Case studies on curriculum, pedagogy, and school climate interventions tackling inequalities

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Editors

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **ISOTIS consortium** aims to understand and contribute to solutions on how Europe may tackle early and persistent social and educational inequalities. As schools and classrooms consist of important levels of analysis and intervention to reach this ambitious goal, it is imperative that we understand how to design and implement curricula, pedagogies, and school social climate interventions that effectively promote inclusiveness and belongingness.

In this report, we present and discuss the findings of **seven in-depth case studies** of curriculum, pedagogy, and/or social climate interventions currently ongoing in seven European countries, from distinct geographic regions, diverse in their income levels, research traditions, education and welfare systems, and immigrant integration policies: England, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Portugal.

Within the **conceptual framework** of the bioecological theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), multicultural education (Banks, 2015), and multiculturalism as a policy (Berry, 1984, 2013), our **goal** is to describe the key **success features** and the main **facilitators** of promising interventions, approaches, programs, or projects tackling educational inequalities through curriculum design and implementation, classroom practices, and/or school social climate, in early childhood education and in primary school. By identifying success features and facilitators in diverse innovative and promising interventions, across multiple education systems, we aim to strengthen the current knowledge base on potential transferable solutions for promoting inclusiveness and belongingness across European classrooms and schools, thus informing researchers, practitioners, and policymakers on potential paths to move the field forward. We also aim to identify **obstacles** experienced within selected interventions, while describing and analysing the types of solutions identified or previously tested and, thus, retrieving additional lessons from ongoing efforts.

Regarding our **findings**, across case studies, we identified **success features** that cover the range of ecological levels of analysis: individual, microsystem (including patterns of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations), mesosystem (focusing on connecting school and families as well as professionals), and exosystem (focusing on mobilizing external resources to support schools and professionals). We also identified success features focusing on supporting school culture and values, highlighting the nature of the school as a cultural microsystem (Vélez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Oppenheimer, Vega-Molina, & García Coll, 2017).

We further identified **facilitators**, closely related to success features, and that address a wide range of factors, including the focus of the interventions; operational dimensions related to program design and implementation; staff characteristics, involvement, and commitment; strong leadership; and family involvement. Importantly, a key success feature in one intervention (such as family involvement) may be a facilitator in a different intervention. The way forward for some interventions may be to incorporate current facilitators as explicit or intrinsic features of the intervention, thus maximizing their potential positive effects.

We also identified and discussed **obstacles** covering a wide range of issues, including funding; program design; combined or multigrade classrooms; children's mobility; staff beliefs and

attitudes, limited training and/or experience, fatigue, and turnover; family/parental disconnection and insufficient involvement; language (including ambivalence in Roma communities regarding the integration of the Roma language in the curriculum); and difficult cooperation with other (semi)professional organizations in the community.

Our discussion of the success features, facilitators, and obstacles identified within the seven case studies has important **implications**. The first implication is that much can be done at all levels of the ecological system that is the school and the school community, and a wide range of options is available for practitioners and policy makers. Indeed, although positive influences and supports are required from more distal levels, most success features are located within activity settings, highlighting the significant role of teachers and other practitioners. Further, although examples of intervention features could be identified for most dimensions of multicultural education (Banks, 2015), content integration, equity pedagogies, prejudice reduction activities, empowering school cultures, and, especially, critical approaches to the knowledge construction process, do not seem to be consistently at the centre of intervention design nor do they come together often within transformative interventions. Notably, reduction of prejudice and discrimination does not seem to be explicitly addressed as a goal, with implications for programme design.

In sum, we found **great variation** within selected interventions suggesting a range of solutions is available to tackle social and educational inequalities. We studied interventions that tackle inequalities at the **school level**, based on a clear funding strategy, strong commitment from leadership, and an embedded professional-development component, either building on available resources or allocating specialized resources to provide onsite support to individual professionals and the whole organization. However, we also studied interventions that tackle inequalities by providing additional support to selected children at risk for social and educational inequalities, based on additional activities, delivered within the school, but designed and implemented by external resources, funded through (often temporary) local projects. These **local targeted interventions** are valuable for schools as they tackle (i.e., compensate for) school limitations in addressing the needs of children at risk of or already experiencing inequalities by mobilizing key community resources. Therefore, external resources can be essential in bringing about desired changes in school practices and social climate towards equity and belongingness. Such external resources can be mobilized through different solutions that ensure stability in implementation, such as allocating structural funds to schools to acquire external services or giving municipalities a prominent (funding) role in orchestrating partnerships between schools and external organizations.

Based on our findings, we **recommend** an expanded and comprehensive view of the conditions needed to design and implement successful interventions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), going beyond activities, roles, and relationships within classroom settings to include reciprocal family-school relationships; staff selection, training, and continuing supports; as well as embeddedness in a strong institutional equity culture (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). We further argue that the five dimensions of the multicultural education framework (Banks, 2015) merit greater consideration and integration to ensure school transformation towards equity. Importantly, such dimensions may serve as paths to value heritage cultures and promote positive contact more systematically. Finally, consistent with previous work (Aguiar, Silva, et al., 2017), findings suggest the key role of high-quality research designs to ensure success in developing and implementing effective interventions.

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Subsequent steps within ISOTIS include the development of a virtual learning environment prototype aiming to support school professionals in developing cultural awareness and plurilingual competence in children (and families). Based on lessons learned from the analysis of the seven case studies, we formulate **implications for ISOTIS' future work** on curriculum, pedagogy, and social climate. Such recommendations encompass features of high-quality program design; alignment with school needs, values, and culture; family participation; frequent, regular, and increasingly more complex use by target groups; and sustainability.

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ISOTIS

1. INTRODUCTION

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CONTEXT AND GOALS

The ISOTIS consortium aims to understand and contribute to solutions on how Europe may tackle early and persistent social and educational inequalities. As schools and classrooms consist of important levels of analysis and intervention to reach this ambitious goal, it is imperative that we understand how to design and implement curricula, pedagogies, and school social climate interventions that effectively promote inclusiveness and belongingness. Within this work, curriculum was defined as "knowledge, skills and values that children are meant to attain" (Sylva, Pastori, Lerkkanen, Ekery-Stevens, & Slot, 2016) and pedagogy was defined as "the practice (or the art, the science or the craft) of teaching" (Sylva et al., 2016), while adopting a focus on the instructional dimension of pedagogy, describing activities, strategies, and materials. Regarding school social climate, we focused on relational dimensions such as respect for diversity, classroom and school connectedness and engagement, and social support (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013).

ISOTIS' work on inclusive curricula, pedagogies, and school social climate interventions began with the description of current trends and challenges regarding interventions tackling educational and social inequalities in centre-based early childhood education and in primary schools (see Aguiar et al., 2017), electing the bioecological theoretical framework (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), multicultural education (Banks, 2015), and multiculturalism as a policy (Berry, 1984, 2013) as key conceptual guides.

Second, we identified, described, and critically analysed 78 promising interventions used in eight European countries to target social and educational inequalities through curriculum, pedagogy, and school social climate (see Aguiar, Silva, et al., 2017). Specifically, we conducted an inventory of promising interventions, within the classroom and school microsystems, aiming to promote educational equality and belongingness in immigrant, Roma, and low-income children attending early childhood and primary education provision in the Czech Republic, England, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Portugal. Target groups were selected based on the persistent educational disadvantages and increased risk of social exclusion they experience, while selected countries represented different geographical areas, national income levels, education systems, welfare regimes, and integration policies (see Aguiar, Silva, et al., 2017). Based on this inventory, we learned that participating countries are

> testing or implementing a considerable number of very diverse and often comprehensive interventions targeting social and educational inequalities through curriculum, pedagogy, and social climate. Language support seems to be widespread within these interventions, appropriately recognizing the foundational nature of language skills for learning,

communication, and belongingness. However, our theory-driven and evidence-based critical analysis of effective and promising interventions suggests there is considerable room for further development in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of such interventions. Specifically, comprehensive multicultural policies that explicitly support culture maintenance, communication, and positive contact among minority or disadvantaged and majority or advantaged students, through equity pedagogies, may be especially valuable in guiding future developments. Based on our findings, increased support for immigrant and minority students' heritage language and culture, while promoting positive contact and interactions between majority and minority children, seems to be a first key step towards designing and implementing transformative interventions that positively impact belongingness, wellbeing, social cohesion, learning, and lifetime success. (Aguiar, Silva, et al., 2017, pp. 10-11)

Informed by these findings and driven by theory, we subsequently proposed preliminary recommendations targeting national and European-level policy-makers as well as professionals aiming to design, implement, or evaluate interventions at the classroom and/or school level. Such recommendations covered values driving decision-making processes; resource-based approaches; support to the participation and competence development of key actors; and issues related to monitorization, evaluation, and dissemination (see Aguiar, Silva, et al., 2017).

The current report presents the goals, conceptual framework, methods, and findings related to our third task, which aimed to further deepen our understanding of inclusive curriculum, pedagogy, and school social climate interventions. Specifically, our current **goal** is to describe the key success features and the main facilitators (i.e., conditions of success) of promising interventions, approaches, programs, or projects tackling educational inequalities through curriculum design and implementation, classroom practices, and/or school social climate, in early childhood education and in primary school. By **success features**, we mean the characteristics, processes, strategies, and conditions that are intrinsic to the design and logic model of the intervention and are key in producing the desired outcomes. By **facilitators**, we mean (mostly external) factors or conditions that support implementation processes or assist in reaching the intended outcomes. By identifying success features and facilitators of diverse innovative and promising interventions, across multiple education systems, we endeavour to strengthen the current knowledge base on potential transferable solutions for promoting inclusiveness and belongingness across European classrooms and schools, thus informing researchers, practitioners, and policymakers on potential paths to move the field forward. We also aim to identify **obstacles** experienced within selected interventions, while describing and analysing the types of solutions identified or previously tested and, thus, retrieving additional lessons from ongoing efforts. Findings will inform subsequent ISOTIS tasks and, especially, the design and implementation of a cooperative virtual learning environment meant to support teachers in innovating curriculum, pedagogy, and social climate approaches by promoting the visibility of languages and cultures as well as intercultural and plurilingual competences.

To meet our current goals, we conducted **seven in-depth case studies** of curriculum, pedagogy, and/or social climate interventions currently ongoing in seven European countries, from distinct geographic regions, diverse in their income levels, research traditions, education and welfare systems, and immigrant integration policies: England, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Portugal (see Aguiar et al., 2017 for a brief overview of country features).

Acknowledging the importance of language support in reducing the gaps between native students and students with an immigrant or ethnic minority background (OECD, 2016) and the role of language as a pillar of student's cultural heritage and of intercultural communication (Berry, 2013), we prioritized the selection of case studies focusing on promising approaches that either explicitly acknowledged and valued students' first language or that targeted, to some extent, students who were learning the majority language as a second language. However, inclusiveness is understood broadly to encompass all children experiencing social and educational inequalities in selected sites (e.g., children with disabilities).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Central to the ISOTIS design, the **bioecological model** of human development, as proposed by Bronfenbrenner (e.g., Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), provides an overarching lens to understand the constellation of dynamic, multilevel, and interrelated influences on children's competence development. It is, therefore, an invaluable conceptual framework for analysing the multilevel success features and facilitators of interventions aiming to transform schools and classrooms and support students' learning and development. According to this model, development results from recurring (i.e., stable, consistent, and predictable) and progressively more complex interactions between a developing person and the people, objects, and symbols in his/her immediate environment. Such interactions or **proximal processes** are considered the engines of development, but their power varies as a function of (1) the person's behavioural dispositions, resources, and demand characteristics; (2) the features of the immediate and distal contexts; and (3) time.

Immediate contexts of children's experiences or **microsystems** involve a "pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 1645). Three types of microsystems result in the enrichment of children's sociocultural experiences and, therefore, in opportunities for competence development: microsystems that are big enough (e.g., providing a wide set of relationships in terms of age groups, gender, and backgrounds), microsystems that are two-sided (i.e., involving reciprocity or power balance), and microsystems characterized by positive affect (see Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992).

As children lives take place in multiple microsystems, the quantity and quality of the relationships between these settings may also influence their development. Such relationships comprise the **mesosystem**, a system of two of more microsystems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The richness and strength of the mesosystem derives from frequent and high-quality connections between the microsystems children participate in (e.g., positive home-school relationships) (Garbarino & Ganzel, 2000).

Human development is also indirectly shaped by events or processes occurring in settings that do not contain the developing person in so far as they influence processes within the microsystem. This extension of the ecological universe influencing development is the **exosystem** (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). This level results in opportunities for development when significant adults in children's microsystems (e.g., parents, teachers) are treated in a way that enhances their behaviour within the microsystem they share with children (Garbarino & Ganzel, 2000).

INTRODUCTION

In his initial propositions regarding the ecology of human development, Bronfenbrenner (1977) also proposed the concept of **macrosystem** to refer to the "overarching institutional patterns of the culture or subculture" (p. 515). We build on this concept to frame schools' culture and institutional patterns, acknowledging the recent revision of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory wherein schools are considered cultural microsystems, with culture embedded in everyday practices and activities (Vélez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Oppenheimer, Vega-Molina, & García Coll, 2017).

Consistent with the inclusion of immigrants and the Roma ethnic minority as target groups, we also build on Banks' **multicultural education** framework, as it aims to transform schools so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds experience educational equality (Banks, 2015). Banks proposed five dimensions of multicultural education that are relevant to the analysis of interventions tackling social and educational inequalities at the school level:

- content integration (i.e., integrating ethnic and multicultural content across subjects);
- addressing the knowledge construction process (i.e., helping students understand how knowledge construction is influenced by the racial, ethnic, and social positions of individuals and groups);
- prejudice reduction (i.e., helping students develop positive attitudes towards different ethnic groups);
- equity pedagogy (i.e., facilitating the achievement of low-status students, namely through cooperative learning structures);
- and empowering school culture and social structure.

We further rely on **multiculturalism as a policy** (Berry, 1984, 2013) to support our analysis of success features and facilitators within curriculum, pedagogy, and school social climate interventions promoting inclusiveness and school belongingness. As a policy, multiculturalism aims to enhance mutual acceptance and to improve the quality of intercultural relations among all groups and communities. Therefore, multicultural policies support (a) *cultural diversity*, by encouraging culture maintenance and development among all groups; (b) *intercultural contact*, by encouraging the sharing of cultural expressions, providing opportunities for intergroup contact, and removing barriers to full and equitable participation; and *intercultural communication*, by supporting the learning of one or more official languages as a means for contact and participation. Importantly, multiculturalism as a policy requires that both **culture maintenance** and **positive contact**, two dimensions of the acculturation model (Berry, 2005), are legislated and acted upon.

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2. METHODS

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CASE STUDY SELECTION

Participating countries' national teams selected, among the interventions included in their National Inventory of Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Social Climate Interventions Tackling Social and Educational Inequalities, one ongoing intervention that met (most of the) following criteria: (a) explicit first and/or second language support, (b) explicit family involvement, and (c) ICT activities. If none of the interventions included in the national inventory was ongoing or occurring in sites willing to participate, partners were asked to select one intervention that met the same eligibility criteria or one education setting that was using strategies or approaches similar to those described in the initial inventory. When selecting the interventions, we also aimed do ensure that all ISOTIS relevant target groups (i.e., immigrants, Roma, and low-income) and both early childhood education and primary school were covered.

Table 2.1 provides a brief description of the nature of seven selected case studies, regarding targeted level(s) of education, target group(s), and type of intervention. As intended, the seven case studies under study represent diverse interventions, with a balanced number of interventions targeting early childhood education (ECE) and primary school, and cover all target groups under consideration.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

A common methodological approach was used across the seven case studies, involving multiple data collection approaches and multiple informants to maximize opportunities for triangulation and, thus, increase the range and depth of analysis. Specifically, national teams conducted: (1) **in-depth semi-structured interviews** or **focus groups** with key staff (i.e., programme developers, site coordinators, teachers and/or other staff implementing the intervention), and parents with different levels of engagement and profiles, whenever possible; (2) **analyses of documentation and published data**, whenever available; and (3) in some case studies, **analyses of children's perspectives and productions,** elicited within a proposed classroom project (see Annex A). In addition, member checks were secured, allowing stakeholders involved in the case study/educational setting the opportunity to provide their inputs, comments, and feedback on each national draft report. Informed consent was obtained and ISOTIS' data management guidelines and national ethical standards were followed.

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Table 2.1. *Brief characterization of selected case studies*

COUNTRY	NAME OF THE INTERVENTION	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	TARGET GROUP	TYPE OF INTERVENTION
England	Speech Bubbles	**Primary** (5-7 years)	Children with communication difficulties, including children with English as an additional language	Drama programme (school time and school setting)
Germany	Language day-care centres – Because language is the key to the world	**ECE**	Centres serving socially disadvantaged areas and families with a refugee background	Language (L1 and L2) supports embedded in daily routines
Greece	Pedagogical utilization of linguistic and cultural diversity at kindergarten	**ECE**	Centres serving communities with a high proportion of migrants & low-income children	Use and development of multilingual materials and production of identity texts
Italy	Inclusion and promotion of plurilingualism in Narcisi kindergarten School of Milan	**ECE**	Centre serving a community with a high proportion of migrants & low-income children	Preservation of a language of origin: Arabic language teaching laboratories. Italian as L2 laboratories
Netherlands	*De Vreedzame School* (The Peaceable School)	**ECE & Primary**	Universal delivery, with emphasis on migrants & low income	Democratic and participatory school and classroom approaches with a special focus on conflict resolution
Poland	General and specialized tutoring	**Primary**	Low income	Individualized or small group general and specialized tutoring
Portugal	*Mãcheia de Chaborillhos* (A handful of kids)	**Primary**	Schools/classrooms serving diverse groups including Roma children	Intercultural education activities addressing Roma history, culture, and language; Socio-emotional learning group activities.

Note. ECE = Early childhood education. L1 = First language. L2 = Second language (I.e., language of instruction).

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DATA ANALYSES

Task coordinators proposed a set of theoretically-based themes or analytical categories for the data analysis: (1) **history of the intervention**, including relevant context information, goals and needs addressed, theoretical background, and supporting evidence; (2) **key activities**, including information regarding their type, structure, and content; location and timing; professionals responsible for implementation, and participants; (3) **features of success**, focusing on unique intrinsic features and strengths of the intervention; (4) **facilitators**, that is, (external) factors that contribute to the success of the intervention; (5) **barriers and how to overcome them**, with a special focus on barriers and solutions with policy implications; 6) **perceived impact for key actors**, including perceived or documented outcomes for children/students, professionals, families and communities, as well as unintended results, such as benefits for children and/or other actors not specifically targeted; (7) **innovative features of the intervention**; (8) **lessons learned and future directions**; and 9) **country specific themes** (see Annex A for a more detailed description of the proposed analytical themes).

REPORTING

Case study national reports were based on a common template (see Annex A), aiming to produce coherent research outputs, with appropriate contextual and historical information to support the informed extraction of communalities and specificities regarding success features, facilitators, obstacles and solutions.

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3. ENGLAND: 'SPEECH BUBBLES'

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ABSTRACT

This report concerns a school-based drama intervention for children aged five to seven years. The programme, 'Speech Bubbles', is delivered throughout the school year to a small group, referred for a range of communication difficulties, such as reluctance to speak in class or lack of English. It is delivered by a teaching assistant based in the school and a drama practitioner who is not part of the school staff. The programme emphasises creative responses from the children when acting out narratives created by members of the group. Research has indicated that participation in the programme is likely to lead to an increase in pupils' self-efficacy and communication skills. Interviews were conducted for ISOTIS with the programme developers, with staff delivering the programme and with parents all support existing research. Children from many backgrounds have taken part and it appears, both from the documented evidence and from the comments of professionals involved in delivering the programme, that this programme is well received and leads to impressive gains for the children. One highlight mentioned frequently was that the programme is valued by children as it is focussed on play and enjoyment, something which interviewees considered to be lacking to some extent in the primary school curriculum. It is low in cost after the initial staff training as many interviewees consider that it would be of value in all schools, and particularly those with many children experiencing disadvantage.

Keywords: play, drama, self-confidence, group, communication

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Table 3.1. *Targeted outcomes, key success features, and facilitators of success of 'Speech Bubbles'*

GOALS	FEATURES OF SUCCESS	FACILITATORS OF SUCCESS AND/OR INNOVATIONS
Individual socio-emotional outcomes • Improving children's self-esteem / confidence • Supporting children's well-being **Interpersonal outcomes** • Developing children's communication skills	**Microsystem: Type of activities / curriculum** • Focus on play and enjoyment • Structured sessions (repetition/routines that foster a sense of security) • Clear rules • Non-directive, non-judgmental experience (e.g., no grading) • Non-stigmatizing (i.e., prestigious) experience • Children's participation • Positive relationships with children **Mesosystem: Connecting schools and families** • Parental involvement in selected activities **Mesosystem: Connecting professionals** • Cooperation between professionals **Exosystem: Supporting professionals and the school** • Purposeful teacher/staff selection and/or training	**Focus** • Building on children's imaginations or everyday experiences • Supporting children's identity **Design** • Clear theoretical background • Strong evidence-base • Strong identity of the intervention (clear goals) • Relevance for children with a range of backgrounds • Tools supporting implementation and / or ensuring fidelity • Monitoring and evaluation **Staff characteristics, involvement, and commitment** • Staff continuity **Implementation processes** • Joint work by school staff and staff from an outside agency • Strong commitment from strong leadership **Additional conditions for implementation** • Regular space (continuity) • Small group delivery

BACKGROUND

Speech Bubbles is a primary school drama intervention supporting children's communication skills, confidence and wellbeing, developed by the London Bubble Theatre with professional support from speech therapists, educational psychologists, and Southwark Pupil Development Centre. It is a weekly drama programme taking place in school time over 24 weeks, designed to give young children an opportunity to have fun telling their own imagined stories and acting them out in a safe and playful space. An experienced teaching assistant (TA) or learning mentor selected by the school delivers the programme with a trained freelance drama practitioner (DP). The TAs and DPs attend an initial training day with the London Bubble Theatre company (LB), a second day halfway through the project, plus a final reflective session at the end of the school year. They are able to access support and advice from LB during the year. They deliver a weekly 45-minute drama session to a group of 10 children in Key Stage 1 or 2 (aged five to seven).

The programme has a particular emphasis on supporting children to gain confidence and develop their physical skills and verbal communication. A story drama approach places the child at the centre of the activity, and they take on different roles, becoming at different times, author, performer and audience. In each Speech Bubbles session, the children participate in a regular and repeated series of games and activities that encourage them to listen to each other and to express themselves. Then each week, at the end of the session, one of the children takes a turn to make up a story with the TA or DP for the other children to act out in the next session. After the session, time is allocated for the TA and DP to reflect on the session and co-plan, discussing each of the children and noting their progress in receptive and expressive language and attention/listening. If any specific concerns are identified, a post card system is used to convey that information to the classroom teacher. At two points during the programme parents are invited to be part of the session.

Reason for selection as promising/effective: The UK **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)** was established in 2011 by the Sutton Trust, as lead charity in partnership with Impetus Trust (now part of Impetus-The Private Equity Foundation) and received a founding £125m grant from the UK Department for Education (DfE). Together, the EEF and Sutton Trust are the government-designated 'What Works Centre' for improving education outcomes for school-aged children. The EEF produced a **toolkit** comparing the effectiveness of various interventions/approaches designed to close the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/).

For the WP4 inventory of programmes (task 4.2), programmes were selected from the Language and Literacy programmes identified by the EEF as promising. Speech Bubbles was selected for a case study from the eight UK programmes included in the WP4 Inventory because it is not yet widespread in schools but has a strong and growing evidence base. In particular, it has been identified by the EEF for further research because an independent review of Speech Bubbles indicated that it had promise to develop pupils' self-efficacy and communication skills. The EEF are supporting a randomised controlled trial of the programme in 25 schools, selected as a project with high potential to generate new evidence of what works.

The population served is in line with the aims of ISOTIS. Children participating have high levels of disadvantage and educational need (Pro Bono Economics, 2018). Based on figures from the 2015/2016 academic year: 61% of Speech Bubbles participants had English as an additional

language compared to 20% in England; 49% were eligible for the Pupil Premium (eligibility is based on low family income) compared to 15% of pupils in England; and 31% had either an Education, Health or Care plan (EHCP) or a statement of Special educational Needs (SEN) compared to 14% in England.

Aims: Children in years 1 and 2 of primary school (ages 5 to 7) are referred to Speech Bubbles for a range of communication issues. The referral guidelines indicate that the programme is not designed to address issues that would require referral for individual speech and language therapy, and that it may not be effective for children with complex emotional and behavioural concerns. However, the programme is being successfully delivered in a school for children with diagnoses on the autistic spectrum with small modifications such as cards with tactile or visual stimuli. Based on several evaluation studies (see next section for details) it is expected that participating children will gain in their understanding of spoken language, their story telling and narratives and their social interactions. There are likely to be improvements in wellbeing, in particular confidence with communication, emotional engagement, and empathy in social interactions.

Number of sites: It is currently being implemented in England with a focus on disadvantaged target areas, typified by being home to families and children from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Working with the International Centre for Social Franchising, LB developed a franchise model to support other theatre companies and venues to deliver Speech Bubbles in schools local to them. In the 2016/2017 academic year 42 schools were engaged in the programme and in the 2017/2018 year 38 schools were involved, the programme delivered by 10 theatre organisations based in seven London boroughs (Greenwich, Hackney, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets) and in Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale and Tunbridge Wells.

Schools pay a fee to the theatre organisation responsible for the programme in their area (up to about £6,000 for the year depending on other grant support) to cover the drama practitioner and the theatre company's costs in training and supporting the practitioners. Currently schools taking part in the EEF RCT are receiving the programme at a reduced rate.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS, PARTICIPANTS, AND ANALYSIS

Ethical approval for the study was received from the University of Oxford, Department of Education.

Semi-structured interviews: With the assistance of LB, volunteers were sought from among practitioners delivering the programme. They received information and then gave written informed consent. In addition to the programme developers at LB, practitioners were interviewed who worked in different schools in the London area and the North West of England, to provide a range of perspectives. In total 9 interviews were conducted as follows:

- 2 programme developers/managers based at LB, who manage the social franchise with other theatre companies, engage with evaluators to increase the evidence base, seek grant funding to support the programme, train and support practitioners, and also deliver the programme. (PD)
- 1 theatre director responsible for managing its delivery in five schools in another city. (TD)

- 4 drama practitioners/teaching assistants responsible for delivering the programme. (P[1])
- 2 parents of children participating in Speech Bubbles. (PAR)

The professionals interviewed (5 female, 2 male) had a range of academic qualifications at degree level or above and/or drama qualifications; all had experience of working with young children, and work in school settings and/or youth theatres prior to their involvement with Speech Bubbles. They had been delivering Speech Bubbles on average for 5.4 years (range from 3 to 9 years). The parents interviewed had professional occupations.

Observations: An end of year staff training event was observed, and an event with presentations from evaluators.

Documentary analysis: A number of documentary materials were reviewed (see section F 'Resources'), providing detailed information about the programme's development, its aims and content, and evaluations covering process, outcomes, and value for money. They include reports on the precursor to Speech Bubbles, 'Speak Out' (Hughes, 2012; O'Neil, 2009), descriptions of the programme and reports on progress by its developer (Annand, 2010; 2012; 2017), qualitative evaluations (Barnes[2] 2012; 2013; 2015; Lloyd, 2014; Robinson, 2010; Samson, 2015), a study of the impact for staff delivering the programme (Afful, 2016), a pre-test/post-test comparison group study looking at the impact on children's development (Price & Ansong, 2018) and a cost effectiveness evaluation (Pro Bono Economics, 2018). In addition, the protocol for the ongoing RCT looking at impacts on children's communication and wellbeing was studied (Shure et al., 2018).

DATA ANALYSIS

Semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed with anonymity. They were read with attention to the features of success, facilitators and barriers identified in the manual. The same process was applied to evaluation reports and journal articles, to identify in particular how the programme might be offered in a range of contexts, and in other countries in Europe. Quotes from interviews are given in italics, with codes to indicate the nature of the respondent.

SUMMARY OF THE INTERVENTION LOGIC MODEL

The theory of change for Speech Bubbles (see Figure 3.1) was developed in conjunction with *Project Oracle* https://project-oracle.com/about-us/validation/, an organisation that supports children and youth organisations and funders to produce, use and share high-quality evidence so that better decisions can be made to improve how interventions are funded and delivered. *Project Oracle* have validated Speech Bubbles as having reached Standard 2, the key requirements being a theory of change, an evaluation plan showing what evidence will be collected with details of methods and timing, and at least one report evaluating the intervention that measures relevant outcomes in an appropriate way with evidence showing that a change has occurred. The theory of change rests on the assumptions that consistent participation in the programme will support both receptive and expressive language and turn-taking – seen as important for effective

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[1] Following quotes, given the small number of participants, both DPs and TAs are referred to as simply practitioner (P) to retain anonymity
[2] Note that the evaluator Dr. Jonathan Barnes has no connection with this report's author

communication. This is expected to lead to improved academic attainment and improved personal and social well-being, which will in turn contribute to improved life chances. The economic evaluation (Pro Bono Economics 2018) has estimated in detail the expected short- and long-term benefits and the value for money, based on existing research evidence.
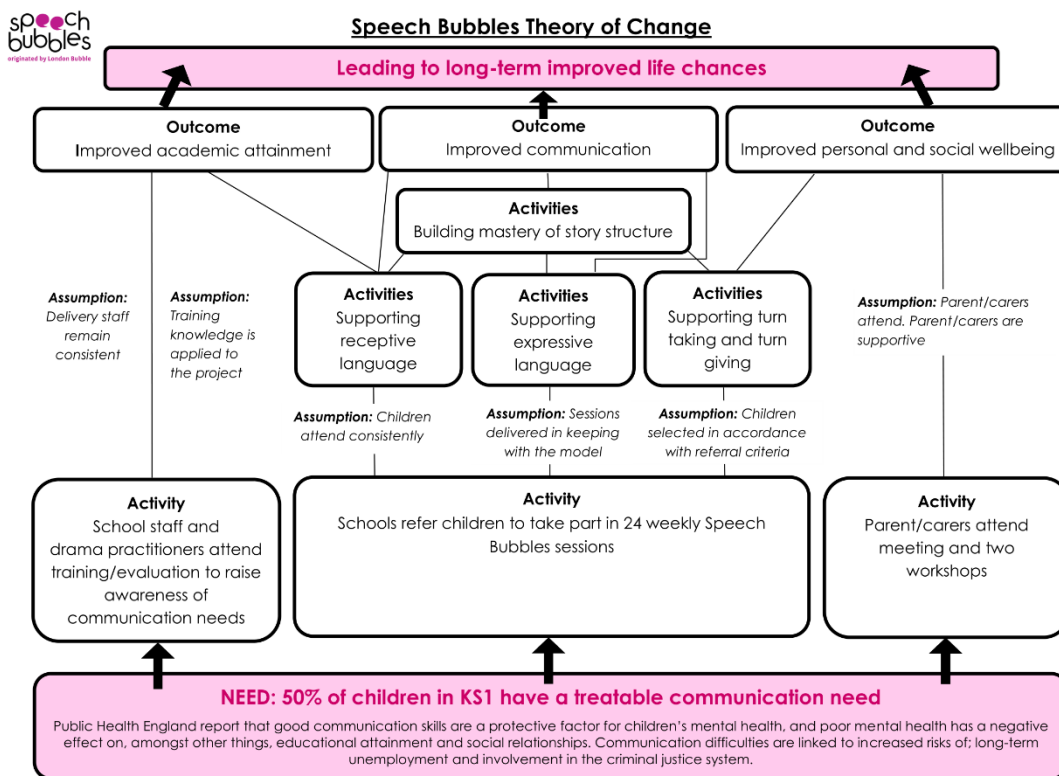
Figure 3.1. Logic Model for 'Speech Bubbles'. Reprinted from "Speech Bubbles" by London Bubble, 2018 (http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/uploads/Speech%20Bubbles/Speech%20Bubbles%20Theory%20of%20 Change.pdf*).* Copyright 2018 by London Bubble Theatre Company.

THEMES

THEME 1: HISTORY

London Bubbles' philosophical and theoretical approach to providing drama workshops in schools is informed by the "*Play what you say*" work of Vivian Gussin Paley (Paley, 1981; Cooper 2005) coupled with activities and conventions from the wider canon of drama in education and participatory theatre. "*Play what you say*" places the child at the centre of the activity, and they become at different times, author, performer and audience. The key component of the programme is that each child has a turn to tell an adult a story, the adult scribes the story as the child tells it, with no grammatical corrections, and that is used as the content for the story acting in the next session. The adult is like a stage director and each child in turn is an author, with all taking turns in writing the story. A story square is marked out on the floor with masking tape, the children act out each other's stories in the square, playing lots of characters, landscapes, animals, buildings. The children work individually and in groups, being invited into the square to bring to

life just a short section of the story while the rest of the children act as audience until their turn arrives to take centre stage. They do not use any props or materials.

Speech Bubbles was developed out of a previous school intervention, 'Speak Out'. A consortium of 18 schools in SE London was running this small group programme, which had a varied drama approach (Hughes 2012; Lloyd, 2014; O'Neil 2009). A group of about 10 children had drama sessions with four adults – a speech and language therapist, a member of school staff and two drama practitioners from the local theatre. With budget reductions affecting speech and language services, the programme was analysed and developed to its present form so that there was more of a focus on the drama, with a refined format making delivery more consistent between schools and reducing costs by involving fewer adults, specifically one drama practitioner (DP) and one member of the school staff, usually a teaching assistant. Collaboration with local speech and language therapists is ongoing as needed. The key assumptions, as described by the programme developer, are as follows:

> *How we communicate affects how we feel and how we feel affects how we communicate. That leads everything we do.* (PD)

> *Communication is a whole-body thing, we are not there to get children to speak, we are there to encourage their communication, physically, their gestures, all of those things. Sometimes they will choose Speech Bubbles as a place to speak, sometimes they won't. What we will do is find ways that they can communicate, and build their esteem, and lower their anxiety.* (PD)

In addition, there is a clear focus on being strength-based and non-judgmental in a context that has clear rules and guidance about optimum communication (e.g., taking turns, listening, sitting well, looking at the person who is talking to you) that are repeated at the start of each session. The participating children are able to develop the extent of their involvement at their own pace, with no judgement about how little or much they take part.

> *It is important for them to do things at their own rate, so we take the pressure off, but with supportive encouragement.* (P)

THEME 2: KEY ACTIVITIES

Content of activities: The main activity is drama, acting out the children's stories. Other activities prior to the drama section of the session are designed to give the children a sense of security and routine while at the same time providing them with skills that will enhance their wellbeing. They are designed to be gentle, sharing and welcoming to create a structured, collaborative and fun environment. Activities are playful and stimulate the pupils' senses.

Each session starts with repeating some principles of the group as a chant: "In Speech Bubbles we do good listening, in Speech Bubbles, we take turns, in Speech Bubbles we are gentle with each other and in Speech Bubbles we do good acting!" The values of the chant are reinforced throughout the sessions, instilling these ideals into the children so that they can apply both in their Speech Bubbles session and during their other school activities. Then other drama-related activities/games take place, which the DP may vary depending on their own experiences and preferences. However, these activities do not involve using any materials and are usually repeated each week so that they become very familiar for the children. Thus, one activity might

be putting names into an imaginary bucket allowing each child to use gestures or words to create their own identity. The group might then be asked to blow an imaginary bubble and slowly step inside it, cleaning the walls from within and floating up.

The main part of the session involves hearing and acting out the story that was composed during the previous session by one child. All of the group members, including the adults, work out ways to act out the story, using only their imaginations, their bodies and their voices. However, the acting is non-judgemental in that each child can decide if, and how, they wish to verbalise and/or move. The stories can take many forms depending on the child and can vary from a list of items to a complex fantasy involving phases of action. They will have been written down verbatim by the DP or TA, with no attempt to correct grammar or to embellish the content. However, care is taken that the stories shared do not reveal sensitive information about the child or their family. After acting out the story the group are asked to pretend to take a shower to wash away the characters that they have played, turn off the shower and 'dry' themselves; then the group's mascot – a cuddly toy such as a hedgehog or meerkat, is passed round and each member is asked to tell the mascot what they enjoyed most about the session. A goodbye song is the last activity. Then all children leave except the child who is to create a story for the next session.

Professionals responsible for implementation: Two adults run the group, a DP and a TA, and the same two should ideally be responsible for the implementation throughout the entire school year. As noted they all receive training from the LB that includes, in addition to a whole day training session, sitting in on sessions in several other schools. The DP is assigned by the theatre company and the TA or other suitable member of school staff such as a learning mentor is assigned by the school administration. There are no specific academic requirements for DPs, who have a range of backgrounds such as community and youth theatre and work in schools:

> *What we are looking for is the ability to engage children in creative activity. We are really looking for a reflective observational mind set, interested in what's going on, and people who want to make theatre with children, bringing enthusiasm to the room.* (PD)

Location and timing: The 24 weekly sessions take place within the school and during the school day, each lasting 45 minutes. They start in the autumn term and run through the whole school year, with 8 sessions per term. It is requested that the same space be reserved for the sessions throughout the year, ideally a room big enough for 10 children to move around but not so big that they feel lost. It should be quiet, private, with natural light and as few decorations as possible to reduce distractions and prevent over-stimulation.

Participants: In each group there are 10 children from school years 1 and 2 (aged 5 to 7 years) with a recommendation that the children should have one of these three characteristics:

- **Lack of confidence in communicating**, including children who are selectively mute and those with English as an additional language;
- **Have difficulty organising thoughts and then communicating them**, including children who may not respond appropriately to what is being said;
- **Have poor attention, poor listening**, including children with a low level of engagement with classwork and difficulty developing positive peer to peer relationships.

Examples of referral reasons can be found in Barnes (2015, p. 14 & p. 21).

Family involvement: At two points during the programme, one in the autumn term and one in the summer term, there is an open session and all parents are invited. During those sessions stories created by the group are acted out rather than one created by a specific child. Parents are not present as observers but are instead expected to take part in the sessions, participating in all activities.

THEME 3: FEATURES OF SUCCESS

Process: A qualitative evaluation (Barnes, 2015) identified several process factors thought to be related to its success. These were: that drama has its impact through emotions, that values were integral to the programme and the children were aware of them when interviewed (e.g., kindness, trust, generosity, and attention to others), that the children were able through their own stories to address difficulties in a creative manner, and that children have few opportunities within the school day, apart from play-time, to use their bodies to communicate, to express moods, feelings and emotions. Interview respondents in this study also noted the way that drama could facilitate communication and self-worth, and that the playful aspects of the activity were central to its success, in conjunction with a non-directive approach.

> *It is not graded or marked or judged, there are no right or wrong way of doing it, there are no rules. Play is central to it, but they are in control of the narratives and how they are shaped and expressed.* (PAR)

Outcomes: Success was defined by one of the programme developers as "*Seeing a child be all that they can be in the session; they feel relaxed, open and able to lose themselves in the story*". Early action research (Annand, 2010) revealed anecdotal reports of success, such as children who had been selective mute being able to speak in the sessions, and children displaying ownership of the programme and increasing confidence. They were also beginning to share their learning and experiences in Speech Bubbles with their peers, school staff and families. In a subsequent qualitative study (Barnes, 2015) teachers were asked if they had noticed changes in the children taking part in Speech Bubbles and they noted: increased confidence, greater participation in class, better listening, increased enjoyment, improved relationships with peers, motivation and the ability to speak out, improved speaking skills, and enhanced language skills, which are in accordance with the aims of the programme. Comments made during interviews also reflected this kind of change in relevant outcomes, as observed by the practitioners over the year or as reported to them by the class teachers.

> *A good example of success is when a child can ask for help. A lot of the children who come to us may not have been identified with any difficulty, they might just disappear in the classroom, they are quiet, but we have succeeded if they are confident enough to acknowledge difficulties to the teacher, we are not solving the problem, but we are providing a platform.* (PD)

> *It gave him a sense of self-worth, I was going to say confidence, but it was more profound than that.* (PAR)

> *Because there is no formal marking the anecdotal stuff is important; teachers say on a regular basis that they have never heard that child speak before, they have never engaged normally.* (TD)

In a pre-test/post-test comparison study (Price & Ansong, 2018), independent one-to-one assessments of the children found that those who took part in the programme made statistically significant better progress that those in the comparison group in three of six aspects of language – understanding spoken language, storytelling and narrative, and social interaction, although their vocabulary was not significantly greater.

Most recently a value for money evaluation (Pro Bono Economics, 2018) demonstrated, on the basis of the available research evidence, that there was an estimated 1.8 to 1 benefit to cost ratio (BCR), representing good value for money and comparable to other educational interventions. Their overall conclusion is that Speech Bubbles is a low-cost intervention that delivers good value for money.

Unique features and strengths of the intervention: One aspect of the programme that was highlighted was that it focussed on play and enjoyment, something which interviewees considered to be lacking to some extent in the primary school curriculum.

> *I have never known another programme like it in the time I have worked in schools. The drama side of it, that's another reason why it works. That playing, acting out. In many schools the drama has gone, which is sad. Playing is really important, and being allowed to play someone else, act out feelings.* (P)

> *Play is central to it.* (PAR)

Another unique aspect identified by many respondents was the focus on repetition. When children are younger parents or other adults might read a story many times or play a game repeatedly. However, as they progress in school the focus is on new experiences and new learning. But the Speech Bubbles programme features chants that are repeated at each session and games that are played many times, which was thought to give them a sense of security, enabling them to relax and then develop their communication with lowered anxiety. This was perceived as being of particular help for children with EAL.

> *What's unique is the repetition and the fact that the children know what's coming, it makes them feel safe and happy because they can be a part of it without it being something to be scared.* (TD)

> *The activities are repeated, but they can be adapted in gradual increments. So, you can make it more challenging while at the same time they are familiar with it. They love the repetition, knowing what's coming next. A lot of school life is not knowing what's coming next and feeling challenged by things that come along, but in that space, it makes it very safe. (*P)

> *It follows quite a rigid structure each week. For me that is one of the successes. For a lot of children, the randomness of school, each lesson you don't really know what to expect. In Speech Bubbles you know exactly what you are going to get, that helps a lot of children because they are not scared.* (P)

> *It really benefits children who have EAL because things are done at a manageable pace for them, learning another language it's really hard to find your voice with the confidence to just start speaking it. It's done at a pace and a level that they can access, and there is a non-verbal element, so a lot of the learning can be done visually, or by copying and it's very repetitive which makes it very accessible.* (P)

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Being part of the programme was seen as a positive experience, non-judgemental and non-stigmatising, engaging with adults who were prepared to be as playful as children.

> *It's collaborative, safe and secure. There is equal participation between adults and children and there is no fear of judgement. You are all the time letting the children know that they are in control of the moment.* (P)

> *I got the sense that the children were really pleased and proud that they were going to it. They didn't feel that they were being 'taken out'. There was competition to get into it, it was like 'this is a wonderful thing that some of you are going to be picked for', so it was quite prestigious, which was good.* (PAR)

Finally, the fact that it was limited to children in the first two years of primary school was perceived to be important.

> *In* year *1* and *2 you are getting them early when they are developing their sense of self and they learn that they can have a voice at that young age, and can be themselves and that's OK, that's going to be building blocks for the rest of their school career*. (P)

THEME 4: FACILITATORS: FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESS

Clear theoretical background and /or strong evidence-base: As already noted, the programme builds on a strong theoretical evidence base (Paley, 1981; 1991) which has been enriched and further developed by several qualitative and quantitative evaluation studies (see list of publications in Section F). There is a strong focus on play, drama, imagination and being non-judgemental. Few resources are required so that the children's imaginations can be the driving force. The focus on play was thought to be an important factor in its success:

> *To me what was most important was that it valued the importance of play…. It recognised the value, the primacy of play for children. School should be child-led, bringing out what is in the children.* (PAR)

The Speech Bubbles team has ensured that this adaptation of Paley's work has built up an impressive evidence base. This focus on evidence at the same time as developing the programme has been one of the most important factors contributing to its continuing take-up in a time of austerity for school budgets.

Strong commitment from the school: It was noted that the senior management of the school needed to be fully committed to the programme for several reasons. First, the selection of the TA should be appropriate and with joint discussion rather than announcing at the beginning of the school year that this would be one of their new roles. It was important to select a TA who could take on board the playful aspects of the programme and the drama. If this was not the case, the theatre sometimes had to talk to the school management and request that someone else be assigned:

> *You can't work with someone who is not wanting to get involved, we need someone who will invest. Sometimes the TA would rather have teeth extracted than do any kind of drama.* (TD)

> *They need to have a good relationship with the children, to be someone who is going to make an effort; they need not to mind crawling around on the floor as a tiger if that's what*

the story needs. Many members of staff would not do that. (P)

It is important to have a key member of senior staff in the school supporting the work and ensuring that the TA is not taken out or reallocated. Senior management will also protect the time from the class going on trips. (P)

Once a school has agreed to the programme, part of their responsibility is to ensure that there is an appropriate, and regular space for the activity. Many interview respondents emphasised that the nature of the room made a difference, that it needed to be quiet, with few distractions, and ideally the same room each week.

That idea of being in the same safe space is important…they know where it is and who is coming in…., it's not just a school thing…. we liken it to having your own club. (TD)

Continuity is important, in the same space every week. We are not interrupted; it's the same adults, the same time. (P)

Strong leadership and support to maintain fidelity: Quality of the programme has been maintained through the leadership of the programme's developers, which is important if a programme is to establish that they can have an impact in a range of contexts. The London Bubble Theatre owns the copyright of the programme 'brand' and trains other theatre companies who join through a social franchise package which has been running since 2012, enabling them to provide the programme in a particular geographical area. They need to be trained by LBT to ensure quality control and LBT collects information from them about children's progress in an ongoing manner, which helps to build a coherent data base.

Relevant for children with a range of backgrounds: It was noted both in the evaluation research studies and during the interviews that most of the schools with a Speech Bubbles programme have a diverse population, predominantly low income with many different cultural groups represented and many children do not have English as their first language. The consensus was that this was not a barrier to participation in the programme and that it was a positive environment for them to develop their spoken language.

We've had children who are at a very basic level of English, and there has been no barrier to them being able to participate in the sessions. (TD)

We have a very mixed population in terms of ethnic background, culture and needs and it meets all of them. When they (the children) see it is drama and a lot is not spoken language they feel a lot more comfortable. The pressure is not there for them to get up and speak in the circle, there is no pressure. (P)

Monitoring and/or evaluation procedures: At the end of each session the DP and TA think about each child in turn and rate their responsive and expressive language and attention**.** It is not intended as evaluation of the children but rather it provides them with important information so that they can, perhaps, look out in the next session for a child who was low on attention or responding at a low level. Speech Bubbles also collect information routinely from all the schools who receive the programme asking teachers to say how much (if any) improvement there has been at the end of the year in each child's learning, speaking and listening (Annand, 2017). This has allowed them to report that 88% of students recorded higher scores, 33% with striking improvement and 37% with clear improvement.

THEME 5: BARRIERS AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

Limited funding and organizational support: Not surprisingly, despite the relatively modest cost of Speech Bubbles, lack of funding was identified as the main reason why schools did not take up the programme or did not continue with it.

> *The stumbling block is funding, but all schools would jump at the chance. Many children with problems in self-esteem and speaking out loud. Tell them that's what it is addressing, and schools are always interested. It is always just the funding.* (P)

The London Bubble Theatre has addressed this by being proactive in seeking out sources of grants to support schools and by engaging actively in research. At the moment a number of schools involved in the RCT pay only a small amount, with most of the cost paid by the research grant.

Frequent changes: It has already been noted that the programme relies on consistency in both the location and the adults delivering the programme. However, depending on the population of the school, children may be mobile, especially if the school has a large proportion of children who are from families that are refugees or asylum seekers. Thus, although it is seen that children with EAL may benefit, this can also mean that they leave during the school year if the family's circumstances change such as being allotted new housing.

> *Each year I have been involved at least one of the children in the group has moved on to another school. In first year a child left after the 3rd week, that was early enough to transfer someone else, so filled the spot but if it's later on it can mean that someone is missing out on the opportunity.* (P)

This was resolved by creating a waiting list of an additional two children who fulfilled the referral criteria, but new arrivals to the group might not benefit to the same extent as those who participated from the start.

Ineffective school leadership: Ineffective school leadership that can be a barrier to the success of the programme with respect to the assignment of the TA. If this is done at the last minute, without preparation or consideration about who might be the most appropriate person, the TA may not be enthusiastic about participating.

> *You can see their face, "I don't know what this is, why am I here?" (*PD)

> *We have had TAs that have just been sent to the initial induction meeting for the school, they've got no idea what they are coming to, they can be reluctant. To expect a TA who has no drama at all to suddenly start playing is a big ask.* (P)

It was also noted that it needs to be understood by the school management that, once the TA is assigned to Speech Bubbles, this time should be protected, and they should not be called on during the programme to deal with any other school business. Planning of outings and special events also needs to consider the programme, which relies on continuity. It was noted that, in some schools, outings for years 1 and 2 are never planned on the specific afternoon that the programme takes place. For others unavailability of either the pupils themselves or the TA was an ongoing source of difficulty.

> *If there is science week, or the year group are on a school trip, the school says 'don't come in' which is a bit frustrating. In my first year it happened 3 or 4 times; they are busy*

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schools, these things happen, but it's a shame. If you see a child on the edge, about to make a break through and then they have a week of it can really set them back. (P)

At one of my schools my only contact was the TA but if she was off I was searching around the school to see whether we could do the group, who could do it, it was not good. You can't run a session if you don't have a member of the school staff present so we then have to cancel. (P)

If something cropped up in school they would just cancel the session, or you would go, and the space wouldn't be available. (P)

Another aspect of the programme that can be affected by leadership within the school is parent participation. While parents are only invited to take part in two of the 24 sessions, they are very appreciative of their involvement.

We were made to feel welcome and we were part of the group, which was really important for the children. There was a real understanding that this was something to celebrate with your family and take away for the parents. (PAR)

However, several practitioners noted that attendance by parents could vary markedly between schools, reflecting the extent of parent engagement generally and the nature of communication between the school and the parents. Attendance at parent sessions could vary from 100% with additional family members also coming to only one or two parents.

The biggest factor is the relationship that that school staff have with the parents. If you've got a very proactive liaison person in school that makes the biggest difference. (PD)

This could be overcome if one member of the school (not necessarily always the TA delivering the programme) took responsibility for promoting the programme and for following up invitation letters with strategies such as reminder texts.

Staff beliefs and attitudes: The success of the sessions depends in part on the characteristics of the children in the group. Very clear guidelines have been developed about referrals but occasionally a referral will be made that is not a good fit, possibly because there is no other option for the class teacher since budget cuts have reduced support from other professionals.

A good understanding of appropriate referrals is also important, that the programme is for communication and not a strategy for managing difficult behaviour. (PD)

The only time anything does seem a little unbalanced is if the children that have been referred to the programme have been referred incorrectly because of a behaviour issue, then that jars with the programme. That's down to the procedures that the teachers and the TAs go through choosing the students. (TD)

If it is not appropriate for them then it's not going to work, and you are taking that space away from someone else. (P)

If the TA has experience of the programme they can provide better guidance about which children would be the most suitable. However, the appropriateness of referrals or regular attendance of a child can depend on the belief of their classroom teacher that the programme has value.

A class teacher who has not necessarily signed up to the programme may have the idea 'I don't want the child going out of the class when they should be doing classwork.' (PD)

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To manage this barrier strategies can be used when promoting the programme to schools to ensure that, not only are senior management on board, but also that other members of the school are fully informed. For example, there might be an open day locally for schools to find out more about the programme or an explanatory session for teachers during a inservice day or after the school day, as a means of illustrating the programme and its principles.

> *The adults are more reticent than the children but if you can show people it makes it much easier, we make it fun.* (TD)

Another expectation that schools can have is that it would be appropriate to collect and share the stories and they have at times asked for written versions of the stories, but the TAs and DP are trained to explain that this is not done.

> *Schools want stories to be edited and fixed up, correctly presented. The principle of the programme is that these are stories that are told in one go, they are not for public display, they are for acting out with your peers and we don't revise them, we don't fix the grammar, we are not working on that. What we are working on is the desire for communication and engagement. (*PD)

It has been noted that school professionals can have a different view about learning and the Speech Bubble approach is different

> *We come in with a different way, a bit more slow, a bit more nurturing. Schools come in with 'we want you to be like this, this is what you should be.' Sometimes you might say to the TA 'let them be and we will work it out from there.'* (P)

THEME 6. PERCEIVED IMPACT FOR KEY ACTORS

Perceived outcomes for children/students

Language and communication: The comments by interview respondents reflected the evidence from both qualitative (e.g. Barnes 2015) and quantitative (e.g. Price & Ansong, 2018) evaluations, that participation in the programme was very likely to enhance children's language and confidence in communicating.

> *Teachers say 'I have never heard that child speak before' or 'I didn't know X was capable of that'. It just highlights that, with all the best teaching in the world and all the best educative principles, sometimes it just takes being a little bit creative to open up a dialogue. There are children who literally come alive during Speech Bubbles sessions.* (TD)

> *Every school that I have been to have said 'we can see the difference in these children' and that's what sells it, the proof before their very eyes.* (P)

> *Just seeing how they flourish throughout the year. You see the confidence of the children in their social interactions, in their use of language and their ability to describe objects and actions, they really want to get their ideas across.* (P)

Socio-emotional outcomes: Many interviewees remarked that the impact for children went beyond improved communication, since communication then helped them to relate better to teachers and children, which affected their wellbeing.

They look happier. (P)

For one girl [who was selective mute] it was mainly that she was a lot more smiley. (P)

One boy was quite anxious and angry, a face like thunder, he folded his arms and there was no way he was going to take part. I didn't push him to do anything, I would just say 'you can do this if you like, but it's fine if you just want to watch'. By session 3 it was like the sun had come out, which was so nice to see. (P)

It was quite a therapeutic space for him, a safe place where he could express himself. (PAR)

Children in a special school for social, emotional and mental health difficulties were also seen to benefit.

They were the best versions of themselves, and that had immense value, they had a space that they treasured where they could be expressive. These are children who spend most of their day struggling with everything and there was a space where they were able to achieve easily, to impress people, be creative and be supported. (P)

Perceived outcomes for professionals

Job satisfaction and professional development: It was noted both during the training session and in several interviews that particular benefits may be experienced by the TAs in terms of their job satisfaction and professional development. They have space away from the routine school day, which can be chaotic, taking part in something both important and enjoyable. They take on extra responsibilities and receive specialised training and support.

For some school staff that is the highlight of their week. They are getting to say all the things they have noticed about the child in class and in the playground. They don't get chance to sit down and talk to anybody else. They sit down, and they love it. (PD)

It's the joy of my week. (P)

The fact that it is a TA rather than a class teacher actually gives a bit of validation to the TA but also makes them have a bigger role in the school, that's really important. (TD)

The strategies used in the programme could also be applied in other school contexts

I know some of the TAs use what we do in SB in the class, the chant 'in SB we do good listening, good turn taking' and they will remind children about that. Also, in the playground one of the TAs will get them playing the games. (P)

I have adapted my tone of voice, noticing that communication can be effective by speaking very quietly, for example to a child who is being uncompliant and shouty. Also, my confidence in leading small groups has improved, and using some of the techniques I have made training (of adults) more fun. (P)

Perceived outcomes for families and communities

The programme does not aim to have an impact on parents, but comments suggest that many children go home and tell their parents about the programme, which may enhance communication and language in the home. In addition, there was anecdotal evidence that the parents learn some

of the activities, which could also enhance the home learning environment, which may lead to other benefits for child development (Melhuish et al., 2008).

> *From what we have heard children go home and talk about Speech Bubbles on a regular basis. I've seen children playing the games that we do in the playground. The children are also teaching their parents what they do in Speech Bubbles, which is brilliant*. (TD)

> *Our parent sessions are an absolute joy. Their children have worked so hard throughout the year they really need to come and see them. By the second parent meeting – in the summer – the parents know the banana song, they know quite a lot about Speech Bubbles.* (P)

> *Parents report back some of the learning; 'my son has been telling me that I have to listen to him.'* (P)

THEME 7: INNOVATIVE FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMME

Asked what was innovative about Speech Bubbles, respondents noted that the joint working between a school member and someone from an outside agency was quite unusual; it is more common for programmes either to be provided by school staff or by an outside consultant.

> *The partnership working, the idea of the TA working alongside the arts practitioner. I don't think that happens very often.* (TD)

It was also noted that the programme was quite unusual in the arts sphere and education by having developed a strong evidence base, one of the reasons that the EEF was investing further in Speech Bubbles by funding an RCT. Increasingly commissioners and schools are looking for 'evidence-based' practice and Speech Bubbles is well on the way to providing that.

> *The fact that there is quite a lot of academic research to support it; it's not just a drama programme, there has been a lot of high-quality research to support it, which is quite rare in the arts field.* (TD*)*

Finally, in a world that is relying increasingly on technology, equipment and the internet, Speech Bubbles relies only on the children and their imaginations, which may come as a welcome break from the increasing amount of time that young children spend on various screen/ digital devices, both at home and in school.

> *We have talked about it [using ICT], people say wouldn't it be good if there was an App and actually no, it's all about imagination*. (TD)

THEME 8: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There was general agreement, substantiated by research evidence, that there is a great need for interventions that can support children's ability to communicate. This programme is not designed to replace speech and language therapy but meets the needs of a wider proportion of the school population, those struggling to communicate for a variety of reasons, which might be relate to anxiety (such as selective mutism), they may be related to lack of language stimulation in the home, or to having English as an additional language. It was suggested that something similar could even be offered earlier than year 1, to 4-year olds in reception classes, and that it would be ideal if it were available to all schools at a modest or no cost, with the support of the DfE.

