



QUALITATIVE STUDY ON MIGRANT PARENT EMPOWERMENT

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1. Introduction to the project

The project 'ALFIRK - Collaborative Networks for Migrant Parent Empowerment' addresses the importance of including parents, and in particular migrant parents in school and educational processes of their children. ALFIRK was initiated by the SIRIUS Network - Policy Network on Migrant Education with the support of the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Program and builds up on the SIRIUS 'Agenda on Migrant Education'¹.

Migrant parents are often found to participate less in the school processes and the education of their children while at the same time many migrant students lag behind in educational achievements. Parental involvement in school and education matters of their children carries the potential to contribute to enhanced educational performance. Furthermore, parents with a migrant background are often not as well connected to local structures and information as parents without a migrant background. Strengthening parental networking and their inclusion in local structures carries the potential to further enhance their involvement in the education of their children.

Against this background, ALFIRK addresses barriers in increased parental empowerment in education processes, particularly among migrant parents, by:

- Analyzing patterns of migrant parental involvement, parental networking, and barriers in parental involvement and empowerment at case study schools in six EU countries;
- Identifying practical tools and good practices for migrant parental involvement and empowerment in order to enable schools to improve their strategies for migrant parental involvement;
- Developing online tools to enable migrant parents to easily access information about school and education systems in EU countries and to network and exchange information among each other.

In the long term, ALFIRK aims to empower migrant parents at three levels:

- The family level, which reflects parents' ability to manage issues of the family within the social context,
- The service system level, which reflects the degree to which parents are able to effectively work with the school system,
- The community/political level, which reflects parents' advocacy for improved services for migrant youth in general.

The collaborative approach is reflected in the project name "ALFIRK," which means "the flock." The project ran from September 2015 to August 2018 and resulted in this qualitative study and a subsequent Toolkit with recommendations and good practices; it was coordinated by the European Forum for Migration Studies - efms (Germany): The partners were Multi Kulti Collective (Bulgaria), Risbo (the Netherlands), Leeds Beckett University (United Kingdom), Economic and Social Research Institute (Ireland), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain), and Migration Policy Group (Belgium).

After introducing the project and research background of this study, a comprehensive literature review is provided which draws on the importance of home-school partnerships for encouraging educational success of students with a migration background.

In the subsequent section, the research approach and methodology of this qualitative study are being discussed, including the clarification of the research question and its sub-questions, as well as the description of the research stages which illustrate the underlying considerations of this project.

Accordingly, the main section of this report contains a description of the migration situation in each country and elaborates on the respective migration situation, policies, parental networking initiatives as well as the case study profiles and the consequent findings of each country-specific case study. Finally, the study closes with concluding remarks and recommendations which need to be interpreted in the particular national contexts.

¹SIRIUS (2014). A Clear Agenda on Migrant Education. MPG, November 2014. Available online: http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Agenda-and-Recommendations-for-Migrant-Education_04112014.pdf (retrieved on 04 December 2017).



2. Literature Review

The importance of home-school partnerships for encouraging educational success of migrant students and young people

Introduction

Students' engagement in school and their academic achievement are influenced by many institutions and people, including parents. It is widely recognised that for students to gain maximum benefit from schooling they need parental support (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003). Recognising this, at policy level, a number of countries have made attempts to increase parental engagement in education. (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003; Wang and Holcombe 2010). Though home and school appear to be two separate worlds they are intertwined and interact in children's developmental process. In addition to school-based engagement, parental home engagement has also been shown to be a significant predictor of children's academic achievement (Bodovski, 2010). Children who have a stimulating cognitive home environment tend to score better in academic tests (Bradley et al, 2001; Desimone, 1999). While there is consensus among authors regarding the benefit of parental engagement, the necessary actions by parents have been defined differently by various academics, reflecting the complexity of the concept.

The following section explores various theories and terms used in describing how parents can be involved in school education of their children. It shows that many terms are often used synonymously, thus creating confusion about the concept of parental engagement.

Parental engagement, involvement or partnership – discussion of some main concepts

Parents can be involved in education of their children in different ways, including formal and informal approaches (see Yemini et al, 2016). Parental participation is a specific concept and can be regarded as the active participation of parents in school activities, including 'communicating with teachers or school officials, attending meetings or events at school and participating in decision-making groups (Lawrence, 2015: 185). Within parental participation one can distinguish between non-institutionalized forms of parental participation (such as carrying out a few informal tasks for the school) and institutionalized forms of parental participation (such as serving on the parents' council or school board) (Education Council, 2010). The term "educational partnership" is also being used as a concept to describe meaningful collaborative relationships between schools and parents (Smit, Driessen and Doesborg, 2005; Lusse, 2013). Educational partnership implies the mutual involvement of parents and schools in order to create optimal developmental and learning conditions for children, at home and in school. This approach is considered to facilitate knowledge of and respect for each other's respective responsibilities (Education Council, 2010, p. 45). A real educational partnership does not yet seem to exist (Education Council, 2010, p. 7) as the position of parents in relation to the school is often relatively weak as they are generally not regarded as equal partners by teachers (Smit et al., 2006). While the three concepts tend to differ in the extent of which parents' feel empowered to interact as equal partners in the home-school interface, the existing theorising has centred mostly on parental involvement as a generic term.

Parental involvement is an over-arching term which is used in different ways in the literature and in practice (Vogels, 2002; Smit et al., 2007; Education Council, 2010; Lusse, 2013). The complexity of the concept is evident in the study by Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) who note that parental involvement takes many forms including:

"Good parenting in the home, including the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfillment and good citizenship; contact with schools to share information; participation in school events; participation in the work of the school; and participation in school governance." (p. 4)

Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) offer a framework for understanding the complexities involved. They differentiate between school involvement (participating in the activities and events in school); cognitive involvement (exposing children to intellectually stimulating activities e.g. going to the library etc.) and personal involvement (attitudes and expectations with regard to education, keeping informed about child's school life). They also differentiate between indirect model (e.g. motivation) and direct model (outcomes using practice and instruction). Elsewhere, these relationships have been



categorised by both the quantity (time spent with the child) and quality (closeness and monitoring of behaviour) of parental involvement (see Marsiglio, 1991; Lamb, et al. 1987; Yemini et al, 2015).

Differences in the level of involvement and impact of involvement appear to reflect differences in parents' human, social and cultural capital (Lee and Bowen, 2006). Research from a number of countries has shown that white, middle-class parents are more likely to become actively involved in activities of the school of their child (Lareau 1989; Reay 2005a, b). Being familiar with the educational system that largely reproduces middle-class values, these parents can easily 'navigate the system' to ensure support for their children. On the other hand, some working class parents can be perceived by teachers as less involved and teachers expect less of them (Griffith and Smith 2005), however, these parents may be involved in their child's education in different ways. Researchers often view working class parents and members of racial and ethnic minority groups as lacking access to the valued forms of capital. The involvement of middle class parents is often more visible, while working-class parents although interested, informed and concerned by their children's education feel that they are excluded from the decision-making processes about school management and organisation (Hanafin and Lynch, 2002).

While the definitions of 'parental involvement' have been varied, one can broadly distinguish between two dimensions of involvement: a) school-based and b) home-based.

School-based approach of parental involvement

School-based involvement strategies include involvement in school governance and activities at school (see Epstein 1987, Comer 1995, Education Council, 2010, Lusse, 2013). Parental school-based involvement has been found to benefit student outcomes (Hofman, et al., 2002; Smit et al., 2006; Lusse, 2013, p. 43). Parental involvement may help to prevent early school leaving (Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2009; Lusse, 2013, p. 25), although empirical evidence on this topic has remained sparse (Lusse, 2013, p. 32). Furthermore, parental involvement is one of several ways to deal with student underperformance and early school leaving (OECD, 2012).

Some sources note that most parents attend parent-teacher meetings and parents' evenings even though only a relatively small number actively provide assistance in school and exercise greater influence on education of their children (Karsten et al., 2006). A national survey in Ireland shows that the vast majority of mothers of primary school children (88%) attend meetings, although fewer (62%) had attended a school concert, play or other event. A minority (23%) had been to see the principal or teacher about their child's behaviour or performance, while 19% had spoken to the principal/teacher about these issues over the phone (see Growing up in Ireland key findings)². In order to encourage participation, schools may organise parenting classes and activities around how to assist children learning at home (Lusse, 2015, p. 12). According to Campbell (2011) volunteering offers welcome opportunities for parents to get more involved:

"Volunteering opportunities, be they formal through service on a governing body or more informally through the PTA and seasonal fairs involvement can break down barriers and capitalise on and use the hidden expertise of parents. Such involvement can also build up valuable networks which can draw in the hard-to-reach parent who would otherwise not engage". (Campbell, 2011, p. 17)

This is in line with Ryan et al. (2010) who suggest that parents should be considered resources, drawing upon their skills and cultural diversity in order to contribute positively to the life of the school (p. 31). Campbell also calls for family learning opportunities; suggesting that "Family learning opportunities can encompass after-school clubs, parent-child homework sessions and opportunities particularly for fathers to get involved through such things as fathers' storytelling weeks and Saturday morning sessions to maximise availability" (ibid: 17).

Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) identify 2 types of involvement (communication with the school and participation in school). The authors found that most of the variation of involvement was within schools rather than between schools. In addition, they found strong association between social class and parental involvement, but noted that 'parental involvement made a significant unique contribution to explaining the variation in children's academic achievement over and above the effects associated with family background (p. 138).

² See: <https://www.esri.ie/pubs/OPEA112.pdf>



Furthermore, countries differ in how they perceive the role parental involvement in their children’s education. Evidence from a study conducted in Finland and England in 1999 (see Chowne and Moriarty 2000) suggested that practitioners in early childhood education in these countries had different understanding of their role in relation to parents. While English teachers were fluent in the rhetoric of partnerships with parents, they were unable to translate it into action and saw parents merely in a supporting role. In contrast, practitioners working in Finland understood the importance of communicating with parents, and saw their role as one of support for parents in the raising of their children.



Home-based approach of parental involvement

Home-based involvement strategies mainly involve support parents give to their children’s learning at home (see Epstein 1987, Comer 1995, Lusse, 2013). Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) identify 2 types of home involvement (discussing school activities, monitoring child’s out of school activities). As with school-based involvement, many authors highlight the benefits of home-based involvement on children’s outcomes. Support for learning at home implies that parents, particularly from higher socio-economic strata have a positive attitude towards the school, and support the learning and career development of their children (see Burke, 2004). Patall et al. (2008) in the US found that parental involvement of primary school children was associated with higher rates of homework completion of their children; fewer homework problems and improved academic performance.

Pomerantz et al. (2007) note that the way how parents become involved determines in large part the success of their involvement. PISA results show that fifteen-year-old students whose parents often read books with them during their first year of primary school show markedly higher scores in PISA 2009 test than students whose parents read with them infrequently or not at all. This is the case regardless of family socio-economic background (OECD 2010). A recent study in the Irish context shows that children that are being read to frequently, who have more access to books have better vocabulary between 3 and 5 years of age, all else being equal (Smyth, 2016).

It is important that the school and parents collaborate on a student's education and upbringing, both at home and in school. Campbell (2011) argues for the need for school management to display openness, “to value the richness of children’s home lives, and a striving to embed community cohesion within everything that is done within their schools by working in partnership with parents” (Campbell. 2011: 16-17).

Figure 1: Parental involvement and its effect

School-based parental involvement strategy		Home-based parental involvement strategy	
Types of approaches			
Communication with the school	Participation in school activities	Discussing school activities	Monitoring child’s out of school activities
			
Potential positive effects			
Benefit of student outcomes Prevention of early-school leaving Improvement of underperformance		Benefit of student outcomes Higher rates of homework completion Improvement of academic performance	

Source: efms 2018



Children's age and parental involvement

Parental involvement changes as children grow older. In general, parental involvement – both at home and in school, tends to be greater when children are still in primary school (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011:42). Cotton and Wikelund (1989) and Campbell (2011) argue, that getting involved in the education of secondary school children is more complex for a number of reasons, including the size of the school, the distance from home, complexity of curriculum, number of teachers involved, and so on (ibid: 6). Eccles and Harold (1993) identify also parents' lack of confidence in being involved in their children's education as they move to secondary education as the curriculum is getting more complex at this stage. Campbell (2011) argues that further research is needed in this area considering the fact that "there is significantly more evidence of parental engagement in the early stages of primary school than in secondary schools, although parental support of learning in the home has been seen to have a significant effect on children of all ages from pre-school to 16".

Active vs. Passive Parents

One can broadly distinguish between four groups of parents, displaying different levels of parental involvement (Vogels, 2002): two groups of active parents ("partners" and "participants") and two groups of passive parents ("delegating" and "invisible" parents). **Partners** are parents who are closely involved with the education and school of their children. They strive for an influential position in the school and seek cooperation with the teachers. **Participants** are also closely involved with the education of their children but do not participate as much in the formal school bodies. **Delegating parents** are mainly parents with religious beliefs. They have less need than other parents for daily influence on the school policy and curriculum. **Invisible parents** (or hard-to-reach parents) are mainly parents with a low socio-economic position. They are significantly less well represented in the formal school bodies.

Reviewing relevant literature, Osgood et al. (2013: 23) distinguish between different groups of hard-to-reach parents:

- Minority ethnic (religious and linguistic) groups (Carpentier and Lall, 2005; DCSF, undated; Wilkinson, Stöckl, Taggart, and Franks, 2009);
- Travellers (DoH, 2002; Wilkinson, et al., 2009)
- Refugees/asylum seekers (DoH, 2002; Wilkinson, et al. 2009);
- Migrant workers (Wilkinson, et al., 2009).

A number of reports focus on hard-to-reach parents, identifying their shared characteristics (e.g. lower SES, see LaBahn 1995; migrant background, see Campbell, 2011). Parents with a low socio-economic status generally feel more inhibited to participate in school than middle-class parents (Lusse, 2015, p. 13).

The profile of student intake in the school is also seen to impact on the home-school interface. In schools where highly educated parents are the dominant group, the parents are usually active on all fronts and there is frequent communication between the school and the parents. Schools where parents from disadvantaged groups are the dominant group are less concerned about the influence of parents on the school policy and look for different ways to keep the often difficult lines of communication with parents open (Karsten et al., 2006).



Table 1: Types of parents' involvement

Active parents		Passive parents	
Partners	Participants	Delegating parents	Invisible parents
Closely involved with the education and school of their children	Closely involved with the education and school of their children	Mainly parents with religious beliefs	Mainly parents with a low socio-economic position
Strive for an influential position in the school	Do not participate as much in the formal school bodies	Have less need for daily influence on the school policy and curriculum	Significantly less represented in the formal school bodies
Seek cooperation with the teachers			

Source: efms 2018, based on Vogels, 2002

Parental involvement and migrant status

This section takes a closer look at the involvement of migrant parents in the education of their children. A considerable body of research indicates that while some migrant children perform as well or even better than native children and youth, the majority lag behind academically. According to a Council of the European Union report from 2011, the average dropout rate is twice as high for migrant students in comparison to native students. One strategy that has been shown to reduce ESL among migrant youth is promoting trusting relations between schools and parents (Nouwen, Clycq, and Ulicna 2015). Stronger relations between schools and parents can have many positive effects on migrant youth, particularly by reducing the amount of stress that pupils experience from acting as cultural and language “brokers” between their school and parents (Cline, De Abreu, O'Dell, and Crafter 2010).

While there is considerable body of research on migrant parents and their involvement in their children’s education originating from Western countries, especially from the UK and the US, less evidence is available from Eastern European countries (for few exceptions see (Захариев, Йорданов 2010; Mancheva, 2012; Mancheva, Nonchev, 2012; Nonchev, Tagarov 2012; Mancheva, Ivanova, 2015)).

Students do not arrive to the schools with a clean ‘cultural slate’. It is important to recognise that child’s family, community, culture, and previous educational context all influence school engagement (Connell and Wellborn, 1991; Mehan et al., 1996; Ogbu, 2003). It is reasonable to expect that migrant parents’ ways of getting involved in their child’s education may differ. There are also studies showing that some migrant children tend to be less engaged and do less well at school in the receiving countries compared to the native population (Fan and Chen, 2001). In fact, dropout rates among these students are often high compared to local students (Rumberger, 1987). This has been found especially true for newly arrived migrant youth, who often experience dissonance between their home and school environments (Phelan, et al. 1993; Darmody, et al. 2011; Darmody and McCoy, 2010). At the same time, evidence shows that some migrant parents are highly educated and have high expectations for their children (Darmody et al. 2016).

Lareau and Horvat (1999) argue that in order to engage in the education of their children, migrant parents need to be familiar with the dominant culture and the latter has to recognise the value and legitimacy of social capital of ethnic minority families. In Canada, McLaren and Dyk’s (2002) study on educational involvement of migrant mothers shows how the capitals these women possessed (i.e. knowledge and skills) devalued when migrating to a new country. Even though they exercised their agency in familiarising themselves with the new situation, they were still positioned as outsiders having deficiencies in language skills and knowledge of the local system (ibid).



While Jeynes (2003) argues that 'parental involvement has a significant, positive impact on children across race and across academic outcomes' (Jeynes, 2003: 213), other studies have found some evidence of racial and ethnic differences in parental involvement at school (Muller and Kerbow 1993; Crosnoe, 2013; Desimone, 1999; Nord and Griffin 1999). Nord and Griffin (1999) found that migrant parents were much less likely than native-born parents to volunteer at their children's schools, but they were just as likely as native-born parents to attend parent-teacher meetings (ibid). Kao (2004) noted that foreign-born parents were less likely to talk to their adolescents about school but more likely to talk to them about college, compared with their native-born counterparts (Kao, 2004).

