



## **NRT POLAND 2019**

### **Report**

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## Context

The last project year did not bring about any major developments in the regulations concerning migrant education. Therefore the main policy priorities identified and discussed during the 2018 NRT also remain relevant in 2019. These were: 1) Monitoring the distribution, up-take and financing of support measures as well as monitoring the educational achievements of migrant students 2) Designing tools and procedures for the orientation and integration of both students and parents in the school community 3) Ensuring adequate psycho-social support, especially in dedicated counselling centers 4) Fine-tuning school placement procedures 5) Ensuring synergy and cohesion in all activities relating to migrant student education (for an elaborated analysis please refer to the 2018 synthesis paper).

The NRT attendees reported, however, substantial progress on the practice level relating to orientation and integration procedures. Major municipalities invested in creating or adapting welcoming brochures for migrant students and their families. These offer not only basic information on the Polish education system, but strive to explain the specificities of the Polish school and after-school-care culture. Also, some of the big cities, being major centers of migrant influx, addressed the need for orientation procedures by launching community-based tutoring and mentoring programs for migrant students/families (sometimes, as is the case in Gdansk, involving peer-to-peer student support). This form of assistance is gaining recognition among major municipalities in Poland, however it does not seem to be very feasible in smaller towns or rural regions. Even the large cities face major limitations in terms of financial resources and are forced to rely on volunteer work.

The additional stress put on the education system by two factors: 1) education system reform (changing the stages of education from a 6+3+3 system to an 8+4 system) and 2) the massive teachers' strike in the spring of 2019 also translated into additional stress for migrant students and their families. As the system reform inevitably resulted in an accumulation of two years of student cohorts starting secondary school in 2019, resources had to be allocated for an increased number of mainstream classes, which might have constrained the ability to organise classes due to limited classroom space and staffing availability. Furthermore, a much higher number of graduates in the recruitment procedures for secondary schools and the higher level of competition connected to this affected all students irrespective of their background. However - as has been reported and can be reasonably be assumed - it was an even more challenging for migrant students (who tend to have both lower final exam scores and less know-how about navigating the recruitment system). It was therefore suggested that migrant students and their families should be supported by mentors/advisors in choosing optimal recruitment strategies and in navigating the school application process.

It was also indicated during the meeting that Poland may be dealing with the issue of unaccompanied minors among the Ukrainian migrant population on a greater scale than previously acknowledged. Teenagers, attending upper secondary schools, who use available boarding possibilities, are being periodically left without supervision. The extent of this phenomenon, however, is not known and would need to be more closely investigated.

## National Round Table

**NRT date, place:** Warsaw, 17 September 2019

**NRT venue:** IBE [Educational Research Institute] premises, ul. Górczewska 8, 01-180 Warsaw



**NRT participants profile:** The event was attended by 33 participants, mainly representatives of local authorities, the NGO sector, academia, teachers and teacher trainers, as well as migrant activists. As the NRT discussed the involvement of big Polish cities in serving the migrant student population, we invited representatives of the largest cities to contribute to the discussion, and representatives of 6 cities participated in the meeting (Gdańsk, Kraków, Lublin, Poznań, Warsaw and Wrocław). City representatives were supported by an accompanying person of their choice from local educational institutions (teacher trainers, teachers, psychologists and NGO activists).

The key aim of the 2019 NRT was to discuss the possible directions, approaches and actions in the area of needs and skills assessment of newly arrived migrant students. This was one of the three fields of Polish education policy, identified during the first “setting-the-stage” NRT, with a need for action/ common standards and, at the same time, which seemed to show the largest potential of a fruitful discussion and possible follow-up activities, an area where stakeholders involved in the Sirius NRTS could provide valuable input.

Furthermore, the aim was to examine the possible role of local authorities, who are responsible for managing schools in the Polish educational system, in the development of measures regarding migrant students' education in general and needs and skills assessment in particular. Representatives of major cities experiencing substantial migration fluxes reported on their activities in the field of migrant education. Special attention was also placed on the various analyses/studies conducted by local authorities on migrant education, the evidence and data used in their policy making.

As in the previous year, the NRT was also aimed to serve as a forum for discussion policy developments in the area of migrant education, exchange of information, experiences and good practices. It was aimed at supporting networking and cooperation among different stakeholders, such as policy makers, teachers and teacher trainers, non-governmental organisations, including migrant-led entities, academia and researchers. Particular attention this year was placed on looking for common approaches and synergies among the above-mentioned educational authorities from Poland's largest cities.

