was heavily restricted. Consequently, the

education was reduced to a few hours structured activities, primarily aiming at making life in refugee camps somehow endurable and helping children process or at least for a moment forget traumatic experiences of the past and despair of their current situation. Actual learning was not the primary objective.

Additionally, teachers had no training or preparation for how to work with refugee children without a shared language. It was more learning by doing, as the interviewed teachers expressed it. Often, they had no assistance from interpreters, very little or no knowledge of their students, their past life and school experiences. But teachers were constantly assured of the students' future plans, and those were geographically projected to Germany, Austria, France, the Netherlands, and other West European countries. No one wanted to stay in Serbia. This sense of temporality continues to exert a powerful impact on parents, children, the educators and on the practical implementation of new policies aiming at improving educational structures for migrant and refugee children.

As previously pointed out, this system was widely criticised in evaluations and reports from UNHCR, UNICEF and various NGOs and was due to change from 2017. During the visit to Branko Pesic school in Zemun, at the outskirts of Belgrade, the school management was interviewed. The school was one of the first in the country to already in December 2016 admit 22 migrant and refugee children. More were enrolled in the following years, 90 percent being unaccompanied minors. The school caters exclusively for socially vulnerable children, i.e. with interrupted schooling, poor Roma and Albanian minority children, some of them returned after their application for asylum was turned down in other countries and migrant and refugee children. Both the school and the children face difficulties from the harsh social situation, lack of shared language and uncertain future. The school management particularly pointed out the children's lack of prior education, but also how little they know about their students' background, for example in terms of life experiences and medical history. Children are commuting from their camps and the length of school day is conditioned by the time breakfast (when to start) and lunch (when to finish) are served in the camps. Generally, children spend four hours per day at school. According to school management, the staff did receive some training, but the organisation and pedagogical approaches were mostly built in the process of learning by doing. The school management expressed a positive and open attitude towards migrant and refugee students. The school leader was aware of the school's segregated student composition, but added that the children feel well at school and are being taken care of.

After the government in May 2017 launched new policy on inclusion of migrant and refugee children in education, an expert group was appointed to further develop and clarify the policy. The result was the previously mentioned comprehensive manual, published in December 2017. The manual was based on and largely produced by the school leader and teachers from Branko Pesic school and supplemented with references from the UNICEF documents. Since this school was highlighted as a role model and best practice, the school leader and teachers were also initial trainers for staff from other schools. Obviously, they based their training solely on their experiences.

The point is that the Serbian system for refugee and migrant children schooling and at least initial professional development of teachers across the country, to a large extent is based on ongoing experiences from one school (with a segregated student population). The absence of scientific research and structured evaluations to support those efforts is apparent.

From the beginning of 2018 the government started reconsidering the policy of sending teachers to refugee camps. The tide of educational flows turned the other way around. Now, the children will come to school instead. The interviewed teachers told that their students strongly expressed a desire to have more formal schooling, in ordinary schools, together with children from the local community. Four schools and a preschool were visited in Subotica, Sombor and Belgrade with migrant and refugee children enrolled. Children are bussed from and to refugee camps every day, escorted by the staff from the Commissariat for refugees and migration. In all schools, children are enrolled in ordinary classes. Notable is that migrant and refugee children constitute only a small portion of all students in these schools.

In some schools, children attend only 4 hours of classes per day, while domestic students are receiving 6 hours of schooling. The reason is mainly the organisation of food delivery in the camps. In order to get back in time for lunch served in the camps, the children needed to leave school earlier. However, this is not the practice in all schools. But even in those where it is, it is about to be changed according to the Commissariat staff present at the meeting in one school. In other words, migrant and refugee children will attend school an equal amount of time as Serbian students.

In the Subotica camp, at the Hungarian border, the old system was retained. The migrants are summoned from camps around Serbia when it is (almost) their turn to cross the border and be interviewed by the Hungarian authorities about their asylum claim. The education policy towards migrant and refugee children is based on a perception that children at any time will move on, and there is no point trying to integrate them into ordinary schools. But the waiting time could vary between one week and six months. In this camp the children are divided into two groups, according to their age, and attend instructions by teachers from local schools two hours per day. At the time of the visit there were 11 school age children, out of a total of 50 refugees. For the rest of the day the children in Subotica camp are involved in some activities with the staff, supported by the Ana and Vlade Divac foundation and some international foundations, such as the Danish Centre for Refugees and Caritas.

### 5.3.2 INTERNAL WORK

A welcoming climate towards migrants and refugees, an individualised approach to every student's background and educational needs, support-based inclusion in ordinary classes, second language acquisition and relations with non-refugee peers, as well as active use of students' first language as a vehicle for learning, are some of the most significant aspects of classroom-based interventions for this group of students, as identified in previous literature.

What became evident during visits to schools and interviews with teachers and school leaders is that a welcoming culture indeed is highly detectable. Students are directly placed into ordinary classes. Their Serbian peers, in the classroom as well as in the entire school, are very positive, according to teachers and school leaders. During interviews with migrant and refugee students in some schools they were explicitly asked about their experiences of bullying, discrimination or racism, with always the same answer: "Really no, everybody is so nice trying to help us!" All interviewed children expressed their joy with school, singling out Mathematics, English, German and football as favourite subjects and activities. They could not come up with what they did not like. According to interviewed teachers and school leaders,

the Serbian parents initially raised some questions, mostly to get information about who these new students were and how the reception would be organised, rather than protesting or expressing concerns. As previously mentioned, the number of integrated migrant and refugee students in the majority of schools is very small, spanning from just a few to 14-15 at most. As such they are not very visible in the schools' daily life.

However, the impression from the school visits is that other measures necessary for successful inclusion and learning are absent. Children are placed into ordinary classes, but they receive no additional support in their language and as it appears very little other targeted support. Schools complain that there is no language expertise in the country at all. So how do teachers manage to reach out to their students who don't speak the language? They rely completely on other children who have been in Serbia for a longer period, learned some Serbian and those who can speak some English. After meeting with some of these children, the conclusion is that their English cannot be sufficient to serve their own, let alone other students' learning needs. The same was the case for their Serbian. The interviewed parents cautiously complained about their children being placed in the last row in classrooms without attracting any teacher attention. And these children need a lot of support if their education is to be designated as equal, meaningful and of high-quality. None of these three fundamental requirements seems to be fulfilled in Serbian schools.

The interviewed staff-members reiterated difficulties with communications, but also revealed a high degree of confidence in their pedagogical skills, claiming that "the language of Mathematics is a universal language" or "a good teacher can always find a way to reach out to his/her student". True, but that approach requires time, resources and attention to student's individual needs. Once again, none of these are particularly prominent in visited schools. Additionally, there is a previously mentioned notion of temporality – nurtured by children, their parents, teachers and the Ministry of education – that effectively reduces migrant and refugee children to a passing challenge intentionally allowing them to somehow "float around" in schools. At the end of the day, they are refugees on the move.

The staff also repeatedly mentioned a certificate they issue to their students, before they leave Serbia, containing information on how long time the children attended school, what subjects they had access to and similar. This was often highlighted as a best practice. The school report, as the certificate is called, is an important instrument, but nobody could really know whether, to what extent or how it is/will be used in the country of destination.

