



NRT SLOVENIA 2019

Report

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Context

At the first NRT in 2018 main challenges of implementing the national strategy of migrant children inclusion into education system in Slovenia were identified. At the second NRT in 2019 the focus on the central theme was maintained: the premises of multilingualism in an inclusive learning environment, and three main topics were addressed. They underlie the problem of inclusion of migrant children to school and represent the main issues in the Slovenian context regarding national reform priorities and changes:

1. **Multilingualism in the pedagogical process:** How to successfully implement the translanguaging and plurilingual approaches into education practice, which emphasize the right to individual's use of all his/her linguistic resources in the process of learning.
2. **The gap between the mastering of language of schooling/language of the majority and academic achievements of migrant children and young people:** How to enable inclusive and equitable education environments regardless of their cultural and language background, socio-economic status and the 'temporary staying' status.

The challenges of involvement of migrants in school and developing the strategies for encouraging their active involvement in the democratic processes of the school: How to include migrants (migrant parents and other adults in local communities) in various school activities as translators, teaching assistants, leaders of extra-curricular activities or volunteers, in order to connect school with the local community and encourage better integration of migrant children and young people.

National Round Table

Title: NEW PRACTICES OF MULTILINGUALISM IN THE INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Venue: European Union House, Dunajska 22, Ljubljana

Date: 27 May 2019 (from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

Methodology of the event: The conference was designed as a moderated round table discussion with stand-alone panel discussions, with the invited participants presenting short contributions (four in each panel) and other participants (the audience) directly joining the discussion. The panel discussions were based on four thematic sections (see the Programme in the Annex):

1. Multilingualism and plurilingualism in the pedagogical process;
2. Ensuring equal opportunities in education – bridging the gap between the acquisition of the language of instruction (Slovenian) and academic achievements;
3. Role of the local community in migrant integration;
4. Strategies for promoting active participation of parents and other adult migrants at school.

Participants:

Invited speakers (16) were school professionals (2 school principals – from elementary and high-school, 3 teachers – two from elementary school (one migrant) and one from high-school), 1 school counsellor from high-school), 2 social workers/volunteers from NGOs, the president of the High School Student Organisation of Slovenia – DOS (member of OBBESU), the representative of Parent Council Association of Slovenia – ZASSS (member of EPA), 2 policy-maker representatives (one from the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and one from the Institute of Education), 2 university teachers, 1 researcher and teacher educator, 2 cultural mediators/migrants.

The Audience/public: The rest of the participants attended NRT voluntarily in response to the public announcement of the event (via ERI's webpage and e-mail). They had to register in a week prior to the NRT (60 registered, 12 missing). They came from elementary and high-schools (teachers and principals), teachers' union (SVIZ), university (teachers and students), research institutes (Educational Research Institute, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Peace Institute, Science and Research Centre Koper), Centre for Slovene as a Second and Foreign Language, Parent Council Association of Slovenia (ZASSS), other institutions related to education (Public Education Centre - Cene Štupar,



Andragogic Center), ministries and other governmental bodies (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants; Advocate of the Principle of Equality, Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development), Slovene National Assembly, foreign ministries (Ministry of Diaspora of Republic of Kosovo), and the media (Slovene Press Agency – STA, Radio Student – RŠ).

During a joint debate at the first NRT in 2018, we identified some gaps between the planned strategies for the inclusion of migrants into Slovenian educational system and their implementation. At the second NRT, which took place this year, the participants discussed solutions, concrete steps and tools that would help carry out the planned strategies and establish an inclusive learning environment suitable for all pupils, regardless of their social, cultural or linguistic background.