### *Inputs and debate points*

During the debate, participants agreed that the growing number of migrants demands developing improved measures and more tailored support for migrant students in the education system. Local authorities indicated the importance of developing their own approaches adapted to the possibilities and specificity of the region, however, areas where more synergy and joint tools/measures are valuable and possible were also presented. Local authority representatives admitted that the education of migrant students is not a priority in their operations, especially in the context of the substantial educational reforms and major changes in the school structure. However, numerous and diverse activities and measures are implemented in this field, including examples of comprehensive, overall strategies and systematic solutions (e.g. establishment of cross-sectoral teams working on various measures to support foreigners, extensive teacher training, operating contact/support points for migrants, as well as consultation points for teachers). Nevertheless, many initiatives undertaken by local



governments are based on the engagement and cooperation of a certain group of people and their implementation is project-based, which impacts their continuity and long-term planning. Therefore, the exchange of experiences on a country level and learning from foreign good practices is very important. Participants often emphasized that the best results can be achieved through the cooperation of various stakeholders, i.e. officials, teachers, parents, directors, NGOs, foreigners. It was also stressed that knowledge still needs to be raised about the needs of migrant children and the integration processes among officials, psychologists, directors of schools and other educational entities as well as teachers. In particular, these last two groups are crucial as being directly responsible for the adaptation of these children in schools.

During the meeting, the issue of needs and skills assessment of migrant students was discussed in two different contexts. First, some city level analyses - conducted in order to shape the offer for foreign students, support schools and teachers in working with them - were described. Such diagnoses include e.g. surveys, school information system data, as well as information from school heads. Apart from the data that is generally monitored, some authorities conducted analyses e.g. regarding the future plans of migrants or their attitudes towards the considered measures (e.g. the city of Poznań conducted a survey to ask migrant parents about their attitudes towards preparatory classes). A different form of diagnosis - individual diagnosis/assessment - is conducted by schools, teachers and psycho-social support centres in order to classify migrant students and provide them with adequate support in the teaching process. It was mentioned that on the city level, some units supporting schools, e.g. psycho-social support centres became specialized in the area of migrant student support. Tools and support methods adapted to migrant children are then developed by those centres. Various issues relating to individual student diagnosis were raised and discussed (e.g. the reluctance of migrant children's parents to this type of diagnosis, communication problems with migrant parents and students, problems of missing or inadequate diagnoses, lack of a psychologist with the appropriate knowledge of foreign languages, difficulties in employing psychologists from the child's country of origin). According to the participants, joint actions of local governments in the development of diagnostic tools and methods for diagnosis would be very important, as purchasing specialized ready-made tools is beyond the financial capabilities of local psycho-social support centres and local governments.

Participants also drew attention to the issue of preparatory classes in schools. Aimed at supporting foreign children who do not know Polish, this solution has been introduced relatively recently - in 2017. Many local governments are providing such classes, but whether removing migrant children from mainstream education is beneficial both in terms of integration and language acquisition remains disputable. Some participants, therefore, pointed out, that it would be worth considering alternative types of support, discussion and evaluation of the functioning of those classes so far is needed. Moreover, it was pointed out that discussions on the working methods, assessment and support in classrooms with migrant students are important, regardless of the type of class (mainstream vs. preparatory).

The introduction of mentoring and tutoring programmes for migrant students/families was another topic raised by the NRT participants. Representatives of NGOs indicated that mentoring, which is not very popular in Poland, should be promoted more widely. Polish law also provides for the possibility of employing a cultural assistant for foreign children in schools. The role of cultural assistants is usually performed by persons from the same culture as the migrant student, who know the student's native language well, and at the same time are familiar enough



with Polish reality to be able to effectively support communication between the child and his/her family and the teachers/school. Most often, these are people who themselves have the experience of being an immigrant in Poland. Participants indicated that cultural assistants are not employed often enough, which is mainly due to the general lack of funds needed, but also due to the lack of people with adequate competences willing to undertake this work for a relatively low salary.

Many of the NRT discussions came down to financing. Participants of the meeting pointed out, for example, that the educational subsidy for a foreign child is too low in relation to the needs. Currently, many local governments are looking for additional funds to finance activities in this area. The problem of inadequate financing touches various projects and initiatives relating to migrant education, many actions rely on volunteer work.

Information gaps and problems with access to and dissemination of various materials about the education of migrants were also mentioned. There was agreement on the need to establish one point in which all valuable information relating to the work with a migrant student would be collected.

### *Conclusions and way forward*

The second NRT showed that there is still a continuous need for discussion, developing common approaches and understanding as well as strengthening cooperation among various stakeholders engaged in the area of migrant education. Participation of local authorities - representatives of the largest cities - led to deeper insight and better understanding of local education policies, actions as well as to some extent, decision-making processes. It also showed that the authorities of the largest cities are important actors willing to cooperate and identify areas where the synergy of activities could be beneficial.