Schools have no particular activities to address potentially traumatic experiences children had been through. Teachers generally expressed a view that "we have not noticed anything, otherwise we would have reacted". Rather, the school attendance itself is perceived as a preventive and resilient-strengthening measure. And here we are at the core of the discourse underpinning the educational response towards migrant and refugee children in Serbia. Somewhere in between all activities, challenges, attempts, policy reforms and efforts a perspective emerges that schools are a safe place to be in and a way of keeping children away from the depressingly paralysing life in refugee camps. Learning does not seem to be a primary objective of attending a school or of direct immersion into ordinary classes, really. Education serves rather another aim, to provide a structured day in a safe and controlled environment for children on the move. As one school leader put it:





*We offer them a happy childhood, on the way to Western Europe, but also to learn something about our language and culture.*

### 5.3.3 RELATIONS WITH MIGRANT PARENTS AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

The third significant aspect necessary for promoting integration in and through education for migrant and refugee students is relations between schools and actors from the local and wider community.

Apparently, the role of parents for learning and care is of the utmost importance and a dialogue between teachers and parents is just a prerequisite for lasting ties. We have seen in the literature review that these ties often are strained and teachers see little value in trying to reach out to migrant and refugee parents. Two contradictory perspectives arose out of meetings with parents and school staff in several contexts in Serbia. The interviewed teachers and school leaders claimed the parents are important partners and efforts should be undertaken to involve them into education. According to school staff there are at least three obstacles. Isolation of parents in refugee camps is one of them. The visited camps are located outside of populated areas and children are bussed to schools on a daily basis. If parents are to get to school, then transportation is needed, but not provided. Language is another obstacle. Even if parents get to school there are no interpreters to enable communication. Previously in this chapter the teachers' perspective on how little they know about their students' background was pointed out. Apart from the children themselves, the only source of that knowledge is the parents. But isolation and language seem to be unsurmountable barriers. A third obstacle, as described by the school staff, is that parents sometimes do not let children go to school since they are afraid it may negatively impact their chances of getting asylum in another country. Once again, the notions of temporality and refugee children on the move affects not just the quality of education provided, but also the access itself.

The interviews with parents gave two perspectives. The parents understood Serbia is a country with limited resources to assist them. They were deeply grateful for all care, shelter, food, education and other activities they and their children received. But they did not want to stay in the country. The second perspective was that the interviewed parents either had never met with school staff or (in one refugee camp) had a meeting once per year. The parents expressed their willingness to participate in their children's schooling to a higher degree, but at the same time they were careful not to criticise anyone nor to demand anything. However, it was also learned that communication between parents and schools in one camp is managed by an aid worker with knowledge of Serbian and Arabic. Simply, the teachers would pass information concerning one child to this aid worker and she will later pass it on to parents with information eventually returning to teachers. The parents' perspective appears to be influenced by a conviction that "everything is better than being at refugee camp" together with trust in locally employed aid workers, who accompanied children on daily bus tours to and from schools.

Concerning relations and dialogues with other stakeholders they could be divided into two groups, against the backdrop of how prevalent they are.

In the first group there are relevant partners that substantially could improve conditions for promoting integration of migrant and refugee children, but are to a high degree absent. No local sport clubs (a primary vehicle for integration in many countries), cultural or religious institutions or for that matter civil society, appear to be involved in activities with these children. There are some individual initiatives, more in the area of humanitarian assistance than promoting integration. A local bakery that donated bread to refugee children was highlighted as an illustration of community engagement.

The second group comprises of organisations actively involved in promoting integration in and through education. There is a quantity of international and national organisations and NGOs with a high presence in refugee camps. For example, UNICEF donated school material and school bags, the Danish Council for Refugees financed staff to engage children in various activities, the Ana and Vlade Divac Foundations and Caritas as well. The national government also set up a foundation where schools can apply for financial assistance (Madad foundation). Local governments, at least in Subotica and Sombor, seem to be very engaged in and provided support to facilitate education of migrant and refugee students. Apart from allocated school places, also through covering transportation costs between schools and camps. There are also some very active Serbian NGOs that provide legal assistance to migrants and refugees and monitor and report on the fulfilment of their rights.

Education trade unions of Serbia could be placed somewhere in between these two (absent and present) categories. The government official referred to social dialogue with unions, calling it essential for delivering policy, programmes and measures. Representatives of the Teacher Union of Serbia displayed a great interest in and dedication to working on improving educational conditions for migrant and refugee students in Serbia. However, out of four education trade unions in Serbia, only one is engaged with the government in discussions on educational conditions for migrant and refugee students through social dialogue.<sup>24</sup> Some of the activities pertinent to education of these students this particular union is involved in are in the domains of communication, network and information. Thus, the Teachers union of Serbia<sup>25</sup>:

- Promotes a positive outlook on education of migrant and refugee students through its media outlet as well as through bringing it up on all union-related meetings in schools and with employer representatives.
- Supports teachers and schools in working with migrant and refugee children through regular professional development seminars.
- Facilitates contacts between schools having migrant and refugee children enrolled in order for teachers to exchange experiences and gain self-confidence in this, to many, a new area of expertise.
- Communicates with school leaders and supports implementation of good practices.

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<sup>24</sup> Correspondence with coordinator for international cooperation of Teachers union of Serbia, Borka Visnic on January 4, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

- Works together with various NGOs supporting the migrant and refugee population.
- Communicates with asylum centres and supports children applying for upper-secondary education, to overcome some administrative hurdles.
- Visits schools with migrant and refugee students on a national holiday handing out gifts.
- Prepares proposal for how to reward teachers' additional work with migrant and refugee children.

## 5.4 CONCLUSIONS

Serbia has gone through various migration phases in its recent history. From being a country of labour emigration in the 1960s and 1970s, with a continuous "brain drain" emigration in the last decades, and refugee sending country to refugee receiving country from Bosnia and Croatia and hosting a large population of internally displaced people from Kosovo. Two new patterns of development have been added in recent years. Serbia was in 2015-2016 one of the largest transit countries in Europe for refugees travelling from Turkey, via Greece and North Macedonia and further into Hungary and other European countries. Migration policy during this period was mainly oriented towards providing temporary shelters, food, water, medical supplies and transport to refugees. Very few applied for and very few were granted refugee status in Serbia. Since 2016, Serbia has gradually evolved into, at least temporarily, a destination country, mainly because the refugees remained there after the borders to neighbouring EU-countries were effectively sealed. Even if the country received financial aid from international organisations, the fact remains that its economy and infrastructure are too weak to adequately provide for the care that migrants and refugees are entitled to. There is a sort of "identity crisis" in Serbia's migration policy. The initial response got stuck in "a transit country" mode, while the events proved clearly that the country was becoming a final destination for thousands of refugees. But as is evident from the account above, things are changing. Nowhere is this policy more obvious than in dealing with migrant and refugee children's educational needs.

Initially, Serbia lacked a concrete strategy, structure and organisation, apart from formal legislation on access, for the inclusion of migrant and refugee children in ordinary schools. The vast majority did not receive meaningful and high-quality education. Rather, they were involved in play and random learning a few hours per day in refugee camps. However, lately things have been put in motion with substantial development. In the academic year of 2017/18 an increasing number of migrant and refugee children have been enrolled in regular schools. Efforts are made to involve all children in regular schools in the academic year of 2018/19. A strategy for educating migrant and refugee children, adopted in 2017, instigated full implementation. A number of projects aiming at supporting teachers' professional development and offering psycho-emotional support to children were launched. These are encouraging steps.

Thus, the organisation of education for migrant and refugee children in Serbia, during a relatively short period of time, evolved from restricted or even denied access to almost complete inclusion into regular schools. Inclusion is not just based on a formally open-door policy, but is actively supported. Bussing children on a daily basis from refugee camps to local schools, having accompanying staff from the Commissariat on busses and adjusting meal-times in camps (even if more could be done here to allow for children to take part in after-school activities) are some important aspects. Additionally, the government issued a set of necessary legal regulations and guidance and a number of teachers have been involved in (although shorter) professional development occasions. Furthermore, the presence of international and Serbian NGOs and international financial aid are two essential factors. What became clear during the fieldwork is that international financial aid recently has been reduced, which is an unfortunate development, because Serbia lacks the economic resources to solely on its own provide necessary support to migrants and refugees, and especially in the area of education. Another question is whether the general public's and the professionals' (teachers and school leaders) support would erode if the government and schools were about to carry the entire costs for refugees' welfare.

