



## **NRT SPAIN 2019**

### **Report**

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**SIRIUS is co-funded by the  
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## Context

The law in Spain states that the public Administration is responsible for implementing practices that promote the integration of pupils with a migrant background into the education system. Consequently, it is up to the regional governments (comunidades autónomas) to develop such integration in their contexts. The outcome of all is a heterogeneous map of 17 education programmes that implement this regulation in a diverse way.

Spain hosted 797,618 pupils with a migrant background in its classrooms at all levels of education during the 2018-2019 academic course. All those students were integrated in an education system that was ruled under the principle of equity. In terms of schooling, pupils with a migrant background were supplied with full universal access to compulsory education between the ages of 6 and 16 as their native peers, with no discrimination at all, and children between 3 and 6 years attended to pre-school establishments in rates higher than 95%.

However, the Spanish education system shows a significant gap in schooling from 0 to 3 years old, as well as in vocational education. This prints a significant impact on migrant population, with low rates of schooling of their youngest children. Surprisingly, the migrant population rates in vocational education are higher than the average, as this education has a low prestige in Spanish society, and it is mainly devoted for early school leavers and those without an academic accreditation.

In terms of academic achievement, data show that there is still a long way to go. Recent research states that the probability of repeating a low socioeconomic quartile pupil is almost 6 times higher than that of a high socioeconomic quartile pupil. If we consider that pupils with a migrant background are mostly concentrated within the low socioeconomic quartile, we easily conclude that these pupils achieve worse academic results than their native classmates in big proportions. Grade repetition rates are also higher for migrant pupils than their native peers.

The policy measures for moving on equity for all (migrant pupils included) are clear: a significant budget increase, better school management, improving the curriculum model, improving the both internal and external school assessment system, improving teacher training, promoting a democratic management, introducing community education and increasing schools' autonomy. The more the education system becomes better for all, the more the pupils with a migrant background will become more successful at school.

In 2019, the Spanish SIRIUS National Round Table focused the attention on three of these measures: the promotion of a democratic school management through the improvement of migrant parents participation, the teacher training addressed to those teachers working in highly concentrated settings, and the participation of youngsters in non-formal education, especially those identified as unaccompanied minors.

## National Round Table

Date: June 14 <sup>th</sup> 2019 Number of participants: 26
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Venue: Headquarters of the Institute of Education, City Council of Barcelona.

Topic: *“Developing educational policies for people with a migrant background”*.

Some guiding questions helped both speakers and participants to focus their policy analysis and proposals:

- How can we promote policies to increase the participation of families with a migrant background at school?
- Which are the key issues for a smart policy of teacher training on intercultural education?
- Which are the main obstacles to facilitate the participation of youngsters with a migrant background in non-formal education?

The structure of the session was divided in four parts:

- **OPENING REMARKS:** Aiming to introduce the main policy priorities/reform needed to be addressed in Spain, providing a conceptual rationale necessary to ground and guide our national activity. The keynote speaker was Dr. Andrés Escarbajal, from the University of Murcia.
- **POLICY PANNEL:** Aiming to set a policymakers debate on the three main priorities and reforms selected, with a special focus on regional and local policies. This panel counted on the participation of Mr. Oriol Amorós and Ms. Gené Gordó, from the Government of Catalonia, and Dr. Miquel Àngel Essomba, from the City Council of Barcelona.
- **WORKSHOPS:** Centred on the discussion and development of a series of concrete proposals for policy development and/or reform for each one of the three main priorities identified in Spain. Participants were distributed in three groups. Each one of them had a moderator responsible for gathering the main outputs and conclusions.
- **PLENARY SESSION AND FINAL REMARKS:** Final plenary session for the presentation of conclusions and signing of commitments facing the policy development or reform for each one of the priorities.