Elsewhere Desforges and Abouchar (2003) note that parental involvement is less influenced by family ethnicity but is strongly influenced by family social class, maternal level of education, material deprivation, maternal psycho-social health and single parent status (ibid. 4). They found that at the age of 7, parental engagement had by far the strongest positive influence on academic achievement. This factor was far stronger than the effect of social class or school composition.

Migrants' background is also likely to have an impact on their involvement. A study conducted by Center for Study of Democracy (CSD) in Bulgaria in 2012 on education for refugee and asylum seeking children found that fostering the contacts between migrant parents and teachers was one of the challenges, along with the incapability of the parents to help pupils with homework because of lack of proficiency in Bulgarian language.

"Due to lack of knowledge of Bulgarian, parents of RASC pupils are in a disadvantaged position to inquire about the situation of their children with school teachers. School teachers in return are not able to communicate the difficulties or problems their children might be facing at school." (Nonchev, Tagarov 2012: 125).

A major problem of the refugee and asylum seeking children is that this group is highly mobile and tends to stay in Bulgaria only temporarily, following their parents further West using various channels (Nonchev, Tagarov 2012: 120). Another issue is the socio-economic status of the parents who are in most cases unable to cover the costs of school materials.

Another cultural characteristic identified by the study that needs better understanding is the one of girls whose parents are unwilling to send them to gender mixed schools and who are enrolled in some cases in private schools or don't go to school at all.

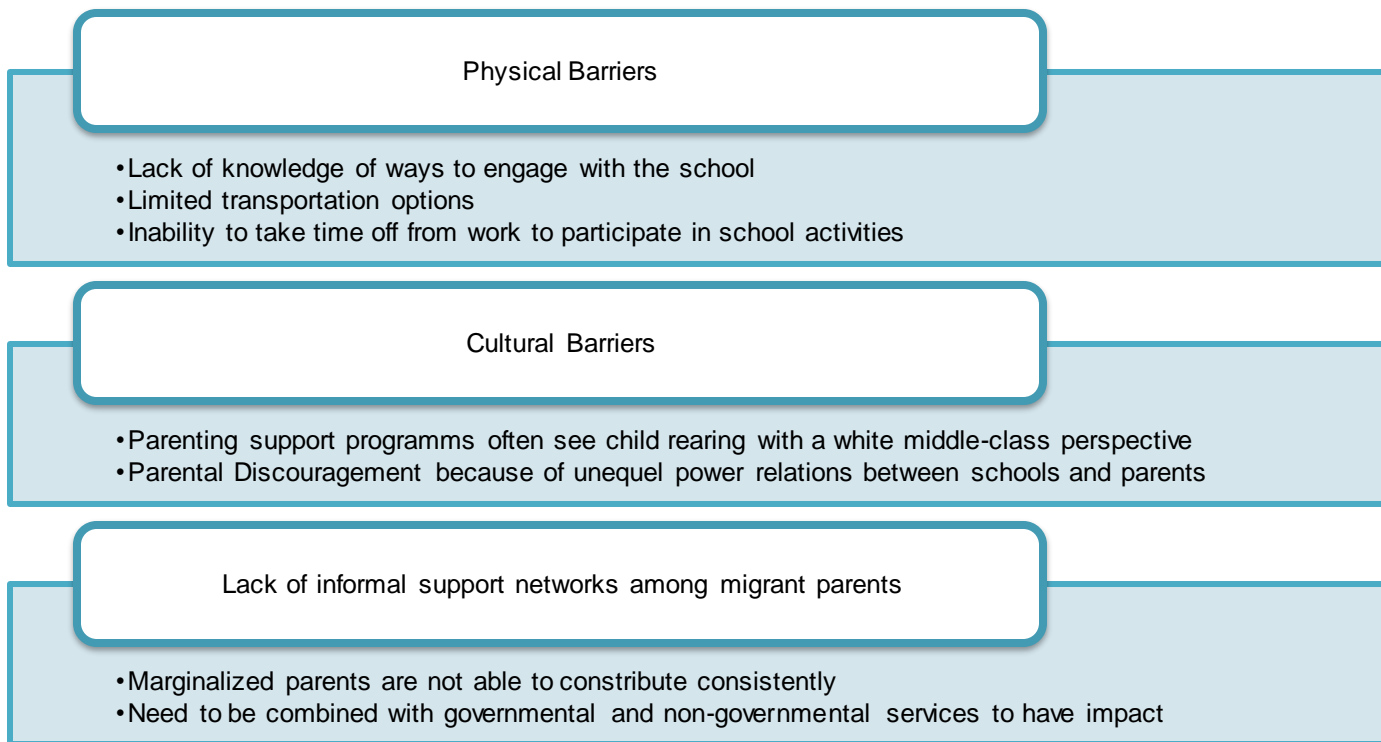
The report underlines that the possibility of parents to communicate with school authorities is of crucial importance to the integration process of refugees and asylum seeking children at school. Issues such as school performance and behavior could be adequately taken care of only with the active involvement of parents. (Nonchev, Tagarov 2012: 130)

Identifying barriers to parental involvement among migrant families

There are many barriers to the involvement of migrant parents. One major challenge is physical and practical barriers, such as the lack of knowledge of ways to engage with the schools, limited transportation options, and/or inability to take time off from work to participate in school activities (Katz, La Placa, and Hunter 2007). Cultural barriers also play an important role. For example, it has been argued that most parenting support programmes do not acknowledge cultural attitudes towards child rearing that differ from white middle-class values. Research has also shown that many parents are discouraged from engaging with schools because of a perceived unequal power relation between parents and schools (Hanafin and Lynch, 2002). Moreover, researchers in the UK have found that migrant parents generally prefer services provided by voluntary organisations to those provided by service providers such as schools (Katz, La Placa, and Hunter 2007). A third major barrier is the relative lack of informal support networks among migrant parents. Researchers have, however, cautioned against focusing resources solely on strengthening informal networks. Informal networks depend on all members contributing in order to be effective and many marginalized parents are not able to contribute consistently. Thus, in order to have the most impact, these types of networks should be combined with governmental and non-governmental services.



Figure 2: Barriers to parents' involvement



Source: efms 2018


The challenges identified most frequently in existing research are addressed below in more detail.

Cultural distance and language difficulties

Carreon, Drake, and Barton's (2005) qualitative examination of Hispanic migrant parents found that these parents wanted to be engaged in their children's schools but had limited involvement because of cultural distance. In the same vein, Denessen, Bakker and Gierveld (2007) in the Netherlands found that school administrators encountered difficulties in getting migrant parents involved in their children's school. The two main barriers to getting migrant parents involved in the schools include language problems and cultural differences between the schools and families. Van Daal et al. (2002) pointed at difficulties that multi-ethnic schools perceived in their relations with migrant parents including low language proficiency levels, parental perception of the role of the school and low value placed on education. In the same vein, Christie and Szorenyi (2015) in the United Kingdom found that "the parents' expectations of their children's schooling appear to clash with those of the UK school system and that this is amplified by perceptions of poor communication, inadequate school-parent cooperation and marginalisation" (2015: 145). Barriers they identified preventing eastern European parents engaging with their children's school included "difficulties of communication struggles to comprehend the British classroom and general educational system and perceptions of marginalisation" (ibid: 149). Language barriers whilst mentioned in all of the studies were especially pertinent for the Portuguese migrants, with the parent and student respondents reporting that:

"Unless a translator was available and present, they were unable to communicate with the school [...] a student talked about her anxiety in exposing her mother to a situation of shame for not being able to speak English [...] and that the two mothers were aware that their daughters only shared the information they wished to share and used their mothers' limited command of the English language as an excuse". (De Abreu et al., 2003, p. 88)

Ryan et al. (2010) whose research includes participants from geographically and culturally diverse backgrounds also site language as being a barrier.



"Several informants noted that there can be a tension around how much information to interpret or translate. And a number of our informants raised the question about what responsibility parents have to learn English, commenting that even though they have been given information about language classes, some seem to be 'reluctant' to learn English. She added that, in several cases, the children had been born in Britain and spoke English fluently, thus parents seemed to rely on their children to translate for them." (Ryan et al., 2010, p. 18)

The research by Ryan et al. (2010) shows also that obtaining information on the schooling system can often be difficult for newly arrived parents, from the admissions policy to choosing the right school: "All of the key informants agreed that newly arrived families tend to rely for information largely on their own networks of families and friends. This means that they are often relying on other migrants who may also be relatively new to the country or who may have limited knowledge of the British educational system" (ibid: 23). This is also an issue highlighted by the study by De Abreu et al. (2003) which focused on Portuguese parents, and showed that in choosing a school the parents often relied on the Portuguese community for advice, instead of visiting the schools: "Though it is common practice in England for parents to visit the school or more than one school before their children enrol, this does not seem to apply to the present sample. Choice of school was based on advice received from family friends and from a Portuguese teacher in the area" (De Abreu et al. 2003: 83). This is an issue also highlighted in the secondary research by Osgood et al. (2013) who link this tendency to a false impression about parents' isolation from the host community pointing out that "The assumption that the 'hard to reach' are isolated and need to be encouraged and supported to experience social inclusion appeared largely misplaced amongst this group of parents" (p.32).

Cultural distance between migrant parents and schools of the host country can result in misinterpretation of parents' actions. Some migrants may come from a more traditional culture in which power distance and role divisions are quite clear: parents are responsible at home; teachers are responsible at school (see Hofstede, 1986). These parents tend to view teachers as experts (Lopez et al. 2001; Serpell, 1997). Due to the factors highlighted above, migrant parents could be seen to be less involved at their child's school than native parents (see also Denessen et al., 2001; Desimone, 1999). However, at the same time these parents may have high aspirations for their children's education (e.g., Denessen et al., 2001; Lopez et al., 2001; Darmody et al, 2016).

Family background

Azim and Rahman (2015) observe that the way how migrant parents get involved in their child's education may be influenced by parents' educational background as well as socio-economic status of the family and parent-student relationships (2015: 36). Migration history is also important: Ryan et al. (2010) argue that there is a strong focus on the different needs of refugee and asylum seeker families as opposed to economic migrants and that these demographics needs do differ considerably from migrants who choose to come to the UK for work or to join family established there. The authors note that "Many migrant parents are not aware that their children will be put into a class with their age mates regardless of whether or not they have ever been to school before." (ibid: 19). They point out that British children start school earlier than a lot of other countries and that children from war torn areas or poorer countries may not have experienced school a school environment prior to arriving in the UK. Furthermore, the authors note that that many families are moved around temporary accommodation across the borough.

"This mobility is frustrating for the school because they are just beginning to make progress with a family when suddenly, often without any warning, they are moved on. The teacher stated that the child may be in class on Friday but by Monday they have been moved on to a new location." (ibid: 19)

Migrant networks

There is now a growing interest in migrant networks. Such networks have been found to facilitate the settling in of new arrivals by providing information about the new society and assistance, for example with housing and employment (Lobato, 2015). There is some evidence that migrant networks are considerably gendered (Hagan 1998, Curran and Rivero-Fuentes 2003) and that social networks are more important for undocumented migrants than for other migrants (Zell and Skop 2011). The importance of migrant networks in affecting outcomes for migrants, their families, and their communities cannot be overstated. Migrant social networks are also important in the field of education as it is often a means of gathering necessary informal information about schools (Ball and Vincent 1998). It has also been argued that some aspects such as school choice have a very local character, thus parents tend to perceive local networks as the most reliable source of information (van Zanten, 2013). Research shows that some parents who avoid regular attendance at formal parent-teacher



meetings tended to create and sustain informal networks. This indicates that non-attendance or sporadic attendance at school-based events does not necessarily indicate social exclusion or marginalisation. While these informal networks “re rendered invisible in policy terms but clearly represent an important and effective alternative to that which is visibly available” (Osgood et al. 2013: 72).

Timing of migration can also be relevant regarding the extent to which migrant parents avail of social networks. A study conducted in the US showed that parents of third-generation Hispanic young people (meaning both parents were born in the USA) find it easier to use school-based social capital – connections with the school and access to the school’s help – to prepare children for college. In contrast, parents of first-generation Hispanic youth (meaning the children were born outside the USA) benefit more from connections with other parents to get their children into college (see Ryan and Ream, 2016). Parents often utilise already existing networks – such as church congregations (Poza, 2014). It needs to be highlighted, however, that while social networks have many supportive characteristics, one should be aware of possible out information gaps that may emerge when parents rely on organizations and networks outside the school to mediate their involvement (ibid.). In addition, some studies have observed ethnic segregation in parents’ networks (see Windzio, 2015); it is likely that this practice may slow down the process of integration.

Approaches taken to increase parental involvement

Previous sections of this review highlighted the importance of proficiency in the language of the receiving country regarding home-school interface with migrant parents. Kröner et al. (2012), in their qualitative interview study on the motivations for or against parental engagement of parent representatives with migration background, find that schools’ focus on breaking down language barriers in the work with parents is a precondition for successful interaction and cooperation with migrant parents. This could be achieved either by enhancing the host language capacity of migrant parents by involving interpreters or by increasing the number of teachers with a migration background (ibid.). Pfaller-Rott (2010 cited in Griebel et al., 2013) finds that the engagement of more parents with migration background in school life could enable other migrant parents who speak the same language to overcome barriers of communication and be a useful in information dissemination. Ryan et al. (2010) call for schools to provide language lessons and support to parents who do not speak language of the receiving country (2010: 31).

Practical recommendations suggested by the authors include:

- Provision of easily accessible information on the school systems in user-friendly format;
- Consideration of migrant parents as resources: parents can be encouraged by teachers and liaison teams to contribute in positive ways to the life of the school. This offers an opportunity to value the cultural and practical resources of the parents;
- Provision of language classes to migrant parents. Schools have an important role to play in facilitating language learning opportunities for parents and relying upon children as language brokers should be avoided, especially when the children themselves are the subject of the conversations.
- Inter-agency collaboration and liaison to prevent disruptions in children’s educational careers (Ryan et al. 2010: 31)



Parental involvement has an extra dimension in large cities since many parents are from different cultural backgrounds. The challenge for "culturally mixed" schools is not just to encourage parental involvement in general, but also to support parental involvement in a diverse environment (Smit, Driessen and Doesborgh, 2005, p. 10). Specific communication skills for dealing with heterogeneous languages and cultures are indispensable here (idem, p. 12).

Migrant parents may have more scope in getting involved in school life in specific types of schools. Arnoldt and Steiner (2013) in Germany found that parents with a migration background prefer to enrol their children in all-day schools that are associated with greater support and integration prospects. All-day schools enable opportunities for migrant parents to participate in teaching and learning activities in the school. The study also showed that the probability of parental engagement increases once their children are enrolled in such schools with full-day lessons and activities (ibid.).

How to increase parental involvement requires careful consideration. Increased parental involvement should not be seen as a substitute for whole-school approach to creating more inclusive school environments (Gomolla 2009). In order to improve teaching and learning at school and to create a more socially just education the most important remedy is the breaking down of individual and institutional barriers, so that more parents are able to engage their potential for the educational well-being of the children (ibid.). For this to succeed schools should prepare in the long run to open their power structures for a meaningful participation of parents in the educational process (ibid.).

Attempt to increase parental involvement has resulted in setting up various initiatives and development of relevant resources. In Ireland, in early 2006, a number of organisations working with the migrant community (including both a statutory and NGO background), identified the need to respond to the specific issues which can arise for parents in unfamiliar circumstances. The project involved development of a set of three resources to (a) support immigrant/black and minority ethnic (BME) parents in their parenting role, and (b) support the professionals who work with them. The set of resources comprised of: a Toolkit developed for practitioners working with immigrant/BME parents, both in a one-to-one and group setting; an Information Pack for parents and practitioners containing information on a range of issues; and a DVD. In addition, a one-day Capacity and Awareness Raising Training (CART) programme was implemented aimed at raising the cultural awareness of attending practitioners and promote use of the resources in practice. In 2007, the Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway, was commissioned by the PMC to evaluate Globe: All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents (see Coen and Kanavan, 2012).

Another Toolkit was developed by Weidhaase and Mc Grath (2009) aimed at migrant parents and youth in Ireland. The project was funded by Integrate Ireland. In Norway, the national parents' association for primary and lower secondary education has established a network of parents of various linguistic origins who advise parents and schools on the education of immigrant children and provide parents with information in their own language (Eurydice, 2009).

Golan and Petersen (2002) promote promising practices for involving Hispanic, migrant parents/caregivers of students in their children's education. The authors present a model for how teachers and migrant parents/families can be trained and encouraged to work as partners to improve student performance. The program consists of an 8-week course for parents and 4 months of follow-up "coaching" calls after completion of the program. The classes are taught by instructors who reflect the parent's cultural background and focus on how to: establish and maintain a supportive home learning environment; communicate and collaborate with teachers, counsellors, and principals; navigate the school system and access its resources; encourage college attendance; identify and avoid obstacles to school success; and support children's emotional and social development. The program has been found to be effective in increasing the frequency with which parents communicate with their children's teachers, read to their children, praise or recognize educational success of their children, and review their children's homework (Golan, 1997).



Summary

Parental involvement contributes to socialisation of children in believing in the importance of education (Domina, 2005). It also increases home-school interaction and subsequent social control as well as informing parents of their children's lives and school performance. While discussing different concepts and practices of parental involvement in general, the focus of this review is the involvement and empowerment of migrant parents. While there is a growing international empirical literature on parental involvement, mostly originating from 'old' migrant receiving countries, less is known about the involvement of recently arrived migrant parents (Azim and Rahman, 2015: 36) and how 'new' migrant receiving countries have addressed the need to involve migrant parents in the education of their children.

The discussion of empirical studies indicates that parents engage in education of their children through school-based and home-based activities. However, the way parents get involved depends on schools' approach to facilitating parents' involvement, parents' own willingness to get involved, resources available, the age of their child and demographic characteristics.