We have a school that says the programme is brilliant but almost coming in too late, a lot of the EAL children could do with this intervention in nursery or reception so we have started piloting new work for nursery and reception in one school to see what sort of impact that's going to have. (TD)

I would love to have Speech Bubbles in every school. The long-term view is if it gets central government funding, then schools can buy it for next to nothing. It would have to go through the DfE ratifying it as part of the curriculum. (TD)

It would be great I there was Speech Bubbles everywhere. (PAR)

In addition to its benefits for communication, there are socio-emotional impacts such as increased wellbeing and improved peer relationships. Also, the focus on respect, turn-taking, and cooperating on role playing in drama is likely to facilitate the development of self-regulation, shown to be so helpful in promoting long-term educational and socio-emotional outcomes (Howard & Melhuish, 2017). Self-regulation could be an additional focus of future Speech Bubbles outcome research.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

This intervention was positively described by every interviewee and has received positive results in a range of different evaluations, conducted by researchers who had no personal investment in the programme.

It is a vision of what school could, and in my opinion should be. It should be child led, bringing out what is in the children. (PAR)

I have been here a number of years and seen things come and go. The school has spent thousands of pounds on things that have not really worked. This programme has so many benefits. (P)

Our study has shown that 'Speech Bubbles' has a particular proven, statistically significant impact on children's spoken language, storytelling and social interaction, giving children a marked boost in these areas of SLC competence. (Price & Ansong, 2018)

Overall that analysis suggests that Speech Bubbles is a low-cost intervention that delivers Value for Money. (Pro Bono Economics, 2018)

The schools in which the programme is offered are in areas of disadvantage, with many children experiencing poverty and coming from a range of cultural backgrounds, including recent immigrants who may have little or no English. By providing ways for children to communicate more effectively, with teachers in the classroom, with peers in social settings, and with their family members, both their achievement and their wellbeing are likely to be enhanced. Children from many backgrounds have taken part and it appears, both from the documented evidence and from the comments of professionals involved in delivering the programme, that this programme is well received and leads to impressive gains for the children. In addition, the school professionals involved report positive benefits, with increased job satisfaction, which is important for retaining experienced professionals who do not generally receive high salaries or prestige from their work.

With the reliance on nothing beyond the training and ongoing enthusiasm of the adults involved and the support of the schools, this programme could easily be applied in different societies

including those where resources are limited, but the needs of children are great.

RESOURCES

About the programme: http://www.londonbubble.org.uk/projectpage/speech-bubbles/

About the Education Endowment Fund ongoing research study:

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/projects-and-evaluation/projects/speech-bubbles/

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ISOTIS

4. GERMANY: 'LANGUAGE DAY CARE CENTRES – BECAUSE LANGUAGE IS THE KEY TO THE WORLD'

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ABSTRACT

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) supports day care settings within the framework of the federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world" specifically in their offers for early language education, cooperation with parents and inclusive pedagogy. It follows a child-centred approach of language education offered to all children in settings with higher proportion of children with an immigration background or a different language spoken in the families. Results show that there is a culture of openness for multiculturalism. A number of everyday-strategies are used to value the spoken languages of the children in different pedagogical activities, during mealtimes etc. The staff shows high integration practices in trying to pick up the spoken languages of the children themselves. Specific strategies seem to be best implemented in small group activities.

Keywords: language education, children, families, multicultural beliefs, additional staff

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LANGUAGE DAY CARE CENTRES – BECAUSE LANGUAGE IS THE KEY TO THE WORD: A CASE STUDY IN GERMANY

Table 4.1. *Targeted outcomes, key success features, and facilitators of success of 'Language Day Care Centres – Because Language is the Key to the World'*

GOALS	FEATURES OF SUCCESS	FACILITATORS OF SUCCESS AND/OR INNOVATIONS
Individual academic / cognitive outcomes • Promote culture-sensitive language development **Individual socio-emotional outcomes** • Supporting children's cultural and ethnic identity **Interpersonal outcomes** • Developing cultural and multilingual awareness and openness **Family-school relationships** • Supporting and creating partnerships with parents **School culture outcomes** • Valuing and/or preserving children's language of origin	**Microsystem: Type of activities / curriculum** • Focus on play and enjoyment • Extensive language support • Multilingualism activities • Mother tongue valorisation and enhancement within the school / classroom routines • Making diversity visible **Mesosystem: Connecting schools and families** • Intercultural dialogue • Parental involvement in selected activities **Exosystem: Supporting professionals and the school** • Experts /consultants systematic support of school staff and the school as an organization: Integrated system of professional development • Purposeful teacher/staff selection and/or training • Alignment with teacher needs for serving a diverse population **School macrosystem: Changing/supporting school culture and values** • Intervention components part of / consistent with the school culture • Organizational focus on a common theme • Strengths-based orientation	**Focus** • Meaningful contact with diverse languages and cultures **Design** • Monitoring and evaluation **Staff characteristics, involvement, and commitment** • Staff continuity • Staff from diverse backgrounds • Staff attitudes and multicultural beliefs: Appreciation of children/families and their diverse strengths • Staff social and professional competence that fit intervention requirements **Implementation processes** • Close cooperation with experts / teacher support • Strong commitment from strong leadership **Family involvement** • Strong and trust-based relationships/partnerships with families **Additional conditions for implementation** • Small group delivery • ICT-based additional support for schools in rural areas • Sustainability

LANGUAGE DAY CARE CENTRES – BECAUSE LANGUAGE IS THE KEY TO THE WORD: A CASE STUDY IN GERMANY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report aims to conduct in-depth analyses of a promising or effective intervention tackling social and educational inequalities through curriculum, pedagogical practices, and/or school climate in early childhood education. The goal is to describe key features and conditions for success of a promising and/or effective intervention and the conditions that may facilitate their effective implementation in other settings. For Germany we chose the federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world" as an example for a promising intervention. Germany is one of the countries in which the social and cultural background of children still has a comparatively strong influence on their development and school careers. The disadvantages that children from socially disadvantaged families as well as children of non-German origin face can already be proven at the age of three and increases in part through further development (Linberg & Wenz, 2017; Weinert, Ebert & Dubowy, 2010). These findings are particularly striking against the background that Germany is considered an immigration country. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) supports day care settings within the framework of the federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world" specifically in their offers for early language education, cooperation with parents and inclusive pedagogy. Around 7,000 daycare centres located in socially disadvantaged areas and with an above-average proportion of children with a special need for language education and language promotion are being supported nationwide. A special target group is children from families with a refugee background. About 1213 day care settings in Germany participate in the evaluation of the federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world". Based on the sample of the evaluation study we chose a best-practice setting. The present case study was carried out from 2nd to 9th of July in a best-practice day care setting in Berlin. Since the federal programme is exclusively tailored to day care settings for children between the ages of 1 to 6 years, it was not possible to conduct a comparative study in a school. We conducted semi-structured interviews with a program developer and the coordinator/head teacher of the daycare setting. Additionally, we conducted one focus group with preschool teachers, an additional educational consultant and an additional expert for early language education. We also conducted a focus group with parents and one other focus group with children between the ages of 4 to 6. Results show that there is a culture of openness for multiculturalism. Different ethnic backgrounds are valued and welcomed. All actors highlight the additional staff funded by the programme (expert of early language education/ educational consultant) as an enriching resource.

INTRODUCTION

T4.3 aims to conduct in-depth analyses of promising or effective interventions tackling social and educational inequalities through curriculum, pedagogical practices, and/or school climate in early childhood education and primary school. The goal is to describe key features and conditions for success of promising and/or effective interventions and the conditions that may facilitate their effective implementation in other settings.

We chose the federal programme "Language day care centres – because language is the key to the world" as an example of a promising intervention. The federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world" is an initiative of the Federal Ministry for

Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth in Germany, which mainly supports day care settings for children located in socially disadvantaged areas and with an above-average proportion of children with a special need for language education. A special target group are children from families with a refugee background. Since 2016, about 7,000 daycare centres have been supported nationwide. They are supported by additional staff (0.5 language expert) and additional financial support. They are meant to develop the institutions in the areas of language education integrated into everyday life, inclusive pedagogy, and family involvement. Inclusive education in this context refers to a positive and appreciative approach to diversity and an orientation towards the personal strengths of the children. Inclusion therefore also plays an important role in the cooperation with diverse family cultures and the development of a welcome culture in these day care settings. The federal programme is also interesting as an approach to further education and training because the Federal Ministry also funds additional specific consulting staff which supports the institutions throughout the course of the programme. Nevertheless, the curricular components are of interest in the context of this work package. In the following report, the background of the federal programme will be explained in more detail. In addition, we will show how the selection of this intervention is justified. Subsequently, the sample, the selected data collection and evaluation methods are described. Following this, the results of the analyses are presented.

BACKGROUND: THE FEDERAL PROGRAMME "LANGUAGE DAY CARE CENTRES – BECAUSE LANGUAGE IS THE KEY TO THE WORLD"

Germany is one of the countries in which the social and cultural background of children still has a comparatively strong influence on their development and school careers. The disadvantages of children from socially disadvantaged families as well as children of non-German origin show up already at the age of three (or earlier) and increase in part through further development (Weinert, Ebert & Dubowy, 2010; Linberg & Wenz, 2017). These findings are particularly striking against the background that Germany is considered an immigration country. The proportion of people with a migration background in Germany in 2017 was 22.5% (Federal Statistical Office, 2017). New challenges are currently arising from the increased influx of children and families with a refugee background (BAMF, 2017). Against this background, day care settings can make a decisive contribution to integration. Language skills are regarded as prerequisites for the reception of educational opportunities and for participation in social coexistence (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2001). They are (central) key competences in child development (Weinert, 2008; Weinert, 2011). In particular, children with special needs should be supported in their language development as early as possible in order to compensate for disadvantages at an early stage. Children who speak languages other than German as their main language at home are usually considered to have a particular need for language support in the institution. In this context, language education which is integrated into everyday life is given special relevance. Language education integrated in everyday life is aimed at all children in a day care setting and is systematically embedded in everyday language activities (Jampert et al., 2011). However, the linguistic development of children is also influenced strongly by the family and the quality of the home learning environment (Schmerse et al., 2018). In some studies, the effects of family conditions have proven to be much stronger than institutional effects, particularly when the children are still very young. International research has shown that preschool

interventions are particularly successful if they do not only target children, but also parents and families (e.g., Melhuish et al., 2015). High-quality language education in daycare centres can decisively supplement the home learning environment and have a lasting positive influence on the development of all children. It is assumed that children from educationally disadvantaged families and children with a migrant background can benefit particularly from the high quality of early institutional education and care. The evaluation study on a previous federal programme "core daycare centres: language and integration" showed that intensive involvement of parents and parental education can have a positive impact on the linguistic development of children. At the same time, it became clear that there is still developmental potential. It was shown that the professional support for day care settings has a great importance for the implementation of language education in professional pedagogical everyday life, which needs to be continued (Anders et al., 2016; Lehrl et al., submitted).

The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) has taken up the results and experiences of the federal programme "core daycare centres: language and integration" in its conception of the federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world". The aim is to support day care settings specifically in the effort to integrate language education into everyday life. The improvement of the quality of day care settings has lately become an aim in Germany. Around 7,000 daycare centres located in socially disadvantaged areas and with an above-average proportion of children with a special need for language education and language promotion are being supported nationwide. A special target group are children from families with a refugee background. In addition to the focus on language education integrated into everyday life, the federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world" was therefore extended to include subjects such as inclusive education and cooperation with families as a core subject. Inclusive education in this context refers to a positive and appreciative approach to diversity and an orientation towards the personal strengths of the children. Inclusion thus also plays an important role in the cooperation with diverse family cultures and the development of a welcome culture in the institution. In view of the need of continuous professional support for day care settings with the aim of quality improvement (Anders et al., 2016; Resa, Groeneveld, Turani & Anders, 2018), not only an additional expert for early language education, but also an additional consultant for education is funded. This consultant has the overriding task of providing professional support for 8 to 15 day care settings, which are grouped together as a network in various associations. Additionally, the educational consultant has to provide individual support for each setting and provide and activate network structures for the individual actors (head teachers, additional experts for early language education and preschool teachers). On the basis of these networks, the educational consultant professionally accompanies, trains and advises head teachers, additional experts and the preschool teacher teams of each day care setting with focus on early language education, cooperation with families and inclusive pedagogy. She organises team-building processes and supports the implementation of the pedagogical work with regard to the main topics of the federal programme. Overall, the federal programme can therefore be described as a comprehensive intervention involving several levels of the system of early childhood education and care in Germany. The overarching objective of the federal programme is to improve the pedagogical quality of the settings with a special focus on professional training of early language education, inclusive education, and family involvement in participating day care settings. It is generally assumed that in addition to the direct effects of the subsidised experts and educational

consultants, there will also be a positive sustained impact on the system of early childhood education and care as a whole. For example, the executing agencies can presumably also use the professional impulses of the federal programme for day care settings that are not involved in the programme. Furthermore, the educational consultants would also use the impulses for individual professional development. It can be also assumed that the consultants will use the impulses to transfer them to other fields of activity. All in all, the formation of networks of day care settings should promote further effects beyond the funded alliances. The reason for choosing this intervention is the complex support system of educational consultants, experts of early language education, an online platform to enable the exchange of the participating educational consultants among each other, literature recommendations as well as handouts and telephone conferences. About 1,213 day care settings in Germany participate in the evaluation of the federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world". The sample of this nationwide evaluation study formed the basis for the sample of the case study. To conduct the online survey with additional educational consultants in winter 2016/17 we chose daycare settings which were supervised by them. In the context of the online survey, the educational consultants were asked about their beliefs and dealings with heterogeneity, diversity and with families. Additionally, there should be an assessment of previous knowledge of their supervised daycare settings. For the case study, institutions with additional educational consultants who have particularly positive values e.g. pronounced multicultural convictions, low assimilative convictions, consideration of parents' wishes, constructive handling of inclusion were selected. The present case study was carried out from 2nd to 9th of July in a best-practice day care setting in Berlin. Since the federal programme is exclusively tailored to day care settings for children from the ages of 1 to 6 years, it was not possible to conduct a comparative study in a school.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS, PARTICIPANTS, AND ANALYSIS

3.1 SAMPLE

1. Semi-structured interview: Program developer

A semi-standardised interview was conducted with a program developer from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The interviewee works as a referent in the field of child day care. At the time of the conception of the federal programme "core day care centres: language and integration", she switched from the area of integration of families with a migration background to the area of child day care. During the process of programme development, she was responsible for the control and monitoring of communication with the respective implementation agencies and was thus significantly involved in the implementation of the federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world". The interviewee studied sociology and journalism and previously worked as a speechwriter for the Minster of the Federal Ministry for Families, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

2. Semi-structured interview: Coordinator/head teacher

In addition, a semi-standardised interview was conducted with the head of the selected day care setting. She has been working in that day care setting for about 17 years and was mainly involved in the founding of the federal programmes "core day care centres: language and integration" as

well as "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world". In addition to her managerial activities, the interviewee has been employed for two years as an additional expert for early language education within the context of the federal programme. She shares the management position with a colleague who is also a trained educator. The institution runs only two-day care settings. Both institutions are located in socially deprived areas and have anchored the appreciative handling of multiculturalism in their pedagogical concept since their foundation.

3. Focus Group: Teachers and other professionals

The focus group is made up of three team members, one educational consultant and an additional expert for early language education, who are both financed by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth as part of the federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world". The group consists of four women and one male pedagogical specialist. The expert for early language education (additionally the head teacher of the ECEC setting) has been working in that role for 1,5 years. A second interviewee is the educational consultant. She is a graduate pedagogue and a specialist in early language education. She has been working as an additional consultant in the framework of the federal programme "language day care centres – because language is the key to the world" for 1,5 years as well. One of the preschool teachers is male and has recently completed his training as a state-approved educator. He identified himself as being of Kurdish background. Another preschool teacher reports that she has been working in that daycare setting for about 11 years. The fifth interviewee stated that she has been working there for about two and a half years. She does her extra-occupational qualification in that daycare setting and will finish next year.

4. Focus Group: Parents

Five parents took part in the focus group, including a couple of parents. All of them have a migration background (Arabic, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Austrian). Three of them grew up in different countries. Two of them have parents who grew up in another country. Additionally, in three families, parents do not speak German at home. The focus group consists of four women and one man. Not all parents live in the immediate vicinity of the day care setting, as it is normally regulated by law. Despite moving to another district, a mother brings her daughter to this institution by order of the Youth Welfare Office, as this is where she has shown the best progress in her development. Two out of five parents have a professional activity. Three of the parents have already registered the second child in this daycare setting.

5. Focus Group: Children

Last but not least, we arranged a focus group which was organized for 14 children between the ages of 4 and 6, including 8 girls and 6 boys. Each child has a migration background (Table 1).

In order to recognize the children's many languages, a multimethod approach was chosen, to allow many ways of listening and enabling diverse opportunity of expression (Moskal & Tyrrell, 2016). A *letter from a researcher of another country (Valentina´s letter)* was used as a trigger to engage children in reflecting on and discussing (through focus group/circle time discussions that was audio-recorded) their preschool experience in terms of inclusion, wellbeing, and acknowledging/respecting differences. The letter helps to activate children both at a cognitive (their opinions and representations on inclusion at preschool) and a socio-emotional level (their

experience of inclusion at preschool). The letter was divided in sections/themes, and some possible questions we could ask children on each section during STEP 1A and 1B. The letter has been intentionally designed with many sections addressing different themes. The country teams did not need to use the entire letter, but could customize its own version of the letter. We met the group of children in a sports rooms and read the letter during a time of one hour. After reading and talking about the letter the children received yellow sunshines and grey clouds cut from cardboard (Pimlott-Wilson, 2012). We asked them to draw five elements (spaces, activities, people...) on the suns that make them feel good and that they think can give [Valentina] an understanding of what are the nicest things about their school in their opinion. In addition, we asked them to draw five elements on the clouds that do not make them feel good about their school contexts and that they think [Valentina] should be aware of. Children were invited individually to explain what they have chosen to draw and why. Drawings and the subsequent verbalizations (that was just audio-recorded) should contribute to elicit children's perspectives *on* and experiences *in* their preschool. We met the children again and talked with them about their drawings. The aim was to figure out the main/most recurring themes elicited; the most and less appreciated features of the preschool; topics/subjects considered as positive by certain pupils and negative by others. The children were invited to comment on the results.

Table 4.2. *Children group characteristics*

Type of classroom	Age	Sex	Children born in other countries	Children with host country nationality	Children with dual nationality	Children that speak other languages at home	Roma children	Children with an IEP
Preschool	4-6	Girls:8 Boys: 6	21.43%	14.29%	------	7,14%	-----	-----

Note. IEP = Individualized Education Plan

3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

All interviews were analysed by the qualitative content analysis according to Mayering (Mayring, 2000). This approach focuses on empirical, methodologically controlled analysis (Mayering, 2000). To support this, we used the computer-aided analysis procedure Atlas.ti. Against the background of the given analysis categories (themes) we focused specifically on the content structure to extract and summarize material (Mayring, 2003). In order to obtain as much as possible country- and/or program-specific information, indicative categories were also formed from the material (Gläser & Laudl, 2010).

With regard to ethical considerations we followed relevant, national, legal and ethical requirements. Additionally, we guarantee that the standards described in the ISOTIS data management are fully met during this task. All participants were informed. Anonymity of every participant is guaranteed. Identification of individual participants would not be possible. Anonymization of participants in leadership/coordinating roles was discussed in the national team. We selected the approach that would bring as little sociodemographic data as possible into the report.

ISOTIS

LANGUAGE DAY CARE CENTRES – BECAUSE LANGUAGE IS THE KEY TO THE WORD: A CASE STUDY IN GERMANY

SUMMARY OF THE INTERVENTION LOGIC MODEL

The federal programme "Early-Years Language Learning: Because Language is the Key to the World" was set up by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth on January first, 2016, running until 31.03.2020. Nationwide, nearly 7000 child care centres receive funding and support to become Early-Years Language Learning daycare centres. Especially settings in socio-economically disadvantaged communities were eligible to the programme. As a consequence, the number of children with an immigration background and the number of children who grow up in families with low socio-economic or educational status in these centres is above average.

The main goal of the federal programme is to improve the overall quality of child care centres, especially in the areas of language education embedded in daily routines, inclusive pedagogy and parental cooperation. More precisely, the programme equips centres with more expertise for their daily routines with regard to language education of children. Primarily, children having difficulties with language as such and with German as a second language shall benefit from the support. The programme enables centres to implement language education embedded in daily routines as a principle of their pedagogical concept and to respond to the special needs of the families.

To implement the three core areas (language education embedded in daily routines, inclusive pedagogy, parental cooperation) and to continuously develop them in the child care centres, the programme implements a support structure following a train-the-trainer approach: The research institute PädQUIS externally equips a quality consultant in the field of language development for training a tandem consisting of the head of a particular child care centre and a so called language expert. The quality consultants provide their expertise in the three core areas of the programme. They further support the tandems in psychosocial questions arising from the pedagogical day-to-day work within the centres, such as problems with children, parents or within the staff. Together, they work to find a convenient solution for all actors involved. Furthermore, the quality consultant serves as a role model, especially when it comes to their expertise. The centre's head and the language expert in turn carry their knowledge to the respective child care centre's team, thereby internally multiplying the newly gained knowledge, covering aspects of counselling, supervision and provision of expertise. Both the quality consultant and the language expert are employed as additional resources working part time. The quality consultant is usually responsible for 10 to 15 child care centres.

With the programme "Early-Years Language Learning: Because Language is the Key to the World" the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth has responded to increasing societal cultural diversity especially in the age group of under 6-year olds. This refers to a complex diversity and interplay of variables, including country of origin and related traits such as ethnicity, religion, language, traditions, cultural values and practices. There is increasing evidence supporting the importance of the mother tongue in developing an (cultural) identity (e.g., Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder; 2006; Cummins, 2001; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Studies have shown that support of the heritage language and culture was related to better well-being, mental health and school achievement (Berry et al., 2006; Chen, Benet-Martinez, & Bond, 2008). Prohibiting or discouraging children and their families to speak their mother tongue, either at school or at home, can increase feelings of rejection and disrespect for their cultural heritage. Therefore, the programme „Early-Years Language Learning: Because Language is the

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Key to the World" focuses on inclusive pedagogy, which in this context refers to a positive and an appreciative approach to diversity and to the perception of children's personal strengths. Thus, inclusion also plays a major role in cooperating with diverse family cultures and establishing a welcoming culture in the centres.

In addition to inclusive pedagogy, language education embedded in daily routines offers a variety of opportunities to include the mother tongues of the children, because it is situation-oriented to the needs and interests of all children. The concept expands the view on language and addresses language development in its entirety. Language education embedded in daily routines can provide culture-sensitive language development, especially for children with a migration background, since interest-based everyday activities can be used to individually address the language development of children and also make reference to the family language. Recent findings have also shown that successful first language acquisition can have a positive effect on second language acquisition (Edele & Stanat, 2016).

THEMES

The data shows, that the main topics of early language education, cooperation with families and inclusive pedagogy have become a culture in the analysed day care setting. Since the formation of the day care setting, they have continuously been working on these subjects. A culture of esteem for diversity is evident. Language plays an important role as a medium of understanding and appreciative exchange. Both parents and children, are welcomed in their native language. There are reading afternoons in the children's native language to which parents and grandparents are invited. Every day, children are greeted in the morning circle in their native language. A team member (preschool teacher) reports that she and her colleagues try to speak the native language of each child as much as possible throughout the whole day. If a colleague does not know a word (e.g. "cucumber") in the native language of a child, he or she asks another child (if necessary, from other groups as well) who speaks the same native language. The head teacher places value in hiring staff with different native languages to support children and parents. The interviewed *parents* feel accepted in the institution and this is apparent by their appreciative attitude towards the pedagogical staff, which is also a result of the staff's willingness not only to discuss but also to engage in greeting and creating everyday support offers (e.g. accompaniment to the youth welfare office, planning appointments so that many parents can participate in different offers). The parents view the preschool teachers as very competent. They appreciate the work of the additional experts of the federal programme. It is important to them, that their children are able to take advantage of the "German language support" offers, as they regard this as a necessary preparation for school. Parents are satisfied with the day care setting if the child makes noticeable progress in speaking. By this, they mean progress in both the native language and the German language. They also emphasise that their children learn tolerance towards other cultures and nationalities as well as social behaviour (self-confidence, sharing, respecting foreign cultural backgrounds and making friends). Ultimately, the parents' credo is to perceive one's own child with a view as to whether it feels comfortable in the institution or not. All parents talk about the fact that they visibly notice how much their children like going to the day care setting, which in turn makes them happy themselves: "We are really happy here. If the children are happy here, we are happy too. It all depends on the children, I think". From the perspective of the *professionals*, multilingualism seems to be a valued concept of success. They speak about how

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useful this multilingualism approach for the work with children and the cooperation with parents is. The main topics of the curriculum are valued as a culture of openness and appreciation towards multiculturalism: "All this has simply fallen on very fertile ground here". The role of educational consultants as a support system is emphasised: "So the programme is simply great with the educational consultant. I think it is very, very enriching". With regard to the core topic of the federal program the educational consultant seems to stimulate the additional expert for early language education professionally. By doing this, the educational consultant improves the team (head teacher, educational expert, preschool teacher): "And (.) in our meetings, in our conversations, (...) we then consider what is still to come. And now we still have some further trainings. So we have also offered an advanced training with parents. (.) How do I live for my child, so how can I as a parent promote the language? We had made a lot of dialogues with children. And (.) We started video now, so with the videography...". Interestingly, young professionals report that they knew about the focus on language and multiculturalism, however, they did not have the impression of having to learn these basic rules of togetherness in the day care setting, but rather, of these rules being automatically accepted: "So I started here and (.) the first thing I noticed was that we value language and that we really want to communicate something to the children. (...) I've been worked into the thing in such a way that I don't know any other way."

With a view on everyday practice, the preschool teacher tries to support children in language education: "Well, we use that every day. Everything is accompanied linguistically. Morning circle for example, we greet each other in several languages". Furthermore, preschool teachers talk about how they try to accompany everything linguistically: "So for me one of the most important things of all. That you really accompany what you do (.) with the language. (...) So I don't believe in sitting down with them and learning anything, according to this teaching principle or something. But really playing in everyday life". By doing this, they focus on children´s play. They don´t want to do language lessons with children, but instead speak about their experience of creating smaller groups and play them intentionally.

> *We also have language promotion games. And also a lot of board games. And I always try to work in small groups. Just like Heidi (additional expert for early language education) does, because it's easier to get to the children, even with the language. And when I then see that the game works/ For example, at the moment Monopoly is completely 'in'. It's played with everyone. And then I pull myself out and then the children/ they understand the content.*

Here we can see, that the additional expert for early language education seems to be an accepted and valued role model for the pedagogical staff. Preschool teachers use equipment like board games to support children in language education. They pick up children´s ideas and play with them, while they accompany everything linguistically. With regard to the question, if there are problems with the different cultural backgrounds of children and their families, pedagogical staff report: "There are no disputes between the children or anything. Not at all". However, there seems to be an unbent handling with different cultural backgrounds and languages: "We also have a child (.) from the African countries. And then she starts discussing (.) in Turkish sometimes. (Laughs) That's like: 'Whoa, what's that?'. Well, they think it's funny and it's funny/ That's really funny. (Laughs) When an African child starts speaking in Turkish". Children can speak any language that they want to. It confirms the children´s perspective, that there is a culture of esteem for diversity.

From the interview with the **children,** a similar picture becomes clear, which shows a culture of the appreciative handling of multilingualism and multiculturalism. The children seem to define themselves strongly through the origin of their parents and family language(s): "And I was born in Germany and I am an Arab". At the same time, however, they show an almost playful handling with their own family language and learning other languages: "My dad is English, and my mom is French. I also speak Turkish".

I: Do you also speak different languages in the daycare center? You said yes, in the morning circle/
B3: I speak different languages.
B4: "Good morning", (other language)
All: (Children name different words in different languages and correct each other for correct pronunciation)

With a view to the fictitious letter from Valentina and the question of how the children deal with getting to know a new child in the group who does not yet speak German, they report on their strategy of helping the child: "We tell her words and she has to repeat it or if she can speak the language, she explains it in Polish and then she knows it". The children show that they naturally enter into dialogue. However, one child seemed to perceive differences:

I: What was it like when you joined the group?
B1: So, for me was/ I was a little ashamed.
I: Ashamed. Why?
B1: Because everyone was looking at me. Especially my friend. Not her, but another one.
B6: And when they made the morning circle, I came and then I said my name at the morning circle.

Interestingly another child remembered, that when he joined the group he just said his name and felt comfortable with situation. It did not become clear why the other child thought that her friend looked at her in an unpleasant way. Yet, we can see that children deal with the situation of being new in a group in different ways. Possibly children have previous experience with discrimination, maybe due to family. Another reason why the one child said that he felt comfortable could be that he joined the daycare setting a little earlier than the other child and felt very welcomed. With regard to Valentina's letter it became clear that the preschool teacher tried to bring the children with their different backgrounds together:

I: Do you know what the preschool teacher did? He suggested that the children in the nursery should cook together.
B2: So are we.
I: You cook too? What do you cook then?
B3: We cooked chicken nuggets ourselves.

The children don´t speak about differences or the typical food of each child or of their own cultural background, but rather about a cooking adventure of the group. They only referred to what they liked the most in the past. With regard to the fictitious letter there is a question about how children deal with social inequality:

I: You know, I still have a very important question. Do you always go away during the holidays?
All: (confused) No. Sometimes.

I: Where are you going?

B5: I'm leaving today.

I: You're leaving today? Where are you going?

B5: No flying. To Turkey. And a lot of people fly to Turkey. (Children speak in between)

I: And when all the other children are on vacation and you are at home on the playground, are you sad there sometimes? Or how do you feel then? Do you always want to fly away? Everybody: (confused) I go too. I go today.

It seems that children were confused about this question. They don´t speak about feeling disadvantaged, rather they speak about flying away in a normal, habitual way. It seems, that it is more a question of how children deal with multiculturalism than social inequality. Perhaps it is part of their family identity to fly. It could also be possible, that they don´t think about borders when they talk about their family background and visiting relatives.

From reading and talking about Valentina's fictitious letter, aspects of how the children define quality in the day care become clear. For example, the children appreciate the fact that the day care setting has a giant swing (in the garden) and a large wooden boat in a certain playroom. The children seem to perceive general child-friendly expectations of their kindergarten and the interaction with the professionals. Regarding the federal programme, the children like it when the additional expert for early language education spontaneously groups some children together and plays special games with them in an extra room: "But I also feel good when I am allowed to go upstairs with Heidi (additional expert). Because Heidi always makes groups of language education on Fridays...There I can play these games with my friends". This approach seems to give these children a feeling of autonomy and of being taken seriously.

The **head teacher** of the daycare setting speaks of the intercultural team as a recipe for success: "I would say that one thing is that we are a mixed intercultural team anyway. (..) It is important for her and the whole team to be 'open to all people'". She sees this as a reason as to why the preschool teacher has such a good connection to children and parents. Another aspect of the success is to encourage the parents emotionally in their language and make them aware that their children can learn well in the day care centre: "The parents are also often insecure, and I always tell everyone to speak with parents in their mother tongue first". With regard to the children, preschool teachers should do what the children bring thematically: "So that we see that everyone is really taken along in this way". As a further reason for success, the head teacher names their experience with the topic of inclusion and multiculturalism. The day care setting is one of the largest inclusive child care settings in the district, which has been focusing on this topic for years. It refers both to children with physical and/or psychological disabilities and to multiculturalism as well: "In the field of inclusion (...) we have always integrated all languages so far". As a recipe for success, the head teacher also describes the fact that his colleagues are "German-Turkish-Kurdish-speaking". It was also important to her to employ preschool teachers who speak Polish or Arabic. It is important for the head teacher, that every child should at least be greeted in his or her mother tongue, even if the preschool teacher herself or himself does not speak his or her language: "And otherwise we simply try all languages/ Well, if there are now children who speak Chinese, then we also acquire a few words so that we can at least so simply greet the basic greetings (...) in all languages". One other reason for the application to this federal program is that the main topics of the federal program are similar to the main topics of the day care setting. The day care has already participated in the federal programme "core day care centres: language

and integration" and has had good experiences with it. It is important to the head teacher that parents are actively involved in the topic of language and its implementation. This is achieved through parents' evenings, workshops and joint visits to the library. The head teacher is concerned with recognising the needs of parents and children and actively involving them in the day-to-day running of the day care setting. This also includes, for example, observing religious needs at the time of Ramadan. Dealing with diversity is described as a matter of course. Conflicts are not named: "That (conflicts) exists with us, with the children not at all. And I think the children notice so much how naturally we all live together". At this point, the mentioned examples correspond with the statements of the children. They seem to have little or no awareness of multiculturalism: "I don't think they have this awareness at all, when I sometimes ask them what language they speak at home, they always say they speak German. Although I know they speak a completely different language. (...) I don't think that's an issue among the children at the moment". If there are conflicts between children of different origins, it is justified with the fact that the respective child has no experience in dealing with differences and is invited to learn this. It is part of the institution's culture to avoid prejudgement of people and rather to live with diversity together.

As a perceived impact for parents, the head teacher describes the fact that the federal programme does justice to their desire for early education language (their own mother tongue and/or the German language) and good preparation for school as a whole:

"And the federal programme is simply the approach, which is the same for all parents, that they simply want their children to learn well (...), that they are simply well prepared for school and/or that all parents find themselves there, no matter what their origin or language". Nevertheless, the head teacher states that the approach of language education integrated into everyday life is not so easy to put into practice. She has therefore adjusted this approach in the daycare setting in a more playful manner in small groups. Data shows that the approach of the head teacher in the role of this expert of early language education focuses on early language education integrated into everyday life. At the same time, it seems that she tries supplementing it with additional offerings. The idea arose from the observation that the needs of the quieter children in large groups are often not recognised and that playing and speaking in small groups is easier for them: "But I notice that it brings a lot to the children. That there are also children who do not speak at all in the large group. And when I'm with them in a small room and it's quiet / And suddenly they start to talk, and you just get more intensive into the conversation with children. When I have few, I can talk very well". In addition, the head teacher and their staff dont want to work deficit-oriented: "I find it important that nobody is stigmatised". The head teacher sums up that the needs and framework conditions of the daycare setting must always be balanced with the goals of the federal programme: "It's still a bit of a challenge to balance it out. That it is nevertheless compatible with the programme". The head teacher emphasizes the close cooperation with the additional consultant, who supports the furnishing team professionally (e.g. in-house further training), as a prerequisite for success. The head teacher himself strives to combine the knowledge of the specialists with new impulses from outside. In the role of the additional expert for early language education, it is important to her to make her colleagues understand that early language education is a topic for each individual specialist and must become a team task. She sees herself in the role model's responsibility: "And I'm actually only there so that they can see what I can still do or perhaps bring in more material or new ideas, new suggestions. That's more my job than anything else. And that they then implement it themselves". As an already successful implementation, she

describes the fact that the preschool teachers are now increasingly looking at the quieter children and using "language as an instrument". She attaches great importance to a sensitive approach to children of different origins and their level of language: "But I try to encourage them in such a way. Even if they are still so confused or only in single words/ "leave you time like this". As a perceived impact for preschool teachers, the head teacher sums up that the professional exchange initiated by the additional consultant would bring benefit in view of organisational development and support. The head teacher feels more structured: "This also makes this organisation even better. And through this exchange you can always look for yourself, okay, how do the others do that?" With regard to the topic of ICT, the federal programme is perceived as stimulating. There is a regular picture book cinema, for which a laptop is used. A new project of the institution allows children to take their own photo tour through their day care setting with a digital camera. Some time ago, learning software was also borrowed. Overall, the head teacher is satisfied with the implementation of the contents of the federal programme. For the future, she would like to "mobilize" her colleagues even more for intensive cooperation with parents and try out new possibilities for cooperation with parents with the entire team. From a head teacher perspective, the federal programme has helped the entire team work on a common theme and to become more sensitive to the importance of language.

From the *program developers'* perspective, experiences from the federal programme "core day care centres: language and integration" were decisive. Results of the attached evaluation study made clear that some daycare settings have already intensively improved the quality of cooperation with parents. The successful structure of this programme was used as a basis for an extension. As a special feature of this structure, the involvement of the individual federal states in the design, implementation and consolidation of the programme content across the board is emphasised. The results of the evaluation study accompanying the programme have shown that there are still "gaps" in the conception which affect the professionals. The structural resource of financing an additional expert for early language education has proved successful. At the same time it became clear that the additional expert often have too little capacity for their main task of team development: "At the same time, we had the experience from the first programme that such selective qualifications are not particularly sustainable. And (.) that is why we have now decided on such a continuous, regular qualification with this cascading model". In addition, we wanted to meet the needs of the daycare settings for a broader range of content by working together with parents and inclusive pedagogy. In order to achieve this, additional consultants should be used. This should also prevent the misunderstanding that additional experts for early language education are a personnel resource. Overall, the quality of daycare settings should be improved through structural resources (additional staff, additional consultant) and a range of further training courses with a broader thematic focus.

The Ministry sees good structures and a functioning network of support and implementation as a recipe for success in supporting quality development in daycare settings in Germany: "We want to strengthen the impulse in terms of content, in this case, early language education. And we need the structures to do this". In particular, the responsible providers should be addressed directly. The assumption is that they can and should get their head teachers directly on board in order to guarantee good implementation processes. The federal states were also included in the concept in order to anchor structures in a country-specific and, above all, sustainable manner. The aim should be to create specific structures on their own so that their daycare settings can continue to run independently without the support of the federal government. The multi-level

approach of the federal programme is described as successful, since a structure was found which "apparently supports and also works successfully". In addition, the evaluation and monitoring data already indicate that the programme has been successful. It examines what is really changing in the institutions and whether, for example, the preschool teacher, head teacher and teams as a whole feel more competent and "better prepared to fulfill the tasks". It also examined whether the parents perceive the topic of early language education in the daycare setting or direct developmental processes to their child. The long-term goal is to determine the effects of quality development in the area. The program developer sees itself in the role of the accompanying, structuring and networking authority. The aim is to "get" the individual daycare setting on board, i.e. daycare settings should see added value for themselves by participating in the federal programme. The program developer sees the fluctuation ratio as a danger to the success of the programme. There was also the problem of an underdeveloped technical infrastructure with regard to the start-up period of the federal programme. In the meantime, a qualification pool, telephone conferences and an online platform have been set up to provide support above all for daycare settings in rural areas (materials, video conferences). Daycare settings in rural areas currently also have increased internet access. With a view to the role of ICT and videography, the use of mobile phones makes professionals less afraid of recording videos.

With regard to the start of the federal programme and the question about barriers, the new structures initially generated a great deal of organisational effort. The daycare settings had to form networks. Some kindergartens had difficulties finding a network. Feedback from practical experience and experiences from the first implementation period show, however, that the organisational problems have been overcome and there is more security for the professionals: "And now we are at a point (.) where the facilities are all running, the programme has somehow picked up speed, there is (.) a certain security for the professionals, (...), what they are doing and how it works". Nevertheless, there are still tensions and reservations in some settings, especially with regard to dealing with the issue of multiculturalism. This seems to depend in part on the provider and the regional location. The program developer sees a challenge here in dealing with this diversity: "And (.) that was also a difficulty with (.) the professional support, (...) to also take up this diversity. And to bring it in". The basic idea here, however, is to develop quality in the main topics of the federal programme through the development of team processes. As a perceived impact for children, the program developer would like to see added value for all children: "All children should benefit". There should be no deficit orientation in the institutions. Feedback from practice shows that multilingualism should be one of the main topics in the future. In addition, social changes, such as the integration of refugees, should include the changed needs of institutions into the content of the programme.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

The federal programme "Language Preschools" is currently implemented by a high number of preschools in Germany (approx. 10 %). It can thus be considered as an initiative of high impact. It follows a child-centred approach of language education offered to all children in settings with higher proportion of children with an immigration background or a different language spoken by the families. It combines the promotion of the language development of the children with parental involvement and inclusive education and is supported by an intense, integrated system of professional development.

The case study points to the relevance of implementation of multicultural beliefs at all levels. It also shows a number of everyday-strategies that are used to value the spoken languages of the children in different pedagogical activities such as during mealtimes etc. The staff shows high integration practices in trying to pick up the spoken languages of the children themselves. Specific strategies seem to be best implemented in small group activities. The described strategies and activities may be taken up in WP 3.4.

The perspectives of the parents show that they feel valued by the teachers and enjoy a good atmosphere. It is also obvious that they consider the promotion of German language skills and valuing their own language as equally important. The parents (with an immigration background) show high educational aspirations and have high interest in getting best support for preparing their children for school, this seems to be one reason for valuing German language support as well as inclusion of their family language in preschool practice. This is actually a topic which seems to show relevance in Turkish immigrant samples across workpackages in Germany.

From the child perspective, the setting of multilingualism and multiculturalism is dealt with as a matter of fact and not as a special challenge. This seems to have the effect that this practice is seen as normal reality for the children and they speak about making use of their family language, German and other languages in a natural way. The setting has a broad mix of cultural backgrounds and this is seen as a resource also by the children. When talking about their wishes for climate and activities in preschool their cultural backgrounds seem not to be mentioned and is not seen as special needs.

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5. GREECE: 'PEDAGOGICAL UTILIZATION OF LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT KINDERGARTEN'

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ABSTRACT

The intervention selected by the Greek team is entitled "Pedagogical utilization of linguistic and cultural diversity at kindergarten". It targets children attending centre-based (public Greek) early childhood education settings. It focuses on curriculum, pedagogy and the school climate. It was considered a suitable and appropriate case for the needs of the current project, as it is consistent with the positive elements and strengths-based approach of ISOTIS. This selected intervention was used as a repository of activities for the purposes of a case study, since it aimed at multiculturalism/multilingualism and utilization of linguistic and cultural diversity in the kindergarten in a very innovative manner within the Greek school context. The case study aimed at conducting the intervention, based on the ISOTIS inventory, contributing to the school curriculum, the empowerment of (immigrant background) families, professional development and inter-agency coordination. The main aim of the case study was the support of the children's home languages and cultures through home-based and classroom-based activities and through the professionalization of teachers using ICT-environments.

Keywords: multiculturalism, multilingualism, diversity, identity, school climate

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Table 5.1. *Targeted outcomes, key success features, and facilitators of success of 'Pedagocial Utilization of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity at Kindergarten'.*

GOALS	FEATURES OF SUCCESS	FACILITATORS OF SUCCESS AND/OR INNOVATIONS
Individual academic / cognitive outcomes • Promote culture-sensitive language development **Individual socio-emotional outcomes** • Improving children's self-esteem / confidence • Supporting children's well-being • Supporting children's cultural and ethnic identity **Interpersonal outcomes** • Developing cultural and multilingual awareness and openness • Promoting positive contact between minority and majority children • Reducing prejudice and discrimination **Staff outcomes** • Improving teachers' self-efficacy and ability to provide support **Family-school relationships** • Supporting and creating partnerships with parents **School culture outcomes** • Highlight and utilize linguistic and cultural heterogeneity • Valuing and/or preserving children's language of origin	**Microsystem: Type of activities / curriculum** • Experiential learning • Cooperative learning • Extensive language support • Multilingualism activities • Sensitivity to local context and culture(s) • Mother tongue valorisation and enhancement within the school / classroom routines • Documenting children's skills in their mother tongue and other languages • Making diversity visible **Mesosystem: Connecting schools and families** • Partnerships and positive relationships with parents/families • Use if ICT for communicating with parents • Recognizing parents' perspectives and competence • Intercultural dialogue • Parental involvement in selected activities **Mesosystem: Connecting professionals** • Cooperation between professionals **Exosystem: Supporting professionals and the school** • Purposeful teacher/staff selection and/or training • Effective communication among all stakeholders **School macrosystem: Changing/supporting school culture and values** • Diversity as strength (culture) • Strengths-based orientation	**Focus** • Supporting children's identity • Meaningful contact with diverse languages and cultures **Design** • Strong identity of the intervention (clear goals) **Staff characteristics, involvement, and commitment** • Staff continuity **Implementation processes** • Team work: Cooperation between professionals • Close cooperation with experts / teacher support • Strong commitment from strong leadership **Family involvement** • Strong and trust-based relationships/partnerships with families • ICT tools for communicating with families • Effective communication with families **Additional conditions for implementation** • Flexibility

PEDAGOGICAL UTILIZATION OF LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT KINDERGARTEN: A CASE STUDY IN GREECE

BACKGROUND

THE SELECTED INTERVENTION

The intervention selected by the Greek team is entitled "Pedagogical utilization of linguistic and cultural diversity at kindergarten". It was developed by Evi Kompiadou as a postgraduate in 2013 at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The intervention targets children attending centre-based early childhood education settings. It focuses on curriculum, pedagogy, and the school climate. It was applied targeting children from disadvantaged backgrounds –migrants and low income- and it aimed, among others, to reduce educational and social inequalities. It was considered as a suitable and appropriate case for the needs of the current project, as it is consistent with the positive elements and strengths-based on approach of ISOTIS: maintaining high expectations for all children, supporting children's/families' heritage, language and culture. Its outcomes are related to academic learning and skills, with the use of ICT, needed for life-long learning and optimal participation in the 21st century. Some of its main aims are:

- ➢ to highlight the linguistic and cultural heterogeneity of the classroom
- ➢ to utilize linguistic and cultural diversity
- ➢ to suggest educational tools which resist the monolingual and mono-culturally oriented school curriculum
- ➢ to get familiarized with languages and develop multilingual awareness
- ➢ to use pedagogical tools as means of expressing identity
- ➢ to produce authentic identity texts
- ➢ to see the "others" in a process of self-awareness and connection of cultures

With regard to the activities and strategies that were applied throughout the project a number of materials were used:

- ✓ questionnaires for parents
- ✓ interviews with families
- ✓ questionnaire for children
- ✓ literary texts
- ✓ bilingual books
- ✓ multilingual material – multiliteracies
- ✓ ICT use, works of art, photographs, films, recordings
- ✓ biographical narratives - identity texts

The project can be considered as a repository of activities aiming at multiculturalism and utilization of linguistic and cultural diversity in the kindergarten and at investigation of attitudes towards diversity in the current Greek kindergarten. Action research as a methodological approach. Action research as the principal methodological tool that was implemented in the project also strengthens the intervention, as it aims at making a change in the educational sector. Transferability to another context is possible. The activities can easily be applied to any pre-school class, whatever its composition is, as we also think that interculturalism is applicable in any context. Teachers' training and intercultural awareness is considered essential and useful.

During the school year 2017-2018 (April-June), part of the material of the intervention was implemented in four pre-school classes, in Western Thessaloniki, with 65 students aged 4-6 years

and with the contribution of 5 teachers. The teachers had scheduled planning time to collaboratively analyse student data, redesign lesson plans and engage new methods based on their needs and to address students' interests and experiences.

THE SELECTED SITE

Since 1990, Greece has faced a dramatic increase in flows of immigrants. The opening of the borders with Albania, as well as the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, resulted in a huge influx of immigrants from both Albania and countries of the former USSR (Kiliari, 1997). Greece's immigrant population reached a high percentage "for a country that until only twenty years ago was a migration sender rather than host" (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2005: 1).

The total number of immigrants who have settled in Greece according to the latest (2011) national census data (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2014) amounts to 713,000 third country nationals and 199,000 EU citizens (non-Greek) living in Greece accounting respectively for 6.5% and 1.8% of the total resident population. Most up to date data coming from the Labour Force Survey of 2016 suggest a significant decrease in the total migrant population since the 2011 census, while Albanian migrants still constitute about 60 % of Greece's foreign population; the next largest communities are Bulgarians, Romanians, Pakistanis and Georgians, followed by Ukrainians, Russians and finally Poles (Triandafyllidou & Mantanika, 2016).

Furthermore, in 2015 and 2016, Greece experienced a new unprecedented influx of refugees and migrants. More than 1 million people arrived in the EU, most of them fleeing from war and terror in Syria and other countries (European Commission, 2017). An estimated 362,000 refugees and migrants risked their lives crossing the Mediterranean Sea in 2016, with 173,450 people arriving in Greece (UNHCR, 2017). While in 2010-2011 a high proportion of intercepted arrivals originated from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco and Algeria, in 2014 and thereafter more than 90 % of those arriving were Syrians, Afghans, Somalis and Eritreans (UNHCR, 2014). According to the total Immigrant and Emigrant Populations by country, Greece is nowadays 43rd as a host country and 71st as a sending country, while the international migrant population in Greece is up to 1.220.000 (Migration Policy Institute, 2017).

Indicators of poverty and inequality were accompanied during the period 2010-2015 by particularly negative social impacts, as poverty and social exclusion in Greece rose from 27.7% 2010 to 35.7% in 2015 (Institute of Labor, 2017). Globally, more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 54% of the world's population residing in urban areas in 2014 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2014), while in Greece 78.7 % of the population is urban.[3] It is clear that nowadays in Greece "in times of crisis" the main issue for most cities is unemployment and social marginalization. Even more so in Thessaloniki, which is the second largest urban centre of the country, the effects of the crisis are intense. Thessaloniki has been experiencing these problems since the beginning of the crisis; from 2009-2010 until today, as its economy was quite vulnerable, with few healthy forces, without clear structure and productive tissue (Elias, 2015: 56, 71).

Western Thessaloniki was selected though, as it is a site that hosts families from disadvantaged backgrounds –migrants and low income- for at least 25 years now, while cheap accommodation

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[3] Worldometers, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision. (Medium-fertility variant). http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/greece-population/

and low rents is preferred by the majority of the population occurred. It should be mentioned that migrants (from third countries) living in the Municipality of Thessaloniki come mostly from Albania and from the countries of the former USSR.[4]

Immigrants and low-income families are concentrated in urban sites and now on refugees that move from reception sites to hostels or apartments in Thessaloniki's urban agglomerations. Public schools host children of economic migrants, low-income families and currently refugees[5] (18% in Central Macedonia), although less than a third of the 12,000 children of school age have had access to formal education.[6] Yet, the dimensions of this challenge call for a more culturally responsive and inclusive education for ethnic minority students and families.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS, PARTICIPANTS, AND ANALYSIS

The participants' profile of this particular case study intervention, i.e. the professionals and parents whose interview data are analysed in the next sections as well as the children who constitute the sample of the study, are presented in Tables 5.2-5.4.

Table 5.2. *Profile of the professionals*

Role of Professional	Teaching experience	Specialty	Site
Coordinator/ Supervisor[7]	29 years total, 18 years in Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUth)	Professor in Sociolinguistics, Coordinator of "Polydromo[8]"	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Researcher	3 years in private and 20 years in public schools	PhD candidate in School of Early Childhood Education-Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUth)	Preschool class in Western Thessaloniki
Site coordinator[9]	22 years in public schools	Postgraduate degree in intercultural education	Preschool class in Western Thessaloniki
Preschool Teacher A	10 years in private and 17 years in public schools	Educational training	Preschool class in Western Thessaloniki
Preschool Teacher B	10 years in public schools	Intercultural training	Preschool class in Western Thessaloniki
Preschool Teacher C	23 years in public schools	Educational training	Preschool class in Western Thessaloniki

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[4] 21,717 people come from Albania and 16,504 from the countries of the former USSR (Katsavounidou & Kourti, 2006)

[5] A recent UNICEF report estimates the number of refugee children in Greece at 20.300 (UNICEF, 2017)

[6] UNISEF for every child. Europe and central Asia. https://www.unicef.org/eca/press-releases/greece-back-school-refugee-migrant-children

[7] The Coordinator is the person who was responsible for the academic supervision of the project on behalf of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

[8] 'Polydromo' is an inter-university special interest group focusing on issues of language contact and bilingualism. For more information please visit: *www.polydromo.gr*

[9] The Site Coordinator is the director of the school

Table 5.3. *Profile of parents*

Code	Age	Sex	Education	Immigrant identity	Family status	Number and age of children	Languages they speak	Employment
A.	35	F.	Primary school	Born in Georgia, father from Russia, mother from eastern Black Sea Region of Turkey	married	2 daughters, 8 and 10 years old	Russian (1st), Greek, Georgian Pontiac (a little)	unemployed
B.	38	M.	High school	Born in Albania, both parents from Albania	married	1 daughter, 8 years old	Albanian (1st), Greek, Italian (a little)	retired
C.	32	F.	University	Born in Serbia, both parents from Serbia	married	2 daughters, 5 and 8 years old	Serbian (1st), Greek, English	unemployed

Table 5.4. *Profile of children*

Number of children	Age	Sex (% boys)	Children born in other countries	Children with host country nationality	Children with dual nationality	Children that speak other languages at home	Roma children	Countries of origin	Languages at home
20	4-6	50%	5%	15%	20%	20%	0%	Albania U.S.A Nigeria	Albanian, English, Yoruba

The teachers who implemented activities in their classes were interviewed in a focus group at the end of the school year. One of them was a researcher in the ISOTIS project for the Greek team and was responsible for organizing and observing the process of implementing the activities. The coordinator and the site coordinator participated in individual interviews. Three parents with a migrant background participated in individual interviews respectively. The parents selected had already participated in the implementation of the intervention during the 2015-16 school year. The aim was to foster a multilingual and multicultural approach in the preschool class with the cooperation of the educators, the children and the parents. During the current implementation we further aimed to find out the effects of the initial intervention over time as well as the perspectives of the parents involved, after the three years that intervened and their experiences from primary school. The necessary research ethics considerations were followed according to the guidelines

of the ISOTIS project with particular emphasis on the anonymity of the participants and their informed consent to participate in the study.

The children of the sample come from a mainstream preschool class where a children's study had been conducted. A letter from a researcher of another country was used in order to trigger and engage children's perceptions reflecting on and discussing their school experience in terms of inclusion, well-being, and acknowledging/respecting differences, through focus group/circle time discussions which were audio-recorded. The letter activated the children both at a cognitive and a socio-emotional level. The letter-trigger was very useful to elicit information about their school and the way the children feel about it. Subsequently, socio-emotional outcomes reflected the school climate.

Interviews and conversational material were transcribed and analysed with the use of Content Analysis, which is a suitable method for qualitative interviews analysis. Analysis based on a small sample is qualitative and thematic or semantic (Clarke & Braun, 2013). It focuses on meanings or themes and the value of the analysis unit for the research purposes. It is a method used in a sociolinguistic paradigm, appropriate to categorize words or phrases generated by techniques for systematic elicitation that use text as a "window into experience" (Ryan & Bernard 2000: 769, 790). Therefore, qualitative content analysis was applied to process, encode and categorize the interviewees' talk. Excerpts of the interviews, which are quoted, are used to interpret and support the conclusions drawn.

SUMMARY OF THE INTERVENTION LOGIC MODEL

Inputs

- **AIMS**
- connection with curriculum and pedagogy
- pedagogical utilization of multilingualism and multiculturalism in education.
- pedagogical utilization of heritage language in pre-school education
- Investigation of attitudes towards diversity in the current Greek kindergarten
- **RESOURCES**
- multilingual material, multiliteracies
- works of art, photographs, films, recordings

Outputs

- **ACTIVITIES**
- interviews , focus goups and individual
- children's study
- ICT use
- biographical narratives - identity texts

- **PARTICIPATION**
- children
- teachers
- professionals
- parents
- migrants and low income families

Outcomes

- **Short term**
- raising multilingual awareness
- supporting children's /families heritage language nd cultural backround
- more active participation in the educational prosses
- **Medium term**
- positive socio-emotional sklills development
- school readiness, particularly for children from disandvantage backrounds
- inclusive school climate
- **Long term**
- reduce educational social inequalities
- higher commitment and empowerment

Figure 5.1. Logic Model for 'Pedagogical Utilization of Linguistic and Cultural Diversity at Kindergarten'

PEDAGOGICAL UTILIZATION OF LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY AT KINDERGARTEN: A CASE STUDY IN GREECE

THEMES

THEME 1: HISTORY

This intervention, as described above, is based on the materials produced in the context of a postgraduate project in 2013, at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The intervention is relevant to the curriculum, giving voice to children from different cultural backgrounds and empowering their identities.

Children's experiences early in life have a long-lasting impact on their future. Thus, early childhood is crucial for human development. Cognitive, social and emotional skills develop through the first years, set the base for future potential social and emotional skills and play an important role in driving children's lifetime success (OECD, 2015). Educational opportunities can help to promote inclusive economic growth and social cohesion while successful education can empower children to reach their full potential.

However, learning gaps do exist between students at opposite ends of the socio-economic scale, with students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds falling behind. This gap tends to widen in the transition into adulthood. Children of less privileged families may not entirely reap the benefits of preschool education if access and usage of high-quality care and education is socially selective due to spatial, economic or cultural constrains. Additionally, extensive research and studies illuminate how high-quality early childhood education and pre-primary experience have resulted in better school outcomes, positive socio-emotional skills development and school readiness, particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (OECD, 2017a).

Bourdieu's work (1998) in social practice is constituted with the notions of field, capital and habitus. Bourdieu uses the term 'field' to describe any 'structured social space' (Bourdieu, 1998: 40). These fields can include the school as space and as a system. Bourdieu's way of thinking helps us understand 'domination' as an everyday practice and invest in achieving an inclusive education for ethnic minority students and families.