A less positive organisational aspect is that some migrant and refugee children are steered towards segregated educational institutions, exclusively caring for socially vulnerable (or "problematic") segments of the population. Another aspect the Serbian authorities should pay more attention to is the absence of assessments, evaluations and scientific research about the policy implementation.

Additionally, the schools have no pedagogical tools to provide meaningful and equal education to migrant and refugee children. There are no language support teachers, no interpreters, schools rely on some students' sketchy skills in Serbian and/or English to support other students, no cooperation with parents, it is unclear how schools assess children's previous knowledge. On top of everything there is a sense of temporality pervading the entire system. Children want to move on to Germany, the Netherlands, Austria. Parents are waiting for a call from Hungarian authorities to submit an asylum application. Teachers and school leaders take temporality as a starting point in how they organise education.

A woman with glasses and a blue shirt is looking down at a book in a library. The background shows bookshelves filled with books. The image has a semi-transparent teal overlay with white text.

**6. BELGIUM** – “WE  
ARE A COUNTRY OF  
SUPERDIVERSITY AND  
SUPERSEGREGATION”



In this chapter, the Belgian case study is presented and discussed. Even if the chapter is entitled Belgium, the study is only partially about Belgium in all its administrative fragments. The main presentation is extracted from fieldwork conducted in two schools in the city of Antwerp, in the Flemish part.

## 6.1 BELGIUM AND MIGRATION

Belgium<sup>26</sup> is a country of 11,5 million inhabitants, located in West Europe bordering on Germany, France, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. The official languages are Dutch, French and German. There are around 6 million Dutch-speaking people living in the Flemish part of the country, 3,5 million Walloons in the French part and around one million German-speaking residents, mostly populating the border area with Germany. Additionally, a number of minority groups and languages are scattered all over the country. Brussels is the capital and with its more than a million inhabitants the largest city. Antwerp, Ghent, Liege and Charleroi are some other major urban centres.

Belgium is a constitutional monarchy and a federal state, administratively divided into three language communities (Dutch, French and German) and three regions (Flanders, Wallonia and the Brussels-Capital). The federal government is responsible for matters of justice, defence, federal police, nuclear energy, social and monetary policy, while communities and regions have broad autonomy in and authority over other realms of public policy. Communities are responsible for delivery of education, which means that Belgium has three education systems, three education policies and three ministers of education (OECD 2017). Furthermore, as pointed out in the OECD report, "schools can be classified in three different funding/management categories: publicly funded education managed by the Community authorities, grant-aided education managed by other levels of public government (such as cities, municipalities and provinces), and grant-aided private education. Schools that are not grant-aided (fully private) represent less than 1% of the school offer" (p. 4). Freedom of school choice has a strong position in Belgium with a far-reaching consequence for school operations and student distribution.

Belgium receives a number of asylum-seekers every year, although the number does not appear to be particularly high. The exception is the record year of 2015 when 44,760 asylum applications were lodged (first and subsequent). In 2016, the number dropped to 18,710, to start increasing again in 2017, with 19,688 and in the first 10 months of 2018 with 20,248 asylum-applications. The biggest nationalities among applicants are from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine.<sup>27</sup> The number of children under the age of 6, living in reception centres was 2,138, as of April 2017 (MPI 2018, p. 20). The largest immigrant groups from non-EU countries are Moroccan and Turkish. Historically, the country has received both labour migrants from South Europe in 1960s and relatively large numbers of refugees from the Western Balkans in the 1990s. The largest EU immigration is from Italy, France and the

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<sup>26</sup> Basic information on Belgium is retrieved from <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/belgium/>

<sup>27</sup> Source: Statistiques d'asile Octobre 2018, Commissariat Général aux réfugiés et aux apatrides.

Netherlands. According to some estimates, around 18 percent of the Belgian population is foreign-born (MPI 2012).

Between 2004 and 2008 the average number of asylum-seeking unaccompanied minors (under the age of 18 and without parents or legal guardians) was 1,800. The figure increased between 2009 and 2012 to 2,800, fell back to 1,800 in 2013-14, to reach the peak in 2015 with 5,047 (De Graeve, Vervliet and Derluyn 2017). Since then it has been in a steady decline. Unaccompanied minors have rather strong legal protection in Belgium, they cannot be detained and deportation is possible only if it is in the best interest of a child and if the care and support are ensured in the country of origin (ibid., p. 1-2).

Thus, because of several historical waves of immigration – ranging from labour market, refugees from Western Balkan, refugees from Asia and Africa, to immigration from other EU-countries and not to forget the country's colonial past and immigration from former overseas possessions (Andersson et al. 2017) – Belgium is increasingly becoming a diverse country. Dealing with migration's consequences is not new to the authorities and professionals. In the next section some insights from previous research and reports about Belgium's educational responses towards newly arrived migrant and refugee students will be brought up.

## 6.2 EDUCATION OF MIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN IN BELGIUM



*Many children suffer from the lack of contact with 'Belgian' children. They would like to play with them, meet them and talk with them in order to better integrate. Education and leisure activities are important for these children and these young people because it brings them stability and hope for the future. (UNICEF Belgium 2018, p. 13)*

Schooling in Belgium is mandatory for all children between ages 6 and 18, irrespective of their migration status (FRA 2017, p. 75). Children have not just legally granted access to education, it is compulsory to participate. This is a step further than international conventions on children's rights require and expect from countries. Essentially, the policy is positive, strengthening children's rights and practical possibilities to get enrolled in schools. It is not up to their parents or local administrators to decide whether it is the right time for migrant and refugee children to start at school or not. The Flemish Ministry of education has even recently taken steps to enrol undocumented children into early-age education. According to Dorsi and Petit (2018), "in Belgium, the Flemish Ministry of Education conducted an information campaign aimed at improving participation in early-age education and care (ages 3-6) by new migrants and children with foreign mother tongues. A letter circulated by the Ministry grants undocumented migrant children the right to attend school, prevents school head teachers from informing the police about the administrative status of children and their parents, and guarantees that they will not be arrested within the vicinity of the school" (p. 51).

Generally, the education of newly arrived migrant and refugee students is organised in the so-called bridging classes in the French speaking part of Belgium or reception classes in the Flemish part (FRA 2017, p. 75). As shown in the next section, containing presentations of experiences from two schools (one primary and one secondary) in the city of Antwerp, in the Flemish part, there are other models spanning from direct immersion in ordinary classes to newcomer schools only. According to the FRA country report, education is sometimes even organised in larger reception centres for asylum-seeking students.