The review of the literature shows that the engagement of migrant parents in the education of their children is often hampered by various barriers. The main barrier identified by existing research is the cultural distance and proficiency in the language of the host country (Azim and Rahman 2015; Crozier and Davis, 2007, De Abreu et al. 2003). Other factors may include immigration status (including refugees and asylum seeker), social isolation, low socio-economic status and the level of parental education (Ryan et al., 2010: 28).

A common thread in most studies is the recognition that migrant parents may have different needs to those of the native population which is often overlooked. De Abreu et al. conclude that a "strategy to return some power to parents needs to be put on the agenda, including support in choice and contact with schools" (De Abreu et al., 2003: 93). The approaches taken by schools across countries seem to increase parental involvement in various school-related activities, with limited evidence pointing to parental empowerment – including migrant parents in decision-making processes in school.

Many migrants have high expectations of their children to do well in school and are supportive of their learning even though they may be less visible in the home-school interface. Parental support in supporting learning at school and creating supportive and stimulating home environment is associated with better student outcomes. Some studies indicate that while migrant parents want to increase their involvement in their child's schools, they do not know how to make this happen. Migrant networks are one of the ways how migrant parents can exchange their experiences and share information. Finally, parental involvement and empowerment cannot be tackled in isolation (see Crozier, 1999; 2001) and needs to be supported by whole school approach and collaboration with relevant agencies and community groups to develop inclusive and supportive practices.



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3. Research approach and Methodology

Methodology

The project set out to achieve two aims. The first aim was to improve our understanding of the needs of migrant parents in supporting the educational inclusion of their children and the obstacles that may prevent migrant parents from being meaningfully involved and in shaping the educational experiences of their children.

The second aim was to map good practices of schools across Europe on supporting the engagement of migrant parents in the education of their children and in the school life.

For the fulfilment of these aims, each national team conducted two case studies, one in a primary school and one in a secondary school. With regard to the first aim, the studies focused on migrant parents' expectations from schools with regard to the academic progress and the educational inclusion of their children and on the relationship that they develop with the schools. It examined also the perspectives of school staff with regard to the quality and level of involvement of migrant parents in the life of the school and the views of both, parents and school staff, with regard to the challenges, obstacles and opportunities that exist for the improvement of parents' engagement in the education of their children.

Research Question

What are the forms and the quality of migrant parents' involvement in influencing the school-based educational experiences of their children in the host country?

Sub-questions

- a. How informed are migrant parents about their rights in being involved in the school-based education of their children?
- b. How informed are migrant parents about the opportunities of being involved in the community of the school which their children attend?
- c. How interested are migrant parents in being involved in the school-based education of their children?
- d. How interested are migrant parents in being involved in the community of the school, which their children attend?
- e. How do schools encourage migrant parents to be involved in the school-based education of their children and in the community of the school which their children attend?

Parents' Involvement

Our understanding of parents' involvement refers to their engagement in the educational activities of their children, which relate directly to the school that they attend, but which can take place either inside or outside the school hours. These include the delivery of the curriculum, homework, extracurricular activities, etc.



Research stages

The first stage of the project was desk-based and aimed to identify and describe the relevant national policies, which describe the obligations of the schools, the responsibilities and the rights of the parents and the overall aims and nature of the relationship between parents and schools envisaged by policy makers in each participant country.

Following the completion of the desk research, the national teams identified the schools for the two case studies. We considered two options for the recruitment of the schools (see Appendix). The first option was to identify suitable schools by approaching parents registered in migrant associations. Despite the strengths of this method, we decided to dismiss it, mainly for some practical and ethical implications. The option that we opted for allowed us to identify schools with the help from personal contacts, the Teacher Training network of schools (where these networks were available) and the study of publicly available reports on the educational provision (Ofsted reports in England and equivalent reports in other countries). The schools were selected on the basis of the size of their migrant students' intake and on the experience that they had in supporting migrant children and their families. The reason for this was to facilitate the identification of good practices. However, the good practices were also identified outside the selected schools, through personal contacts and information that was provided by interviewed staff and parents in the participant schools. A series of visits prior to this stage of the project and the initial discussions with parents and staff verified the appropriateness of the selected schools.

In order to investigate parents' and school staff perspectives we conducted a series of interviews (focus group and individual) with parents and staff. Staff interviewed included the Head teachers and teachers with particular responsibility to support migrant students and their families. Such members of staff include teachers who support students with English (or other native language) as an additional language, parents-school communication liaison officers, bilingual or multilingual Teaching Assistants who regularly facilitate the communication between parents and the school, etc.



4. Description of migration situation in each country

4.1 Bulgaria

The focus of the study conducted in Bulgaria within the ALFIRK project is to shed light on the current situation of parents' engagement in the school life of refugee kids³, particularly due to high relevance and importance of targeting exactly that group of the foreign population in Bulgaria.

The period of the research – beginning of school year 2016/2017 to beginning of school year 2017/2018 – is influenced by the latest changes in the normative framework in regards to the adoption of the new Pre-school and school education act. Several additional documents were approved: Ordinance No 11 of 01.09.2016 on the Evaluation of Schoolchildren's learning outcomes which stipulates the procedure of children who seek or have been granted international protection and who have a document that certifies their education degree; Ordinance No 3 of 06.04.2017 on the Terms and Procedure for the Enrolment and Education of Persons Who Seek or Have Been Granted International Protection.

The research in Bulgaria consisted of 1) two focus groups with parents who have been granted international protection in Bulgaria and 2) in-depth semi-structured interviews with principals of two schools in Bulgaria – one in Sofia and one in a small village near the Bulgarian-Turkish border. The interviews with the principals and the pedagogic staff of the schools were conducted twice in both schools – during the first semester of school year 2016/2017 and the first semester of school year 2017/2018.

The two focus groups were conducted in Sofia in partnership with the Bulgarian Red Cross (April 2017) and Caritas Bulgaria (July 2017). The aim of the focus groups was to gather the perspectives of the parents of refugee and asylum seeking children, the challenges they face, and the possibilities for empowerment.

One primary and one secondary school were selected for the research. The primary school "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", in the village of Ivanovo, is situated near to the town of Harmanli and near the Bulgarian-Turkish border. The school was chosen, because it is one of the rare few in Bulgaria that welcomed refugee kids even when there was no official path administered by the Ministry of education and science, due to the openness and visionary ideas of its Principal and school staff. The secondary school 66 "Philip Stanislavov" is situated in Sofia and has the longest tradition of integrating refugee kids in Bulgaria. This is partly due to its location, situated very close to the former building of the State agency for refugees and now the Registration and reception centres in Ovcha kupel district in Sofia (RRC-Ovcha kupel).

4.1.1 Migration situation

Bulgaria remains a transit country within the refugee context since the beginning of the Syrian crisis. This is due to several factors, including: the national policy, which puts a strong focus on securing the borders and on a zero-integration policy; the fact of being the poorest country in the EU; the general intention of most of the asylum seekers to reach countries like Germany, Austria, Sweden and Western Europe; the negative political discourse, and not least, the overall negative attitudes towards refugees from the local population.

The overall dynamics at a European level (for example, the EU-Turkey deal from March 2016), regional level (for example, the closed Western Balkan route in March 2016), give different nuances to the fluctuations and the intensity of flows, illustrated in the following table, but does not change the transit character of the country.

³The term refugee will be used in the text as a generic term, the way it has entered the public discourse referring to people who seek or are granted international protection in Bulgaria.



Table 2: Information on asylum applications and decisions on asylum applications in the period 2012-2017

Year	Number of international protection applicants	Refugee status	Subsidiary status	Rejections	Terminated procedures	Total number of decisions
2012	1387	18	159	445	174	796
2013	7144	183	2279	354	824	3640
2014	11081	5162	1838	500	2853	10353
2015	20391	4708	889	623	14567	20787
2016	19418	764	587	1732	8932	12015
2017	3700	804	900	3048	9662	14414

Source: State Agency for Refugees (January 2018)

The number of applications (Table 1) shows sharp increase of applications in 2013, a peak of applications in 2015, as light decline in 2016 and a significant decline in 2017. It is visible that the number of rejections has increased in both 2016 and 2017 when the predominant number of applications were from people of Afghani origin as shown in Table 2 below.

The following table (Table 2) shows that for 2017, the highest number of asylum applications was received from nationals of Afghanistan. According to the report of the State Agency for Refugees (SAR) the situation with the asylum applications in 2016 is similar, with 45% of all applications - by people of Afghan nationality, while in 2015 the highest number of applications comes from citizens of Syria (SAR report 2016).

Table 3: Top 5 countries of origin of asylum applicants (01.01.2017-31.12.2017)

Afghanistan	1 139
Iraq	1 023
Syria	970
Pakistan	212
Iran	88

Source: State Agency for Refugees (January 2018)

Bulgaria

In 2016, registered net migration remained negative. Its level more than doubled compared with 2015, to -9 300. While total negative net migration continues to be driven by the growing negative net migration of Bulgarian nationals (-16 500 from -13 700 in 2015), positive net migration of foreigners keeps decreasing (by 23% to 7 300), thus playing a smaller role in compensating national population decline.

Emigration of Bulgarians increased by 5%, reaching 25 800, comprising 85% of total outflows. The largest group (43%) of Bulgarian emigrants was aged 20-35. Total immigration declined in both 2015 and 2016, although the level remains well above pre-2014 figures. Declining immigration of foreigners (-17%) and notably the sharp decrease in inflows from Syria, is the main driver of this trend. Among the 12 000 foreign immigrants, the top three nationalities were Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.

The stock of foreign-born residents increased by 12% in 2016 and reached a record high of 147 000, 2% of the total population. The main countries of origin of the non-EU-born population remain stable and include Russia (18.7% of the total), Syria (8.4%), Turkey (6.9%) and Ukraine (6%). One third of the foreign-born originated from EU countries, mainly the United Kingdom, Germany and Greece. The diversification of the foreign-born population is due to Bulgaria's geopolitical position at the crossroad of global and regional migration flows, including from neighbouring crisis-ridden areas.

In 2016/17, three main trends emerged concerning asylum flows. First, after four years of steady increase and a record high in 2015, applications for international protection started to decrease in 2016, to 19 400 (-5%), and dropped in 2017 to 3 700. Second, the national composition of asylum seeking inflows has diversified. Since the end of 2015, Afghans have replaced Syrians as the largest group of applicants. In 2016, applications from Afghans and Iraqis boomed (respectively 45% and 28% of the total), while those of Syrians declined to 14%. In 2017, Afghans accounted for 31%, Iraqis for 28% and Syrians 26% of applications. Third, rejection rates have increased. In 2017, almost 99% of applications from Afghans, and 89% from Iraqis, were refused, while only 6% of Syrians had their request refused.

In the academic year 2016/17, international enrolment in Bulgarian universities grew, reaching 13 200 or 5.4% of the total student population, up from 11 600 and 4.4% respectively in 2015/2016. Most foreign students continued to come from neighbouring countries, mainly Greece (27%) and Turkey (15%). The number of British and German students tripled and doubled respectively compared to the previous year.

In 2016, despite persistent unemployment, some sectors of the recovering economy reported labour shortages. The new Labour Migration and Labour Mobility Law which entered into force in April provides an exemption to labour market testing for recruitment of foreigners in a list of occupations set annually by the newly-established National Council on Labour Migration and Labour Mobility – a consultative body made up of representatives of eight ministries, social partners and local authorities – and the National Council for Encouragement of Employment. The 2016 law also included provisions to facilitate Blue Card issue and the transposition of EU directives on intra-corporate transfers and seasonal workers.

In 2016, the number of new work permits swelled to 740, from barely 200 in 2015. Of these, a record 200 EU Blue Cards were issued, 70% more than in 2015 and more than six times the 2014 figure. Most work permits were granted to highly qualified specialists in IT and engineering. Six countries accounted for almost half of all permit holders: Serbia, Turkey, United States, Ukraine, FYROM, and Russia. In 2016, 200 seasonal and short-term permits were issued, mainly to nationals of neighbouring countries.

Additional amendments to Bulgarian labour migration legislation in 2016/2017 further liberalised foreigners' labour market access. Since January 2017, a simplified procedure for issuing 90-day seasonal worker visas applies. By August 2017, 3 215 such visas had been issued, bringing seasonal worker inflow to a 30-year high. Amendments in June and November 2017 introduced more favourable conditions for EU Blue Card issue, extending its duration to up to 4 years, and waiving the 10% foreign employee limit for businesses hiring EU Blue Card holders. Conversely, requirements for long-term entrepreneur visas have been tightened to ensure that business immigration brings a genuine economic contribution.

In 2017, a new regulation – the third in two years – was introduced, which defines the terms of the integration contract between beneficiaries of international protection and mayors. However, the additional burden that the decentralisation of responsibility for refugee integration has put on under-resourced local authorities means that in many cases they have no other choice than rejecting eligible migrants, thus rendering integration support de facto unavailable.

For further information

<http://www.aref.government.bg/>
<http://www.nsi.bg/>
<http://www.mvr.bg>



4.1.2 Policy review

The migration policy of Bulgaria has a strong securitization focus. Driven by the motivation of entering the Schengen agreement, the country's migration policy emphasizes on building a fence, with the argument of securing the whole EU territory.

In the years 2005-2013 National Program for Integration of Refugees (NPIR)⁴ in the Republic of Bulgaria was implemented and financed by the State Agency for Refugees with the Council of Ministers. Although covering a small number of approximately 100 beneficiaries of international protection annually, the program provided assistance (financial included) in finding housing, social assistance, Bulgarian language courses, health insurance, professional qualifications, etc. All the activities were happening in the Integration centre at the Ovcha Kupel Registration and Reception Centre. In 2014 the Integration was closed and the program was not prolonged. Since then, there is no other integration program provided by the state. In the beginning of 2016, a small Pilot Integration Program for 40 beneficiaries of international protection was launched, funded by UNHCR and implemented by the Bulgarian Red Cross. It was originally planned for the year 2016 and was prolonged in 2017. At that period there are no integration initiatives planned, implemented and financed by the government, and the gap is filled by the activities of several non-governmental and international organizations like the Bulgarian Red Cross, financed by UNHCR and Caritas Bulgaria.

Regarding education, all beneficiaries of international protection of school age have the same rights as Bulgarian citizens according to the Pre-school and School Education Act – free and obligatory education.

Pre-school and School Education Act

Promulgated, State Gazette No. 79/13.10.2015, effective 1.08.2016

Article 9. (3) Foreign minors, seeking or granted international protection in accordance with the Asylum and Refugees Act, shall receive free education and training at state-owned and municipal kindergartens and schools in the Republic of Bulgaria under the terms and conditions applicable to Bulgarian citizens.

Article 16. Children and pupils for whom the Bulgarian language is not their mother tongue shall be provided additional conditions to assist their educational integration under the terms and conditions laid down in the state education standard for the mastering of the Bulgarian literary language.

Article 17. (3) At the kindergartens and schools with children and pupils who are seeking or have been granted international protection in the country in accordance with the Asylum and Refugees Act shall be provided, if necessary, with additional instruction in the Bulgarian language under the terms and conditions laid down in the state education standard for the mastering of the Bulgarian literary language and the state education standard for the financing of institutions.

Several additional documents issued by Ministry of Education and Science beside the Pre-school and School Education Act (adopted in August 2016) are:

- Ordinance No 11 of 01.09.2016 on the Evaluation of Schoolchildren's learning outcomes stipulates the procedure of children who seek or have been granted international protection and who have document that certifies their education degree; the assessment of the students learning outcomes.
- Ordinance No 3 of 06.04.2017 on the Terms and Procedure for the Enrolment and Education of Persons Who Seek or Have Been Granted International Protection stipulates the procedure for children who seek or have been granted international protection and who do not hold a document certifying the completion of education degree. Enrolment in a state or municipal school follows this procedure: an application should be made by a parent (the representative of the unaccompanied minor) to the head of the relevant Regional Education Administration (REA). REA appoints the school within 7 working days according to the place of residence and willingness of the parents/representative. The enrolment of the refugee kid could happen throughout the whole year but not later than 30 school days before the end of the second term of study. A school commission decides on the education grade and appoints the class the child would join after an interview with the child.

⁴ Detailed information about the refugee integration in Bulgarian is available at: www.refugee-integration.bg

- Ordinance No 6 of 11.08.2016 on Learning the Bulgarian Literary Language stipulates that pupils, who seek or have been granted international protection, should be provided with additional Bulgarian language classes.

The Pre-school and School Education Act stipulates also the following forms of interaction between the parents and the schools/kindergartens:

- Individual consultations;
- Parent meetings;
- Trainings;
- Specific situations.

The contact and communication tools are the correspondence book (further in the text mark-book, belezhnik) of the child, e-mail of one of the parents, e-register. The following part presents the articles of the Pre-school and School Education Act that inform about the rights and obligations of the parents.

Pre-school and School Education Act

Promulgated, State Gazette No. 79/13.10.2015, effective 1.08.2016

Article 208. (1) The cooperation and interaction between parents and kindergartens or schools shall take place through individual consultations, parents meetings, training, as well as every time when a specific situation or the behaviour of the child or pupils warrants it. (2) The correspondence book shall be the tool of the continuous contacts between the school and the parent. (3) The e-mail of one of the parents and the e-register of the form may also be used as tools of contact with the pupil's family.

Article 209. Parents shall have the following rights: 1. to receive information, in a regular and timely fashion, on the performance and development of their children in the educational process, on the observance of the rules at the kindergarten and at school, and on their socialization in the community; 2. to meet the leadership of the kindergarten or school, the class teacher, teachers and the other educationalists during the fixed reception hours or at another time convenient to both sides; 3. to be aware of the school syllabus or the relevant pedagogical system at the kindergarten; 4. to attend and to be heard at their choice when decisions concerning the rights and interests of the child or pupil are taken; 5. to receive information, support and counselling at the kindergarten or school on issues related to the education, career orientation and personality development of their children at least once a year; 6. to elect and be elected to the public oversight board of the kindergarten or the school; 7. to express opinions and to make proposals on the development of the kindergarten, school or personality development support centre.