Based on the expectation that the utilization of heritage/home languages in pre-school education will stimulate children's linguistic awareness and that the development of home/heritage language and literacy skills can change the attitudes of the general population towards multiculturalism, we developed, tested and evaluated an original multilingual support program for pre-school education with the use of ICT.

THEME 2: KEY ACTIVITIES

Regarding the activities and strategies proposed and used in the program, the researcher values **experiential learning** and the **project method** because they focus on experience and develop creativity, thinking and discussion in order to trace the views of children and also any possible misunderstandings. **Brainstorming** was also used so that all thoughts could be heard with respect and acceptance, as well as **role-play** that create a safe framework for children to express themselves and participate, **group-work** that fosters feelings of reciprocity and collective responsibility, **computer use** that has many advantages through appropriate software (games, fairy tales, simulations) and through the **use of the internet.**

The teachers, who implemented the program, report the **use of books** and **pictures** so that the

children gradually acquire the representation of words and situations. The picture in this case seems to function as a "mediator" between knowledge and language, that is, between the language that the teacher could use to convey the information he/she wants, taking into account the linguistic level and the linguistic use of the students (Sphyroera, 2007: 19). Additionally, the use of **experiential games** is emphasized so as to identify with children. *"I think the more we work in an experiential manner on sensitive issues, the more desirable results we may have in the end"* (Teacher A).

The practices, which were implemented throughout the program in order to contribute to its goals and look deeper into the children's views and its assessment, are described by the teachers themselves: "*First of all, we try to **detect what they know, what the children's views are on the subject.** After exploring what they think, we try in different ways to touch upon these issues, that is, a fairy tale may be used or it could be a video but above all it must be an **experiential activity,** that has to do with the children's own participation, with **dramatization, cooperative games** that will help children experience things and put themselves in other children's shoes. And then we can examine again **correspondingly** the extent to which children's views on the subject have changed after our intervention "(Teacher A)." With all the methods and materials, **suitably tailored**, with **group and cooperative educational scenarios and activities** "(Teacher B). With the pedagogical use of their own texts, the creative work by students, including literary narratives, and multimodal materials. These, as identity texts, can act like a mirror reflecting identity issues. In addition, every day practices in the classroom such as drawings can reflect their negotiated identities situated in their discourses (Researcher).*

The role of families is considered to be very important for the program since parental involvement is shown to be among the factors that improve educational process and to function as a link between the school and the community. "*Very important, parental involvement has very positive results both for children and for **the parents' role, but also for the relationships between them and the class teacher.** The active participation of parents increases the **teachers' motivation** and their **educational role** at the same time and enhances the **children's participation and their self-esteem** "(Teacher A). The school learning community welcomes all families. Schools that serve a diverse range of students, including new immigrants and refugees, consist welcoming schools, where educators appreciate differences and involve all families in educational practices (Epstein & Salinas, 2004: 14). "*Engaging parents and **recognizing the value, the culture, the cultural background** and the ecosystem of families is one of the additional strategies implemented by the kindergarten as well as the **connection with the community**" (Site coordinator).*

THEME 3: FEATURES OF SUCCESS - FACILITATORS: FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESS

Strong **personal relationships** with the participants and **a stable pedagogical staff** are among the success factors which are reported. *"When all children and parents are happy sharing stories from their various backgrounds and feel happy and lucky to have been involved in this project with the specific teacher-researcher"* (Coordinator).

Extensive **language support** and **sensitivity to the local context and culture** have emerged as key-elements of the intervention for children and their parents. "*The children came into contact, at least in our own class, with languages that they had never heard before and **they impressed***

them, that is, the Arabic language impressed them both its writing and its accent. While they had heard Albanian before e. g. Arabic made **a great impression on them and that is a gain**. They had ... they knew more about European languages, so they now **faced stereotypes about people and languages** unknown and they enriched their knowledge "(Teacher A). "In addition, the children who did not refer to their own languages were given the opportunity to **feel more comfortable** in class with regard to their origin and language. The schoolgirl who listened to her language showed that she enjoyed it and she was **more expressive** after that"(Teacher B). "I have found that it can **help parents** too, **to change their impressions**. There are families who support their origin and others who do not. The school can play a role in all that. To help with their **inclusion**" (Teacher A).

For the parents, who are culturally different, focusing on the first language and on elements of their culture was important for communicating with other parents "*I think it's successful because... I was born in another country and there were a lot of nationalities there, and I am used to listening to another language, hanging out with people of another nationality and I like it that we communicate here as well, we learnt how to communicate with people from Albania, Georgia...*" (Parent A). The parents report the change they see in themselves and their children: "*I think it worked positively for the parents we had the most contact with, it brought us together even more, and as for the children... I don't know, my children are more liberated now that they speak another language. We didn't use to be like that. When we first came we talked in a very low voice so as not to... we were embarrassed. Now my children aren't... for example. A. is not at all embarrassed to be speaking Russian... and we owe all this to the program in a way. Because you told us: Speak Russian at home, let the children learn... the children speak Russian and aren't ashamed, it's not like in the past!*" (Parent A). "*She felt very proud (her daughter) and I felt too; because we are dealing with it, we have not heard something like that, so it seemed how you handle all kids. These things… they are from Albania, and we are from Serbia and that from Georgia… I remember the wedding they played, with different songs from all countries of the children*" (Parent C).

The **good management** of the project with **appropriate materials and equipment**, **the clear objectives** and the **teachers' support** seemed to be very positive for the teachers themselves. *"The goals set by teachers about the project should be clear"* (Site coordinator). "*It was well-organized from its part, it was organized very well. We had the material; we had the steps we had to follow, so it went well in this regard. In the short time we had, it was very positive that we had the material ready. If schools which are going to take part in such programs are supported next year too with such support, I imagine it will be effective. It is good to provide freedom to the teacher, as long as there is a planning of actions*" (Teacher A). Also, effective **collaboration and communication among the staff** and **support** and **flexibility** among them were reported: "*Cooperation between teachers, the exchange of ideas and the children's own interest, the extent to which it will attract their interest, what we do. We should be prepared and ready to adjust what we have planned. At the same time, the program should be flexible*" (Teacher B). In addition, **frequent communication** between the teachers who implement the project and the supervisors as well as its **assessment** are also stated: *"Regular feedback should be given on what has been done, and what could be done"* (Teacher C).

The benefits from **the use of ICT** are reported by the coordinator: "*It helps as it makes the process much more dynamic and attractive for all*" and by site coordinator: *"... both for retrieving*

information and for the publication to the community of the actions taken within the framework of the program, which can lead to community awareness". As the teachers advocate, it is considered that the use of ICT in pre-school education **needs to be supported by themselves** as the children of this age cannot make use of its multiple uses. "*The role of ICT in the kindergarten is mostly facilitative not predominant because the children themselves cannot use it in various ways"* (Teacher A). However, it does have multiple benefits for the program itself:" *Uploading however the materials and activities is very good for dissemination of the program* (Teacher A). More specific benefits are reported regarding **providing information to parents:** *"Parents are better informed, especially some parents who do not come to school daily because we are all-day school and the parents work. With the uploading of materials they also have a much better understanding of what is going on in the kindergarten. They do not expect a meeting to get to know the programs we run"* (Teacher A). This precisely is emphasized in the features of a program that gives parents the **opportunities to participate without the need for their physical presence**. "Because most parents cannot often come to the school building to see what their children are learning, new designs for homework can engage all parents... for example, an interactive homework" (Epstein & Salinas, 2004: 16). For this mother, technology is used **to recall and maintain memories**: *"It helps us, it brings back memories, and the pictures you've brought reminded me of some things I had forgotten about. It goes without saying that it helps us but you educators too. Especially the children remember a lot of things. With technology, parents and teachers remember things"* (Parent A). It is also important for **practicing the first language**: *"…I would like to take them to a language school so that they learn the language, but I cannot for financial reasons. We watch Russian TV ... for instance, whenever a joke is made my daughter understands it and laughs at the jokes. Technology helps with languages"* (Parent A).

This parent in his interview mentions the use of ICT **to inform children** and **give food for thought and reflection on important issues** such as war and its consequences: "*It is helpful, very helpful. Because for example we saw pictures from Syria, from the war. This will give us food for thought: how does a human live, what does he do, how his voice is heard ... this should affect us. It should affect us positively as we listen to someone or looking at him. One does not choose to be poor or to have war. A child, at least a child cannot choose* "(Parent B).

But also, for **communication among schools** and the **training of teachers**: "... *they communicate with each other and see what programs are implemented in other schools and get ideas*" (Teacher A). "*It is true that one gets ideas ... because you are a single unit otherwise*" (Teacher B). *"For the training of teachers and the creation of a depository of good practices"* (Researcher).

THEME 4: BARRIERS AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

The difficulties for the teachers that were noted were: *"The **reduced participation, indifference of some parents, limited school time"*** (Teacher A). *"One of the problems is the lack of time on the part of the parents"* (Teacher C). A teacher suggests providing incentives to increase parent involvement that is in line with modern media and the power of mass media that seem to influence parents as they are directed towards competitive activities: "*Something that would have been **competitive** if we presented that the school is involved, and we need **your own contribution** perhaps. In the e-twinning program when we made a poster and we had to vote, they involved themselves in the process, respectively last year in an environmental program. I saw them to be*

*more interested in something like that. The **influence of the media** is apparent here...* " (Teacher A). Parental awareness is considered important: "*Few are already **aware of** the migrant or refugee issue in which they would show greater **interest**. The issue is also **political** ..."* (Teacher B), therefore similar actions are suggested towards this direction: "*Through **corresponding programs** like this and **awareness** raising actions"* (Teacher C)". Also, the teacher reflects on the activation of parents to participate: "*Parents, however, are **influenced** by one another. In a positive direction, for participating in the activities, the incentive is given so that someone else does something too. **Incentives** need to be given*" (Teacher B).

Participation should not be taken for granted. The teachers report as a disadvantage the reduced parental involvement in parents' gatherings and informative meetings. "***It would be very important if all families were involved.** I often **do not get response from everyone**. In the meetings we hold for providing information about the program, all previous programs, and afternoon meetings so that they can come, half of them attend and we get response from fewer of them, especially at the end of the year"* (Teacher A). *"Their participation is very important, we do not always have their response, I agree" (*Teacher B). Apart from that, it is reported that sometimes they experience negative emotions not only with their role but also towards the school as an institution: *"Sometimes there is a **depreciation** of the school in general"* (Teacher A). "*Some parents think that the kindergarten does not have **the same requirements** as the other school levels*" (Teacher C). Addressing such situations requires careful management and good organization of educational practices in terms of the school planning: *"When a program starts **from the beginning** of the school year and **focuses in depth**, then participation is increased*" (Teacher A*).* Deep knowledge of the educational framework and an approach that meets the needs of all the parents involved are also considered important. As the coordinator states, intercultural competence is a qualification and a skill to cope with such phenomena as well as the corresponding material *"As members of Polydromo group[10] all program developers had a deep and **long-standing understanding** of migrant issues, had already formed **important bonds** with migrant families and communities and had access to various resources that were developed within the group's initiatives".*

For the researcher, the difficulties seem to be expected and to relate to the personal exposure of people which always entails a risk, as well as when referring to historical events that are never neutral: *"Dealing with the identities of people in depth has a tremendous educational interest, it constitutes a link between the family and the school environment. **Personal exposure is always a difficult** and **sometimes a sensitive issue**, it touches on personal aspects of the individual, and it must be done within **a secure framework of communication and trust.** This is not built overnight, but it is **part of the school culture** in which the school invests*". The researcher comments on the benefits that she claims the use of identity texts and their exposure can have, despite the obstacles: *"Incentives were given regarding participation. The **emergence of personal stories** e.g**. in an attractive way**, of the students' family trees **using the computer**, or **their exhibition, open to the public, within the school**. Sensitive historical issues were smoothed through discussion and dialogue. The parents realized that in the school context the objective, as much as possible, exposure of historical events is necessary. Experiences remain alive and narratives always carry this risk, to capture the narrator's eye*" (Researcher).

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[10] For more information please visit: *www.polydromo.gr*

As the site coordinator argues they had difficulties *"…to inform the few parents who did not speak Greek. Language has been **an obstacle to our efforts** to inform and persuade non-linguistic parents to get involved in the program. In this case, we asked for help from parents who knew the language of these families. So, they worked as **interpreters, moreover as mediators"**.* The teachers involved also mentioned some of their efforts to overcome the difficulties: *"We **exhibited the outcomes** and the material of the project and this motivated other parents. We **tried to explain** the reasons, the benefits, the results of such programs. We **gathered quite often"*** (Teacher C). Accordingly, the researcher mentions as an essential skill of the modern teacher the intercultural skills acquired through personal engagement and development as well as training*: "**Training and engaging in intercultural education** equips the educator, **to be on solid ground** and deal with issues that arise better. It mediates his or her knowledge to parents, aiming at a **secure framework of meaningful communication."***

THEME 5. PERCEIVED IMPACT FOR KEY ACTORS

5.1. Impact perceived by professionals

The impact of the program for the professionals is shown in their own words. They focus on the **personal relationships**, **the relationships developed with the parents** as the coordinator points out: *The relationship between the teacher and the parents is **crucial** especially at this (preschool and early primary) level of education*". The link between immigrant families and the families of the host country is referred by the site coordinator*: "I have realized **the sincere concern** of the families of the dominant group in order to get to know the cultural identity of the families of the minority groups in the class. Also, when families of minority groups **revealed** the particular elements of their cultural identity **without fear of being isolated"**. "...A grandfather told me that it **was the first time that they were given the opportunity** to ask and learn their history exactly and it was recorded, and they were moved very much!" (Teacher B).* After that, the same teacher notes about the use of identity texts, especially texts that required the families' engagement: *"**The whole class and every family benefits**, although the children were of young age, they engaged themselves in the process of talking about their past in some families, something which they had never done before. They went to their village to get to know it, whereas they had not been there until then*" (Teacher B).

Unexpected benefits are also reported for other groups in the classroom: *"Generally, children who have some diversity are the ones who benefit more because **they understand that there are other groups too** and even if they are not the ones with which the project deals and initially targets at. So, they can also gain regarding their self-esteem"* (Teacher A). Particularly **new population groups**, such as refugees, "... *It has been here in education for some years (interculturalism). We paid a little more attention to the Arabs. This helps **refugees to enter our schools**; it is a matter that we were concerned with.*" (Teacher B).

The teachers' **professional identity** and **the image they have for their role** is shown to be improving too through the **feedback** they receive: *"Our feedback as educators is important, **we approached the stories of people, their lives**, it was of great interest"* (Teacher C). Through parental involvement and the participation of parents and the community, *"the role of teachers is empowered through **the positive feedback** they receive on the educational"* (Researcher).

5.2. Impact perceived by parents

The parents discussing the benefits of the program refer to the overall **positive atmosphere** created "*The positive points. There was a **very good atmosphere** among children and parents* "(Parent A). More specifically this parent refers to the benefits for herself and her children:" *First of all it helped me to open up more, **to come closer** to the other parents, with whom our relationship still holds up to today. **All of this was positive**. For my children as well, although it's easier for kids than for grown-ups to adjust, it was very nice"* (Parent A). Similarly, the father in the interview extract below focuses on pre-school education as **the basis for building knowledge**: "…*I do not feel the same with primary teachers; they do not promote education, culture and knowledge the same way we did in the kindergarten. That is, in the kindergarten that I was thinking that there was no such knowledge or education needed ... But I saw in the end that this **was the basis for building knowledge**"* (Parent B). *"The relationship with the children. It can help psychologically, you when you sit down and talk with them, you will find a way. It's in the character, in the teacher; you know the job…*" (Parent C).

They refer to the **relationships** developed among parents in their meetings, the **mutual understanding** and the realization of their **similarities**, of the **common problems** *"I liked that we were meeting often, the fact that we were a **big company** with the other parents. We were also telling various things and it felt like we could **say our things** and we were **learning from each other**... If we had not met, **we would think that they are perfect**, and they do not have any problems…"* (Parent B). The same father states: *"…to feel more **familiar**, **closer to each other** with our **fellow men**"*. In his discourse he emphasizes the **development of friendly relationships** with the other parents and also to the positive feelings of his child: *"At school I feel better because it seems **to be like her own habitat**. She felt nice, she was telling great things about her teacher"* (Parent B). Also refer to the relationship between the children: *"You, teachers are different with the kids; you **support** them in many things. …It was a great success for the kids to **become a team**"* (Parent C).

5.3. Children's perspectives

The study of the children aimed to involve children as key informants, allowing them to express their perspective about:

   a) **if and how their school acknowledges and values diversity**
   b) **what elements they consider as quality indicators of school inclusiveness.**

The selected site was a typical formal preschool class in Western Thessaloniki, with full-day educational provision. Two preschool teachers are employed in the class, that were also interviewed, and they are part of the case study sample.

A letter from a researcher of another country was used as trigger to engage children perceptions. They made comments even about the envelope: *"it is from abroad"*. They understood it from the letters, *"they are in English"* they said. Their level of literacy allows them to understand the differences. They were impressed by the name of the supposed school: Casalpusterlengo. They also commented on the similarity of the word with the game they know: Lego. They recognized the word Scuola meaning school (*"Scholeio"* in Greek).

Concerning the question*: "What do you think she could find interesting/special about your school?"* the children gave answers that describe their school to someone that may not know it,

such as: *"At school we play in the corners"* (they mean the way space is organized), *"We have computers" "We have a dollhouse to play"*. They mention the topics they deal with: *"We talked about our teeth"*, *"We are preparing a summer celebration"*, *"We recycle batteries, among other things"*, *"We made a painting exhibition with our works in the town hall a week ago"*, or something general: *"We learn a lot of things"* or *"I like my school"* etc.

Regarding the question *"Do you think that your school would be similar to the one in Italy?"*, the children answered in a way that showed that they are aware of the differences (language, habits, houses, educational practices) that may occur. They perceive these differences as something natural and expected. They also talked about the similarities mainly related to the nature of children/childhood and their habits.

Table 5.5. *Differences and similarities between schools that children mentioned*

It will be different because:	It will look similar because:
• It will not look alike in the outside	• They will have a library, **like we do**!
• **All schools are different**!	• They will have computer too…
• They may not have "corners" to play	• **They will draw, like we do**!
• Their **games may be different**	• They will have posters made by them.
• Their **homes may also be different**	• They **will be sitting in a circle**, with seats and benches, couches and tables.
• They **may not work in groups**	• They will have drawers to put in their works.
• They may not eat at the same time with us and maybe they play in other hours.	• There will be shops nearby the school.
• **They will speak Italian**.	
• Their yard may be different, and they won't share it with the primary school, as we do	

Concerning the question *"When new pupils arrive in your classroom, how are they welcomed? Do you do something similar in your school?"*, they answered:

- *"We welcome him/her. We say Hello! We say our names!"*
- *"We play 'first meeting' games"*
- *"It is like when we… that the children learned a few words and letters."*

And when the question became more specific: "*If he/she is from another country*" they suggested actions mainly concerning the use of language but also practices they already knew and believed that would make the new student feel happy and accepted. The inclusive nature of the program implemented in their class is evident through their answers as they show empathy and sympathize with the supposed child coming into their class. Emotions are expressed, as they suggest ways of managing anxiety and uncertainty, which they imagine the child would be feeling. Their suggestions are presented in Table 5.6.

ISOTIS

Table 5.6. *Children's suggestions for welcoming a new student from another country*

Language use	Other techniques - Emotions
• *If he/she was from England, we would speak to him in English, the English we know. We have E. in class (a girl from Nigeria) who speaks English. If we were from France, we would speak a few French, bonjour! We would say good morning in French.* • *When we meet A.'s mum (a student of Albanian origin) we can say: Mermenjes! We will speak Arabic to M.'s mother (a child of the next class with Arabic origin)* • *We would learn some more words in his/her language* • *When we met N. (a girl from another school with Arabic origin) in the park, we spoke to her in English and Arabic. "Ismi" is easier than the other… (she meant an introduction for the female sex that sounded easier to her)*	• *We would get dressed as clowns to make him/her feel happy* • *With N. we played a game and when we touched her she was chasing us.* • *When Miss D. came to class, she is from Crete, we danced Cretan dances, we can do the same.*

A part of the letter-trigger was presented with the use of the puppet theatre, as an investigation of perceptions and behaviours towards children that are culturally different. The two characters of the story were presented as puppets. The children watched with great attention and they sympathized with the characters. They perceived the meaning of the story as the two puppets presented the two incidents: the one with the children who laughed at Fatima's mom wearing a scarf and then at Mohammad not eating some kinds of food as his religious observance. They compared it with the habit of Christians who do not eat meat for 40 days. They knew some things about fasting. They suggested Muhammad should keep on removing the meat from his sandwich. They did not like that the children laughed at his face.

Although they did not easily recall similar incidents they had experienced, they recognized the origin of the two characters and they became aware of the difficult moments the characters were in. Then they recalled some memories, as you can read in their comments.

Researcher: "*Have you ever experienced something like this? To make you feel strange about something or someone different;"*

- "M.'s mom has a scarf and S.'s mom and N.'s" (children from neighbouring classes).

Researcher: *Did you know why they wear a scarf?*

- "She is Muslim".
- "My mom told me she is Muslim"
- "We saw Malala in our class (the story of Malala Ousafi) she also wears one".

They were aware of the languages of origin that their classmates speak, as they answered:

- ➤ "A. speaks Albanian"

> ➢ "E. speaks English and Africani[11]"
> ➢ "And my dad also…" (a boy with Greek-Canadian father)
> ➢ "N. speaks Albanian"
> ➢ "My dad (A. said) speaks little Russian"

The children in an individual activity the next day were given suns and clouds and were asked to draw: On suns the elements that make them feel good and on clouds elements that do not make them feel good in their school contexts. Afterwards, children explained to the researcher and then to the other children what they have chosen to draw and why. Drawings and the subsequent verbalizations contribute to elicit children's perspectives on and experiences in their preschool. Their explanations are presented in the following Table 5.7.

Table 5.7. *Children's comments on their drawings on suns*

Activities	School	Friends	Things	Emotions
When we dance	I draw our school colourful (Appendix 1: picture 3)	My friends and me (Appendix 1: picture 5)	Books	I was happy borrowing books
When we go outside in the yard	I like my school very much	The children in our school	Computer	I love to do tasks
We, playing with puzzles	I want to go to my school all the time	My friends, E. A. and me (Appendix 1: picture 2)	Dollhouse	I like excursions
When we talk and we sit altogether	Children going to school	F. draws very nice	"The book without pictures"	I love my friends (Appendix 1: picture 4)
Computer work	Me at school playing	My friends are playing very well	The dinosaurs and our toys	I love M. and A.
When we made butterflies	Birthday parties at our school (Appendix 1: picture 1)	The children, the boys and the girls		It makes me happy when I am well
The library and the puppet theatre (Appendix 1: picture 6)	When it's shiny	I made new friends		It makes me happy
				I felt very happy at school
				E. and F, because they love me
				I will miss school during summer

The children seem to be well-adjusted to the school environment, which is also shown by field observation. There are no signs and no points referring to problems. On the contrary, their feelings of belonging are often shown in their words about their school, often referring to "my school" or "our school" and to the items they share in their birthday celebrations there. The descriptions of

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[11] They were not aware of the exact language name, which is "Yoruba".

their paintings refer mainly to their feelings and to their friends. They describe their school as colourful and sunny, their group activities, the games the play.

Regarding the negative points and what they did not like, they mentioned **specific incidents***: "I didn't like it when N. hugs me and tightens my throat"* and instant: *"When N. scared me". "When H. scared me at the old school". "When I didn't find place to play". "When the house we made was destroyed".* Some children referred specifically to the incident of **closure** of the previous school building that hosted them and moving to another building: "*When our old school closed*" (Appendix 2: picture 1). Of great interest is the fact that they mentioned **their first day at school:** "*When I did not have friends. When I came for the first time*". Characteristically, this particular child drew him/herself to be holding flowers as he said: "*For my very first friend*" that he/she had not yet met (Appendix 2: picture 6). "*In the past, when I first came to school, I cried because I wanted my mom*" (Appendix 2: picture 3). Also, on the same topic: "*On my first day at school I was afraid*" (Appendix 2: picture 2). In this picture the child characteristically drew clouds and rain over the school while the day was sunny. Some children reported incidents in which they were **challenged:** "*When G. said I did not have a turtle, but I did.*" *He said that not eating greens but worms. He lied…".* It turns out that children need stability and security and that any change is frightens them. The transition from preschool education to primary education is very important for this age. Transition policies and practices should be well-prepared and child- centred, guided by an appropriate and aligned curriculum and managed by professionals in collaboration within the transition areas (OCDE, 2017b).

In conclusion, the children who took part in the study of show **empathic abilities**, taking into account their discourse about the possibility of a new child coming into their classroom. They feel like **the school is their own place**, which was expressed through their drawings and descriptions, but also by the parents in their own interviews. Concerning their socio-emotional development, they seem to have **self-consciousness** and to be **familiarized with the social and cultural differences**. They maintain and establish **good relationships** with the "important others" in the school environment, such as the teacher and peers. Through communication with the family and support from parents, the role of teachers is of great importance as a link between the two reference frameworks. Academic outcomes can only be shown in such a supportive environment.

THEME 6: INNOVATIVE FEATURES OF THE PROJECT / PROGRAM

What is important and innovative in the program is that it **involves the children's identity**, it **builds on experience**, **backgrounds and interests of their children and their families** and it **creates incentives**. It supports learning in today's multimodal communication environments. The coordinator states about expectations: "*That students acquire a deeper and meaningful understanding of linguistic and cultural variation and that migrant parents feel an important part of the school process.*" The researcher argues that: "*It benefited not only the bilingual children, but all the children in the class who were equipped with the **qualifications and the perspective needed to enable them to become citizens of the world**. The children of the host country, who are not linguistically and culturally diverse, are treated by the educational system with homogeneity despite their visible and non- visible differences, from this cultural exchange they are encouraged to acquire **a meaningful contact and knowledge of the languages and cultures that are next to us** mainly in our schools*". Accordingly, the mother's words: "*It

*presented other languages to children... To children that could only speak Greek, I think they took it more... not as something huge... something strange. They took it easier and **accepted it as something normal**"* (Parent A)*.*

The father's words are very characteristic about the program and the teachers whom he sees as **ambassadors** among children and school **on issues of equality and social justice:** *"… the teacher handled all children the same way. The children were equal to each other. It was not that the one comes from Albania, the other from Russia and another from Greece. This is why I say **that teachers and kindergarten teachers are the ambassadors**, because children learn from them. They learn how to look to each other, how to feel nice among them **without offending or without feeling as being in an inferior position,** like: 'I come from Albania and I cannot be equal to a Greek'…"* (Parent B).

Only by reversing our way of thinking and highlighting the heterogeneity of our "own" group and the forms of power that constitute it, we can see more clearly our relationships. In other words, only by seeing and accepting the multiple identities that individuals and groups carry, someone can see the "difference" as a constituent of "us all". By confronting the dominant perceptions of homogeneity and by challenging pedagogical complacency we attempt to create a place of meaningful understanding and acceptance in school and in the community (Androusou & Askouni, 2007).

THEME 7: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

About the future of the program the coordinator reports: *"It can be **repeated in various classes** once the teachers involved are open and willing. To be able to implement similar initiatives in other classes and schools and incorporate this project into **teacher training programs** at University. It helps if teachers are open to new languages and dare to explore them even if they make mistakes. The children can be very helpful as they are willing to talk about their own languages once trust has been built in class".*

In this intervention, the monocultural perspective gives its place to an **intercultural perspective**, to **an extended view and critical stance**, through contact and interaction with languages and cultures. Its main objective is to contribute, as an action research, to improving everyday educational practice in order **to respond to the whole student population**. As the coordinator argues *"It addresses the need to cater for the smooth integration of migrant background children into preschool education and the development of a school context of creative language and culture contact»*. According to the site-coordinator*, "It fulfils the need to develop a climate of acceptance and trust"* and according to the teacher: *"I believe that it will touch issues that are important but also sensitive to a certain extent"* (Teacher B).

The program and the activities implemented helped the children and their families with the necessary commitment and engagement to the educational process. According to Cummins (2014), the commitment and involvement of children is likely to increase to a great extent when teaching enables them to co-construct knowledge and develop literacy skills that are necessary to understand and act in the world around them. This requires educators to overcome the approach of language as content and to implement activities and educational practices that affirm the identity of pupils and are related to their lives (Cummins, 2014: 153) and their funds of knowledge (González et al, 2006).

Characteristically, this parent talks in his interview about his experience which is **against racism** and is in line with the inclusive practices that ISOTIS also aims at: *"Yes, I say that these people should love other people and everyone's culture. We live in a reality, in **globalization**. A Greek or an Albanian cannot say that -We do not want Greeks here- or -We do not want Albanians or others here-. It is not possible. If it were so, it would be like communism, with closed borders and just: 'you live in here'. People now move, go from one side to another… **there should be no such thing, racism, this dividing line between people** …"* (Parent B).

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

According to site-coordinator: *"Expectations focus mainly on the **development of students' critical thinking** but also on **becoming partners in the knowledge and perceptions** that they will shape within their family environment and therefore the immediate and extended family engage in a **cultural exchange**. In this way an attempt was made to avoid the social exclusion of pupils who came from different cultural environments. "*

Specifically, "identity texts" deposited by children and parents give space to their own voices as they produced authentic personal texts. Parental involvement during the intervention is also considered a positive element and particularly the involvement of the immigrant parents as class assistants. Cummins and Early (2011: 3) describe identity texts as "the products of children, creative works or performances, carried out within the pedagogical space orchestrated by the classroom teacher". The "text" is related to the direct and also to the wider sociocultural context. It focuses on the social and the cultural background of linguistic production (Archakis & Tsakona, 2011). Every child finds in it a detail that seems to reflect and echo, the internal concerns, possible conflicts or problems, that found a way to express themselves through the text, at that specific moment (Cummins, 2001; Tsokalidou, 2012, Tsokalidou, 2017). Through the texts, the cultural & linguistic background comes to the foreground and finds expression. This process can help the production and pedagogical use of children's authentic testimonies and also the development of intercultural "awareness".

According to the coordinator the evaluation of the case study falls within *"The importance of sharing **knowledge on different languages and cultures**, the **equal importance of all languages** for their speakers, **the importance of languages for identities for all** involved in the school process (teachers, children and parents), **the importance of multilingualism and multiculturalism** for educational and social contexts alike".* Parents also evaluated the program by **highlighting positive facts about themselves, their children and the community**. They included among them, communication succeeded between individuals, emergence of linguistic and cultural heterogeneity and the use of technology. Coexistence with other cultures and interaction has been brought together with self-esteem and self-confidence as they recognize themselves, their culture and their language in the program.

The case study, as it is applied, is coherent with the positive and strength-based approach of ISOTIS: maintaining high expectations for all children, supporting children's/families' heritage language and culture. It also targets at children attending centre-based early childhood education settings, children from disadvantaged backgrounds (migrants - low income). It aims to reduce educational and social inequalities and it focuses on curriculum, pedagogy, and school climate. We expect it will have outcomes related to academic learning and skills needed for life-long

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learning and optimal participation in the 21st century.

Education has a unique power to change the world according to the following statement. The father's words, full of power and belief, sound like a **declaration on cultural diversity** and we find them the most meaningful way to close this report:

*"This means that something is changing. It changes, it matures through time. Now there is the chance for the children! They should now learn that it really does not exist: "you are like this and I am like that". This is racism in everything … and I call it racism because I am Albanian or the other is Greek, but you can see racism even in fat or thin people, rich or poor. **This should be taught by the teachers through education** that ¨difference is nice¨. **Every human is different and unique**! We cannot be the same, if we were, we would be clones. As if we had come from a factory"* (Parent B)*.*

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APPENDIX 1: SUNS, THE ELEMENTS THAT MAKE THEM FEEL GOOD

Picture 1

Picture 2

Picture 3

Picture 4

Picture 5

Picture 6

APPENDIX 2: CLOUDS, ELEMENTS THAT DO NOT MAKE THEM FEEL GOOD

Picture 1

Picture 2

Picture 3

Picture 4

Picture 5

Picture 6

APPENDIX 3: EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS IN GREEK

«Θεωρώ ότι όσο πιο πολύ δουλεύουμε με βιωματικό τρόπο πάνω σε ευαίσθητα θέματα στο τέλος μπορεί να έχουμε πιο επιθυμητά αποτελέσματα.» (Teacher A, page 6)

*«Καταρχήν κάνουμε μία **ανίχνευση του τι γνωρίζουν, ποιες είναι οι απόψεις των παιδιών πάνω στο θέμα**. Αφού διερευνήσουμε τι πιστεύουν προσπαθούμε να δώσουμε με διάφορους τρόπους να αγγίξουμε τα θέματα, δηλαδή και παραμύθι μπορεί να είναι και **βιντεάκι** μπορεί να είναι, αλλά πάνω από όλα πρέπει να είναι **βιωματικές δραστηριότητες**, ότι έχει να κάνει με την ίδια τη συμμετοχή των παιδιών, με **δραματοποίηση**, με **συνεργατικά παιχνίδια** που θα βιώσουνε τα παιδιά πράγματα και να βρεθούν στη θέση των παιδιών. Και μετά μπορούμε να κάνουμε πάλι την **αντίστοιχη διερεύνηση** για το πόσο άλλαξαν οι απόψεις των παιδιών πάνω το θέμα μετά την παρέμβασή μας»* (Teacher A, page 6).

*«Με όλες τις μεθόδους και τα υλικά, με **κατάλληλα προσαρμοσμένα**, με **ομαδικά**, με **συνεργατικά εκπαιδευτικά σενάρια** και **δραστηριότητες*** (Teacher B, page 6).

*«Πολύ σημαντικός, η **γονεϊκή εμπλοκή** έχει πολύ θετικά αποτελέσματα τόσο στα παιδιά, όσο στο **γονεϊκό ρόλο αλλά και στις σχέσεις μεταξύ τους και με τον/την εκπαιδευτικό της τάξης**. Η ενεργός συμμετοχή των γονέων αυξάνει ταυτόχρονα τα **κίνητρα των εκπαιδευτικών** και τον εκπαιδευτικό ρόλο και **ενισχύει τη συμμετοχή των παιδιών, την αυτοεκτίμηση τους**»* (Teacher A, page 6).

*«Η εμπλοκή των γονέων και η **αναγνώριση της αξίας**, της **κουλτούρας** του **πολιτισμικού υπόβαθρου** και του οικοσυστημικού πλαισίου των οικογενειών είναι μία από τις πρόσθετες στρατηγικές που εφαρμόζει το νηπιαγωγείο και η **σύνδεση με την κοινότητα**»* (Site coordinator, page 6).

*«Ήρθανε τα παιδιά σε επαφή, τουλάχιστον στη δικιά μας την τάξη με γλώσσες που δεν είχαν ξανακούσει και **τους εντυπωσίασαν**, δηλαδή τα αραβικά τους έκανε εντύπωση και η γραφή τους και η προφορά τους. Ενώ είχαν ακούσει αλβανικά π.χ. τα αραβικά τους **έκαναν μεγάλη εντύπωση και είναι κέρδος**. Είχανε.. γνωρίζανε περισσότερο ευρωπαϊκές γλώσσες, οπότε τώρα και **αντιμετώπισαν στερεότυπα σε σχέση με λαούς και γλώσσες** άγνωστες και εμπλούτισαν τις γνώσεις τους»* (Teacher A, page 7)

*«Επιπλέον τα παιδιά που δεν ανέφεραν τις δικές τους γλώσσες, τους δόθηκε η ευκαιρία **να νιώσουν πιο άνετα** μέσα στην τάξη σε σχέση με την καταγωγή και τη γλώσσα τους. Η μαθήτρια που άκουγε τη γλώσσα της έδειχνε ότι το χάρηκε και ήταν **πιο εκδηλωτική** μετά»* (Teacher B, page 7).

*«Διαπίστωσα ότι μπορεί να βοηθήσει **να αλλάξουν εικόνα και οι γονείς**. Υπάρχουν οικογένειες που υποστηρίζουν την καταγωγή τους και άλλες που δεν το κάνουν. Το σχολείο μπορεί να παίξει όλο σε αυτό. Να βοηθήσει **στην ένταξή τους**»* (Teacher A, page 7)

*«Πιστεύω ότι είναι πετυχημένο γιατί.. εγώ γεννήθηκα σε μια άλλη χώρα και είχαμε πολλές εθνικότητες εκεί και είμαι συνηθισμένη στο να ακούω άλλη γλώσσα, (αα) να κάνω παρέα με ανθρώπους που έχουν άλλη εθνικότητα και μ' άρεσε που και δω επικοινωνούμε, **μάθαμε να επικοινωνούμε**, με ανθρώπους από την Αλβανία, από τη Γεωργία…»* (Parent A, page 7).

*«Στους γονείς που είχαμε πιο συχνή επαφή νομίζω πως λειτούργησε θετικά, **μας έφερε πιο κοντά**, και στα παιδιά… Δεν ξέρω, τα παιδιά μου **είναι πιο απελευθερωμένα** που μιλάνε μια άλλη γλώσσα. Εμείς δεν ήμασταν έτσι. Όταν ήρθαμε μιλούσαμε σιγά σιγά, να μην… ντρεπόμαστάν. Τώρα τα παιδιά μου δεν… η Α. ας πούμε δεν ντρέπεται καθόλου που μιλάει και ρώσικα… και αυτό το οφείλουμε κατά κάποιον τρόπο στο πρόγραμμα. Γιατί εσείς μας λέγατε: Να μιλάτε ρώσικα στο σπίτι, να μαθαίνουν τα παιδιά… Τα παιδιά μιλάνε ρώσικα και **δεν ντρέπονται**, δεν είναι όπως*

παλιά!» (Parent A, page 7).

«Ένιωσε πολύ περήφανη και εγώ πάρα πολύ επειδή ασχολούμαστε με αυτό, δεν άκουσα κάποιος άλλος να το κάνει αυτό. Έτσι φάνηκε πώς χειρίζεστε όλα τα παιδιά. Αυτό, και αυτοί είναι από την Αλβανία, και εμείς που είμαστε από τη Σερβία και αυτός από τη Γεωργία. Θυμάμαι το γάμο που κάναμε με διαφορετικά τραγούδια από όλες τις χώρες» (Parent C, page 7).

«Να είναι ξεκάθαροι οι στόχοι που θέτουν οι εκπαιδευτικοί σχετικά με το πρόγραμμα» (Site coordinator, page 7).

«Η καλή οργάνωση, από πλευράς αυτού η οργάνωση ήταν πολύ καλή. Είχαμε το υλικό, είχαμε τα βήματα που έπρεπε να ακολουθήσουμε, οπότε πήγε και καλά ως προς αυτό. Στο λίγο χρόνος που είχαμε ήταν πολύ θετικό το ότι είχαμε έτοιμο το υλικό. Αν υποστηρίζονται τα σχολεία που είναι να πάρουν μέρος σε ένα τέτοιο πρόγραμμα και του χρόνου με τέτοια υποστήριξη φαντάζομαι θα είναι αποτελεσματικό. Καλά είναι να υπάρχει ελευθερία στον εκπαιδευτικό, φτάνει να υπάρχει ένας προγραμματισμός στις δράσεις». (Teacher A, page 7).

«Η συνεργασία ανάμεσα στους εκπαιδευτικούς, η ανταλλαγή ιδεών και το ενδιαφέρον των ίδιων των παιδιών, κατά πόσο θα τους τραβήξει το ενδιαφέρον αυτό που κάνουμε. Να είμαστε και σε ετοιμότητα, να αναπροσαρμόζουμε αυτό που έχουμε σχεδιάσει. Να ταυτόχρονα ευέλικτο το πρόγραμμα» (Teacher B, page 7).

«Να γίνεται τακτικά ανατροφοδότηση του τι έχει γίνει, τι θα μπορούσε να γίνει». (Teacher C, page 7).

«… τόσο για την άντληση πληροφοριών όσο και για την κοινοποίηση στην κοινότητα των δράσεων που γίνονται στα πλαίσια του προγράμματος η οποία μπορεί να οδηγήσει στην ευαισθητοποίηση της κοινότητας»(Site-coordinator, page 7).

«Ο ρόλος των τεχνολογιών στο νηπιαγωγείο είναι περισσότερο βοηθητικός κι όχι κυρίαρχος γιατί τα παιδιά μόνα τους δεν μπορούνε να τον χρησιμοποιήσουν ποικιλοτρόπως» (Teacher A. page 7-8).

«Το να ανεβαίνουν όμως, να αναρτώνται τα υλικά και οι δραστηριότητες είναι πολύ καλό για τη διάχυση του προγράμματος». (Teacher A, page 8).

«Οι γονείς ενημερώνονται πολύ καλύτερα, ειδικά κάποιοι γονείς που δεν έρχονται καθημερινά στο σχολείο γιατί είμαστε και ολοήμερο και οι γονείς εργάζονται. Με το φωτογραφικό υλικό που ανεβαίνει έχουνε επίσης πολύ καλύτερη αντίληψη του τι γίνεται στο νηπιαγωγείο. Δεν περιμένουνε μία συνάντηση για να δούνε το προγράμματα που τρέχουμε» (Teacher A, page 8)

«Μας βοηθάει, μας θυμίζει, με τις φωτογραφίες που μου φέρατε θυμήθηκα κάποια πράγματα που είχα ξεχάσει. Εννοείται πως μας βοηθάει και εμάς και εσάς τους εκπαιδευτικούς. Τα παιδιά ιδιαίτερα, θυμούνται πολλά πράγματα. Με την τεχνολογία θυμόμαστε πράγματα και οι γονείς και οι δάσκαλοι. Τα παιδιά θυμούνται πιο εύκολα, πιο πολλά πράγματα" (Parent A, page 8).

«… Θα ήθελα να τα πάω να μάθουν τη γλώσσα σε φροντιστήριο, αλλά δεν μπορώ για λόγους οικονομικούς. Βλέπουμε ρωσική τηλεόραση και κάποιοι δεν τα καταλαβαίνουν όλα… όταν λέγεται ας πούμε ένα αστείο, η κόρη μου τα καταλαβαίνει και γελάει με τα αστεία. Η τεχνολογία βοηθά στις γλώσσες». (Parent A, page 8).

«Είναι βοηθητικό, είναι πολύ βοηθητικό. Γιατί παίρναμε εικόνες, παίρναμε από τη Συρία, από τον πόλεμο. Αυτό θα μας βάλει στην σκέψη: πώς ζει κάποιος άνθρωπος, τι κάνει, πώς ακούγεται η φωνή του… Αυτό πρέπει να μας επηρεάζει… Πρέπει να μας επηρεάζει θετικά, ακούγοντας έναν άνθρωπο, βλέποντάς τον, δεν επιλέγει κάποιος να είναι φτωχός ή να έχει πόλεμο. Ένα παιδί… τουλάχιστο ένα παιδί, δεν επιλέγει!» (Parent B, page 8).

«… επικοινωνούνε μεταξύ τους αλλά και βλέπουν τι προγράμματα εφαρμόζονται σε άλλα σχολεία και παίρνουν ιδέες» (Teacher A, page 8).

«Είναι αλήθεια ότι παίρνει ιδέες … γιατί είσαι μονάδα αλλιώς». (Teacher B, page 8).

«Για την επιμόρφωση των εκπαιδευτικών και για τη δημιουργία ενός καταθετήριου καλών πρακτικών». (Researcher, page 8).

*«Η **μειωμένη συμμετοχή**, η **αδιαφορία από κάποιους γονείς**, ο **περιορισμένος σχολικός χρόνος**».* (Teacher A, page 8).

"Ένα από τα προβλήματα είναι η έλλειψη χρόνου από την πλευρά των γονέων"» (Teacher C, page 8).

*«Κάτι που θα είχε **διαγωνιστικό χαρακτήρα**, αν στο παρουσιάζαμε ότι συμμετέχει το σχολείο και χρειαζόμαστε **τη δική σας συνδρομή** ίσως. Στο e-twinning πρόγραμμα όταν κάναμε μια αφίσα και έπρεπε να την ψηφίσουνε μπήκανε στη διαδικασία, αντίστοιχα πέρυσι σε ένα περιβαλλοντικό πρόγραμμα. Σε κάτι τέτοιο τους είδα πιο πολύ να ενδιαφέρονται. Φαίνεται εδώ **η επιρροή των μέσων**…»* (Teacher A, page 8).

*«Λίγοι είναι ήδη **ευαισθητοποιημένοι** σε σχέση με το μεταναστευτικό ή το προσφυγικό που θα έδειχναν μεγαλύτερο **ενδιαφέρον**. Το θέμα είναι επίσης **πολιτικό**…»* (Teacher B, page 8).

*«Με τα αντίστοιχα **προγράμματα** όπως αυτό και **δράσεις ευαισθητοποίησης**»* (Teacher C, page 8).

*«Οι γονείς όμως **επηρεάζονται** ο ένας από τον άλλο. Προς το θετικότερο, προς τη συμμετοχή στις δραστηριότητες, τότε δίνεται το κίνητρο για να κάνει κι ο άλλος κάτι. Χρειάζεται να δοθούν **κίνητρα**»* (Teacher B, page 8).

*«**Θα ήταν πολύ σημαντικό να συμμετείχανε όλες οι οικογένειες**. Εγώ πολλές φορές **δεν βρίσκω ανταπόκριση από όλους**. Στις συναντήσεις που κάνουμε για ενημέρωση για ένα τέτοιο πρόγραμμα, για όλα τα προηγούμενα προγράμματα, και απογευματινές συναντήσεις για να μπορούνε να έρθουνε, έρχονται οι μισοί και από αυτούς βρίσκουμε ανταπόκριση από λιγότερους, ειδικά στο τέλος της χρονιάς»* (Teacher A, page 8-9).

*«Είναι πολύ σημαντική η συμμετοχή τους, **δεν βρίσκουμε** συμφωνώ, **πάντοτε ανταπόκριση**»* (Teacher B, page 9).

*«Μερικές φορές υπάρχει **μια απαξίωση για το σχολείο** γενικά»* (Teacher A, page 9).

*Μερικοί γονείς θεωρούν ότι το νηπιαγωγείο **δεν έχει τις ίδιες απαιτήσεις** σε σχέση με τις άλλες βαθμίδες»* (Teacher C, page 9).

*«Όταν είναι **από την αρχή της χρονιάς** ένα πρόγραμμα και **εστιάζει σε βάθος** τότε η συμμετοχή είναι μεγαλύτερη»* (Teacher A, page 9).

*«Η σε βάθος ενασχόληση με τις ταυτότητες των ατόμων έχει τρομερό εκπαιδευτικό ενδιαφέρον, αποτελεί φορέα σύνδεσης του οικογενειακού και του σχολικού περιβάλλοντος. Η **προσωπική έκθεση είναι πάντοτε δύσκολο και ενίοτε ευαίσθητο θέμα**, αγγίζει ατομικές πλευρές και πρέπει να γίνεται μέσα σε ένα **ασφαλές πλαίσιο επικοινωνίας** και εμπιστοσύνης. Αυτό δεν χτίζεται από τη μια μέρα στην άλλη, αλλά αποτελεί **μέρος της σχολικής κουλτούρας** στην οποία το σχολείο επενδύει»* (Researcher, page 9).

*«Σχετικά με τη συμμετοχή δόθηκαν **κίνητρα**. Η **ανάδειξη των προσωπικών ιστοριών π.χ. με ένα ελκυστικό τρόπο**, των οικογενειακών δέντρων των μαθητών/τριών με τη **χρήση του υπολογιστή**, η **έκθεση τους σε κοινή θέα** στο σχολείο. Τα ευαίσθητα ιστορικά ζητήματα **εξομαλύνθηκαν με συζήτηση και διάλογο**. Οι γονείς αντιλήφθηκαν πως στο σχολικό πλαίσιο η αντικειμενική, όσο γίνεται, έκθεση των ιστορικών γεγονότων είναι απαραίτητη. Τα βιώματα παραμένουν βιώματα και οι αφηγήσεις εμπεριέχουν πάντοτε αυτόν τον κίνδυνο, να αποτυπώνουν τη ματιά του αφηγητή»* (Researcher, page 9).

*«Τα προβλήματα που αντιμετωπίσαμε ήταν στην ενημέρωση των γονέων οι οποίοι δεν γνώριζαν Ελληνικά. Η γλώσσα αποτέλεσε **εμπόδιο στην προσπάθειά μας** να ενημερώσουμε και να*

*πείσουμε τους αλλόγλωσσους γονείς να εμπλακούν στο πρόγραμμα. Σε αυτήν την περίπτωση ζητήσαμε την βοήθεια των γονέων που γνώριζαν τη γλώσσα των οικογενειών αυτών. Λειτούργησαν δηλαδή **ως διερμηνείς, περισσότερο σαν διαμεσολαβητές»**(*Site-coordinator, page 9).

*"**Παρουσιάσαμε τα αποτελέσματα** και το υλικό του έργου και αυτό επηρέασε τους άλλους γονείς. **Προσπαθήσαμε να εξηγήσουμε** τους λόγους, τα οφέλη, τα αποτελέσματα τέτοιων προγραμμάτων. **Συγκεντρωνόμαστε αρκετά συχνά** "* (Teacher C, page 9).

*«Η επιμόρφωση και η ενασχόληση με τη διαπολιτισμική αγωγή και εκπαίδευση εξοπλίζει τον/την εκπαιδευτικό, **πατά γερά στα πόδια του/της** και διαχειρίζεται καλύτερα θέματα που προκύπτουν. **Διαμεσολαβεί** τις γνώσεις του/της στους γονείς, στοχεύοντας σε ένα **ασφαλές πλαίσιο ουσιαστικής επικοινωνίας»** (Researcher, page 9).

*«Αντιλήφθηκα το **ειλικρινές ενδιαφέρον** των οικογενειών της κυρίαρχης ομάδας για να γνωρίσουν την πολιτισμική ταυτότητα των οικογενειών των μειονοτικών ομάδων της τάξης. Επίσης όταν οι οικογένειες των μειονοτικών ομάδων **αποκάλυπταν** τα ιδιαίτερα στοιχεία της πολιτισμικής τους ταυτότητας **χωρίς να φοβούνται ότι μπορεί να απομονωθούν»**.* (Site-coordinator, page 10).

*«…Ένας παππούς μου είπε ότι **πρώτη φορά τους δόθηκε η ευκαιρία να ρωτήσουν και αν μάθουν την ιστορία τους** ακριβώς και καταγράφηκε και συγκινήθηκαν πάρα πολύ!»* (Teacher B, page 10).

*«**Ωφελείται όλη η τάξη και η κάθε οικογένεια** που παρότι τα παιδιά ήταν μικρά σε ηλικία μπήκανε στη διαδικασία σε κάποιες οικογένειες να μιλήσουν για παράδειγμα για το παρελθόν τους, πράγμα που ως τότε δεν το είχαν κάνει. Πήγαν στο χωριό τους να το γνωρίσουν, ενώ δεν είχανε πάει ως τότε».* (Teacher B, page 10).

*«Γενικώς τα παιδιά που έχουν κάποια διαφορετικότητα, εκείνα είναι που ωφελούνται **περισσότερο γιατί καταλαβαίνουν ότι υπάρχουν και άλλες ομάδες** και ας μην είναι αυτές με το οποίο ασχολείται και στοχεύει αρχικά το project. Οπότε έχουν κι εκείνα να πάρουν ως προς την αυτοεκτίμησή τους»* (Teacher A, page 10).

*«…Είναι εδώ κι κάποια χρόνια μέσα στην εκπαίδευση (η διαπολιτισμικότητα). Δώσαμε λίγο περισσότεροι προσοχή στους άραβες. Αυτό βοηθάει στην **είσοδο των προσφύγων στα σχολεία μας**, ένα θέμα που μας απασχολούσε»*(Teacher B, page 10).

*«Σημαντική η δική μας ανατροφοδότηση ως εκπαιδευτικών, **προσεγγίσαμε τις ιστορίες των ανθρώπων, τις ζωές τους**, είχε μεγάλο ενδιαφέρον».* (Teacher C, page 10).

*«… ενισχύεται ο ρόλος των εκπαιδευτικών μέσα από τη **θετική ανατροφοδότηση** που θα πάρει για το εκπαιδευτικό του έργο»* (Researcher, page 10).

*«Τα θετικά σημεία. Υπήρχε **πολύ καλό κλίμα** με τα παιδιά και με τους γονείς»* (Parent A, page 10).

*«Καταρχήν βοήθησε εμένα σαν Τ. να ανοιχτώ πιο πολύ, **να έρθω πιο κοντά** με τους υπόλοιπους γονείς, που… η σχέση μας κρατάει και μέχρι τώρα. **Ήταν θετικό όλο αυτό**. Και για τα παιδιά μου, αν και τα παιδιά είναι πιο εύκολο από τους μεγάλους να προσαρμοστούν, ήταν πολύ ωραία»* (Parent A, page 10).

*« …δε νιώθω το ίδιο με τους δασκάλους, έτσι, να προβάλλουν παιδεία, κουλτούρα και τη γνώση με τον ίδιο τρόπο όπως κάναμε σο νηπιαγωγείο. Δηλαδή, στο νηπιαγωγείο που θεωρούσα ότι δεν χρειάζεται τόση γνώση, τόση παιδεία ή τόσο αυτό… Αλλά, κατάλαβα στο τέλος ότι **ήταν η βάση, ήταν το θεμέλιο, ήταν το θεμέλιο για να χτίσεις μια γνώση...**»* (Parent B, page 10).

«Τη σχέση που έγινε με τα παιδιά. Μπορεί να βοηθήσει ψυχολογικά, εσείς όταν κάτσετε και μιλήσετε θα βρείτε τρόπο. Είναι ο χαρακτήρας, ο εκπαιδευτικός, να ξέρεις τη δουλειά…» (Parent

C, page 10).

*«Μ' άρεσε που συναντιόμασταν συχνά, δηλαδή εκεί γίναμε **μια μεγάλη παρέα** με τους άλλους γονείς. Και λέγαμε διάφορα και νιώθαμε ότι μπορούμε να πούμε κι εμείς **τα δικά μας**, και αυτοί, και **μαθαίναμε ο ένας τον άλλο**. Δηλαδή αν είχαμε κάτι εμείς, δεν θα μπορούσαμε να το πούμε, ή αν είχαν κάτι αυτοί, δεν θα ξέραμε. Αν δεν συναντιόμασταν θα σκεφτόμασταν **ότι αυτοί είναι τέλειοι ή είναι εντάξει**, ή δεν έχουν **προβλήματα...»** (Parent B, page 10).*

*«... και αυτό μας βοηθούσε ακόμα πιο πολύ, για να νιώθουμε **πιο οικείοι, πιο κοντά ο ένας με τον άλλο**.... με τους **συνανθρώπους μας!**» (Parent B, page 10).*

*«...οπότε εκεί ένιωθα καλύτερα, γιατί το παιδί ένιωθε σα να είναι στο **δικό του περιβάλλον**. Ένιωθε ωραία, μιλούσε με τα καλύτερα λόγια για τη δασκάλα»* (Parent B, page 10).

*«Κάνατε διαφορετικά με τα παιδιά, τα **στηρίζατε** σε πολλά πράγματα. ...Πέτυχε πολύ τα παιδιά **έγιναν ομάδα**»* (Parent C, page 10).

*«Ωφέλησε όχι μόνο τα δίγλωσσα παιδιά, αλλά **όλα τα παιδιά της τάξης που εφοδιάστηκαν με τα προσόντα και την οπτική, που τα επιτρέπει να γίνουν πολίτες του κόσμου**. Τα παιδιά της χώρας υποδοχής που δε διαφέρουν γλωσσικά και πολιτισμικά, η εκπαίδευση τα αντιμετωπίζει με μια ομοιογένεια, παρά τις ορατές η μη διαφορές τους, από αυτή την πολιτισμική ανταλλαγή ενθαρρύνονται στο να κατακτήσουν μια **ουσιαστική επαφή και γνώση γλωσσών και πολιτισμών που βρίσκονται δίπλα μας και κύρια μέσα στα σχολεία μας**»* (Researcher, page 14).

*«Το ότι μπορούσε να δείξει άλλες γλώσσες των παιδιών... Στα παιδιά που μιλάνε μόνο ελληνικά, νομίζω πως το πήραν πιο... όχι σαν κάτι το φοβερό... και κάτι ξένο. Το πήραν πιο μαλακά και το **δέχτηκαν σαν κάτι φυσιολογικό**»* (Parent A, page 14).

*«...νιώθω ότι εσείς σαν δασκάλα παίρνετε τα παιδιά τα ίδια. Δηλαδή, τους βάζατε ίσοι. Ήταν ίσοι μεταξύ τους τα παιδιά, δεν ήταν ένας από Αλβανία, ένας από Ρωσία, ένας από την Ελλάδα. Για αυτό λέω **ότι είναι οι πρεσβευτές οι δάσκαλοι, οι νηπιαγωγοί**, γιατί τα παιδιά από κει μαθαίνουν... πώς να βλέπουν ο ένας τον άλλον. Πώς να μπορούνε να πετύχουν και να νιώθουν εντάξει, και να νιώθουν ωραία ο ένας με τον άλλο, **χωρίς να προσβάλλουν ή, χωρίς να νιώθουν μειονεκτικά**: «εγώ είμαι από Αλβανία και δεν μπορώ αν είμαι ίσα με τον Έλληνα»* (Parent B, page 14).

«Καλύπτει την ανάγκη ανάπτυξης ενός κλίματος αποδοχής και εμπιστοσύνης» (Site-coordinator, page 15).

«Θεωρώ ότι θα αγγίξει θέματα σημαντικά αλλά και ευαίσθητα ως ένα βαθμό» (Teacher B, page 15).

