



## SIRIUS network Policy makers'

### FORUM OF EXPERIENCES

Riga, June 5-6, 2014

(PM1.2/2014)

#### Summary report

Goal of this event was to create a forum for experience sharing for all the policy makers involved and consequently strengthen the European cooperation on migration and education across the EU. Forum has presented in action what policy makers involved have learned and acquired in SIRIUS already, and has served as the platform of experience sharing in forms of peer review ( regarding policy implementation structures and processes) and knowledge transfer ( regarding policy development).

It was organized as an informal gathering of mission – oriented persons, working on making education policies more open and needs – based for children and youth with migrant background. First part of forum (first day, June 5<sup>th</sup>) was organized as a series of national best practices or new national studies on migrant or intercultural education presentations (Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia, Norway, Greece, and Portugal) followed by Q&A sessions. Second part ( second day, June 6<sup>th</sup>) presented itself group sessions of sharing and learning where representatives of new migration countries (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia) have engaged themselves into productive conversations with representatives of old migration states ( Greece, Portugal, Norway).

To make event compelling to participating policy makers, a new design for the event was introduced and have completely proved its success: flexible agenda, work group structures, opportunity spontaneously present own findings and conclusions, ideas, dynamic Q&A sessions have deserved high appreciation from participants ( see *Evaluation* file in the attachment).

#### **Overview of the content**

**The Baltic:** current trends, challenges and strengths in immigrant education policy implementation

Forum of Experiences, organized in Riga, capital of **Latvia**, has logically been attended by neighbours – policy makers from **Lithuania** and **Estonia**. Baltic could be interpreted as a region in the SIRIUS network, more or less unified in terms of migrant education policies, still for each of countries having specific challenges and best practices.



## *Background*

As relatively new European Member states (joined the EU in 2004), Baltic countries are one of the few EU migrant sending countries. Actual immigration to these countries is relatively low. However, the number of migrants shows slight increase, mainly as a consequence of free movement of labour within the European Union. It is notable also, that returning Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian nationals comprise a significant part of countries' immigration rate. E.g., about 80% of immigrants in Lithuania are returning Lithuanian residents and 55% of immigrants in Estonia hold Estonian citizenship (according to IOM, 2011). Situation in Latvia is different - small share of returnees (approximately 1000 persons since 2013, data from Ministry of Economics suggests) in combination with mainstream of third country nationals coming for economic purposes or family reunion. Another peculiar characteristics of Baltic States, is that historically, these countries experience great population diversity, due to the earlier migration waves between the years 1950-1988. The biggest minority group in Latvia and Estonia are people of Russian origin (27.6%<sup>1</sup> and 25%<sup>2</sup> of the total population respectively). Russian minority in Lithuania is much smaller (5.8%) and outnumbered by the population of Polish origin (6.6% of the total population).

Interestingly, three countries apply different definitions of what immigrant actually is, which may influence the understanding of the target group when developing common policies. All three countries apply the general concept of 'alien' towards non-nationals; however, e.g. Estonia distinguishes new immigrants and old immigrants as separate categories, 'new immigrants' including workers, asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants who have arrived to Estonia from the EU or other states – who wish to commence their studies in an Estonian school and who have lived in Estonia less than three years (EMER, 2004). In Latvia, 'aliens' or 'immigrants' include non-citizens, third country nationals, asylum seekers and refugees; while Lithuanian law applies very general definition of an 'alien' as anyone who is not a national of Lithuania<sup>3</sup>.

## *Education policies*

The diversity and interrelatedness of school population has shaped the relatively democratic nature of education policies in the Baltic States. The rights of minorities have been always taken into account when developing education policies through the system of bilingual education. Relatively small

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.latvia.lv/library/ethnic-minorities-latvia>

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Estonia [www.stat.ee] 30.10.2013

<sup>3</sup>The Lithuanian Law on the Legal Status of Aliens, 2013.



number of migrants in the countries and their homogeneous ethnic composition (most coming from Russian-speaking countries) did not create any need for the Baltic to amend the well-established education policy strategy. Interestingly, e.g., in Lithuania according to the Ministry of Education and Science, nearly 70% of immigrant children attend ethnic minority or bilingual schools due to their greater experience in accommodating diversity. Similar trend has been observed in Latvia and Estonia.

