

Research Report

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EDINA, Education of International Newly Arrived Migrant pupils

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Abstract: The goals of the project were (1) to reduce disparities proposing adequate strategies and activities to help teachers, schools and municipalities to support newly arrived migrant pupils, (2) to increase the efficiency of investment in the education of this group and, and (3) to strengthen training paths of school staff fostering the collaboration between schools, municipalities, and researchers nationally and internationally. An interdisciplinary and international team developed a curriculum to be used by teachers, schools, municipalities and policy makers for pre- and in-service teacher education. The curriculum is available online at <https://edinaplatform.eu>

Résumé: Les objectifs du projet étaient (1) de réduire les disparités en proposant des stratégies et des activités adéquates pour aider les enseignants, les écoles et les municipalités à soutenir les élèves migrants nouvellement arrivés; (2) d'accroître l'efficacité de l'investissement dans l'éducation de ce groupe; (3) de renforcer les parcours de formation du personnel scolaire en encourageant la collaboration entre les écoles, les municipalités et les chercheurs aux niveaux nationaux et internationaux. Une équipe interdisciplinaire et internationale a mis au point un programme destiné aux enseignants, aux écoles, aux municipalités et aux décideurs pour la formation initiale et continue des enseignants. Le programme est disponible en ligne à l'adresse <https://edinaplatform.eu>

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1 Background of the project

‘Despite the possibilities and challenges [...], amazingly few connections have been made in the sociolinguistic, educational and political domain. [...] Contacts between researchers and policy makers working with different types of minority groups are still scarce.’ (Extra & Gorter, 2001: 3–4, Extra, 2013). Our project EDINA aimed to do exactly that: bringing together policy makers, schools and researchers to develop an international multimodular programme for newly arrived migrant pupils. We used our interdisciplinary, international collaboration and political networks to develop and disseminate this multimodular programme to provide support to municipalities, schools and teachers in the reception and the integration into the school system of newly arrived pupils. The objective was to substantially improve knowledge, skills and cooperation possibilities so that they could support newly arrived pupils to meet their full educational and social potential.

Improving the support for newly arrived pupils is essential given that the number of pupils migrating to Europe has recently raised dramatically within the last decade. For instance, according to Eurostat, the number of unaccompanied asylum seekers in Europe who were minors has increased from 10.610 in 2010 to 95 208 in 2015¹. In addition, there is a growing inflow of minor children from Middle and Eastern Europe in the three countries involved including newcomers with very vulnerable profiles like Roma. For instance, in the Netherlands, 32.800 pupils from Poland, Bulgaria and Romania were officially registered in 2013. In Flanders (Belgium), the number of newcomer students in primary and secondary education has doubled between 2006 and 2012. These pupils face unique challenges regarding their integration related to experiences of exile, lack of knowledge of the host country’s language, isolation and separation from relatives resulting in limited social networks, discontinuity of schooling and, frequently, health problems due to trauma. The high inflow of newcomers means that schools are experiencing a constant rise in the numbers of pupils who do not master the school language. This situation creates a heavy challenge for the European school system and in the long run for the European labor market. Against this background, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of successful reception at their new schools to reach full integration.

The three Member States (Finland, The Netherlands and Belgium) provide education for minors regardless of their residential status. In each country, the

1 <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/child-migrants>

pupils' education begins with intensive training of the language of instruction in order for the pupils to learn the school language until they have reached a level that allows them to catch up with the curriculum. In Finland and in The Netherlands, at primary school level, and when we started the project, children were schooled separately during one academic year before integrating the regular classroom. In Belgium, however, the primary school level was semi-inclusive and pupils were integrated into regular classes much faster. Thus, criteria regarding the reception, admittance, duration of special schooling, transition to regular or to secondary school, constitution of learning environments, instructional background of teachers, methods and didactics greatly vary between the cities.

Reports have shown that on average newly arrived pupils are at a higher risk for early school leaving. The nature of the learning difficulties observed in newly arrived pupils depends on several factors including socioeconomic background, literacy level of the parents, exposure to the language used at school, instructional materials, didactic competences of the teachers and incentives of the institutional environment. As reported in the literature, educators may not possess the appropriate developmental expectations. As a result, they are inclined to underestimate the true potential of their newcomer students while over-identifying possible impairments. These factors hamper the optimal educational academic development of the pupils.

There is thus a high need to identify the most successful strategies to improve the education of newly arrived pupils, to make this knowledge available in order to empower schools across Europe with the ultimate goal to improve the prospects of this vulnerable group of pupils. Our project developed a multi-modular programme including a training module to develop specific teachers' competencies; a training module to promote active differentiation within the classroom; a toolset and resource base to optimize the reception, observation and transition processes into the regular classroom. This programme is to be used by teachers, schools, policymakers and municipalities and freely available online. The currently available practices and resources were gathered (nationally and internationally), described in country reports and evaluated in the three partner sites. It is essential to ensure that newly arrived students (aged 6–18) may access the level of education that corresponds to their cognitive possibilities in order to reduce early school leaving and to support excellent schooling attainment.