Article 210. (1) Parents shall have the following obligations: 1. to ensure the regular attendance of the child in the compulsory pre-school education and of the pupil at school, notifying the kindergarten or the school of any absence of the child or the pupil in due course; 2. to enrol the child in grade I or the pupil at school in the case of move to another community or school in accordance with Article 112; 3. to keep informed of their children's socialization at the kindergarten and in the school environment, their performance and development in education and their observance of the school rules; 4. to abide by the rules of the kindergarten, school and personality development centre and to assist its observance by the child and the pupil; 5. to take part in the process of developing self-study habits as part of the development of lifelong learning skills; 6. to take part in parents meetings; 7. to come to meetings at the invitation of a teacher, the headmaster or another educationalist at a time convenient to both sides. (2) Parents whose children are educated in a bespoke form of instruction under Article 112(1)(2) and in an independent organization shall guarantee the attainment of the objectives under Article 5, provide the necessary conditions for learning, knowledge books, textbooks and teaching aids, and apply methods and approaches of their choice in accordance with the age, individual needs and interests of the child.



4.1.3 Parental networking

Networking among parents in Bulgaria is done through several devoted non-governmental organizations (Association Parents, National Network for Children) and through other organizations covering more specific needs of the children who they address (for example, parents of children who are deaf, have Down syndrome, epilepsy, etc.).

The Parents Association⁵, established in 2001 as a non-governmental organization, is a member of the European Parents Association. The mission of the association is "to encourage parents to be the best parents they can be and to support children to become the best adults they can become". The Association is devoted to:

- 1) Developing, implementing and disseminating of regional and national policies for promoting family values among children; building positive attitude towards volunteering and charity, raising ecological awareness and respect for the natural environment among children, promoting grassroots sports and art activities for children; supporting the development of effective child healthcare and promoting the child's rights as a patient and the prevention of childhood diseases; prevention of all forms of violence against children; fighting pornography, gambling and delinquency among children; supporting gifted children.
- 2) Protecting the child rights, stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child: promoting of social and legal principles, concerning child protection and welfare; validation of social values among parents and encouraging continuity in values between parents and children; providing general and specialized assistance to parents in the process of raising their children; supporting parents in crisis for reintegration into society, restoring parental rights and formation of a correct attitude on the issue of raising and educating children; supporting single parents; supporting families with three or more children; implementation of parental control over public education and social control over institutions for children; promoting the right of the parents of informed decision – choices in the best interest of the child.

List of projects of Parents Association

Men Care in Bulgaria (www.mencare.bg) - A project encouraging and promoting active and positive fatherhood in all areas of child development in the family and at kindergarten and at school.

National Centre for Internet Safety (www.safenet.bg) - A project since 2007 aimed at promoting safer internet among families, educators, children and teenagers through educational materials, popular articles, open lessons at class, technical and emotional support at the Bulgarian Helpline for Online Safety, lobbying for legal regulation of crimes against children in the virtual world.

Bulgarian Helpline for Online Safety - A service for emotional and technical support for children, teenagers, parents and educators in cases of online risks and difficulties. We deal with cases like identity theft, online reputation abuse, threats of violence, fraud, child pornography, online sexual exploitation.


Famillathlon (www.famillathlon.bg) - An initiative promoting grassroots sports, art and ecologically-oriented activities among families with children. Famillathlon is a celebration of family, sports and healthy lifestyle! The initiative started in Sofia in 2009 as a one-day open-air event for families who want to spend time together and try new and exciting activities. Since then Famillathlon has spread across Bulgaria and now it is part of the cultural programme of 5 municipalities.

Prevention of Virtual and Real Violence - An educational methodology consisting of a training course and two handbooks for facilitators on important topics for teenagers from 5th to 12th grade. The methodology has proven its effectiveness with time for it has been in use since 2009.

Guidebooks for parents - Helpful brochures in plain language with guidelines for parents of children in the kindergarten, first and fifth grade. The information and advices are gathered through personal and professional experience as both parents and trainers of educators.

⁵ The information about the Parents Association is available at:

https://www.roditeli.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&layout=blog&id=13&Itemid=4 (14.08.2018)



Shared School – A project for building sustainable school community encompassing all stakeholders – parents, children and teachers, in a multicultural school environment.

The National Network for Children⁶ – is an alliance of civil society organisations and supporters, working with and for the children and families across the whole country. The promotion, protection and observing the rights of the child are part of the key principles, that unite the organizations of the Network, following in the activities the best interest of the child and with the active participation of children and young people themselves. NNC was created in 2003 as a non-formal alliance of NPOs. Since 2006 it is officially registered as a public non-profit organization.

One part of the activities of the network are advocacy campaigns in order to guarantee the rights of children and improve the wellbeing of Bulgarian families and children in active partnership with the NGO sector, businesses, institutions and individuals with the active participation of the children. Another priority is the consolidation of all non-profits, working with children and families, as well as improving the communication and exchange of experience and good practices within and beyond the Network.

4.1.4 Case Study profiles

Rationale for the selection

One primary and one secondary school were selected for the research in Bulgaria. The primary school "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", in the village of Ivanovo, is situated near to the town of Harmanli and near the Bulgarian-Turkish border. The school was chosen, because it is one of the rare few in Bulgaria that welcomed refugee kids even when there was no official path administered by the Ministry of education and science, due to the openness and visionary ideas of its Principal and school staff. The secondary school 66 "Philip Stanislavov" is situated in Sofia and has the longest tradition of integrating refugee kids in Bulgaria. This is partly due to its location, situated very close to the former building of the State agency for refugees and now the Registration and reception centres in Ovcha kupel district in Sofia (RRC-Ovcha kupel).

Town(s) the schools are located in, situation of migrants in the city

Village of Ivanovo is diverse regarding the ethnic background of its inhabitants that are Bulgarians, Bulgarian ethnic Turks and Roma. There are no settled refugees in the village, they travel to the village from the biggest nearby town Harmanli. The inhabitants of the village are around 300.

Sofia is the capital of Bulgaria, with official population of about 1.5 million people, where most established migrant communities are already settled, it is the most diverse and dynamic city in Bulgaria in terms of development and structure of the population. According to the last census conducted by the National statistical institute, as of 1.02.2011, 36 723 persons with foreign citizenship live in Bulgaria, representing 0.5% of the country's population. According to the National Strategy for Migration and Integration (2008-2015) 35% of the foreigners live in Sofia. These numbers do not include the number of the refugees in Bulgaria that according to estimated data of the UNHCR office in Sofia is about 500 and mainly living in Sofia.

Description of the case study schools

Primary school "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" was established in 1882. In the school year 2016/2017 there are 133 children, grades first to eight; in addition, there are 17 kids who are in a preparatory group. The kids in the school are from 7 villages, Ivanovo and 6 more, and from the town of Harmanli. There is a school bus that drives the kids from all the places.

In the beginning of the school year 2016/2017 the refugee kids were four, then five more joined, one of them in a preschool group. The principal of the school says that "the kids relate very well with the other kids from the different ethnic groups – Turkish, Roma. They hug each other, dance, cry when they have to separate for the holidays". Four new kids enrolled in November 2016, so altogether there are nine from four families in the current school year. They are all from the town of Harmanli. One of the boys, whose family lives in Bulgaria for 3 years, was helping as an interpreter for the new ones who did not speak Bulgarian at all when they came to the school.

⁶ The information about the National Network for Children is available at: <http://nmd.bg/en/about-us/> (14.08.2018).



The changes in the education law (Pre-school and school education act) in 2016 stipulates that the primary education finishes in 7th grade, that is the reason why in the beginning of school year 2017/2018 the school of the village of Ivanovo reduced its number of kids to 112 pupils and 12 kids in preparatory group. Just two from the Syrian kids who started studying in the school in 2016 continued in 2017/2018. The rest of the altogether 9 refugee kids moved with their families, reaffirming the transit character of Bulgaria. Four new pupils of Afghani origin from one family were appointed to study in the school. Nearly 90% of the kids stay in school during the whole day, they are provided with lunch.

Secondary school 66 "Philip Stanislavov" in Sofia has the longest history of accepting refugee kids in Bulgaria. This is partly due to its location, situated very close to the former building of the State agency for refugees and now the Registration and reception centres in Ovcha kupel district in Sofia (RRC-Ovcha kupel). Through the years the number of refugee kids vary, but each year they have some.

In the school year 2017/2018, altogether 315 pupils are enrolled in the school, 83 of whom study at the Centre for social educational support because of having special needs. 25% of the children are of Roma origin. Altogether the refugees are 42 in November 2017. All the kids either do not speak Bulgarian at all or have very little knowledge of the language. They come predominantly from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and are spread in the different classes between preparatory group and 9th grade. Not all of them are willing to learn Bulgarian and are following the principles and discipline of the school. Based on their long experience, the principal and teachers assume that these kids who don't want to study do not plan to stay in Bulgaria for a longer period of time. As the principal explains: "luckily, there are several girls this year that show real interest, we hope they will stay for longer".

Parental engagement at the schools, policies/procedures for parental engagement

There is a tendency in Bulgaria showing the importance of the role of more actively engaging parents in the schools in general at policy level. A national survey⁷ done by "Trend" agency and ordered by MEP Asim Ademov, presented results on a forum in Sofia titled "Getting parents back to school" in April 2018. "Parents feel more comfortable about their children when they get more information from the teachers. Dialogue and partnership are needed to build trust between school and family"⁸ was the main message of the Minister of Education and Science Krasimir Valchev at the forum. In the words of the Minister, educational institutions that interact with parents achieve better learning outcomes and also deal more successfully with problems such as aggression. According to the Minister "the school should be active in seeking and attracting parents". At the forum the Minister points out that he had organized meetings with parents at the beginning of his mandate (May 2017), after which good communication practices are spread. Some of these practices include more frequent parent meetings; involving parents in school activities; setting up clubs' involving more pupils and parents together, exchanging information through closed groups, etc.

The above mentioned survey⁹ shows that 77 % of parents only get informed by their children about what is happening at school; 81% of parents trust the teachers and are happy with the school's influence on their children, as well as with the education their children are receiving; 84% of parents meet their children teachers only at the regular parent meetings (that happen several times throughout the whole school year); 46% of parents turn to the school only when the child is already having a serious problem.

Minister Valchev confirms at the forum that the Ministry of Education and Science is extremely reactive and discusses any proposal coming from parent organizations, and reaffirms that all the good ideas from the forum will be adopted to improve the work with parents.

⁷ The survey was conducted in February 2018.

⁸ Official website of the Ministry of Education and Science, in Bulgarian: <https://www.mon.bg/bg/news/2965> (16.07.2018)

⁹ The survey is done among parents who have children from 5th to 12th grade in the Bulgarian school system.



4.1.5 Case study findings

Role of school leadership

Primary school "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in the village of Ivanovo was chosen, because it is one of the rare few in Bulgaria that welcomed refugee kids even when there was no official path administered by the Ministry of education and science, due to the openness and visionary ideas of its Principal and school staff. It has a multi-ethnic character with 48% of the kids being Roma, 36% of Turkish origin, 6% Syrian and the rest are Bulgarian. The school has experience in socializing kids of different cultures. One of the aims of the school staff is to include them in the school life, which means "creating appropriate appealing environment – various corners, gardens, non-formal relations, dance group. In the dance group all the kids communicate freely, all the ethnic groups are present there". The principal is very proud that they take part in different festivals outside the village, thus "the kids gain confidence, fulfilment of what they do and this being a result of the school work is attractive and keeps them in the school".

The program of the Ministry of Education and Science "Your class" enables the refugee kids to learn additionally Bulgarian in more interactive ways. Knowing Bulgarian is in the centre of all the other spheres of life, so that's why the school staff is aware of the importance of the additional Bulgarian classes and additional consultations. This is also due to the fact that most of the kids are from different ethnic groups and learning Bulgarian is one of the focuses of work anyway. The Bulgarian speaking environment is also supportive to learn the language. All small aspects are important in the school life – helping in the garden, planting flowers, taking care of the trees, as the principal says "they notice beauty and take care of it".

Regarding the refugee kids, the principal proudly says: "we were the first ones, when we started, now the situation is better, some normative documents are present, but back then, it was try and maybe make a mistake and the risk we took. And it happened that really there was a risk, when some of the parents wanted to move their kids away from the school, but happily it finished well". The principal concludes that each child requires individual approach and care.

In secondary school 66 "Philip Stanislavov" in Sofia that has the longest history of accepting refugee kids in Bulgaria, the principal of the school summarises the years of experience as: "what really bad is, concerning refugee kids in Bulgaria, that the moment after the family receives status or starts to feel more stable, they leave the centre (RRC), go to outside address, and that is a precondition to search illegal ways to leave to Western Europe, because the aim of most of them is to leave our country, unfortunately. And when you have some results, the kid was here for a couple of years, you are satisfied that you have achieved something with that kid, and in one moment, without informing yourself, this kid leaves with his/her family and even in the agency they do not know and you have to note him/her as a drop-out".

During the time of the first interview (January 2017), the principal exemplifies the transit character of the phenomenon: "From the beginning of the year up to now, they have changed several times. They started around 35 kids, now the number is below 30 and these are different kids."

All the pupils enrolled in the school come from the Registration and reception centre in Ovcha kupel, where they live with their families during the asylum application procedure. The principal of the school explains how the enrolment of refugee children is happening in the school according to the latest regulations: "Children are enrolled according to the current regulations, approximately by age, and we can move them three classes/years back when they have no papers, almost all the children have no papers showing completed education degree; they have a translator to say in which class they were in their respective countries before they fled their country. Documents are submitted to the regional administrative authority that issues an order to be enrolled in a given school. It is a duty of each director to form a team at the school to make an interview with the children with parents with the help of translators. But with the translators it is very difficult, because they do not have translators in Ovcha Kupel, one of our colleagues there is helping us, and we appoint them to the different classes – the younger ones who are 5, 6, 7 years old to the preparatory group and the older ones – in the upper classes. With the new regulations, the representative of unaccompanied minors is the district mayor."

Compared to school year 2016/2017, a positive development in the school year 2017/2018 is the fact that the State agency for refugees has provided transportation for the refugee kids and brings them to the school in the morning and back to the Registration and reception centre at lunchtime. The school staff supports the idea to let the refugee children spend the whole day in school, because this will be beneficial for faster learning Bulgarian language and socializing with the kids. At a UNHCR meeting of principals of schools with refugee kids from Sofia, a representative of UNHCR has explained that the



children are afraid that if they do not go back in time they will stay without food that is provided to everyone that lives in the Reception centres.

Empowerment of parents

In primary school "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in the village of Ivanovo at the beginning of school year 2016/2017 there were problems with the parents of local kids. There was a parents' meeting in the beginning of school year. When the principal explained to the parents there will be refugee kids this school year, some of the parents of the other kids reacted. The principal explains that with the bad image of refugees spread through the media – "Talibans", "terrorists", etc. But when parents are talked to and situation is explained, with the time they get used to with all the kids.

There was a situation when an incident happened because boys are more playful, and some kids were wounded. The parents of the kids that got hurt went to the school and reacted very emotionally, with negative attitudes towards the Syrians. What helped in that situation were meetings and talks from the side of the school principal and staff with the parents, also a real visit at school while the boys were playing in the schoolyard, when in the play no one can distinguish who has a different ethnicity, because in the play, kids are kids. With patience, understanding and communication the situation settled. However, the principal emphasizes on the risk for the school, because at the beginning some of the parents were saying that they will move their kids to other schools, as mentioned above.

Similar is the situation in secondary school 66 "Philip Stanislavov" in Sofia, the school faces the challenge of losing some Bulgarian kids because of having refugee kids in the school, although having a longer tradition of integrating refugee children in the school process. The principal explains it by saying: "The issue is that when new families come and do not know the other kids, when they come and see the different colour of the kids they leave school". The principle addresses this situation again through talking with parents, explaining the situation of the refugee kids and sharing positive stories.

Role of social class / education, cultural distance, structural inequalities

The educational status of most the parents¹⁰ of the pupils in primary school "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in the village of Ivanovo is a low one; just several of the parents have secondary education, most of them have finished up to fourth grade. Due to this fact, some of them do not have inner conviction that they can help with something and that even going to school is necessary, and sometimes they do not understand that it is obligatory. Thus, parents cannot help in the education process, financially (some of them take social benefits themselves), or as volunteers, because of being busy throughout the whole year with activities in the fields. A possibility for the parents to participate in the school life is through extra-curricular cultural activities or as the principal explains: "what they can really do is be present to see how their kids progress, how they express their talents during the festivals, because this shows that they support their kids and this makes the kids happy."

Sometimes the parents do not allow their kids to take part in the extra-curricular activities, because of cultural reasons, such as that at the places of the festivals there are older children, there are boys, that somebody can steal their girl. The principal explained about recent situations when he had to go to the parents and personally guarantee that they will take care and this cannot happen and such activities are beneficial for the kids – broadens their horizon, they meet other kids, visit different places, different schools. In such situation what helps are again the personal meetings and talks.

In the first focus group interviews¹¹, most of the refugee kids' parents had an educational degree – school or university – and were very interested in the education of their kids. They explained that it is part of their culture to be interested how their kids progress in school and they would like to support them in any way possible. That is why, mostly requested by this group are additional lessons in Bulgarian, in English, Maths and other subjects according to the needs of the kids. In

¹⁰ This information is about the parents in general, not about the parents of the refugee kids.