At the moment, the focus of the Baltic education systems was put on targeted support (developed to a various extent across three countries: provision of mother tongue<sup>4</sup>, extra funding for acculturation support and official language learning, individual curriculum option, customized evaluation system and exams) rather than overall comprehensiveness and inclusiveness of education policies (which is however, included into overall policy discourse)<sup>5</sup>. Extra funding to address additional immigrant children's needs is available in Estonia and Lithuania (but not in Latvia). Schools are eligible to receive (extra) funding from the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research to teach migrant children the Estonian language for additional 4 lessons per week. In Lithuania, the funding approach is based on differentiated pupils' basket: national minority schools receive extra 20% of funding for supporting minority and 30% for supporting immigrant students, which allows them the implementation of policies such as integration classes, bilingual education, continuous instruction of Lithuanian as a second language, and mother tongue instruction.

### *Challenges and strengths*

Migrant education policy challenges and experience in the Baltic States are rather similar, although a variety of nuances in approaches to policy have led to differences in strengths the three countries. All three countries have a largely similar and extensive experience for policy design and implementation in the situation of having a rather small new immigrant student population, a considerable minority student population (mostly Russian) and the most recently emerged student group – returnees.

All three Baltic States have a long history of integration of minority children in education. Lithuania has the lowest share of minority children (7.2%), which includes both Russian and Polish speaking population.

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<sup>4</sup>Mother tongue instruction is mostly happening in bilingual education settings in formal education both in primary and secondary schools.

<sup>5</sup>Sirius Comparative report "Policy Implementation Analysis by National Educational Agents and Other Stakeholders" (based on focus groups and interviews), May 2013. Available at: [http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/SIRIUS-Comparative-Report-def-  
editat\\_SIRIUS\\_130531.pdf](http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/SIRIUS-Comparative-Report-def-editat_SIRIUS_130531.pdf)



In Lithuania, Latvia and in Estonia, the financial support allocated by the state to schools is per each student. It involves student basket for immigrant student and minority student in Lithuania and Estonia (30% and 20% accordingly). Latvia has the same policy only regarding refugees and asylum seekers; however since 2014 extra basket is being suggested as an amendment to existing provision regarding returnees or returnees. Schools in Estonia are eligible to receive funding to teach the national language (4 extra lessons per week). In Lithuania, additional language support can be organised after classes, if requested, and is funded from the differentiated student basket. However, the provision of this support is not always effective, since teachers do not receive any initial training on teaching Lithuanian language to non-Lithuanian speakers, which again is a case in Latvia, where Latvian Language agency is carrying this duty for more than 15 years with success. There is a possibility to organise an integration class (which theoretically can be introduced in every school if there are at least 5 migrant pupils); however, in most of the cases schools lack financial resources to maintain it. Currently, integration class is available only in ‘Lietuviu namai’ – school which is specifically designed for integration of Lithuanian returnees<sup>6</sup>. Since traditional migrants to Baltic States until recently where from Russian speaking countries, these schools were an effective mechanism of integrating new coming immigrants and provide the instruction in mother tongue. However, the content of bilingual curriculum differs across Baltic States. In Latvia and Estonia, about 60% of curriculum must be taught in the state language, while in Lithuania schools are required to teach at least 20% of curriculum in Lithuanian.

During the Forum a situation given above was used as a context, presented by host institution GDI, while a new best practice were presented by policy maker from Lithuania, Ona Čepulienė. She familiarized the audience with an online resource *Lithuanian model*, administrated by University of Vitautas Magnus in Kaunas offers on – line learning tools and resources for foreigners, migrants, teachers, Lithuanians abroad. University in cooperation with Ministry of Education and Science and Education Development Centre organizes workshops for teachers on professional use of the resource, on designing teaching tools, textbooks, e-tools, guides for parents. All of it is available in moodle environment at the University web page. See more on portal *LUGIS* <http://lugis.vdu.lt>

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<sup>6</sup>Sirius Comparative report “Policy Implementation Analysis by National Educational Agents and Other Stakeholders” (based on focus groups and interviews), May 2013. Available at: [http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/SIRIUS-Comparative-Report-def-editat\\_SIRIUS\\_130531.pdf](http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/SIRIUS-Comparative-Report-def-editat_SIRIUS_130531.pdf)