Of course, EDINA was not the first programme to address the needs of newly arrived migrants and was complementary to various national and international initiatives: first of all, it reacted to the conclusions drawn by the Sirius project by applying their recommendations making “schools matter for all” and particularly

for the newly arrived students' population. It also added a practical implementation into schools and classrooms and dissemination into the three school systems. Second, the project was also complementary to the Transition and Multilingualism project that was carried out from 2009 to 2013. Despite its success, this project was limited by a lack of sustainability plan. By focusing on the newly arrived population and by including schools, school boards and municipalities as partners, the EDINA project ensured the implementation and the long-term impact of the prior project. Third, in The Netherlands, we had been commissioned by an important city to evaluate the system of education for newly arrived students at primary school level (Le Pichon-Vorstman & Baauw, 2013–2015). Within this context, with the four main cities of the country, we organized a meeting to discuss the current state-of-the-art where preliminary results of the study mentioned above were presented, the main conclusion being a lack of common didactic and pedagogic views for this population between and within the Dutch cities. The EDINA project reacted thus also to this conclusion by introducing a common programme including a training curriculum, a toolset and resource base that aimed to facilitate the cooperation between schools, cities and countries regarding the education of newcomer students.

In Finland, schools had developed a great expertise in individualized learning paths. The EDINA project anticipated to benefit from this knowledge. Furthermore, Finland was already at the time working on a new master programme for teachers and wished to include the results of EDINA to this master.

For Flanders, the intellectual outputs of the EDINA project were in line with the conclusions and recommendations of the report by the Flemish Advisory Board on Education (VLOR) on the education for newcomer students in Flanders in January 2013. In Belgium, the Centre for Diversity and Learning of the University of Ghent was coordinating a research project, commissioned by the Flemish government, evaluating the education for newly arrived students in primary and secondary education. The project started in September 2014 and the results have been made available in 2016. Since the Centre for Diversity and Learning was involved in both projects – the evaluation of the education for newcomers in Flanders and the EDINA project – links was made between the two projects and thus both projects became mutually reinforcing.

2 Partners in the project

The consortium consisted of nine institutions from three countries carefully composed to assure that all necessary skills, expertise and competences exist in the partnership. The municipal boards were responsible for the local policy

around the fields of education and reception of newly arrived pupils. The departments of Education (in The Netherlands and Flanders) and Welfare (Belgium) wished to develop a proactive and sustainable policy towards a successful integration of newly arrived pupils into the school systems. They brought their expertise in policy and their political network to support the implementation of the deliverables in a broader context than their own city. They each brought in one university with expertise in the field of multilingualism, pedagogy and intercultural education. The universities were responsible for the research activities that were divided according to the expertise and interests of the consortium members. Each municipality introduced at least two schools with expertise in inclusion of newly arrived pupils. They developed hand in hand with the researchers, implemented and evaluated the deliverables, and their dissemination during the project duration.

In the Netherlands, the policy on the field of newly arrived pupils' education had not been adapted for more than eight years. The national inspectorate of education had expressed their deep concern about this situation. Given the emergency, Venhar Sariaslan from the municipality of Rotterdam and Emmanuelle Le Pichon- Vorstman, from Utrecht University, started this consortium with Ghent, both cities being confronted with a rising influx of similar groups. Together, they decided to include Helsinki. In Rotterdam and Ghent, school boards had an autonomous position regarding the primary process of the education. Therefore, their participation was crucial. Expertise-sharing and knowledge exchange about including newly arrived students in education was one of the main issues in primary and secondary education. Therefore, school boards in Ghent and Rotterdam became partners in the project. During the meeting in Rotterdam, we established together with the schools and school boards a list of priorities that determined the choice of the deliverables for EDINA.

3 Objectives of the project

The first objective of the project was to reduce disparities. Reports have shown that on average Newly Arrived Migrant pupils had a higher risk for truancy and leaving school early without a diploma compared to the rest of the student population.

The second objective was to increase the efficiency of public expenditure. The EDINA consortium involved the three cities of Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Ghent (Belgium) and Helsinki (Finland). Political representatives used the consortium to improve and strengthen the support of newly arrived pupils in their

city and country. The municipalities used the reports to disseminate the findings in their political network. These reports allowed the politicians to understand the challenges of newly arrived education better and to give more room to it in their agendas.