¹¹ Parents who live outside the Registration and reception centres in partnership with the Bulgarian Red Cross was conducted in April 2017. The group of six parents who took part in the FGI11 was a mix of fathers or mothers who were living in Bulgaria for between one and a half and six years. All of them were from Syria with one exception – a father from Afghanistan. All of them have at least one child that is enrolled in a Bulgarian school or in the Palestinian school. The Palestinian school is popular among the Arab community in Bulgaria, because kids can study Arab language besides Bulgarian, and the received diploma at the end of the school year can serve as a stepping stone to allow the child to be transferred to a Bulgarian school. This is especially relevant for kids who come without any document justifying their educational degree.



regards to the educational process, beside extra lessons, the kids also need help for their homework, especially when it is in Bulgarian and their parents cannot help, because they do not know Bulgarian so well. In the second focus group interviews,¹² most of the parents have completed high school education. In four of the families, the kids were visiting the Armenian school in Sofia; one kid was in the Palestinian school.

Source of information for migrant parents

The parents from the first focus group interviews explained that the kids are usually enrolled in the respective school with the help of somebody – a social worker from the Bulgarian Red Cross, a neighbour, or a relative. All of them reported that they have zero information about the Bulgarian education system and it is very difficult for the kids to adapt. It usually takes a year for both kids and parents to adapt and to understand what is required. This happens with the help of local friends, relatives who are here for a longer period of time, neighbours who are willing to help, social workers from the active NGOs, etc.

In the second focus group, interviews in most of the cases friends or relatives helped in choosing the schools. Most parents usually communicate directly with the teachers, when children are enrolled, and if interpretation is needed, they search help from the facilitators from Caritas. In some cases, the kids themselves are mediating the process of communication between teachers and parents.

Isolation of parents

In terms of relations with other parents, just one mother says that she is in touch with one other parent, all the others do not have regular contacts with other parents. The general mood is that they would be glad to respond to different invitations, rather non-formal (holidays celebrations, excursions, gatherings, where they can present their culture as well), to interact more closely with the other parents, but they have not received such invitations yet. The common observation is that there is “a big ice between us” when contacts with the Bulgarians are explained, so various occasions that support getting to know each other are welcome and important. One of the parents explains how lucky they are with their neighbour who helps the kids a lot.

In the second focus group, there were mothers who say that they attend all the parents’ meetings and others who say that they do not go because of the language barrier. One of the mothers who attends explains that this happens because of the help of the teacher in English. Some of them communicate with other parents, with simple words (hello, good-bye, how are you); a mother who has the experience with two schools explains that in one of them all people are goodhearted and in the other not that much.

In regards to taking part in school activities, a mother said she has already taken part – baked something for school, another said she might also do so, but there was one mother who said that it would not be possible for her because she has to go to work. All the ones whose children have completed a year say that they attend the closing ceremony of the school with pleasure.

From the perspective of the school and the principle interviewed, in secondary school 66 “Philip Stanislavov”, the communication with the refugee parents is very difficult because of the language barrier. Usually, in the beginning of each school year there is a parents’ meeting with a representative from the State agency for refugees and an interpreter to help the school staff explain more about the school and in which class go each of the enrolled children. This meeting is not enough, but because of lack of interpreters, more meetings of this kind are not possible: “It is important to have interpreter for these parents to come.” There is no information brochure on the education system to inform the parents as well.

When there was no transport every day, one or two of the parents were bringing the kids to school every day, they were taking turns. But there is no real contact between teachers and parents. Thus, the communication happens mainly through the children who know more Bulgarian, the refugee kids themselves serve as mediators in that regard.

¹² With parents who live outside the Registration and reception centres in partnership with Caritas Bulgaria happened in July 2017. Nine mothers took part in the FGI. There were women who live in Bulgaria between one year and a half, and eight-nine years the most. Three of them were from Syria, three were from Iraq, two from Lebanon and one from Russia.



The teachers and the principal explain that the motivation of the family has a key impact on the kid, along with the culture of the country they come from. If the parents are educated, they prefer their kids to be educated too and they encourage them to go to school even if the period of stay in Bulgaria is intended to be a short one. Because knowing another language is a big benefit and the socialization at school has a positive character: "If the parents are motivated, kids learn very fast, for three weeks they learned to read. The support of the family is very important. The parents who want their kids to study, they prepare them and send them to the school. The ones who come for two years studying they become excellent pupils in the third year."

School's definition of the partnership with parents

In the sphere of education for refugee and asylum seeking children, a study was conducted back in 2012 by the Centre for Study of Democracy (CSD) examining the "teachers – pupils – parents" nexus as crucial for achieving integration of both parents and children in Bulgaria. Compared to nowadays situation, the report for Bulgaria was written in a different context – characterized by low asylum seekers influx, presence of national plan for integration of refugees and a small number of children entering the education system. Fostering the contacts between migrant parents and teachers was one of the challenges observed at that time, along with the incapability of the parents to help pupils with homework because of their own lack of Bulgarian language knowledge. A major problem of the refugee and asylum seeking children is that their group is highly mobile and tends to only stay in Bulgaria temporarily, following their parents further West using various channels (Nonchev, Tagarov 2012:120).

The interviews with principles and school visits within the ALFIRK project show that the above mentioned tendency is still very relevant for the majority of people seeking international protection in Bulgaria. However, the focus groups with parents also showed that there is a small number of families who are willing to stay in Bulgaria and need support in building networks with other parents and getting involved more actively in the school life of their children.

In primary school "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in the village of Ivanovo the principal explains to the refugee parents that this is a primary school and they also have a preparatory group, he assumes that their motivation is to live in Bulgaria and it is easiest for their kids to learn Bulgarian in the school. He adds that when he had meetings with them they were not so interested about the curriculum, but rather more interested in general information. The refugee parents are described by the principal as responsible, respectful and attentive. When being invited to parents' meetings and feasts, the principal says: "the parents of the refugee kids always come, the whole family comes. They show respect, show they are grateful, because the school has accepted their kids".

The communication is in general one-way: from the school to the parents. The school initiates all the meetings, talks about both the formal educational part and the activities that happen after the formal educational program is finished.

The parents' meetings happen usually twice per year. One additional parents' meeting is organized for the kids who are at 7th grade. It concerns the external evaluation of the kids at this stage of the school system; informs them about the exams; what are the conditions and the opportunities to study after that. They are introduced to the possible secondary schools in the region. All these meetings concern the formal education part.

There also are extra-curricular activities in which parents are welcome as well. They are connected with the customs and culture of the different ethnic groups. Parents are invited to present their cuisine, culture, folklore. In the previous years, parents of Roma and Turkish origin presented and this year the teacher, who is responsible for this activity, is planning to invite the mother of the Syrian kids. The mother herself is very busy because she is managing a restaurant in the town, but the principal is positive that they will find the right format.

Parents also come to the celebrations/feasts the school is celebrating, again not so many come, about 10-20%. These are the Christmas holidays, the spring holidays, the day of the Mother on 8th of March, the Day of the Bulgarian alphabet on 24th of May. The Day of the Bulgarian alphabet is also an anniversary of the establishment of the school, and in 2017 more parents have come, because the school celebrates 135 years since its founding. About 30-40% of the parents attended. The principal is aware of the time of the holiday, end of May. This is a high time for the agricultural work, when tobacco is planted, and most parents are busy, because tobacco is one of the main means of living of most of the people in the area. The director explains: "in general, the work of all the parents is in agriculture and stock-breeding, so they visit the school in time when they are free from work, they cannot stop their fieldwork to go the school, because both the fields and the



animals cannot wait". Therefore, the parents visit the school sporadically, if they have the chance to pass by or if there is a problem with their kids.

If there is anything important to communicate with the parents, usually the principal of the school and/or some of the teachers are travelling with their cars to visit the parents themselves. The principal says: "Even when we send them something written, it doesn't mean that they will respond or read it. They send written invitations for the parents' meetings, also for the celebrations." Teachers are also communicating directly, they have the mobile numbers of the parents and they call. When it is connected with the education of the kids, the means of communication is the pupils' mark-book (belezchnik). They can also write in the kids' notebooks that there will be parents meeting on a particular day.

The parents' meetings usually happen three times throughout the school year. There are two main forms of involvement of the parents in the school life, both of them initiated by the school. On one hand, they are invited to all the celebrations, feasts of the school, and on the other, they are invited in projects. Currently, there is a project called "Your class", before there was another one called "Success". Both projects initiated joint activities with parents, but they are voluntary, so not all parents participated. During celebrations and feasts, the parents of the smaller pupils usually come. The parents of the pupils that are in 11th or 12th grade usually do not come. Concerning the project "Your class", the parents are asked to fill in questionnaires about education gaps or education interests and additional classes are formed. Parents are invited in that formats as well – for example, when there are sport activities, literature, language activities, etc.

The principal gives an example how they include the Roma parents in the school life. There is a resource teacher who is particularly assigned for the role of the communication with the Roma kids. The teacher accompanies the kids during their travel by bus to the school and brings them back to the district where they live. She knows the parents and they rely on her a lot.

The attendance of the parents' meetings happens to be a big issue for most schools in Sofia, the principal explains. Parents prefer to talk directly with the class teacher and do it when it is the most suitable time for them or over the phone. The mass parents' meetings are avoided, because parents don't like the way they are happening: the teacher enters, then goes to each parent and loudly speaks about their child. If the child is a good one, it is fine, but if the child has problems, the parents get embarrassed, so they rather prefer not to go and speak with the teacher directly. They search for individual decisions.

The website of the school is not much visited by parents, especially from the ones with Roma of refugee background. The Facebook page is more frequently visited. The class teachers themselves communicate with their class through Facebook regarding assignments or when they would like to provide information about meetings, activities. There are not so many parents who initiate some activities themselves. In the public oversight boards, they help in choosing the textbooks, the curricula, to have transparent education process, they are active and responsive. They gather four times a year.

The principal of the school has a wish: "I would be very happy if parents communicate with their kids at least one hour per day, to tell them what has happened in the school, thus the parents will always know what is going on with their kids. Would be good if the parents are interested in the teacher, the class teacher. And in third place, if they are interested to understand whether the school needs something, what they can help with. In general, what is needed is more real communication.

Parents' definition of their role in the education process

In most of the cases the parents know less Bulgarian than their children, so they do not see how they can direct help in the learning process. They see their role as a supportive one, to be persistent in finding schools, mainly with the support of NGOs, bring children to school and where needed and possible find them additional learning activities – through volunteers, language and subject teacher, neighbors and friends in and outside their communities.

Parents also expressed willing to support newly arriving families and parents of their origin and help with their experience.

Parents' role in the secondary school choice

Parents' role in the secondary school choice is a significant one, of course it differs due to various factors, education status of the parents, social status, in general, different possibilities. In the capital city of Sofia, there is a huge interest for the elite secondary schools that are mainly situated in the centre of city and have traditions in education such as the various



language high schools, math/computer technologies high schools, etc. Lately many of the schools from the periphery of the capital are choosing adding an entrepreneur profile along with a language one to attract more potential parents/students. The situation in the small villages is a different one; in most places of the size of village of Ivanovo, there are only elementary schools and for secondary education the kids should travel to the nearest bigger town and cities.

Needs acknowledgement of parents by schools

A crucial issue for all the parents is the communication with the school teachers, principals, mainly due to the language barrier. Some teachers know English and this is how they communicate with some of the parents who also know some English. So, parents usually get informed about their kids' progress from the teachers directly, from their mark-books (beležnik) and most of them don't visit parents' meetings. In one case, where the father knows Bulgarian, the communication happens directly with the teacher over the phone. One mother explained that their teacher is really concerned and calls her to tell her on what to focus in the learning process.

Special care is also needed in particular cases. A mother explained that because of the traumatic experience of crossing the border, it was difficult for her child to stay alone in the school, without her around, so for one month she had to go with him to the school and stay outside the classroom waiting for him while he finishes, thus being calm and secure that everything is fine for him there. At that moment she needed more support from the teacher to understand that it is a difficult period for the kid and an extra effort is needed from all sides. The mother explained that rather than being supportive the teacher was irritated by her stay and that special attention was needed in that case. The situation settled for a month and now the child manages well.

Most of the kids do not have problems with other kids at school, but this depends very much on the teacher of the class. Some parents report about situations, when their kids are called: "Arabs, go back home" or "gypsies" and come home crying. Such situations are difficult to handle for both parents and kids.

They would be glad to have contacts of volunteers, organizations that could help with extra classes in different subjects and supporting kids with their homework. In general, the attitude to these kids has to be with a greater care and understanding that they need more time for adaptation, for learning the language, for fulfilling their tasks.

The challenges parents face overlap with the ones of the previous focus group – need of some additional attention towards the progress of the kids, additional classes in Bulgarian, because kids sometimes don't understand what is read/said to them if being done fast. Parents are not aware what is happening when, because they have scarce information about the Bulgarian education system. For example, they do not know when exams are done in the schools. Sometimes other kids misbehave and call refugee kids' names, which in the eyes of the parents, combined with the lack of a special treatment from teachers, is perceived as discrimination.

In terms of education process, kids lack knowledge in the specific subjects with more difficult terminology. Private classes are very expensive, so the parents pled for additional support from the state through programs targeting exactly these kids. A mother explained that her kid has epilepsy and asked whether there is a possibility for a special school where screaming attempts and other situations will be addressed adequately.

Requests, different than the ones expressed in the previous FGI, include regular sport activities for the kids and school bus to bring the kids to school, afterschool activities to help the kids prepare their homework, along with additional Bulgarian language classes and special attention to the subjects with heavy terminology.

The school staff of primary school "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" in the village of Ivanovo sees several directions of special care about the refugee kids as answers to the needs they see as important. First, these are additional Bulgarian classes that are currently available through the program "Your class". Would be good to have a second teacher who knows their language, to communicate with them, this comes as a suggestion based on the experience with the resource teacher for the Roma kids.

During the winter time, the refugee kids need warmer clothes. Through campaigns and donations, the school gathered and bought materials and winter shoes for the kids twice. In regards to support materials, the available ones are a textbook for studying Bulgarian, developed by Caritas Bulgaria that is targeting adult refugees, not kids and a Welcome kit developed by an NGO, which could serve beginners learning Bulgarian language.



Possible next steps through the eyes of the refugee parents:

Both FGIs show that there is a general need for more communication between the parents and the teachers, between the teachers and the kids, between the refugee kids and the local ones, between the refugee parents and the local ones.

The parents would be happier if they have:

- More information about the Bulgarian education system, for example, when there are exams, so they can support their kids;
- More possibilities to study Bulgarian language (for both kids and parents). Knowing Bulgarian better could stimulate the parents to interact more regularly with the schools and with other parents as well. A possibility is an interested stakeholder to provide classes called: "Bulgarian for parents";
- More possibilities for additional help with the homework, with special attention to the scientific subjects that have heavy terminology – could be provided by volunteers;
- special attention to the refugee kids – more understanding from both teachers and other kids that refugee kids need time to adapt, that their situation is sensitive and need to be treated with respect and care.

Recommendations

The three perspectives of the research conducted within the ALFIRK project – the policy/normative one, the one of the refugee parents and the one of the school management – show progress in the refugee integration educational procedure in Bulgaria. Being new, it requires time to be validated as good or having room for improvement. It would be interesting to observe whether this positive normative change would have some effects on the phenomenon and the transit character of Bulgaria on the refugee path.

On that stage, empowering refugee parents could be strengthened through:

- Investing in creating space for refugee parents and teachers to meet;
- Investing in Bulgarian language classes especially for refugee parents ("Bulgarian for parents");
- Investing in interpreters at the parents' meetings, so more refugee parents have the wish to join, because of having the chance to understand what the progress of their kids is; how fast they learn and whether there are particular gaps to fill in; to learn more about the talents of the kids and find out the meaning of learning and socialization processes that happen at school;
- Investing in information materials about the Bulgarian education system that could be translated in the languages of the refugee parents;
- Investing in creating space for the refugee parents to proudly present their culture, cuisine, folklore in the schools and/or different other ways in which they can contribute;
- Investing in creating of data base of volunteers who would like to help refugee kids with homework or studying languages, difficult science subjects;
- Investing in creating a welcoming atmosphere for refugee parents at the schools;
- Investing in creating space that refugee kids feel welcome in school through bringing more empathy and understanding of their personal stories, thus making steps in reducing negative attitudes and discrimination in general, as the principal of the school of Ivanovo highlighted: "each child requires individual approach and care".



References

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Further information

Detailed information about the refugee integration in Bulgarian is available www.refugee-integration.bg developed by the Bulgarian Council for Refugees and Migrants and financed by the UNHCR Representation in Bulgaria.



4.2 Germany

4.2.1 Migration situation

From a historical point of view, Germany has been an immigration country since many decades. Major immigration movements started after the end of the Second World War. Due to the economic boom from the end of the 1940s on Germany hired many guest workers from other countries. Thus, between 1955 and the recruiting stop in 1973 more than 14 million guest workers arrived from first Italy and later also from Spain, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, and the former Yugoslavian Republic. 11 million of them went back to their countries of origin, which resulted in a net migration of 3 million people.

Since the 1950s Germany also received a huge number of asylum seekers. Due to the national uprising in Hungary in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1969 more than 10.000 refugees came to Germany in each case. A first record number was reached in 1980 when more than 100.000 people arrived in Germany after the military coup in Turkey and the declaration of the martial law over Poland. Until 1992 the amount of asylum seekers increased continuously due to the civil war in Sri Lanka, the oppression of the Kurds in Turkey and Iraq and the civil war in Yugoslavia. The highest number of first asylum requests until then (438.000) was received by Germany in 1992, when the iron curtain fell. In the subsequent years the numbers declined as a consequence of the new law on safe third countries¹³. It hinders people to seek political asylum in Germany when they entered Europe through a safe third country¹⁴. Since the high increase in the arrival of refugees since 2014, more than 1,1 million people arrived in Germany; most of them coming from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Eritrea, Turkey, Iran, and Somalia caused by war and unrest in these countries.