The central topic of “multilingualism as the fundamental assumption of inclusive learning environment” was addressed within the following three thematic sections:

1. **Multilingualism and plurilingualism in the pedagogical process.** Multilingual and plurilingual approaches in education emphasize the individual's right to use all of their linguistic resources in the pedagogical process, regardless of the potential current legal restrictions, deeply rooted and ordinary monolingual teaching practices as well as culturally and politically defined names of languages. A reflection on the possibilities to implement multilingual and plurilingual approaches in the school practice:
 - a. use of different languages and materials in class (when discussing topics, monitoring pupils' understanding and assessing their knowledge);
 - b. empowering teachers to work in a translanguaging manner;
 - c. potential changes in education policies (at the level of documents and transnational links) that will go beyond the monolingual perspective in education and will not hinder the use of mother tongues (or the individual's idiolect) in the pedagogical process.
2. **Ensuring equal opportunities in education – bridging the gap between the acquisition of the language of schooling (Slovenian) and academic achievements.** A reflection on ensuring equal opportunities to learn regardless of the cultural and linguistic background of migrant pupils, their socio-economic or “temporary” status:
 - a. socio-cultural differences as an obstacle to ensuring equal opportunities in achieving learning and linguistic performance;
 - b. taking into account the developmental and psychological characteristics of children and adolescents when it comes to the inclusion of migrant children;
 - c. individualisation as the primary principle of inclusive intercultural pedagogy;
 - d. taking into account different levels of oral competence in the language of schooling (Slovenian) when it comes to ensuring a suitable environment to attain learning performance of migrants.
3. **Participation of migrants in the school environment – at the level of pupils, teachers and parents.** Reflection on the participation of migrants at school (among pupils, teachers, parents, migrant associations and NGOs) and strategies that would encourage them to participate more actively in the democratic processes within the school and to integrate more successfully into the new social environment:



- a. involving representatives of migrant parents in various bodies of the school's functioning (e.g., the parents' council);
- b. involving migrants (parents and other adults in the local community) to help as translators, teaching assistants, leaders of extracurricular activities at school, or volunteers in organizations and public institutions in the local community;
- c. involving migrants (parents and other adults in the local community) to help as teachers in classes of other mother tongues and cultures;
- d. integrating ideas and experiences of migrant pupils into conducting classes and extracurricular activities; promoting products made by migrant children at the school level and in connection with the local community; developing volunteering at school; promoting creativity and joint activities for Slovenian and migrant children;
- e. employing teachers of migrant background ("role models" of integration).

In addition to this, the aim was to establish a closer link between the stakeholders working in this field in Slovenian educational establishments, higher education and research institutions, non-governmental organisations, the National Education Institute Slovenia, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, informal associations and individual migrants.

Inputs and debate points

The discussion at the NRT was organised around four thematic sections presented below. Short descriptions are followed by the links to the projects' websites where good practices are presented in more detail.

Part I: Multilingualism and Plurilingualism in the Pedagogical Process

- A representative of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport presented the activities in relation to the language policy development to promote multilingualism in the pedagogical process. She discussed the possibilities of networking and cooperating with the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe – ECML (<https://www.ecml.at/>).
- A higher education teacher and project manager at Languages Matter (<https://www.jeziki-stejejo.si>) and LISTIAC (<http://www.listiac.org/home>) presented the examples of plurilingualism implementation in education as well as the issues related to the deep-rooted monolingual perspective in the Slovenian school environment.
- A National Education Institute Slovenia counsellor described a concept of mobility at the border, a set of competencies the teachers in the border area need and the possibilities of transferring these practices into schools attended by migrants.
- A primary school librarian presented the school library as a space of multilingual practices when it comes to the inclusion of migrants in education.
- The thematic discussion with the audience highlighted the good practices of multilingualism and plurilingualism that take into account a whole-school approach and individualisation, the promotion of quality interactions with peers and adults within and outside school, and the continuing training of teachers for developing plurilingual competence.



Part II: **Ensuring equal opportunities for education – bridging the gap between the acquisition of the language of schooling (Slovenian) and academic achievements of migrants**

- A secondary school counsellor and teacher presented possible adaptations of lessons in the first year of inclusion of migrant students based on intensive learning of Slovenian and vocational guidance.
- A higher vocational college principal pointed out the need for systemic changes and adaptation of practices that would allow migrant students to successfully complete secondary education and enter the Slovenian labour market.
- A primary school teacher multiplier presented the practice of the Individual Activity Plan or INA (<http://www.medkulturnost.si>) that enables team to plan, monitor and evaluate prior knowledge, further knowledge and social adaptation of migrant pupils.
- An intercultural mediator presented the practice of a bilingual teacher who helps pupils to successfully bridge the gap between the language of schooling and academic achievement and, if the child and their parents learn Slovenian at the same time, the teacher also promotes social integration of the entire family.
- The thematic discussion revealed a gap between planned options and guidelines for multilingual teaching and their implementation in the school practice: two- or multilingual didactics are not used in the integration of migrants; a standardized test of Slovenian at the A2 level, which is a prerequisite for migrant students to continue education, appears to be too demanding in practice; teachers should benefit more from available training about teaching Slovenian to migrants.