The third objective was to strengthen education and training paths of educators and youth workers. Our consortium had been initiated because of the challenges reported by the schools regarding the inclusion of newly arrived students in the educational system. From these practitioners, there was and still is a strong need to improve the circumstances in which children are integrated and to provide the teachers with strategies in order to support them in receiving and educating them adequately.

4 How was it realized?

1. We first built an international partnership in newly arrived education and reinforced national interdisciplinary partnerships of stakeholders in the field, building strong networks of experts at all levels: school, schoolboard, city, and national levels.

The goal of these groups was to stimulate professional network and community building between teachers and schools within and between the partner cities working with newly arrived migrant students. Given the extreme mobility and heterogeneity of the population, we all strongly believed that transnational collaboration in the education of the pupils was needed to agree upon a common multimodular programme. With the political forces of the municipalities, we aimed to reach the local, national and European political levels. We established a cooperation plan among the partners involving different levels:

- A Municipal Steering Committee which consisted of members of the partner cities (politicians or their representatives) and representatives of the school boards. The aim was to create political commitment to implement the deliverables after the project completion.
- A Transnational content level consisting of the partners and meeting twice a year.
- At local level, we developed National Project Groups. These groups involved experts in education, training institutes and other stakeholders not connected with one of the participating institutions (for instance, in The Netherlands, the Ministry of education, the inspectorate, the municipalities and different school boards). After each meeting of the partners, a national project group

meeting was held in each country involved to discuss the results and their implementation.

2. The second step was to develop tools, in order to train and empower our expert schools.

When we started the project, the educators wished to strengthen their practice and the municipalities wished to support and strengthen the whole system around the education of newly arrived students. Therefore, we decided to train the educators and to support the municipalities in providing them with precise information and knowledge about the needs to provide optimal education. We developed three main modules. Each research partner was responsible for one module, but all partners were involved in the development, implementation, evaluation and dissemination of each of them. Together, the three modules form a multimodular programme, involving a teacher training, a toolset and a resource base.

- Module 1: Teachers' intercultural competence.
- Module 2: Differentiation in the classroom.
- Module 3: Transitions to regular classroom.

The school boards and municipalities chose to strengthen the intercultural competence of the teachers and school stakeholders as well as their capacities to apply a pedagogy of differentiation in their schools and classrooms because they were convinced that educators are a key factor for the successful school attainment of pupils. The module about transitions has been developed to enhance the awareness and knowledge related to the mobility of the population. When transitioning to the mainstream classroom, the students do not yet master the school language. By providing a toolset and resource base for them and the principals, schools can improve the transition to the regular classroom against benchmarks. For instance, we included knowledge about individual linguistic preconditions and development processes, pupils' language achievements, background knowledge, interests and abilities, pupils' language and cultural biographies and of their academic background, what is the effect of the inclusion of the home and minority languages in the school and why it should include written texts. We included information about monitoring and evaluating results of the factual language development using portfolio and other techniques to keep track of the progress and we provided examples of good practice, guidance and training to develop skills essential for integrating home languages across the curriculum. The ultimate goal is to ensure that newly arrived students may access the level of education that corresponds to their cognitive possibilities in order to reduce early

school leaving and to support excellent schooling attainment. The currently available practices and resources were gathered (nationally and internationally), described and evaluated in the three partner sites.

5 Results of the project

The Country Reports described the educational situation of newcomer students in the three countries involved in the project. These situations set the goals of the project.

5.1 Mobility of the pupils

Results of the country reports showed that in the three countries, the newly arrived population was hypermobile from 1–2 times a year in Finland to 5–7 times in The Netherlands. These frequent movements of one place to the other and the absence of a sustainable educative strategy highly hampered the continuity of the education. Therefore, our goals were to reduce the mobility, and to organize the follow-up education of the students in a way that reduces the disruption of the educational trajectory.

5.2 Duration of the reception class

Countries differed with respect to the duration of the duration of the reception classroom. In Finland, duration of the reception classroom is 1 year maximally, and the schools are working through faster integration into regular education. In The Netherlands, the students spend 1 to 2 years in a reception classroom. Also, criteria on the reception and transition of newcomers vary per school. In some schools the division is by age, in others by the level of Dutch proficiency. In Flanders, they spend 1 to 2 years in reception classrooms in primary education and 1 year in secondary education. Given that the literature points at clear advantages of early transition to mainstream classrooms, EDINA encouraged faster integration into the regular classroom, and a support based on age division.