In the report 'What do you think' produced by the Belgian branch of UNICEF (UNICEF Belgium 2018), based on interviews and meetings with 170 migrant and refugee children, there are plenty of interesting perspectives on life as a migrant-child in Belgium. An often-overlooked group are young refugee mothers, 16-17 years old, who need to combine parenthood with school and a pretty tough social environment in reception centres. With regard to education, the children interviewed in the report expressed their gratitude to the Belgian government for providing them with the opportunity to go to school, most of them enjoyed it even if some complained about long days and a curriculum not adapted to needs of those who might never have been at school. Noteworthy is that many of the interviewed children referred to support they received from NGOs, Mentor-Escale being mentioned as one good example, varying from information to socio-emotional support. As summarised in the report:

“ *The children like school. They all want to learn French or Dutch, and all of them express the desire to start or continue their studies. This is actually what they are doing, because in Belgium, education is a right for all children, regardless of their migratory status. Children who speak one of the national languages and who haven't dropped out of school, can directly attend a normal class. For the others, getting up to speed and learning the language are done in a class for new arrivals (DASPA/OKAN classes). Children who have suffered major trauma, or those who live in a large reception centre, find learning the language and returning to school difficult. The length of the school day, the lack of sleep and the pace of the lessons can cause adaptation problems. (UNICEF Belgium 2018, p. 83)*

Being placed in separate classes (DASPA/OKAN) elicited somewhat conflicting perspectives, some found it being a very good idea, and some complained about separation slowing down language learning. Here are just two excerpts from the report to illustrate the children's perspectives (UNICEF Belgium 2018, p. 85):

“ *It's difficult to make new friends in the normal class. OKAN is easier, because everyone is in the same situation. It's difficult to understand everything in class. When you're in the normal class, there aren't many people, either pupils or teachers, who speak to you. It's also difficult to learn a new language. (18-year old, Syria)*

*In the OKAN classes, we're separated from the others. It doesn't really matter. But it upsets my friend. During an OKAN course, another pupil said to her, "You're an OKAN, you're not at home here". Why do we have to be separated in this way? In my school, the 'normal'*

*pupils have a break between 11.15 a.m. and us at 12.45 p.m. I would like to have a break at the same time as them; I should be given the opportunity to learn Dutch. It's not good to separate us. (15-year old, Angola)*

Three additional issues undermining the quality of education opportunities of newly arrived migrant and refugee children identified in the report are: a) hostility and even racism some children encounter in schools; b) limited opportunities for sport and other after-school activities outside of reception centres and; c) some children being shunted from reception centre to reception centre and sometimes across language lines. Thus, a child who started a school in a Flemish part with Dutch as a language of instruction, could be sent to a centre and a school in the Walloon part, with French as the language of instruction. However, in some cases the courts rescinded those decisions, as reported by the FRA (2017, p. 75-76): "In a ruling of 6 May 2014, for example, the Labour Court of Charleroi found that the transfer of a family to the family centre of the Holsbeek open return place (in Dutch speaking Flanders) would result in a violation of the right to education since it would force the children to change from a French speaking school to a Dutch speaking one."

In the above-mentioned study on unaccompanied minors (UAM) in Belgium, De Graeve, Vervliet and Derluyn (2017) describe how the young refugees' high educational aspirations clash with a lack of language proficiency, often inadequate prior schooling and the system's propensity to sidetrack them, after initial language course. As a result, the UAM are over-represented in vocational training and tracks for children with special educational needs and underrepresented in tracks that lead to higher education. Moreover, as argued in the article "when UAM have not obtained residence documents when they turn 18 or are no longer in the asylum procedure, they cannot attend school anymore (because they are over 18 and staying without residence documents in the country). As an effect, UAM often end up leaving school without graduation or a certificate/diploma" (p. 4).

## 6.3 EXPERIENCES FROM FIELDWORK



*The strong growth of the school population, in particular among pupils with a migrant background (their proportion rose from 15,1 % in 2012 to 17,7 % in 2015), will exacerbate the equity challenge. Moreover, Belgium faces an emerging shortage of teachers, and the teachers are not always well prepared or supported to cope with an increasingly diverse school population. (Council of the European Union 2017, p. 10)*

A two-day fieldwork was conducted in Antwerp, a multicultural city (Sirius 2015) in northern Belgium, with around 500 000 inhabitants. The school leader of a primary school claimed that students in his school have backgrounds in 62 nationalities (and even more languages). Proudly he added that Antwerp is the second most diverse city in the world, having residents from 177 nationalities.

In this section the insights from the fieldwork are presented.

### 6.3.1 ORGANISATION

Both schools are located close to the city centre. Both are superdiverse with regard to students' migration background, and socioeconomically quite homogenous with a lower socioeconomic status (SES). The reason for this student composition is only partially concerning the primary school, the above-mentioned superdiversity of the city. Largely, it is an outcome of an intentional policy steering migrant and refugee children to, in particular, the secondary school. Thus, segregation appears to be a main organisational feature of educational responses towards migrant and refugee students, at least in these two schools. It is impossible to determine, based on the fieldwork conducted for the purposes of this study, whether this is the case in other schools in Antwerp, Flanders and Belgium. According to a representative from the education trade union, older newly arrived children indeed are referred to separate schools, for a period of one to two years to learn the language, before being transferred to an ordinary school.

The primary school, enrolling children from pre-school to 11 years old, is a so-called transit school, meaning children arrive throughout the school year, but many also leave. According to the school leaders, the school can have 350 students at the beginning of a school year and end with 450. At the time of the visit (December 2018) the school enrolled 361 students, out of which 99 were undocumented. 95 percent of all students are labelled as with low SES and eligible for extra support. As previously mentioned, the school is superdiverse. Students have a background in 62 different nationalities and only five have Belgian born parents.

Despite the current student composition and a less favourable reputation in the local educational market, this is not a "refugee-only" or an exclusively newcomer school. Bad reputation, many children of migrant and refugee background and low SES have prompted and for many years nurtured the "white-flight" process. Socially established families, irrespective of their ethnic background, choose to move their children to other educational settings. According to the school leader and teachers, interviewed in the study, there are several Catholic schools, considered as "white-school", in close proximity that their students are trying to get enrolled in, but many are rejected. Generally, in the city of Antwerp, there seems to be more students who would like to change their designated school than available places, which gives popular schools an opportunity for "cherry-picking". However, as explained by the representative of the Catholic School Association, the doors to his schools are open for all students, they never discriminate against anyone, but there are certain admission rules to observe.

Newly arrived students in the primary school are immersed into ordinary classes and placed into age appropriate group. According to the school leader, teachers avoid taking newly arrived students out of classes for instruction. Generally, there is an ethos of inclusion pervading the school culture and genuine efforts to welcome newly arrived children into the school community, irrespective of their migration status. Nevertheless, the school itself is segregated. Furthermore, very few attempts, if any, to overcome segregation between schools in the city have been brought up.



The secondary school, with about 200 students age 12-18, is a newcomer school (OKAN), intentionally created to admit only newly arrived students. The focus of instruction is Dutch language and its mission encapsulated in the school leader's statement "to prepare students to go to regular schools". There are 10 such schools across Antwerp, counting up to 1,000 students. Refugees, asylum-seekers, undocumented and migrants from East-European EU countries (Romania, Bulgaria) are all enrolled. Students stay at school for at least one year, even for a shorter time is possible if a student displays progress in language acquisition. According to the school leader, they offer students another year at school, but many are reluctant to continue. They want to get into ordinary schools and get access to all school subjects. Transfer to other schools is carefully prepared by teachers and coaches, which includes advice on available schools and educational alternatives. Additionally, a portfolio about a student's achievement, strengths and challenges is produced and handed over to receiving school. Both primary and secondary schools carry out initial screening or mapping of students' previous knowledge and educational background. Some of the students in the secondary school are illiterate and for their needs, five special classes are convened.

The school staff noticed a large increase in the number of traumatised students, especially those arriving from Afghanistan. Some disturbances and conflicts occurred, which increased awareness that newly arrived refugee students need more support to deal with their traumatic experiences.