Part III: **Role of local community in the integration of migrants**

- A social worker in the Day Centre for Migrants outlined the critical points on which the good practice of inclusion of migrants in education is based: the importance of their inclusion in education, networking and peer support among migrant children, the development of personal and social competencies of migrants, the promotion of self-determination with adequate information on education, and ensuring a safe learning environment at school (and acceptance among Slovenian peers).
- The president of the High School Student Organisation of Slovenia presented some examples of activities (in cooperation with the OBESSU) (<https://www.facebook.com/dijaskaorg/>), which enable mutual knowledge, understanding and acceptance between the majority pupils and the migrant pupils.
- A representative of the Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto (DRPD NM) explained the activities within the KULTEGRACIJA project (<http://www.medkulturnost.si/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Andreja-Lu%DCtek-Predstavitev-programa-KULTEGRACIJA.pdf>), which is based on a flexible implementation (adaptation to the users' needs), intensive networking of users and institutions, active participation of users in planning and implementing programmes, and an active role of the intercultural mediator in empowering migrant families.
- A cultural mediator presented good practices of integrating Albanian migrants that show the effectiveness of cultural mediators (The Social integration of Albanian-speaking women project (http://www.lucelje.si/socialna_aktivacija_albansko_govorecih_zensk/)) and the need for employment in various public health, social and educational institutions. (<https://www.nijz.si/sl/projekt-care>; https://www.nijz.si/files/publikacije-datoteke/prirocnik_kulturne_kompetence_2016.pdf).



- Key features of good practices for integrating migrants were outlined during the thematic discussion with the audience: taking into account the diversity of migrants when it comes to planning the activities for their integration, promoting the integration of entire migrant families, understanding the developmental and socio-cultural specificities, ensuring confidentiality and security, and being aware that a planned process does not always lead to the desired result.

Part IV: **Strategies for promoting active participation of parents and other adult migrants at school**

- A researcher of interculturality in education presented the appropriate ways and importance of parental inclusion in school.
- A primary school principal emphasized the importance of official multilingual communication with migrant parents (e.g., multilingual invitations) and pointed out that successful integration requires the activation of the entire teaching body. She also stressed that education programmes for future teachers should develop intercultural competencies (<http://lezdrugimismo.si>).
- A representative of Parent Council Association of Slovenia drew attention to the need to contextualize migration and design strategies for overcoming hidden discrimination in school. He also highlighted the problems of inclusion of migrant parents into the school bodies (Parents' Council: transparency, representation, organization). Furthermore, he presented the benefits of the multilingual Compass for Parents tool, developed by the European Parents' Association within the ParentHelp Project (<http://www.ParentHelp.eu>).
- In the context of the successful inclusion of migrant children, a researcher and a higher education teacher of inclusive pedagogy outlined the model of an inclusive school community based on a universalist approach to addressing diversity in education (a uniform school strategy, all teachers accept responsibility for the inclusion and success of children, teamwork, differentiation of teaching, self-initiative and flexibility of teachers). Such an approach is important for overcoming the established partial solutions intended for specific groups of students.

The thematic discussion showed a gap between the modern principles of inclusion and its practical implementation when it comes to the inclusion of migrant children. The need to sensitize the majority parents and teachers to recognize the diversity of migrant parents and their difficulties in joining the school community was emphasized (the importance of good preparation, of being informed, and of discussions with parents and the teaching body on cultural specificities, circumstances and migrants' first-hand experiences).