The Spanish 2019 National Round Table counted on a plural representation of stakeholders:

- Instituto Miquel Tarradell (Barcelona)
- FAPAES (parents association)
- CEIP Mare de Déu de Montserrat (Terrassa)
- Grupo de investigación en desarrollo humano, intervención social e interculturalidad
- Asociación Rumiñahui (Valencia)
- Asociación Educativa Integral del Raval
- Grupo de Estudios de Inmigración y Minorías Étnicas
- Escola Bressol Municipal Aurora (Barcelona)
- Associació de Mestres Rosa Sensat
- Plataforma de Acció Social KABUA
- Universitat de Girona
- Fundació María Auxiliadora (Terrassa)
- Agencia Catalana de Joventut
- CCOO (trade union)
- NGO Superacció
- Comisión de Ayuda al Refugiado
- Asociación Marroquí para la Integración de los Inmigrantes
- Federación de Centros Juveniles Don Bosco



## *Inputs and debate points*

All the discussions during the opening remarks and the policy panel were very fruitful. They turned around the three essential topics of the National Round Table: teacher training, family participation, and migrant youngsters in non-formal education. Starting with the teaching staff, we state that the new composition of the Spanish classrooms requires teachers trained to meet the unexpected needs of their migrant pupils. Teachers must move on and consider that educational equity for migrant pupils not only consists in their school achievement, but also in a framework of socialization and relationships under intercultural principles. According to the intercultural education guidelines by UNESCO (2005), in Spain teachers not only have to promote an education with academic contents, respect and knowledge of other cultures, but also with critical thinking, emotional and ethical factors as well as the promotion of positive values on diversity.

This requires an initial and in-service teacher training model aimed at acquiring professional skills to meet the needs of migrant pupils. Intercultural education is a topic in the curriculum of Spanish teacher training, but it still requires a major status. Work must continue to bring out a broad and solid intercultural background from teachers, as well as the ability to critically reflect on daily educational practice in complex environments. Spain should promote policies that help teachers develop attitudes that allow them to be critical, reflective and committed on cultural diversity.

Regarding the role of families, Spain stays under a situation of contradiction. On the one hand, scientific evidence indicates that the involvement of families (all in general, and those with migrant background in particular) is a key boost for educational equity. However, on the other hand we find a Spanish law that invites to restrict such participation - see LOMCE, the latest Education Act -, and reduces the right of families to become active in decision-making. In general, Spain draws a vertical nature of governance, with little space to engage families.

If we move into migrant families, their participation is even more restricted for cultural and linguistic barriers. Migrant families, as well as minority ethnic groups such as the Roma people, have a lower degree of participation in every way in Spain. We are still far from an effective policy that introduces an intercultural, gender and community perspective in our schools that favours a greater degree of migrant family involvement.

Finally, and driving our focus to youngsters with a migrant background, it is essential to stand on our attention on a key aspect: the educational opportunities that migrant pupils can find outside of school. And this dimension sets a big challenge, as evidence shows that the degree of participation of migrant pupils in free-time educational activities, or extracurricular training, is much lower than the one by their native classmates.

Nevertheless, youngster participation rates in community education activities are generally low in Spain. There's a multifactorial explanation to this, and some historical reasons and sociological dynamics are behind. This absence of non-formal education public policies is more visible now, when a large number of unaccompanied minors are arriving in Spanish Mediterranean cities, and neither schools nor non-formal education organizations are ready to welcome and meet the need of these youngsters.



Beyond the analysis, all the participants at the 2019 National Round Table agreed that the opening of a new political cycle in Spain this 2019, at all levels of the Administration (National, regional and local), should allow us to be optimistic about policy development on education and migration. At a National level, the door is open to repeal the LOMCE Education Act, with numerous articles against equity and diversity, so that regional government might have the chance to articulate educational policies sensitive to issues related to integration and success at school for all.

In terms of teacher training, the participation of ten Spanish universities since 2019 in the ambitious project of “European Higher Education institutions” (four Catalan, two Valencian, two from Madrid and two Andalusians) will significantly increase the exchanges, the quality and the European dimension of initial teacher training. As these ten universities are placed in regions where the migration rate looks higher, everybody expects a generalised improvement of teacher training as well as a better introduction of an intercultural dimension within the teacher training curriculum.