The two interviewed students, enrolled in a class encompassing ages 13 to 18, were negative towards and even disappointed by this organisational model, claiming children of different ages, and on top of that from different countries and various life experiences, have different mentalities which lead to conflicts and fights. Both students expressed a desire to get enrolled in a normal school, as they put it, and study other academic subjects. Not just the language, as the case is in the newcomer school. As for screening of their previous education, both interviewees said that they indeed were asked, but more on a basic level. They are aware of the school segregation, imagining it would be better if other non-newly arrived students also were there, but at the same time they experienced this school as something temporal. A necessary, outside imposed, station on the path to normality and ordinary structures.

### 6.3.2 INTERNAL WORK

If one impression is about to be singled out from the primary school, it would be an extraordinarily strong commitment the interviewing school leader and teachers conveyed about their students' learning opportunities. There is not a single trace of resignation, of giving up on students' futures, solely because they might be newly arrived or with a low SES. On the contrary, the staff was adamant in expressing confidence in how the school operates, what is at the heart of instructional activities and the diligence of their students. With extra resources it sounds like a formula for success. However, the students face multiple challenges, limited skills in the majority language identified as the most important to overcome. According to the school leader, their profile is to work with children who either do not speak or have limited proficiency in Dutch, "and we want to be the best in the world doing that", as he put it.

In the official policy the majority of students are labelled as disadvantaged, which entitles the school to additional funding. Since the school has many children learning Dutch as a second

language it also elicits extra resources for one and sometimes two years. The resources are used to employ more teachers (having three teachers in two classes), allotting more time to individual instruction and generally for adapting learning to students' individual needs. An additional resource is a coordinator for socially disadvantaged children deployed in the school 28 hours per week, a sort of a social worker catering for the welfare of the students. Working hours for the coordinator are distributed centrally from the city, according to the estimates of the schools' needs. The school leader was not content with this system and claimed his school would benefit immensely if they could get more hours.

As mentioned in previous sections the students are directly enrolled in ordinary classes in age appropriate groups. Even if the school policy is to avoid separate education, it is described as sometimes inevitable. Thus, newly arrived students can be pulled out of ordinary classes for one hour of more focused language instruction. The school uses a buddy-system, meaning newly arrived are paired with peers who speak both their language and Dutch. There are no language support teachers, helping children acquire subject knowledge in their mother tongue during an initial period, until they master Dutch. In previous research this support has been identified as one of the most relevant pedagogical interventions, but it is not allowed in Flemish schools. Instead, and this is a model already seen in the Serbian case, teachers rely on other students to provide language support to the newly arrived through a buddy-system or on a Google translate app. This can hardly constitute an adequate or efficient system. Even more interesting is that professionals who deal with the situation on a daily basis, school leader and teachers in both primary and secondary school, expressed strong discontent about the policy, calling it "a very strange system", instigated by political and not pedagogical considerations.

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that further learning of the students' first language has been referred to non-formal arenas outside of school. In a school library there are books in different languages which students voluntarily can come by and pick up. It is here, in this small space, that the school's policy of promoting multilingualism starts and ends.

Another important feature of the primary school is a strong emphasis on internal communication between staff on students' needs, progress, possible new methods to apply etc. Evident is the presence of learning communities and mutual support, further promoted by a three teachers-two classes system.

If the main organisational feature of the secondary school was encapsulated in a motto that "we prepare students to go to regular schools", the main feature of internal work would be: "they are here to learn the language". No mistakes, Dutch (or the Netherlands as the interviewed persons interchangeably labelled it in English) is in focus. The stiff one-language-only policy is even more strictly imposed in secondary school, solely enrolling newly arrived students. There are no language support teachers, definitely no attempts to facilitate further learning of the mother tongue in school, bilingual teachers are not allowed to use languages other than Dutch (and presumably sometimes English) for instructions or support. Even written communication with parents cannot be translated, it must be in Dutch. Although the school leader revealed they sometimes translate them anyway.

The school appears to have a solid student-teacher ratio (60 staff members to 200 students). The policy is that for every four newly arrived students a school is allocated resources equiv-

alent to 50 percent of a full-time teacher position. Coaches, most often second language teachers, assigned to support newly arrived students and financed by the government are highlighted as the most important support structure. Initial screening is being gradually developed, with inspiration from Sweden. The school also offers socio-emotional guidance and help with everyday problems students may encounter outside of school, for example with housing.

The interviewed students in the secondary school, 16 and 18 years of age, shared their experiences of how they managed to initially navigate the school without Dutch and without support in the mother tongue. A student with Romanian mother tongue relied on his Romanian peers, who had been a longer time in Belgium, for support to understand instructions and requirements. A student with Tibetan mother tongue relied on his good English to navigate school initially. Both students asked for more contacts with ordinary schools so they could practice the Dutch language.

Finally, as it was pointed out by the representatives of the education trade union and the employer representatives at the concluding meeting, there are very few initiatives for the professional development of teachers. Additionally, teachers would need more autonomy, as it seems that many crucial decisions concerning conditions for their professional work are made at some other policy levels. Deployment of language support teachers is an obvious example of the gap between professional and political assessment of what is needed to promote learning and integration of newly arrived migrant and refugee students in education.

### 6.3.3 RELATIONS WITH MIGRANT PARENTS AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

In both schools, the interviewed school leaders and teachers reiterated how important parents are for the educational success of their students. Nevertheless, it seems schools are doing very little to forge stronger relationships with parents. Relations and communications are reduced to a few mandatory meetings per year. Even here the language is perceived as a major barrier. When parents are invited to a school-parent meeting the interpreters are present.

In the primary school the school leader claimed they are regularly inviting parents to support some activities, such as following on school trips, swimming etc., but the response is not overwhelming, something that the school leader finds understandable "since parents have their own problems". Another activity to increase parental involvement in the primary school was asking parents to read from books in their language in the classroom and let their children interpret. Even the interviewed students in the secondary school confirmed that meetings with parents are occasionally held, a few times per year.

Although the schools staff brought up the issue of sporadic cultural differences surfacing with parents, no one identified this as an insurmountable or even a prominent problem. The perspective seems to be, "yes, it does happen, but we are effectively communicating with parents, explaining why and how".

When it comes to other forms of relations and dialogues between schools and the community, it does not appear to be well established. The impression is that the staff in both schools are busy with running schools, teaching, offering support, participating in learning communities, and meetings, which leaves them with only limited time to get engaged in any substantial projects with organisations from the community. The school leader from the secondary school mentioned a good cooperation between schools for newcomers in Antwerp and with Atlas, which is a sort of municipal reception centre that also refers newly arrived children to different schools.

A newly arrived student from Tibet shared the information about being involved in informal education in Tibetan, organised by his ethnic community every Sunday. It is likely that other language groups set up their own complementary language schools. But nobody has mentioned them during meetings or interviews as a potential partner. Here regular educational institutions are missing an opportunity to link up with at least two strong allies: a) very dedicated parents, who want to preserve their language and even send children to school on weekends, and b) complementary schools which are performing pedagogical and didactical tasks, although focused on one language and one culture. The point is that closer relations and dialogue could benefit both regular and complementary schools, and the children themselves.

It is important to remember that both interviewed students have permission to stay in Belgium and they live in ordinary apartments. The situation is quite different for asylum-seeking children living in reception centre. Their opportunities to get involved in after-school activities are heavily restricted. In the abovementioned report 'What do you think' (UNICEF Belgium 2018), it is asserted that:

“ *The majority of boys would like to play football outside the reception centre. They would like to enrol in a club, take part in training and play matches, but they are prevented from doing so because they have no papers. (p. 90)*

It is evident that more attention has to be paid to school and after-school conditions for children who stay at reception centres.