## Latvia:

### CLIL – logical arrival from bilingual education

Latvian government agency – Latvian Language agency – was presented during the Forum by Indra Lapinska, expert in CLIL (Content and language integrated learning). She has referred to the recent innovative teaching/learning project (2010-2012), financed by ESF on cooperation and professional development of pedagogues, working both in the realms of minority and mainstream education. Project methodology was complex, but effective - combining methodology of problem based learning (PBL), modern foreign language teaching methods with analysis of bilingual education policy implementation. She has emphasized that CLIL as an approach helps bilingual teachers to perform more effectively, and reach better student outcomes. Focusing on introduction of CLIL, project has offered participating schools the use of minority language or official language or foreign language in teaching certain subjects as History, or Economics, or Social Sciences, or Politics and Law in secondary level. Project was implemented as a whole school approach (administrator, subject teacher, Latvian language teacher, minority language teacher, foreign (German or English, or French) language teacher, representative of the students' council formed a school team). The *Teacher to teacher* approach was part of the project methodology: master classes delivered by one teacher to others have experienced a great deal of success. *Resource bank* of CLIL based lesson scenarios developed in moodle environment on the Project web page is still available to interested pedagogues.

In migrant education context, CLIL presents the powerful tool, possible to use for different purposes: 1) bilingual mediator – teacher who can use freely mediator language, English, could help as a support for a student who is native Chinese, for instance, (*there is no institution of bilingual assistant in Latvia, and the lack of political will possibly will prevent introduction of such in nearest future – L.O.*)2) immersion into official language by learning subject, not learning language itself, has proven its effectiveness already (study, carried out by Riga City Council, 2014).

### Family Group Conference: a promising strategy to be tested with migrant families

A family group conference (FGC) is a process, led by family members to plan and make decisions for a child who is at risk. Usually it happens to migrant children and youth.
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This strategy was presented in the Forum by new members of GDI, social pedagogy and social work experts Alexandra and Arseniy Pavlovskie (originally from Russia, living in Latvia since 2014).

A family group conference is an innovative and collaborative method, used in work with families and communities. This method can be used in the work with families that face a range of economic, psychological and social problems. It helps to involve the family in the development and realization of the action plan for solving these problems. Family ( understood here as a direct and extended family members, group of friends, peers, local community members, neighbours, kin) group conferences can be used in various settings: educational, social, medical. It is designed to 1) foster the social integration of a young person; 2) to create ties between migrant community and mainstream population, represented by education and community institutions. This strategy potentially empowers social workers from social support centres, social pedagogues and psychologists from education institutions, school teachers, heads of divisions and organizations who are dealing with migrant population.

During the Forum interest on learning this method was expressed by Riga City Council and Latvian Language agency, colleagues from Estonia and Croatia also expressed their interest in application of this method. Pilot workshop in Riga is planned for September 2014.

## **Croatia:**

### **Inclusion as a framework instead of specific targeted measures**

The framework of Croatian education policy on migrant inclusion was presented by Nada Jakir, Head of division for Minorities and Students with Special needs.

Statistics on migrant students is collected annually In Croatia. In Croatian schools there are 2.177 migrant students altogether or 0, 53% of all students in schools. Thus, there are 1.959 (0, 59%) migrant pupils in the elementary school, 374 (0, 60%) in the high school and 384 (0, 31%) in the vocational education establishments. 684 (or 0, 43% of all the students) third country students study in colleges, universities and technical universities of Croatia.

Croatia presents a case of deliberately and gradually constructed **inclusive education system**, consisting from „umbrella „strategy, several laws and regulations. Croatia has a tradition of inclusive policy, since the 1980s, when the integration of children with development disabilities was introduced into





regular pre-school institutions, primary and secondary schools. Those policy implementation efforts aim to develop a friendly environment within the school for everyone.