New local authorities may also play a remarkable role, if we consider that it is local settings where equity programmes take place – municipalities should articulate their policies to those at a both National/regional level when implementing measures for migrant families and their children and youngsters. The current political situation should facilitate the dialogue and co-operation among different levels of the Administration.

## *Conclusions and way forward*

The workshops were rich in policy recommendations on the three topics. These recommendations were shared in a final plenary session among all the participants, and everyone could introduce new ideas, suggestions and amendments that were taken into account by the workshop leaders.

The policy recommendations on teacher training were addressed to fill the gap between law and reality: policy plans express the will of better training on intercultural education and diversity management, but the current situation of the Spanish classrooms is still far from being intercultural. Therefore, some policy recommendations were proposed:

- To introduce a National Plan on Intercultural Education in all the in-service teacher training programmes, regardless the presence of migrant pupils in the region or not, so that all those teachers who did not receive training on interculturalism during their initial teacher training might have access to it.
- To make use of the latest research on intercultural education in teacher training so that teachers get updated information and strategies on how to deal with cultural minorities and migrant pupils today. To be aware of the 4 C's for a successful intercultural education: conditions, context, community and change.
- To promote a National network of teacher trainers specialized in intercultural education and diversity management, in order to exchange good practices on teacher training and facilitate peer-support among higher education staff.



- To create a resources centre in every region that facilitates the link between teacher training and meaningful intercultural contexts. In that sense, teacher training on intercultural education should be strongly articulated with local community education plans.
- To introduce a specific regulation that encourages higher education institutions to plan long term programmes on teacher training about intercultural education and diversity management at schools. Intercultural education training programmes should last one academic year at least, and they should be based on practical work and teamwork.
- To introduce strategies to extend the training on intercultural education to all the relevant stakeholders concerned with migration in local communities, together with teachers and professionals in the field of education.
- To encourage both regional and local authorities to promote a certain sense of interculturalism in their cultural policies (based on multiple identities, active citizenship and social responsibility) so that municipalities might play an active role as educating cities, and regional/local authorities prove a strong commitment to cultural diversity and a human rights approach to migration.

The policy recommendations of migrant parents active participation were not addressed to migrant families as a target group but to the Administration and the native citizenship, who has to make efforts to transform current structures and dynamics to facilitate integration. These are the most remarkable recommendations that came up from the discussion:

- To start a policy reform in education that promotes horizontality in decision making: More dialogue is needed and greater equality between the school community (students, teachers, families) and the Administration. It is necessary to introduce a bottom-up dynamic, and that the Administration "listens" and becomes empathic with the school community.
- To invest resources (human, financial) to break down the current barriers in front of migrant parents: cultural, linguistic, political, demographic, etc.). It is necessary to make the school an open and welcoming space for migrant families. Spaces for exchange and opportunities between migrants and natives should be implemented in local communities, and mentoring strategies addressed to migrant parents should take place within school communities.
- To introduce mechanisms for knowledge transfer on parental involvement and migration: greater connection between researchers and school communities, especially in scientific dissemination. Research on parental involvement of migrant parents should be disseminated at school.
- To introduce the basic principle of "Participation is achieved by participating" in both policy making and policy implementation about parental involvement of migrant families: greater opening of the school to stimulate the creation of alliances between the different stakeholders. To finance the participation of parents in adult training activities (reading clubs, language proficiency courses, etc.) within the schools. To generate a culture of participation.
- To clarify roles and tasks of the several professionals who are actively working within the school frame with regards to the migrant parents: tutors, counsellors, mentors and trainers, since there is certain kind of confusion on who does what. To encourage migrant parents to assume actions of mediation and/or translation with newly arrived migrant parents at school.



The policy recommendation on migrant youngsters in non-formal education settings were mainly focused of the current situation about migrant unaccompanied minors. Non-formal education reveals opportunities to deal with this specific population, especially activities based on sports, leisure or scouting, since these action frames provide a shared identity, a sense of mutual respect and intercultural values. Non-formal education becomes meaningful for migrant unaccompanied minors so as it promotes education from experience and presence, with no academic assessment, and acknowledging the youngsters prior learning.