## 6.4 CONCLUSIONS

Belgium is an administratively highly fragmented country, having responsibility for education policy and schools devolved to several layers of intermediary structures of power and organisations. Belgium is an ethnically and linguistically diverse country, with a history of migration stretching back to 1950s. Since migrants are mostly concentrated into urban places, a combination of migrant background, low SES and urban density risks creating segregation in housing and schools, something that already has taken roots in some parts of the country (Andersson et al. 2017).

Legally, all students irrespective of migration status have the right and obligation to attend schools between ages 6 and 18. High degrees of local autonomy inevitably affect the provision of education to newly arrived migrant and refugee students. All three organisational models are to be found, direct immersion, separate classes and newcomer schools. The models also differed in two visited school, one having direct immersion and strictly avoiding the separation of the newly arrived from the rest of the class. The other was just the opposite, a school only for the newly arrived. The European Commission has issued a set of recommendations to schools on how to cope with migrant and refugee students. One of the recommendations is about placement and admission:



*Ensuring that initial preparatory classes are time limited, where they are deemed necessary, and setting in place welfare and academic supports to facilitate a smooth transition into mainstream education. Monitoring is also important, to prevent the geographical segregation of migrant learners through school entry and admissions criteria. (2017a, p. 15-16)*

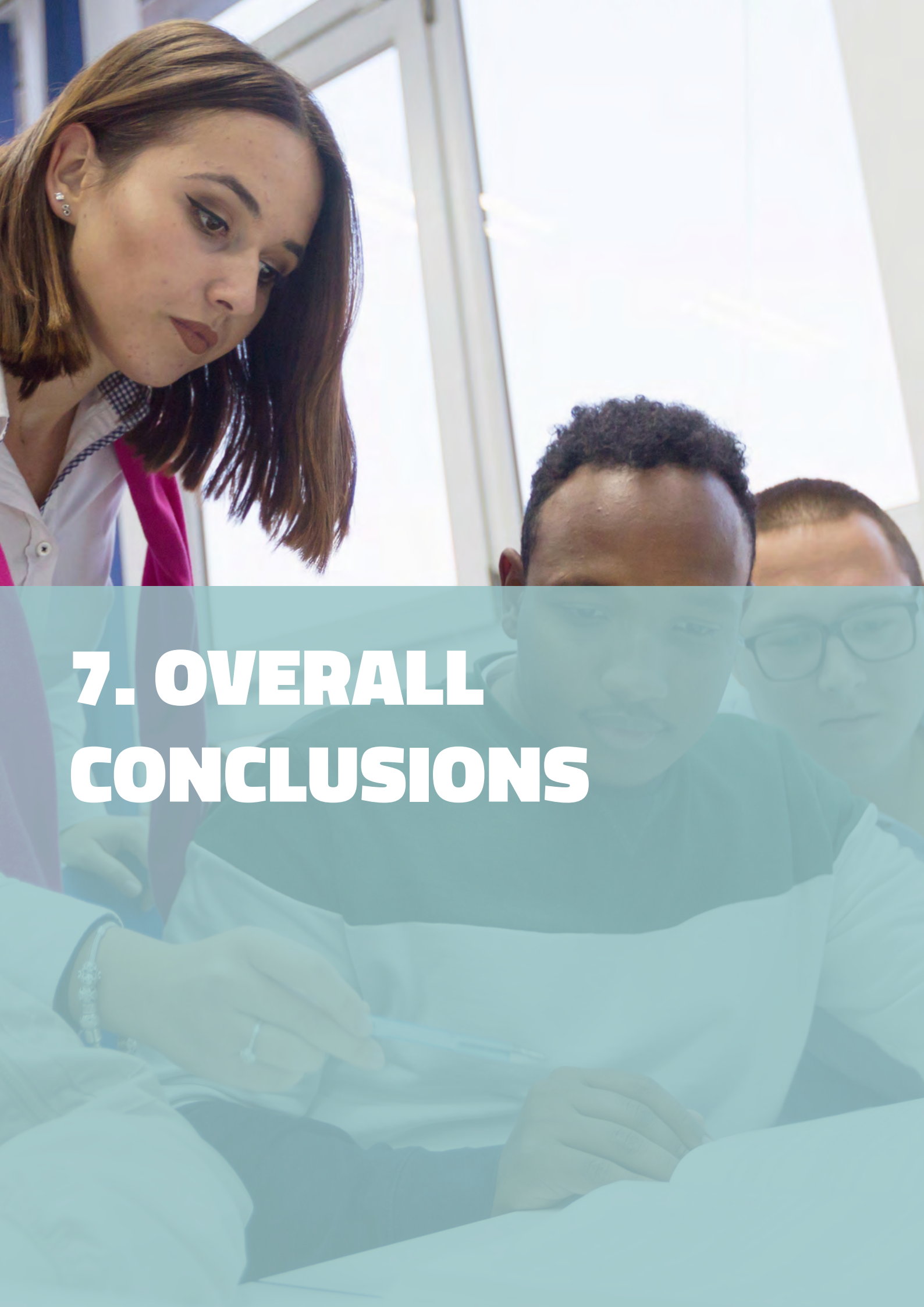
The European Commission does not even mention newcomer schools-only as an alternative. Furthermore, the Commission warns against the risks of segregation through school entry and admission criteria, which is exactly what happened in both schools depicted in this study, but for divergent reasons. In the primary school, due to partly residential segregation and partly due to “white-flight” and unrestricted school choice policy, newly arrived are included into classes and a school that in itself is segregated.

In the secondary school, with all that staff dedication, welcoming climate, safe environment, good internal organisation and as it appears resources, the fact remains, this is a segregated school, outside of ordinary lines. Noticeable is the sense of temporality, that was already although in another form, detected in the Serbian case, among interviewed students. They wait to be transferred to another, “normal” school, where they can feel as part of the society, socialise with Belgian born peers also and, primarily, learn better Dutch. Based on previous research and policy recommendations from international organisations such as the European Commission (2017a) and Sirius (2015), the problem cannot be qualified primarily as the absence of resources, positive attitude or skilful teachers. The problem is that the policy deprives newcomers of integrated social and pedagogical environments, essential for language acquisition, learning and a feeling of being an equal member of the society.



Thus, the overall conclusion is that school segregation should attract much more political attention and active policy measures. In some cases, to contravene the segregating impact of housing policy and some educational models (for example the effects of the school choice policy). In some cases, to abolish intentionally created school segregation, regardless the fact that it "only" hits newly arrived migrant and refugee students.

Another interesting finding in both schools is a policy towards the children's mother tongue. The policy was disadvantageous, and the staff attitude was something else. They valued the mother tongue, encouraged parents to use it at home with their children and through mentoring and peer-support programmes they promoted it in school practices. But the teachers do not have policy backing and consequently could not use it in a more structured way, through qualified language support teachers, for example. This is a serious weakness of educational responses towards migrant and refugee students. Even the European Commission (2017a) suggests, with regard to maintaining existing languages, the importance of "access to home language instruction, and encouragement to speak existing languages on a day-to-day basis at school, including structured opportunities to do so" (p. 15-16).



## **7. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS**

The major aim of the report has been to present and discuss insights from previous research, generally and in particular from Spain, Serbia and Belgium, and identify obstacles and promising policy approaches to promoting integration of newly arrived migrant and refugee children in education. Furthermore, the aim has been to, based on secondary material and fieldwork, present and analyse relevant legislation, local policies and promising practices, challenges and obstacles, organisational and instructional models, the experiences of migrant children and their parents, and the cooperation of various stakeholders in five cities in Spain, Serbia and Belgium. An additional aim has been to collect and analyse information from ETUCE and EFEE members on the extent and form to which social dialogue is used to promote effective integration of migrants and refugees in education.