The National strategy on education, science and technology determines the aims of an inclusive education policy including the following measures:

- ❑ Transformation of kindergartens, schools and student residences into a friendly environment for all where everybody feels to be equally worth and continuous effort to eliminate obstacles to the full inclusion of all students is present;
- ❑ Through regular and community classes, lectures and workshops, students, parents and employees of kindergartens, schools and student residences will be sensitized about satisfying the needs of different groups of children and students;
- ❑ Transforming a certain number of education institutions in cities into Centres of excellence in the area of inclusive education; such a network also functions as a system of support for the other local schools and teachers.
- ❑ The development of inclusive capacities presupposes the preparation/revision of competency frameworks for expert associates (psychologists, educational rehabilitators and others), teachers and principals, which includes amending of their initial education and professional development.
- ❑ An efficient system of support to students requires expert teams who give direct support to children and students as well as coordinate all forms of cooperation inside the school and between the school and other institutions, experts and organisations that care for children and youth.

To implement the all – inclusive education policy framework has certain historical roots and is reflected into comprehensive system of Laws.

The introduction of confessional religious education in the beginning of 1990s made the school a place where rights of different religious groups are recognized.

The rights of national minorities to education in their own language as well as learning the language and culture of national minorities is combined with learning for democratic citizenship and human rights.



Integrational education policy for Roma since the 2000s gives the school a new momentum for internal transformation. The introduction of the Curriculum on Health education in 2012 raises awareness about the existence of gender differences and diverse sexual orientations.

The Immigration strategy in force since 2013 guarantees the rights of migrants to learn the Croatian language and the right to education in equal conditions as for Croatian students.

The Anti-discrimination Act is a comprehensive regulation which bans discrimination in all areas of public and social life, including the area of education.

The Croatian migration policies are developed in line with the provisions contained in the regulations of most of the EU countries. Education policy provisions, laws, regulations are developed with the focus on needs and provision of support for migrant pupils and students. It includes national consultative mechanisms (Boards, regular work groups, forums etc.) regarding immigrant education and related services for migrants. The Act on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools prescribes that the children of European Union citizens, asylees, asylum seekers and foreigners have the right to education under the same conditions as the children of citizens of the Republic of Croatia. The Act on Asylum prescribes that asylees and foreigners under subsidiary protection have the right to primary, secondary and higher education under the same conditions as a Croatian citizen and that their foreign education qualifications are recognized under the same conditions as for Croatian citizens. If an asylee or a foreigner under subsidiary protection is unable to produce the relevant documentation proving a foreign professional qualification and has a justified reason for it, an assessment of their competencies acquired before («prior learning») will be conducted by authorities according to the Act on Regulated Professions and Foreign Professional Qualifications Recognition. The minister in charge of education delivers the program on learning the Croatian language and the conditions of implementing it and the expenses are covered by the state budget. Task Force for Implementation Policy on the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society that is attached to the Governmental Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities is the main consultative body regarding immigrant education and related services for migrants.

As it was described before, and reflected in a few previous SIRIUS WP 1 and WP2 studies, bilingual education is a case not only in Baltic, but also in Croatia. Nada Jakir has presented 3 models of bilingual education, effective there. In A model Croatian language is taught 4 lessons per week, the rest of





subjects are taught in minority language. B model in practice means combined and balanced bilingual education, where social studies related subjects are taught in minority language, but the rest of subjects are taught in Croatian. C model with 2-5 lessons per week of teaching language and culture of minority, and with rest of subjects taught in Croatian demonstrates a variety of compensatory bilingual education. This model requires a presence of teachers, belonging to minorities and having subject expertise.

### **Greece – critical analysis of existing policies**

Recent study on *status quo* in intercultural education (2013-2014), presented at the Forum by professor Georgios Tsimouris demonstrated a grounded critique of assimilationist mainstream in Greek education policies regarding migrant population. This explains why SIRIUS National Partner in Greece was unable to connect policy makers' involvement coordinator with appropriate person from the national circles of education or migration policy. According to his data, Greece has approximately 10 % migrant pupils and students, with 60% from them coming from neighbouring countries, mostly from Albania and Bulgaria. It is evident, that historical long-term conflict between Christian and Muslim religions, diversity of mainstream (Greek Orthodox Christian) and minority /migrant (Muslim) religious affiliations has influenced pedagogical processes in education institutions, having minority/migrant population.