5.3 Constitution of learning environments

In Finland, primary and secondary education provide extra support and flexible programs for newcomer students in mainstream classrooms or additional reception programs in separate classrooms. Home-school cooperation is emphasized, instruction in Finnish/Swedish as an L2 is provided. Instruction in the L1s is possible but extra-curricular. In the Netherlands, primary and secondary education provide additional reception programs in separate classrooms with individual working plan and learning pathway. In August 2018, there was still no education in the first languages of the students. However, more and more schools take into account the cultural background of the student in the educational programs they offer. In Flanders, primary education provides extra support and flexible or additional reception programs in separate classrooms. Instruction in the first languages of the student is possible but extra-curricular. In secondary education, they are included in reception classrooms with individual work plan and learning pathway. EDINA provided differentiation tools, allowing for flexibility in the education, taking biographical backgrounds of the students into account.

5.4 Instructional background of teachers

There were important differences between the three countries regarding the educational background of teachers. In Finland, multiculturalism and societal participation were some of the core values of the teacher education. Also, there was a strong connection between schools and the University of Helsinki, which organized punctual trainings. In Flanders and The Netherlands and at the moment of the research, there were no particular requirements for reception classroom teachers. In the Netherlands, punctual trainings were organized, but the quality of those trainings varied. In Flanders, teachers also received punctual training. Therefore, one of the goals of EDINA was to reinforce the interdisciplinary cooperation, peer feedback and instruction of teachers based on social justice.

5.5 Financial support

We soon discovered that the Finnish government supported the student financially during 6 years. In The Netherlands and at the beginning of the project, this support was reduced to 1 years in primary education and 2 years in secondary education, assigned to every school with a minimum of 4 newly arrived students.

In Flanders, teaching periods were added in primary education and teacher hours in secondary education. In addition, a possible allowance per student per school with a minimum of 4 to 6 newly arrived students was allotted. The goal of EDINA was to provide policy makers with insights into the best practices regarding financial support of migrant education.

EDINA was in these three years one of the projects that aimed to help the teachers to develop the needed skills to teach to newly arrived students. The project reinforced the collaboration between teachers, schools and municipalities. This led to more awareness about their own role and responsibility towards the pupils. We also created political awareness and willingness to improve the policy at local, national and European level. With the country reports, heads of education and political representatives were able to understand better the actual situation of the system of reception and education in their city. In The Netherlands, the intervention of the main applicant of this project led to an increase in the budget of the education of newly arrived refugee pupils at primary school level of 15 million euros. This was a great achievement of the project. The country reports and the research done at the same time, supported by the strong interdisciplinary partnership between the policy makers and the researchers in this project provided the necessary arguments to make a statement at national level. At European level, exchanges between the countries were reinforced at all levels: school stakeholders and policy makers exchanged and debated examples of practices targeting the social environment in which the educational system is grounded. These exchanges were based on important shifts:

- each partner wished to shift from a standardized view of education to a multilingual and multicultural perception of diversity,
- from a perception of integration as a problem to inclusion as an enrichment,
- from aiming at the integration of pupils with a migrant background to foster the inclusion of each pupil.

In the Netherlands in March 2018, the three partners schools developed and disseminated their knowledge to other school stakeholders during workshops organized by the national organ for the education of newly arrived migrant students at primary and secondary school level. These three schools have become the focus of attention concerning the inclusion of newly arrived students. The schools are at the moment regularly visited by delegations from other countries. Internationally, the schools and municipalities organized exchanges parallel to the EDINA project to reinforce the collaboration. In the end, EDINA has contributed to (re)problematize the inclusion of newly arrived students in these three countries, contributing to critical debates in our cities and adding to the expertise and the empowerment of the partners involved. However, more than an addition

of results, the project is an ongoing process that acted at three levels: Policy, Education and Research. We believe that the sustainability of this project is guaranteed by the empowerment of the partners and the strong interdisciplinary networks that EDINA has contributed to create.

6 References to main project outcomes

6.1 Press Clippings

- Meer ondersteuning voor migrantenkinderen op de basisschool / more support for migrant children at primary school level 7/06/2016
- Parliament debate on newly arrived migrant pupils financing 1/06/2016
- Deur, bel, schoolbord; Kinderen van nieuwkomers hebben rust nodig – en goed taalonderwijs 1/10/15
- Nederlandse scholen niet voorbereid op de instroom van nieuwkomers/ Dutch schools are not prepared for the influx of Newly Arrived Migrant pupils 1/10/2015

6.2 Creative Output

Le Pichon- Vorstman, E., Dekker, S. & Baauw, S. Van Avermaet, P., De Mets, J., Royackers, J., Dervin, F. & Simpson, A. Education of international Newly Arrived Migrant Pupils at primary and secondary school level; website: <https://edinaplatform.eu/> see all activities related to the program (a.o. development of modules for teachers, newsletters, organization of (inter)national meetings for school stakeholders). website available in Dutch, English and Suomi.

Publications

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