The largest group of non-German nationals, here considered as people without German citizenship, has Turkish nationality. With approximately 1.5 million people they represent 15% of all non-German residents. The second largest group is formed by Polish nationals with 866.855 people corresponding to around 9% of all non-German residents. The third largest group since 2015 is formed by Syrian nationals with 698.950 persons, resulting from the high numbers of asylum applicants. However, most immigrants come from other European countries, accounting for more than 7.5 million people corresponding to 78.4% of all non-German residents. Over time, the share of Non-Germans increased from 1% in 1961 to 6.3% in 1975 and further up to 8.2% in 1992¹⁵. Currently (as constituted on 31.12.2017), 9.575.000 non-Germans are living in Germany; they represent approximately 11,6% of the total population (Destatis 2018a, pp. 18).

Besides non-Germans also Germans with migration background have to be considered. 'A person has a migration background, if she or at least one of her parents is born without German citizenship.' (Migrationshintergrund (Definition), 2018). According to the sample census 2017, 19.258.000 people with migration background live currently in Germany, among them 13.172.000 with own migration experience and 6.086 without¹⁶ (Destatis 2018b). They represent 23.6% of the overall population with increasing trend over the last years. Approximately, one third of the persons with migration background are below 25 years, one third is between 25 and 45 years old and one third is older than 45 years (Destatis 2018b, p.34). Table 1 gives an overview over the numbers of non-German nationals, people with migration background and the total population since 2011.

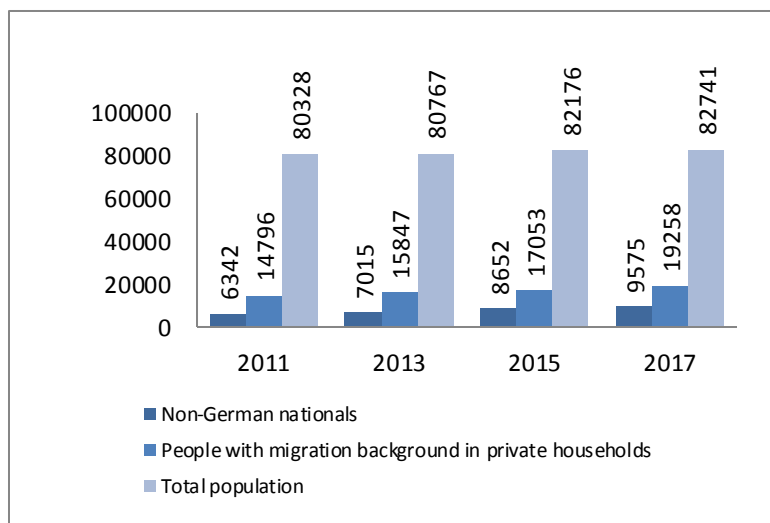
¹³ Art. 16a GG (entered into force as from July, 1st 1993)

¹⁴ Safe third countries are EU member states, Norway and Switzerland

¹⁵ Data for 1961 and 1975 refer to the former Federal Republic of Germany)

¹⁶ Please take into account that the data taken from the sample census and those from the Ausländerzentralregister ('Central Register of Foreigners') base on different sources. Thus, inconsistency in the data is possible. The source of the data will always be mentioned.

Figure 3: Foreign population and population with migration background in Germany, 2011-2017, in thousand



Employment and education situation of migrants¹⁷

Regarding the socio-economic background, in 2017 the largest group of non-German nationals were white-collar workers accounting for 2,619,000 people or 55,75% of all non-German people in paid work and 27,8% of all non-Germans. Furthermore, 30,63% of all non-German people in paid work are employed as blue-collar workers (1.439.000 persons or 15,28% of all non-German nationals). In comparison, only 15,8% of all German people in paid work respectively 8.08% of all German nationals are employed as blue-collar workers. It is also remarkable that only 1,21% of the non-German people in paid work are employed in the public service; this corresponds to only 57.000 persons (0.6% of all non-German nationals) and to 2% of all employees in the public service. Among the group of German nationals in paid work, 7,57% work in the public service (2.796.000 persons or 3,87% of all German nationals).

Concerning education, the 2017 Census shows that there are significantly more non-Germans without any kind of educational degree (15,55%) than German nationals (1,91%). 36,65% of non-German nationals drop out of education without a job-qualifying degree while that applies only to 11,52% of the German nationals. However, there are slightly more non-German nationals with an academic¹⁸ degree (16,06% or 1,5 million non-Germans) than German nationals (15,08% or 10,9 million Germans). Among the academic degree holders, especially the group of university graduates differs strongly. While 11,91% of the non-Germans graduate at a university, this applies only to 8,17% of the German nationals. However, there are more Germans graduating at a university of applied science (5,31%) than non-Germans (2,82%).

The group of people with migration background is located in-between non-German nationals and German nationals. Approximately 10% leave school without any graduation that is more than the Germans but less than the non-Germans. Among the school graduates, one third leaves school with lower secondary degree, one fourth with medium secondary degree and 41% with a type of high school degree (general or specialised high school degree). Approximately 26% of all people with migration background have no job-qualifying graduation that is 10% less than among the non-German nationals. 13,18% of the people with migration background graduate.

With 57,27% (5,024,000) white-collar workers form again the largest group among people in paid work followed by blue-collar workers with 12,9% or 2,484,000 persons. 8,75% of the people with migration background are self-employed only 1% are civil servants. In the whole sector of public administration, only 2,27% of the people paid in work are employed in. It follows, that in total, only 7% of all employees in the public administration have a migration background. This shows the high under-representation of this particular group compared to the share of 23% it constitutes of the total population.

¹⁷The following data are based on the Ausländerzentralregister

¹⁸ Including degree from a university of cooperative education, polytechnic degree, university degree, promotion



Migration figures

Current population estimation based on the results of the Census 2011 shows that German's population was 82.471.000 in December 2017, which constitutes an increase of 2.413.000 (3%) since December 2011. The total number of non-German nationals increased drastically from 6.342.000 to 9.575.000, corresponding to 11,6% of the population. The total number of people with migration background increased from 14.786.000 in 2015 to 19.258.000 in 2017. This is an increase of 30%. In 2017, 1,55 million people immigrated to Germany while only 1.14 million people emigrated. This results in a net immigration of 405,020 persons. More than 1.082.213 third-country nationals received a residence permit or a EU Blue Card in 2017. The main nationalities receiving a residence title were Syria (21,9%), Turkey (8,3%) and Afghanistan (6,4%). The main nationalities of foreign people living in Germany are Turkey with 1,5 million, Poland with 866,855 and Syria with 698,950 people (see BAMF/ Forschungszentrum Migration, Integration und Asyl, 2018).

Germany

According to data from the Federal Statistical Office, in 2016, around 1.7 million foreign nationals arrived in Germany (2 million in 2015). Approximately 1.1 million foreign nationals left Germany in 2016, resulting in positive net migration of around 635 300; a strong decrease compared to 2015, when net migration was around 1.2 million.

More than half of newly arrived migrants in 2016 were third-country nationals (922 600). The number fell considerably compared to 2015, when inflows totalled 1.2 million. Around 796 500 EU foreign nationals came to Germany in 2016, a 6% decrease compared to 2015, whereas outflows of EU foreign nationals in 2016 were slightly higher than in the previous year (584 500 and 518 500, respectively).

About 23% of the population living in Germany in 2016 had a 'migration background', i.e. they themselves or at least one of their parents were not born with German citizenship. This constitutes an increase of 4 percentage points compared to 2011. Among children aged 5 or younger, this share increases to 38%.

In 2016, most newly arrived immigrants were nationals from Romania (222 400), followed by Syria (179 400), Poland (160 700) and Bulgaria (83 000). These nationalities constitute around 40% of all new immigrants in 2016. Once departures from Germany are taken into account, net migration figures yield a different pattern. Syrians had the highest net migration in 2016 (145 800), followed by Romanian (60 100), Afghan (56 100) and Iraqi nationals (47 700).

According to data from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, labour migration from third countries to Germany increased by more than 30% to 51 000. Of these, around 65% were highly skilled. The increase is partly due to a temporary policy implemented in October 2015 for nationals from the Western Balkans, allowing them under certain conditions to work in Germany regardless of the qualification level of their job offer. Family migration of non-EU nationals also increased by 28% to a total of 105 600 new family migrants arriving in 2016.

In the winter semester of 2016/17, 150 000 EU and non-EU students started studying at German universities. International student enrolment reached around 265 000 total, up 15 000 from a year earlier. The main countries of origin among enrolled foreign-born students remained China (13%), India (6%) and Russia (4%).

In 2017, close to 200 000 first-time asylum applications were lodged, a decrease of more than 70% compared to 2016 (722 000). Most of the applications were from Syrian nationals (25%), followed by Iraqis (11%) and Afghans (8%). Close to 40% of applicants were female (34% in 2016) or under 16 years old.

The increase of asylum applications in 2016 was accompanied by a large number of appeals. Around 25% of decisions and 40% of rejected cases were appealed before an administrative court in 2016. Even among Syrian nationals who received subsidiary protection status, 37% appealed. The number of pending cases in administrative courts rose from 60 000 in 2015 to 285 000 by the second quarter of 2017.

In 2017, 605 000 asylum cases were heard, which is below the 695 000 figure for 2016. Around 39% of the applications were rejected compared with 25% in 2016, while 18% were declared as not admissible. The remaining 43% received some form of protection: refugee status (21%), subsidiary protection (16%) or a status that prohibits deportation (7%).

After the introduction of the Integration Act (*Integrationsgesetz*) and new asylum legislation in 2016, the following year was marked by a consolidation phase focused on implementation of, for instance, programmes for vocational language learning.

Most policy developments in 2017 were focused on re-integration and return. As of February 2017, asylum seekers from certain origin countries may receive EUR 800-1 200 in financial assistance in addition to regular return assistance when they agree to return during their asylum procedure or once their request has been denied. Such additional cash assistance is also available for recognised refugees who decide to return. In addition, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees offers a hotline with information on voluntary return and re-integration programmes.

A legislative package that entered into force in 2017 makes it mandatory for asylum seekers without documentation to provide their mobile phones to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees who may use the metadata for determining their identity and nationality. It also enables regional governments to pass legislation which may then require asylum seekers to live in reception centres for up to two years and facilitates the detention of individuals which pose a severe threat before they are returned. The law also clarifies that youth welfare offices are required to apply for asylum on behalf of unaccompanied minors without undue delay.

Furthermore, in 2017 Germany transposed the Intra-Corporate Transferees Directive, the Seasonal Workers Directive and the Students and Researchers Directive.

For further information

www.bmas.de
www.bmi.bund.de
www.bamf.de
www.destatis.de



4.2.2 Policy review

The constitution determines the care and education of children as the natural right and primary duty of parents (Art. 6 Abs. 2 GG). This means that parents possess the prime responsibility for educating their children, compared to other institutions such as the state or church. Further, it signifies the importance of parents to be the main person of reference for their children and to educate them about fundamental values, shape their mindsets and foster competences. This legislation was influenced originally by the experiences and consequences of the Third Reich, and should hence ensure that the critical responsibility of the development of children lies in the hands of their parents, independently of their country of origin (Parität: 7).

Nevertheless, the cooperation of parents and the school is constitutionally guaranteed in Germany (Gomolla 2009: 25), and therefore depicts an exception of the above mentioned regulation. Accordingly, the public education assignment in form of the schooling system (Art. 7 Abs. 1 GG) is not subordinated to the parental education duty but rather equated. In order to ensure a substantial development of the child's personality, the educational assignment needs to be accomplished cooperatively and through meaningfully aligned actions. This verdict was defined already in 1972 by the federal constitutional court (BVerfGE 34, 165, 06.12.1972). Nevertheless, the educational reforms in the 1990s provided parents with more rights to have a say in the schooling process, which resulted out of an increased institutional autonomy of schools and a greater freedom of choice for parents. For instance, more and more federal states in Germany permitted not only the freedom of choice between private schools, but also within public ones. Further, parents obtained more rights to be heard in school conferences and through parent's councils (Gomolla 2009: 25).

The respective federal states in Germany are responsible for the configuration and organisation of the relationship between parents and school. Predominantly, this refers to the participation of parents in external school matters, but rather less concerning the participation within internal pedagogical issues (Gomolla 2009: 26). Nevertheless, parents have the constitutional right in all federal states to be heard from the school, to make suggestions and to consult with others about school initiatives, for instance within school committees such as the class parent's council or within the school conference (Krüger/Schmitt 2012: 144). Furthermore, within the area of learning-oriented participation, parents possess the right throughout Germany to receive information about the learning progress of their child, for example through consultations with respective teachers. However, more forms of learning-oriented participation are regulated either very differentiated or not at all on the federal state level. This relates particularly to educational agreements, parent courses, sitting in on classes, or the frequency of parent conference days (Kirk 2012: 186–187).

The role of parents in education

The regular contact between parents and teachers is important for the individual support and to ensure proper development of children in Germany. Parents have the right to be represented in schools through special organizations and to get informed by the school about important changes. They are generally encouraged to take part in certain school activities and decisions regarding the school, as well as to embrace opportunities to get informed or be involved during the school year. On the one hand, teacher meetings take place during the school year where parents get informed about their children's performance, the school system and the options for their children, especially for immigrated parents. On the other hand, parents' council meetings (Elternbeirat) take place, where parents influence important decisions at the school. The main focus in Germany is that parents have frequent opportunities to get informed or to have a say in the school body (e.g. in the Grundschule, three times in one school year). Sometimes parents also get the opportunity to come into the class and talk about their culture, their job or to support the teacher by volunteering as a guardian to a class excursion or field trip.

Additionally, an important parental engagement is to help children with their homework and learning progress. Parents have to know about the difficulties their children face, to react in an appropriate way. Furthermore, immigrated parents can learn the German language through their children, as they adapt to and learn the language easier from an early age on, or in specific German classes for parents in some schools.



4.2.3 Parental Networking

Many migrant-parents-networks have been established in Germany, as their need was recognized for the integration process to be successful. These were founded to foster the communication between parents with migration background and parents who are well informed about the German education system and to ease the process of settling into a new schooling system and country. The subsequent section will explain the main umbrella organisations, including widespread and on-site projects.

The federation of Turkish parents-networks in Germany (FÖTED: Föderation Türkischer Elternvereine in Deutschland)

The FÖTED is an umbrella organisation, targeting parents of Turkish origin. The aim is to support parents to help their children before, during and outside of the German school system. The educational work is focusing on parents, but also targeting teachers and educators to improve their intercultural skills. To achieve this aim, the network organizes workshops, courses, conferences and cultural-days. The main features are the wide distribution across the whole country, the cooperation to other parents-networks, educational institutions and initiatives as well as their support in communication between parents, teachers and educators.

The parents-network in North Rhine Westphalia – Integration together (Elternnetzwerk NRW-Integration miteinander e. V.)

In Westphalia the umbrella parents-network is a support system for immigrated parents to get in contact with each other. Furthermore, they are actively engaged in a better education for children with migration background. It is important to inform and qualify the parents to help and support their children, hence parents-seminars, parents-networks and parents-teacher-networks are organized. Moreover, the Elternnetzwerk NRW assists associations through projects and networking. Another main aspect is that the network is a non-profit organization with religious and political independence.

Migrants-parents- network Lower Saxony (Migranten-Eltern Netzwerk Niedersachsen):

The Migranten-Eltern Netzwerk Niedersachsen organizes trainings, informs parents about the current political education situation, motivates parents to a political commitment, as well as connects migrants and educational institutions. Furthermore, the network is organized on a democratic basis and also religiously and politically independent.

Neighborhood mothers (Stadtteilmütter):

Stadtteilmütter is a project for mothers with migration background in many cities all across Germany, for example in Berlin, Düsseldorf and Hamburg. Unemployed mothers with a non-German background are trained and qualified in topics like education and health. After the training they visit and help other families in their district. Furthermore, the project supports the language skills, the communication between parents and their children, and empowers parents in the school system. Moreover, they support the early pre-school (Kindergarten) visit for immigrated children to learn the German language and make new friends. The main aspect of this organization is to ensure that parents can help other parents with the same experience and language background in school and educational matters.

Elternlotsen

Elternlotsen is a project in Hamburg, which supports families by making their start in a new country easier. The members of Elternlotsen work voluntarily, have a migration background, and are able to speak the required languages. Due to the experience of similar situations, they can relate to and know many problems the migrated families are facing. The Elternlotsen live nearby the migrated families or in the same district, which makes it easier to provide them with information and assistance about how to use the public transport, how to contact authorities, or they help integrating children in local schools or kindergarten.

The following table provides an overview of migrant-parents-networks all across Germany.