Most of migrants in Greece are enrolled in so called intercultural schools (there are 26 altogether nationwide, majorities of them in Athens and Saloniki). Usually they have 150 – 200 students in average, which theoretically allows for application of differentiated pedagogics and individual approach. Tsimouris study have addressed the following questions: how pedagogics applied in intercultural schools suits student needs, how teachers assess their own performance and evaluate students. To find the answers, three domains were studied: teachers' performance in the classroom; curriculum, extra – curricular activities. Findings of Tsimouris and his colleagues are shocking, at least in his interpretation: regardless existing legal provision on support measures for migrant students they are not implemented due to the complicated and bureaucratic nature of the implementation procedure, but not because of the lack of finances. Due to the overt differences between cultural identities of teachers and students and lack of sensitivity towards cultural differences assimilationist and ethnocentric action is present in classrooms. There is almost no case of specific official language support or mother tongue teaching, Tsimouris states. He has observed also insufficient number of Greek classes for migrant students at the secondary level of education, which actually prevents their successful integration because of the lack of proficiency in official language.



He strongly criticizes uniform curriculum in all the schools, regardless diversity of students, the measure, considered an advantage in the Baltic, for instance. Curriculum is being supported by ethnocentric textbooks, containing negative stereotypes of migrants, especially Bulgarians. It also contains the opposition towards influences of former Ottoman area that is why Albanians are pictured as strange, potentially dangerous. Overall he criticizes the lack of recognition of newcomers, deficit of reciprocity, solidarity, institutional recognition of other cultures. Religious education presents a bright example where religious otherness, atheism also, is not recognized at all. Mandatory Christian prayers are practised every day, also in intercultural schools. Tsimouris concludes that Greek education system is hierarchical, authoritarian, lacks cultural sensitivity and presents only one „right culture” – Greek.

Extra – curricular activities in intercultural schools basically consists of national celebrations, containing „antagonistic messages regarding neighbouring nations”, which makes migrants coming from those settings feel ashamed of their ethnic belonging.

In sum, recent qualitative study in intercultural schools in Greece has proved the lack of intercultural competence among teachers, lack of culturally adjusted curriculum (Christian prayers, no mother tongue support, and ethnocentric textbooks). There are no policies on mother tongue support or effective bilingual education as a part of in – service teacher training practice.

Design of extra -curricular activities only reinforces that domination. Assimilatory practices in schools are politically supported, according to Tsimouris findings.

„Nothing intercultural in schools, besides students,” researcher concluded.

## **Norway /NAFO**

### **Integration happens locally**

*The most important reason for any multicultural kid to go through the program, FLEXid offers, is to boost their sense of who they are; become more confident in how to use their special knowledge, skills and experiences, and feel encouraged to reflect all the diversity of their identity instead of choosing one part over another.*

Dag Fjæstad, senior adviser, NAFO



Dag Fjæstad, senior adviser at NAFO, directly working with municipalities in Norway, introduced the audience with NAFO strategy of sustainability management: working in the field of multicultural education, NAFO sustains their local interventions by creation of local consortiums of municipal and education institutions. Those consortiums regularly receive an input from NAFO: consulting, fostering collaboration, support in local education policy development, offer of new programs, further education. Norway has 90 counties and NAFO has established networks – consortiums- in each county, consisting of municipality, kindergartens, primary, basic and secondary schools, adult education institutions.

One of the major directions of NAFO work is prevention of early school leaving: average drop-out rate is 30% in secondary school. Due to comprehensive and systemic intervention, Larvik in this dimension is doing much better than others: average drop-out rate is only 2, 4%, but for migrant students 1, 6%.

Larvik city has 42.412 residents; 4323 with a migrant background; 90 ethnicities, and new migrants keep coming, currently comprising 11% of population. Unfortunately situations of intercultural encounters there quite often cause conflicts between locals and migrant population.

Program, introduced in the schools with significant migrant students' proportion in Larvik community under the supervision of NAFO has started in 2001 and still is operating with success. The theoretical background is brought from D. C. Pollock's psychological explanation<sup>7</sup> of identity transformations, experienced by children of missionaries and diplomats, and the concept, introduced by him to describe this phenomenon – *third culture kids*. In FLEXid design being third culture kid is visually explained as a meeting of person from *yellow culture* with a life in a *blue culture*, which usually results in living *green*, yellow-blue-blended *culture*. To define program essence shortly, it is *collective explanation of one's identity, with focus on advantages what life in an initially strange culture could give*. Program acquisition helps migrant students to cope with social expectations of different groups of significant others (family, school, peers). FLEXid offers an education of cross-cultural skills, communication and integration that will lead to better co-existence between diverse groups in schools and communities.