*«Ναι, αυτοί οι άνθρωποι λέω, πρέπει να αγαπάνε τους ανθρώπους και να αγαπάνε την κουλτούρα ολονών... Ζούμε μια πραγματικότητα, στην **παγκοσμιοποίηση**. Δεν μπορεί τώρα να πει ένας Έλληνας ή ένας Αλβανός ότι: «Δεν θέλουμε του Έλληνες εδώ» ο Αλβανός στην Αλβανία ή... ο Έλληνας εδώ: «Δεν θέλουμε τους Αλβανούς ή κάποιους άλλους». Δεν γίνεται, αυτό, άμα ήταν έτσι, θα ήταν όπως είχαμε εμείς τον κομμουνισμό, με κλειστά σύνορα και «ζείτε εδώ μέσα». Ο κόσμος τώρα κινείται, πάει από μία άκρη σε μία άκρη. Άμα το κάνεις αυτό, **σαν χώρα ή σαν ομάδες θα τον αποτρέπεις αυτόν τον άνθρωπο να κάνει κάτι διαφορετικό**...»* (Parent B, page 15).

*«Οι προσδοκίες εστιάζονται κυρίως **στην ανάπτυξη της κριτικής σκέψης** των μαθητών/τριών αλλά και οι ίδιοι/ες να γίνουν **κοινωνοί των γνώσεων και των αντιλήψεων** που θα διαμορφώσουν στο οικογενειακό και συγγενικό περιβάλλον τους και επομένως να εμπλακεί το στενό και ευρύτερο οικογενειακό τους περιβάλλον σε μια **πολιτισμική ανταλλαγή**. Με αυτόν τον τρόπο έγινε μία προσπάθεια να αποφευχθεί ο κοινωνικός αποκλεισμός των μαθητών/τριών οι οποίοι/ες προέρχονταν από διαφορετικά πολιτισμικά περιβάλλοντα»* (Site-coordinator, page 15).

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*"Αλλά τώρα είναι ευκαιρία με τα παιδιά! Μαθαίνοντας ακριβώς ότι δεν υπάρχει , δεν υπάρχει αυτό: «εγώ έτσι, εσύ αλλιώς!». Αυτό είναι ρατσισμός στα πάντα, εγώ το λέω ρατσισμός επειδή είμαι Αλβανός ή ο άλλος Έλληνας. ρατσισμός υπάρχει στο χοντρός, στο λιγνός… στο φτωχός, στο πλούσιος. **Αυτό πρέπει να δείχνεται με τους δασκάλους, με την παιδεία,** με τα σχολεία, πρέπει να υπάρχει: "**Η διαφορετικότητα είναι ωραία!**" **Κάθε άνθρωπος είναι διαφορετικός και μοναδικός!** Δεν μπορούμε να είμαστε ίδιοι, άμα ήμασταν ίδιοι θα ήμασταν κλώνοι. Βγαλμένοι από μία σειρά, σα να τα βγάζει το εργοστάσιο"* (Parent B, page 16).

6. ITALY: 'OPEN SESAME'

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ABSTRACT

Families attending the Narcisi preschool, that is based in a multicultural neighbourhood in Milan (Italy), have different social, economic and cultural backgrounds (63% of children with different origins), making communication between the subjects particularly challenging. Among the many different nationalities, the presence of the Arabic culture stands out. Since the early 21st century, this school found itself having to face challenges it was not prepared for, with the need of specific tools and strategies. At that time, Verga Foundation (in cooperation with Ismu Foundation) proposed to the school an innovative approach to fulfil these emerging needs, Apriti Sesamo, a project for teaching Arabic language in public schools to avoid segregated educational choices. This project has been crucial to set up a new mindset, which is now part of the daily action of the staff. The Narcisi School has built a new *forma mentis* little by little; the school learned to enhance diversity and to promote plurilingualism through the daily practices and the teacher-child/children interactions.

Keywords: new mindset/forma mentis, inclusive practices, multilingual approach, culture of understanding, acknowledgement of identity

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OPEN SESAME: A CASE STUDY IN ITALY

Table 6.1. *Targeted outcomes, key success features, and facilitators of success of 'Open Sesame'.*

GOALS	FEATURES OF SUCCESS	FACILITATORS OF SUCCESS AND/OR INNOVATIONS
Individual academic / cognitive outcomes • Promote culture-sensitive language development **Individual socio-emotional outcomes** • Improving children's self-esteem / confidence • Supporting children's cultural and ethnic identity **Interpersonal outcomes** • Developing social and democratic citizenship skills • Developing cultural and multilingual awareness and openness **Family-school relationships** • Supporting and creating partnerships with parents **School culture outcomes** • Highlight and utilize linguistic and cultural heterogeneity • Valuing and/or preserving children's language of origin	**Microsystem: Type of activities / curriculum** • Experiential learning • Multilingualism activities • Mother tongue valorisation and enhancement within the school / classroom routines • Documenting children's skills in their mother tongue and other languages • Systematic mapping of multilingualism (school linguistic heritage) • Making diversity visible • Making similarities visible **Mesosystem: Connecting schools and families** • Partnerships and positive relationships with parents/families • Use if ICT for communicating with parents • Implementation of a children's area (for allowing parents to participate in L2 support activities) • Sharing of personal stories by parents with the support of a cultural mediator • Support of second language learning and communication of parents • Recognizing parents' perspectives and competence • Intercultural dialogue • Parental involvement in selected activities **Exosystem: Supporting professionals and the school** • Purposeful teacher/staff selection and/or training • Institutional network (municipality, university, community organizations…) • Effective communication among all stakeholders **School macrosystem: Changing/supporting school culture and values** • Intervention components part of / consistent with the school culture • Diversity as strength (culture) • Strengths-based orientation	**Focus** • Supporting children's identity • Meaningful contact with diverse languages and cultures **Design** • Relevance for children with a range of backgrounds • Tools supporting implementation and/or ensuring fidelity • Monitoring and evaluation **Staff characteristics, involvement, and commitment** • Staff continuity • Staff from diverse backgrounds • Staff attitudes and multicultural beliefs: Appreciation of children/families and their diverse strengths **Implementation processes** • Team work: Cooperation between professionals • Close cooperation with experts / teacher support **Family involvement** • Strong and trust-based relationships/partnerships with families **Additional conditions for implementation** • Flexibility

CONTEXT AND DATA COLLECTION

Narcisi kindergarten school has been built during the Fifties of the past century and is located in the south-west suburban area of the Municipality of Milan. Families attending the school have different social, economic and cultural backgrounds, making communication, language and understanding between the subjects particularly challenging and complex. The school has 6 classes and hosts 147 children with 13 teachers and one pedagogical coordinator. The percentage of children with different origins (63%) is quite high comparing to the urban average which is 27,8% for 3-6 age services. Among the many different nationalities of the families attending (South Americans, Chinese, Ceylonese, Indians, Filipinos, North and Central Africans, Eastern Europeans), the presence of the Arabic culture and over all Egyptians stands out.

> *The Narcisi kindergarten school is the reference point for the families living in this* neighbourhood. *The presence of immigrants has been increased recently due to the construction of council housing and this phenomenon led to the drop out of Italians attendance. […] In our school we have many children speaking more than one language or exposed to different idioms in the different contexts of their life, home and school.* (Coordinator, pg. 3 – first interview)

Even when there was no inflow of foreign people, the school was already hosting a different kind of diversity: people coming from the countryside all over Italy to work for the industry. These families spoke different dialects and the school was already the only place where they were invited to speak the national language.

> *This school, like other schools in Milan after the Second World War, has embraced the world: people coming from the countryside, that at that time was representing a mix of languages and local habits and traditions. People from Milan were speaking "Milanese", while people from Puglia were speaking "Pugliese" and then people from Veneto etc. There was already a multilingual context and the school was the place where everybody spoke Italian[12]. It was the same as today - I think – there is just one difference about the fear of the stranger due to the actual economic crisis.* (Coordinator, pg. 4 – first interview)

Meanwhile the inflow of foreign people started to grow, in the first decade of 21st century. As a reaction, Verga Foundation in cooperation with ISMU Foundation, proposed and financed an innovative approach to fulfil these emerging needs and perspectives, the *Apriti Sesamo* (AS) project.

The case study (Yin, 2009; Stake, 2005) included interviews and focus groups with key staff and parents (Table 6.2). More precisely:

Table 6.2. Participants

Role in the school	Methodology	Participants	Country of origin
Coordinator	1 Interview	1	Italy
Teachers	1 Focus group	3	Italy
Parents	2 Focus Groups	5	1 Italy, 1 Morocco, 1 Peru, 2 Somalia

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[12] Italian dialects can be very different from the national language. People from different regions could not understand each other if they spoke their local dialects.

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Analyses of published data and documentation included the PTFO (The three-years educational program – in Italian: PIANO TRIENNALE DELL'OFFERTA FORMATIVA), articles – written by the staff – and school documentation. The description of ISMU project AS has been written by one of the program developers.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND – APRITI SESAMO PROJECT

Apriti Sesamo (*Open Sesame*) was a project for teaching Arabic language in public schools. It was implemented in Milan between 2005-2008 by ISMU Foundation, in collaboration with the *Territorial School Office* (UST, former USP) of Milan, and *mainly financially supported* by Verga Foundation. It intended to respond to the need for a formative offer for Arabic language literacy found mainly in Moroccan, Tunisian and Egyptian migrant communities, in order to avoid segregated educational choices. This project, whose objectives regarded both the area of learning and that of integration, was immediately configured more as an action research (Mantovani, 1995; Pastori, 2017) than as a linear and predefined sequence of actions. The network and the collaboration between different institutions created the conditions for the inclusion of *AS* in a broader institutional project for the *preservation of language of origin* that involved, along with the *Territorial School Office,* the Regional School Office (USR) of Lombardy and the Catholic University of Milan.

THE CONTEXT OF THE ACTION RESEARCH

The significant presence of children and youth of immigrant origin in the Italian school system has created in time a complex and dynamic educational context, characterized by a plurality of language and cultural diversity (Figure 6.1).

TABLE 1. FOREIGN STUDENTS IN THE ITALIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. S.Y. 2005/06-2015/16. A.V. AND %

School Year	Total	Per 100 students	Increase in A.V.
2005/06	431,211	4.8	-
2006/07	501,420	5.6	+70,209
2007/08	574,133	6.4	+72,713
2008/09	629,360	7.0	+55,227
2009/10	673,592	7.5	+44,232
2010/11	711,046	7.9	+37,454
2011/12	755,939	8.4	+44,893
2012/13	786,630	8.9	+30,691
2013/14	803,053	9.0	+16,423
2014/15	814,208	9.2	+11,155
2015/16	814,851	9.2	+643

Source: ISMU analysis on MIUR data

Figure 6.1. Foreign children and youth in the Italian school system between 2005/2006 and 2015/2016. Reprinted from Education, by M. Santagati, in V. Cesareo (Ed.), *The Twenty-third Italian Report on Migrations 2017* (p. 56.), 2018, Milan: Fondazione ISMU. Copyright 2018 by Fondazione ISMU.

The Italian school, as an open inclusive system, from the beginning of *the migration phenomenon*

understood the centrality of the linguistic issue especially in reference to the acquisition of a second language. Intervention models and enacted inclusive and facilitating strategies were elaborated, being aware that studying in Italian as second language (L2) is a complex process, in line with multilingual and multicultural needs.

The implementation of *AS* started from the following considerations:

- in front of growing explicit requests from the families to maintain mother language, the school system could not give adequate answers;
- preservation and valorisation of maternal languages of foreign students remained more frequently a background topic, not yet really grasped by the school institution as a whole;
- the valorisation of linguistic repertoires in the classes were declared but not implemented in the educational practice or was randomly pursued by few teachers as individual;
- the legal frameworks, the intent declarations and the orientations expressed in ministerial orders and decrees were not adequately implemented in language policies (cf. e.g. Circulars of the Ministry of Public Education 205/90 and 73/94; Unique Paper on Immigration [L. n. 40 del 1998 e D. Lgsl. del 25/7/1998]; Guidelines for Welcoming and Integrating Foreign Students issued in 2006 by the Ministry of Education, University and Research);
- the value given to plurilingualism seemed to be a forgotten debate, involving only a minority of teachers;
- there was a significant gap between educational practice and the multilingual studies and research advances, as between Italian Legislation and the linguistic policy of the Council of Europe.

Indeed, the theoretical and pedagogical guidelines of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR – Council of Europe, 2001) already strongly had stressed the importance of plurilingualism promotion as a complex competence and as an answer to the linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe.

PROJECT AREAS

CEFR represented the theoretical perspective and the integrating background of the different actions conducted within the AS project, and plurilingualism was one of the keywords and a critical issue at the same time.

The two main intervention areas are:

- Arabic language teaching laboratories (for children and youth: *from 5 years old to* 19 years old);
- Italian as L2 teaching laboratories (for adults: parents, relatives, friends of children and youth involved in the project).

The adopted perspective:

(for children and youth)

- developing a linguistic repertoire in which all competencies are valued (CEFR, 2001);
- valorisation of language and culture of origin as a project of equal opportunities and citizenship;
- developing and enhancing linguistic and communication competences in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA);

- answering to families' need to preserve connections with language and culture of origin for their sons;
- testing a teaching/organizational model for the valorisation of L1;
- identifying transfer strategies and hypotheses for other migrant languages;

(for adults)

- favouring autonomy, socio-cultural promotion, integration and active citizenship;
- supporting the parenting role in the migration context.

Arabic language teaching laboratories

The Arabic language teaching laboratories intended to teach and preserve *MSA*, since the Arab world has a complex socio-linguistic situation and *Standard Arabic* is definitely not the first spoken language, but learning it means accessing the coded, sacred cultural heritage, the literature and history. For many children or youth *AS* was, indeed, the first contact with writing and reading in their *mother tongue*[13], while others regained and developed competencies that had gotten eroded with migration towards Italy and integration in the Italian school. For children in preschool age, language became a play, as the activities involved them in a first practice of verbal language (learning by doing) and differentiation of signs by means of touch and movement (e.g., *Total physical response – TPR*). Being able to attend the laboratories inside their own school, even if in extracurricular hours, was an important symbolic acknowledgement, giving "citizenship" to the language of origin. The participation in *AS* of some Italian and other foreign (non-speakers of Arabic) children and youth clearly confirmed this perception.

Italian as L2 teaching laboratories

The Italian as L2 teaching laboratories for adults were meant not only to foster and learn linguistic competencies, but also to provide a resource for stepping out situations of social isolation, preventing vulnerability. They offered opportunities to develop and enhance the linguistic and communicative competence, aimed at favouring social inclusion, integration, agency and autonomy in access services and institutions; and at supporting the parenting role in the migration context. Among the different laboratories (morning and afternoon hours, age and gender heterogeneous), some of them were addressed to foreign women, mostly Arabic speakers, some of which with low educational level or illiterate in the mother tongue. For this type of learners, the linguistic-mediator, along with teachers, had a key role as a facilitator in preparing teaching activities, bilingual glossaries, and in organizing specific lessons (women and children's health, school teaching model, prevention of domestic incidents, healthcare, etc.).

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[13] It should be mentioned that here we refer to *Standard Arabic* when we speak about mother tongue. Actually, when speaking about mother tongue, referring to *Arabic*, one does not usually mean *Standard Arabic*, a language that is learned in school as a "second language". In fact, *Arabic language is characterized by* the linguistic phenomenon *of diglossia*, namely, "the presence of a high and a low style or standard in a language, one for formal use in writing and some speech situations and one for colloquial use" (T.L. Harris, R.E. Hodges (1981). *A Dictionary of Reading and Related Terms*. Newark: International Reading Association, 88). That is to say that each Arabic country *has its* own national variety (e.g. *Moroccan Arabic*, *Egyptian Arabic, etc.*).

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Moreover, the implementation of a **children's area**, managed by educators and supported by volunteers, allowed mothers for fully participating in the learning process, otherwise of difficult access. In this interactive space, monolingual Arabic children had a first exposure to Italian language, involved in sensorial experiences, play and movement activities that became action-language (learning by doing), a first step towards bilingualism.

Table 6.3. *Synthesis of the laboratory activities carried out from 2005 to 2008*

Schools	Groups	Participants	Children in children's area	Teachers	Mediators	Class hours
5	26 (Arabic lab)	371	0	5	2	1467
	10 (Italian L2 lab)	187	35	10		552
Total	**36**	**570**	**35**	**15**	**2**	**2019**

NARCISI KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

As specified before, the intervention was conceived according to its specific context. Some AS project actions were carried out in the Narcisi Kindergarten School. In this site, as in the other schools of the project, the objective was to meet the needs of the different subjects involved (teachers, parents and children), and to "open as many doors as possible" (Coordinator., pg.2 - second interview).

AS involved teachers within a professional development path, built on their actual questions, doubts, dilemmas, raised by the sudden change of the school population. ISMU planned three meetings in which an expert (Antonio Cuciniello) responded to questions on educational work in a context characterized by diversity and, especially, by the presence of Arabic culture.

> *At a certain point, there was this change in subscriptions, so, when ISMU proposed this project, it just seemed perfect! We started to have new needs – both me, as the person in charge of the school, and the teachers, during this moment of change; it was a time of new issues compared to the past.* (C, pg.1 - second interview).

> *AS has been an opportunity to begin an all-around process of change: for the teachers, it was important to have answers – Cuciniello proposed meetings in which he could use the teachers' questions and doubts to speak about different origins, cultures, and educational habits. At that time, teachers used to consider all people from different countries to be one and the same, but we must note that this approach could in fact be dangerous, as it could cause people to make many mistakes; Cuciniello brought information that worked to open some doors.* (C, pg.2 - second interview).

Regarding the parents, the main goal was to create the conditions for a partnership as a necessary premise for a relationship of trust with the school, but also to face any tensions, either cultural or relational, between the parents themselves.

> *Sometimes, we have to face different problems simultaneously: for example, we can't understand some parents, and, at the same time, they do not understand each other, and*

they are in contrast because of different origins or religions - in the past, we had to deal with this kind of issue, between Copts and Muslims. Once, it was more evident than today, Coptic and Muslim mothers did not speak to each other. (C, pg.1-2 - second interview).

In particular, ISMU organized a few laboratories for a small group of people held by a professional linguistic and cultural mediator, during which participants were invited to share their personal stories. These small-group activities were useful to plan new initiatives in order to involve as many parents as possible in their children's school life.

These meetings helped parents to know each other. They were the occasions to share their stories, thanks to laboratories in which it was possible to develop relationships […] We started this experience with a small group; we identified mothers that were available during the school time, when their children were at school […] Due to the success of these small-group meetings, we planned to extend the proposal to each parent of the school. In particular, we organized a sort of "snack" for all the families, Italians and foreigners, during school time, with the presence of the linguistic and cultural mediator. After that, we proposed a meeting of all the parents to show the activities realized in the project, also with technological support […] One of the needs that we had, and that we still have, was to talk about everything that happens at school. It was one of the most attended meetings of my carrier as school coordinator! (C, pg.3 - second interview).

The last action, relevant to be mentioned, is that of the Arabic language teaching-laboratories with the presence of a linguistic and cultural mediator, involving 5-year-old children of Arabic culture.

This experience with children gave an important signal to their parents: they could feel understood and acknowledged in their histories/origins. If the school proposes an Arabic language teaching-laboratory, they do not need to go to the "via Quaranta" school, which at that time was the only school in which children could learn the Arabic language in Milan. Their children could have the opportunity to experience an Arabic language teaching-laboratory in their own school, which meant an acknowledgment not only of their mother tongue, but also of their written and gestural language – we could very well say an acknowledgment of their history. (C, pg.2 - second interview).

TEACHERS' SELECTION AND TRAINING (MOTHER-TONGUE TEACHERS OF ARABIC)[14]

The teachers were selected (school year 2005-2006) firstly by a curriculum analysis and afterwards by interview carried out by a commission made of experts in Arabic and an Arabic mother-tongue teacher. Besides typical selection criteria (such as title and course of studies; level of competence in Arabic (*MSA*) and in Italian; level of competence; previous experience in teaching context; motivational aspects), a quality selection criterium regarded the gender, nationality and religion variety of the group of teachers. This choice proved to be far-seeing and formative for the operators and for the teachers themselves, engaging them in a continuous dialogue, listening, comparison and negotiation between methodological approaches, reciprocal stereotypes, life and professional stories. Group diversity proved to be an important resource for

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[14] The selection of Italian L2 teachers turned out to be far less problematic. The teachers were actually internal or external to the public institution, already inserted in the Italian school model, with previous experience of teaching Italian L2 to adults.

testing one's own intercultural self-training, not very common in cultural and formative contexts of origin. Also, the families of children and youth, who were involved every year in project presentation and evaluation, considered this to be one of the strengths of *AS*. Arabic speaking parents felt recognized in their differences (nationality, linguistic heritage, religious belonging).

The initial training addressed topics related to learning, preserving and valuing Arabic mother tongue children born or migrated in Italy. The topic dealt with:

- plurality of learning and relational histories of foreign minors;
- connections between migratory experience and language acquisition process (linguistic-cultural choices of the family, bilingualism forms, identity paths);
- steps of learning a language (methodological approaches, teaching instruments and strategies, competence indicators).

The teachers and project team evaluated as a critical point of weakness of the project the under-sized time invested in professional development, to be overcome in future action-research training, regardless of the language taught[15].

OPERATIONAL COORDINATION AND PEDAGOGICAL-DIDACTICAL MONITORING

The organizational supervising of laboratories' activities and the pedagogical-didactical monitoring were both aimed at guaranteeing the projected quality into practice. The networking of a plurality of subjects, each with a specific and integrated role, guaranteed the coordination: the responsible teacher from every participant school, the administrative personnel, the operational coordinator of the project. Thus, synergic management of the resources was developed that assured regularity in laboratories' activities, across every phase of the project implementation. The schools involved in the project took an active role, not only as target for activities, but as proposed partners and privileged interpreters of their contexts.

Monitoring involved the coordinator of the laboratories and the pedagogical-didactic responsible; it took place twice-monthly for Arabic language teachers and monthly for Italian L2 teachers, while the topics and language teaching issues were established in a previous preparation meeting between the members of the coordination team. This 'reflective investment' represented an important workload for teachers and it allowed to observe and verify practices and the process as it was going on, critically and systematically. The monitoring action also allowed to document the process and mostly to focus on its problematic nodes.

ELABORATION OF COGNITIVE, TEACHING AND COMMUNICATIVE INSTRUMENTS

Stemming from the idea that a curriculum design takes into account the linguistic, relational and learning biography of the students (age, knowledge, cognitive style, learning pace, needs, motivations and experiences), the preparation phase comprised cognitive, communicative and teaching instruments elaboration, some of them bilingual (Arabic-Italian), considering:

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[15] During the second-year project (SY 2006-2007), a complementary project was implemented, namely, *Arab Lab.* Promoted by Fondazione ISMU, it was configured as a possible answer to a more permeating training needs expressed by teachers and project team. Such project turned out interesting as it involved an expanded group of teachers by including Italian and foreign university graduates in Arabic language and literature.

- diversity of the target, by gender, age, roles (learners, families, teachers, educators, volunteers);
- various functions of the instruments (cognitive, communicative, didactic, regulatory, etc.);
- moments of use (at entry, in progress and for follow-up).

The communication instruments for the families (accompanied by positive informal relationships) were ideated in order to involve them in the learning process of their own sons, by promoting an active and participant role, by supporting a formative choice that belonged primarily to the parents, and thus needing to be accompanied, negotiated and shared with the sons.

DOCUMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Documenting allowed to trace the history of the process. The evaluation process, involving target groups and operators, facilitated the identification of elements useful to redefine and reformulate the process itself. It thus had a critical regulation function.

STRENGTHS

The implementation of the project over a three-years period, constantly observing and reflecting on the practices and the process, favoured the consolidation of some choices considered to be key-quality features of its structure:

- the network between institutions with the Territorial School Office (UST, former USP) of Milan and the Regional School Office (USR) of Lombardy;
- the teachers' selection, training and self-training;
- the operational coordination and pedagogical-didactical monitoring;
- the elaboration of cognitive, teaching and communicative instruments;
- the training meetings on the Arabic-Islamic world and plurilinguism for all the teachers of the schools involved in the project. These meetings were considered opportunities to facilitate a more throughout cultural acquisition of AS in school;
- the connection between AS and the curricular management of multilingual and multicultural classes, by complementary actions, on the average/long term;
- the involvement of Arabic mother-tongue teachers in courses co-projected with curricular Italian and foreign teachers, in reflecting on the relationship between languages, cultures, identities.
- involvement of the families;
- the document evaluating students' learning process in Arabic language teaching laboratories in the ministerial school report;
- the documentation and evaluation effort.

PROJECT EVOLUTION

AS found its natural evolution between 2008 and 2010 in a European framework, namely, in *PLUSVALOR*, a project financed within the Programme of Life-Long Learning of the European Commission, along with scientific and non-governmental organizations from the Netherlands, Hungary and Romania. The main goal was to introduce the concept and the practice of plurilingualism into curricula, in order to provide the young citizens of the future with key skills

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necessary for exercising active citizenship.

In continuity with *AS*, but in a broader framework, it was targeted to:

- investigation of practices concerning possible pathways for the valorisation of migrants' mother tongues;
- developing intercultural dialogue between majority and marginalized minority groups;
- improving exiting didactic approaches to teaching immigrant languages, as well as host country's language in preparation to migration.

TODAY PERSPECTIVE: FROM A TOP-DOWN TO A BOTTOM RESPONSE TO NEEDS

Nowadays the Narcisi Kindergarten school aims at meeting different needs and expectations of children and their families by implementing experiences that could involve parents, while designing pedagogical and didactic training based on accurate analysis of both, needs and resources, of children and adults.

AS satisfied that time emergency due to so many cultural backgrounds crossing the school and it was a chance to learn, debate and deepen knowledge about cultural perspectives and representations of the role of the institution, caregivers, parents and children. This multilevel intervention allowed to build up a heuristic approach of the teachers, that we could identify as a new attitude towards what is unknown and not recognizable. The process led to a new mindset characterized by an ambition to research in depth instead of act sudden reactions relying on prejudice.

> *The experience of AS has been generating - that doesn't mean that we reproduce the same type of experience - it rather means the possibilities of implementing ways of acting on a daily basis. This is the main consequence of AS.* (Coordinator, pg. 1 – Second Interview)

> *In my opinion the most important thing is our attitude.* (T3, pg. 3 – Teachers' Focus Group – same dialogue)

> *It is really fundamental, we refrain from impose our opinion immediately in order to let them express themselves. Afterwards we begin to go in depth within the relationship to better understand the situation.* (T3, pg. 3 – Teachers' Focus Group - same dialogue)

Limits regarding funding and economic resources pushed the subjects to a different level of action and intervention grounded on the daily routine. It is not a matter of reiteration of professional development trainings and community projects, it is rather an effect and a consequence produced by the initial project still promoted, designed and active on a daily basis. We can call this process a shift from a **top-down** perspective of action to a **bottom-up** response to the needs.

The first step is to recognize, within intentional effort, the diversity of the context across the different levels such as multilingualism, religion, values, habits (dress code, diet, multiple caregiving by siblings etc), roles and duties (based on institutional, domestic and gender categories).

> *We must hold the will and keep alive the ability to start again every year. We begin by addressing people attending, what we are going to do and how. We evaluate, listen to*

each other and then plan. (C, pg. 8 – Second Interview)

Enhance everyone's uniqueness. We don't do anything different from other schools, we rather use within a usual activity what they carry as different cultures. They bring it from home and we start from it, we make it ours. It is a big enrichment also for us, we make ours what belongs to them. (T3, PG. 1- Second Interview)

This acknowledgement makes visible what is otherwise fragmentary and fragmented, in other words not recognizable. For instance, it makes visible - in the case of multilingualism - physical structures, relationships and didactics[16].

The further step is to develop an organic set of pedagogical and didactic practices already tested, assessed and documented within a particular focus on the process and the actors (children, parents and teachers).

The main and transversal issue of the context is **effective communication** between the subjects (teachers and children, children and children, teachers and parents), and multilingualism is the most important dimension as premise and ultimate objective. More precisely between adults - the possibility of understanding each other is crucial in order to share a common educational perspective and to build up a real partnership, including all the logistic matters always the first challenge and a work in progress all year round[17]. Misunderstandings between teachers and parents can be identified as linguistic incomprehension or cultural incomprehension, and the communication skills cross the entire scenery of relationships. Linguistic and cultural incomprehension are listed as the main causes of misunderstanding and intolerance. Studies about teachers' burn out evidence different kind of efforts about communication, culture and psychological aspects. About communication they refer to problems that come from the impossibility to understand parents' language: simplifying the complexity of some issues – translated into simple words that are not able to outline and specify what is hidden as a deep problematic. The missing acknowledgement of parents' linguistic competence, a wrong perception of the understanding of Italian language by parents and a very approximate way of communicating in a formal setting are described as main issue since the beginning of the relationship between subjects involved. About cultural incomprehension - studies describe the trend to cause misunderstandings due to the tendency to categorize parents' attitude, behaviour and words using another cultural framework. They refer to problems to deal with the school rules, schedule and general commitments[18].

Overall the model/approach is made of a combination of attitudes and behaviours by the school staff. The first one is related to all the subtle – not visible but active - aspects of interactions between teachers and parents, but also with children (i.e.: flexibility); the second one is about practices and behaviours, anything that can be observed, noticed and recorded.

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[16] Cantù, S., Cuciniello, A., (A cura di), *Plurilinguismo, Sfida e risorsa educativa*, pag.22, Quaderni Ismu, Milano, 2012, pg. 22.

[17] Epstein, J., *School, family, community partnership: caring for the children we share*, Phi Delta Kappan, 92 issue: 3 (November, 2010), p. 81-96.

[18] Gozzoli, C., Ragalia, C., *Migrazioni e famiglie. Percorsi, legami e interventi psicosociali*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2005.

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THE SCHOOL APPROACH

FORMA MENTIS

The concern about the partnership between families and school is a current issue in Italy: the possibility to share values and cooperate, while recognizing each other roles and competences[19]. The school tries to mediate between the institutional educational model and the families' perspectives, aiming at building a unified community for the children. This process is much more delicate and complex due to the linguistic and cultural gap between different actors.

The context was able to spot a couple of relevant actions to increase parent involvement:

There are two elements that the school is holding as fundamental: the first one is to promote communication in order to improve knowledge and an authentic educational view exchange; the second one is families' participation, as the Municipality encourages teachers to share with parents the educational path of children along with each role, each responsibility - and to do that the school must be open. (C, p. 6 – second interview).

This year we develop the vegetable garden project and during springtime we involved parents a lot. (T2, pg. 6 – Teachers' Focus Group).

We are involving parents in planting bulbs at the front and tomatoes at the back. […] Children paused a lot of time watching the growth of flowers and plants in the vegetable garden. Some children went behind the garden with their parents and put sticks to plants. The harvest of carrots was a really beautiful experience, children took it at home. They cooked and ate it: "My mom made it raw, my mom made it in the oven". They thought about this. The all process produced cooperation with families. All classes took part, all parents joined despite it was in the middle of the afternoon. (T1, pg. 6 – Teachers' Focus Group).

They organize beautiful things, when they throw a party each of us have to bring the typical dish of his country and children enjoy a lot. (M, Second parents' focus group, p.1-2)

Every year the school improves. (P, Second parents' focus group, p.1-2)

I do like a lot when we are asked to bring our country dishes. Parents bring it and children taste them. (M, Second parents' focus group, p.1-2)

You explain your country tradition. (P, Second parents' focus group, p. 1-2)

[…] I do like everything they do, it is a well-managed school […] They give notice for all events and attach it on the door, if parents do not pay attention the teacher tell them […] We have a good relationship with teachers, they are always available and listen to you. This is what I like the most. (M, Second parents' focus group, p.1-2)

In order to enhance foreign families' participation, we have to create contexts, circumstances, so they wish to join […] teachers have adopted the strategy to schedule meetings within the school hours […] for these mothers are housewives and can attend

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[19] Milani, P., (2008), *Co-educare i bambini. Genitori e insegnanti insieme a scuola*, PensaMultimedia, Lecce.

when children are at school. (C, p. 6 – second interview).

AS started a process of enhancing resources and not only problems in a context of diversity, multilingualism and minorities. This perspective - adopted by the staff after the AS project - recognizes competence, skills and high potential to parents with different backgrounds even within economic and social disadvantage. The diversity of cultures becomes the ordinary setting - and intercultural approach becomes a way of thinking useful to turn any tradition in a resource to be shared in order to reach common objectives through new cognitive and emotional processes.[20]

> *We need to be able to recognize that the school is not word of God, the school is an instrument to help – otherwise we lose the chance – if we take for granted that we are truth holder we deny others' histories, experiences and abilities.* Then *of course we have our responsibilities and the families too.* (C, p. 14 – second interview).

This is much more relevant considering dynamics that affect family relationships in a migrant context. Arriving in a foreign country is already itself an event that causes an emptying of the main function carried out by a parent within child: the mediation with the surrounding reality. "During the migration process, fathers and mothers suddenly find themselves deprived of the ability to interpret the world, as they very often struggle to understand the language, behaviours, tradition of the new country, and they become less and less mediators for their children"[21]. Therefore, the school's fundamental task becomes recognizing what parents have to offer, and enhancing it.

At a **microlevel** the school makes big efforts to **recognize every single parent, as someone with his own perspective and competence**; on the other hand, there is a much bigger dimension – the **macrolevel** – about what is hidden behind a single individual in terms of cultural believes and representation, symbolism and meanings. The main commitment has been described as a shared *forma mentis* open to in depth research of habits and values, in order to better understand interpretative and meaningful categories. This process begun with AS and took his own life, at the moment the staff kept trying to understand different kinds of diversity crossing the school every year. This means an attitude to refrain from judging before developing a proper knowledge about what is different and unknown.

> *People are always different, I'm talking about families, different kind of biography and situation… […] What has changed in the school and needs to be increased day by day is the ability to read the situation standing in front of you in that moment. You don't have always the same people and stories even though they are always people from Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, they are different. AS promoted the idea that people* need *to be known, that stories about people has to be known before judging or the risk is increasing prejudice.* (C, p. 6 – second interview).

> *If you know families, it is possible to talk about the school educational project, with many aspects, sometimes similar to the families' ones, sometimes different. We know each other, and we build up a* partnership*, as the school takes in great consideration diversities while carrying its own educational project aiming at children development.* (C, p. 5 –

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[20] Valtolina, G., (A cura di), Una scuola aperta al mondo. Genitori italiani e stranieri nelle scuole dell'infanzia a Milano, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2009, p. 16.
[21] Ibidem, p. 26.

second interview).

The school coordinator highlighted the importance of **involving families through the acknowledgment of everyone ability**: "To be able to involve an increasing number of parents, we relied on hidden skills that people often do not think they have and can use for other people. How many surprises! To begin with we received only replies of rejection or disbelief: "What can I do? You are supposed to be the school!". "What can I do better than the teacher?" Than with time, thanks to the help of parents more involved, we were able to build a tradition of cooperation and create regular moments of sharing, formal and informal"[22].

Teachers and coordinator developed skills **of flexibility and adaptability**, always keeping an eye on the dynamic balance between the set of rules within a community and families' habits and perspectives about logistic and educational aspects.

> *We usually start explaining to new families the course of the day and our main objectives, quite different from maternage. Children face a micro-society where they have to learn to cohabit with other 25 children and all new rules, and that means they need to understand the rules.* (T2, pg. 5 – Teachers' Focus Group).

> *(…) otherwise we end up in total anarchy* (T3, pg. 5 – Teachers' Focus Group).

> *Implement with flexibility a kind of rigidity. This is the goal. […] I remember when I arrived I was rigid about some aspects, then I realized that I should be much more flexible in order to achieve anything in this kind of context* (T2, pg. 5 – Teachers' Focus Group).

> *The ability to read the situation in front of you, to give this kind of answers, that help people feeling of being recognized within their needs. Than of course we hold on our principles, because the school has his own principles that must be respected* (C, p. 7 – second interview).

Another basic element of this approach is to keep **the school a neutral space**, where everyone is recognized for his own specificities, while greater importance is given to similarities rather than differences. This is fundamental above all to overcome some cultural and ethnic tensions.

> *Ethnic/cultural tensions have been a challenge because we have had to confront not only different worlds and cultures, but also families from countries that had religious conflicts […] I found myself on a couple of fights between parents and I had to stop because this is not the place for that […] Starting from the experience we have done with ISMU, we experienced a big opening: this attitude of emphasizing similarities instead of differences. Between Italians and foreign people and between foreign people from other countries.* (C, p. 17-18 – second interview).

The two focus groups realized with parents confirmed the positive and welcoming setting of the school. They have observed peacefulness and interest of their children for activities and relationships in the school.

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[22] Rizzati L., The Kindergarten School: a daily lab for inclusion [La scuola dell'infanzia Narcisi: un laboratorio quotidiano per l'inclusione], in Canali C., Sica M. (a cura di), Multilinguismo e sviluppo delle identità culturali nella prima infanzia– Idee condivisen.6 Progetto TFIEY (Transatlantic forum on inclusive early years) Fondazione Emanuela Zancan onlus 2015, Padova]

I haven't noticed particular difficulties in this school; from my point of view, even if I don't get along with you, I don't care, I'm interested in children; the children feel good, the teachers are valid, and I like them, so I have no problems, even if it is full of Moroccans. I have no problems with other people, I decided not to change the school because I like the staff and my son became friends with everyone in 5 days…he is a child, he doesn't care, he can't understand the diversity, he is so young that he doesn't get the difference. (M1, pg. 4 – first focus group)

I don't care who attends the school. The most important thing is feeling good at school; who comes, who goes away, it doesn't matter. We are fine! (P pg. 4 – second focus group)

Some of the interviewed parents conveyed resolute trust in the school's way of working. This opinion could appear ingenuous, without a critical analysis of the context's limits and chances of improvement, but at the same time, it highlights the rich relationship of trust established between parents and teachers. Families choose to rely on school, on its approaches and educational practices. Parents mostly enjoyed activities that school organized involving them and valorising their origins; as well as when they can be active protagonists of spaces and initiatives in the school, for example "open Saturdays".

The school organizes nice initiatives; teachers planned a party in which each family had to bring food of the country of origin and children had fun! […] Parents explain the customs of their country of origin. (M pg. 1 – second focus group)

Parents produced a show for children and, on Saturdays, they used to organize a snack. Now I have no more time on Saturday, I can't be present, and I don't know if they still organize it [...] The teachers work hard, this school works well because everyone has an active role. (M pg. 3 – second focus group)

The school staff thinks up many activities, such as books that you can take home for a week. Children can go to the school library and choose a book, and parents have to take care of this book so that children don't break it. (M pg. 4 – second focus group)

The relationship of trust that has been consolidated over time, seems to arise from the availability of teachers and coordinators to help families entering the context, helping them to face deadlines and duties, but also to overcome the most significant difficulties in the growth of their children.

I like almost everything of this school's way of working: for example, teachers write notices and attach them to the door; if a parent doesn't understand, they explain it to him/her. [...] We have a beautiful relationship with the teachers, they are always available, they listen to you. Is this what I like! they are present even if you need advices and directions for your child [...] I never had this kind of need, but I know that they can help me, because I saw their kindness with other families. (M pg. 2 – second focus group)

When some parents don't know something, other parents let them know; maybe the child didn't tell them, or they didn't read the poster. For example, when you have to enrol the children in elementary school, you have just one month to do it; sometimes there are parents that don't know it and teachers or parents warn them "the time is running out!". I appreciate this kind of things! (M pg. 7 – second focus group)

Finally, it seems important to give voice to some critical remarks expressed by the interviewed parents regarding the large number of foreign people in the school. Parents (both Italian and foreign) have expressed their perplexity for a context in which the number of Italian families is so low; it seems a form of ghettoization against migrants perceived as not yet integrated with the local society.

> *Italians are few in this school [...] there are more foreign people. For me it is not a problem but, being Peruvian, if I go to my country and I find that in the school there are no Peruvians, I feel very bad - it's not an awful thing, but it seems strange...I am in Italy and in the class I find only Peruvians, Chinese, Moroccans, Egyptians.* (M2, pg. 1 – first focus group)

> *I think it is more than 70%, I would say 85%, Italians are very few - the impression was not so negative, but it has seemed strange to me. Getting to the school and finding such a high concentration of foreign people has been really strange - it was a shock to me!* (M1, pg. 1 – first focus group)

PRACTICE

The PTFO (The three-years educational program – in Italian: PIANO TRIENNALE DELL'OFFERTA FORMATIVA) is the Italian schools' official document to address main objectives and strategies aiming at fulfilling the educational and didactic target. About the Narcisi kindergarten school we could document the importance of **inclusive methods** with a specific **multilingual approach**. "The school's commitment is meeting needs and requests of such a different variety of attendance, looking for ideas and designing activities in order to involve as many families as possible by mapping relevant topics about children and adults in terms of resources and needs. […] The variety and complexity of diversity in the school claim to attention of the entire group of teachers upon quite a few key factors in order to set up flexible and tailored educational practices"[23].

> *At the beginning of the school year we usually develop a comprehensive educational and didactic plan. First, we observe children, and afterwards we elaborate a didactic program based on critical issues and strengths not only related to children – in terms of needs and requests but also attitudes and interests. Along the year we can modify the content but not our aim which remain focused on an inclusive perspective.* (T2, p. 2 – Teachers' Focus Group).

The beginning of the year plan condenses within a variety of activities, proposals and initiatives. Our analysis stresses the emergence of two main trends.

The first one is about practices that promote the relationship between all actors involved. We call these **inclusive practices**.

While the second is dealing with all aspects to increase knowledge through a deep understanding and empowerment of the different culture crossing the context. We named this aspect **cultural/didactic practices**. Above all, multilingualism is the transversal topic, due to a couple of considerations. The first one is that sharing a language is the premise to build up any relationship and increase knowledge at any level, while the second one is that working on a better

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[23] PTOF, 2016-2019, Scuola dell'infanzia Narcisi, p. 6.

understanding and use of the Italian L2 is the main goal in this kind of framework.

> *Teaching of the Italian language is actually crossing our daily activities. When children come and ask for "drink" or "water", we then reply: "You have to ask: can I go outside to drink?" and we wait for them to repeat the all sentence".* (T1, p.5 - Teachers' Focus Group)

> *Routines help to fix concepts day by day.* (T2, p.5 - Teachers' Focus Group)

> *The morning circle time.* (T1, p.5 - Teachers' Focus Group)

> *You care to deep Italian learning – A foreign child has to learn the basis of the language, so the teacher has to be clear while speaking slowly and showing what she's talking about. Possibly, if you can, you give them examples. […].* (T3, p.5 - Teachers' Focus Group)

> *The "naming game" is one of the games teachers propose to enhance children relationships and acknowledgment of their proper name. It is possible to play this linguistic game each time in a different way – Teachers have developed from it other linguistic activities, one of them is names comparison (i.e. Giuseppe/Joseph). Children realized that the same name could be written in a different way, even the word "house" could be written in many ways, holding the same meaning. So, we have different possibilities to graphically design an object name or a person name, but it means the same. Teachers suggest these activities when opportunities show up spontaneously.* (C, p. 11 – second interview)

Studies about the increasing multilingualism in education contexts stress a number of elements that we noticed in the school with an original development. As a matter of fact, we can document the effort of the school of spotting and going in depth into the school linguistic heritage, mapping the multilingualism active in the school by practicing systematic and regular observations of children and their linguistic interactions, and by verifying their mother tongue level along with their learning other languages spoken in the context. We have recorded the endeavour of supporting the process of Italian L2 learning within all activities and routines - for instance involving parents in activities that promote the use of their mother language not only at school but also at home, of encouraging the use of other languages across the whole school day while making a broader experience of new and diverse type of sounds, codes and rhythms by offering a cognitive and linguistic shift. We can also highlight the attempt to make visible the variety of languages, using them to name physical places, play and activities ("Quite often we stick up announcements written in many languages on the notice-board or walls outside the classrooms" C, p. 13 – second interview – "Marianna once made a sign in the classroom where it was written welcome in different languages. I had written it in Somali and all the mothers wrote welcome in their language (M, Second parents' focus group, p. 4).

The school is equipped with a library and there is a regular activity that involves parents reading books in their mother tongue.

> *Teachers learned this important concept: at home children need to speak the family language, so they are able to learn the language. The thoughts build their structure listening to the language of parents. Teachers have organized some meetings with parents to explain this concept in a simple and comprehensible way, stating clear that the*

Italian language teaching is the school duty […] The mother tongue is relevant because is the acknowledgment of their roots and because helps acquisition of linguistic skills but, overall, has to build the cognitive structures. If families act correctly, children can learn different languages easily, maybe just not immediately. (C, p. 9 – Second interview)

The subjects address also a number of practices that have been changed through the AS project. The first relevant legacy produced by the AS project is the way of welcoming parents' arrival in the offices during the subscription with the coordinator and also during the first meeting with teachers. Those are considered the first steps to build up a good relationship of trust and cooperation.

If we start from the first change and setting up different behaviours… We can begin with the office duties, we experience a shift in the dynamic of welcoming parents – what has changed in my mind? I now try to put everyone in the condition of acting by themselves, the output has been positive: people can do it by themselves if you give them the right information and help when needed […] It has changed the way teachers interact with parents, as if they cannot understand Italian they can't feel comfortable. Now we select the information we used to give to parents at the first individual meeting and at the school gathering in order to choose only necessary details to start with, and to let open space for a dialogue. […] They switch the fixed pattern about the settling in phase to a new way of welcoming not exactly the same for everyone. (C, pg. 5 – Second Interview).

The steps while children are settling in are costumed ad personam – based on children needs, and family needs. (T2, pg. 4 – Second Interview).

A welcoming attitude, not only using words but using also body language. Many parents leave with concern as they are not present, so we explain to them that the child cry for a while then start playing peacefully. (T2, pg. 3 – Second Interview).

During the first phases of welcoming the coordinator and the teachers stress the importance of being supported by professionals for a linguistic translation and filling of cultural gaps, while the lack of economic resources leads to a sustainable practice that rely on parents help.

It happened to me that mothers just approach me spontaneously to translate without been asked. […] It is also a way of involving them and give them a role in the school. (T2, PG. 7 – Teachers' Focus Group)

The neighbourhood is a great resource. […] The parent that already knows how it works and is able to explain it to another parent represent a facilitator. (C, pg. 16 – Second Interview).

It is also clear in mind – as the coordinator stated at the beginning – that parents do not need a facilitator always, they need instead to improve their Italian comprehension and speaking.

We feel the need to have support in translation within complex concept that must be adopted as regular behaviour, although we try not to translate everything as they have to learn Italian. (C, pg. 13 – Second Interview).

On many occasions the school staff facilitate communication with both, children and parents, through the use of multimedia tools. During assemblies or themed meetings between adults, the use of tools that help communication visually are essential.

Teachers by now have to use different tools, not just for planning and documenting, but also for children's and parents' activities. For example, files with the experiences of children or power point presentations of project: tools that facilitate communication and interaction between different subjects. For instance, the video camera helped a lot for teachers' trainings, and for parents' meetings. (C, pg. 15 – Second Interview).

We are using all facilities we have: photos, computer, projector, as they are able to give sense to what you are saying. (T3, pg. 7 – Second Interview).

We named these practices "Inclusive" because they are relevant to build a relationship of trust and mutual support. The chance to rely on this kind of relationship balance the lack of economic resources and hold the system to a sustainable process.

On the other hand, we noticed a variety of activities – we call them "Cultural/Didactic" practices – based on the educational and didactic planning of the school.

Here we use everything: music, clothes, food, not always within a structured project, because it is linked to our daily routine. Children bring at school their culture and we mix all together. […] More or less we are always doing such things, even though not always as a formal project to avoid being repetitive. (T3, p. 1 – Teachers' Focus Group)

Also, clothes: Italian girls try to wear the Muslim veil and then the other girls say: "no, my mum wear it like this!" because maybe her mother wear the veil to cover her head. Or they could say: "My mother wear only long dresses" then we add Muslim clothes to the symbolic play corner. A child brought male linen traditional clothes, children do recognize them: "This is a dress that Kirolos brought from his grandfather home!" and all of this is a way to recognize diversity as a value, as a value for others. It is a continue discovering. […] Then we ask to the mothers to come to dance traditional choreographies and children were very excited about it. (T1, p. 1 – Teachers' Focus Group)

They have used very unusual music. There were Arabic mothers, they came in a big group and performed a different kind of dance. It was a morning activity. (T3, p. 2 – Teachers' Focus Group)

This activity was part of the didactical planning. (T2, p. 2 – Teachers' Focus Group)

This pedagogical framework schedules also proper space and time for a more formal project related to the pervasive inclusive approach of the school.

Last year we proposed a very beautiful project "The colours of the World" about costumes of different peoples around the world. We started by letting children stick pictures on the world map on the country they belong to. This helped to give the sense of distance: "look how far away you are!" (T1, p. 1 – Teachers' Focus Group)

The child usually explained that he comes from Egypt, although this is just knowledge about the name of the country. So, we propose dances and games from that country. (T3, p. 1 – Teachers' Focus Group)

CONCLUSION

The Narcisi Kindergarten School of Milan can be considered a good example of the possibility of building on and enhancing of diverse cultural and linguistic resources. This school has helped to sustain diversity since its very beginning, but in the early 21st century, it found itself facing challenges it was not prepared for, with the need of new tools and strategies. As we could see, the AS project has been crucial to set up a new **mindset**, which is now part of the daily action of the staff. Projects are usually dependent on specific funding and have a limited life. Schools cannot afford to bind their work to funding; schools have the task of facing challenges brought by children and their families, always. AS lasted a year and created the opportunity to plan the follow-up of the actions, beyond the project. The Narcisi School has changed its mindset and has built some new *forma mentis* little by little; the school learned to enhance diversity through daily practices.

Daily practices point out the importance of a bottom-up approach which is rooted in the needs of children and families, and is able to call upon local resources. This perspective is based on the recognition of diversities crossing the school since the beginning. That's why the chance of effective and regular interaction with families is the main and cross-cutting issue popping up from teachers and coordinator narratives. As we already stressed, the greatest effort has been put in building up significant relationships between different subjects and promoting families' partnership through inclusive and cultural/didactic practices. AS was a great empowerment to the system, increasing the value of people, skills, cultural exchanges and perspectives. The access to different cultures, the Arabic one overall, allowed to avoid prejudice and stereotypes within the educational interactions and relationship with parents.

Acting in a context characterized by diversity is difficult and implies the willingness to **get involved** constantly. Speaking about the staff, the coordinator once said: *"This is a school of life, a school that gives the opportunity to live nice experiences, but that also requires a lot of efforts. It is really hard because teachers have to deal with their ideas and opinions as citizens, with their political views […] in any case, this is an existing reality, and it is better to deal with it instead of rejecting"* (pg.18 - second interview). For this reason, it is important for the school staff to have a space for speaking, for comparing the situations and for planning together; the **teamwork** is essential to each activity, from the drawing up of the didactic project at the beginning of the year, to the organization of initiatives and meetings with parents. The opportunity to valorise everyone's competences and experiences allows to feel accompanied in such a complex work. Another very important help is that brought by the **network** of which the school is part. The Narcisi network is composed not only of local services, to which families that need solving specific problems could be sent, but also of the single families living in the neighbourhood and sending –or having sent– their kids to the Narcisi School. This is the network that brings "human resources" to a context characterized by no "economic resources", it is a network of mutual help, essential to overcome communication and comprehension issues.

The Narcisi Kindergarten School had to face the changes brought about by an increasingly various and complex target, a set of different people, with different languages, habits, traditions, and religions that the school decided to consider as **treasures instead of as problems**. The Narcisi School does not really conduct special or unusual activities: the innovation can be observed in the decision to use an inclusive approach and to carry out practices for the enhancement of both linguistic and cultural diversity. We can find innovation in its intentional

choice to change its perspective and in the adoption of a "**culture of understanding**", seen by the coordinator of the school as *"the opportunity for newcomers, with different histories and languages, to get as close as possible to us and to make us as close as possible to them"* (C, pg.20 - second interview). This "culture of understanding" begins with a partnership with the families, because a trusted and familiar relationship between the school and the parents is a fundamental premise for a shared educational project. This kind of approach finds is natural follow-up in the work with children, through the acknowledgement of everyone's characteristics and the planning of *ad personam* interventions.

> *Our task is to enhance their uniqueness in a wide context, to confirm their identity in a place different from their country of origin, to increase the value of diversity.* (T2 – pg. 1 – teachers focus group)

> *It is true that you are now in Italy, but since you are Arabic, I do have to acknowledge your identity, as well as your culture. I can do so for example by asking for information or by asking how I can translate words and sentences into the target language. What is important is that I do my best to get to know your culture, so that I can also promote it.* (T2 – pg. 6 – teachers focus group)

The work with children aims at a daily acknowledgement of their **identity**, an identity made up of multiple nuances, precious in its uniqueness. An identity in which the linguistic issue has a special place, as it requires a constant work by both the family (mother tongue support) and the school (mother tongue enhancement and Italian second language learning), and since, as the Council of Europe states, "the language is not only an essential feature of culture, but also a tool that allows to approach cultural aspects"[24].

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[24] Consiglio d'Europa, *Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue. Apprendimento, insegnamento, valutazione*, trad. it. a cura di D. Bertocchi, F. Quartapelle, La Nuova Italia-Oxford, Firenze, 2002, pg.7

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7. NETHERLANDS: 'THE PEACEABLE SCHOOL'

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ABSTRACT

The investigated intervention, The Peaceable School, is an educational programme aiming at developing social competencies and democratic citizenship skills among (young) children in school and pre-school or child care, including stimulation of openness towards people with different backgrounds. Although not specifically targeted at minority or low-SES groups, the character of the programme implies that the intervention is often implemented in multi-cultural schools and neighbourhoods. The pedagogical approach focusses on the pupil in its social community, rather than the individual developing child and its personal skills only. In addition to fixed weekly lessons or curricular activities, the school, preschool, the classrooms or groups are set up as an inclusive democratic space where children learn to: 1) make decisions in a democratic way; 2) resolve conflicts constructively; 3) take responsibility for each other and for the community; 4) show openness towards people with different backgrounds; and 5) gain knowledge of the principles of a democratic society. The Peaceable way of working seems to be a promising approach to work with and include children and parents in disadvantaged communities.

Keywords: democratic citizenship skills, social competence, inclusion, student-mediation, community- and parental involvement

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THE PEACEABLE SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY IN THE NETHERLANDS

Table 7.1. *Targeted outcomes, key success features, and facilitators of success of 'The Peaceable School'.*

GOALS	FEATURES OF SUCCESS	FACILITATORS OF SUCCESS AND/OR INNOVATIONS
Individual socio-emotional outcomes • Reducing problem behaviour and / or peer conflict **Interpersonal outcomes** • Developing social and democratic citizenship skills • Developing constructive conflict resolution skills • Developing cultural and multilingual awareness and openness **Staff outcomes** • Improving teachers' self-efficacy and ability to provide support **Family-school relationships** • Supporting and creating partnerships with parents	**Microsystem: Type of activities / curriculum** • Structured sessions (repetition/routines that foster a sense of security) • Children's participation (e.g., involvement in decision making) • Positive relationships with children **Microsystem: Peer context** • Peer mediation component (based on student training) **Mesosystem: Connecting schools and families** • Partnerships and positive relationships with parents/families • Parental involvement in selected activities **Exosystem: Supporting professionals and the school** • Purposeful teacher/staff selection and/or training • Institutional network (municipality, university, community organizations…) • Alignment with teacher needs for serving a diverse population **School macrosystem: Changing/supporting school culture and values** • Strong community focus: Joint/integrated approach at the school and neighbourhood level (common vision and language) • Intervention components part of / consistent with the school culture • School processes aligned with curriculum • Structured formal curriculum aligned with compulsory core goals of the educational system • Curriculum alignment with real-world democratic experiences, and societal changes and challenges regarding inclusiveness • Organizational focus on a common theme	**Design** • Clear theoretical background • Strong evidence-base • Strong identity of the intervention (clear goals) • Relevance for children with a range of backgrounds • Tools supporting implementation and / or ensuring fidelity • Monitoring and evaluation **Staff characteristics, involvement, and commitment** • Staff continuity • Staff from diverse backgrounds **Implementation processes** • Team work: Cooperation between professionals • Strong commitment from strong leadership **Family involvement** • Strong and trust-based relationships/partnerships with families • Effective communication with families

BACKGROUND

GENERAL BACKGROUND

The case study of The Netherlands concerns The Peaceable School-programme. The Peaceable School, and its extensions The Peaceable Preschool and The Peaceable Neighbourhood (De Vreedzame Wijk), is an educational programme aiming at developing social competencies and democratic citizenship skills among children, including openness towards people with different backgrounds and abilities.

The programme considers the classroom and the (pre)school as a community, in which all children feel equally heard and seen, get a voice, and moreover, in which children learn the meaning of being a 'democratic citizen'. The Peaceable School implies a pedagogical approach focussing on the pupil in its social community, rather than the individual developing child. In addition to fixed weekly lessons or activities according to a prescribed curriculum around six themes in all groups, the school, preschool, the classroom or group are all set up as an inclusive democratic space. Here, pupils have the opportunity to practice the acquired citizenship competencies in a meaningful context (Pauw, L., 2017a).