Table 4: Migrant-Parents-Networks in Germany

State	Network	Location	URL
Nationwide (Office Berlin)	FÖTED-Föderation Türkischer Elternvereine in Deutschland	Berlin	http://www.tuerkische-elternfoederation.de/
Nationwide (Office Bonn)	Bund der spanischen Elternvereine e.V.	Bonn	http://www.confederacion.de/
Nationwide (Office Köln)	Bundesverband russischsprachiger Eltern	Köln	http://www.bvre.de/index.php
Nationwide (Office Köln)	Phoenix-Köln e.V. (Projekt "Kompass")	Köln	http://www.phoenix-cologne.com/Kompass.html
Nationwide at different locations	TEaCh – Türkische Eltern arbeiten an Chancen	Stuttgart	https://bit.ly/2IWVluZ
Baden-Württemberg	Deutsch-Portugiesischer Eltern-Verein Waldshut-Tiengen e.V.	Waldshut-Tiengen	
Baden-Württemberg	Griechische Elternverein Hellas Bodelshausen e.v	Bodelshausen	
	Italienischer Elternverein e.V.	Göppingen	
	KAUSA Servicestelle Region Stuttgart	Stuttgart	https://bit.ly/2CJY3ne
	Migrantinnen Verein Göppingen	Göppingen	
	Portugiesische Elternverein e.V.	Sindelfingen	
Bayern	AEV Ausländischer Elternverein München e.V.	München	http://www.aev-muenchen.de/



Bayern	Asyl AK der KHG (Projekt: Frauenfrühstück)	Würzburg	
	Caritasverband Bamberg Stadtteilmütter "Känguru"	Bamberg	https://bit.ly/2CJYVIw
	Deutscher Kinderschutzbund Kreisverband Augsburg e.V. Projekt Stadtteilmütter	Augsburg	https://bit.ly/2RQh5N5
	Internationalen Elternvereins des Landkreises Miesbach e.V. - Vereinigung von Eltern jeder Nation -	Miesbach	http://www.elternverein-lmb.de/
	Marokkanischer Elternverein in München und Umgebung e.V.	München	http://www.memu-ev.de/1.html
	Stadtmission Nürnberg Stadtteilmütter	Nürnberg	http://t1p.de/tyz9
	Türkischer Elternbeirat in Gersthofen e.V.	Gersthofen	http://www.okulaile.de/
	Türkischer Elternverein Bamberg e.V.	Bamberg	http://tev-bamberg.de/de/uber-uns-2/
	Verein Türkischer Elternbeiräte in Göppingen	Eislingen	
Berlin-Brandenburg	Türkischer Elternverein in Berlin - Brandenburg e.V.	Berlin - Brandenburg	http://www.tevbb.de/home.html
Hamburg	Projekt "Eltern vor Ort"	Hamburg	http://www.kwb.de/kwb/pages/index/p/1018
	Türkischer Elternbund Hamburg e. V.	Hamburg	http://www.htvb.org/index.php
Niedersachsen	Braunschweiger Elternnetzwerk interkulturell	Braunschweig	https://www.men-nds.de/index.php/regionalnetzwerke/braunschweig
	FöTEV-Nds e.V. Föderation türkischer Elternvereine in Niedersachsen e.V.	Hannover	http://www.foetev.de/
	Interkulturelles Familiennetzwerk Stadt Peine	Peine	https://www.men-nds.de/index.php/regionalnetzwerke/peine
	Migranten Eltern Netzwerk Niedersachsen	Hannover	http://www.men-nds.de/
	MigrantenElternNetzwerk Göttingen	Göttingen	https://www.men-nds.de/index.php/regionalnetzwerke/goettingen



Niedersachsen	MigrantenElternNetzwerk Stadt und Region Hannover	Hannover	https://www.men-nds.de/index.php/regionalnetzwerke/hannover
	Migrantenelternnetzwerk Hildesheim	Hildesheim	www.men-nds.de/index.php/regionalnetzwerke/hildesheim
	Migrantenelternnetzwerk für Hansestadt und Landkreis Lüneburg	Lüneburg	www.men-nds.de/index.php/regionalnetzwerke/lueneburg
	MigrantenElternNetzwerk Stade	Stade	www.men-nds.de/index.php/regionalnetzwerke/stade
	Regionales Netzwerk von Eltern mit Zuwanderungsgeschichte Oldenburg	Oldenburg	www.men-nds.de/index.php/regionalnetzwerke/oldenburg
	Türkischer Elternverein Hannover e.V.	Hannover	www.te-h.de/deutsch/startseite/
Nordrhein-Westfalen	Elternnetzwerk NRW - Integration miteinander	Düsseldorf	www.elternnetzwerk-nrw.de/
	Elternverein Rheydt e.V.	Mönchengladbach	http://www.spanischerelternvereinrheydt.de/
	Türk. Elternverein Ratingen e.V.	Ratingen	www.tev-ratingen.de
	Spanischer Elternverein Bonn-Beuel e.V.	Bonn-Beuel	http://spanischerelternverein-bonn.de/
	Spanischer Elternverein Bergneustadt e.V.	Bergneustadt	https://www.facebook.com/Spanischer-Elternverein-Bergneustadt-eV-540632296033838/info/?tab=overview

4.2.4 Case study profiles

Case study 1: Grundschule Herzogenaurach

Herzogenaurach is a small town in Bavaria with 24.000 inhabitants. Due to the fact that international companies, e.g. Adidas, Puma and Schaeffler are based in Herzogenaurach, the town hosts many guest worker families from India, Japan, China, Rumania, Serbia who usually stay in Germany for about 2,5 years.

The case study school is a primary school with 548 students in 2017 who attend grades 1-4 (6-10 years). The school has 22 classes that are taught in two buildings. The school applies two models:

- a half-day school model with classes lasting from 8.00 am until 1.00 pm the latest, and
- a whole-day school model with classes lasting from 8.00 am until 3.00 pm.

90 pupils attend the whole-school model. Both models are free of costs. Additionally, the school has two day-care centres with 200 places where pupils can stay until 6.00 pm. The school runs 12 voluntary working groups for its pupils; the themes of the working groups include English, French, Basketball, theatre and others.

30% of the school's pupils have a migration background; they represent 40 different nationalities. Many pupils have a Turkish, Greek or Traker (Turkish-Greek) background. A number of newly arrived pupils come from Syria. Many pupils are from India, Japan, China, Romania, or Serbia. Most of them are children of temporary guest workers of the international companies located in Herzogenaurach.

The school runs some activities that aim to include parents and foster their participation. Such activities include:

- Reading club: school library organised by parents.
- School fruit program: parents distribute fruits and vegetables among pupils once a week.

With most families, especially those who are in Herzogenaurach as guest workers, the school communicates in English. According to the school it is difficult to get in contact with and include parents who are only temporarily in Germany.

Case study 2: Eichendorffschule Erlangen

Erlangen is a medium-sized city in Bavaria with 108.000 inhabitants and closely connected to the cities Fuerth/Nuremberg. Nuremberg is one of the larger Bavarian cities with 0,5 Million inhabitants. The case study school is a lower secondary school with 422 pupils, including 60 pupils in transition classes for newly arrived migrant students (NAMS) in 2017. The number of students has been growing in recent years. Pupils attend classes 5 to 10 at the school.

The school currently runs a half-day model, but will be transferred into full-day school by 2020/21. Pupils attending the school can choose between different voluntary projects; these include sports, dance, movie, music, school band, experimental education, school beekeeping. It hosts many students of diverse backgrounds; the majority of students with a migrant background have Italian, Spanish or Turkish background. Students in transition classes are primarily from Iraq and Syria. The school considers it as very difficult to get in contact with parents and to include them in school activities.

Case study 3: Graf-Stauffenberg Wirtschaftsschule Bamberg

Bamberg is a medium-sized town in Bavaria, with 73.300 inhabitants. The case study school is an economic medium secondary school with 432 students in 2017, who attend grades 7-10/11. Usually, 2/3 of graduates transit into vocational training and 1/3 transit to higher secondary education. Among similar schools of the region, the school has the highest rate of graduates entering higher secondary education.

180 students (42%) have a migration background, most of them have Turkish background or rare from ethnic German families from Eastern Europe, mainly the Russia. For school events, the school usually manages to achieve a high participation of parents, including migrant parents. At the same time, teachers find it difficult to connect with migrant parents.

4.2.5 Case study findings

The findings of the case studies are based on interviews that were conducted with headmasters, teachers and migrant parents of the case study schools.

The parents who were interviewed are of diverse backgrounds. 1) In regard to their education: Some have lower secondary degrees, others have medium secondary degrees and one has a double university degree. 2) In regard to their current professional status: Some parents are currently taking part in vocational training, others are working. 3) In regard to the language spoken at home: Some parents speak German at home and some speak their mother tongue at home. 4) In regard to their future plans: Some of them are planning to go back to their countries of origin while others are planning to stay in Germany.

Before the interviews, kick-off meetings with the leadership of each school aimed to identify the particular situation of the schools and challenges the schools face in parental engagement were conducted. The kick-off meetings in all three schools found that:

- The case study schools find it very difficult to include migrant parents, especially for events (except for case study school 3), parents' meetings, and school trips.
- The case study schools find it difficult to understand why some parents do not participate in school activities; they wish to understand how to approach and include parents better.
- The schools assume that finances and language represent barriers for the participation of some families, but they are not sure if this assumption is correct and which other factors represent barriers.

Needs acknowledgement of parents by school

The analysis showed that a crucial aspect in the relation between parents and school is, whether parents' needs are fully acknowledged by the school.

The interviewed parents agree that there are sufficient and suitable options to contact the school and teachers. The teachers try to encourage parents to contact them if they have any questions or problems. An interviewed mother said: "The teachers want that [parents contact them]. They say that in each meeting."

However, the interviewed parents have different perceptions about the appropriateness of schools' responses to concerns and challenges that the parents perceive. While some interviewed parents feel that the school makes valid efforts to fully discuss problems and takes resulting decisions in the best interest of the children, other parents feel that the concerns they express towards the school are not taken seriously and responses are not appropriately taken by the school. This is why an interviewed mother explained: "Our headmaster is really open-minded and willing to listen to problems. But sometimes, if something happens or a problem comes up, it is not discussed until a solution is found. So, they [the school] listen but nothing further happens in order to solve the problem in a satisfactory way." Another mother experienced a similar situation when she asked the school to exempt her daughter from a school trip because she did not approve of the thematic scope of the trip. However, neither the school nor the teachers acknowledged the mother's concerns or took any action in response.


When parents feel misunderstood or their concerns are not taken seriously by schools, they may become frustrated and discouraged from active involvement in school matters.

From the perspective of schools and teachers, the pupils and their education are at the center of their concerns and efforts. Their focus is on assuring that all pupils receive the same education without any exception due to cultural or religious differences. It appears that challenges arise when the expectations of the education and the school environment differ between parents and schools.

Schools' definition of the partnership with parents

The findings of this study indicate that schools and parents define two levels of partnerships:

- The partnership between parents and teachers, and
- The partnership between parents and the school as a whole.



The interviewed parents emphasize that their children's teachers are normally looking for personal contact with parents; this contact usually works very well and is described by most interviewed parents as frequent and trustful. Teachers seem to consider it as part of their responsibility to keep parents up to date on the progress of their children and to remain in frequent contact with them. The resulting easy and unproblematic contact between parents and teachers is described in the interviews as very important for the parents as well as for the teachers. An interviewed father explained: "If I have problems or questions I would not hesitate to contact the teacher." An interviewed mother added: "The teachers want us to contact them, that's what they always tell us."

At the same time, the interviews indicate that the case study schools as a whole, often perceived by parents as being represented by the Parents' Board, are looking for contact at a rather general level. The schools try to involve parents at the school festivities, e.g. preparing or serving food, or as active members of the Parents' Board. However, some interviewed parents find that the school should also organize class- or small group-based meetings for parents where they can establish contacts with other parents. That is why an interviewed mother explained: "At the beginning I was really lost, thus, I wished to have more contact to other parents." But she felt the school does not provide opportunities for contact among parents. Some parents feel that small group-based meetings could facilitate the integration into the German (school) life, especially for newly arrived parents who face German language barriers.

There is a difference in the intensity of contacts and interaction between parents of primary school pupils vs. parents of secondary schools' pupils and schools'. The interviewees from the two secondary case study schools explained that they have not been aware of any activities that the school offers for parents, except for a parents' meeting that takes place once in a while, usually at the beginning of the school term. They are hardly in contact with other parents of their school. In contrast, most of the interviewees of the primary case study school explained that they are organized in a WhatsApp-group, meet personally on a regular basis, and know each other from the school. However, this primary school does not seem to intervene very actively in the parents' self-organization process. This indicates that parents of primary school pupils are more motivated to connect among each other than this is the case for parents of secondary school pupils.

While it is a rather general pattern that parents of primary school pupils remain in closer contact and interaction than parents of secondary school pupils do, the context of the primary case study school in Herzogenaurach has to be taken into consideration: Herzogenaurach has been a town with a lot of guest workers for a long time due to several international companies (Puma, Adidas, Schaeffler-Group) being based there. Therefore, the international composition of the population has long been a tradition for the school as well as for the whole town. The resulting openness of the school and its environment may facilitate contact between parents of different backgrounds. Additionally, some parents know each other from working at the same company.


Isolation of parents

There are two types of parental involvement/support within the education process of children, namely the home-based involvement/support and the school-based involvement/support (Lusse, 2013). Home-based involvement and support includes different types of support that parents give to children's learning at home via discussing school activities and monitoring child's out of school activities. School-based support includes all involvement in school governance and activities at school, e.g. communication with the school and participation in school.

Nearly all interviewed parents are very well informed about their children's homework and current school situation. Depending on their support strategy and their own education background they help actively in doing homework or they just offer support. A father describes his strategy: "I always check his homework but I only get involved if he asks for my help." All interviewed parents, except for one, are able to help their children with homework when they ask for help. This indicates a strong relevance of the home-based support pattern.

A slightly different pattern appears for the school-based involvement. Nearly all interviewees are in frequent contact with their children's teachers and participate in parents' meetings. Some of the interviewees engage in some school events. However, most of the interviewees are only sporadically participating in school activities and are not participating in school bodies, such as the parents' council. On the question why they are not more actively involved, the interviewed parents reply:

- "I do not have time...."
- "I do not want to commit myself..."
- "For me, it feels like pressure..."
- "I do not know whom to ask..."



The answers indicate that one of the reasons for low school-based involvement is the lack of time. Some parents are participating in vocational training, have more children at home and/or are single parents. This leaves them no time for further engagement. Being expected to participate frequently in school activities adds to their pressure. But that does not imply that parents are not informed about their child's school matters.

Interestingly, also a lack of information is mentioned. There are parents who want to engage and start their own projects but they do not know where to get the information from and whom to ask. At the same time, an interviewed headmaster said that he has never directly asked parents why they do not participate more in school's activities. He is assuming what the reasons may be but he has never communicated with parents about the issue of their participation.

This indicates that there seems to be a lack of communication between schools and parents. When schools manage to pass information to parents in a way that is accessible to all parents, more parents may feel motivated and able to contribute to school activities and may be able to bring in ideas and resources that the schools are so far not aware of.

Parents' definition of their role in the education process

While schools have certain expectations of parental involvement, they often do not consider the role parents define for themselves in the education process of their children. Interviewed headmasters and teachers of the case study schools mention that parents "are not interested", that they "do not feel responsible for school matters of their children" or that there is a "strict separation of parents' responsibilities at home and teachers' responsibilities at school". Not participating frequently in school is interpreted by headmasters and teachers as a cultural characteristic. They assume that parents feel responsible at home and assign responsibility to teachers for all school affairs.

While this may be part of the reason, the interviews with parents of this study yield also other aspects. Almost all of the interviewed parents want their children to be autonomous and independent. That is reflected in various aspects. All of them would support the child in its secondary school choice. They trust their children and want them to feel comfortable at school and take their own decisions. One mother explained: "They advised me to send my daughter to a middle school. Then, I said 'no, my daughter wants to go to a higher secondary school and I trust her'" Another mother said "My son should do what he wants and not what I want him to do." The interviewed parents support the decisions of their children and do not pay as much attention to the grades and teachers' judgments. While most interviewed parents are well informed about their children's homework situation, they only offer help by request. Their main reason for this strategy is to support their children in becoming independent. An interviewed father said: "I want him to be independent".

Concluding, the interviewed migrant parents are involved and interested in their children's education. They want their children to grow up responsible for and autonomous in their lives. This may be part of the reason why some parents intentionally rather remain 'in the background' and only sporadically participate in school activities. Nevertheless, the interviewed parents appreciate any kind of support that is provided by the school and the teachers their children. For example, they consider a weekly homework schedule or homework done under supervision at school as very suitable, in particular for parents who do not have advanced knowledge of the German language.

Empowerment of parents


According to the interviewed headmasters and teachers, schools experience challenges in the successful transmission of information to parents. An interviewed teacher explains:

"Maybe it would be interesting to offer low-threshold opportunities [of communication] in order to transform information in a real communication. So far, the only way is that the school informs parents in written form, maybe the information is not well received by parents. They may not be aware how to respond. How should schools deal with this? How can we transform information into a communication with very low barriers, using easy language and with low expenditure of time?"

On an individual level, one school appears to cope with this challenge. This is explained by a headmaster:

"On the individual level we have some first approaches. For example, if we invite a mother who does not speak German we can include a translator. We can also use translated information letters. That means with communication we can deal with this issue for individual cases."

However, only the school seems to be aware and able to involve a translator in the communication with parents. Parents are often either not aware that it is possible to come for a parents-teacher meeting with a translator or do not know have the means to arrange for a translator. This is why the interviewed headmaster continues: "It is difficult with the communication; that parents really realize that they have the opportunity to come to school in company with a translator."



Interviewed parents confirm that language sometimes represents a barrier for them to access or fully understand the information that the school provides. According to an interviewed father, „sometime we miss something because we do not understand [the information].“

Enabling parents to fully access and understand the information provided by the school would facilitate their participation on school life and would improve the overall cooperation between parents and the school.

Apart from the above mentioned activities, e.g. parent-teacher meetings, school events, the case study schools do not organize any other activities that target parents. NGOs, e.g. sports clubs, NGOs that support refugees may offer other activities at schools, but those are not organized by the school.

Statements of parents like the following illustrate the gap, schools have in their welcome strategy for parents. An interviewed mother said: “Initially, I had wished to have more contact to other parents, because I was totally lost; but now the contacts I have are enough.” Another mother added: “I always wonder what would have been if a teacher coached me.” There seems to be a need, especially for newly arrived migrant parents, to connect with other parents and receive information and coaching about educational matters. An interviewee suggested that schools could establish a room in the school where parents, especially newly arrived parents can meet, get in contact with other parents and find relevant information. This can increase the parents’ sense of belonging to school and facilitate their integration.