The area of the needs and skills assessment of newly arrived migrant students was indicated as one where joint actions are important, in particular, the development of standardised diagnostic tests would be highly appreciated. The discussion, however, showed that due to the lack of capacities, most importantly financial, the development of a high quality tool is beyond the reach of the stakeholders represented in the meeting or even of a larger group of municipalities. Therefore, for the time being the focus of the Polish NRTs and Polish Sirius participants will have to be on other issues.

On the other hand, the development and functioning of preparatory classes for migrant students, introduced in Poland in 2017, turned out to be an issue in which participants agreed that still needs discussion, analyses and evaluation. Preparatory classes are attracting the attention of all groups of stakeholders and are still a relatively new phenomenon in Poland. There was agreement that this issue could be picked up by the Polish Sirius participants in the next NRT.

Furthermore, it was agreed that there is a constant need to provide a certain online space / platform, gathering high quality materials on various aspects relating to the work with migrant children developed in recent years by different institutions, both governmental and non-governmental. This could be an answer for the lack of synergy in some fields, similar materials developed by different centres, or the poor dissemination of many valuable



products. Such a platform could help to better advertise available resources and increase the use of already developed tools and materials by practitioners. Establishment of such a platform requires both financial resources as well as a well-recognised institution to operate it. The decision was reached that funding possibilities in relation to such a platform will be monitored by IBE and the possible cooperation of NRT participants in this respect is possible.

The insight into the role and engagement of local authorities in migrant education which this NRT brought about will serve as a base for further considerations and consultations (in the following months) regarding possible areas of cooperation and synergies among local governments. In particular, the idea to develop a set of standards and procedures implemented locally by participating local authorities will be examined more closely.

### *Follow up of the NRT*

Following up on the NRT, IBE will be continuously involved in gathering information on important developments in the field as well as suggestions on the possible directions of work, consulting possible joint activities and synergies. At the same time, we will be providing participants with information on SIRIUS project developments and we will strive to remain in regular contact and play a networking role.

Furthermore, IBE's project development unit will research financing opportunities for the above-discussed areas, additional funds are necessary in order to develop some of the proposed initiatives (e.g. platform with materials) and to extend the current scope of activities.

Using the support of the Sirius network, IBE's Sirius team will also look for examples of good practices and possible measures/solutions implemented in other countries in the area discussed during the NRT. Peer learning activity might be a good opportunity for that.

IBE will also try to reach experts in the area of standardised diagnostic tools to consult the discussed constraints and possibilities of developing such tools.

### *Continuity with the NRT 2018*

As highlighted above, the choice of the 2019 NRT's theme strictly followed the conclusions from the last year's event. It elaborated one of the three major fields in need of action identified in the previous NRT and built upon a shared understanding of the state of affairs in migrant education determined in 2018. Many of the discussion points and conclusion of the 2019 NRT could be referenced to the outcomes of the 2018 event – either reaffirming or revising our position on the matter under discussion. The composition of the attendees (comprising a majority



of the participants from last year's event + ca 30% of new participants) was meant to ensure a proper balance for continuity and fresh insight in the discussion.

## *Challenges*

This year, the preparation of the NRT and invitation process started much earlier. We focused on approaching participants who were carefully selected based on their professional profile and how this fits the NRT theme, while at the same time trying to ensure the presence of all key groups of stakeholders. We also contacted SIRIUS partner organisations requesting that they support the invitation of their Polish members. Unfortunately, no representatives of the partner organisations decided to participate in our event (among them, only the Salesians currently have members in Poland). We were able to ensure the participation of all key stakeholders and major players, only representatives of students and parents associations were not present, there are, however, no organisations with such a profile that are very active in the field of migrant education in the country. Of special importance from the perspective of the aims of the event was the presence of local authorities – representatives of six large Polish cities. Furthermore, the composition of participants (participating in NRT 1 vs. this new one) ensured a good balance of continuity and fresh insight in the discussions. The main challenge with the preparation of the NRT resulted from external factors – mainly the announcement and actual nationwide strike of teachers. This affected the preparation and date of the NRT, which had to be rescheduled from June to September.

An ongoing issue throughout both NRTs is the lack of realistic financing prospects for the initiatives developed in the course of the discussions. IBE, however, is investing the time and efforts of its staff in monitoring financing opportunities for possible follow-up projects.