The research site for this case study is the neighbourhood Zuilen in Utrecht. Utrecht counts as the cradle of the Peaceable School as the programme was initially developed and piloted here. In Utrecht, nowadays, almost all communities are 'Peaceable' and about 75% of the schools[25] are actively involved. This is due to a pro-active policy of the city council that made 'Peaceable' subject to local government regulations for community organizations. Within Utrecht, Zuilen was selected as research location as this neighbourhood has, on the one hand, a native low SES-population, and on the other hand, a large migrant population with very mixed cultural and ethnical backgrounds. In recent years, some parts of Zuilen are subject to 'gentrification': due to upgrading of housing blocks and increasing popularity of the Utrecht city-centre and rising house prices and living costs there, more and more higher educated middle-class families enter the neighbourhood. Zuilen is one of five neighbourhoods in Utrecht that receive special attention by the city council through a specific 'neighbourhood approach' ("krachtwijk"[26]), such as additional investments in communication, empowerment of vulnerable groups, citizen's participation, and attention for special places or themes symbolizing improvements in the neighbourhood.

This case-study is focussing on The Peaceable (Pre)school-programme; however, the Peaceable Neighbourhoods-perspective is continuously included as it is considered an essential feature for success of the overall programme.

TARGET GROUP(S)

Schools: The school or preschool is the point of entry for The Peaceable School-programme. School-teams – board/management and at least 80 per cent of the teachers - need to fully commit to the intensive implementation-period of two years of (team)-trainings. Besides that, the school

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[25] http://www.utrecht-monitor.nl/sociale-leefomgeving-ondersteuning/onderwijs-vaardigheden/leerlingpopulatie-migratie

[26] https://www.utrecht.nl/fileadmin/uploads/documenten/bestuur-en-organisatie/initiatief-en-invloed/Wijkactieprogramma_s/Voortgangsrapportage_Krachtwijken_2014.pdf

has to be transformed into a democratic practice in itself, where children can experience what democracy means in day-to-day situations and daily interactions with each other.

Teachers: The teachers, as an intermediary target group, will be trained during 5 days in the first implementation year, and 3 days in the second implementation year. They will gain knowledge about democratic practices and conflict resolution, child participation, and the skills to teach the weekly lesson around the six Peaceable thematic blocks. Moreover, they will reflect on their own attitudes in relation to issues around democratic citizenship, and they will become aware of the transferability of these attitudes in daily classroom practices.

Children: The Peaceable School programme is aiming at primary school-aged children from 4 to 12 years old[27]. The Peaceable Preschool Programme is aiming at children from 2,5 years to 4 years. The programme is even extended to secondary and tertiary educational levels – however, this falls outside the scope of this case study.

Professionals and semi-professionals working with and around children in the neighbourhood, and local residents: The programme is also extended to the community, through a community outreach programme called The Peaceable Neighbourhoods. Emphasis in this out-reach programme is on developing a universal 'language' for conflict-resolution and awareness on joint (pedagogical) responsibilities.

Parents: Furthermore, the programme is reaching out to parents as an intermediary target group in The Peaceable (Pre)School. In the context of The Peaceable Neighbourhoods they are considered a direct target group. In some communities, parents are trained in community-mediation.

> *Cross-cutting through all (ethnic) groups, is the fact that parents just want the best for their child. -* Programme developer

AIM(S)

(Pre)school

The main goal of the programme is to develop social and democratic citizenship skills among children. The school needs to become a place where everyone feels equally responsible and socially involved, and where conflicts are resolved constructively and peacefully. This means children will be able to: 1) make decisions in a democratic way: 2) resolve conflicts constructively; 3) take responsibility for each other and for the community; 4) show openness towards people with different backgrounds; and 5) gain knowledge of the principles of a democratic society. This, in turn, is expected to reduce problem behaviour of children, and feelings of insecurity and inability to provide adequate support among teachers.

The basic curriculum consists of six thematic blocks, implemented during the (school)year:

1) We belong together (school climate and interaction skills)
2) We resolve conflicts ourselves (conflict resolution skills)
3) We are aware of each-other's needs (communication skills)

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[27] The Dutch system provides for 8 years of primary education: 2 years of universal kindergarten (groups 1 and 2) for children aged 4-6, and 6 years of primary education (groups 3-8) for children aged 6-12 years old.

4) We take care of each-other (socio-emotional skills)
5) We all contribute to the community (participation and (peer-)mediation)
6) We are all different (respect for diversity).

Young children, even toddlers, learn to recognize the difference between a fight and a conflict. The first includes verbal or physical violence (then we must first make sure that children cool down). The latter is an argument without violence. – programme developer

Extension to the community:

Outside the school, street culture dominates. For children of non-Western migrant- and of native low SES-communities, there are often differences in approaches and pedagogical cultures between the school and the home environment. In The Peaceable Neighbourhood, the school-based methodology of The Peaceable School is expanded to the community. By connecting with the pedagogical approach, language and symbols of The Peaceable School, all these domains (school, street, clubs, home, etcetera) are connected to each other, in such a way that it becomes clear to children that the expectations and rules match everywhere (Horjus, & Van Dijken, 2014).

The extended Peaceable Neighbourhoods-programme is aiming at: 1) children applying their Peaceable School-competencies in different contexts; 2) children performing tasks as community volunteers and children having a voice in activities affecting their daily lives; 3) a sense of shared responsibility among parents and professionals in the community for the upbringing and care of children in the neighbourhood ('It takes a village to raise a child'); 4) decreased feelings of incapability to act among educators (professionals/non-professionals); and 5) increased perceptions and feelings of security in the ecology of The Peaceable Neighbourhoods.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN, PROFESSIONALS, AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAMME

Since 2001, approximately 946 Dutch schools became 'Peaceable', out of a total number of about 6.800 schools in the Netherlands (CBS/DUO, 2017[28]). Also, roughly fifteen per cent of all preschools and day-care centres in the Netherlands are working based on the Peaceable philosophy, either directly through the Peaceable Preschool-programme or through an adjusted version like Together for the Future[29]/Growthmeter (Ludens, 2011). Moreover, the number is still increasing[30]. The distribution and implementation of the programme is nation-wide; however, the programme is more concentrated in the G4 - the four largest cities in The Netherlands being Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht - and the G40, consisting of 40 medium- sized cities in The Netherlands[31],[32], as the need and demand in these urban areas has been higher due to various urban issues related to, amongst others, migration, an increasingly diverse population,

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[28] https://www.onderwijsincijfers.nl/kengetallen/primair-onderwijs/instellingenpo/aantal-instellingen

[29] http://www.samengoedvoorlater.nl/wp-content/uploads/We-zijn-allemaal-anders.pdf. Together for the Future (=Samen goed voor Later) was implemented in all Kindwijzer-day care centers from 2011 onwards. Kindwijzer, of which the organization for day care centers in Utrecht Ludens is a member, represents nearly 15 per cent of all day care centers in The Netherlands

[30] https://vreedzaam.net/actueel-nieuws/item/423-aantal-vreedzame-scholen-en-wijken-stijgt-nog-steeds

[31] https://www.g40stedennetwerk.nl/

[32] http://devreedzameschool.nl/vreedzameschool201425/home/overzicht

changes in social structures and individualisation.

FUNDING

The budget and costs for implementing The Peaceable (Pre)school-programme comes from schools' annual budgets. A two-year implementation trajectory for schools is rather costly (approx. Euro 70.00-80.000, - (Pauw, 2017a)). The budget and funding for activities under the umbrella of The Peaceable Neighbourhoods is mainly coming from local governments – either directly by supporting Peaceable Neighbourhoods-projects and trainings, or indirectly by making the commitment towards The Peaceable Neighbourhoods a condition for providing government subsidies to community organizations.

The Peaceable (Pre)school is a 'product' implemented by the CED-Group –a private organization offering educational consultancy and in-service trainings aiming at quality improvements in education. The Peaceable Neighbourhoods, though closely linked, is operating under a separate independent not-for-profit foundation aiming at social pedagogy and community climate improvements. Innovations, both for The Peaceable (Pre-)School as for The Peaceable Neighbourhoods, have been placed under the auspices of the foundation.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS, PARTICIPANTS, AND ANALYSIS

Within Zuilen, Utrecht, interviews were held at a preschool site/day care centre ('Lieve en Bouwe' of Ludens, an organization for day- and afterschool care and education) and a primary school (public primary school OBS De Cirkel). It needs to be noted here, that it was very difficult to find a research site for this case study, as the five "krachtwijken" of Utrecht appeared to be rather over-researched and over-asked. We are very appreciative to Ludens-staff, who were extremely helpful in introducing us to the research sites and connected us to many of the interviewees and OBS De Cirkel.

Semi-structured interviews/focus groups: For this case study, we have conducted 13 semi-structured in-depth interviews with three programme developers/researchers, from The Peaceable School, The Peaceable Preschool as well as from Peaceable Neighbourhoods. Furthermore, we conducted interviews with 2 Peaceable School site coordinators, 5 teachers (2 preschool; 2 primary school; and 1 after-school teacher), and parents (3). Respondents were mainly connected to The Peaceable (Pre)school, and from that perspective, were also asked about the community and Peaceable Neighbourhoods.

Most respondents were involved with The Peaceable (Pre)school programme. However, at Ludens' and at its' daycare centre[33] 'Lieve and Bouwe', they worked with a somewhat adjusted pedagogical curriculum and approach, the *Growthmeter. The Growthmeter* is a tool for staff and

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[33] In the Dutch system, a day care centre is a centre for children 0-4 years old, providing day care for children of working parents. A pre-school is a provision for early childhood education for children from 2,5 to 4 years old, subsidized for children with a special indication (risk of language deficiency). On paper, these provisions do overlap. However, in practice, both provisions seem to cater for different populations (dual income, middle and high SES families in day care centres vs low SES and migrant background families in preschools), leading to segregation in the education system. The government is recently taking steps to integrate both provisions. The Peaceable Pre-school Programme can be implemented in both provisions.

parents around 'Peaceable' themes for socio-emotional and democratic citizenship competencies[34] for young children. Both 'The Peaceable Preschool' programme and the *Growthmeter* are based on the same strong theoretical base regarding democratic citizenship pedagogy (Van Keulen, 2013).

Table 7.2. *Study informants*

Status/role	Location	M/F	Age	Educational level	Years of experience
Programme developers	Peaceable School-programme	M	60+	PhD (ISCED 8)	20+
	Peaceable Preschool-programme	F	50+	Master's degree (ISCED 7)	20+
	Peaceable Neighbourhoods-programme	M	60+	PhD (ISCED 8)	20+
Site coordinator	Location manager day care centre.	F	50+	Bachelor's degree (ISCED 6)	20+
	Location manager primary school	M	45	Bachelor's degree (ISCED 6)	20+
Teachers	Preschool teacher (children aged 0-4). Working with the Growthmeter.	F	40+	Post-secondary non-tertiary Education (ISCED 5) MBO	20+
	Preschool teacher (children aged 0-4). Working with the Growthmeter.	F	20+	Post-secondary non-tertiary Education (ISCED 5)	5+
	Teacher BSO (children aged 6-8). Working with the Growthmeter and The Peaceable School.	F	40	Post-secondary non-tertiary Education (ISCED 4)	20
	Teacher primary school	F	30	Bachelor's degree (ISCED 6)	8
	Teacher primary school	M	30	Bachelor's degree (ISCED 6)	8
Parents	The Peaceable School	F	40	PhD (ISCED 8)	8
	The Peaceable School	F	40	Secondary education (ISCED 3)	15
	The Peaceable School	M	50	Secondary education (ISCED 4)	20

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[34] http://www.samengoedvoorlater.nl/wp-content/uploads/We-zijn-allemaal-anders.pdf

Documentary analysis: Types of documents have been reviewed, namely:

Dissertations on Peaceable:

a) The Peaceable School: Pauw (2013). Education and citizenship: what's in the power of the elementary school? An evaluation of the Peaceable School. PhD-thesis with a summary in English. Utrecht University.
b) Peaceable Neighbourhoods: Articles of PhD candidates Horjusand Van Dijken. Both dissertations are forthcoming in 2018.

Additional documents used: evaluation reports, web articles, journal articles, and articles in literature for professionals (section F. Resources).

DATA ANALYSIS

The data (literature and interviews) have been analysed through a systematic content analysis. The following analytical topics/categories were provided by the WP4 core-team: history, key activities, features of success, facilitators, barriers, perceived impact, innovative features, and lessons learned). These topics were also covered in the interview guidelines for all stakeholders.

THEMES

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAMME

Between 1998 and 2006, the Peaceable School-programme was developed and piloted by the CED-group, a private organization for educational consultancy and training in The Netherlands. The Resolving Conflicts Creatively Programme (RCCP) in New York, implemented during the 1990s, served as a source of inspiration - mainly because of its unique approach to peer-mediation. This approach included a transfer of responsibility to the students: giving them ownership of the problem and letting them participate in finding the solution for that problem. Pupil-volunteers were trained as student-mediators, and they were visibly present in the school. Within the emerging Peaceable School-programme in The Netherlands, the initial emphasis was also on reducing conflicts and improving general school-climate. At that time in the 1990s, teachers in The Netherlands perceived student-behaviour as increasingly difficult, teachers' absenteeism increased, and the education sector was faced with growing teacher shortages. The Peaceable School-programme provided tools to address this inability for action and was warmly welcomed by many school-boards and professionals.

In 2005, the Dutch government introduced a policy on citizenship education: all schools had to address 'democratic citizenship' in their curriculum (De Winter, 2005; Bron, 2006). Subsequently, The Peaceable School-programme was further developed into a complete package approach for social competence and democratic citizenship until 2010. Since then, The Peaceable School-programme is also extended to preschools (since 2011), and to the community through The Peaceable Neighbourhoods-programme (since 2009/2010). Schools were, and still are, free to choose how they will implement citizenship education, however, The Peaceable (pre)school programme is the most popular programme in the G4 and G40.

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> *It is the nature of the programme to make maximum use of resources and strengths already available in families and neighbourhoods / communities. For example: 'Parents for parents' (a Peaceable School strategy recently piloted in Overvecht – another "krachtwijk" in Utrecht): parents motivate other parents to join parental meetings in school. During such meetings, parents team up to translate for each other in case of language challenges. They may end up sharing personal experiences and recognizing the universality of their perceived personal problems. – programme developer*

Currently, The Peaceable School-programme is about to embark on an overhaul to ensure themes and activities are up-to-date with current events and contemporary issues like, for example, increased polarisation in society, decreased tolerance towards diversity, and media-education (the discussion around "fake-news" and the perceived need for critical thinking and debating skills). The number of themes dealt with on an annual basis, will be reduced to 5, to be in sync with the natural rhythm of the schools in between periods and holidays during the school year. The need for this revision, was also confirmed by the teachers interviewed.

The Peaceable School-programme has a strong research and evidence base. Various aspects were followed and have been studied by researchers over the years, concluding that the programme is theoretically well-grounded and effective, and sustainable in the perception of the teachers and school principals (Pauw, 2013). Also, since 2017, The Peaceable School programme is included in the Database for Effective Youth Interventions of the Dutch Youth Institute and received the status of 'evidence-based' (NJI, 2017). In addition, The Peaceable Neighbourhoods-programme has been studied extensively by scholars of Utrecht University (Horjus, thesis forthcoming in 2018; Horjus, Van Dijken, & De Winter, 2009, 2012a, 2012b; Horjus, 2014). The programme has worked well for professionals and children; however, these studies point to a need for more parental involvement and influence. There are indications that parents may be more willing to participate in the programme if the programme better matches their priorities and therefore clearly increases the future prospects of their children.

KEY ACTIVITIES OF THE PEACEABLE (PRE)SCHOOL

> *You count, you make a difference, you belong to us. It is this bonding and group creation, which is very strong with us and in the context of Peaceable. That is a great thing: you take care of each other, and you are allowed to be yourself.* - Preschool site coordinator

The implementation-period of 'Peaceable' at schools or preschools, under close technical guidance of the CED-group, takes two years all together. Mostly, the CED is approached by school boards, as they hear from others about the benefits of the programme. However, sometimes schools are approached pro-actively and motivated by CED-trainers to implement the programme. The trainings are provided by experienced CED-teacher trainers, and enable teachers to reflect on themselves and each other, and hence learn how to transfer social and democratic citizenship skills and attitudes to students. The teachers themselves are responsible for implementing the programme in the group/class and monitor the class and school climate with various available tools. At the studied preschool site, teachers were trained by an internal trainer and at the studied school site new teachers were offered a 3-day introduction course of The Peaceable School – as the implementation-period of Peaceable was years back.

Peaceable is as much about a fixed curriculum (weekly lessons) as it is a way-of-working and daily practice. Teachers mention examples, like giving a lot of responsibility to the group/class, evaluating class-climate, an open and responsive attitude towards children (and parents), solving problems together, organizing chores and participation. One teacher mentions, that it essentially means that professionals are increasingly moving from a teaching to a coaching role, organizing the teaching-learning process with the children in the classroom, and subsequently, with the children and their parents.

FEATURES OF SUCCESS

> *The higher purpose of the program is to combine a series of lessons on democratic citizenship skills and attitudes with the school as a democratic practice in itself. It is precisely this combination that makes it powerful. The curriculum provides guidance, but it is not possible to be effective without setting up the school as a training place (which is actually much more difficult than just teaching lessons).* – Programme developer

The Peaceable School serves a purpose and a wide-felt need among professionals. Firstly, the programme offers a curriculum to implement one of the compulsory core objectives of the Dutch educational system: schools have to deliver on citizenship education and by the time pupils leave primary school, they need to have acquired minimum standards on citizenship competencies (van Dam, et al, 2010). Secondly, 'Peaceable' meets the needs of teachers and provides tools to deal with an increasingly diverse student population – not only diverse in student-backgrounds but also increasingly diverse in student-needs and challenges. Finally, it provides a framework to address wider societal challenges, such as social and cultural integration and inclusiveness.

The programme developers assumed that it is effective to connect the school-domain with other domains of life, to facilitate one common 'language' -i.e. attitudes, terms and concepts, rituals and objects as an expression of this social norm (Horjus, & Van Dijken, 2014). The different approaches of 'Peaceable' (via school, via the neighbourhood, through parents) are important for the success of the programme, which is also confirmed by recent studies (Horjus, 2018). The interviewed parents confirm this statement. The common language and symbols do work, and children use them at home ("stop, hou op / stop, please quit" and "I have to cool down" or "I have to put on another (blue/yellow/ red) hat"). Also, the teachers confirm that these practical elements help to express the same vision and the use of a joint approach. However, at the primary school, both the coordinator and one of the teachers, question the scope of the programme outside the school. One teacher even questions the desirability of children extending their school-mediation role outside the school: these are different worlds for children and should children feel responsible for all conflicts in their neighbourhoods?

A unique feature of the programme is the peer-mediation component. During the school-years from age 2,5 years onwards, responsibility to resolve conflicts among children is increasingly transferred to children themselves, culminating in the last two grades (age 10-12) of primary education in some children being trained into 'student mediators'. Student mediators, mostly two students per class, are visibly present in the school. Pupils that have a conflict that they cannot resolve amongst themselves, may ask the help of the 'student mediators'. Only if that does not work out, or if one of two parties is not willing to cooperate, the support of teachers is called in.

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Another unique feature of the programme is, as mentioned earlier, the strong community approach. The Peaceable Neighbourhoods-programme is an autonomous off-spring of The Peaceable School rather than an outreach programme of the school. The advantage of this is that both initiatives could strengthen each other and contribute to a pedagogical civil society around the child through its own successful strategies. However, there is a risk that both initiatives will work alongside and may drift apart (like one after-school teacher explained: *'some of the elder children are really relieved when they find out they may quit their role and responsibility as a student-mediator after school-hours.'*).

FACILITATORS: FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESS

The Peaceable School has a clear theoretical background and has been recognized by the Dutch Youth Institute as being 'evidence-based' (Pauw, 2017a), the highest level of recognition that an intervention or curriculum can get. The programme received quite some exposure in the professional and public media[35]. However, as the programme developers indicate, the word was mostly spread by word of mouth.

> *The programme offers a common language, a joint approach to citizenship education, and a shared vision. A shared vision is easier to create with such a clear-cut programme and such a straight-forward implementation strategy.* – Programme developer

> *Clarity is important. In this you have an important task as location manager. Endlessly, I have emphasized to employees that it is just the core of their work. That it is nothing new, not something additional. By the moment you are used to it, it can really help you. By repeating this time and again, it is now intrinsic.* – Site coordinator

The Peaceable School-programme has a very clear purpose, goals and an elaborated curriculum including various tools for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The implementing agency (CED-group) will not start implementation without commitment at all levels in the school (board, management, steering committee, teaching staff). According to the programme developer, strong leadership is essential. A site coordinator added: *The continuity and enthusiasm of a team leader or school leader is very important, even crucial, for these kinds of programmes.* All teachers mention their own important and decisive role in this process: it is up to them to involve children in all processes at all levels in the class-room. Teachers also stress the importance of having close ties with parents – especially in common daily contacts, and being responsive to any query, issue or problem that children or parents may have. A seemingly small but striking feature mentioned by all, is the visibility of staff (managers and teachers alike) before and after school, in and around the classroom. For example, every morning, the director of the primary school is shaking hands at the entrance of the school, with both children and parents. The teachers do the same at the entrance of the classroom. All teachers and parents mention their appreciation of this gesture, and the importance of this for creating 'a community' and making everybody feel equally welcomed and respected.

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[35] http://www.devreedzameschool.nl/component/content/article/36-praktijk/deelnemen-1/433-publicaties-2009-heden

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In short, whether The Peaceable School is successful, is for a large part determined by factors such as: the quality and governance of the school management, the degree of commitment to dealing with the curriculum, the extent to which teachers can relate to the programme and be a role-model, and the degree in which the values of the program are explicitly communicated to parents and the broader community around the school (Pauw, 2013). In addition, the site-coordinators mention the importance of staff-continuity, and one of the site-coordinators mentions it really helps that nowadays, they managed to appoint more staff of mixed backgrounds – and of the same background as many of the children/families. One of the parents confirms this: "*Our teacher is from a foreign background, so this teacher may be even more able to create a sense of togetherness and belonging – also because this teacher can see the signals that other teachers may ignore or under-estimate. The role of the teacher is quite crucial I think: in the school, but also by motivating children to take this attitude with them into the neighbourhood*".

BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS

Over the years, it has been noticed that in communities with a native, low-educated socio-economic class, it is generally more difficult to achieve results than anywhere else. This is true both for schools and for neighbourhoods. The programme developers assume that this may have to do with a more cynical attitude of the residents, which is very difficult to influence. In contrast, in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods, parents often embrace the pedagogical goals of The Peaceable School – though they sometimes may be redefined for parents in a different 'language' (for example, in line with the 6 golden rules of Islamic pedagogy, as was done in a course about The Peaceable School for parents of Islamic backgrounds taught by Islamic community organisations in Utrecht). Parents in migrant positions often want children to be educated socially and to be taught moral standards and values. All parents interviewed stressed the fact that they want their children 'to fit in' (group, class, neighbourhood, society). This matches with the aims of The Peaceable School / Neighbourhood.

A programme developer remarked: '*Very generalizing: there is a huge recalcitrance in some native neighbourhoods; people do not feel connected to the broader society. It is individualistic, and very much focused on the interests of the own group. So, if one comes up with a programme like The Peaceable School that stimulates connection with society, school-children will not easily receive any cooperation from their home-situation*.' There is no clear-cut solution for this. Actually, as one programme developer indicates, only an active government policy to increase socio-economic mobility in these communities seems to yield results regarding a sustainable positive change towards citizenship and participation in the long term. In the short term and within the scope of the programme, a very active policy regarding outreach and parent-to-parent motivation and stimulation, and a close co-operation within The Peaceable Neighbourhoods, appears to work out. An example mentioned is a multi-problem native neighbourhood in Zaandam, where teachers report a reduction in problem-situations in the classroom and with individual children, and where local residents indicate that the number of conflicts and problem situations has decreased since the introduction of the programme (interview with programme developer).

The main overall challenge mentioned for The Peaceable School is parental involvement. The main challenge mentioned regarding the Peaceable Neighbourhood is the involvement of the schools with other (semi-)professional organizations in the community. A solution for this, coming from The Peaceable Neighbourhoods, is the introduction of a training of 'parent mediators' for

'peaceable' conflict resolution around the schools and in the neighbourhoods/communities. In Zuilen, the school itself puts the scale of the impact that The Peaceable School can have in the neighbourhood into perspective: they do not underestimate it's importance, however, there are so many issues to deal with <u>within</u> the school – issues that the school is held accountable for, and results to which they have to report to the school inspectorate. As a result, no resources are available to go beyond the borders of the school. Parents may be able to bridge that gap. As one of the teachers confirms: *in that sense, close contact with parents may be even more important than close ties with a child – we have to do it together. If the relationship with parents is good and open, many problems and conflicts in and outside the school can be prevented. That is why I really invest in very good 1-to-1 relationships with parents. And if – as is sadly true in some cases – parents are completely out of sight, it is even more important to invest in the relationship with that respective child.* Besides that, the research sites (pre-school and school) both actively invest in activities and celebrations involving parents as a group on-site (a high-tea during Eid al Fitr, the summer festival before the summer-holidays, a Christmas get-together, etcetera). Moreover, the pre-school stresses the importance to reach out to, and enter the community. The pre-school, for example, actively invests in cooperating in neighbourhood activities, also after-hours and in the weekends.

PERCEIVED IMPACT FOR KEY ACTORS

Evaluation research has been conducted among a large group of schools that have been working with the programme for three years or more (Pauw, 2013). This research indicated that teachers and boards of the participating schools mention evident change in the school climate before and after the introduction of the Peaceable School programme. Schools report a decrease in the number of conflicts and teachers broadly indicate that the programme influences the behaviour of pupils: they behave more calmly and responsibly, interact with each other more respectfully, show improved adherence to agreements, have fewer conflicts, articulate issues better and are more approachable by teachers from lower grades. As a result, the teaching climate improved. The number of years that a school works with the method seems to affect the achievement of the goals, especially when it comes to increased participation and responsibility of students. Moreover, the research indicated that the programme is sustainable: it is continuously used by most of the schools even a few years after its introduction. Only a very small number of schools (4 out of the 131 schools surveyed) indicated that they no longer work with the programme after 5 years (Pauw, 2013).

Perceived outcomes for children/students

Many schools notice that the programme positively influences the behaviour of children, and improves the class and school climate (Pauw, 2013). Teachers notice that things run smoother if they let children think along and participate. Like one teacher remarked: '*since the introduction of Peaceable, we hardly had to fill up "Oeps-pages" with children'* (the Oeps-method[36] is a method to influence child behaviour and implies that children have to reflect on their "unacceptable behaviour" after two warnings through (among other things) filling out an Oeps-page). Other teachers mention the student-mediation works very well, and after a while also preventative:

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[36] http://www.vanhoogstratenschool.nl/bestanden/Documenten/Oeps-procedure.pdf

conflicts hardly arise anymore, because issues are resolved very quickly before problems arise. They also stress the fact that if problems arise, it is also a good thing: problems are there to learn from and conflicts of interests or different meanings can exist – as long as children are able and willing to discuss them, treat each other with respect, and as long as children are able to change perspectives. One teacher quotes one of her students: *in the end, we are all the same.*

All interviewees mention that children are enthusiastic. As young as 4 years old, children start to ask for their weekly 'Peaceable' activities. Also, children enjoy their increasing responsibilities when schools start to function as a democratic practice (like children chairing circle discussions, organize and participate in group meetings, forming children's committees, drop ideas, participate in solving problems and the methods of conflict resolution).

> *We have agreed that we especially emphasize what is going well. Of course, we do mention things that are not allowed like "you cannot hurt anyone" or "do not leave other children out". But by primarily stressing positive things, children get a lot of confidence, and they learn where they stand in society. Hopefully this way, in the future, they will value democratic citizenship, and they know they matter and can make a difference. So: 'Thank you for helping me' or 'How nice that you wait for Pietje' or 'Do you want to get that shoe, you do that very well, thank you'. Children like that very much and we find that they are very free here and they develop very well.* – preschool site coordinator

Children's self-esteem increases, also through the student-mediators. Some of the mediators are (democratically) selected because of their capacity to socially bind, be neutral and their enthusiasm to resolve conflicts; others are the opposite and may have been "the problem" in the group in past times, and may need this extra boost to increase their conflict resolving skills and self-confidence ("*teaching others is teaching yourself*"). Neither parents, nor teachers say the fact that some children are chosen as student-mediator leads to jealousy or differences in status. All children get different chores and roles in the classroom and/or in the school, and get the opportunity to participate in various activities, working groups or clubs: either formally through the student-council, or through various exercises and roles in the classroom. This is closely evaluated by the teachers and The Peaceable School provides tools for that. In general, children have the feeling they are able to participate and co-decide (see also: Participation Ladder, The Peaceable School based on Hart (1992). Teachers and parents alike, mention that through providing children with responsibilities, involving them, and really listening to them and their ideas, children learn to express themselves very well and learn to analyse problems beyond themselves and their own personal perspectives.

Perceived outcomes for professionals

The programme has an ideological approach. It appeals to some of the staff (site coordinator and teachers interviewed) to why they once chose this profession - namely, to work with children and while doing so, contribute to a better world. The Peaceable School implies - besides an intensive training course, team reflection and supervisory guidance during two consecutive years – a change in the way-of-working. As one of the pre- and one of the afterschool school teachers puts it: '*Nowadays, we do not even notice anymore, as it became our common way of working. This is just how we do things, how we do our work. But in the beginning – I remember – it was quite an adjustment. The "Growthmeter" really helped as a tool to provide children with more space, and transfer responsibility to them. While your reflex is to help children or solve problems for them. It*

is good, now we even encourage children to take (calculated) risks, to challenge their own boundaries while at the same time making them feel safe and secure ("just jump, I'll catch you!" is one of the themes in 'the Growth-meter').

Although professionals are rather an intermediary target group, and not the end-users, the interviewed teachers indicated that the programme provided them with the tools to create for children a democratic context, gain insight into democratic practices and learn children democratic skills and attitudes. They also mention that the language and symbols of The Peaceable School, provide them with tools to communicate with, and involve parents. However, the primary school teachers mention that they experience the curriculum approach and the strictly prescribed lessons sometimes as too restricting; both express the wish to use the curriculum more as a source of inspiration from which they can draw whenever a theme becomes topical or when an issue arises in their class-room. On the other hand, again, they see it is very worthwhile to cover a subject school-wide and at the same time, as it is currently done.

Perceived outcomes for families and communities

Of course, it is of great impact on the family if your child comes home from school with a smile on his face because he had a good day. And my child is happy! He walks home on one leg! - Parent

During many of the interviews, parental involvement and support is mentioned as one of the main challenges of the programme. And according to a programme developer: '*There is not óne Peaceable way for parents'*.

Parents appreciate the way the school communicates and handles conflicts. They appreciate the direct contact with the teacher, but also the celebrations and activities organized with, and for parents. One parent mentions an example, of a native-Dutch parent starting a discussion about last years' Sugar Festival (Eid al Fitr): during those days Muslim children had holidays, while the other children had to attend school. Instead, with Christmas, everybody had holidays – Muslims and Christians alike. The respective parent suggested this was 'unfair'. This year, the school planned 'teacher study days' during the Sugar Festival, and all children had two days off. A peaceable solution, and everybody was happy.

Differences are as much as possible celebrated under the umbrella of unity. Everybody is equally welcome, and all are equal and equally treated and respected. For example, during the school's Summer Festival, special effort was made to involve all cultural backgrounds under the theme of a "holiday market": what is there to do, and what can we eat in all the countries that we may visit during the holidays? Everybody felt welcome, and parents felt involved – irrespective of their background.

The school is loosely involved with The Peaceable Neighbourhoods-programme through the "Brede School". The "Brede School" is a partnership between all the schools and after-school activities in the neighbourhood. The school-staff knows about The Peaceable Neighbourhoods-programme, and the fact that other institutions are involved as well (library, youth workers, police, etc.). However, they are unaware of its actual status. The pre-school / day care centre is more pro-actively involved with the neighbourhood (as mentioned under the section *Barriers and Solutions*), and actively undertakes outreach activities, as illustrated in the following quote.

We are a small community here. We are invited to the annual neighbours' day, and 'stroll

through the gardens' as an activity from the neighbourhood. And we are connected to the adjacent elderly care centre. Every Thursday we visit, and a "grandfather" or "grandmother" will read out storybooks. We also participate in the annual volunteer market in the park. And then we feel we belong to the community. And we meet the parents in a different role. In a larger perspective, that is very important. We carry it forward with each other, that is Peaceable. So, also with the library, and the football club, and the schools, the after-school care, wherever children come. We aim for the same way of getting along with each other. – Site coordinator

INNOVATIVE FEATURES OF THE PEACEABLE SCHOOL

Student participation: In 'The Peaceable School', the classroom and the school become a community, in which children feel heard and seen and get a voice. One of the most successful and innovative strategies of The Peaceable School is the earlier mentioned student-participation in the form of peer-mediation in conflict situations.

The most striking aspect of the program is: letting children do a lot by themselves and let them discover things for themselves. – Preschool teacher

Common language: Also innovative is the Peaceable approach to 'language': The Peaceable School is not about language-lessons as such, but about 'creating a common language' – a common vision, a common approach, common words for common concepts, and common symbols that are recognizable, acceptable and non-negotiable for everyone involved.

ICT: The core of the programme is really how people and children relate to each other in daily practices. The Peaceable School does not have digitalised teaching materials yet; teachers work with paper files for the collection of lesson materials alongside each activity. However, ICT is used for communication with teachers through a log-in system, and for the sharing of information and articles. Fixed monitoring tools and instruments are also partly provided online: examples of tools that can be used online are a quality care instrument (an instrument measuring perceptions of security and more sustainability) and-related instruments like questionnaires. In schools, ICT is increasingly used to communicate with parents and to create 'a parental community' through special portals with group and individual access; however, the extent to which this is used depends on the (pre)school and its ICT-policy. As some of the preschool and after-school teachers indicate, informing parents during the day with personalised messages including pictures, seems to increase parental involvement. The Peaceable School does not create its own separate digital communities with children or parents. Media-education for children will be included in the next edition of the Peaceable School-programme, see below.

LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The school-wide implementation of The Peaceable School- programme has been decisive for its impact; the aim of the programme is to shape the social and citizenship skills of children, which is easier to achieve when all children – and their families - in a certain community (i.e., the school) know, follow, and apply the same skills and rules, and when this is made visible throughout the community in communication-expressions and symbols. Society is continuously evolving and, according to the programme developers, the programme must evolve along. The last version of the programme stems from 2010, so an update is very timely now and will be ready in one or two

years. The next version will pay more attention to diversity, and aims to develop more towards including actual affairs, like polarisation in society, the importance of critical thinking ('fake news'), critical participation, social media. There will also be more attention for parental involvement in the programme.

Also, The Peaceable Pre-school programme may need an update. According to one of the programme developers, toddlers and pre-schoolers can participate much more than previously assumed on the basis of developmental psychology. Even the youngest children are able to chair a meeting, have a clear social perception and learn very quickly to resolve problems in a peaceable way. This could be more emphasised in the next phase. Also, the programme could be tailored towards the needs of specific target-groups, like refugee children.

Although the child-perspective is considered on-site in the groups and classes, this still depends very much on the management and teachers' competence. The Peaceable Programme itself could pay more attention to it in its curriculum and weekly lessons/activities. Also, in the on-going process of reviewing the programme, the child perspective could be taken into account in a formalised – non ad-hoc manner: through a children's commission or working group, and/or child participation in a review commission, working group, or steering committee (concluding from an interview with a programme developer).

SUMMARY OF THE INTERVENTION LOGIC MODEL

In summary, based on the literature study and analysis of the interviews, the key features of The Peaceable (Pre)School Programme can be as following described by the intervention logic model.

INPUTS

The Peaceable School-programme will only start in a (pre)school or daycare centre when the school-management takes a pro-active role and at least 75-80% of the teachers support implementation. To ensure that these conditions are met, an intensive preparatory phase based on a needs-assessment and a close support trajectory of two years are compulsory. Costs of the programme are relatively high in terms of budget needed for this and for educational materials (from school annual budgets), and staff need to invest a considerable amount of and time.

At the daycare centre- and school-level, the programme is implemented by teachers. The teachers are trained by experienced teacher trainers. Cooperation with other resources, stakeholders and partners in the community is stimulated: parents and other (semi-) professional organizations directly or indirectly involved with children.

OUTPUTS

Activities: The programme has an elaborated approach for continuous learning, is comprehensively and accurately described and its strategy is methodologically sound (Pauw, 2013; 2017a). By annually re-presenting the same themes - each time at a higher level – insight and understanding increases among young children and students. The programme has a structured curriculum, with a fixed weekly activity (young children) or lesson (from 8 years onwards). However, stimulation of the learning process starts after the activity or lesson: everything is revolving around the application of skills in practice, with a central role for the teacher

THE PEACEABLE SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY IN THE NETHERLANDS

(Pauw, 2017a).

Participation: Within the programme 'student participation' is emphasized, through a focus on community responsibilities, voices and representation, peer-mediation skills, and (group-)meetings. In addition to weekly lessons in all groups, the school and the classroom are organized as a democratic practice where pupils have the opportunity to take responsibility for each other and for the community (class, school and neighbourhood).

Examples include: working with student mediators, committees, community tasks and group meetings. In The Peaceable School, children not only learn to hold on to their own position in a conflict, but also to ensure that they have their own arguments straight, and that they practice changing perspectives and empathise with the arguments and feelings of other persons. Children are taught they are part of a community where they are jointly responsible, where everyone belongs and where you cannot always get things done in your way only (Pauw, 2017b). Most decisions in group meetings will be based on consensus. Over the course of the years, children will increasingly be responsible for the items discussed and issues addressed during these meetings, setting the agenda and governance of the meeting.

Furthermore, participation of parents and other stakeholders in the community is a continuous point of focus in the programme.

OUTCOMES

Short term: Children learn to make decisions in a democratic way, to resolve conflicts constructively, to take responsibility for each other and for the community, to show openness towards people with different backgrounds and to gain knowledge of the principles of a democratic society.

Medium term: Improvement of school climate: quality and progress of the programme is monitored through a set of fixed monitoring tools and instruments, to be filled in by teachers and/or students. These tools are provided partly online. More sustainability-related instruments, like a questionnaire on class- and school climate, are to be filled in by teachers, coordinators and managers. Feedback on overall progress and quality improvements is provided by programme-staff.

Long-term: The core of the programme (The Peaceable School/Preschool and Peaceable Neighbourhoods) is a positive approach, giving children a voice: establish a shared vision for positive development (school- and neighbourhood climate). The overall aim is to work towards building a democratic school and community culture. This, in turn, is expected to reduce problem behaviour of children, and insecurity and inability to provide adequate emotional, behavioural, and educational support among teachers. These goals have been elaborated at the student-, teacher- and school-level.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

The programme has several strong points, relevant for the aims of ISOTIS: 1) The programme has evolved towards a strong community-focus, after realising the link between school and community needed strengthening in order to implement a democratic citizenship-programme like The Peaceable School effectively (Pauw, 2017a). It reaches out to other community support

organisations in order to improve neighbourhood quality through The Peaceable Neighbourhoods; 2) Besides being a programme with a formal curriculum and a continuous educational approach from pre-primary to primary level (and even up into secondary and in some cases up into tertiary level), the programme is strongly theory-based with a philosophy towards improving the school and community climate. Children are actively involved in creating schools as a democratic community: key-strategies are for example conflict resolution through peer-mediation, democratic citizenship education and joint responsibilities towards the community; 3) The programme is open to all schools in The Netherlands and is implemented nation-wide upon request of the schools themselves - public as well as public-private/denominational[37]. Even though the intervention is delivered universally, the programme is mostly implemented in schools in predominantly disadvantaged communities (non-Western migrant- and/or native low SES-communities), because demand for support is more prevalent there.

Furthermore, the main special and effective features of the Peaceable (Pre)school and Neighbourhood programme that inform the way forward in curriculum, pedagogy and social climate interventions tackling social and educational inequalities, are:

- The programme has a strong identity: A clear pedagogical approach: one language (concepts and consequent use of specific words) and the same system in terms of symbols.
- The programme emphasises transfer of responsibilities to children, especially regarding conflict-resolution and peer-mediation, but also through emphasis on student participation and voices regarding organizing and chairing group-meetings and tasks that they may have in the community;
- There is a strong focus on parental involvement (which is considered to be the main challenge at the same time);
- The issues addressed by the programme are continuously evolving around changing societal challenges. In 1999, the programme started with a focus on regulation of undesirable behaviour and conflict resolving skills in schoolchildren - with a conscious or unconscious choice not to emphasize diversity, and to start from "togetherness" (risking to overlook ethnic differences and multicultural diversity). Then the programme evolved, by including a focus on citizenship education from 2006 onwards, towards participation and inclusion, and creating a common language and overarching symbols to support bridging and bonding of the various domains children enter during the day. The next phase of The Peaceable School will focus on critical thinking, dialogue, and stimulating an open, reflective attitude. And beyond: addressing macro-issues like polarisation and increasing segregation in society.

In practice, this is what teachers already do: differences are there to be celebrated, and problems and issues are allowed. As long as there is open dialogue and a responsive attitude, all parties can learn and grow from it. As quoted:

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[37] Public (*openbare*) schools in the Netherlands: State-run schools (non-denominational) provide secular Dutch education. They may also offer teaching around specific philosophic or pedagogic principles (Montessori, Steiner etc.).
Private special (*bijzondere*) schools in the Netherlands: Financially they have the same status as public *openbare* schools. Most of them are denominational (Catholic, Protestant, Islamic, Jewish, etc.), or follow specific philosophic principles.

> *That's how it should be, this is how you want people to get along and work together.*
> *That's how it should be in the whole organization and everywhere. No decision-taking*
> ***about*** *people, but* ***with*** *people - site coordinator*

To inform Task 4.4 (VLE intervention), as a source of inspiration: the ground theory that led to The Peaceable School-programme, has also been articulated in an adjusted online version for the Together for the Future-project of day care provider Ludens: www.samengoedvoorlater.nl, including the *Growthmeter*.

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8. POLAND: 'GENERAL AND SPECIALIZED TUTORING'

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ABSTRACT

The General and Specialized Tutoring program (GST) is embedded in a Local Support System which aims at providing children and youth at risk of social exclusion with a developmentally supportive environment. The GST program focuses mainly on the educational support of primary and lower secondary school pupils by providing tutoring classes of two types: general, i.e. ongoing educational support, such as helping the child with homework, and specialized, aimed at increasing the pupils' educational outcomes in specific educational areas. Apart from improving the pupil's school performance, the goal of both types of tutoring is to enhance the participants' self-esteem and to create a positive attitude toward school and education in general. The program involves close collaboration of professionals working with the child (teachers, school counsellors, after-school care providers etc.) aimed at drawing up individual plans of work with each participant and the involvement of pupils themselves in this process.

Keywords: low SES, children and youth, tutoring, collaboration of professionals, participatory approach

Table 8.1. *Targeted outcomes, key success features, and facilitators of success of 'General and Specialized Tutoring'*

GOALS	FEATURES OF SUCCESS	FACILITATORS OF SUCCESS AND/OR INNOVATIONS
Individual academic / cognitive outcomes • Improving children's achievement **Individual socio-emotional outcomes** • Improving children's self-esteem / confidence • Improving children's attitudes towards school **Staff outcomes** • Improving teachers' self-efficacy and ability to provide support	**Attending to individual needs** • Availability of snacks and drinks **Microsystem: Type of activities / curriculum** • Individualization • Clear rules • Children's participation (e.g., involvement in decision making) **Mesosystem: Connecting professionals** • Cooperation between professionals **Exosystem: Supporting professionals and the school** • Purposeful teacher/staff selection and/or training • Institutional network (municipality, university, community organizations…)	**Implementation processes** • Team work: Cooperation between professionals • Support from the classroom teacher • Articulation with other ongoing actions

BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE OF THE REPORT

The objective of this report is to present the *General and Specialized Tutoring* (GST) program, its history and key features, with a special focus on the factors contributing to its success. The report is a part of the deliverable 4.3. of the ISOTIS project - *Report on the case studies of promising inclusive curricula and educational practices.*

The GST program is embedded in a Local Support System (Barnes et al, 2018), more specifically a project called *The Action Base of Integrated Activity* (Baza Akcji Zintegrowanej Animacji), which will be referred to as the BAZA project throughout this report. The main aim of the BAZA project is to provide children and young adults at risk of social exclusion with a supportive environment, using various actions that complement each other. One of such actions is the GST program. It operates in primary schools, lower secondary schools and after-school centres situated in one neighbourhood in Warsaw, the community of which is considered to be at high risk of social marginalization. The GST program focuses mainly on the educational support of children and youth, and provides tutoring classes of two types: *general,* i.e. ongoing educational support, such as helping the child with homework, and *specialized*, aimed at increasing the pupils' educational outcomes in specific educational areas; the former is provided by trained volunteers, while the latter is conducted by specialized teachers and based on the individually prepared plans of work. Apart from improving children's school performance, the goal of both types of tutoring is to enhance the students' self-esteem and to create a positive attitude toward school and education in general. As stated by one of the authors of the program:

> *This activity is a response to huge educational problems of children and youth at risk of social exclusion, as schools located in socially disadvantaged areas often struggle to find resources for additional support.*

REASONS FOR SELECTING AS PROMISING

The main reasons for selecting the program as promising were its evaluation reports, which were mainly opinion based and yet presented positive feedback from all stakeholders, as well as some information about the improvement of the children's educational outcomes. Those reports will be presented in more detail in section III of this report.

Moreover, the intervention itself was based on the program called *Learn, but how?* ("Uczyć się, ale jak?"), which has been positively evaluated and is regarded by professionals as beneficial for students (read more in section III), which may be viewed as grounds for the belief in the program's transferability potential.

Summing up, the GST program has been chosen as a promising intervention because of:

- positive feedback from stakeholders,
- transferability potential,
- some indication of positive outcomes,
- continuity for over two years (within different projects and localities the program has been adjusted to the needs and resources and continued for approximately 8 years).

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TARGET GROUPS

The main target group of the BAZA project and thereby the GST program are children from primary and lower secondary schools as well as after-school centres who need additional educational support, especially those from families with a low SES. Each and every child was recruited for the program from schools or after-school centres situated in one of the revitalized neighbourhoods in Warsaw (localities with a high level of social problems).

The recruitment process was conducted by coordinators of the GST program (representatives of educational institutions and the BAZA project consortium) in cooperation with the school /after-school centre professionals, such as teachers, counsellors and psychologists. What was taken into account during this process was not only the child's outcomes and motivation to improve them, but also his/her family resources.

Moreover, the parents of all qualifying children had to sign a consent form before they could become a part of the BAZA project. Additionally, to be enrolled into the GST program the children and their parents had to accept a contract. It was to ensure that all families were aware of the terms and conditions of the involvement in the GST program.

STAKEHOLDERS AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

As the recruitment for the current edition of the GST program is ongoing, the information on the number of stakeholders and organizations involved presented in this section of the report concerns the second edition of the program finished in December 2017.

Organizations and coordinators: One coordinator in each of the participating schools and after-school centres supervised the operation of the GST program in their institution (8 coordinators in total). Additionally, one coordinator from the BAZA project supervised the GST program in all of the participating institutions.

Students: The available data do not allow to estimate precisely the number of students involved in the GST program due to several reasons. As *general* tutoring was available to children at after-school centres on *ad hoc* basis, no record on the exact number of beneficiaries exists. Moreover, several volunteers continued the cooperation with educational institutions after fulfilling their volunteer contracts, without being directly involved in the GST program any longer. In the case of *specialized* tutoring the educational support at schools or after-school centres was organized in cycles of 10 hours of individual sessions or, if the demand for tutorial lessons was greater than the available resources, 10 hours of sessions in mini groups (2-3 children at the same educational level and with the same field for improvement). However, the children could use more than one cycle, i.e. they could continue the tutoring in the same subject or at the same time be involved in more than one tutorial cycle. Additionally, some children stopped taking part in the tutorial cycle before using all the available lessons (these were rather rare cases), and the hours allotted to the child were assigned to another student. On the basis of the number of lessons actually conducted, one may say that approximately 80 children participated in specialized tutorial classes every school term.

Volunteers: The involvement of each of the volunteers was preceded by the following procedure. First, a general interview with the candidate was conducted by the program coordinator in order to gain necessary information on his/her experience and educational background. At the meeting,

the coordinator presented the general objectives of the GST program, the available training (preceding the work in the program as well as ongoing coaching) and the expectations toward the candidate. On the basis of the information the potential volunteer and the supervisor drew up a contract specifying the rules of the cooperation. In total 45 volunteers took part in the program.

Teachers/Professional tutors: Approximately 70 teachers were involved in providing specialized tutoring of Math, Polish, foreign language (mostly English) and to less extent other subjects. The majority of the professionals were teachers of the schools involved in the programme, recommended by the school coordinators (about 60%), and the other tutors were recruited on the open market. Just like the volunteers, all professional tutors could obtain the support of specialists, for example psychologists, if necessary.

FUNDING

The two finished ones and the third currently ongoing edition of the GST program have been organized within the BAZA project, which has been financed by the Municipality of Warsaw.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS, PARTICIPANTS, AND ANALYSIS

In order to explore the characteristics of the GST program (section III) and to formulate the logic model reflecting the interventions' inputs, outputs, and expected outcomes (section IV), various existing resources have been analysed, such as the BAZA project, the schools' and after-school centres' internal documentation, websites, and the GST program's evaluation reports.

Furthermore, six semi-structured interviews have been conducted with professionals involved in the program at different levels of its operation, including:

- one interview with a policy maker involved in the formation of the Local Support Systems' framework and the evaluation of the BAZA project;
- one interview with a GST program developer and coordinator;
- one interview with a school GST program coordinator;
- two interviews with teachers conducting specialized tutoring.

All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. Each participant had been informed in detail about the study's goals and signed informed consent forms. Additionally, all participants had an opportunity to review this report before publishing in order to assess whether their identity and statements were properly anonymized and/or represented.

Moreover, there are some quotes from children and/or parents used in this report. Those citations were taken from the evaluation reports of the GST program (the quotations had been anonymized by the authors of the evaluation reports).

Data collection and analysis was conducted between April and September 2018. The descriptive strategy for data analysis has been employed (Yin, 2015 p. 164) in this study.

THEMES

HISTORY

The GST program is an adaptation of an educational program entitled *Learn, but how?*, which was carried out from 2011 to 2015 in a small town close to Warsaw (the successive editions of the program involved the varying intensity of different types of activities). In 2013, due to its positive evaluation, the developers of the BAZA project decided to incorporate the *Learn, but how?* program into the scope of their actions, and they modified it in order to fit the framework designed for children from socially disadvantaged areas as well as the available resources. The GST program developer we interviewed had also been involved in the original program and described its framework as follows:

> *In "Learn? but how?" we combined the specialist tutoring classes for one person in the particular subject, at least ten hours, with workshops on learning to learn. The child took part in both, first in the workshop on learning, and then it was presented, as a form of support, or even as a reward, investment, with the possibility to take part in that specialist tutoring.*

While talking about the *Learn, but how?* program the interviewee also emphasized the complexity of its impact on children and the positive perception of the results by teachers.

> *We really saw the results of that work, both in the grades and in the perception of the teachers on how the child functioned at school, on its attitude to coming to school, on its willingness to say something during the lesson, to take on challenges or to improve the grades – it really had positive influence.*

The GST program developer and coordinator also referred to the decision to modify the framework of the original program and the reasons why its initial form could not be maintained.

> *…for many reasons, also financial, but not only, we decided to try to do it in a slightly different way, and we backed off from combining the workshops and the tutoring. Some children did take part in both, as the workshops were organized by the BAZA project within a different action, but the two were no longer strongly linked and I have an impression that the effects were not as beneficial, which I concluded from conversations, though the educational indicators went up for all these children (the ones taking part in the GST program).*

To sum up, the main change implemented in the second edition of the BAZA project in comparison to the original program was that the tutoring lessons were no longer strictly connected with the metacognitive skills workshops, i.e. that not all the children participated in both types of activities. Additionally, the participants of the *Learning but, how?* program did not participate in general tutoring. In the current edition of the GST program the coordinators have decided to come back to the framework where all the children receiving the tutorial support will also participate in workshops supporting their metacognitive skills, and general tutoring will be available as well.

KEY ACTIVITIES

There are two main types of activities within the GST program, namely *general* and *specialized* tutoring classes. Besides, as the tutoring program is part of the BAZA project, some of the children were parallelly involved in supplementary actions organized in the neighbourhood, for example speech therapy.

General tutoring: General tutoring classes took place in after-school centres and were conducted by trained volunteers. The main aim of the activity was to help the children with homework and revision. Moreover, the volunteers were to motivate children to develop their personal interests and talents by providing information on the cultural, sports and art classes available in the neighbourhood. The work was carried out individually. The intensity of the support varied between institutions and depended on the availability of volunteers.

Specialized tutoring: The statute of specialized tutoring was drawn up by the project coordinators on the basis of the experiences of the professionals involved in *Learn, but how?* program. The terms and conditions specified some basic organizational aspects of the classes and provided general guidelines for structuring their content.

Before entering the program, each child's parent had to sign a special consent form confirming that they allowed their children to participate and that they understood the conditions and goals of the action, and were aware that their children's participation in the program would be registered in *Baza Monitorująca* (the Monitoring Base – a monitoring platform of the Local Support Systems, such as the BAZA project, and thereby the GST program).

Specialized tutoring was organized in the form of educational cycles. One educational cycle consisted of a maximum of 10 hours of specialized tutoring, with the maximum of 2 hours per week to ensure systematic work. All meetings had to be held in secluded, quiet places to allow children to learn in peace. The implementation of each educational cycle was preceded by the preparatory phase. The appointed tutor and the child, in cooperation with the school teacher of the tutored subject (if the leading teacher was not the tutor him/herself), were to define the specific aim of the tutoring cycle, taking into account the school curriculum and the child's marks, learning needs and preferences. Afterwards, the tutor prepared the syllabus for ten meetings. An example of the goal of an educational cycle was: "XXXX (name of the child) knows the location and important facts about the biggest cities in the country". The tutor, who had learnt that the child liked drawing, prepared a big poster with a contour map, which at each class was completed with some drawings representing different cities. Drawing specific features was supported by using different resources such as books, the Internet or expert opinions. Another example is an educational cycle prepared for a mini group of children, the goal of which was to practice English vocabulary (colours, animals, shapes, family members etc.) using board games. Importantly, there were also packages which had more directive, 'school-like' design.

Notably, most of the times the children were offered a snack and a drink before the lesson, which, as some teachers stated, was very well received by the pupils. Both teachers and students were required to inform beforehand if they could not attend the next meeting.

The tutoring classes were carried out by teachers designated by the school or the program coordinators; however, the children could ask not to be tutored by the teacher from their own school or the particular professional assigned. Even if teachers were tutoring students from their own schools, the classes had to be organized in addition to their working hours, as they received

additional payment for the work.

Additional actions: The tutorial classes were specifically dedicated to socio-economically disadvantaged children with educational problems, but they were accompanied by some additional actions organized by BAZA project professionals for all children enrolled into the partner schools. For example, pupils could participate in workshops on metacognitive skills, mnemonic techniques, dealing with stress and anger, as well as a variety of sports, cultural, cooking or art activities organized in schools and other venues in the neighbourhood and in the city.

FEATURES OF SUCCESS

The measures of the GST program's success are the direct outcomes of the stakeholders and its processual features occurring throughout the years (i.e. the continuation and evolution of the whole program).

Direct outcomes of stakeholders

Positive outcomes for children may be considered the greatest success of the GST program. The evaluation reports present a very positive perception of the tutoring program by its participants. Students claimed that their knowledge and skills had increased, they came to school with more enthusiasm and were more motivated to learn. Teachers of the students involved in the program claimed that the participants were more engaged during school lessons, and that to some extent they had improved their marks. Moreover, the teachers underlined the fact that their relations with the students had become better due to more opportunities to work with them on one-to-one basis. Besides, a pilot evaluation proved that the children's attendance rate had increased. Another group which turned out to have benefited from the program were the tutors, who stated that they had established closer relations with other specialists and gained some knowledge about the available forms of in-service support. Lastly, the organizations involved in the program established collaboration resulting in initiating other joint actions.

Processual features of success

Arguably, one of the strengths of the program is its continuous operation throughout the years and its evolvement based on the lessons learnt from the previous editions. On many occasions during the interviews the GST program coordinators stated that they tended to draw conclusions from their own observations, the experiences of front-line providers and, most importantly, the children's opinions and outcomes in order to design the new editions more effectively. Moreover, the changes in the program from one edition to the next confirm that the program developers are open to modifying the activities, adding new ones and removing the ones which do not seem to be beneficial for the children any longer. At the same time, unchangeable is the priority to ensure lasting and comprehensive, not incidental, support for the children.

> *We don't want to make play with support and do things incidentally. We think that there are other means to solve incidental problems, like when someone has to revise for a test. Not in this program; I mean, the kids will surely get this kind of support, because there are volunteers who will help etc. But in the project that we are talking about now we have decided to organize only specialized tutoring which will be a coherent whole of 10 hours*

and not less than that. … We have chosen this form because this is about improving educational chances and we have to deliver the goods and produce results. So we've chosen – out of the very wide range of possible actions – the kinds of interventions which are the most conducive to bringing the particular desired effects.