Conclusions and way forward

Conclusions:

1. Successful implementation of good practices requires appropriate system support (solutions):
 - systematization of jobs for specially trained teachers who have developed their intercultural competence within specific projects (e.g., multipliers);
 - flexibility of organizing lessons;



- integration of informal forms of education into school practice.
2. The notion of *good practice* is not universal:
 - individual good practice is not necessarily transferable and successful in all school environments:
 - due to individual and interaction effects, it can even produce effects opposite to those intended;
 - due to different circumstances, it does not lead to the desired results;
 - a practice that does not lead to the implementation of the intended objective is not necessarily a bad practice;
 - good practices that are potentially transferable to another context are sometimes not recognized as such (for example, models of mobile teachers and multilingual didactics used in schools in border areas are not recognized as useful in the inclusion of migrants in other parts of Slovenia).
 3. Ensuring the continuation of good practices:
 - good practices developed within the projects (e.g., Challenges of Intercultural Coexistence (SIMS), Languages Matter (JEŠT)) should become part of the school curriculum (included in the school's annual work plan after the expiration of projects that should be implemented within the entire teaching body);
 - good practices developed within the projects should be extended to other school environments (including the schools that were not involved in the projects) in the form of collaboration between schools;
 - systemic bases should enable that the practices from the projects, which are evaluated and demonstrated to be effective, can be transferred and integrated by the teacher (or the school) into their implementation curriculum.
 4. The Individual Innovation Plan (INA) is a good practice that enables teachers to plan, work, monitor and change the learning process, which is necessary for the successful inclusion of the migrant child.
 5. The current way of inclusion of migrant pupils in the education, which focuses on learning Slovenian while joining the regular classes, does not necessarily produce the desired results (e.g., at the level of academic achievements, learning motivation, knowledge of Slovenian). The reason for this perhaps lies in the established monolingual approach.
 6. Multilingualism practices should be used to more effectively promote the inclusion of migrant children and social activation of their parents:
 - a flexible teacher who can find different sources and associate with colleagues inside and outside the teaching body (within the local community and internationally);
 - access to multilingual learning materials and literature that, through the development of literacy in mother tongues, raises the effectiveness of learning and the management of the language of schooling; therefore, system support in the funding and organization of school libraries would be required;
 - focus on all actors in the pedagogical process, not just migrant pupils (e.g., informing and preparing children, parents and teachers to share the school space with migrant pupils);
 - involvement in the organization of lessons and didactics of all subjects (not only Slovenian).



7. The presence of an intercultural mediator at school is important because it facilitates the initial inclusion and contact between cultures, between school and pupils, and parents (mutually facilitates understanding and recognition of different cultural characteristics and linguistic meanings).
8. Inclusion of migrant children requires a holistic approach based on the understanding of the school space as diverse, which requires all participants (children, teachers, management, parents) to assume responsibility for the learning process in accordance with their roles and abilities, with the need for individualization and differentiation of teaching.
9. It is important to encourage the participation and cooperation among teachers, pupils and parents in various roles within the school community (e.g., pupils may be teachers to peers or adults, while the parents have professions with which they can enrich the school environment).

Way forward:

From the set of presented practices, participants were invited to select the ones they found interesting, test them in their work with migrants, and evaluate and submit proposals for upgrade or further development at the next NRT.

Follow up of the NRT

Due to the very positive response, both in terms of content and the way of addressing the issues, the organizer (ERI) will prepare a summary of the discussion and equip it with all the relevant links to the presented projects. The NRT summary will be presented at a press conference, published on the ERI website and social networks, and disseminated by e-mail to the participants and the interested public. Our wish is to enable the widest possible networking of all those involved in the inclusion of migrants, and in particular encourage the exchange of experiences and good practices between individual actors.

At this year's and last year's NRT, we were unable to ensure the participation of representatives of migrant-led organizations because migrants in Slovenia mostly organize in the form of cultural societies. They mainly care for the preservation and development of their own culture and language, and their activities are less often included in public educational programs. However, two individuals, who, as migrants, are very active in the field of intercultural mediation in education, were invited to participate at the round table. We will continue with this practice in the future.