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1. <sup>7</sup> *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds*. David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken. [ISBN 978-1-85788-525-5](https://www.isbn-international.org/product/978-1-85788-525-5); Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1999, 2001, 2009.



The aim is to prevent potential conflict between generations, and help kids and parents resolve often painful differences and challenges that follow culture-shifts and clash between values, beliefs and traditions.”

Normally the kids (in between ages of 12-18, mostly) follow the program for two years: The first year has a group focus; the second year focuses on each individual. Girls and boys have separate groups. Curriculum for the first year includes the following themes/content areas: Identity and belonging; Multicultural resources – and how to «build bridges»; Leaving one country, coming to another; Prejudice and racism; Girls and boys; Roles and expectations. 1st year of program enrolment gives students an explanation of social context he or she is finding himself or herself. *Who am I, my connections, multicultural resources I possess, how to use them; mobility as such, parents, translation from one culture to another - lost or found in translation, honey moon stage in a new country and following culture shock, home sickness, parents losing their professions and acquiring new, shifts in initial welfare level, gradual acquisition of recognition, racism, parental expectations and self - project.*

Focus of the Second year is individual context and learning process is organized around themes: Own background and history; Language and emotions; Me meeting others; Girls and boys - prejudice, choices and future; Dilemmas and choices in a multicultural society; That's typical - about generalization. Learning process is organized in interactive formats like role plays, case studies, discussions, group work.

More information, video on FLEXid  
<http://nafo.hioa.no/fag/filmer/identitetshandtering/>

### **PROGRAMA ESCOLHAS/CHOICES PROGRAMME, Portugal**

Choices Program is a governmental program (founded in 2001) and is, since 2004, integrated in the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue. Currently as a public institute it is integrated in the High Commission for Migration. Program is funded by the national budget and from European Social Fund, but local municipalities, participating in program should invest also their local resources. Annual investment is 9.000.000 Euros. Central and local team of the program is composed by multidisciplinary and flexible group of 843 skilled staff members (21 people in the central staff, 822 persons locally employed).

Groups program is targeting are:



- children and youngsters from 6 to 24 years old
- living in the most vulnerable territories
- with insufficient institutional responses
- early school leavers, without the basic educational level which is 12 years of schooling;
- immigrant descendants and ethnic minorities
- children and youngsters at risk or young offenders
- parents and other community members.

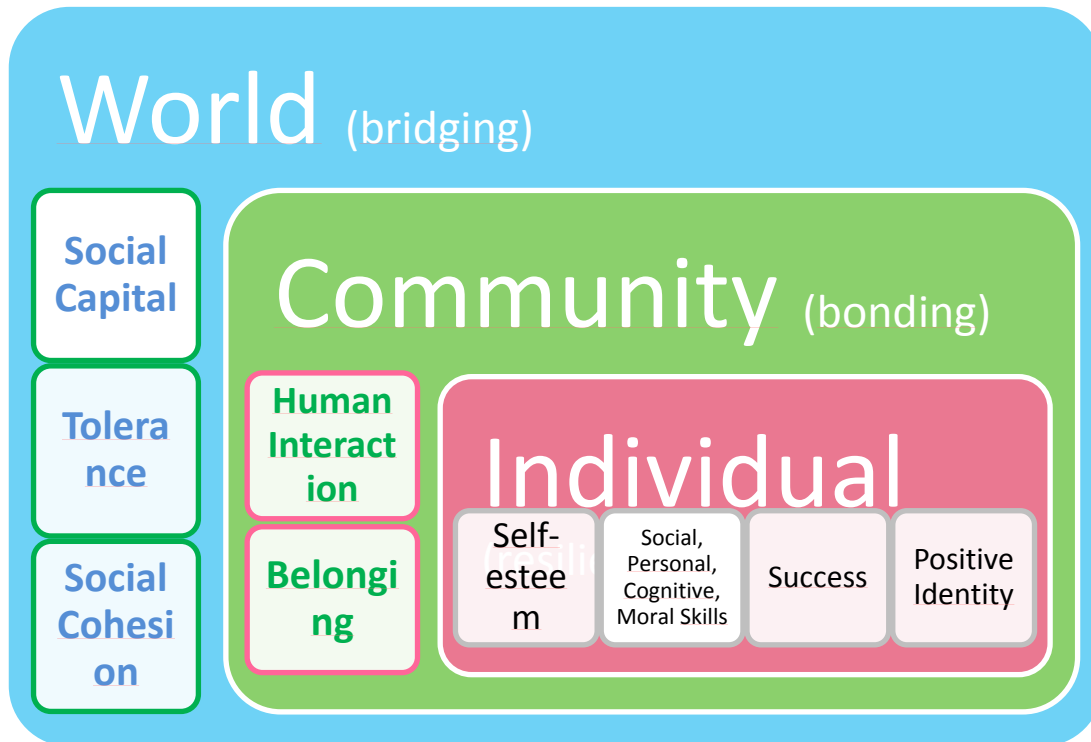
Model of intervention is a bottom-up approach: program offers some tools, method, support and funds, but the local institutions are the actors who have the opportunity and responsibility to find solutions for their own local problems.