Importantly, the process of cooperation between all partners involved in GST program is unique in the Polish context, as it is planned to tighten the bonds among the specialists working for schools and after-school centres (psychologists, teachers, trainers etc.), the local authorities, and non-governmental organizations operating in one locality, with a view to providing support to the most disadvantaged children. Arguably, this complex process of cooperation that results in continuous improvements to the program's framework and content is the crucial feature of its success.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO SUCCESS

Individual approach

One may say that above all the success of the program stems from the program developers' humanistic, highly personalized approach to each child, resulting in viewing children as active participants of their own development. In practice it is reflected for example in the contracts regulating the terms and conditions of specialized tutoring, which have to be signed not only by the professionals and parents, but also by the children. Additionally, the children take part in developing the syllabuses of their educational cycles.

My organization works within the framework of humanistic psychology, we have some assumptions, basic premises, we view a human being in a certain way and we influence him or her in a certain way. He or she is not the object but the subject in our relation. But the educators, teachers, specialists who conduct these specialized tutoring classes are different. That is not a bad thing, there are different schools in pedagogy and psychology, and it is sometimes difficult to find a person who thinks like we do. We have to equip them to work in the way that fulfils our expectations.

As the program developer states, the individual approach is crucial to building the child's self-confidence, sense of responsibility for him/herself and curiosity about the world. Each pupil enrolled in the GST program is provided with conditions enhancing his/her educational outcomes and encouraged to take advantage of all the available support. Concurrently, at each stage of the program, pupils take an active part in shaping these conditions.

Cooperation between professionals

Cooperation among professionals was mentioned by interviewees several times as one of the most important elements of the GST program contributing to its overall success.

From my perspective it all worked best, and the effects were the strongest simply when there was co-operation. These kids were "traced", sometimes they were at school, but also in the after-school centre, and in my workshop, and we communicated with one another – the teacher, class tutor, day-care centre teacher – and it all worked. We made joint decisions whether to give someone more support. I think that was the best.

Close collaboration of different professionals in the neighbourhood occurred at all stages of the GST program. Even if some practitioners were not tutors or volunteers themselves, but worked with the children within other actions, they could contribute by advising in the recruitment process or by sharing information on the child's strengths or interests with his/her tutors. This approach enabled the on-going (even though not formalized) monitoring of the children's needs and progress.

> *For example: I can see in my classes that XXXX (name of the child) has difficulties, e.g. needs speech therapy. I talk to the school, define what I can do, check in the Monitoring Base if he is enrolled in a day-care centre, if he has taken part in a language school and I don't have to phone YYYY (name of the organization providing family assistance to the most disadvantaged families in the locality), I can check in the system if any of my partners is working with his family.*

Furthermore, professionals could reach out to program developers whenever they required support, such as additional materials or professional advice. Importantly, all tutors had an opportunity to provide feedback to program coordinators and developers, which, as mentioned earlier, was taken into consideration when preparing the subsequent editions of the action.

Availability of snacks and drinks

Two interviewees mentioned that some snacks and drinks were available to children attending general and specialized tutoring classes. This initiative was undertaken after the program developer had received signals from tutors that some children could not focus during the classes because they were hungry.

> *Whenever there was a need expressed by the school or organization, we did our best to make the food available. I'm not sure it was really to entice the kids. I'm pretty certain that in fact these kids were hungry, as simple as that. It is more difficult for them to function cognitively when they are hungry or thirsty and they are thinking about that. That's why we tried to provide the food. We didn't have much money for that, now we have planned more.*

Even though, as stated above, it might not have been the most important motivational stimulus, the general needs of children are well worth taking into consideration when developing educational programs for socio-economically disadvantaged families.

The availability of a snack was also mentioned as a positive aspect of the GST program by the children interviewed for the evaluation report.

BARRIERS AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

Financial means

In the interviews the topic of funding was the one most frequently occurring in regard to the obstacles encountered. According to the interviewees, the funding allocated for the GST program was not sufficient in relation to the needs.

During the GST program the problem of insufficient funding was partially overcome in two ways. The first solution was to make mini-groups of children for specialized tutoring instead of individual

classes. However, this solution was implemented only in the case of the children who needed help in the same field (mathematics / language etc.).

> *We made a joint decision that e.g. in school XXXX (number of the school) the tutoring would be organized in groups of three students. There was a loophole – we stated that it was to be individual, or could be conducted in micro-groups, up to three students, if they needed to work on the same problems or the same subject. We decided to implement it, even though we knew it would be less effective and less likely to give the kids the sense of uniqueness. But the needs were so huge that we decided in favour of this solution in several schools, and the decisions were made in co-operation with the coordinators.*

The other solution was seeking additional resources within the BAZA project consortium itself. Given the specific nature of the consortium, especially the commonality of goals and very good cooperation between different parties, some additional funds or materials could be obtained through negotiations between organizations involved in the project.

Another obstacle mentioned in the interviews was the fact that the regulations concerning the financial settlement of the funds were found too rigid for a program like the GST. Two interviewees expressed the opinion that there should be more flexibility in adjusting spending to the current needs during the whole period of the program's implementation, whereas now the hours of specialized tutoring per (calendar) year had to be organized according to the plans formulated at the project preparation stage and different unexpected circumstances might for example cause the accumulation of activities within a short period of time.

> *Another challenge was that we received the funds relatively late. That's why the classes which could have begun in September had to begin in November. Definitely it would have been more effective if we had obtained the resources earlier, but that's how projects start, so there was nothing we could do.*

Children's attendance

During the first two editions of the GST program the tutors and coordinators noticed that the schedule of tutoring influenced the children's attendance rate. For example, it was observed that pupils were absent less when specialized tutoring was organized straight after school and the school teacher walked the child to the tutorial classroom than when it was scheduled before school or sometime after the lessons. In the current edition of the program more effort has been made to organize specialized tutoring straight after school. However, due to the limited availability of classrooms and tutors it is very difficult to overcome this barrier.

Turnover of volunteers

In the case of the general tutoring, stable long-term cooperation with the volunteers is considered to be the key factor in enhancing the children's sense of security and establishing positive relations between the volunteers and the pupils. Moreover, it is necessary for involving the volunteers in professionalization actions. Therefore, the turnover of volunteers has been considered by the GST program coordinators to be one of the obstacles. One of the coordinators stated:

…generally, I think that it is better to invest more time in preparing one volunteer than casually cooperate with several… it's better to do less but properly than do a lot of sloppy work … because when they [the volunteers] come and go, this incidental contact doesn't do the children much good…

In order to minimize the turnover of volunteers a lot of attention is paid to their recruitment process. To ensure that they understand the goals of the GST program, each volunteer works with the program coordinator to draw up a detailed contract. Nevertheless, this issue is still considered unsolved.

IMPACT FOR KEY ACTORS

This section is mainly based on the evaluation report of the latest finished (2015-2017) edition of the GST program; however, it concerns only the specialized tutoring component. The report consists of brief evaluations from each partner school, followed by an overall summary of the whole edition.

Children

Even though the assessment of the educational outcomes in the latest GST program's edition was basic in design, it still gives some indication of its effectiveness. The comparison of the children's grades before and after their involvement in the program showed improvement within the subjects related to the contents of the tutoring. Moreover, opinion-based questionnaires enabled some insight into the children's perception of the action.

One may say that what is most important is that the children found their participation in the program a positive experience, even though different reasons for that were indicated. Some of the interviewed pupils mentioned that it had helped them to improve school achievement, while the others focused more on increasing their self-confidence and motivation.

When we had the first mock test I had a poor result, and now we have written the second and it was better.

It is not very good, really, but it's better. I have lately done more, a few examples, and I got a satisfactory.

There were also children who stated that their relationship with teachers had improved due to the tutoring arrangement, i.e. the possibility to work with the teachers in a one-to-one context enhanced more personal relations. Considering that the trustful and positive relations among teachers and pupils are beneficial for educational processes, this may be regarded as an important outcome of the program.

…during the classes we did a lot of talking, sometimes even off the topic. But it was nice and it was easier to remember what came before.

A few children viewed the involvement in the program as an opportunity to improve their lives in general, emphasizing the relation between learning and their professional future. Enhancing self-confidence and motivation seems to be particularly important for children from low-income families.

> *We become smarter and the teacher teaches us to solve other things, we can pass, we can graduate, get a job…*

To sum up, most of the interviewed children stated that they appreciated the tutoring classes and considered them beneficial as regards the improvement of their educational, social and emotional competences.

Room for future improvements

In the questionnaire children were also asked to list the things that could be improved in the subsequent editions of the program. Their comments mostly focused on two features: methods of work, which according to some children should be more active, and the intensity and duration of the educational cycles. However, there was no consensus among them concerning the dosage of tutoring. Some of them mentioned that they preferred more hours of such specialized tutoring

> *I could have used more time. For I don't understand much in maths, so I would like these test results to improve*

> *There was not enough reading in the classes, there should have been more time…*

whereas others stated that they did not like spending additional hours at school.

> *Because of these classes I didn't go playing with this boy. He went home after school. These classes make you lose playtime.*

As the GST program has the pull-out approach, it seems to be very important to constantly monitor the children's motivation to participate in the activities and adjust to their current situation in order not to leave behind any child in need.

Professionals

Establishing a community of professionals

The professionals often mentioned in the interviews that they especially valued the close cooperation with one another, which involved several planned and ad hoc meetings before, during and after the GST program to ensure its effective operation, monitoring and evaluation.

What was considered particularly valuable was establishing closer contacts among the different professionals working with the same child (i.e. psychologists, volunteers and after-school care providers), because of its beneficial effects to all the stakeholders: the children, who could receive more comprehensive support, and the professionals, who obtained support from each other by sharing professional knowledge and experience.

> *The opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas among various people, various specialists – that was nice, because normally we don't always have time for that.*

Chance to gain new knowledge and improve skills

Some professional development opportunities were available for the participating volunteers and professionals. The GST program tutors could participate in in-service training provided to other professionals involved in the BAZA project, and in that sense they were not only the implementers of the program, but also its beneficiaries.

Apart from the obligatory training for volunteers preceding their involvement in the program, there was some optional training (workshops, mentoring sessions) with specialists, such as psychologists, social competences trainers, metacognitive skills trainers etc. The training was provided by the BAZA project specialists or by external professionals.

Moreover, the framework of the program enhanced the professional teachers' sense of agency, as they had a lot of freedom in shaping the syllabuses of the tutorial cycles.

> *First of all, that we could choose the target group. And that it was a small group, so it was possible to adjust the individual syllabus. And that I could prepare the final syllabus by myself and I could include different ideas…*

Families and communities

Due to the extensive and complex organizational structure of the BAZA project, it is almost impossible to isolate the outcomes of the GST program from the outcomes of the other activities and support provided to whole families. However, it is worth mentioning here that engaging the parents in the cooperation was important for the GST program developers, for example by means of the specialized tutoring classes contracts that had to be signed by parents. In order to do this, parents (along with their children) were invited for an initial meeting with tutors, where they had the opportunity to ask the questions they might have had and to learn more about their children's educational needs.

LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The main topic undertaken by the developer of the program concerning the lessons learned was the need to supplement the two key components of the program with additional actions such as metacognitive skills workshops (part of the original *Learn but how?* program), which would enhance the children's curiosity and help to build their self-awareness and self-esteem.

> *Actually we're planning to organize workshops on learning to learn for the classes indicated by the school, so it doesn't mean that if someone takes part in the effective learning workshop then they have to take part in tutorial sessions, but it will be organized for the classes that will be selected by the schools each semester, the ones that need support in that respect. But besides that, for all the schools involved in the tutorial programme there will be what we have called cognitive workshops. They will exercise the brain a little, show how to exercise it, stimulate this kind of cognitive curiosity and things connected with cognitive functions.*

There are also some organizational changes planned, related to how children are involved in the process of defining the aims of their own specialized tutoring, which are expected to have a positive effect on their motivation and overall involvement in the program.

> *[in the "Learn, but how?" program] before the tutoring began there was a meeting with one of us, a trainer who conducted the workshops. That was a motivational meeting, where we kindled the student's motivation, that it meant investing in that child, and we determined the aims of the 10 hours, we signed the contract etc. It was very expensive from our perspective, so in the GST program we passed it to the teachers, the tutors. They were to determine the aims, we gave them the directives and the rules that they were to follow.*

According to project evaluation reports, it was sometimes observed that even though such an introductory meeting took place, neither the students nor the teachers remembered the terms and agreements of the specialized tutoring after it had concluded. Therefore, project developers and coordinators stated that there was a need to support the tutors in this respect.

> *Generally in the next edition we are planning to introduce a counsellor, so there won't be only the coordinator, who has to make things happen, check if the classes took place, if things are signed in the right places, but also a person who will keep in touch with the participants and the implementers, and will have an influence on the quality of this activity. We are spending a lot of money on this educational activity and we would like to keep control of it, and we don't check the quality now.*

To conclude, three main lessons may be drawn from the GST program. It seems that educational support programs dedicated to socially disadvantaged children should:

1. take into consideration the children's physical, emotional and social needs as well,
2. ensure stability and continuity by means of coordinating the effort of different specialists working with the children and their families,
3. be flexible enough to allow to adjust to the current situation, but at the same time have a firmly established framework and set of goals in order to enable monitoring and evaluation.

SUMMARY OF THE INTERVENTION LOGIC MODEL

The logic model has been formulated on the basis of the framework provided by the project leader of the task and the examination of the information already presented in this report. However, it is important to state that the majority of outcomes are opinion-based and/or deduced from the materials provided – none of them has been sufficiently documented by high quality studies.

Inputs

- The facilities of partner schools and after-school centers
- Staff (volunteers and professional tutors, coordinators of the program, staff of the local institutions working with children and their families)
- Money (Municipality funding)
- Materials and equipment (including online educational resources as components of some individual educational programs)
- Online monitoring and communication tools (eg. Monitoring Base of Local Support Systems)
- Individual (or small group) educational programs (tutors' syllabuses)
- Children (their opinions on individual needs, preferences and expectations)
- Parents of participating children (their opinions on the needs, preferences and expectations of their children)

Outputs

- ACTIVITIES
  - General tutoring classes
  - Specialized tutoring classes

- Additional actions (e.g. educational workshops, sports, art and cultural activities)
- Professional development activities for tutors (including obligatory and optional training)
- Comprehensive plans of support for children (involvement of professionals from different institutions)

- PARTICIPATION
- Children from low-income families and at risk of social marginalization from one locality in Warsaw with high level of social problems

- Professionals of schools, after-school centres and other institutions working with families with children from one locality in Warsaw with high level of social problems

- Parents of children involved in the program

Outcomes

- Short term
- *Children*
  Support with current school program;
  Appreciation of the child as an expert (the choice of the tutor; involving the child in stating the aims and developing the syllabus of the tutorial classes);
  Access to (the information about) extra activities available in the neighbourhood, e.g. cultural or art

- *Professionals*
  Access to (the information about the availability of) training
  Getting involved in the local network of practitioners working with children and their families

- *Parents*
  Information on the childs' educational needs and on the availability of support for children and families

- Medium term/Long term
- Children
  Increased motivation to learn, higher self-esteem and more positive attitude to teachers and school (based on self-reports of children and teachers' observations);
  Increased school attendance rate (based on small scale survey);
  Improvement of school grades;

- *Professionals*
  Gaining new knowlege and skills;
  Being more aware of the needs of children and families;
  Working within networks of local professionals;
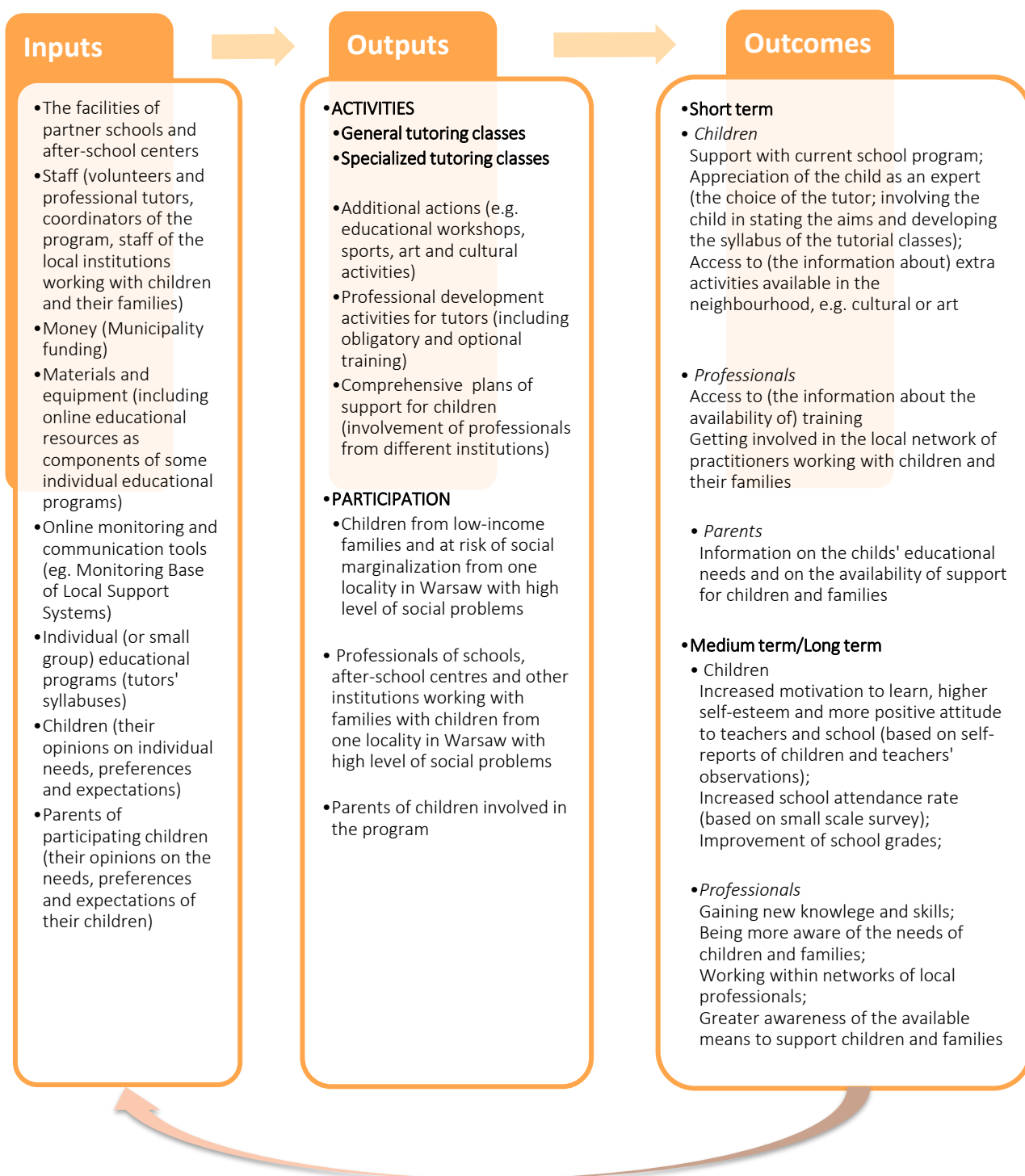 Greater awareness of the available means to support children and families

Figure 8.1. Logic model for 'General and Specialized Tutoring'

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CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

The subsequent stages of the development of the GST program and the BAZA project as a whole are an example of the process of establishing a continuous educational support system for children from socially disadvantaged families.

- In the first edition of the program the focus was on establishing cooperation among professionals within and between organizations, which enabled the exploration of the available resources;
- In the second edition the focus was on establishing the optimal framework of the program (types of activities, structural arrangements etc.);
- In the third edition, the attention is focused on quality monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

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9. PORTUGAL: 'A HANDFUL OF KIDS'

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ABSTRACT

The Portuguese case study*, A Handful of Kids,* is a programme of education for interculturality, embedded in a broader social intervention project, *Projeto Escolhas E6G Plano A*, with the aim of promoting social inclusion and school integration of Roma children and communities. The programme addresses specific features of the Roma culture aiming to challenge the stigma and marginalization of Roma communities not only within the school context but in the broader community as well. It focuses on promoting positive contact between Roma and non-Roma children, and on improving children's socio-emotional skills aiming, ultimately, to increase well-being among all children in the school, and improve the school social climate. Thus, it is universally implemented with Roma and non-Roma children in the same class. The programme promotes positive intercultural dialogue by emphasizing the similarities between different cultural groups and acknowledging and respecting their specificities. According to participants, by improving children's socio-emotional skills, this intervention has effectively improved the school social climate.

Keywords: Roma, positive contact, socio-emotional skills, multicultural curriculum, school social climate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Table 9.1. *Targeted outcomes, key success features, and facilitators of success of 'A Handful of Kids'*

GOALS	FEATURES OF SUCCESS	FACILITATORS OF SUCCESS AND/OR INNOVATIONS
Individual socio-emotional outcomes • Reducing problem behaviour and / or peer conflict • Supporting children's cultural and ethnic identity **Interpersonal outcomes** • Developing constructive conflict resolution skills • Developing children's communication skills • Developing cultural and multilingual awareness and openness • Promoting positive contact between minority and majority children • Reducing prejudice and discrimination **School culture outcomes** • Promoting social inclusion and school integration of Roma children and communities, through intercultural dialogue	**Microsystem: Type of activities / curriculum** • Individualization • Focus on play and enjoyment • Experiential learning • Sensitivity to local context and culture(s) • Mother tongue valorisation and enhancement within the school / classroom routines • Positive relationships with children **Mesosystem: Connecting schools and families** • Partnerships and positive relationships with parents/families • Intercultural dialogue **Mesosystem: Connecting professionals** • Cooperation between professionals	**Focus** • Building on children's imaginations or everyday experiences • Supporting children's identity **Design** • Planning **Staff characteristics, involvement, and commitment** • Staff attitudes and multicultural beliefs: Appreciation of children/families and their diverse strengths • Staff social and professional competence that fit intervention requirements **Implementation processes** • Team work: Cooperation between professionals • Joint work by school staff and staff from an outside agency • Support from the classroom teacher • Articulation with other ongoing actions **Family involvement** • Strong and trust-based relationships/partnerships with families **Additional conditions for implementation** • Flexibility

BACKGROUND

IDENTIFICATION OF THE CASE STUDY

The intervention selected for the Portuguese case study for ISOTIS WP4 – Task 4.3 was the programme *Mãcheia de Chaborrilhos: Uma experiência de educação para a interculturalidade* (*A Handful of Kids: An experiment in intercultural education*; Programa Escolhas, 2011), a programme of education for interculturality, embedded in a broader project, *Projeto Escolhas Plano A E6G.* This broader project is promoted by *Escolhas* (i.e., Choices) Programme, a national government programme, promoted by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and integrated in the High Commission for Migration, with the mission of promoting social inclusion of children and young people from vulnerable socioeconomic contexts, aiming at equal opportunities and strengthening social cohesion (Programa Escolhas, 2018a).

Plano A E6G project is also locally promoted by *Fraterna* – Community Solidarity and Social Integration Centre, a Limited Liability Public Interest Cooperative, which undertook the commitment to contribute to the reduction of early school leaving of children and young people living in areas of greater social exclusion in Guimarães. It is directed primarily at children and young people living in vulnerable socioeconomic contexts in Guimarães and is being implemented in three school clusters within this municipality. This project includes various and diversified actions that complement each other: "CoolBAND" project, "Real Madrid", "Inclusive Literature", "Intercultural Mediation", "Philosophy for Children", "Parenting skills promotion programmes", "Education programmes for justice and law", "Training in ICT", and the interculturality programme "A Handful of Children" (Fraterna, 2018). Within the school selected for this case study, the *Plano A E6G* project is part of the overall school inclusiveness strategy, as depicted in Figure 9.1.
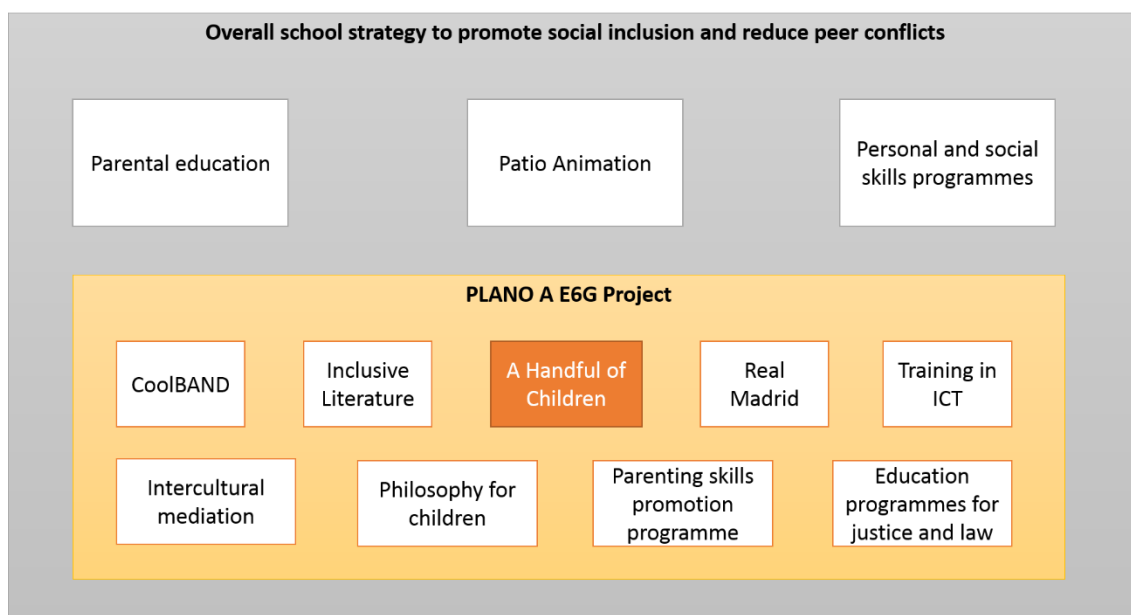

Figure 9.1. Visual representation of the overall school strategy for promoting inclusion and reducing peer conflicts

A HANDFUL OF KIDS: A CASE STUDY IN PORTUGAL

The original programme *A Handful of Kids* comprises fifteen intercultural education sessions to be implemented throughout the school year in schools. The activities are divided into three blocks and are based on elements of the Roma culture and elements that are valued both by the Portuguese non-Roma and the Portuguese Roma cultures, on observation of practices and on translation/adaptation of other existing resources (School Safety Net, 2018b; Programa Escolhas, 2011).

REASONS FOR SELECTION OF THE PROGRAMME AS PROMISING OR EFFECTIVE

The programme *A Handful of Kids* was selected as a promising intervention because of its innovative character, even though it has not yet been evaluated through high-quality studies. It is listed as a recommended resource for promoting interculturality by the *Escolhas Programme* (Calado & Gomes, 2012) and has been implemented for several years, since its pilot implementation, in 2010-2011, within several *Escolhas* projects in Portugal. It is thus highly considered among stakeholders as well as practitioners working with ethnic minority and disadvantaged children, particularly Roma children. Notably, it is also listed in the Training Sources database of the School Safety Net, a project funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme, aiming to address the need of European school system to prevent early school leaving (School Safety Net, 2018ab).

TARGET GROUP(S)

This intervention targets primarily Roma children, but also non-Roma low-income children, given that it aims to promote intercultural dialogue and to increase well-being among all children in the school. It is universally implemented with Roma and non-Roma children in the same class.

AIM(S)

The main goal of this programme is to promote social inclusion and school integration of Roma children and communities. To that end, *A Handful of Kids* aims at stimulating the intercultural dialogue between Roma and non-Roma children and young people, by encouraging social heterogeneity in activities and interactions within the classroom and overall school context. The programme comprises three thematic blocks of activities, each with a specific main goal: (1) *Getting to know each other*, which aims to promote the development of the awareness of belonging to different groups, in which there are people with different characteristics; (2) *Communicating*, which aims to facilitate the relations between people that belong, or not, to different cultures; and (3) *All together*, which aims to increase knowledge about different cultures, and tolerance towards cultural differences and positive and constructive coexistence between cultures (Programa Escolhas, 2011).

NUMBER OF SITES, CHILDREN, PROFESSIONALS, AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

This intervention is currently part of two ongoing *E6G Escolhas* projects: *Plano A E6G* and *Criativos do Bairro E6G*. Within *Plano A E6G* project, during the school year 2017/2018, the programme was implemented with 18 children of 2nd and 3rd grade, within the same class, in the site selected for this case study. The programme activities were carried out mostly by two professionals – programme dynamizers – with the occasional participation of other professionals,

the school mediator and the project coordinator. However, this programme has been frequently used since its initial implementation, embedded in several *Escolhas* projects. It has thus involved many children, professionals, and organizations.

FUNDING

The ongoing Escolhas projects that include the programme *A Handful of Kids - Plano A E6G* and *Criativos do Bairro* – are nationally funded by the *Escolhas* Programme and, respectively, by *FRATERNA – Centro Comunitário de Solidariedade e Integração Social* and *Associação para o Desenvolvimento do Concelho de Moura*. The total budget from *Escolhas* Programme for the *Plano A E6G* project, initiated on March 1 2016 and expected to end on December 31 2018 is 197.839,33€ (Programa Escolhas, 2016).

REASONS FOR SELECTION OF SITE (AND RELEVANT CONTEXT INFORMATION)

This specific site/primary school was selected given that, to the best of our knowledge, it was the only one in which the programme was currently being implemented in the school context during the 2017-2018 school year, which was a necessary condition for conducting the case study. In addition, this school is located adjacent to a social housing neighbourhood comprising different cultural groups. This multiculturality is represented in the school and underlies most of the school needs in terms of social intervention. Specifically, there are three main cultural groups: two different and conflicting Roma communities and the non-Roma (mainstream) community. The school social climate was marked by a high level of conflict between children mainly from the two different Roma communities, mirroring the cultural / ethnic tension of the surrounding neighbourhood ["*(…) this study is in the right place, because we have the community, in effect this cultural minority of Roma ethnicity is well represented here in this school, in this (school) grouping, and therefore it makes all the sense to study* (this), *and* (that) *the data of this study are known. And I ask you (…) that it be known also in the community so that we can know if we are working well, if we are working badly, and even other data, sometimes detected in these rigorous, scientific studies, from the social and cultural point of view and that we are interested in our day-to-day work."* (School grouping director)].

In the broader community, there is a social stigma associated with this primary school because of the proportion of Roma children attending this school, which has led many families from the mainstream cultural group to choose to enrol their children in other primary schools within this municipality ["*(…) we have few children because there is a stigma in the community that this school is only for Roma. Now, what is lacking is that people have confidence in the school and that they enrol the children here. Because there are a lot of people, here from the neighbourhood, that will enrol them there at the end of the street, because they have the idea that there is only Roma here."* (School coordinator)].

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DATA COLLECTION METHODS, PARTICIPANTS, AND ANALYSIS

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

This case study involved multiple data collection methods, namely a set of interviews with key staff and parents, document analysis, and analysis of documentation produced by children. Data collection was conducted between May and July 2018.

Document analysis

In order to explore the characteristics of the programme *A Handful of Kids* and to formulate the logic model reflecting the interventions' inputs, outputs, and expected outcomes, various existing resources were analysed, namely: the original programme manual, the adaptation of the activities made by the *Plano A E6G* team in order to meet the specificities of the children of the site chosen for this case study, the worksheets and the stories used in the activities, and an evaluation report of the *Plano A E6G* project. Web articles were also used (see Resources).

Semi-structured interviews

We conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with multiple informants: programme developers and site coordinators, staff implementing and/or supporting the professionals who delivered the programme, and parents of children participating in the programme (see Participants section). The professionals and parents interviewed were informed in detail about the study's goals and signed informed consent forms. All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. The professionals had the opportunity to review this report to check whether their identity and statements were properly anonymized and/or represented, and to provide their feedback. Most interviews were held at Guimarães, at the primary school where the case study took place, at the school grouping headquarters school and at the *Plano A E6G* project facilities. The interview with the programme developer was held at her current job location, in the south of Portugal.

Children's group activities

Furthermore, children's perspectives were also collected through the class project proposed by the UNIMIB team - Children's study – which was designed to allow children of each selected site for the ISOTIS WP4 case studies to express their perspectives about if and how their school acknowledges and values diversity, and about which elements they consider to be quality indicators of school inclusiveness (see Task T4.3 Manual). Therefore, some anonymous quotes from children are used in this report. Those citations were taken from the material outputs of the activities conducted in the children's study. These activities were conducted in the primary school where the programme was being implemented, in a classroom where the programme activities usually take place.

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PARTICIPANTS

This case study was conducted with multiple informants, including: 1) professionals involved in the development, coordination and implementation of the programme; 2) parents of some of the children who participated in the programme; and 3) children from a second and third grade class.

Professionals

Seven professionals with different roles in the programme and broader project participated as informants in this study: 1) the main author/developer of the programme; 2) three site coordinators: the coordinator of the project within which the programme was implemented; the primary school coordinator; and the school cluster director; 3) two professionals involved in the implementation of the programme; and 4) one professional supporting those who deliver the intervention (school mediator). Table 9.2 presents the professionals' profile. The primary school coordinator and school cluster director focused their responses mostly on the broader project, while the project coordinator and the staff involved in the programme implementation focused mainly the specific programme.

Table 9.2. *Profile of the professionals*

Status/role	M/F	Age	Educational level	Specialty	Years of experience	Location
Programme developer	F	36	Graduation (ISCED 6)	Political sciences	12 (10 in the Escolhas Project)	Odemira
Project coordinator	F	33	Graduation (ISCED 6)	Social Work	12 (12 in this site)	Project headquarters/facilities
School coordinator	F	45	Graduation (ISCED 6)	School administration	29 (3 in this site)	Primary school
School cluster director	M	67	Master (ISCED 7)	Education	40 (25 in this site)	School cluster headquarters school
Professional 1 (P1; programme dynamizer)	F	38	Bachelor's degree (ISCED 6)	Education	13 (13 in this site)	Primary school
Professional 2 (P2; programme dynamizer)	F	27	Bachelor's degree (ISCED 6)	Social work	9 (3 in this site)	Primary school
Professional 3 (P3; school mediator)	F	33	Master (ISCED 7)	Education	8 (2 in this site)	Primary school

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Parents

Three parents also participated in this study, two mothers and one father. Table 9.3 presents the profile of parents.

Table 9.3. *Profile of parents*

Code	Age	Sex	Education	Nationality	Family status	Number and age of children	Languages they speak	Employment
Parent1	26	F	8th grade (ISCED 2)	Portuguese	Single	1 9 years old	Portuguese	Unemployed
Parent2	28	F	Primary school (ISCED 1)	Portuguese	Single	1 8 years old	Portuguese and Caló	Unemployed; Volunteer at *Plano A E6G* project
Parent3	39	M	Graduation (ISCED 6)	[omitted]	Married	2 4 and 7 years old	[omitted]	Engineer

Children

The participating children consisted of 18 primary school children (Table 9.4) of the second and third grade (50.0% girls) with ages ranging from 7 to 11 years (*M* = 8.56). Approximately 6% of the children were born in other countries and speak other languages at home; 94.4% are Portuguese; no children have dual nationality; 50.0% are Roma. All children, except one, were born in Portugal. Languages spoken at home are Portuguese, Caló, and the immigrant child speaks his/her heritage language at home.

ANALYSIS

Data was analysed through a systematic content analysis, using the analytical categories provided by the WP4 core-team and covered in the semi-structured interview scripts for all stakeholders: history, key activities, features of success, facilitators, barriers, perceived impact, innovative features, lessons learned, and future directions.

THEMES

HISTORY

Context

The programme *A Handful of Kids* was developed within the previous *Escolhas* Project Encontros, which occurred between 2006 and 2010, and had as central purpose school and social integration of the Roma communities of two villages of a rural municipality in the interior of Portugal, Moura. Around 2009-2011, the Roma community represented 10% of the total local

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community and approximately 50% of the school community. This project consisted of a set of actions aimed at promoting the integration of Roma children from these villages in schools and their school success, involving different key agents: the children, their families, the school community and socio-educational intervention professionals. Several activities were carried out with the Roma community in their own living places, whether it be in camps, in neighbourhoods, or in more isolated households, to facilitate social and school integration. Activities included street libraries, parental training, and school and family mediation. Intervention at the institutional level (e.g., social security, municipality, health centre) sought to disseminate information about Roma communities and culture to raise awareness and provide tools to those who contact daily with Roma communities, through thematic meetings and the Roma Community Observatory of that municipality. In the school context, the intervention focused on promoting an environment of cooperation and understanding, where intercultural interactions and differences could be welcomed and celebrated (Programa Escolhas, 2011; School Safety Net, 2018b). Since the systematization of these activities in 2011 into the *A Handful of Kids*, this programme has been incorporated by several other Escolhas Projects in different regions of the country which included, among their main goals, the promotion of the social inclusion and school integration of Roma children.

In the selected site for this case study, this programme was also included in a broader Escolhas Project – *Plano A E6G* – which also comprises activities carried out in the local community and in the school context with the aim preventing the early school leaving of children and young people form vulnerable socioeconomic contexts and at higher risk of social exclusion and promoting social inclusion of Roma children and young people. *Plano A E6G* project is located at a social housing neighbourhood, from where most children attending the primary school where this case study took place come from. Thus, the implementation of this project in this school aims to help to better address the specific needs of those children [*"we have ... the children are (…) mostly residents there in the neighbourhood, where Plan A has an intervention plan, and we found this very important, this support. I think ... I look at the project as a support for school and school activities. For all activities, Plan A is called upon to collaborate on anything that is necessary."* (School coordinator)].

Within the *Plano A E6G* project, the programme *A Handful of Kids* was specifically used as a tool to tackle a high level of peer conflicts among children from two different Roma communities, and between Roma and non-Roma children [*"(…) there is actually a large Roma community, and even within the Roma community, we have two Roma communities, and we felt that there were… they had many conflicts because they had a hard time realizing (…) how the other functions/behaves, and that it is possible to relate to others. So, we felt the need to have this resource, and to work with it weekly ... right?"* (Project coordinator)].

Goals and needs addressed

The elaboration of this resource stemmed from the observation, within the broader social intervention, that: (a) having Roma children at school created ill-ease and children spontaneously organized into Roma and non-Roma groupings both in the classroom and at recess time [*"We did this activity for three years and realized that it was very complicated (…) if we could get the Roma children together, the non-Roma children would walk away, and the other way around. And so we needed to have an environment where they were together"* (Programme developer)]; (b) Roma

children had lower academic success than non-Roma children; (c) teachers explicitly expressed that they lacked the necessary tools to deal appropriately and effectively with cultural diversity in the classroom; and (d) relatives of Roma children tendentially did not trust schools to educate their children or to keep them safe (Programa Escolhas, 2011).

To address these issues, the professionals developed a set of activities with the following goals: 1) **promoting contact between Roma and non-Roma children** ["*Our goal at the time was to join Roma and non-Roma children around the same activity*" (Programme Developer); "*our aim, (the aim of) these activities, is precisely this: to establish a relationship between them in which there are various activities - and this programme brings this to school – that involve all students and not make this division of ethnicities, and achieve among all a group cohesion*" (P3)]; 2) **decreasing the cultural and ethnic tension between Roma and non-Roma children as well as between the two different Roma communities** through the development of positive conflict resolution skills ["*Exactly in this management of conflicts between peers, because we think that if they manage to put themselves in the role of the other (...) that (the conflicts) will diminish.*" (Project coordinator)]; 3) **reduce prejudice and discrimination** ["*to work on prejudice with both groups*" (Programme Developer); "*to work on some of the problems we felt, that it was discrimination, that they (Roma children) felt discriminated against*" (P2)]; 4) **promote interculturality** ["*(…) and then the fact that it was implemented in school was that we inevitably did not work with the Roma only, because the classes were both Roma and non-Roma, so the issues of interculturality, prejudice, diversity can still be worked on a little bit.*" (P2)].

Theoretical background and research base

Although not explicitly addressed by the professionals in the semi-structured interviews, the theoretical background of the programme is explicitly outlined in the programme manual (Programa Escolhas, 2011). Specifically, the development of *A Handful of Kids* was grounded on an intercultural education framework (Banks, 2010, 2015), emphasizing the relevance of positive communication and interaction between different cultural groups as way towards social cohesion and a peaceful society (Perotti, 2004; Programa Escolhas, 2011). A key value was equity between all children ["*(…) values were always the equity among the children.*" (Programme developer)].

Following curricular guidelines from the Portuguese Ministry of Education regarding education for citizenship and aiming for an effective adaptation to the specificities of the local context, the development of the programme activities was based on elements of the Roma culture and aspects valued both by the Roma and non-Roma cultures ["*Things were always conducted according to the context of the children. Therefore, when we spoke about interculturality, we would seek features related to the Roma community, but also to the culture of Alentejo.*" (Programme developer)], on the observation of practices and on the adaptation of diverse materials ["*We searched for good practices, especially in Spain. In Spain, they have things developed from a long time ago. And... we went looking for manuals, for... activities to promote interculturality, that's it, we studied the issue a lot…*" (Programme developer)].

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KEY ACTIVITIES

Type, structure, and content of activities

The activities of *A Handful of Kids* are based on features of the Roma culture and features valued by both Portuguese and Roma and were designed to stimulate a positive intercultural dialogue and to reduce prejudice (Programa Escolhas, 2011). In the site selected for this case study, the set of activities originally proposed in the programme manual underwent some adaptations in order to better meet the specific characteristics and needs of the particular children participating in the programme. The *Plano A E6G* project coordinator describes the programme as a non-formal education period that allow a reflection about aspects that are relevant in promoting interculturality ["*I describe it as a non-formal and reflective Playing Time.*" (Project coordinator)].

The activities consist of group dynamics, story tales, and pencil and paper tasks, designed to stimulate children's self-knowledge, self-esteem and social skills (e.g., empathy, assertiveness, interpersonal problem solving) and to address and stimulate children's reflection upon key concepts in the field of interculturality (e.g., diversity vs. equality, human rights, discrimination, tolerance, respect, social exclusion, cultural diversity). Some of these activities focus specifically on features of the Roma culture (e.g., history, music, vocabulary). The adaptation carried out by the *Plano A E6G* project of *A Handful of Kids* consists of 10 sessions with the following respective activities:

1) Session 1: *This is me*
   a. *The web* (group dynamic)
   b. *Who are you?* ["*(…) there is a really nice activity, which is the "who are you", in which they make their own blazon, (…) they loved it, which is 'talking about my family', 'how my family is'*" (P3)]
2) Session 2: *Treasures*
   a. *The treasure*
   b. *My self portrai*t
3) Session 3: *Labels*
   a. Group dynamic about labels
4) Session 4: *Children are children*
   a. What is intercultural education?
   b. Ten rights of children
   c. Drawing about the theme *right to equality*
5) Session 5: *Big hug, full heart*
   a. Story tale - *The great Felpa's family*
   b. Group dynamic - *Hug, little hug, big hug*
6) Session 6: *Let's talk?*
   a. *When I argue with someone…* - Brainstorm and worksheet
   b. *Is it a joke or an argument?* - Worksheet and group reflection
   c. *In the classroom…* - Worksheet
   d. *Is it serious or not very serious?* – Worksheet
7) Session 7: *I am Chico and I'm going to tell you a story*
   a. Story tale – The of the little Roma Chico
   b. Debate

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8) Session 8: *Jelem Jelem*
   a. Listening to the song *Jelem Jelem* (Roma Hymn)
   b. (Roma) Word search
9) Session 9: *Who wrote this?*
   a. Short story reading (about equality in diversity)
   b. Group reflection and debate
10) Session 10: *I am…*
   a. Group dynamic *I am* (identifying personal characteristics and finding what is common with the other children)

Most sessions start with an icebreaker or cooperation group dynamic to stimulate positive contact and a cooperation climate between Roma and non-Roma children ["*We always try to make an icebreaker or cooperative dynamic, because they are not used to cooperating, and ... they are very divided for cultural reasons: the Roma, and among the Roma both communities, and the non-Roma."* (Project coordinator)]. Also, in each session, there is an introduction of key concepts and clarification of the specific goal of the proposed activity, before carrying out the activity itself ["*there is a whole preparation, right, because each session has a theme that will be addressed, so there is all the preparation of a theme. First, there is a clarification of the concepts, for them to understand better, they are told what the purpose of that session is and then we go on working on the session."* (P1)].

Story tale activities are used to stimulate children's understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity, and knowledge about specific features of the Roma culture are among the children's favourite ["*there is one that I always emphasize because it creates a lot of impact, in fact two, which are the story of Ursinha Felpa (…) they are always amazed, and another is the story of Ciganinho Chico. Yes, I think it's a question of appropriation of that content, pride and curiosity, because even though they belong to the Roma community, there's a lot in the story (…) which they do not know. So, they are delighted, ... delighted, but at the same time proud, because a space in the school was opened to talk about their community - right? – in a positive way, which is important"* (Project coordinator); "*readings of stories and exploration of what is covered in these stories are among the activities they like the most"* (P1)].

Paper and pencil activities, involving worksheets, are often adapted into more practical solutions to increase children's engagement ["*Of course, the worksheets were worksheets, but before that there was an explanation about the reason for that worksheet. In some situations, the worksheets were not used because we thought we could work on the same concepts in another way."* (P2)].

Professionals responsible for implementation

The staff implementing the intervention consists of two *Plano A E6G* professionals – one education sciences professional and one social worker – and, occasionally, the school mediator who sometimes supports them in delivering the programme activities.

Location and timing (frequency, duration)

This adapted version of the programme consists of 10/12 activities implemented throughout the school year in one-hour weekly sessions in a school classroom ["W*eekly, in a period that we call "playing time", with the class of the 2nd and 3rd years in the classroom context. It is not in their classroom, but it is in another space, in another classroom (…)"* (P1)]. Often, due to children's

characteristics, more than one session is needed to complete an activity [*"We feel the need to do it throughout the school year because, also considering the group, what would be one session sometimes is divided into three"* (Project coordinator)].

Participants (grouping structure and criteria)

Participants are the students of a 2nd and 3rd year class which includes children from two different Roma communities and non-Roma children. Regarding grouping structure, the programme activities include both group and individual tasks [*"The activities are dynamized in a group, therefore they participate in the group activity and when they have to do some individual task the reflection is carried out in group"* (P1)]. As for grouping criteria, groups are mixed, including both Roma and non-Roma children [*"We always wanted the groups to be mixed, with Roma and non-Roma"* (Programme developer)].

Family involvement activities

In the beginning of the school year, the staff implementing this intervention presents the programme activities to children's parents, but the actual activities do not contemplate an explicit involvement or participation of children's parents or families [*"The programme does not assume this involvement."* (Project coordinator); *"At the beginning of the year we present to parents the activities that will be carried out during this "play time" at the end of the day, there. But I do not think that it goes much beyond that"* (Project coordinator); *"No ... I do not. No, not directly ... I do not know how ... not directly, I did not have the opportunity."* (Parent3)]. Although children's parents and family are not actively involved in the programme activities, within the broader project there is continuous intercultural mediation through an informal articulation with parents and families in the local community (i.e., the neighbourhood), aimed at reducing the cultural/ethnic tensions among the different cultural groups, as a complement to the intervention carried out with the children [*"We work in non-formal education with children and in a way of informal articulation we work with families on these issues of intercultural mediation because there are many conflicts in the school that arise from this ... this ... interculturality – right? – and conflict of interests ... and values."* (Project coordinator); *"(...) When we went to the school or to the neighbourhood, during the holidays, we took the notebook and then the parents could see the kids inside the classroom, studying, or playing, or doing other things. And that was very important, this notebook, a very, very interesting tool. (...) this was a methodology that worked very well*." (Programme developer)]. In addition, parents' volunteer participation in the broader project activities that take place in the project facilities is welcome and encouraged [*"I also like to help them and so, and ... and when it's uh ... for example, when it happens here things I'm the first to be here. And ... I'm always giving ideas - "and this, let's go there, let's do this" - so I'm always in these things."* (Parent2)]. Even though family involvement in the programme itself is limited, it is considered very important to maximize the success/impact of the intervention ["(family strengths and resources are fundamental to the) *success in all at all stages. Before implementation, in this conceptual question - right? (...) because they often live the prejudice, but do not know how to ... name it - right? So, the family would have an important role there."* (Project Coordinator)].

FEATURES OF SUCCESS

Success defined in terms of process and outcomes

Considering that the programme aims, broadly, to promote participating children's socio-emotional skills, the interviewed professionals defined the programme success in terms of process and outcomes simultaneously. Several process features were identified by the professionals as indicative of the success of the programme. Namely, **activities that are more dynamic and more practical/concrete, involving manipulation of materials** ["*Everything that is more dynamic – right? - works much better*" (Project coordinator); "*For example, using the hands has always worked better. (...) We had activities with a... with... with play dough, which worked very well*" (Programme developer)], as well as **experiential learning activities that allow them to experiment the others' feelings** were identified as working better with the children ["*And everything that makes them feel. All those dynamics that let them experience the sensation of the other*" (Project coordinator); "*Because sometimes reading and reflecting is harder for them in terms of learning, but when they feel it, we realize that it has a lot more impact*" (Project coordinator)].

The programme is acknowledged by the professionals as a **tool to work with children on improving interpersonal relationships between different cultural groups** ["*We know that we have an instrument that helps us work the relationship between the different communities within the school*" (Project coordinator)]. Some strategies were also identified as indicators of success of the programme activities in terms of process. Specifically, **brainstorming is effective in promoting children's participation and engagement** in the programme sessions ["*I was able to adapt the worksheet and I made a kind of brainstorming, with the chalk board, (...) and it was really nice (...), at a given point they were debating between them*" (P2)]. Also, the **documentation of activities in a notebook** worked well as a basis for giving feedback on activities, for showing the children contacting with each other and working together, and for creating a common ground between children within the same school and between schools ["*(...) it was a joint notebook between the two schools. So, they could also see how the other children, from the other school, had done the same thing, always aiming to create a common ground, bonds between the kids, between the schools, between the communities.*" (Programme developer)].

Features indicative of **children's engagement in the activities** were also identified as process factors related to the success of the programme. Such features consisted of children's:

- **Focus on the activities** ["*When I realize that they are super focused…*" (P2)];
- **Demonstration of interest and pleasure/enjoyment in participating in the activities** ["*It is a programme that they like very much, even because whenever there are these activities, they like to participate; (…) the kids are interested, they like to come and that for me is a plus: the fact that they like to be here. (…) the fact that they come of their own volition, without feeling obligated, without making a face and participating, in a way, by the minimum participation already makes all the difference*" (P3)]. Children's perspectives expressed within the class project proposed in the Children's Study (i.e., elements that make them feel good about their school) also illustrate children's satisfaction with the programme activities ["*I like the activities of A Handful of Kids*" (8 children; Step 2)] as well as with other activities within the *Plano A*

E6G project ["*I like the Coolband*" (8 children; Step 2); "*I like the Real Madrid*" (7 children; Step 2)];

- **Motivation to overcome challenges posed by the programme activities** ["*They then almost looked at it as a challenge: 'I can do it! In-ter-cul-tu-ra-li-ty!'*" (Project coordinator)].

The professionals implementing the intervention consider that the programme is successful given that they observe small **progressive behavioural changes** in the children ["*When there is a slight change in behaviour, it may not be very large, but simply saying "thank you P2", "P2, I already know this", "P2, I helped him", the simple fact of sitting in place listening to the colleague speaking, for me it makes all the difference, because before this it was a behaviour that did not happen.*" (P2)]. Throughout the programme sessions, the children have started to use the conflict resolution skills learned through this intervention within the programme sessions in classroom situations ["*And there was a situation in one of those sessions where one kid had made fun of another and the kid turns to me and says, "oh teacher, he's making fun of me," and I said "ignore it," and he said, "ah , but I'm doing what you told me, I'm calling an adult ... ". (...) these little things are what remains. And the fact that they apply this to real life – right?*" (P2)].

Roma **heritage language support activities** contribute to creating empathy and proximity, to value the Roma identity and to foster empowerment of Roma children ["*It is super important. (...) It calls for what I have already said - the question of identity. (...) it was they who taught us to correctly say "Mãcheia de Chaborrilhos"* ("Handful of Kids"). *Because we said "Mão"* ("Hand") *and they corrected. That is, uh... this helps us create the kind of empathy that is needed - right? Because of this question of identity.*" (Project coordinator)].

Success was defined by one professional as being able to conduct the programme activities with much **lower levels of peer conflicts between children from the different cultural groups** in the school ["*(I feel) Satisfied when they can carry out the programme* (activities)*, as it did not happen in previous years, without causing so many conflicts. They can already be in the same space and there are not these conflicts between them. (...) Therefore, when we are implementing the programme, we can see a lot of improvement in the group, which is where our satisfaction comes from.*" (P1)]. Success is also defined by noting, through observation of children's behaviour, that the **target message was successfully conveyed** ["*When an activity went well, that I saw that I had managed to convey the message that I had intended to take.*" (Programme developer)] and that they had **understood a key concept** ["*For example, there are very lovely moments: when we spoke about prejudice, I divided the word, the "pre" and the "concept", and explained that the "pre" always comes before, so it means that it is what we think of a person without knowing him/her. And (...) there was a kid who really stressed that and explained exactly how he understood, that "it is what I think you are before I met you," just like that. And that to me it is a sign that I did my part and they understood.*" (P2)].

Positive feedback from teachers ["*I also felt good when, in the meetings, when teachers gave positive feedback, which was not an easy thing*" (Programme Developer)] and **children's choice in remaining in the school to attend the programme activities** ["*It is an activity carried out after school hours. If it were not an activity in which the parents saw as fruitful they would come pick them up sooner (…) parents let them stay until later because* (it was) *activity that they* (the children) *liked and they did not leave because they were enjoying the activity, and I think that's very positive. (…) I think it turns out to be positive because they end up telling parents "today there is this activity, do not come pick me up"*. (P3)].

Unique features and strengths of the intervention

Several unique features and strengths of this programme were emphasized by the programme developer and the professionals responsible for implementing the intervention. Specifically, as noted by the programme developer, a major strength the programme *A Handful of Kids* is that it is **based on a personal relationship with the children, teachers and families** ["*(...) it was very much based on a personal relationship. So, I think this is very important. It was not a random person of a random institution to go about implementing an activity that he/she thought was nice, with some random children. It was all based in those children's temper, which we were able to perceive very well, in our relationship with the teachers, in what we had proposed to work with the families, and we tried to use the programme also to work* (with) *the families. So, this relationship of great proximity, mutual trust between these various stakeholders was and is one of the factors of success."* (Programme developer)]. Related to that, another strength of this programme was that **the activities and the materials used were personalized and tailored to the children's characteristics** ["*Personalization of things* (i.e., of the programme activities) *is very important."* (Programme Developer)].

In addition, it considers **features of both cultural and geographical contexts**, that is, it includes references that are relevant for the target children ["*(programme activities) *were always* (…) *planned according to the context of the children. Therefore, when we spoke about interculturality, we would seek features related to the Roma community, but also to the culture of Alentejo."* (Programme Developer)]. Thus, the programme emphasizes interculturality not only as a target outcome but also as a methodology to deliver the intervention: given that the programme activities are grounded on children's everyday relevant experiences, children can experiment interculturality throughout the intervention ["*Because* (it allows) *to work* (promote) *interculturality not only as a theme, but also as methodology. And that, of experiencing interculturality ... many times, we settle at folk dances or what they sing in a place, what they eat - this gastronomy issue, which is very important, but is not enough. And we, with this program, what we did is this: that we experimented with interculturality. We made it a day-to-day experience, and we always tried to use children's everyday situations to illustrate what we were saying ... Yes, that's it, to use children's experiences to promote interculturality in a very lively way"* (Programme developer)].

According to the staff implementing the programme within the *Plano A E6G* project, a unique feature and key strength of *A Handful of Kids* is that it was **designed to work with children from the Roma communities and to address the specificities of Roma children**, emphasizing their heritage language and features of their history ["*(...) it is among the first programs that works* (designed to work with) *the Roma community. (...) In addition, I think it is the only one that has Roma content. Because, for example, the programme includes some worksheets about… for example,* (with) *soup letters with words in "Caló", there are things like that, the body parts in "Caló" – right? – which is now not usual, the Roma now they do not speak "Caló" (…) I think it is nice, because even the children, the younger ones, many of them do not even know the history, of the Roma origin. For example, another one of the sessions that I implemented, which is "the story the little Roma Chico" that was created by (…) a Roma mediator. This story, I ended up adding it to the sessions because I find it really nice, telling the story, they get all excited"* (P2)]. In addition, it was **tailored to address this specific type of cultural diversity and age group** in which it is more likely to improve the target skills ["*(it was) *thought for this population in this particular age group. When they are younger, we can harvest fruits more easily."* (P1)]. Related

to these feature, the **programme activities are engaging** and the **themes/issues addressed in the programme facilitate reflection and behavioural change** ["*(…) the activity time is not a boring time, which ends up facilitating"* (P3); "*And even the themes that are addressed in this programme are fundamental, because they will help them have here this reflection and this behaviour change."* (P3)]. Despite this cultural tailoring, it was also emphasized by the *Plano A E6G* project coordinator that the programme can be used as a tool to promote interculturality in a flexible way, without focusing on any specific culture.

FACILITATORS: FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SUCCESS

The **support from the classroom teacher** was emphasized by several professionals as a factor contributing to the success of the intervention, by allowing an articulation of the programme activities with the formal curriculum and the regular classroom context ["*I think there has to be a lot of involvement from the teacher (…) Even for delivering the contents afterwards - right? - that are addressed, because then they will be able to make a bridge with some concepts that will certainly be addressed in the classroom, or with some conflict that arises and that the teacher is there to solve - right? - he will be able to use the contents that have been addressed - right? - and almost solidify what was apprehended by them."* (Project Coordinator)].