Continuity with the NRT 2018

The thematic sections of this year's NRT were established entirely on the issues identified during the implementation of the strategy aimed at the inclusion of migrants in the Slovenian education system at the last



year's round table NRT 2018. The invited participants of this year's NRT 2019 were equally diverse (politicians, researchers, teachers and non-government representatives), while the number of stakeholders was higher compared to the year before (High School Student Organisation of Slovenia, intercultural mediators, and migrants). This year, the response of the concerned public was just as good: the attendance was even higher and very heterogeneous in terms of the representation of various institutions. The participants praised the event's continuity, the selection of topics and the dialogue-based round table.

Challenges

This year, unlike last year, two representatives of the migrant community, who have been working as cultural mediators in education, as well as a representative of the High School Student Organisation of Slovenia/Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions, were invited to the round table as well.

The integration strategy covers the whole educational path (kindergartens, primary, secondary and tertiary education), while the first and second round table covered the inclusion of migrants at the level of primary and secondary education only. The inclusion of migrants in kindergartens was only covered indirectly (not in an independent contribution). The inclusion of migrants in tertiary education was not considered; however, it was briefly discussed in the context of educating future teachers.

During the discussion at the first and second round table, teachers in particular stressed the need for concrete "recipes" for a successful inclusion of migrants. The goal of round table was to start a discussion and reflect on finding one's own way to improve the success of inclusion in a specific educational environment and highlight the key features of examples of good practice (which are potentially transferable to other environments). However, this is also an indicator of the lack of self-initiative and assumption of responsibility among the teachers for the planning and implementation of the pedagogical process. The purpose of the round table in the future will remain to continue to raise the awareness among teachers that a successful professional development does not lie in the uncritical collection of tips and examples of good practices of others, but in constantly questioning their own practice through dialogue with others, exchanging views on the professional role of teachers and jointly finding strategies that can lead to the successful implementation of the goals and principles of inclusion of migrants in education.

Teachers sometimes mistakenly expect that the majority of the good practices needs to be systematically regulated and implemented in advance. In doing so, they overlook the possibility of implementing or developing them themselves in their micro environment without systemic implementation. They do not, for example, recognize their responsibility and autonomy for the implementation of any of the NRT conclusions in their



pedagogic practice or at the school level, but await the instructions of the ministry, which has the power to introduce such practices at the systemic level.



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Participants

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Name	Organisation/ institution	Position in organisation/ institution
POLICY MAKERS		
Bronka Straus	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport	Secretary at the Office for Development and Quality of Education, Development Area: Language Education
Katica Pevec Semec, Ph.D.	National Education Institute Slovenia,	Advisor at Department for Primary School Education
TEACHERS, TEACHER-TRAINERS, SCHOOL-LEADERS OR OTHER SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES		
Karmen Pižorn, Ph.D.	University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Department of Basic Pedagogical Studies	Associate professor of English language didactic; teacher trainer
Marijanca Ajša Vižintin, Ph.D.	Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU), Slovenian Migration Institute	Researcher and teacher trainer
Klara Skubic Ermenc, Ph.D.	University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Educational Sciences	Associate professor of pedagogy; teacher trainer
Urška Peršin Mazi	8 Talcev Logatec Elementary School	librarian
Alenka Pečnik Kranjec	Brežice School of Economics and Commerce	school counsellor
Sladjana Jović Mičković, M.Ed.	Livada Elementary School	Teacher and multiplier in the Challenges of Intercultural Coexistence project
Gvido Jager	Ljubljana Secondary School of Civil Engineering, Land Surveying and Environmental Studies	principal
Nada Duler	2nd Elementary School Slovenj Gradec	principal
PARENTS- AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES		
Damir Josipovič, Ph.D.	Parent Council Association of Slovenia (ZASSS) and Institute for Ethnic Studies	Representative of parents and researcher
Lucija Karnelutti	High School Student Organisation of Slovenia (DOS)	President of DOS
OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS		
Astrite Humski	Self-employed teacher and translator of Albanian language	intercultural mediator
Vera Haliti	Certified Judicial interpreter for Albanian language	intercultural mediator
Primož Jamšek	Slovene Philanthropy	Coordinator of the Day Centre for Migrants in Ljubljana and Maribor project
Mojca Rodič	the Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto	Project coordinator