LOCAL INTERVENTION. As a national program it funds, supports and evaluates 110 three-year projects throughout the country in 71 municipalities. Projects are locally managed by partnerships with a minimum of 3 institutions (the average is 7 partners) on the ground of 'co-shared responsibility'. Every project is being monitored, evaluated and put under financial audit by central program staff (usually 6 month terms).

Until June 2, 2014 number of program direct beneficiaries is 45 000 persons, and it has almost 100 000 participants at all.

Program operates on the grounds of philosophy of change which is reflected in drawing nr.1.

Drawing nr.1. Theory of Change (Escolhas design)



Content wise, each of above mentioned 110 projects is aligned with 1, 2, 3, 4 or all measures or axes (see below).

Local intervention is structured in 5 measures or axes:

I. Educational Inclusion and non-formal education (related to schooling issues like failures, early school leaving, truancy, etc.; strategies applied are: school reintegration: creation and implementation of specific educational responses; drop-out prevention; non-formal education; family involvement).

II Measure: Vocational training and employability (developing new opportunities for vocational training and promoting employment, and internship based on corporate social responsibility - many corporate partners involved by the program staff).

III Measure: Civic and community participation (balanced combination of recreational and educational activities: artistic and cultural activities, sports; contacts with community organizations; awareness raising and community mobilization).

IV Measure: Digital inclusion (aiming to 'combat' the digital gap with CID@NET – Digital Inclusion Centres; almost all of 110 projects have own CID@NET; strategies applied are: ICT workshops (journalism; multimedia, hardware, etc.); Certified trainings on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in partnerships with companies like CISCO and Microsoft)





Program promotes e-learning in the framework of this measure - there is a Virtual School (web based platform totally aligned with the official Ministry of Education Curricula: students have free access to all education programs/subjects from 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

V Measure: Entrepreneurship and empowerment (skills development activities; financial support for projects planned, implemented and evaluated by young people, fostering grassroots' initiatives; visits, internships and partnerships with civil society organizations).

More information on [www.programaescolhas.pt](http://www.programaescolhas.pt)

### **Group sessions for sharing and learning**

Second day of Forum was organized as a group work: mutual consultations where participants from new migration states have basically interviewed their peers from old migration states to learn from their success and mistakes.

Also, at the beginning of the day, in the short session led by Liesma Ose, all forum participants have agreed to follow the certain structure of the national action plan on migrant education.

Individual, country level

Action plan on migrant education  
2015-.....

*(title optional, please, be creative and use the target group situation relevant title, which reflects their needs and actual resources*

*Suggested structure*

#### Option 1 ( classical model)

- 1) Evidence: Needs assessment, existing legislation;
- 2) Issues to be solved;
- 3) Resources country has;
- 4) Overarching goal, strategic goals (2-3), priorities, tasks and activities, connected to each of them.
- 5) Expected results/resources to develop
- 6) Budget

#### Option 2

Existing resources based approach



- 1) Legal provision - existing and to be amended
- 2) Resources - existing, and needs on the ground;
- 3) Necessary impact to be made at the individual, community, macro level ( for instance: Inclusive community development, political attitudes to be tackled, media reality and possible shifts there to be made, time and place for intercultural encounters, individual growth and competence development)
- 4) Targeted measures (using existing resources and developing them) with budget figures.