Articulation with other actions within the broader project also contributes do the success of the programme ["*We have computer classes at school in this Playing Time (…) and there was a connection with the colleague who is the monitor of the digital inclusion centre to prepare up some concepts. That is, before implementing a few sessions, S. went with them to search for what was meant by interculturality, what was meant by prejudice and helped them divide the word ... Yes ... it was important. Since they have to learn to ... to search, to do - right? - research in search engines, there was a set of concepts here that A., which is implementing the program, went to S., and S., in terms of ... of computer classes, helped them search to find out more about it. That is, there was a preparation."* (Project Coordinator)].

Having at least two professionals in the programme sessions was also highlighted as an important facilitator by the professionals implementing the programme: ["*It works with two people present, whenever possible* (P1)*; Now we always try to be two; as I was telling you, these classes are somewhat complicated and sometimes it becomes difficult to conduct the session. I sometimes came alone and there were some sessions that I could not conduct due to conflict situations." (P2)*]. Related to this, good quality and strong personal relationships among the staff were also pointed out as a factor contributing to the success of the programme ["*(…) we had a spectacular team. (...) we were very... supportive and very positive*; *We faced very difficult times, but uhm... there, we helped each other, who was more personally involved."* (Programme developer)]

Another important factor contributing to the success of the programme identified by several professionals was the **quality of the relationships with the main stakeholders**. **Personal, close and trust relationships with the children** ["(…) *and what I said, always weave personal relationships. This is very important. Because they are children, they are small children, we have to have personal relationships. Yes, they had to like us, we had to like them, because if not, we could not get there".* (Programme Developer); "*Well, I think the fact that they already know us, that they have a close relationship with us, helps a lot. It's the relationship of trust."* (P1)], and **with their families and communities** ["*The fact that we intervene in this territory from a long*

time ago and know the parents of these children and have established an empathic relationship, having a relationship of trust greatly facilitates the work - right? - because sometimes what is difficult is when we are new in the school, no one to knows us, and to gain that trust, even for sharing, is more difficult. And the fact that we know the children and the parents turns out to be easier to share. And, there, this is a strong point as professionals implementing the programme." (P2)] were considered very important.

Using **children's real context social experiences as material for reflection** about appropriate *vs.* inappropriate behaviour and to promote understanding and learning of key skills ["*There are some sessions (...) that have to do with the recess context that* (in which) *they work on the kind of behaviours that are adequate and inadequate, so if they think about it, then I believe that they will try in practice to reproduce what they have reflected, right? Since it is something that has to do with what goes on in their day to day life."* (P1); "*I think they assume* (understand) *it is better if we apply what is there in the sessions to the real context because they experience the situations and can understand them better."* (P2)], although it is not entirely clear how this is done.

A number of features related with the characteristics of the professionals were also referred as facilitators, namely: **professionals sensibility, empathic ability, and non-prejudice attitude** ["*The fact that the monitor* (…) *creates an empathy relationship here, that always tries in a way, as I shall say, to maintain this empathic relationship and at the same time alert the student in a positive way, and that there is this positive reinforcement that they often give them"* (P3); *"The facilitator must also have some particular features, he cannot be prejudiced."* (P1); "*(…) the teachers treat them with all the patience of the world and that is, the treatment of the teachers, the teaching they give them, the time they dedicate to them, to teach them ... this is, I believe, what I like the most in this school."* (Parent 3)], a **good fit between the professionals' characteristics and the programme activities** ["*I think they have here an adequate profile to develop these activities. I think they make these students have here a moment where they can reflect on various themes and (…) it is not that they change the behaviour from one day to the other, but it helps us here that they are trying to improve at the level of behaviour and it motivates them to come to school"* (P3)], **appropriate professional background/ training** [*"Having this training base* (background) *in social work*, (she) *manages to produce* (evaluation materials) *very well."* (Project coordinator)] and a **strong commitment with the programme** [*"It was a very big challenge, right? It took a great deal of effort, but it was done with much... with much, with much love, with much will, with... with, yes, with the will to change things."* (Programme Developer)].

In the implementation of the programme within the Escolhas project in which the programme originated (i.e., Projeto Encontros), a very important facilitator was that one **member of the staff had the same background as target children** ["*The community dynamizer is a role invented by the Choices Programme (...) His goal was really ... to make the bridge, uh ... to be able to mobilize the Roma children. (...) with the entrance of B.* (community dynamizer) *who, in addition to the culture, also knew the people very deeply, uh... these unlocks* (i.e., this mobilization) *were getting easier because we could perceive better why people reacted like that, and then mend things. (...) we must understand the cultures to be able to act. And that is, it is a very, very important question. Hence the importance of this community dynamizer.* (Programme developer)].

Meaningful activities ["*There are some activities that work beautifully (…) there is a really nice activity, which is the "who are you", in which they make their own blazon, (…) they loved it, which is 'talking about my family', 'how my family is'"* (P3)] and **sensitivity to the local context and**

culture ["*However, there are others that although I think they are super important and that make all the sense, they have to be adapted to the realities, so that is why many of them I tried to adapt to the* (local) *context."* (P3)].

Finally, the **use of appropriate materials and equipment** and a **careful preparation of activities** were also considered facilitators ["*The materials used had to be well executed, they had to be worked. We had to have a guiding thread. The preparation of the activity was very important."* (Programme Developer)]. Related to this, **ICT** was mentioned as a valuable resource in preparing, planning, and sometimes delivering the intervention ["*So ICT was ... that's how we used it: at the time of preparation, at the time of planning - right? - very important. So, planning, preparing and, from time to time, to put a video or... yes, to play videos."* (Programme developer)].

BARRIERS AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM

Cultural/ethnic tensions

One of the main challenges that professionals encounter in implementing the programme refers to the cultural/ethnic tensions between the different cultural groups involved**,** which manifest through: **prejudice towards Roma** ["*(…) this permanent prejudice. I ... every time I said that "I work with Roma communities", people would say "Ah, it must be very difficult" and I would answer, I would always answer the same thing: "What is difficult is not working with the Roma! What's hard is working with non-Roma." Because that's where prejudice materializes. (…) so, this... a great difficulty, a great challenge that we had with this program, is that we always had the, the impression of, of working and of fighting against. (...) against a school culture based on prejudice."* (Programme Developer)]; **prejudice between different Roma communities** ["*They come with many prejudices ... and deconstructing them is very difficult, because "my father says that he is not like that, that he is not Roma", and "my father says that I am the one who is Roma", and "my Dad says he has lice and I cannot hold his hand." That is, this is very difficult... to deconstruct, right?"* (Project coordinator)]; and **frequent conflict situations** involving the different cultural groups of children ["*(…) there were such problems in the classroom and sometimes there were activities or reflections that led to the development of these conflicts: who is Roma, who is not."* (P1); "*(…) undoubtedly, many conflict situations. It was like I was telling you, in the beginning I was going to implement the sessions by myself, and now I've been coming* (by myself) *a few times too, but I got to a point where I said 'man, I cannot take it anymore'"* (P2)].

Children's perspectives about the elements that do not make them feel good in their school also illustrate these manifestations of cultural/ethnic tension ["*They do not make fun of me because they are afraid of me, because I 2am Roma*" (child; Step 1B); "*I do not like that they call others names and that they beat*" (child); "*I have already been called names."* (child; Step 2)].

To overcome this barrier, professionals resort to various strategies, such as: **working cooperatively in a network** ["*In network. If it were not for the network, it would not be possible. You realized that there is a strong connection with the school's GAAF [student and family support office] professional and with the* (school) *coordinator, right? And if wasn't so, it would not be possible."* (Project coordinator)]; **fostering children's reflection** about the importance of team work to resolve conflicts ["*(…) the fact that we talked a little bit* [about the conflict situations]. *(...) Then, eventually, children would begin to say "oh, he did this, this and this", "Ah, but you did too", and they debated among themselves and then they realized that there were kids who they were*

revolted with the attitude of the other (...). The group was talking to that kid; then they began to realize that if they did not begin to help everyone and get along .... That's what I tell them: "you have to function as a football team" (…). The goal is to become better people, "you have to think that you form a team in the classroom". (P2)]; and **building on the experience of those knowledgeable about the setting**, establishing a trust relationship with families, communicating with parents regarding positive child outcomes ["*(…) we seek for the experience of those who are on the field and can give us some guidelines here. I think that every day we are here to learn ... We try to talk with parents, to really establish this relationship of trust, not only to inform about negative aspects, but also to establish when it is going well, a positive reinforcement."* (P3)].

Multiple year-level classes

Another important challenge emphasized stems from having children from two different grades in the same class. This occurs when there are not enough children in the same education level to create a class ["*(…) in these small schools we have another problem, which has nothing to do with interculturality, which are multi-year classes."* (Programme developer)].

To overcome this challenge, professionals have resorted to different strategies and solutions, including: **promoting peer tutoring** from older to younger children and between Roma and non-Roma children ["*Therefore, we had to play with these various aspects: that Roma and non-Roma children would help each other, that 4th grade children would help 1st grade children. (…) cooperation, collaborative learning (...) was one of the very, very important values."* (Programme Developer)]; **coteaching** ["*This is a second and third grade class. Since there are few students, they are all in the same class. But in terms of organization, what we feel is ... it cannot be just one element* (professional)*, right? Sometimes we need to be two or three to be able to organize them."* (Project coordinator)]; **adapting the implementation of the programme activities** to the specific needs of each child/group of children ["*Some children that I know have more difficulty, in fact they themselves call me and ask 'can you explain it to me again?'"* (P2)]

Limited organizational support

In the first years of implementation of this programme, limited organizational support was an important barrier which manifested mainly in **insufficient time allocated to planning and preparing activities** ["*One of the main* (barriers) *was the lack of time, because we were always running, always running because the ... we had a very fast pace, with many activities, with a lot, well... it was very complicated to justify with the Choices* (Program) *that we could spend a morning, two people, preparing a one-hour activity."* (Programme Developer)].

This constraint was dealt with through **professionals' personal investment** and not through policy responses, namely by working over hours ["*(…) we had to overcome this barrier, and prepare at other times or on weekends (…)"* (Programme developer]] and using travel time between schools to advance work ["*(…) we had to travel to the activities, to the schools... each time half an hour. (...) So it was lost. We even established a plan in which we did the evaluation of the activity inside the van so as not to lose that half hour totally.*" (Programme developer)].

Mismatch between original program and children's specificities

In the site selected for the present case study, professionals noted that there is a mismatch between the original programme activities and the specificities of the target children in this site

["*Okay, what we were feeling was another need, which was to adapt this resource to this group, right? Because... it was what we were talking about, even though there is a Roma community, right? They all have their specifics (…)."* (Project coordinator)].

To overcome this constraint, professionals have adapted the original programme proposal to the specificities of the target children of this site. To that end, the adaptations consisted in making the programme activities more practical, concrete and hands-on: ["*(…) the sessions (…) must be adapted to the context. I realized with these kids that I had to adapt the situations and apply them differently."* (P1); "*We necessarily had to adapt it, because for these classes it was not going to work, I do not think it would have the same impact if it was applied in the way it was programmed. I think the fact that there have been some changes creates more impact on the children, and because these children are more practical, right?"* (P3); "*(…) we felt the need to adapt ... to the difficulties of the group, especially in reading and understanding. And they have very little reflective ability, which is why we have to create some dynamics and put together some dynamics, to make them - what I was explaining - to make them feel. Thus, they will better understand the concepts."* (Project coordinator)].

Lack of programme evaluation tools

The original programme does not include evaluation tools to measure its impact on children. To overcome this barrier, the Plano A E6G project team has created a participant observation grid to better evaluate the programme ["*(…) we also created, felt the need to create an observation grid."* (Project coordinator)].

Resistance of Roma children and communities

According to participating professionals, some specific characteristics of the Roma children and communities also posed some challenges to the implementation of the program, namely their **resistance to change and to disclose** ["*(…) a Roma culture... very resistant (...) to change."* (Programme developer); "*When it is for cultural reasons, Roma kids for example do not say why. (...) And they are taught this, right?"* (Programme developer)].

Another element of resistance identified regards the Roma heritage language. However, data from the interviews reveal disparate perspectives regarding this feature of the programme among different informants. On the one hand, Roma heritage language support activities have been identified as a success feature of this intervention by several professionals involved in the programme implementation where this case study took place as well as by the non-Roma parents interviewed. On the other hand, especially in the first years of the programme implementation there was a significant resistance among the Roma communities **towards activities disseminating the Roma heritage language** ["*(…) it can be a problem because Roma children are taught not to pass this on to non-Roma. They do not like it, they do not like it at all that we talk, that we transmit those things. So, they get all embarrassed and then they do not... they feel very uncomfortable ... and they start laughing (…). And our idea was not to unveil things that they do not want to unravel. And... everyone has their culture that must be respected, and if that was not to be said, man, we do not say it."* (Programme developer)]. Since then, many things have changed, and this kind of barrier is not so intense ["*However things have changed very much... very, very much. If in the beginning one did not even know that there was a language, children these days usually do those mini-glossaries, and whatever else, with much less embarrassment*

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than before. Things evolve. And fortunately, thanks to our joint efforts, right? That is why." (Programme developer)]. Nevertheless, nowadays there is still some ambivalence among the Roma communities regarding the disclosure of Roma heritage language ["*I mean, it's good and it's not good either, because this is a secret among the Roma. Do you understand? Some things, ok ... it's funny, it's a joke to say to friends and to say ... many people here, people from here, who grew up with us, they know ...* (but) *many things they do not know. A lot of things we cannot say. Do you understand? (...)* (if) *something happens in our land or other land,* (if) *we are near a person who is not Roma... the* (Roma) *person speaks Romanó to escape from there (…) so he does not understand."* (Parent 2); "*I understand some words of the dialect, and so they are often talking to each other, saying something about me that they do not want to say in Portuguese, and then at a given point they say "she understands" and I "yes, I understand", and so now they do not speak* (in Romanó between them with the aim of saying something that only they can understand)" (P2)].

To overcome these resistances, professionals resorted to **acceptance** and to always **trying to understand the underlying reason** for the problem/challenge ["*(…) if we do not try to find the "why", we cannot manage, because then we start with the confrontation, right? And we cannot figure out why! And it seems senseless to us! And so... There was a special reason for that. So, and this in several areas, several moments. This kind of thing must... We have to know people very well, so they can transmit the right things in their culture that help us to... Well, it's a virtuous circle, so to say."* (Programme developer)].

Barriers related to the staff

Some barriers were related with the professionals responsible for implementing the program. When the programme first started to be implemented, the professionals involved had **limited professional training and experience in the education field** ["*It was not very easy ... None of us had a pedagogical background."* (Programme developer)]. In the site where this case study took place the fact that the professionals have a **different background than the target children** is sometimes felt as a barrier ["*(…) sometimes it is also difficult for us who were not created in these cultural traditions, which are so much specific of them, and some things are not quite cultural. We think so, but they are not. No, particularly because if we talk to other professionals who work with other Roma communities, they make completely different reports, so some things are cultural, and some are not. In our opinion, it is cultural, for this specific community (…)."* (P1)].

Professionals' fatigue and frustration at times has also been identified as a felt challenge, with which professionals cope by empathizing with the child, by reframing the problem situation, and activating their emotional regulations skills ["*(…) it is often inevitable that we get a little bit out of ourselves with a given behaviour, because we are already tired, for a lot of situations, but we must realize that this is how this kid has learned to be, so we have to deconstruct the situation. Is it difficult? Yes, it is really complicated, sometimes I have to take a deep breath ten times."* (P2)].

Barriers related to the parents

Finally, according to the professionals, **establishing a close relationship with the children's parents and helping them acknowledge the importance of education** has also been challenging. A policy response to this has been to make children's school attendance a requisite for parents' social benefits. However, it is also necessary help parents understand the importance

of the school for their children ["*(…) establishing a relationship of closeness with parents (...) we still have a long way to go here because the parents totally devalue the school, many times they are obliged because they are the beneficiaries of the minimum social income of insertion, and we have to deconstruct all this, and we are taking advantage of these activities to show them the importance of the school.*" (P3)].

PERCEIVED IMPACT FOR KEY ACTORS

Perceived outcomes for children/students

Overall, professionals perceive an **improvement of the school social climate** and overall children's well-being ["*(…) as we have been given this time within the school to work on these skills, it has created an increase in well-being here - right? – in quality.*" (Project Coordinator); "*Because then, I see that my son is comfortable in this school. So, I feel like it's ... working ... because everything they do, I do not know ... it's not ... just one activity (…) it's all the areas that ... that this project encompasses. I feel it is working well ... and I see that my son ... that it makes him feel good.*" (Parent 3)]. There is a global perception that both cultural/ethnic groups (i.e., Roma and non-Roma) benefit from the intervention, but Roma children seem to benefit more ["*They all are. (…) minorities always suffer more discrimination, right? And ... and if we look, if we give a quick answer we can find that they - right? - they benefit most, but I think others benefit very much.*" (Project coordinator)].

More specifically, professionals identified three main domains of outcomes for children: increased intercultural knowledge, improved socio-emotional skills, and increased social inclusion of the minority groups:

- **Increased intercultural knowledge.** Several professionals emphasized children's increased knowledge and understanding about interculturality and about each other's culture, focused on what is common, as a way to increase connectedness ["*Thanks to this program, we have been able to increase the level of knowledge about the cultures, their cultures. (...) If we do not understand the other, we are not able to get close. (…) one of the things, of the methodologies we have always used, is always to refer more to the common than the different.*" (Programme developer)]. Children's perspectives expressed within the class project proposed in the Children's Study also illustrate this ["*When our friend D. came from Mexico he ate different foods from ours.*" (Child, Step 1B)].

- **Socio-emotional outcomes.** Most perceived outcomes refer to an observable improvement in children's socio-emotional skills, as demonstrated by:
  - Decrease in cultural / ethnic tension ["*At the moment* (cultural / ethnic tensions) *do not challenge as much.*" (P1)];
  - Improved relationships between children from different cultural groups ["*For the students it is very positive. What I see on the outside is that they already relate with each other, there is no longer as much this distinction between Roma and non-Roma.*" (P3)];
  - Improved conflict management skills ["*Precisely in this management of conflicts between peers because we think that if they manage to put themselves in the role of the other and if they can feel the other then it* (i.e., the conflict) *will diminish. And it actually decreases, since it* (i.e., the program) *began to be included in the weekly activities plan... it has decreased.*" (Project Coordinator); "*Then there are those little details: one child is making*

fun of the other, the other no longer reacts as he previously reacted. He draws attention, asks the adult..., there is this concern, they now think before creating the conflict and I think that the school is (now) *very different in that."* (P2); *"(…) there is no longer that fear of "because he is Roma I have to shut up or I have to listen to an insult", they already seek the help of adults to try to solve the problem here."* (P3)];

- Increased respect and tolerance among children ["*For me, these small changes in behaviour, the fact that they respect their colleague next to them, even though there is still a lot of rivalry between the kids, I believe, and some behaviours are really observable in this school - because it was a school with many conflicts - they have really changed. I believe that the implementation of this programme and other activities within "Plano A E6G" has helped this."* (P2)];

- Increased solidarity among children ["*(…) at the recess they share the afternoon snacks, because they end up realizing that that student does not bring the afternoon snack (…)."* (P3); "*I have forgotten the pen, the pencil, and the sharp edge. Sometimes my colleague lends me."* (Child; Step 1B)].

- **Increased social inclusion.** The increase of children's social inclusion is the most visible outcome of the programme ["*I think it improves, it is what is most visible. (…) I can perceive it in the courtyard context, and, out there, things flow."* (P3); "*A hundred per cent, yes, because if they have to be in a classroom, in group, and work in groups and allow others to work, when they adjust these behaviours… What is inclusion? That's it, right? It is to be able to be in everything that is proposed to them, equally. Therefore, if they participate and allow participation, then..."* (P1)].

- **Increased participation in school** ["*Because there is a devaluation and demotivation towards the school and these activities end up promoting their participation in school a little".* (P3)].

Unintended results (e.g., benefits for children not targeted specifically)

There was a **generalization of participating children's outcomes to the broader school context** ["*What they acquire in the sessions of A Handful of Kids and manage to extend to the other contexts, to our other activities and to our space, or to the playground, or the classroom with the teachers, the employees, I think it is beneficial for all, yes."* (P1)].

In addition, children that were not directly involved in the programme also benefit from this intervention through participating in children's sharing of programme activities with them and **modelling of improved social skills** ["*In this school, in particular, yes, because the number of students is very small and therefore their conviviality outside the classroom, as they are few, they end up playing games always together, and what they bring out here then is passed on to the others."* (P1); "*Because the other kids end up sharing with them, this turns out to be a smaller school and they end up sharing with others "look, I did this, this and this in P1 class", "we learned this and this". The mere fact that the kids leave the sessions and meet the others outside, and started trying to say the word interculturality, so that was really funny. So, I think they end up sharing* (their experience with the other children)*, and the others benefit because, even at the level of conflict situations, the children who participated in the sessions no longer react as the supposedly [usually] did. This is already very good."* (P2); "*I think it is the issue of sharing, they get out there and share the activities."* (P3)].

INNOVATIVE FEATURES AND STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAMME

Regarding the innovative features of this programme, professionals emphasized its **potential to promote interculturality through non-formal education** ["*(…) working in a way... with a basis of non-formal education the issue of interculturality."* (Project coordinator)], the fact that it is **tailored to address this specific type of cultural diversity at this particular development phase** (i.e., primary school Roma and non-Roma children) ["*It has been designed for this target population in this age group in particular."* (P1)], and that it **addresses specific features of the Roma culture** and targets the promotion of Roma children social inclusion, supporting their identity ["*It is the fact that it is a programme really directed towards the Roma ethnicity, which addresses the Roma culture."* (P2)].

LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

According to the professionals responsible for and/or involved in the delivery of this intervention, the process of implementing of programme A Handful of kids in this particular site has raised their awareness about several issues that need to be taken into account and/or addressed in future implementations of this intervention to ensure and increase its success, namely:

- The importance of continuing to stimulate target children's socio-emotional skills in order to effectively improve social relationships among children from different cultural groups and prevent peer conflicts ["*I think we have to bet more and more on their literacy, right? In the literacy of the other, in emotional literacy ... it is fundamental to resolving conflicts."* (Project Coordinator)].
- The need to stimulate families' active involvement in the intervention ["*I think they are* (fundamental to) *success at all stages. Before implementation, here in this conceptual question - right? – which does not exist... because they often live the prejudice, but they do not know... how to name it - right? That's why the family would have an important role here. It would play an important role, I think, by being involved at least in one or two sessions - right? - to also realize what is done - again, not only be the teacher to make the bridge - the family at home can also make the bridge. And it would also be interesting to return these results to the family."* (Project Coordinator); "*(…) it would made perfect sense because no matter how much we talk about these topics here, if not motivated at home the next day they no longer remember, even more being once a week, the distance is a bit long, but it is something that was never addressed but really important.*" (P2); "*Maybe design 2 or 3 sessions that would allow families to work as well, involve more the parents."* (P1)].
- The need to focus on primary intervention/prevention ["*I think we have to work more and more here at the base of the pyramid (...) is to work on the basis of the primary intervention, otherwise we will be in the focus of always solving the problem."* (Project Coordinator)].
- Improve programme evaluation procedures.
- The need to tailor the programme activities to the specificities of participating children to make them meaningful to the target children ["*(…) I come back here to the planning of the sessions, that they must be adapted to the context. I realized with these children that I had to adapt the situations [proposed by the programme] and apply them differently."* (P2)].
- The importance of listening to what children are communicating through inappropriate behaviour ["*I think what we lack is to listen to what they have to tell us. If we like to be heard*

and to be understood, so do they, only they inform us that they are not ok differently. We adults can say it by words, they [do it] through behaviors." (P2)].

- The importance of clarity of rules ["*Then there is the question of having rules."* (P2)].
- To extend the interventions to preschool children ["*To address, from a young age, interculturality, prejudice, discrimination, social exclusion."* (P2); "*Those under 6 years old ... That was something that would be very important, because the prejudice starts very, very early."* (Programme developer).] and to 5th and 6th grades children, making the necessary adaptations ["*(...) the second cycle, but ... the manual is even made for the primary school kids. It has to evolve: the themes, (...)* (the materials) *have to evolve to a public a little more mature."* (Programme developer)].
- To extend the intervention to all primary school children ["*I think we should insert the 1st and 4th grade (children), (…) some children get sad for not participating."* (P3)].
- To include more sophisticated use of ICT and media, to promote children's engagement ["*Implementing a session with ICT (...) is an idea to think about, even because today kids are all computer users, they are all technological. It might be an idea for them to be more focused."* (P2)]
- To articulate the programme with the formal/regular curriculum ["*(…) what I would like very much was that, for example, (…) the teachers themselves could use it to develop their activities in civic education."* (Programme developer); "*(…) this is a subject that in the school should be addressed more (...) if interculturality was approached, I do not know, in the study of the environment, I do not know, maybe have another impact."* (P2)].

SUMMARY OF THE INTERVENTION LOGIC MODEL

In summary, based on the document analysis and analysis of the interviews, the key features of the programme *A Handful of Kids* can be described as following by the intervention logic model (Figure 9.2).

Inputs

What is invested

• The programme *A Handful of Kids* was designed to be implemented in a school classroom context.

• The programme sessions should ideally be implemented by a team of two professionals, preferably with professional training in the field of education and/or social sciences.

• Regarding materials and equipment, the programme activities require simple, not expensive, material resources, such as charcoal and coloured pencils, glue, scenery paper, three specific story books, and a book about the children's rights.

Outputs

Activities; Participation; What is done; Who is targeted

• The programme comprises a set of activities designed to promote a positive intercultural dialog and to reduce prejudice towards minority cultural groups among primary school children, by stimulating their socio-emotional skills and their understanding and reflection about key concepts in the field of interculturality.

• It consists of 10 sessions comprising 21 activities organized in a structured curriculum to be implemented throughout the school year in one-hour weekly sessions.

• The programme specifically aims at improving the school and social inclusion of Portuguese Roma children, but can be tailored to address other minority groups.

Outcomes

Short term

• Children improve their socio-emotional skills, learn to solve conflicts in a more constructive way, to show openness towards people with different cultural backgrounds, and to gain knowledge of the principles of interculturality.

Medium term

• Children improve their socio-emotional skills, learn to solve conflicts in a more constructive way, to show openness towards people with different cultural backgrounds, and to gain knowledge of the principles of interculturality.

Long term

• The overall aim of the programme is to work towards achieving a peaceful intercultural climate within the school and the broader community as well. By progressively decreasing the cultural / ethnic tension between children from different cultural groups (mainly between children from the two conflicting Roma communities), decreasing prejudice, and improving children's socio-emotional skills, it is expected that there is a progressive transmission of these outcomes to future generations of Roma and non-Roma children.
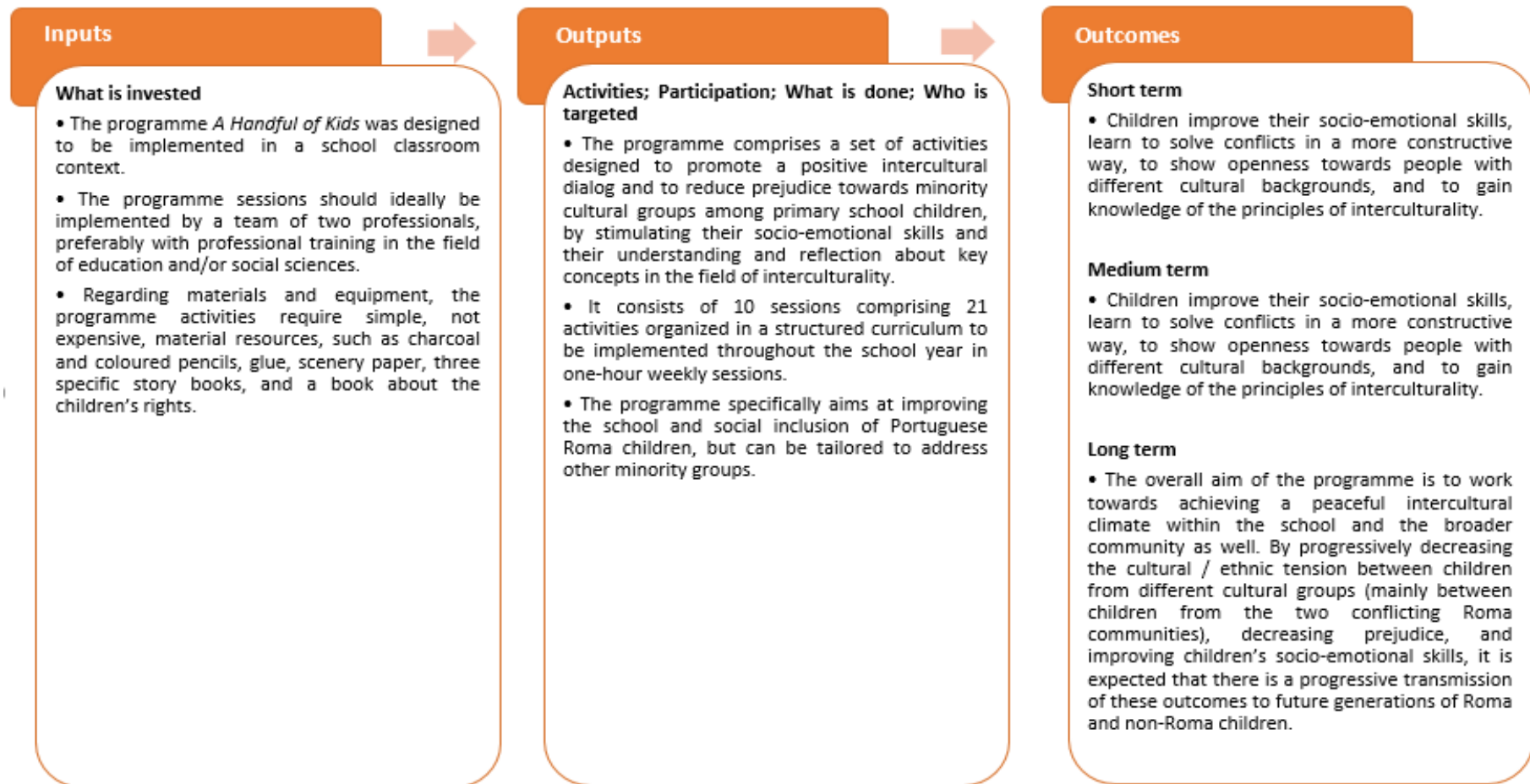
Figure 9.2. Logic Model for 'A Handful of Kids'

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

The programme A Handful of Kids has several relevant characteristics considering the goals of ISOTIS: (1) it is based on the multicultural education framework (Banks, 2015); (2) it is part of a broader social intervention project aiming to ensure that children from minority cultural groups and economically disadvantaged backgrounds experience educational equality; and (3) it focuses on promoting positive contact between Roma and non-Roma children, and on improving children's socio-emotional skills aiming, ultimately, to improve the school social climate.

In addition, several features of the programme contribute to inform the way forward in curriculum, pedagogy and social climate interventions tackling social and educational inequalities:

- It is a multicultural curriculum given that it addresses specific features of the Roma culture aiming to challenge the stigma and marginalization of Roma communities not only within the school context but in the broader community as well;
- The programme effectively promotes a positive intercultural dialogue focusing on recognizing the similarities between different cultural groups and on acknowledging and respecting their specificities.
- By successfully improving children's socio-emotional skills, particularly their social problem-solving skills, the programme has effectively improved the school social climate.

A finding that emerged in case study which is particularly relevant for the development and implementation of the virtual learning intervention focusing on promoting intercultural and plurilingual competence concerns the different perspectives among different informants considering the Roma heritage language support activities. Data from the interviews with professionals and parents highlighted divergence in perspectives. While these activities are considered a facilitator by the professionals and non-Roma parents, there is a clear ambivalence among people from Roma communities regarding the dissemination of the Roma heritage language. According to the professionals, even though children react positively to these activities, at the same time they seem to refrain from using their language in the sessions. Among parents, this ambivalence was expressed by one Roma parent interviewed for this case study who explicitly mentioned both positive and negative perceived consequences of the dissemination of the Roma language. Therefore, it is important that the VLE intervention should take these diverging perspectives into account.

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10.   SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION

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This report aimed to describe and critically discuss the key success features and facilitators of innovative promising interventions, approaches, programs, or projects aiming to reduce social and educational inequalities through curriculum design and implementation, pedagogical practices, and/or school social climate. To this effect, we have conducted and presented seven in-depth case studies of interventions targeting early childhood education and primary school children from immigrant, Roma, and/or low-income background in seven European countries. Each case study also described the obstacles identified by key stakeholders aiming to understand potential solutions that might contribute to improvements and inform transferability.

In the final chapter of this report, we synthesize and discuss findings across the seven case studies, by compiling, conceptuality organizing, and critically discussing success features, facilitating factors, and experienced obstacles, through the lens of the bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). We consider the extent to which selected case studies cater to students' needs and, ultimately, reform schools so that students with diverse or disadvantaged backgrounds experience educational equality (Banks, 2015). We further look at the extent to which the acculturation dimensions of culture maintenance and positive contact (Berry, 2005) are addressed in selected case studies.

We conclude our discussion by considering the implications of our findings for ISOTIS' subsequent tasks and, importantly, by drawing recommendations for educational practice and policy.

KEY SUCCESS FEATURES

Intervention goals provide an initial perspective on the range of ambitions and potential reach of selected interventions, while providing a context for discussing success features, facilitators, and obstacles. Table 10.1 presents the main outcomes targeted through selected case studies, which range from improving individual children's school achievement to changing the school culture to value and/or preserve children's first languages and develop cultural and multilingual awareness and openness. This range of goals illustrates the diversity of selected interventions and the diversity of lessons that may potentially be derived from this analysis.

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As described in the methods chapter, all case studies included an in-depth analysis of the key success features of selected interventions, building on multiples sources and methods of data collection. Table 10.2 presents a classification of these success features, informed by the context levels proposed within the bioecological model (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Across case studies, we identified success features that cover the range of ecological levels of analysis: individual, microsystem (including activity settings, curriculum characteristics, and peer relationships), mesosystem (focusing on connecting school and families and connecting professionals), and exosystem (focusing on the supports available for schools and professionals). We also identified success features focusing on supporting school culture and values, highlighting the nature of the school as a cultural microsystem (Vélez-Agosto, Soto-Crespo, Vizcarrondo-Oppenheimer, Vega-Molina, & García Coll, 2017).

At the **individual level**, success features include attending to children's biological needs ensuring, for example, that low-income children eat and drink prior to tutoring sessions, thus increasing attendance and, importantly, readiness for learning. As proposed by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006), biological factors "impose imperatives regarding the environmental conditions...required for the realization of human potentials" (p. 799). By providing snacks, the intervention taking place in Poland contributed to positive variation in children's biological resources available to engage in learning activities. Note that within participating countries, Poland has the highest prevalence of food insecurity (see Loopstra, Reeves, McKee, & Stuckler, 2016). Despite the lack of knowledge on food insecurity in Europe (Borch & Kjærnes, 2016), available evidence suggests that food insecurity varies across countries, with unemployment and wages linked to food insecurity within countries, and country social protection policies mitigating risks for food insecurity (Loopstra et al., 2016). As social protection policies related to unemployment, housing, sickness, disability, and families reduce the risk of food insecurity (Loopstra et al., 2016), interagency coordination to address families' multiple needs, based on a wide social work and health support network system (see Barnes et al., 2018), is likely necessary to promote food security and ensuring the biological resources children need to engage in learning activities.

Table 10.1. *Outcomes targeted through selected case studies.*

GOALS	ENGLAND	GERMANY	GREECE	ITALY	NETHERLANDS	POLAND	PORTUGAL
Individual academic / cognitive outcomes							
Improving children's achievement						*	
Promote culture-sensitive language development		*	*	*			
Individual socio-emotional outcomes							
Improving children's self-esteem / confidence	*		*	*	*	*	
Improving children's attitudes towards school						*	
Reducing problem behaviour and / or peer conflict					*		*
Supporting children's well-being	*		*				
Supporting children's cultural and ethnic identity		*	*	*			*
Interpersonal outcomes							
Developing social and democratic citizenship skills				*	*		
Developing constructive conflict resolution skills					*		*
Developing children's communication skills	*						*
Developing cultural and multilingual awareness and openness		*	*	*	*		*
Promoting positive contact between minority and majority children			*		*		*
Reducing prejudice and discrimination			*		*		*
Staff outcomes							
Improving teachers' self-efficacy and ability to provide support			*		*	*	
Family-school relationships							
Supporting and creating partnerships with parents		*	*	*	*		
School culture outcomes							
Highlight and utilize linguistic and cultural heterogeneity			*	*			
Valuing and/or preserving children's language of origin		*	*	*			
Promoting social inclusion and school integration of Roma children and communities, through intercultural dialogue							*

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At the **microsystem level**, we identified multiple success factors focusing on the patterns of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by students in the school setting. Most success features involved patterns of **activities** experienced by children that invite or permit sustained engagement, including:

- **Individualization** based on tailored syllabus or learning plans, building on children's progress, that inform progressively more complex activities.
- **Structured sessions** and **clear rules** that allow for the stability and organization in routines and activities needed to foster a sense of security and shape competence.
- **Non-directive activities** that allow children's choice in their mode of participation.
- **Non-judgmental** activity settings where grading is not used, and process is paramount.
- **Prestigious (artistic) activities**, with participation valued within the school community.
- **Experiential learning** activities such as acting-out, role-playing, and role-shifting. Experiential learning should involve children's guided reflection about their experiences, namely regarding multicultural awareness. Importantly, in the Greek intervention these experiential activities include the construction of **identity texts** which acknowledge, value, and support children in developing **positive cultural and ethnic identities** (Cummins & Early, 2011).
- **Focus on play** and children's enjoyment, ensuring positive and meaningful experiences that build on and support children's imagination.
- **Use of equity pedagogies**, such as cooperative learning, that support positive and meaningful contact.
- **Extensive (implicit and explicit) language support**, building on **multilingual activities** that value and give **visibility** to all languages coexisting in the classroom/school, within typical activities and routines. This work can also involve **documenting individual children's language abilities**, including competence in their first language and in other languages coexisting in the classroom.
- **Sensitivity to local context and culture(s)** in selecting contents and modes of delivery.

Such patterns of activities are interrelated with the **social roles** of those who participate in the microsystem. One success feature identified can be considered central to the roles students are assigned or assigned themselves and that is **students' active participation**, through choice and involvement in decision making. Through students' active participation power is given and/or claimed, allowing personal resources and demands to shape intentionally other features of the microsystem. As shown in our case studies, even young children have personal resources that allow them to share personal stories, share information about their country of origin and their first language, chair meetings, become tutors or mediators, etc. Therefore, we may argue for a capability approach to promoting children's wellbeing and agency, balancing protection and participation, as well as freedoms, achievements, and competences (Hart & Brando, 2018). Naturally, this requires a focus on educational processes, going beyond a focus on academic outcomes.

Regarding **interpersonal relations**, one important success feature was the development of **positive relationships** with children, setting the stage for enduring, positive, and reciprocal proximal processes that lay the process foundations for learning. Importantly, engaging the peer microsystem through **peer mediation**, following student training, was also identified as a success feature that fosters progressive competence in conflict resolution and embraces students' roles

in contributing to positive school social climate.

As opportunities for development at the microsystem level derive from participating in positive, balanced, and extended (Garbarino & Abramowitz, 1992) settings, we found success features that tackle negativity and power unbalances in children's experiences while also extending and enriching children's worlds, namely through interactions with diverse peers and professionals. Therefore, we found success features consistent with the conditions needed for regular, progressively more complex, and reciprocal interactions that promote development of competence. In addition, we also found success features that tackle the risks emerging from diversity, building on the valorisation of first languages and the promotion of positive contact, which can be considered the basis for living successfully in two cultures (Berry, 2005).

Success features at the **mesosystem level** include two dimensions (1) connecting professionals and (2) connecting schools and families. Consistent with previous literature (e.g., Ainscow, 2016), systematic **cooperation between professionals**, either within the school and between the school and other services, was identified as a feature that contributed to successful identification of children at risk, to their referral to appropriate services, and to appropriate catering to their needs. Importantly, cooperation between professionals within several case studies highlights the **role of out-of-school programmes and community organizations** in supporting positive changes in early childhood education and primary school practices targeting inclusiveness and belongingness as well as the importance of coordination among services targeting children and families (see Barnes et al., 2018).

At the mesosystem level, however, most success features address the **connections between schools and families**, although multiple levels of family involvement were considered:

- **Communicating with parents**, to convey information regarding school goals and activities and children's experiences. Provision of documentation (namely in the families' first language), frequent parent-teacher conferences, and use of ICT-based bidirectional communication channels have been successfully used to this effect.
- **Creating opportunities for parental involvement** in selected classroom/school activities such as exhibitions and performances.
- **Supporting parent involvement in activities** (e.g., providing child care for siblings; supporting parent second language learning and communication).
- **Positive attitudes toward families**, recognizing the value of parents' perspectives, valuing their competences, and identifying their potential contributions.
- **Mediated intercultural dialogue**, namely through sharing personal stories aiming to promote shared understanding and empathy.
- **Partnerships** with parents/families, ensuring parental participation in decision-making processes to allow for cultural and context-appropriate design and implementation.

Consistent with the notion that opportunities for development of competence at the mesosystem level derive from frequent and high-quality interactions between microsystems (Garbarino & Ganzel, 2000), we found success features targeting further connections and opportunities for meaningful dialogues and, more ambitious still, features focusing on creating partnerships based on shared-power (Epstein, 2011). Importantly, consistent with previous findings (Aguiar, Silva, et al., 2017), success features identified across case studies suggest the existence of various levels

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of consideration of family involvement, highlighting potential venues for further development, namely for interventions currently considering lower-levels of family participation.

At the **exosystem level**, success features reflect an expanded view of the nature of interventions needed to tackle social and educational inequalities in early childhood education and primary school. At this level, we found consistent and systematic efforts to support professionals and schools, namely by mobilizing relevant external resources to strengthen teachers and staff professional competence. Thus, exosystemic intervention characteristics that result in success include:

- Purposeful teacher and staff **selection** and/or **training** procedures to ensure both a good match between practitioner profiles (e.g., skills and interests) and intervention requirements.
- **Allocation of expert consultants** to provide systematic support to school staff and to the school as an organization (by focusing on team development), resulting in an integrated (in-service and onsite), system of professional development. Such resources team around teachers, supporting their role.
- **Effective communication** among stakeholders.
- **Effective institutional networks** (e.g., municipalities, universities, community organizations).

Consistent with the notion that opportunities for development at the exosystem level result from treating significant adults in a way that enhances their behaviour and practices within the microsystem (Garbarino & Ganzel, 2000), we found interventions that focus on connecting, supporting, and training individual professionals and teams involved in implementation and engaging directly with target groups. These success features highlight the role of external services or agencies in supporting professional development and competence and, relatedly, the importance of interagency coordination for supplying such resources. ISOTIS' work on professional development (e.g., Slot, Romijn, & Wysłowska, 2017) and interagency coordination (e.g., Barnes et al., 2018) will further inform policy and practice regarding professional development priorities and effective delivery practices.

Importantly, at the level of **school institutional patterns**, which may be considered the most difficult level to address within school interventions, we identified success features that involve supporting and cultivating school culture and values, embedding inclusiveness and belongingness into the school's blueprint. Based on the selected case studies, we identified the following success features at this level:

- **Strengths-based** curriculum and pedagogical approaches that build on the resources of all stakeholders, including children and families with diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and social class backgrounds. Relatedly, interventions that build on **diversity as a strength** are aligned with inclusive education propositions (UNESCO, 1994).
- **Focus on language support**, giving visibility to children's first language while also ensuring a strong focus on learning the second language (i.e., the language of instruction in host country). Relatedly, we also found examples of systematic mapping of multilingualism in the school, as part of the school linguistic heritage, explicitly acknowledging diversity and ensuring its visibility. This language focus is consistent

with previous evidence on the importance of early sustained language support (OECD, 2015).

- **Curriculum alignment with real-world** democratic experiences as well as societal challenges which results in perceptions of relevance and meaningfulness among stakeholders. Relatedly, intervention goals and processes which are aligned with teacher needs for serving diverse student populations, are more likely to be implemented with fidelity and purpose.
- Structured intervention **curricula which are aligned with the goals of the education system** are more likely to respond to school and staff needs, therefore becoming necessary and meaningful in the school and in the classroom setting.
- **School processes aligned** with the knowledge, skills, and values articulated in the curriculum provide a meaningful context for enacting learning outcomes.
- **Intervention components consistent with the school culture** are more likely to be implemented with fidelity and purpose.
- **Organizational focus on a common theme** which is associated with a **strong identity** of the school (and of the intervention) and with the development of a **shared vision** regarding the schools' mission.
- **Schools' and professionals' commitment to children's (and families) respectful inclusion**, building intercultural bridges and bonds to support inclusiveness, belongingness, and social mobility. Notably, success seems to be associated with schools and professionals viewing themselves as agents of change towards inclusion and social justice (Pantić & Florian, 2015). A wide view of teacher and staff professionalism must, therefore, include dispositions such as beliefs, values, and attitudes as core professional competencies that need to be considered both in initial training, recruitment, and professional development and collaboration processes (for a review see Caena, 2011).
- **Strong community focus**, based on a joint/integrated approach at the school and at the neighbourhood levels provides a common vision and a common language, building a strong basis for meaningful communication, joint problem solving, and promotion of human development.

Importantly, these success features support the notion that schools are *cultural microsystems*, with culture playing a central role in everyday practices and activities (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). It seems necessary that interventions targeting inclusiveness and belongingness become part of the school blueprint, permeating school routines, discourse, and processes, to deliver the expected outcomes. Therefore, it is not incidental that intervention success features identified in these case studies span several grades (from early childhood education to primary and latter grades) and are implemented intensively across days and weeks, ensuring stability across time and continuity across settings.

Taken together, this collection of success features seems to address, to some extent, most dimensions of **multicultural education** (Banks, 2015). Multilingual language support across classroom activities and routines can be considered an example of **content integration**. Importantly, such content integration supports the maintenance and development of the **children's heritage culture** (Berry, 2005), building on the cultural and linguistic resources of children and families, within a strengths-based approach, and transforming the role of teachers

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and other staff into that of brokers or mediators that invite and coordinate contributions from children and families and organize classroom processes to integrate such contents in meaningful ways. Further, examples of cooperative learning within heterogeneous groups illustrate the use of **equity pedagogies** (Banks, 2015), **supporting positive contact** among children from diverse backgrounds. We also found examples of **prejudice reduction activities**, including the construction of multilingual identity texts which integrate culture-specific content and activities promoting positive contact, even though most interventions do not formulate explicit goals related to reducing prejudice and discrimination. Examples of **empowering school cultures** aiming to empower all students through democratic and participatory processes were also identified, although empowering social structures within participating schools seem to be developing. Finally, examples of critical approaches to the **knowledge construction process** were not explicitly identified in the seven case studies described here, likely because of the levels of education targeted (i.e., early childhood and primary education).

Table 10.2 *Classification of key success features of selected case studies*

FEATURES OF SUCCESS	ENGLAND	GERMANY	GREECE	ITALY	NETHERLANDS	POLAND	PORTUGAL
Attending to biological needs							
Availability of snacks and drinks						*	
Microsystem: Patterns of activities							
Individualization						*	*
Structured sessions (repetition/routines that foster a sense of security)	*				*		
Clear rules (regarding behaviour expectations)	*					*	
Non-directive, non-judgmental activities (e.g., no grading)	*						
Prestigious activities	*						
Experiential learning			*	*			*
Focus on play and enjoyment	*	*					*
Cooperative learning			*				
Extensive language support		*	*				
Multilingualism activities		*	*	*			
Mother tongue valorisation and enhancement in school/classroom routines		*	*	*			*
Documenting children's skills in their mother tongue and other languages			*	*			
Making diversity visible		*	*	*			
Making similarities visible				*			
Sensitivity to local context and culture(s)			*				*
Microsystem: Social roles							
Children's participation (e.g., involvement in decision making)	*				*	*	
Microsystem: Interpersonal relationships							
Positive relationships with children	*				*		*
Peer mediation component (based on student training)					*		
Mesosystem: Connecting professionals							
Cooperation between professionals	*		*			*	*

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FEATURES OF SUCCESS	ENGLAND	GERMANY	GREECE	ITALY	NETHERLANDS	POLAND	PORTUGAL
Mesosystem: Connecting schools and families							
Use if ICT for communicating with parents			*	*			
Parental involvement in selected activities	*	*	*	*	*		
Supporting parental involvement (e.g., providing child care for siblings)				*			
Support of second language learning and communication of parents				*			
Recognizing parents' perspectives and competence			*	*			
Sharing of personal stories by parents with the support of a cultural mediator				*			
Intercultural dialogue		*	*	*			*
Partnerships and positive relationships with parents/families			*	*	*		*
Exosystem: Supporting professionals and the school							
Purposeful teacher/staff selection and/or training	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Experts /consultants systematic support of school staff and the school as an organization: Integrated system of professional development		*					
Effective communication among all stakeholders			*	*			
Institutional network (municipality, university, community organizations…)				*	*	*	
School macrosystem: Changing/supporting school culture and values							
Integrated approach at the school and neighbourhood level					*		
Intervention components part of / consistent with the school culture		*		*	*		
Diversity as strength (culture)			*	*			
Systematic mapping of multilingualism (school linguistic heritage)				*			
School processes aligned with curriculum					*		
Alignment with teacher needs for serving a diverse population		*			*		
Structured formal curriculum aligned with compulsory core goals of the educational system					*		
Curriculum alignment with real-world democratic experiences, and societal changes and challenges regarding inclusiveness					*		
Organizational focus on a common theme		*			*		
Strengths-based orientation		*	*	*			

FACILITATORS OF SUCCESS

Table 10.3 presents a categorization of the factors that contribute to the success of selected interventions. Such factors, identified by key stakeholders and researchers participating in the case studies, are closely related to success features, and address the focus of the interventions; operational dimensions related to program design and implementation; staff characteristics, involvement, and commitment; and family involvement. Importantly, a key success feature in one intervention (such as family involvement) may be a facilitator in a different intervention. Arguably, the way forward for some interventions may be to incorporate current facilitators as explicit or intrinsic features of the intervention, thus maximizing their potential positive effects.

According to participant stakeholders, when interventions build on children's imaginations and everyday experiences, support children's identities, or aim to ensure meaningful contact with diverse languages and cultures, the intervention is more likely to be successful. These facilitators seem to share a **focus on individual strengths** (i.e., diversity as resource) and positive exchanges which are likely to be considered meaningful and appropriate within school contexts. Finally, relevance for children with a range of backgrounds was also a program design feature identified as a contributor to success, based on meaningfulness and non-stigmatization.

Regarding procedural or methodological facilitators, as expected, **programme design quality** features such as a clear theoretical background, a strong evidence-based, availability of tools to support implementation and ensure fidelity, and systematic monitoring and evaluation were considered important to ensure the success of the intervention success and to achieve high reputation among stakeholders. Relatedly, the development of a strong identity of the school or the intervention, based on clear goals that are clearly aligned with the school mission and vision was also identified as a facilitator of success. Collaborations between policy-makers, practitioners, and researchers at the onset of the programme design stage are likely to result in programmes that meet these criteria and are to be encouraged and appropriately considered by funding agencies. Importantly, these are features necessary for determining intervention efficacy based on high-quality evidence and, thus, it is warranted that they become intrinsic features of interventions targeting social and educational inequalities across Europe.

Another group of facilitators of success are related to **implementation processes**, namely systematic planning, effective team work ensuring cooperation between professionals within the school, cooperation between internal and external resources allocated to specific interventions, and support from the classroom teacher. The role of leadership (see Ward et al., 2015) was also explicitly mentioned as well as the importance of close cooperation with experts. Onsite consultation by experts (vs. one-on-one expert intervention with children) is an invaluable resource to strengthen everyday practices of staff members, with a multiplier potential across classes and children (Shelden, & Rush, 2010). Within an intervention focusing on activities implemented by external resources, coordination with other ongoing actions was also considered important (Barnes et al., 2018).

Additional conditions for implementation highlighted as facilitators include the use of regular spaces to ensure continuity and promote a sense of security in child participants; small group delivery based on deliberate group composition (e.g., heterogeneous grouping) to foster positive contact and building on collaborative work to promote positive interdependence (see Aguiar,

Silva, et al., 2017); flexibility in order to allow for child and context specific adaptations, while preserving fidelity; ICT-based additional support for schools in rural areas; and sustainability of the intervention, namely regarding the human resources required, in order to ensure its continuity after initial funding and implementation efforts.

Consistent with previous work (see Slot, Hallab, & Romijn, 2017), **professionals' characteristics, involvement, and commitment** were also identified as important facilitators of success. Based on our case studies, ensuring staff social and professional competence, staff continuity, staff profiles that ensure a good fit with interventions demands and needs, the existence of staff from diverse backgrounds, and staff with positive attitudes and multicultural beliefs related to the appreciation of children/families and their strengths contributes to the success of interventions tackling social and education inequalities in school/classroom settings. As previously mentioned, these facilitators support an eclectic view of teachers' and staff core professional competences, extending beyond pedagogical and content knowledge to encompass attitudes, values, and beliefs, as well as interpersonal skills (Caena, 2011; Pantić & Florian, 2015). Based on our case studies, we also point out the merits of a careful recruitment strategy and of the provision of professional development opportunities consistent with the school priorities and culture. Further, as described in the selected case studies, these staff-related requirements are dependent on another important facilitator: a **strong and committed leadership.** As suggested by Ward et al. (2015), school leadership for equity builds on a well-documented and widely accessible and perceptible common vision of the schools' social justice mission, approaching such a mission through critical reflection and transforming dialogue. Importantly, school leadership must ensure that the key principles underlying the school values and culture permeate school discourses, activities, processes, symbols, and spaces in a way that ensures they are consistently reiterated and become clearly perceptible to children, families, and professionals.

Family involvement was identified as a success feature but also as a facilitator of success. Effective communication with families (including through ICT) and, at a higher level, strong and trust-based relationships and partnerships with families were considered important conditions for the success of the selected interventions. Importantly, most interventions, even those with family communication and involvement components, aim to further develop and strengthen this feature, based on current outreach limitations and on the acknowledgement of its role for supporting both child and school outcomes.

Additional success features at the level of the **national macrosystems** (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) can be extract from the case studies. For example, the German case suggests the importance of a **national policy**, with a clear funding strategy to ensure a **widespread system of support**. The Dutch case illustrates the importance of a **national curriculum goal** ('citizenship education') that provides the necessary frame for local bottom-up solutions and/or adaptations. While both these cases provide examples of nation-wide upscaled programs, others illustrate the **key role of municipalities and non-profit or community-based organizations** in supporting the schools' mission, such as Polish and the Portuguese cases.

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Table 10.3. *Classification of facilitators of success of selected case studies.*

FACILITATORS OF SUCCESS	ENGLAND	GERMANY	GREECE	ITALY	NETHERLANDS	POLAND	PORTUGAL
Focus							
Building on children's imaginations or everyday experiences	*						*
Supporting children's cultural and ethnic identity	*		*	*			*
Meaningful contact with diverse languages and cultures		*	*	*			
Design							
Clear theoretical background	*				*		
Strong evidence-base	*				*		
Strong identity of the intervention (clear goals)	*		*		*		
Relevance for children with a range of backgrounds	*			*	*		
Tools supporting implementation and / or ensuring fidelity	*			*	*		
Monitoring and evaluation	*	*		*	*		
Planning							*
Implementation processes							
Team work: Cooperation between professionals			*	*	*	*	*
Joint work by school staff and staff from an outside agency	*						*
Close cooperation with experts / teacher support		*	*	*			
Strong leadership and commitment at all levels of the (school) organization	*	*	*		*		
Support from the classroom teacher						*	*
Articulation with other ongoing actions						*	*
Additional conditions for implementation							
Regular space (continuity)	*						
Small group delivery	*	*					
Flexibility			*	*			*
ICT-based additional support for schools in rural areas		*					
Sustainability		*					

FACILITATORS OF SUCCESS	ENGLAND	GERMANY	GREECE	ITALY	NETHERLANDS	POLAND	PORTUGAL
Staff characteristics, involvement, and commitment							
Staff continuity	*	*	*	*	*		
Staff from diverse backgrounds		*		*	*		
Staff attitudes and multicultural beliefs: Appreciation of children/families and their diverse strengths		*		*			*
Staff social and professional competence that fit intervention requirements		*					*
Family involvement							
Strong and trust-based relationships/partnerships with families		*	*	*	*		*
ICT tools for communicating with families			*				
Effective communication with families			*		*		

OBSTACLES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

Tackling educational and social inequalities through curriculum, pedagogy, and school climate is intensely challenging, despite the extent of the knowledge-based acquired. In the selected interventions, multiple obstacles at various levels were identified by key stakeholders, and solutions tested or under consideration were described and discussed.

Issues related to **funding** were particularly salient, including insufficient funding, untimely funding, and inflexible rules for budget allocation and use. To address such challenges, multiple strategies were used, including seeking additional sources of funding and negotiating additional funding within existing sources. Importantly, in two cases, lack of financial resources was addressed through changes in delivery mode by choosing to provide tutoring in small groups vs. individual tutoring, and by focusing on work processes during daily routines to mitigate the loss of specialized staff to implement heritage language support laboratories. Despite schools' and professionals' commitment to their missions, these obstacles suggest the need for policies ensuring coherent, long-term, and predictable funding strategies for interventions tackling persistent social and educational inequalities.