In this final chapter some of the main findings are summarised and discussed. Six themes of importance have emerged from the evidence presented. These are: support-based inclusion; the role of first language; resources and professional development of teachers; cooperation with parents, local and broader community; the temporality of the children's and families' status; the importance of social dialogue. Below, all of them will be addressed.

## 7.1 SUPPORT-BASED INCLUSION

Inclusion and related concepts, such as integration, segregation and exclusion, of newly arrived migrant and refugee students in education systems is extensively debated in previous research and policy discourses. Irrespective of the historical and political particularities of educational systems, the available research conclusions converge in one stance: inclusion into schools' social and pedagogical contexts is a preferable organisational model. Forging peer-relations, developing citizenship values, having plenty of opportunities to practice the majority language, having access to and being taught by subject matter teachers and promoting the sense of belongingness are some of the expected outcomes. Nevertheless, inclusion demands some preconditions. Common spaces (as opposed to segregation-based models), welcoming culture, teachers' skills in working with language and content integrated learning and supporting structures, including the use of children's first language, are some of the most invoked in the literature. Thus, inclusion requires the remodelling of schools' traditional approaches and efforts from all teachers, not just second language teachers, and additional resources. Strains arise when this, what could be labelled as, support-based inclusion is being transferred from theory into practice. Some relevant aspects are omitted or hard to meet, resulting in what could be labelled as partial inclusion. Students might be sharing common spaces, but without the minimum of language skills and additional support, they are even more disadvantaged than having support in separate classrooms.

As evident from the chapters based on fieldwork, research and reports from Spain, Serbia and Belgium, the schools are, generally speaking, struggling with a challenge of how to provide an integrated and inclusive environment for the overall student population as well as for migrant and refugee students. But, as it appears, against a strong head-wind in a form of housing segregation and the attendance zone principle for student distribution, the way school choice operates, "white flight" and national policy of directing newly arrived to certain schools. Of course, there are differences between the three school systems, where

the Serbian generally appears to be the least segregated. Serbia is also a country that relatively swiftly has responded to the educational needs of migrant and refugee students with inclusion. On the contrary, the newly arrived students face the largest obstacles inside the classrooms in Serbian schools, due to an absence of tailored support, even if the students are fully integrated into ordinary classes. Educational needs of these students are more properly met in Spanish and Belgian schools, but both systems are marred with persistent school segregation. Hence, the conclusion is that all three school systems in relation to newly arrived migrant and refugee students are marked by the policy and practices of partial inclusion, albeit on different bases.

Support-based inclusion is a promising policy and practice, widely recommended and supported by the evidence of its effectiveness. However, the first step in adopting the policy is to properly understand its constituent elements.

## 7.2 THE ROLE OF FIRST LANGUAGE

The research conclusions across countries and continents converge also in the conclusion regarding the role of the first language for second language acquisition and learning by newly arrived students. It has never been proved in the literature that further development of the first language negatively impacts on the second language acquisition. On the contrary, the first language has been presented as an indispensable vehicle for learning during the first years in the new country, as students still lack the majority language proficiency. The point made in research is that the first and second languages are not mutually exclusive categories. It is never either or, but rather both.

As evident from descriptions of situation in Spain, Serbia and Belgium, the first language is rarely used in a systematic way. Sometimes the national policy is the obstacle, sometimes the lack of resources, and yet sometimes practical difficulties in recruiting a bilingual language support teacher. Anyway, schools in this study sometimes attempt to circumvent these obstacles by using bilingual buddies as support. These practices could be designated as promising, but once again they rely on peer support, not on an organised and pedagogically structured approach.

Hence, the conclusion is that the schools must find proper ways to harness the capacity of the multilingualism the newly arrived students possess in order to promote inclusion and educational success.

## 7.3 RESOURCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

Actively implementing the policy of support-based inclusion requires resources. Enhancing teachers' and school leaders' skills requires continuous professional development, which also requires resources. It is ultimately the responsibility of school governing bodies, municipalities, regions, national governments, to provide schools with resources necessary to live up to the high legal standards of granting equal, meaningful and high-quality education to all children. In all countries presented in this study the lack of resources has been presented as one of the main obstacles. Even in Belgian schools, that in comparison with two other cases, were in better financial situation the resources and lack of professional development initiatives were presented as hampering further development. The high level of commitment displayed by teachers and school leaders cannot compensate for the lack of financial support. This is something that especially has been pointed out by the representatives of education trade unions and it is also a recurrent topic of social dialogues.

The conclusion this study arrives at is the obvious one, but deserves to be repeated. Schools need additional resources to accomplish their task of providing equal education to newly arrived migrant and refugee students.

## 7.4 COOPERATION WITH PARENTS, LOCAL AND WIDER COMMUNITY

The research presented in this study has pointed out good cooperation between schools and parents as a prerequisite for the educational success of newly arrived students. One important thing the parents can provide schools with is information on students' previous schooling, the way of learning, experienced difficulties and ways of dealing with them. The parents can also provide feedback on how a student currently is experiencing schooling, socio-emotionally and regarding learning. Schools can inform parents on the learning progress and ask for assistance with homework. Due to probable language barriers the parents might not be in a position to provide that assistance in the majority language, but they can definitely do it in their first language. Hereby, the language of knowledge transmission is not allowed to obscure and paralyse the learning process.

To create and maintain good cooperation it is necessary to foster trust between schools and parents. Mutual respect, basic understanding of how the cooperation can benefit children and some organisational preconditions (for example having a home school liaison teacher) are among the main ingredients. Working closely together with actors from the local and wider community, from governmental agencies, health care, and NGOs to civil society organisations, is another aspect of a school's external orientation presented in the research as a promising practice.



The experiences from visited sites in Spain, Serbia and Belgium are mixed. The parents are to a large extent absent and perceived by the educators as hard to reach, mainly due to language and “their own problems”. Anyway, there are some positive initiatives making efforts to engage parents in all countries. Serbian teachers and parents have a completely different set of circumstances as a starting point, since the parents reside in refugee camps, do not speak the language of the country and are “on the move”. As evident from interviews even those parents expressed a desire for getting more involved in their children’s schooling, but a few occasions were provided.

Hence, the conclusion is that schools must find new strategies of reaching out to newly arrived migrant and refugee parents, and open new communication channels adopted to the particular needs and difficulties facing this group.

## 7.5 TEMPORALITY OF THE CHILDREN’S AND THE FAMILIES’ STATUS

Education and learning of newly arrived migrant and refugee children are inevitably conditioned by their past and present life experiences. Some of these children have been through dreadful events caused by war and persecution in their home country. Some have even been through traumatic experiences during their (ongoing) journey to a destination country. The argument is not to solely reduce them to a status as “traumatised refugee children”, but rather to identify and properly address traumatic experiences. Promoting resilience through support-based inclusion, having high expectations, boosting self-esteem, second language acquisition and learning are some ways to address the traumatic experiences, as learned from previous research.

But there is another interesting observation emerging from fieldwork in Serbia and Belgium that impacts learning and integration. It is about the sense of temporality developed by students, their parents and to a large degree by the educators. Being a student in a school only for newly arrived students in Belgium was experienced by the interviewed students and school staff as a temporary station on the way to a normal, ordinary, school and a status “just like everybody else”. As long as the students stay in a temporary school their status as a refugee or a migrant is prolonged with a strong feeling of not (yet) belonging. Staying in a country that was never envisioned as a final destination and waiting for permission to continue the journey, that could happen any day, puts parents, children and the educators in a sort of parallel reality in Serbia. The approach of the Serbian authorities in this sense must be characterised as a promising practice: “You are here now, and we work as though you are going to settle down in this country permanently. But if you are permitted and decide to leave tomorrow you will bring something valuable with you.”