*PS. Majority of participants were inclined to work on the 2<sup>nd</sup> option*

## Conclusions

1. Baltic countries have quite rich experience in designing and implementing education policy in the situation where approximately 20% in Latvia and Estonia, and 9% in Lithuania of students' in general education institutions mother tongue or language spoken at home is other than the official language. There are good practices that have been developed from this tradition of bilingual education that are effectively working with migrant children.
2. The experiences of all countries represented at the Forum states, that it is crucial that all educational institutions have operational strategies and professional capacity for teaching students with various language and cultural background. The strategies involve the role and responsibility of all school professionals, including teachers, support services and school management in order to create a cohesive and supportive organizational culture. Development of Professional capacity at schools should be a priority of national education policies. There is a need for systematic preparation to develop teachers' intercultural competence, incl. competence to recognise and facilitate students' educational special needs, in cooperation with universities who provide teacher training. Good systemic practice on how to implement it was offered by NAFO, Norway.
3. Consultations and sharing between policy makers, representatives of government agencies, researcher and a few municipality representatives (Latvia) has given the ground to conclude, that unfortunately in practice intercultural education is quite often understood by its implementers as acculturation of migrant population into mainstream, official culture. This explains the minor efforts to maintain mother tongue of migrant students. Instead continues efforts to teach official language are observed. In some countries (Greece, Latvia) it is executed rather poorly, without taking into account insufficiency of time and lessons to achieve the same level of proficiency in official language, as for native speakers; having unified



- curricula, requirements and exams for everyone regardless their background and first language. Assimilationist practices are rationalized as keeping national borders safe, safeguarding national values. Bright examples of this trend are observable in textbooks, where essentialist view on cultures is presented.
4. In opposite – a positive view on belonging to migrant population is presented by Norway, where “positive blended identity construction toolkit”-FLEXid program was designed. The program, introduced locally in multicultural setting, ensures students’ socialization into strange culture not only by making them cope with existing norms and values, but fostering positive self – concept. This practice is absolutely worth for testing in other multicultural national and local settings. Instead of unfortunately widespread (both in education policy analysis and inclusive pedagogics) image of migrant population as help-requesting, deficit – having, resources – missing, it helps develop image of givers, creators, investors among *third culture kids*. Evidence of that positive – identity – building approach for migrant children is proved in Israel, where the social accelerator PRESENTENSE is created by children of migrants from Eastern Europe and now is being internationally recognized as an innovative social business incubator. More information <http://presentense.org/>
  5. Recent Study on educational support for newly arrived migrant children (2013) has demonstrated enough evidence on equal potential of either targeted measures oriented or all – inclusive educational policies for migrant students. Croatia, presented in the Forum as an example of consequent inclusive education policy in comparison with Baltic ambiguous policy (inclusive education policy in policy planning documents, laws and regulations, being implemented as a set of specified targeted measures for certain groups, some more preferential as others, for instance, special support for returnees) seems more effective, eventually more flexible in terms of meeting diverse needs of expanding migrant population. Learning environment is proved to be one of the most crucial factors for smooth integration and success of immigrant children at school. It is notable, that Croatian education policy is this direction oriented and demonstrates the understanding that positive learning environment is created through cooperation between school staff, children and parents and communities.
  6. SIRIUS network, consisting of 18 countries, present the diverse combination of countries. There is some rather sending, then receiving migrants (the Baltic, Bulgaria, etc.) countries, and countries, receiving and hosting them (the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Greece etc.). Strategies offered, studied and suggested by the network WP since now have missed a potentially productive focus on collaboration of countries sending and countries receiving migrants. Formerly, in 2012 and 2013, working in Latvian Ministry of Education and Science, networks’ policy makers’ involvement coordinator Liesma Ose has had such an experience in collaboration with Ireland, where huge Latvian Diaspora is settled. This



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idea has actualized during the Forum, observing discussions between policy makers and stake holders from both kinds of countries, represented in the Forum. It could be possibly value added SIRIUS product if action plans for improving migrant education policies across the network contained at least few examples of such bilateral or multilateral collaboration.