Therefore, the policy recommendations are oriented to give priority to their educational, vital and emotional development and needs, always under the principle that the child's interest should always prevail above his/her migrant condition:

- To eliminate bureaucratic obstacles that prevents unaccompanied minors to participate in non-formal education activities.
- To introduce a sense of community education within the following education policy reform, so that formal education and non-formal education are driven through a similar status.
- To implement Community Education Plans in local areas, with a special focus on unaccompanied minors. These plans should be co-ordinated by local authorities, and they should meet the unaccompanied minor needs on school learning, sport practice, cultural activity, peer socialization and others. All the local stakeholders should be articulated in the frame of a Local Community Education Commission.
- To extend the supplies and educational facilities for unaccompanied minors beyond 18 years old. Despite the fact that these unaccompanied minors become young adults once they are 18, their social and educational needs keep the same than they were minors. In that sense, a specific programme of scholarships and vocational education for young adults who were unaccompanied minors should be carried out.
- To promote the access of unaccompanied minors in those democratic participatory platforms where their rights and needs are discussed.
- To acknowledge the unaccompanied minors initiatives in the field of education and training. To support mutual learning and networking with other youngsters. Sport and cultural activities are mostly chosen by them to expand bridges towards their peers in non-formal education settings.

To end up, participants also mentioned the threats looming over the horizon. They were convinced that the humanitarian crisis that keeps alive in the Mediterranean (which means an increasing number of new flows of asylum seekers and refugees) will continue to seriously affect the Spanish education system in the nearest future. Similarly, they were concerned on the rise of the extreme right in Europe as well as in Spain, a political ideology against diversity and intercultural education, and in favour to prevent a full citizenship for migrants. All these new challenges should probably be the focus of the next Spanish National Round Table in 2020.



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### **Participants**

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Name	Organisation/ institution	Position in organisation/ institution
<b>POLICY MAKERS</b>		
Gené Gordó	Ministry of Education, Catalonia	Deputy director general for support and care for the Catalan school community
Oriol Amorós	Ministry of Social Affairs and Families, Catalonia	Secretary general
Miquel Àngel Essomba	City Council of Barcelona	Comissioner for education
Pilar Leonart	City Council of Barcelona	Head of Educating Cities Programme
Abdou Mawa Ndiaye	Ministry of Social Affairs and Families, Catalonia	Migrant youth programme assistant
<b>MIGRANT-LED ORGANISATIONS</b>		
Vladimir Paspuel	Association Rumiñauí	President
Claudia Guayguacundo	Association Rumiñauí	Head of department, Families and education
Youssef Kouah	Association AMISI	Social educator
Edgar Iglesias	Association AEI Raval	Programme director
Zuhir Zammouri	Association Superacció	President
<b>TEACHERS, TEACHER-TRAINERS, SCHOOL-LEADERS OR OTHER SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES</b>		
Núria Marín	Mare de Déu de Montserrat primary school	Headteacher
José Luis Lalueza	Psychology of Education research group DEHISI	Director
Xavier Besalú	Universitat de Girona	Teacher trainer
Andrés Escarbajal	Universidad de Murcia	Teacher trainer
Olga Serradell	Immigration and Ethnic Minorities research group	Researcher
Francina Martí	Risa Sensat teachers association	President
Elisa Palau	Aurora pre-school	Director
Anna Tarrés	Diversity and inclusion within complex societies research group	Programme director
Simone Belli	Universidad Complutense de Madrid	Researcher
Cristian López	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México	Researcher
<b>PARENTS- AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES</b>		
Lluís Vila	FAPAES	President
Karin Blanco	Association "Mamás que leen"	Co-ordinator
Fernando Gimeno	Federacion de Asociaciones Juveniles Don Bosco	President
<b>OTHER RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS</b>		
Josep Guardiola	Association Objectiu Inclusió	President
Neus Vidal		Social educator
Begoña López	CCOO trade union	Director, Education Programme