In the Portuguese case, issues derived from the **presence of children from different grades** in the same classroom / group were addressed through peer tutoring, co-teaching (i.e., allocation of two staff members for implementation of activities), and individualization. Combined or multigrade classrooms are frequently used in less densely populated regions (e.g., rural areas) and require teaching pedagogical approaches that build on the heterogeneity in the classroom as a resource (see Smit, Hyry-Beihammer, & Raggl, 2015).

Children's mobility was also identified as an obstacle to providing successful interventions, based on attrition and, consequently, insufficient dosage. In this case, to maximize the number of children able to benefit from the intervention following the loss of a participant, a waiting list of eligible children was created.

Staff beliefs and attitudes regarding the intervention and/or minority groups involved can also be important obstacles to successful implementation. In the German case study, tensions and reservations related to multiculturalism are tackled through professional development based on expert consultation focusing on team processes. Regarding "Speech Bubbles", negative staff beliefs and attitudes toward the relevance of the drama intervention were addressed by offering "taster" sessions for teachers and by training participating staff to explain procedures. In "A handful of kids", prejudice towards and among Roma communities was addressed through cooperative work and consultation with key community members and through promoting children's reflection regarding conflict resolution. In the Dutch case, visible symbols and daily routines served to reiterate the principles of the Peaceable School, nudging schools' culture and values. Staff diversity was also mentioned as a means to ensure that children and families experienced contact with professional interlocutors with similar backgrounds to support shared understanding and representation. A broad view of staff core professional competences that includes personal dispositions (Caena, 2011) should thus inform pre-service training, professional recruitment strategies, and professional development opportunities.

Mirroring identified facilitators, **staff turnover** was considered an obstacle to implementing successful interventions. Attention to recruitment processes, based on the definition of clear

expectations and the negotiation of provision conditions (based on individual resources) were tested as a possible solution with limited success. Appropriate pay, provision of meaningful onsite professional development opportunities, strong leadership prioritizing positive school social climate might also contribute to staff stability. Other staff related obstacles included **limited training and/or experience** with the target groups/communities and staff **fatigue and frustration**. In the case of the "A handful of kids", such obstacles were addressed through informal communication and cooperation with other professionals more knowledgeable about the community as well as personal efforts to mobilize individual socio-emotional skills. While interpersonal competences and personal dispositions are part of the core teacher professional competences (Caena, 2011), such solutions reflect the use individual strategies to tackle difficulties and may signify insufficient pre-emptive strategies at the intervention design and/or organizational level. Relatedly, in the same intervention, limited organizational support, as demonstrated by **insufficient time allocated for planning**, was addressed through professional commitment (e.g., working overtime). While expected in competent professionals, such solutions suggest structural improvements are warranted. In "Speech Bubbles", when **ineffective school leadership** was an obstacle, finding proactive liaisons was considered a potential solution.

At the design level, and mirroring findings regarding facilitating factors, an initial **mismatch between an existing program and local children and community** characteristics was addressed through adaptations to the local culture, settings, and children's individual characteristics and, importantly, through the recognition of the considerable heterogeneity among minority groups such as Roma communities. Also related to program design, **lack of program evaluation tools** to measure children's outcomes was considered an obstacle and addressed directly through the design of tailored evaluation tools based on observation.

Family/parental disconnection and insufficient involvement was likely one of the most frequent obstacles identified. Based on the experiences reported in the selected case studies, possible strategies to overcome such issues include asking for parents' contributions to school activities, making school goals, needs, and requests explicit and meaningful; ensuring the visibility of pedagogical work, through exhibitions of children and school outputs; and involving parents in activities and celebrations. Additional strategies that seem to go a step further to reach families include establishing family communication and building trust with families as core dimensions of the school culture; implementing an active outreach policy based on parent-to-parent motivation; and cooperation with the neighbourhood branch of the intervention, extending beyond the limits of the school. Policies classifying children's school attendance as a requisite for receiving social benefits were also identified as a strategy for ensuring parental commitment to children's attendance.

Importantly, in the case of "A handful of kids", an unexpected but meaningful obstacle towards one key feature of the intervention was identified: the **ambivalence/discomfort of Roma children, families, and communities regarding activities aiming to give visibility to (and share features of) the Roma language**. Such ambivalence seemed to be rooted in the fact that this intercultural curriculum approach exposed or uncovered a unique resource that allowed Roma to communicate without being understood by non-Roma. Participant stakeholders reflected on the need to build trust and positive relationships to overcome such an obstacle. This important finding raises key questions regarding power dynamics between minority and majority groups and illustrate the need to negotiate, within each community, how multicultural policies may be enacted

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in ways that result in both perceived and actual empowerment. Importantly, it is possible that the Roma language is considered, by some Roma communities, to pertain to the private domain. Such a possibility and the need to consider within-group heterogeneity reinforces the need to negotiate the use of the Roma language within the school curriculum, at the local level.

Even within interventions that focus on multilingualism, **language barriers** become obstacles to communication and, consequently, success. A low-cost strategy used to overcome language barriers was to use other parents as translators and cultural mediators.

Finally, **difficult cooperation with other (semi)professional organizations in the community** was considered an obstacle that limited schools outreach potential and access to important community resources. In "The Peaceable Schools" case, training of parent mediators to go beyond the borders of the school was tested as a potential solution to this issue.

CONCLUSION

Our discussion of the success features, facilitators, and obstacles identified within seven case studies of interventions tackling social and educational inequalities in early childhood education and primary school has important implications. The first implication is that much can be done at all levels of the ecological system that is the school and the school community, and a wide range of options is available for practitioners and policy makers. Indeed, although positive influences and supports are required from more distal levels, most success features are located within activity settings, highlighting the central role of teachers and other practitioners.

Importantly, however, although examples of intervention features could be identified for most dimensions of multicultural education (Banks, 2015), content integration, equity pedagogies, prejudice reduction activities, empowering school cultures, and, especially, critical approaches to the knowledge construction process, do not seem to be consistently at the centre of intervention design nor do they come together often within transformative interventions. Notably, reduction of prejudice and discrimination does not seem to be explicitly addressed as a goal, with visible implications for programme design.

We found great variation within selected interventions suggestion a range of solutions is available to tackle social and educational inequalities. Both "The Peaceable School" and "Language day-care centres" **tackle inequalities at the school level**, based on a clear funding strategy, strong commitment from leadership, and an embedded professional-development component, either building on available resources or allocating specialized resources to provide onsite support to individual professionals and the whole organization. In turn, interventions such as "General and specialized tutoring" and "A handful of kids" tackle inequalities by providing additional support to selected children at risk for social and educational inequalities, based on additional activities, delivered within the school, but designed and implemented by external resources, funded through (often temporary) local projects. These **local targeted interventions** are valuable for schools as they tackle (i.e., compensate for) school limitations in addressing the needs of children at risk of or already experiencing inequalities by mobilizing key community resources. Therefore, external resources can be essential in bringing about desired changes in school practices and social climate towards equity and belongingness. Such external resources can be mobilized through different solutions such as allocating structural funds to schools to acquire external services or giving municipalities a prominent (funding) role in orchestrating partnerships between schools

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SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION

and external organizations. However, the temporary and uncertain nature of the funding schemes available for these local targeted interventions may be considered a vulnerability, highlighting the need for coherent and long-term funding schemes within national or municipal policies that ensure stability in the implementation of interventions targeting social and educational inequalities.

INFORMING FURTHER WORK IN ISOTIS

Subsequent steps within ISOTIS include the development of a virtual learning environment prototype aiming to support school professionals in developing cultural awareness and plurilingual competence in children (and families). Based on lessons learned from the analysis of these seven case studies, we formulate five important implications for future work:

1. The virtual learning environment prototype will benefit from **high-quality program design** features such as relying on a clear theoretical background, systematic monitoring and evaluation (either quantitative or qualitative, building on formative evaluation approaches), etc.
2. Goals, contents, and processes addressed within the virtual learning environment prototype should be clearly **aligned with the school needs and the school culture** to ensure meaningfulness and, consequently, adherence.
3. **Family participation** in the development and use of the virtual learning environment should aim for high levels of involvement, based on bidirectional communication and opportunities for participation in decision-making processes. Multilingual and plurilingual approaches within the virtual learning environment prototype need to build on an intensive dialogue and negotiation with families as key and competent interlocutors and active participants. For example, in the case of families from Roma communities it is important to ensure that the use of **the Roma language is indeed a tool of empowerment** that does not unwillingly step into a private domain.
4. The power of the virtual learning environment to positively influence student and family outcomes will be a function of its **frequent, regular, and increasingly more complex use** by target groups.
5. The **sustainability** of the virtual environment prototype is paramount to its further development and continuity. Ensuring low costs, securing the commitment of school/centre leadership, and building competence in key stakeholders should be at the core of design, development, and implementation efforts.

INFORMING PRACTICE AND POLICYMAKING

Our synthesis and discussion of success features, facilitators, and obstacles and respective solutions is useful for decision makers setting the policy agenda related to inclusiveness and belongingness and for professionals aiming to design, implement, and evaluate interventions tackling social and educational inequalities. Refraining from repetition, we argue for the consideration of an expanded and comprehensive view of the conditions needed to design and implement successful interventions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), going beyond activities, roles, and relationships within classroom settings to include reciprocal family-school relationships; staff selection, training, and continuing supports; as well as embeddedness in an institutional culture (Vélez-Agosto et al., 2017). We further argue that the five dimensions of the multicultural education framework (Banks, 2015) merit greater consideration and integration to ensure school

transformation towards equity. Importantly, we view such dimensions as paths to value heritage cultures and promote positive contact more systematically. Finally, as in previous work (Aguiar, Silva, et al., 2017), findings suggest the key role of high-quality research designs to ensure success in developing and implementing effective interventions.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A: TASK 4.3 MANUAL – INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF INCLUSIVE CURRICULA, EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES, AND SCHOOL SOCIAL CLIMATE

ISOTIS — **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SUPPORT TO TACKLE INEQUALITIES IN SOCIETY**

WP4 | TASK 4.3

Case studies on curriculum, pedagogy, and school climate interventions

MANUAL

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1. Goal

T4.3 aims to conduct **in-depth analyses** of **promising or effective** interventions tackling social and educational inequalities through curriculum, pedagogical practices, and/or school climate in early childhood education and primary school. Our goal is to describe **key features and conditions for success** of promising and/or effective interventions and the conditions that may facilitate their effective implementation in other settings.

Therefore, we ask that you select an intervention from your national inventory (developed within T4.2) and describe its key success ingredients, based on common research methods, described below. If none of the interventions included in your national inventory is ongoing or is occurring in sites unwilling to participate, kindly select one intervention that meets the same eligibility and priority criteria or one education setting that is using strategies or approaches similar to those described in your initial inventory. As **ICT use** and **multilingualism** are key features of some of the case studies, we also aim to derive relevant data for **informing T4.4** design and implementation.

2. Ethical considerations

National teams are asked to ensure that (1) relevant national legal and ethical requirements and (2) the standards described in the ISOTIS data management are fully met during this task. **Informed consent** is required for all participants (i.e., information sources) and anonymity of participants should be guaranteed whenever possible.

The possibility of identifying national cases would be an asset for our reports and should be negotiated at the national level. However, identification of individual participants should be avoided whenever possible, unless upon request and, if possible, following member checks (i.e., informant feedback) of the case study national report. Anonymization of participants in leadership/coordinating roles may be difficult to achieve and should be discussed and addressed in the informed consent forms used by country teams.

3. Data collection approach

Methodologically, the case studies will involve **interviews** with key staff and parents, analyses of **documentation** specifically prepared by **children**, as well as **analyses of documentation and published data**, whenever available. We aim to maximize opportunities for **triangulation** (based on data from multiple sources and data collection approaches) and to use **member checks**, allowing for input by stakeholders involved in the case study/educational setting (e.g., opportunities to comment on the national draft report). If the intervention/program targets both early childhood and primary education, consider recruiting key informants for both age groups, whenever possible and feasible.

▷ **Multiple informants**

→ **Program developers and site coordinators** (at least one informant at each level, as appropriate)

→ **Teachers/other staff implementing the intervention or supporting those who deliver the intervention** (one group interview or at least three individual interviews per type of professional)

→ **Parents** (with various levels of engagement and, if possible, diverse profiles, including parents who speak other languages) (one group interview or at least three individual interviews, per level of engagement and/or type of parent, if possible)

→ **Children** (class project to be proposed by UNIMIB > without identification of children). Consider selecting a typical classroom in the case study site.

▷ **Multiple data collection methods**

→ Interviews or group interviews

→ Focus groups with children and documentation produced by children

→ Document analysis (if available)

▷ **Member checks (i.e., feedback on the case study report by key informants)**

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4. Template for WP4 case study national reports

We recommend that the case study national report does not exceed **15 pages** and is submitted as a **Word document**. It must be written in **English** (including quotes).

Below, you will find a proposal for the report structure and content[1]. Kindly follow this structure but feel free to include additional information or themes, if necessary to appropriately describe the unique features of the intervention considered in your case study. For each theme, kindly include **brief quotes from the interviews conducted or documents** analyzed to support and illustrate the patterns described.

We hope all partners will be able to provide some information for each theme but the elements included under each theme (especially for themes 3, 4 and 5) are illustrative and meant to provide some guidance, anticipating some topics that may emerge. We do not expect all topics to apply to all cases and we also do not provide an exhaustive list of topics.

A. BACKGROUND

> Name of the case study
> Reasons for selection of project / program as promising or effective
> Target group(s)
> Aim(s)
> Number of sites, children, professionals, and organizations involved
> Funding
> Reasons for selection of particular site (and relevant context information)

B. DATA COLLECTION METHODS, PARTICIPANTS, AND ANALYSIS

1. **Semi-structured interviews/focus groups** – how many conducted and with whom (include relevant sociodemographic characteristics of participants: age, level of education, professional status/role, years of experience, etc.)

2. **Children's documentation** and focus groups - include relevant sociodemographic information for children (e.g., age, sex, immigrant/minority status, etc.)

3. **Documentary analysis** – identify types of documents reviewed (e.g., evaluation reports, newspaper articles, journal articles, etc.)

4. **Data analysis** – describe your analysis approach.

C. SUMMARY OF THE INTERVENTION LOGIC MODEL[2]

Provide detailed information on the intervention inputs (i.e., resources), outputs (activities and population targeted), and expected outcomes (short, medium, and long term), as illustrated below.

Inputs	Outputs	Outcomes
• **WHAT IS INVESTED?** • Staff • Money • Time • Materials and equipment • Research base • Partners • Child, family, and community recourses • Etc.	• **ACTIVITIES** • **PARTICIPATION** • What is done? • Who is reached?	• Short term • Medium term • Long term

D. THEMES

Theme 1: History[3]

- Context
- Goals and needs addressed (including types of diversity addressed)
- Theoretical background and research base
- Key assumptions and values

Theme 2: Key activities

- Type, structure, and content of activities (with special attention to activities designed to create a positive intercultural climate and those aiming to reduce prejudice, whenever applicable)
- Professionals responsible for implementation
- Location and timing (frequency, duration)
- Participants (grouping structure and criteria)
- Family involvement activities

Theme 2: Features of success

- Success defined in terms of process
- Success defined in terms of outcomes
- Unique features and strengths of the intervention

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[2] If already available, the logic model may probably precede the Themes section, to provide context. If designed by the country team, based on the information collected, consider including it after the Themes section, as a summary of the key features of the program/intervention.
[3] We are interested in the overall history of the intervention and in the history of the intervention within the site selected for the case study.

Theme 3: Facilitators: Factors that contribute to success

- Clear theoretical background and /or strong evidence-base
- Clarity of purpose
- Strong commitment at various levels
- Strong leadership/management
- Strong personal relationships among staff and/or between partners
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities
- Frequent and effective communication
- Staff with the same background as target children/families
- Extensive language support
- Training/professional development opportunities
- Teacher/staff support and/or effective team work
- Stable pedagogical staff
- Strengths-based approach (child, family, and community resources)
- Meaningful activities
- Sensitivity to the local context and culture
- Strong partnerships with families and/or the community
- Strong involvement of families in activities
- Intercultural dialogue
- Appropriate materials and equipment
- Sophisticated use of ICT and media
- Comprehensive needs assessment
- Monitoring and/or evaluation procedures

Theme 4: Barriers <u>and</u> how to overcome them

- Cultural / ethnic tensions
- Limited funding and organizational support
- Frequent changes
- Resistance to change
- Ineffective leadership
- Difficult relationship with the community/families
- Staff beliefs and attitudes
- Staff turnover
- Limited professional training and experience

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Theme 5. Perceived impact for key actors

- Perceived outcomes for children/students
  – Involvement
  – Academic/cognitive outcomes
  – Socio-emotional outcomes
  – Sense of belonging
- Perceived outcomes for professionals
  – Training
  – Connectedness
  – Commitment
- Perceived outcomes for families and communities
  – Trust
  – Involvement
  – Connectedness
- Unintended results (e.g., benefits for children not targeted specifically)

Theme 6: Innovative features of the project / program

Theme 7: Lessons learned and future directions

Theme 8: Country specific themes

E. CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

– What is special about this intervention/case study?
– How does this case study inform the way forward in curriculum, pedagogy, and/or social climate interventions tackling social and education inequalities?
– How does this case study inform Task 4.4 (VLE intervention)?
– How is this case study relevant within ISOTIS? How generally inclusive is this case, considering how does it address diverse types of inequalities (e.g., based on race, gender, colour, disability, institutionalization, etc.)?

F. RESOURCES

– Links to relevant websites and documents (in English, whenever possible).

5. Sample semi-structured interviews[4]

A. INTERVIEW WITH PROGRAM DEVELOPERS

- Thank-you for willingness to participate
- Introduction of the interviewer
- Brief introduction to ISOTIS and WP4
- Motivation for conducting the interview
- Invitation to share his/her points of view in detail
- Informed consent procedures (e.g., audio-recording, anonymity, use of data, voluntary nature of participation)
- Request brief presentation of the interviewee (role within the intervention/site), professional background and experience)

Topic/Theme	Sample interview questions
History	• When and why was this project / program developed? • What needs does the project / program address? • What were the expectations for this project / program? • How was it developed? • How would you describe the project / program core assumptions and values? • To what extent was project / program development informed by family and community strengths and resources? • What types of diversity, tensions, and inequalities does the project / program address? • Why do schools/classrooms choose to implement this project / program?

Activities	• What does the program look like?
	   • What are the activities involved?
	   • What are the key strategies used?
	   • Who is responsible for implementation?
	   • Where do the activities occur?
	   • When and for how long?
	   • Who participates and how are participants organized and supported?
	• What is the role of families in the project /program?

Features of success	• When are you most happy with the program / project? What does success look like in this program / project? • What are the unique features and strengths of this program / project? • What works best in this program / project?

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[4] Country teams are free to add additional topics and/or questions or to adapt the questions proposed to the specificities of their case study. In some cases, similar questions are proposed in order to help interviewers explore the topic in different ways, if needed.

	• What are the innovative features of the program / project?
Facilitators	• Which factors or conditions contribute to the project / program success? • What is needed for the program / project to be successful? • To what extent is the use of ICT a key to the project success? • To what extent is language support[5] a key to the project success? • To what extent are family and community strengths and resources a key to the project success?
Barriers and solutions	• What problems and challenges has the project / program faced? • How has the project / program faced and solved these problems/challenges? • What did and did not work? What lessons were learned that can be shared? • To what extent have cultural or ethnic tensions posed a challenge for the project / program? • How has the project / program faced such challenges?
Perceived impact	• What are the results of the project / program for those involved? • To what extent does the project / program enhance overall inclusiveness in preschool / school settings? • Which children benefit the most? • Have you identified any unexpected benefits for groups of children that were not targeted specifically? Which project / program features may have resulted in such unintended benefits?
Lessons learned and future directions	• What is the future of the project / program? • How would you like to move forward?

- Allow for concluding remarks or the possibility of adding valuable information not discussed or sufficiently covered.
- Thank-you.

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[5] L1 and L2.

B. INTERVIEW WITH SITE COORDINATORS

- Thank-you for willingness to participate
- Introduction of the interviewer
- Brief introduction to ISOTIS and WP4
- Motivation for conducting the interview
- Invitation to share his/her points of view in detail
- Informed consent procedures (e.g., audio-recording, anonymity, use of data, voluntary nature of participation)
- Request brief presentation of the interviewee (role within the intervention/site), professional background and experience)

Topic/Theme	Sample interview questions
History	• Why did this school / preschool choose to implement this project / program? • What needs does the project / program address? • What were the expectations for this project / program? • How does this project / program fit with the overall inclusiveness goals and strategies of this school / preschool? • What types of diversity, tensions, and inequalities does the project / program address? • Are there additional projects / programs / strategies that the school / preschool is developing / implementing to support inclusiveness? • To what extent is project / program implementation in this school / preschool informed by family and community strengths and resources?

Activities	• What does the program look like?
	  • What are the activities involved?
	  • What are the key strategies used?
	  • Who is responsible for implementation?
	  • Where do the activities occur?
	  • When and for how long?
	  • Who participates and how are participants organized and supported?
	• What is the role of families in the project /program?

Features of success	• When are you most happy with the program / project? What does success look like in this program / project? • What are the unique features and strengths of this program / project? • What works best in this program / project? • What are the innovative features of the program / project?

Facilitators	• Which factors or conditions contribute to the project / program success? • What is needed for the program / project to be successful? • To what extent is the use of ICT a key to the project success? • To what extent is language support a key to the project success? • To what extent are family and community strengths and resources a key to the project success?
Barriers and solutions	• What problems and challenges have you faced in implementing this project / program? • What solutions were tested? • What did and did not work? What lessons were learned that can be shared? • To what extent have cultural or ethnic tensions posed a challenge for the implementation of the project / program? • How has the school / preschool faced such challenges?
Perceived impact	• What are the results of the project / program for those involved? • To what extent does the project / program enhance overall inclusiveness in this preschool / school? • Which children benefit the most? • Have you identified any unexpected benefits for groups of children that were not targeted specifically? Which project / program features may have resulted in such unintended benefits?
Lessons learned and future directions	• What is the future of the project / program in this school/preschool? • How would you like to move forward?

- Allow for concluding remarks or the possibility of adding valuable information not discussed or sufficiently covered.
- Thank-you.

C. INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONALS

- Thank-you for willingness to participate
- Introduction of the interviewer
- Brief introduction to ISOTIS and WP4
- Motivation for conducting the interview
- Invitation to share his/her points of view in detail
- Informed consent procedures (e.g., audio-recording, anonymity, use of data, voluntary nature of participation)
- Request brief presentation of the interviewee (role within the intervention/site), professional background and experience)

Topic/Theme	Sample interview questions
History	• Why did this (pre)school choose to implement this project / program? • What needs does the project / program address? • What were the expectations for this project / program? • How does this project / program fit with the overall inclusiveness goals and strategies of this school / preschool? • Are there additional projects / programs / strategies that the school / preschool is developing / implementing to support inclusiveness? • What types of diversity, tensions, and inequalities does the project / program address?
Activities	• What does the program look like? • What is your role in the program? • What activities and strategies do you use? • How are you supported in using these activities and strategies? • What is the role of families in the project /program?
Features of success	• When are you most happy with the program / project? • What are the unique features and strengths of this program / project? • What works best in this program / project? • What are the innovative features of the program / project?

Facilitators	• Which factors or conditions contribute to the project / program success? • What is needed for the program / project to be successful? • What do you need for effectively participating in this program / project? • To what extent is the use of ICT a key to the project success? • To what extent is language support a key to the project success? • To what extent are family and community strengths and resources a key to the project success?
Barriers and solutions	• What problems and challenges have you faced in implementing this project / program? • What solutions were tested? • What did and did not work? What lessons were learned that can be shared? • To what extent have cultural or ethnic tensions posed a challenge in implementing the project / program? • How were these challenges faced?
Perceived impact	• What are the results of the project / program for those involved? • To what extent does the project / program enhance overall inclusiveness in this preschool / school? • Which children benefit the most? • Have you identified any unexpected benefits for groups of children that were not targeted specifically? Which project / program features may have resulted in such unintended benefits?
Lessons learned and future directions	• What is the future of the project / program in this (pre)school? • How would you like the project / program to move forward?

- Allow for concluding remarks or the possibility of adding valuable information not discussed or sufficiently covered.
- Thank-you.

D. INTERVIEW WITH PARENTS[6]

- Thank-you for willingness to participate
- Introduction of the interviewer
- Brief introduction to ISOTIS and WP4
- Motivation for conducting the interview
- Invitation to share his/her points of view in detail
- Informed consent procedures (e.g., audio-recording, anonymity, use of data, voluntary nature of participation)
- Request brief presentation of the interviewee (e.g., age, education, occupation, marital status, number and age of children, immigrant or ethnic minority status)

Topic/Theme	Sample interview questions
History	• How did you hear about this project / program? • What were your expectations for this project / program? • What needs does this project / program address for you and your child/children?
Activities	• What does the program look like? • How are you involved? What do you do? With whom? Where? When? • How is/are your child/children involved? What do they do? With whom? Where? When? • What experiences does your child/children describe when talking about this project / program? • Are there other projects / programs / initiatives that this school / preschool offers to help your child/children and/or you and your family? • Beyond this project / program, to what extent are you asked to become involved in school / preschool and contribute to school initiatives?
Features of success	• What do you like the most about this program / project? • What works best in this program / project? • What do you like most about this school / preschool in general?
Facilitators	• What helps the program / project work? • What is needed for the program / project to work well? • What do you and your family need for participating in this program / project with success? • What does/do your child/children need to participate in this program with success? • How do you feel about the way technology is used in this project?

[6] Interviewers must do all they can to establish trust and allow parents to feel safe in sharing their thoughts, needs, and feelings.

	• What languages do you and your child/children use? How you feel with the support/inclusion of the language(s) of your origin (L1) in the program? • Overall, how do you feel about the way your child's/children's language development is supported in the project? • How do you feel about your participation in the project?
Barriers and solutions	• What problems has/have your child/children faced in this project / program? • What problems have you or your family faced in this project? • How did you face these problems? What did you do? • What did and did not work? • What problems has/have your child/children faced in this school / preschool? • What problems have you or your family faced in this school / preschool? • How did you face these problems? What did you do? • What did and did not work?
Perceived impact	• How do you feel about the results of the project / program for you and your child/children? • How has the project helped you and your child/children?
Lessons learned and future directions	• What would you change about this project? • What would you like other (pre)schools to learn from this project? • Would you recommend this project / program to other children and families? Why?

- Allow for concluding remarks or the possibility of adding valuable information not discussed or sufficiently covered.
- Thank-you.

6. Sample sociodemographic questionnaires[7]

A. SAMPLE SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Date: ___/___/_____

Before we begin our interview/group discussion, we would like to ask you to share with us some information about yourself and your professional experience.

1. Sex: ☐ Female ☐ Male

2. Age:_____

3. Level of education: _____

4. Field of specialization:_____

5. Years of professional experience: _____

6. Years in this school / preschool: _____

7. Years of experience with this project / program:_____

8. Current occupation: _____

9. Role within the school / preschool?_____

10. Role within the project / program? _____

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[7] These sample sociodemographic questionnaires are included for your guidance and may be adapted as appropriate/needed.

ANNEXES

B. SAMPLE SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

Date: ___/___/_____

Before we begin our interview, we would like to ask you to share with us some information about yourself and your family.

11. Sex: ☐ Female ☐ Male

12. How old are you? _____

13. What is your nationality/nationalities? _____

14. Where were you born? _____

15. Since what age do you live in [country]? _____ And in [region]? _____

16. What language(s) do you speak at home? _____

17. What is your marital status? _____

18. What is your level of education? _____

19. What is your occupation? _____

20. How many children do you have? _____ How old are they? _____

21. How many of your children attend this school / preschool? _____

22. How many of your children are involved in [project / program]?_____

C. CHILD / GROUP CARACTERISTICS

Partners are asked to collect sufficient information on children / groups participating as informants in the national case study. This should be done in accordance to national guidelines. A draft example of a Descriptive Table to be included in the **final D4.3 (i.e., the synthesis report of the 7 case studies)** is presented below for your guidance to illustrate the type of information that should be reported for each group of children in country reports.

Case/Country	Type of classroom[8]	Children's age [M(SD)]	Sex (% boys)	% children born in other countries	% children with host country nationality	% children with dual nationality	% children that speak other languages at home	% of Roma children	% of children with an IEP
England									
Germany									
Greece									
Italy									
Netherlands									
Poland									
Portugal									

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[8] Preschool or Primary school (including grade).

7. Children's study

Giulia Pastori, Valentina Pagani, Sophie Sarcinelli

A. RESEARCH AIM AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The children study within WP4 |TASK 4.3 aims at allowing children of the selected sites to express their perspective about:

a.   if and how their school acknowledges and values diversity;
b.   what elements they consider as quality indicators of school inclusiveness.

Children's voice not only will contribute to triangulation of the data collected from multiple informants; but will also be a 'litmus test' for assessing the effectiveness of the interventions tackling social and educational inequalities in their school context.

The theoretical framework of inclusion we draw upon - inspired by and going beyond the classification of multiculturalism forms in the educational settings proposed by Rosenthal and Levy (2010) - conceptualizes inclusion as a 4-step process:

1.   **Inclusion as acknowledging differences**: a precondition for promoting inclusion is recognizing and drawing attention to social and cultural differences;
2.   **Inclusion as valuing differences:** diversity should not only be recognized, but also appreciated as a value (Salamanca Statement, UNESCO, 1994);
3.   **Inclusion as acceptance:** only when differences are recognized and valued, all forms of social and cultural diversity can be accepted;
4.   **Inclusion as well-being:** the recognition, appreciation, valorisation, and acceptance of diversity are key preconditions for promoting well-being. In fact, inclusion and well-being are two concepts closely linked. The concept of wellbeing relates to the opportunity to feel that 'one's perceptions and experiences do matter' (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2007:45). Wellbeing 'requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society. It is enhanced by conditions that include supportive personal relationships [and] strong and inclusive communities' (Newton, 2007:1). Hence, wellbeing can be considered the goal to aspire to in order to foster inclusion.

B. METHODOLOGICAL PREMISES

The choice to involve children as key informants builds on the recognition that children are:

- **active citizens** who have to right to express their viewpoint on all the questions affecting their life;
- **competent and reliable informants** of their own experience, who are able to contribute with valuable ideas. Their own perspectives are essential to understand their lives from their unique viewpoints (Cook-Sather, 2002; O'Keane, 2008);
- **research participants and partners** that can actively and meaningfully engage in the research process as an opportunity to experience citizenship, agency, and awareness.

The value of involving children as research participants is even greater for the ISOTIS project considering that very few studies have encompassed young children's perspectives and meanings of inclusion (Nutbrown & Clough, 2009).

C. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES

In order to recognize children's many languages, we propose to adopt a **multimethod approach**, using many ways of listening and enabling diverse opportunity of expression (Moskal & Tyrrell, 2014). The methodology will combine a "socially and historically situated methodology" (Sarcinelli, 2015:9) – that takes into account the social identity of informants, the specific objectives of the research, the social construction of childhood, and the status of children in a given context – with a flexible yet common method necessary for a cross-cultural study.
We propose a similar methodological approach for the two age groups selected (3-6 and 9-11). However, methods, languages, and tools are adapted according to different developmental stages and to the two different school cultures.

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES PROPOSED				
Key questions	**3-6 years**		**9-10 years**	
	Steps & Duration	Activities	Steps & Duration	Activities
a. Does the school acknowledge and value diversity? How? b. According to children, what are quality indicators of school inclusiveness?	**Step 1A** 1h	Trigger: Letter from a researcher + focus group/circle time	**Step 1A** 1h30	Trigger: Letter from a researcher + focus group
			Step 1B 1h/1h30	Small group activity
	Step 2 2h	Drawings + verbalization	**Step 2A** 5h	Photo tour + audio-tagline
			Step 2B 1h	Adding comments to the booklet
	Step 3 2h	Researcher's restitution + discussions	**Step 3** 2h	Researcher's restitution + discussions

NB. In case local constrains (school's organization, teachers' attitudes towards the research, lack of resources) do not allow for running all the activities, you may consider implementing just Part A of the first step. Step 2 is a central one and we would recommend not to shorten or even cut it; step 3 is a data return time very important from a methodological and ethical point of view; you may consider making it shorter but not to skip it.

Step 1A: LETTER AND FOCUS-GROUP/CIRCLE-TIME (3-6 & 9-11)

      Duration: 1h/1h30

      Where: in the classroom

      How: plenary (entire class)

A *letter from a researcher of another country* will be used as trigger to engage children in reflecting on and discussing (through focus group/circle time discussions that will be audio-recorded) their school experience in terms of inclusion, wellbeing, and acknowledging/respecting differences. The letter enables to activate children both at cognitive (their opinions and representations on inclusion at school) and socio-emotional level (their experience of inclusion at school).

Two different versions of the letter will be provided by UNIMIB (3-5, 9-11). An exemplar letter for older children is reported below. The letter is divided in sections/themes, and some possible questions you can ask children on each section during STEP 1A and 1B are provided. The letter has been intentionally designed with many sections addressing different themes. The country teams do not need to use the entire letter, but can customize its version of the letter. Each country will adapt the content by selecting only the sections most relevant to their own context. The goal of customization is to adjust to different target groups/issues while preserving the cross-country comparability. In Appendix A, you will find a template to indicate your proposals to customize the letter. The version for younger children will be shorter; will use a simpler, age-appropriate language; and will adapt themes and questions to match children's developmental stage.

EXEMPLAR LETTER FOR 9-11 YEAR OLD CHILDREN
How to introduce the letter to children

The researcher will explain to children (using a child-friendly, age-appropriate language) that he/she is working at an international project, called ISOTIS, and is interested to know what students across Europe think about their schools.

The researcher will tell children that he/she has received a letter from one of his/her [Italian] colleague, reporting some thoughts of the [Italian] pupils her/his colleague has met about their school experience in [Italy] and some questions and curiosity [Italian] pupils have about their school.

Themes addressed /Sections	Text of the letter	Possible questions to ask to stimulate the debate
Presentation of the research	Hi! My name is [Valentina] and I live in [Milano]. You might have heard of it, there has been Expo a couple of years ago: many people from all over the world came and visited it! I'm writing to you because I'm a researcher at the University, the school for adults. What am I searching for, you may ask? Well, I am doing a research about what children across Europe think about their schools. I went to a school in [Casalpusterlengo] in [Italy] and met class 5^C and their two teachers. They told me many interesting things about their school. I know that my collegue [NAME OF THE RESEARCHER] will come to your class and I am very curious about your school!	*[Valentina] wrote she is really curious about your school.* - What do you think she could find interesting/special about your school? - Do you think that your school would be similar to the one in [Italy] she had visited?
Social relationship	Let me tell you something about the class I met. In class 5^C there are 25 10-11ys old pupils since, a couple of months ago, they got a new child, Fatima, who arrived from Morocco. To welcome her, the other pupils of the class had prepared a big poster and then they had introduced themselves by telling her about their hobbies. Mohamed had helped out by translating in Arabic to help Fatima understand. She really appreciated this warm welcoming. Fatima told me that she didn't know if she would like her new school. She was afraid to be different from all the other children and that they would not have room for a new friend.	- What do you think about what Italian pupils did to welcome Fatima? - When new pupils arrive in your classroom, how are they welcomed?
Language and communication	She was also worried because she didn't know a word of Italian. She hoped to learn it quickly to play with her new classmates, but, at the same time, she feared to forget Arabic while learning Italian. Well, that was not at all the case. In fact, as pupils told me, a very nice thing happened during this school year. Teacher Heba held a workshop to teach them a bit of Arabic. The children said that they learnt some strange letters. They told me: "if you see them, you wouldn't guess that those are letters!" They found them so difficult and often ask for help from their	- Do you speak different languages in your school? - Do you think that learning [YOUR COUNTRY LANGUAGE] would be difficult for a child from another country?

	teachers! Even Mohamed, who speaks Arabic, didn't know how to write them! The cool thing is that they learnt also some Arabic words. During my visit, they started greeting each other in Arabic. One said "Salam aleikum" and the other answered "Aleikum salam"! Fatima and Mohamed told them to stop, but at the same time, they laughed a lot.	- What do you think about Heba's workshop? - Do similar projects happen in your school?
Identity (facilitators at three levels: 1) peers; 2) teachers; 3) school organization)	There were also difficult moments in class. At some point, a group of boys started making fun of Mohamed because he didn't eat *spaghetti alla carbonara*, a pasta dish which contains pork. So, Heba asked Mohamed to explain why he doesn't eat pork. Fatima and Mohamed made a presentation about Islam and food. Heba invited the religion teacher to attend the class. The pupils explained the celebration of the end of Ramadan fast and the special food you get. Since this year Ramadan fast ends more or less at the end of the school year, the pupils decided to ask Fatima and Mohamed's families to bring some of their dishes to the party of the end of the year. However, the school director said it is not possible because, according to Italian legislation, it is forbidden to have food who has been cooked outside.	- Are there different cultural traditions in your classroom? - How these different cultures get along together? - Have difficult moments between children from different cultures ever happened in your classroom? What has happened? How have you overcome them?
Learning difficulties	Children told me that in their classroom, along with the teachers, they also have an educator, Davide, who assists students with learning difficulties. Usually, educators take the children they take care of outside of the class to help them doing homework. However, since the class was studying vegetal realm in Science and it was quite boring, Davide had a great idea to spice things up. He created a vegetable garden and each student helped doing what they could do better: someone searched on line when to plant each vegetable; a small group designed the garden plan and wrote the vegetable tags. Fatima was in charge of the planting: she was really good at using the spade since in Morocco she used to plants vegetables with her grand-mother. She loved this activity and was very proud!	- Do you have any special activities in your school other than standard lessons? - Do you have any special activities in your school to support your learning?
Social inequalities (if relevant for your context)	Other nice things happened in that class. Mauro, another boy of the class, wasn't attending the swimming activity because he didn't have a bathing suit. So, Angelica, whose father works in Decathlon, managed to get one for free. Mauro has so much fun in the swimming pool!	[PARTNERS WITH LOW-INCOME AS TARGET GROUP WILL INCLUDE SOME QUESTIONS THEY CONSIDER RELEVANT ON THIS TOPIC]
School	Do you also do some exciting activities at school? And what about your school? How many pupils are in your class? Do you have lots of teachers and educators as we have? Is it really cool? I promised the pupils of 5^C to go back to tell them how school works in other countries.	*[Valentina] was curious about your school.* - What are the nicest things about your school? - What do you like most?

	I could try to persuade their teacher to organize a school-trip to [NAME OF THE CITY] to visit your school! As you might have understood, I have plenty of questions! Bye bye from Italy! Valentina	- Do you do any interesting projects/activities? - Are there any things that you do not appreciate?

HOW TO REALIZE THE FOCUS-GROUP/CIRCLE-TIME

The researchers will read the letter section by section. After reading the first section, they will stop and ask some questions to elicit children's spontaneous ideas on that passage of the letter and stimulate debate among children through a focus group (9-11) or a circle-time (3-5). When the researchers think that a topic has been exhausted and further discussion would yield little new information, they will move on reading the next section of the letter. The focus group/circle-time will be audio recorded.

TIPS/SUGGESTIONS TO CONDUCT CIRCLE-TIME/FOCUS GROUP WITH CHILDREN:

The methodological framework of circle-time/focus group with children we draw upon is inspired by and goes beyond the approaches of Gibson (2012), Morgan et al. (2002), and Pastori (2017). We suggest the following:

➤ Make sure you shared and explained to the teachers the rules of the focus group and ask them not to take part of the discussion, especially to avoid comments on what the children said (e.g., to be merely a co-facilitator). You might also give a role to the teacher (e.g., taking notes on the blackboard, etc.)

➤ Take care in setting the scene: small arrangements can contribute to create a welcoming, relaxed climate, supporting children's participation and mutual exchanges (for instance, very quiet/shy children sitting opposite the facilitator can enable them to receive more encouraging eye contact without seeming to be singled out), and dampening the implicit structures and assumptions that the school environment entails (for instance, sitting in a circle, even on the floor);

➤ The researcher (in his/her role of facilitator) must be the first to respect the rules and adopt a neutral and listening stance about the themes addressed to support and guarantee a non-evaluative climate;

➤ Inform children you are interested in their thoughts, recognizing them as 'experts' of their school;

➤ Use child-friendly, age-appropriate language;

➤ Use first names to encourage children to see adults in a more informal relationship than with teachers and to reduce the typical hierarchical adult–child relationship (especially in primary school) they are used to;

➤ Establish some ground rules at the beginning of the session to both set boundaries and clarify expectations:
  o everyone gets a chance to speak;
  o speak one at a time (to enforce this role more effectively, researchers can tell children that only who holds a specific object – a ball, a seashell, a wand… - can speak);
  o there are not right or wrong answers;
  o each opinion is equally valuable and must be respected and must not be judged (no teasing or making fun);
  o even different, opposite opinions can coexist since the aim is not to reach a consensus but to give voice to every perspective.

➤ Make sure that the rules of the game are respected without adopting an authoritarian stance;

➤ The researcher must avoid interfering too much in the discussion. His/her participation are meant to:
  a) Help the discussion go on if the silence lasts for too long or if the discussion comes to a deadlock (by using reflective statements, summary statements of different viewpoints on the same subject and/or asking if anyone has a different opinion);
  b) Help if the discussion goes off-topic for too long (going back to the subject);

c) Help pupils who have difficulties in expressing themselves or organizing their thoughts (by synthetizing their statement saying something like "If I understood you correctly, you meant that…") or pupils who feel very insecure (by acknowledgment of feelings, praise for engagement generously, giving a positive feedback to their statement or eliciting the opinion of children who are not speaking).

Step 1B: **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY** (9-11)

Duration: 1h/1h30

Where: in the classroom (the small groups should be distanced enough to work separately)

How: small group, then plenary session

After completing Step 1A, children will be involved in a second activity using the letter as a stimulus/trigger. Researchers will divide the class in small groups (4-6 children each). Each group will receive a copy of the letter with a specific passage underlined (if possible, a different passage for each group) and a set of questions related to the theme addressed. They will be asked to focus on and discuss about that passage and the related questions.

The groups will have 30min/1h to discuss and to prepare a poster who sums up their thoughts and answers the questions. Afterwards, each group will present their poster to the class and the researchers.

An exemplar of the sections of the letter to be used for this activity and of possible sets of questions is reported below.

EXEMPLAR LETTER FOR 9-11 YEAR OLD CHILDREN		
How to introduce the letter to children		
Themes addressed /Sections	**Text of the letter**	**Possible questions to ask to stimulate the debate**
Social relationship	Let me tell you something about the class I met. In class 5^C there are 25 10-11ys old pupils since, a couple of months ago, they got a new child, Fatima, who arrived from Morocco. To welcome her, the other pupils of the class had prepared a big poster and then they had introduced themselves telling her about their hobbies. Mohamed had helped out by translating in Arabic to help Fatima understand. She really appreciated this warm welcoming. Fatima told me that she didn't know if she would like her new school. She was afraid to be different from all the other children and that they would not have room for a new friend.	- What do you think about Fatima's fears? - If a child from another country (like Fatima) arrived in your school, do you think he/she would feel different from anyone else? - If a child from another country (like Fatima) arrived in your school, do you

		think he/she would find new friends in your class?
Language and communication	She was also worried because she didn't know a word of Italian. She hoped to learn it quickly to play with her new classmates, but, at the same time, she feared to forget Arabic while learning Italian. Well, that was not at all the case. In fact, as pupils told me, a very nice thing happened during this school year. Teacher Heba held a workshop to teach them a bit of Arabic. The children said that they learnt some strange letters. They told me: "if you see them, you wouldn't guess that those are letters!" They found them so difficult and often ask for help from their teachers! Even Mohamed, who speaks Arabic, didn't know how to write them! The cool thing is that they learnt also some Arabic words. During my visit, they started greeting each other in Arabic. One said "Salam aleikum" and the other answered "Aleikum salam"! Fatima and Mohamed told them to stop, but at the same time, they laughed a lot.	*Fatima was afraid that learning Italian she would forget Arabic.* - What do you think about her fear? - If a child from another country (like Fatima) arrived in your school, do you think he/she would fear to lose his language?
Identity (peer relationships as facilitator)	There were also difficult moments in class. At some point, a group of boys started making fun of Mohamed because he didn't eat *spaghetti alla carbonara*, a pasta dish which contains pork.	*A group of boys made fun of Mohamed because he didn't eat spaghetti alla carbonara.* - How do you think he felt in this occasion? - Has a similar episode ever happened in your classroom?
Identity (teachers as facilitators)	So, Heba asked Mohamed to explain why he doesn't eat pork. Fatima and Mohamed made a presentation about Islam and food. Heba invited the religion teacher to attend the class. The pupils explained the celebration of the end of Ramadan fast and the special food you get.	- How have adults in your school support you in overcoming difficult moments between different cultures? - In your school, are there occasions to learn about different cultural traditions?
Identity (school organization as facilitator)	Since this year Ramadan fast ends more or less at the end of the school year, the pupils decided to ask Fatima and Mohamed's families to bring some of their dishes to the party of the end of the year. However, the school director said it is not possible because, according to Italian legislation, it is forbidden to have food who has been cooked outside.	*Fatima and Mohamed's proposal was rejected due to school policy.* - Does the policy of your school interfere with the valorisation of different cultures/diversity?

		- In your school, are there occasions to learn about different cultural traditions?
Learning difficulties	Children told me that in their classroom, along with the teachers, they also have an educator, Davide, who assists students with learning difficulties. Usually, educators take the children they take care of outside of the class to help them doing homework. However, since the class was studying vegetal realm in Science and it was quite boring, Davide had a great idea to spice things up. He created a vegetable garden and each student helped doing what they could do better: someone searched on line when to plant each vegetable; a small group designed the garden plan and wrote the vegetable tags. Fatima was in charge of the planting: she was really good at using the spade since every summer she goes to Morocco and he plants vegetables with her grand-mother. She loved this activity and was very proud!	[PARTNERS WITH LOW-INCOME AS TARGET GROUP WILL INCLUDE SOME QUESTIONS THEY CONSIDER RELEVANT ON THIS TOPIC]
Social inequalities (if relevant for your context)	Other nice things happened in that class. Mauro, another boy of the class, wasn't attending the swimming activity because he didn't have a bathing suit. So, Angelica, whose father works in Decathlon, managed to get one for free. Mauro has so much fun in the swimming pool!	[PARTNERS WITH LOW-INCOME AS TARGET GROUP WILL INCLUDE SOME QUESTIONS THEY CONSIDER RELEVANT ON THIS TOPIC]

TIPS/SUGGESTIONS TO CONDUCT THIS ACTIVITY:
- ➢ It would be useful to ask teachers for advice about how to form the groups. Teachers, knowing their class (social relationships, individual skills, origins, and social background of each student...), may provide useful suggestions to create balanced groups that could work effectively and making each child feel comfortable;
- ➢ It would be useful to ask teachers to refrain from supervising groups' work from close up in order to make children feel freer to express their ideas and feelings;
- ➢ Since older children will have opportunity to reflect on the letter in two different moments, we suggest reserving the most emotional-engaging questions for the small group activities.

Step 2: DRAWINGS (3-5) **OR PHOTOTOUR** (9-11)

➔ **DRAWINGS** (3-5)

    <u>Duration</u>: 2 hours

    <u>Where:</u> in the classroom

    <u>How:</u> whole class/individual activity

Children will receive yellow sunshines and grey clouds cut from cardboard (Pimlott-Wilson, 2012) and will be asked to draw:

- On the suns (max) five elements (spaces, activities, people…) that make them feel good and that they think can give [Valentina] an understanding of what are the nicest things about their school in their opinion;
- On the clouds (max) five elements (spaces, activities, people…) that do not make them feel good in their school contexts and that they think [Valentina] should be aware of.

Children individually will be invited to explain (to the researcher) what they have chosen to draw and why. Drawings and the subsequent verbalizations (that will be audio-recorded) will contribute to elicit children's perspectives *on* and experiences *in* their preschool/school.

➔ **PHOTOTOUR**[9] (9-11)

Step 2A

    <u>Duration</u>: 5 hours (class divided in two groups, 2h30 for each group even in two different school days)

    <u>Where:</u> around the school

    <u>How:</u> individually (recommended) or in pairs/small groups

The second activity will involve children conducting a phototour of their school (Clark, 2017). The class will be divided into two groups and, while one group conducts the activity, the other one will stay in the classroom working with the teacher.

Pupils (individually or in pairs/small groups) will be asked to:

- take (max) five pictures of elements (spaces, activities, objects …) that make them feel good in their school context and that they think can give [Valentina] an understanding of what are the nicest things of their school in their opinions;
- take (max) five elements (spaces, activities, …) that do not make them feel good in their school context and that they think [Valentina] should be aware of.

_____

[9] In case the photo-tour is too challenging, you may consider applying a methodology similar to the younger group, by asking children to **write** about elements that make them feel good and about elements that do not make them feel good. However, please consider that taking pictures can be very exciting and involving for children.

Once they have finished, children will be asked to record an audio-tagline for each picture, explaining what they have chosen to shoot and why.

TIPS/SUGGESTIONS:
To manage this task properly, we suggest the following:
➢ involve at least 2 researchers: (at least) one researcher will assist children during their tour of the school. The other one will download children's pictures on his/her laptop and, with one child at time, will record the audio-taglines;
➢ have at least 4 tablets/smartphones;
➢ consider that ideal would be to let each child do this activity individually. Realizing the phototour in pairs/small groups will be more time-saving; however, it will also entails the risk of mutual influence and of not giving voice to the perspectives of some children – likely the most fragile, excluded ones;
➢ explain children how to avoid capturing the people in the pictures (in case of privacy issues):
  o example 1: if a child wants to take a picture of the school gym because it is the place that make him really feel free but, when his phototour takes place, there is another class doing gymnastics; he can take a picture of a ball, of the door of the gym, of an element that represents the gym, etc… in the audio-taglines he will be able to explain the actual meaning of this picture and why he has selected it;
  o example 2: if a child wants to take a picture of her best friend because this is what makes the school nice to her; she can take a picture of their holding hand, his/her shoes, his/her backpacks, etc… in the audio-taglines she will be able to explain the actual meaning of this picture and why she has selected it.

Step 2B
    Duration: 1 h
    Where: in the classroom
    How: whole class/individual activity
After completing Step 2A, the researchers will return each child a small booklet with his/her pictures accompanied by the transcribed captions. Each child will have the opportunity to add comments, ideas, and further explain why they chose to take those pictures.

Step 3: RESTITUTION OF THE RESULTS OF STEP 2 (3-5 / 9-11)

> Duration: 1 hour

> Where: in the classroom

> How: whole class/group activity

After analysing the contents that emerged in Step 2 (drawings, 3-6; audio-taglines + comments on the booklet, 9-11), guaranteeing anonymity to individual child's opinions, the researchers will present (even organizing pictures/drawings and, for older children, comments on billboards):

- the main/most recurring themes elicited;
- the most and less appreciated features of the school;
- topics/subjects considered as positive by certain pupils and negative by others.

Children will be invited to comment on the results. The follow up discussion after the researcher's presentations will be the opportunity to gather further data and to give a data return/restitution to children (and teachers). Children's comments will be audio-recorded.

TIPS/SUGGESTIONS:

➢ To foster a fruitful collaboration with schools/teachers, we suggest that researchers ensure them that they will be provided with (a copy of) all the materials gathered. This way, they can have something back related to the research (as symbolic 'remuneration' of all the time they have given to the researchers) and they can continue to work further on those issues with their class.

D. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Informed consent: National teams are asked to (1) ask for permission/authorization from school principals and teachers; (2) ask for **written consent** from parents/carers and, if possible, provide them with an oral explanation about the research, allowing for time to answer their questions; (3) provide an oral explanation about the research in an age appropriate language with question-time followed by **written informed consent from children** (adapted with visual images). We will provide a model of a written informed consent for children.

Privacy and confidentiality: National teams have to (1) explain the reasons for the anonymising of research participants to children; (2) Encourage children to choose their own pseudonyms; (3) ensure respect for the legislation of your own country on research ethics (e.g., ask children to avoid taking pictures of people if this is not in line with your country's legislation on privacy).

Age adaptation: During the entire research process, national teams should use an age appropriate language and approach (methods, languages, and tools adapted to two school settings).

Child protection: Researchers should make sure to avoid asking direct questions that might disturb children and should interrupt any situation or conversation that might trouble him/her.

E. TEXT TRANSCRIPTION

Country teams are asked to transcribe children's verbalizations and discussions during circle times, focus groups, one-to-one conversations.

F. DATA ANALYSIS

According to Joseph Tobin's methodological approach (Tobin & Hsueh, 2007), images are intended to be a stimulus and not data. For this reason, no coding of images recording is planned. Data to be used are children's verbalizations, written comments, and discussions. A coding system will be provided with the possibility to add sub-codes. The analysis of children's perspectives will be realized based on indicators and on the theoretical framework presented above. A national analysis will be followed by a cross-country analysis. Comparison will be made. To do so, we will provide some general items, but each country will have the possibility to develop sub-items.

G. APPENDIX A: CUSTOMIZATION TEMPLATE

Please, use the following template to indicate which sections (if any) you will omit and to propose your adaptations.

CUSTOMIZATION TEMPLATE		
Themes addressed /Sections	Text of the letter	Customize the letter to adapt it to your context
Presentation of the research	Hi! My name is [Valentina] and I live in [Milano]. You might have heard of it, there has been Expo a couple of years ago: many people from all over the world came and visited it! I'm writing to you because I'm a researcher at the University, the school for adults. What am I searching for, you may ask? Well, I am doing a research about what children across Europe think about their schools. I went to a school in [Casalpusterlengo] in [Italy] and met class 5^C and their two teachers. They told me many interesting things about their school. I know that my collegue [NAME OF THE RESEARCHER] will come to your class and I am very curious about your school!	
Social relationship	Let me tell you something about the class I met. In class 5^C there are 25 10-11ys old pupils since, a couple of months ago, they got a new child, Fatima, who arrived from Morocco. To welcome her, the other pupils of the class had prepared a big poster and then they had introduced themselves telling her about their hobbies. Mohamed had helped out by translating in Arabic to help Fatima understand. She really appreciated this warm welcoming. Fatima told me that she didn't know if she would like her new school. She was afraid to be different from all the other children and that they would not have room for a new friend.	
Language and communication	She was also worried because she didn't know a word of Italian. She hoped to learn it quickly to play with her new classmates, but, at the same time, she feared to forget Arabic while learning Italian. Well, that was not at all the case. In fact, as pupils told me, a very nice thing happened during this school year. Teacher Heba held a workshop to teach them a bit of Arabic. The children said that they learnt some strange letters. They told me: "if you see them, you wouldn't guess that those are letters!" They found them so difficult and often ask for help from their teachers! Even Mohamed, who speaks Arabic, didn't know how to write them! The cool thing	

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	is that they learnt also some Arabic words. During my visit, they started greeting each other in Arabic. One said "Salam aleikum" and the other answered "Aleikum salam"! Fatima and Mohamed told them to stop, but at the same time, they laughed a lot.	
Identity (facilitators at three levels: 1) peers; 2) teachers; 3) school organization)	There were also difficult moments in class. At some point, a group of boys started making fun of Mohamed because he didn't eat *spaghetti alla carbonara*, a pasta dish which contains pork. So, Heba asked Mohamed to explain why he doesn't eat pork. Fatima and Mohamed made a presentation about Islam and food. Heba invited the religion teacher to attend the class. The pupils explained the celebration of the end of Ramadan fast and the special food you get. Since this year Ramadan fast ends more or less at the end of the school year, the pupils decided to ask Fatima and Mohamed's families to bring some of their dishes to the party of the end of the year. However, the school director said it is not possible because, according to Italian legislation, it is forbidden to have food who has been cooked outside.	
Learning difficulties	Children told me that in their classroom, along with the teachers, they also have an educator, Davide, who assists students with learning difficulties. Usually, educators take the children they take care of outside of the class to help them doing homework. However, since the class was studying vegetal realm in Science and it was quite boring, Davide had a great idea to spice things up. He created a vegetable garden and each student helped doing what they could do better: someone searched on line when to plant each vegetable; a small group designed the garden plan and wrote the vegetable tags. Fatima was in charge of the planting: she was really good at using the spade since every summer she goes to Morocco and he plants vegetables with her grand-mother. She loved this activity and was very proud!	
Social inequalities (if relevant for your context)	Other nice things happened in that class. Mauro, another boy of the class, wasn't attending the swimming activity because he didn't have a bathing suit. So, Angelica, whose father works in Decathlon, managed to get one for free. Mauro has so much fun in the swimming pool!	
School	Do you also do some exciting activity at school? And what about your school? How many pupils are you? Do you have lots of teachers and educators as we have? Is it really cool? I promised the pupils of 5^C to go back to tell them how school works in other countries. I	

| | could try to persuade their teacher to organize a school-trip to [NAME OF THE CITY] to visit your school!

As you might have understood, I have plenty of questions!

Bye bye from Italy!

Valentina | |

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WEBSITES

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/egms/docs/2008/Paris-report.pdf

8. Timeline

- **March 1ˢᵗ**: ISCTE-IUL proposes data collection manual (e.g., semi-structured interviews) and initial guidelines for the country report

- **March 7ᵗʰ**: Discussion of data collection manual (**Utrecht Meeting**)

- **April 11ᵗʰ**: Finalizing data collection manual

- **April-May**: Data collection

- **June-July**: Writing country report (submit for feedback July 15ᵗʰ)

- **September 15ᵗʰ**: Submit final national reports (up to 15 pages, including Methods, Results, Brief discussion)

- **October 30ᵗʰ**: First draft of integrative D4.3

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We will be happy to assist you.