## 7.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Education trade unions are strong forces throughout Europe and elsewhere, but they have occasionally been criticised for not fully using that force to promote opportunities and not fully engaged in migrant children's integration challenges in schools (Bunar 2018). Partly, the critique stems from the lack of broader research evidence on what actions education trade unions actually are undertaking in relation to this matter. This shortcoming has been adequately addressed in the present study. A survey disseminated to 173 ETUCE and EFEE members has garnered 78 responses from 41 countries. Even if social dialogue as a tool is used in less than half of reported cases (mostly in forms of consultations and communication), it is encouraging that reports from many countries illuminate a broad range of actions, from supporting migrant teachers and professional development of school staff, disseminating information, lobbying, organising workshops and conferences to undertaking concrete practices in and outside of schools to support migrants and refugees.

What is now needed is a concerted effort to bring together these practices, learn more about their structures and outcomes, adjust them according to recent research evidence and use them as a fundamental element in the future social dialogues through negotiations. The examples provided in this report show unequivocally that they are possible to implement.



# APPENDIX

## THE SURVEY RESULTS

Country	Actions undertaken	Through social dialogue	How			Level			
			Neg	Cons	Com	Nat	Reg	Loc	Inst
Albania	Yes	No	X	2	2	2	X	X	2
Armenia	Yes	Yes	4	5	4	4	4	3	3
Austria	Yes	Don't know	1	3	5	5	X	X	X
Belgium (COV)	Yes	Yes	4	4	5	3	4	4	4
Belgium (MAW) EFEE	Yes	No	1	4	4	2	4	4	5
Belgium (GO) EFEE	Yes	Yes	3	5	4	1	5	3	2
Belgium (FWB)	Yes	Yes	4	4	4	X	5	5	5
Bulgaria	Yes	Yes	5	4	5	4	4	5	5
Croatia (CTU)	No	No answer	X	2	2	1	X	X	X
Croatia (UHSR) EFEE	No	No answer	1	2	3	3	3	4	4
Croatia (IURHEC)	No	No	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Croatia (TU-WPSEC)	No	Don't know	5	5	5	5	4	3	4
Czech Republic	No	No	1	2	4	5	1	1	5
Cyprus (OELMEK)*	No	Don't know	4	2	2	2	2	3	1
Cyprus (KTOEÖS)	Yes	No	1	5	5	1	5	2	5
Cyprus (MOEC) EFEE	Yes	Yes	X	5	5	5	2	2	5
Cyprus (CTTTU)	Yes	Yes	3	1	4	3	3	3	4
Denmark (GL)	No	No answer	2	4	3	4	X	2	2
Denmark (DUT)	Yes	Yes	X	4	3	1	2	3	4
Denmark (UED)	Yes	Yes	2	2	3	2	2	3	3
Denmark (DLF)	Yes	Yes	3	5	4	4	1	4	3
Denmark (DM)	Yes	Don't know	3	2	5	3	2	4	4
Estonia (EEMU)	No	No answer	X	X	5	5	4	4	3
Estonia (UNI-VERSITAS)	Yes	Yes	X	3	2	4	X	3	2
Finland (OA)	Yes	Yes	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

Country	Actions undertaken	Through social dialogue	How			Level			
			Neg	Cons	Com	Nat	Reg	Loc	Inst
Finland (KT) EFEE	Don't know	No answer	2	3	2	5	3	3	4
Finland (FUURT)	Yes	No	X	1	3	3	X	X	3
France (SNES)*	Yes	Yes	X	2	X	3	2	X	2
France (SNUipp)	Yes	Yes	1	2	3	X	X	2	5
France (SNCS)	Yes	No	1	1	1	5	1	1	3
Georgia	No	No	5	4	4	5	4	5	5
Germany (VBE)	Yes	Yes	X	5	5	3	5	4	X
Germany (GEW)	Yes	Yes	2	4	5	2	4	4	2
Greece	Yes	No	1	X	3	5	X	X	X
Hungary	No	No answer	X	X	X	1	X	X	1
Iceland	Yes	No	X	4	4	2	4	2	4
Ireland (TUI)	Yes	Yes	3	5	4	4	2	4	5
Ireland (INTO)	Yes	Yes	5	5	4	5	5	3	3
Ireland (IFUT)	No	No answer	X	X	4	1	X	X	3
Italy	Yes	Yes	3	4	4	4	3	2	2
Kazakhstan	No	No answer	1	2	3	1	1	1	4
Kyrgyz Republic	Yes	Yes	1	2	3	1	1	1	1
Latvia	No	No answer	2	2	5	4	2	2	3
Lithuania	Yes	No	1	4	5	5	1	1	5
Luxembourg	No	No	4	3	1	3	1	3	3
Malta (MUT)	Yes	Yes	4	3	3	4	2	2	3
Malta (MEE) EFEE	Yes	Yes	4	4	4	3	5	5	5
Moldova	Yes	Yes	X	5	4	X	X	5	5
Montenegro (MoE) EFEE	Yes	No	X	X	2	X	X	X	5
Montenegro (TUE)	Yes	Yes	3	4	5	5	X	2	3
Netherlands (AOB)	Yes	No	1	5	5	3	3	4	5
Netherlands (Voraad) EFEE	Yes	Yes	4	4	4	4	4	5	5



Country	Actions undertaken	Through social dialogue	How			Level			
			Neg	Cons	Com	Nat	Reg	Loc	Inst
Norway (JEN)	Yes	No	X	5	5	5	5	5	1
Norway (NAR)	Yes	Yes	3	4	4	3	3	3	3
Poland (SKOiW)	Yes	No	1	3	4	5	1	3	2
Poland (ZNP)	Yes	Yes	X	1	2	1	4	4	4
Portugal (SIN-DEP)	No	No answer	1	2	4	4	5	5	2
Portugal (FEN-PROF)	No	No answer	X	1	5	1	1	1	5
Portugal (CNEF) EFEE	Yes	No	3	4	3	2	3	3	2
Portugal (FNE)	Yes	No	X	X	X	X	5	X	3
Romania (EDU-FORM) EFEE	No	Don't know	X	5	2	5	1	1	5
Romania (NTUF)	No	No answer	2	3	4	4	3	2	2
Romania (FSLI)	Yes	Yes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Serbia (TUS)	Yes	Yes	2	4	5	5	4	4	5
Serbia (UESTS)	No	No answer	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Scotland	Yes	Yes	2	4	5	5	3	3	2
Slovakia	No	No answer	X	X	1	1	X	X	1
Slovenia (ESTUS)	Yes	Yes	5	2	1	2	3	2	1
Slovenia (NKOS)	Yes	No	2	3	3	4	2	2	2
Slovenia (ZRVS) EFEE	Yes	No	X	5	5	5	1	1	5
Spain (CSIF)	No	No answer	2	2	5	5	4	2	5
Spain (UGT)	Yes	Yes	3	3	4	4	3	3	3
Sweden (LF)	Yes	Yes	3	5	5	5	2	5	4
Sweden (SULF)	Yes	Yes	1	4	4	4	1	1	4
Switzerland	Yes	No	1	3	5	4	4	2	2
UK (NASUWT)	Yes	Yes	2	3	4	2	X	4	5
UK (UCU)	Yes	Yes	1	3	5	1	X	X	5
Uzbekistan	No	No	5	1	3	2	3	4	5

X – No action

\* Reported twice

1=least likely; 5=most likely

Neg=Negotiations; Cons=Consultations; Com=Communication

Nat=National; Reg=Regional; Loc=Local; Inst=Institutional

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