## **NRT POLAND 2019**

### **Participants**

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Name	Organisation/ institution	Position in organisation/ institution
<b>POLICY MAKERS</b>		
Agnieszka Adamska-Bednarz	Urząd Miasta Lublin, Wydział Oświaty i Wychowania/ Lublin City Office/ Education Department	Section chief
Barbara Błoch	Urząd Miejski Wrocławia, Departament Edukacji/ Wrocław City Office/ Education Department	Chief of section, Kindergardens and Primary schools Unit
Anna Grabowska	Warszawskie Centrum Innowacji Edukacyjno-Społecznych i Szkoleń, Biuro Edukacji m.st. Warszawa/ Warsaw Centre for Socio-Educational Innovation and Training, Education Office, Warsaw City	Coordinator
Agnieszka Fiedosewicz	Urząd ds. Cudzoziemców/the Office for Foreigners	Chief specialist
Hanna Janowicz	Urząd Miasta Poznań, Wydział Oświaty/ Poznań City Office, Education Department	Chief of School Organisation Unit
Magdalena Krawczyńska	Urząd Miejski w Gdańsku, Wydział Rozwoju Społecznego / Gdańsk City Hall, Social Development Department	Inspector
<b>MIGRANT-LED ORGANISATIONS</b>		
Khedi Alieva	Fundacja Kobiety Wędrownie/ Kobiety Wędrownie Foundation	President
Oleksandr Pustoyvi	Sobotnia Szkoła Ukraińska w Warszawie Fundacji Nasz Wybór/ Saturday Ukrainian School in Warsaw, Nasz Wybór Foundation	Director
Aleksandra Zapolska	Fundacja Zustricz/Zustricz Foundation	Member of the Board
<b>TEACHERS, TEACHER-TRAINERS, SCHOOL-LEADERS OR OTHER SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES</b>		
dr Izabela Czerniejewska	Ośrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli w Poznaniu/ Teacher Training Centre in Poznań	Specialist for migrant students
dr Maria Grygier-Frąckiewicz	Poradnia Psychologiczno-Pedagogiczna nr 9 we Wrocławiu/ Psycho-Social Support Centre no 9 in Wrocław	Psychologist
Maria Kędzierska	Poradnia Psychologiczno-Pedagogiczna nr 1 we Wrocławiu/ Psycho-Social Support Centre no 1 in Wrocław	Director
Nina Markiewicz-Sobieraj	SP nr 16 im. Władysława Broniewskiego w Gdańsku/ Władysław Broniewski Primary School No 16 in Gdańsk (during the meeting representing Gdańsk City Hall)	Director
Tetyana Ouerghi	SP nr 221 w Warszawie, oddział przygotowania cudzoziemców/ Primary School No 221 in Warsaw, preparatory class	Teacher
Izabela Witczak	Warszawskie Centrum Innowacji Edukacyjno-Społecznych i Szkoleń/ Warsaw Centre for Socio-Educational Innovation and Training	Coordinator of the contact point on foreign students teaching
Małgorzata Wysokińska	Warszawskie Centrum Innowacji Edukacyjno-Społecznych i Szkoleń/ Warsaw Centre for Socio-Educational Innovation and Training	Consultant for foreign student support/teacher trainer
Małgorzata Zasuńska	Warszawskie Centrum Innowacji Edukacyjno-Społecznych i Szkoleń/ Warsaw Centre for Socio-Educational Innovation and Training	Coordinator
<b>OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS</b>		
dr hab. Zbigniew Babicki	Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego/ Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University	Professor
dr Adam Bulandra	Stowarzyszenie Interkulturalni.pl/ Interkulturalni.pl Association	Vice President
Leyla Elsanova	Fundacja Ocalenie/ Ocalenie Foundation	Cultural mentor



Agata Gajewska-Dyszkiewicz	Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych/ Educational Research Institute	Expert
Anna Górska	Instytut Spraw Publicznych/Institute of Public Affairs	Specialist, NIEM project officer
Artem Graban	UNHCR	Trainee
dr Dorota Jaworska	Uniwersytet Gdański/Gdańsk University	Assistant professor
Agnieszka Kozakoszczak	Fundacja na Rzecz Różnorodności Społecznej/ Foundation for Social Diversity	President
Urszula Majcher-Legawiec	Fundacja Wspierania Kultury i Języka Polskiego im. Mikołaja Reja; Program Otwarty Kraków/ Mikołaj Rej Foundation; Open Kraków Programme ( <i>during the meeting representing Programme run by the Municipality of Kraków</i> )	President, methodical consultant, Open Kraków Programme consultative team member
dr Ewa Pogorzała	Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa im. Szymona Szymonowica w Zamościu/ The State School of Higher Education in Zamość	Lecturer
Izabela Przybysz	Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych/ Educational Research Institute	Expert
dr hab. Piotr Stankiewicz	Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych/ Educational Research Institute	Director
Agata Saracyn	Biuro Unii Metropolii Polskich/ The Union of Polish Metropolises Office	Coordinator
dr Katarzyna Stankiewicz	Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego/ Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University	Assistant professor, teacher
Joanna Śmigiel	Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych/ Educational Research Institute	<i>Senior Specialist</i>
Olga Wasilewska	Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych/ Educational Research Institute	Expert