Role of social class / cultural distance / inequalities

The findings of this study indicate that the value of education in the family is a major factor in determining the level of parental involvement. All interviewed parents, regardless of their own educational and professional backgrounds are interested and engaged in the education of their children and all of them consider it as important to support their children in their school career by “providing advice”, “try to give private lessons” or just by “trusting” them. An interviewed headmaster concluded: “Parental involvement is not depending on integration but only depends on the role of school at home.”


Role of school leadership

Obviously, the focal points of the work of schools are pupils while the work with parents plays a minor role for schools. This is why an interviewed mother explained: “Teachers are indeed well prepared for foreign pupils”, for example by offering special language classes for newly arrived students, but there are no activities for parents that would facilitate their integration in Germany. However, the interviewed schools aim to improve their collaboration with and the engagement of parents, which is the main reason for their participation in this study. So far, the collaboration with parents is primarily limited to their contribution to school events and/or their engagement in the parents’ board. Thus, parents perceive that the schools’ approach to parental involvement is one-sided: parents are expected to support school activities but they do not receive support by the school.

According to the schools, the educational aims they have for their pupils are the same for everybody, independently of their backgrounds. In this sense, the educational success is at the centre of the interest of the schools: “For me as head master and as teacher of a graduation class: good passing of the exams [...]; integration in vocational training and in the labor market, and higher education are the goals for everybody” [head master of a case study school]. Another headmaster adds the aspect of integration as a goal: “Children should be able to participate in class actively and successfully. This is one goal. The other one is a good integration into society, that they make friends, that they find someone in their neighbourhood who they can play with, and thus, that we can attract them to our educational objectives. [...] So we teach them basic skills in order for them to move forward as fast as possible” [head master of a case study school]. Another headmaster mentions the aspect of diversity with its potentials and challenges: “First of all, we do not want to make any difference between pupils with and without migration background. We all work with young people and they are different. Diversity forms our school. There are moments when diversity is precious and good [...] and there are situations that are challenging” [Head master of a case study school].

Source of information for migrant parents

As mentioned before, the basis for the participation of parents are accessible and suitable sources of information, both before enrolling their children into a school, e.g. for the selection of an adequate school, and during the attendance of their children of a school, e.g. in order to be informed about the educational development of the child and opportunities of parental involvement.



The interviewed parents chose different ways of getting information in order to prepare for their children's education in the German educational system and for selecting a school: Some parents are familiar with the educational system because they went to school in Germany themselves, others were informed by the head master of their children's school about the school and the school system, and others got all the information they required from friends, family and parents of other pupils. But all parents indicate, that they are well informed about the school system.

Apart from preparatory information, a constant flow of information during the children's school attendance is crucial. Some of the interviewed parents feel that the information policies of their school were insufficient. According to the parents, the information from the teachers about the individual child is limited to parent-teacher meetings. However, these only take place two times a year and many people participate, which leaves teachers with only a few minutes to spend with each parent. It seems that parents see a close connection between the performance of the head teacher and the information flow: "Only this year it does not work very well because the head teacher does not inform parents at all." [Interviewed mother]

Networks among parents seem to play a relevant role for parents' access to information. Nearly all of the interviewed parents are in frequent contact to other parents from other schools, while only two parents are also in contact to parents from the same school. The contact is personal, by phone or through WhatsApp groups. Those who have no contact to other parents say that this is due to a lack of time.

In order to improve the information policy of the school, an interviewed mother proposed to create an online platform for parents: "Each class should have an internet portal, parents can log in and have access on the schooling success of their children. Thus, parents can have a look at the marks online, for sure with a password. I wonder why a country like Germany does not have such a platform. Also all exams can be registered there. This way, parents can inform themselves which exams are pending, or also if some classes cannot take place because the teacher is ill. All information is online. [...] If you want to go to consult a teacher, you have to check the timetable and then even go there personally. [...] I prefer to clarify things online or by phone. Thus, having such an internet platform for the parents – that would simplify everything" [interviewed mother]. Surely, such a platform could be extended in order to distribute information about school events or requests for school event support.

According to Crozier (1999 and 2001), a whole school approach and collaboration with relevant agencies and community groups facilitate the development of inclusive and supportive practices of parental involvement.

Recommendations

- Offer welcome activities for parents. Give them the feeling to be welcome at school and appreciate their attendance.
- Enable parents to participate in school activities despite a potential lack of language skills. Engage interpreters for parental evenings and establish a mentoring system for parents.
- Establish small-group meetings for parents in class. Give parents the necessary and sufficient time and place to meet each other and to establish valuable contacts between the parents.
- Contact parents directly and ask them about any concerns you have. In many cases, parents have the intention to engage actively in school life but are not aware of the possibilities they have.
- Assure a successful transmission of information. Provide low-threshold information and guarantee easy access to it. Assure that parents really understand the main points.
- Implement a comprehensive school approach for the handling of multiculturalism at school and make sure that the complete school staff behaves and works in accordance to it.
- Collaborate with local networks. Use them as platform to provide information about the school system.

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Further information

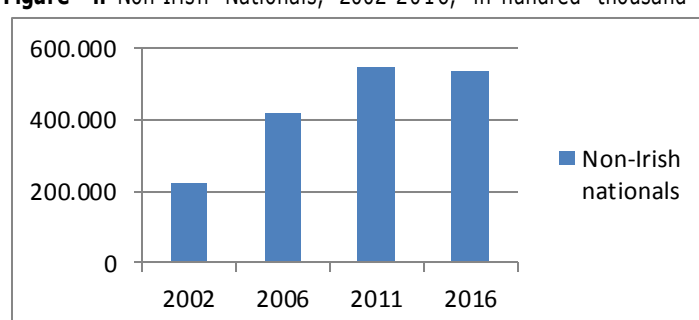
- More information about the project Elternlotsen:
<https://www.hamburg.de/contentblob/9922312/543eb72773c3c5e3db465e58335bfbd6/data/rahmenkonzept-elternlotsenprojekte-barrierefrei.pdf> (only in German)
- More information about the Elternnetzwerk NRW- Integration miteinander:
<https://www.elternnetzwerk-nrw.de/> (only in German)
- More information about the FÖTED-Förderung Türkischer Elternvereine in Deutschland:
<http://www.tuerkische-elternfoederation.de/> (only in German and Turkish)
- More information about the Migranten Eltern Netzwerk Niedersachsen see:
<https://www.men-nds.de/> (only in German)
- More information about the project Stadtteilmütter see:
in Berlin, Neu-Köln: <https://www.diakoniewerk-simeon.de/beratung-integration/stadtteilmuetter-in-neukoelln/> (only in German)
- More information about parents and school and the school system see:
http://www.bamf.de/EN/Willkommen/Bildung/Schulsystem/ElternUndSchule/elternundschule-node.html;jsessionid=6F96ED49A7C72E2219D5DCD5D28D4924.2_cid359 (in English)

4.3 Republic of Ireland

4.3.1 Migration situation

The Republic of Ireland can be considered a new immigration country. Traditionally characterized by a declining population and notable levels of emigration, within the last two decades immigration has increased significantly in the context of economic growth, otherwise known as 'the Celtic Tiger'. Before that era between 1980 and 1988 the flow of non-Irish nationals into Ireland had been modest, averaging only 800 persons annually (CSO, 2012). Inward migration reached a peak in 2002 where almost 67,000 people came into the Republic of Ireland (this figure includes the returning Irish)¹⁹. In 2006 39,448 persons arrived in Ireland. Since then the number of non-Irish nationals arriving in Ireland has been decreasing but was still significant at 20,716 persons for the year 2010. The number of non-Irish nationals living in Ireland grew from 224,261 persons in 2002 to 544,357 in 2011 (12% of the population). The earlier immigrants arrived mostly from EU countries and the US. Today, the immigrant population in the Republic of Ireland is very heterogeneous. The Central Statistics Office found that in 2011 non-Irish nationals represented 199 separate nations, with many of the largest nationalities being from non-English-speaking countries (CSO, 2012)."

Figure 4: Non-Irish Nationals, 2002-2016, in hundred thousand



Source: Central Statistics Office, Interactive tables

Table 5: Non-Irish Nationals compared to population in total, 2002-2016, in hundred thousand

Year	Non-Irish nationals	Population total
2002	224,261	3,932,000
2006	419,733	4,274,000
2011	544,357	4,577,000
2016	535,475	4,761,865

Source: Central Statistics Office, Interactive tables

¹⁹ Non-Irish nationals were identified by their responses to the question 'What is your nationality?' This question was first asked in the 2002 Census.



Employment and education situation of migrants

According to the socio-economic background, in 2011 the largest group amongst non-Irish nationals were non-manual workers (115,877 persons or 21.3% of all non-Irish nationals). Proportionately more Irish nationals were assigned to employers and higher and lower professional groups (35% combined) than were non-Irish nationals (26%). On the other hand, relatively more non-Irish were assigned to non-manual, manual skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers (48% combined) compared with Irish nationals (39%). Higher than average proportions assigned to higher professionals were recorded for Sudanese (48.5%), Egyptian (18.6%) and Pakistani (17.9%) nationals, reflecting the high numbers of medical doctors among these nationalities. The 2011 Census also shows up differences that existed in the levels of education attained between Irish and non-Irish nationals aged 15-64: 28.7 % of Irish nationals who had completed their education were educated up to lower secondary (Junior Certificate or equivalent), while the same rate for non-Irish nationals was 12.5 %. At third level, the proportion of non-Irish nationals with a degree or higher was 31.3 % compared with 27.1 % of Irish nationals. Indian nationals had the highest percentage of persons with a third level degree or higher (77.3%). Filipinos (64.5%) and US nationals (55.9%) had similarly high rates. Nationals from Latvia (10.9%), Lithuania (15.5%) and Romania (17.1%) had below average rates.

Non-Irish nationals who spoke a language other than English or Irish at home amounted to 363,929 persons in 2011. Amongst European nationals living in Ireland in 2011, Polish was the most common language by far with 112,811 speakers, followed by Lithuanian, Russian, Romanian and Latvian. Of the non-Irish nationals who arrived in Ireland in 1990, over three-quarters indicated that they spoke English very well in April 2011, with barely one in twenty indicating not well or not at all. In contrast, for those non-Irish who arrived in 2010 just over one in three (37%) spoke English very well, while 23.7 % could not speak English well or at all."

Migration figures

Census 2016 results show that Ireland's population stood at 4,761,865 in April 2016, an increase of 173,613 (3.8%) since April 2011. The total number of non-Irish nationals fell slightly to 535,475, or 11.6% of the population, the first decline since the introduction of this question in 2002, while the number of people with Dual-Irish nationality has increased by 48,879 to 104,784 people since April 2011. In the year to April 2016, 82,346 persons moved to Ireland. Of these, 28,143 were Irish nationals, with the main countries of origin being the UK, Australia and the USA. A high proportion - 54,203 - were non-Irish immigrants, coming mostly from the UK, Brazil and Poland. In 2016, 612,018 Irish residents spoke a foreign language at home, an increase of 19% since 2011. Polish was the most common language, followed by French, Romanian and Lithuanian. 30 % of those who spoke a foreign language at home were born in Ireland, and 57.4% of these were children (CSO, 2017).

Ireland

A total of 566 600 non-Irish nationals resided in Ireland in April 2017. This is an increase from 550 500 in 2016, but has remained below the pre-recession peak of 2008 (575 600). Non-nationals currently represent 11.8% of the total population, up from 11.6% in 2016. In the twelve months to April 2017, immigration increased by 2% (84 600) from the previous year (82 300). With emigration of 64 800 in 2017 (a 2% decline from the previous year), net migration was 19 800. Net migration of Irish nationals continued to be negative, but at a much lower level than in recent years, while net migration of non-Irish nationals increased.

From 2016 to 2017, the stock of immigrants from all regions increased. As in previous years, the largest group of non-nationals in 2017 was from the 12 New EU Member States (250 300) who accounted for 5% of the total population. This group saw only a small increase from 249 400 in 2016. Citizens from outside Europe make up a further 2.9% of the total population (139 600), UK nationals 2.2% (107 700) and immigrants from other European countries 1.4% (69 000).

The share of total immigrants from the rest of the world (excluding the EU, Australia, Canada, and the United States) has risen to 27% in 2017. This increase may be attributed to highly skilled migration to fill skill shortages in the Irish labour market, as well as an increase in the number of international students. The increase in working age migrants (25-44) continued in 2017, accounting for over half (53%) of immigrants.

Approximately 124 200 entry visa applications for both short and long stays were received in 2016, an increase of 7.4% from 2015. The approval rate of entry visas was 90%, and the top five nationalities applying for visas were India (20%), China (13%), Russia (10%), Pakistan (8%) and Turkey (5%). The number of new employment permits in 2016 increased to 7 700 (from just over 6 000 in 2015). As in previous years, India was the largest nationality of employment permit holders with 32% of the total. Pakistan accounts for another 11% and the United States for 9%.

A total of 2 200 people applied for asylum in Ireland during 2016, a decrease of over 30% from the number of applications in 2015. Some 1 600 cases were finalised during 2016. The largest share of asylum claims came from Syria (11% of total applications), Pakistan and Albania (10% each), Zimbabwe and Nigeria. There was a marked increase in the number of appeals by refugee claimants from 1 400 in 2015 to 2 200 in 2016.

The 2015 International Protection Act, which creates a single application system and brings Ireland into line with other EU member states, came into force on 31 December 2016. Furthermore, a series of reforms have been

implemented following a review of Direct Provision, the system of reception of asylum seekers in Ireland. Reforms include improvement to accommodation standards, increased allowances and improved access to further education.

In May 2017, the Supreme Court of Ireland declared the ban on working for asylum seekers to be unconstitutional, and commissioned a report by an intergovernmental task force. Following this report, Ireland decided to opt into the EU (recast) Reception Conditions Directive, which lays down standards for the reception of international protection applicants. In November 2017, the Government indicated that asylum seekers will be allowed to work no later than nine months after their application for asylum is lodged, if they have not yet received a decision on their case. Since 9 February 2018, those seeking international protection in Ireland may seek employment via the work permit system or may apply for a permission for self-employment.

The Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP), approved in 2015 in response to the migration crisis, committed Ireland to receiving 4 000 refugees by the end of 2017. The commitment to take 1 040 refugees under the UN Resettlement Programme has been largely fulfilled by the end of 2017. Under the EU relocation programme, at the end of 2016, a total of 240 refugees had arrived in Ireland from Greece.

“Irish Educated, Globally Connected: An International Education Strategy for Ireland 2016-20” aims to increase the value of international education by 33% (to EUR 2.1 billion per annum) by 2020. This calls for an increase in the number of international Higher Education and English Language Training students in Ireland by 37 000, bringing the total number at any point in time to 176 000.

Revised regulations in the Immigrant Investor Programme targeting third-country nationals were published in late 2016, eliminating two investment categories and returning the investment thresholds from EUR 500 000 to 1 million.

For further information

www.inis.gov.ie
www.ria.gov.ie/
<https://dbej.gov.ie>

4.3.2 Policy review

The role of parents in education

Policy-making in the field of education in the Republic of Ireland is influenced by a number of local agents including individuals, the Churches, employer's representative groups, the teacher unions, the educational management bodies and parent bodies (Drudy 2009). In addition, policy-making is also shaped by external organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU).

Regarding the role of parents in the education of their children, the Irish Constitution²⁰ states that parents have primary responsibility for educating their child and it guarantees the parents' right and duty to provide for their children's education. Prior to 1980s relatively limited attention was given to parental involvement; thereafter a number of factors including the gradually declining influence of the Catholic Church, greater parental demands for broader forms of school provision, and greater recognition of the role of parents in education put the issue firmly on the policy agenda in Ireland.

Over the years, parents' associations have been set up in Ireland. The primary aim of such organisations is to represent the interests of parents of children attending the school and to promote good relationships between parents and the school board of management, and school staff. The association can make representations to the school on issues of policy and advise the principal and board on any matter affecting the school. It can also adopt a programme of activities that will promote the involvement of parents in the management of the school. Circular letters from the Department of Education and Skills refer to parents as partners in education:

"Partnership for parents in education is a stated policy aim of the Government. Through the Programme for Economic and Social Progress the Government and the Social Partners have formally recognised the promotion of parental involvement in the education of their children as an essential strategy of educational policy and practice." (Circular Letter 24/91, 2006 to primary schools)²¹

A booklet of the Parents' Associations ("Making Them Work"), indicates that parents should be involved in their local school for two main reasons:

1. "The school is regarded as an extension of the home and an active partnership between parents and teachers make this a reality, especially in the eyes of the young child, who is the central figure."
2. "Research shows that parental interest and attitudes to school, to books and to education are the single most important influence on a child's learning."

According to the same Circular Letter, each national (primary) school will be required to establish as part of its overall school policy/plan, a clearly defined policy for productive parental involvement.

A Circular Letter M27/91 (2006) to secondary schools the Department of Education sees Parents' Associations essential for:

- developing partnership for parents in education at the level of the local school, and
- supporting and encouraging individual parents to become more involved in the education of their children.

However, not all schools have such associations. In 2006 the then Minister for Education requested post-primary (secondary) school management authorities to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that a Parents' Association is formed in association with its school. Each association should affiliate with the National Parents' Council. The National Parents' Council provides representation for parents, as partners in education, on various Government-appointed educational bodies.

The National Parents Council – Post Primary²² runs a 'leaving certificate results helpline' every August in association with the Institute of Guidance Counsellors. The National Parents Council (Primary)²³ has published guidelines on working effectively as a parent association²⁴. Among its activities, it gives information to parents about parents' associations and

²⁰ See: http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/the_irish_education_system/constitution_and_education.html


²¹ Circular letters to primary and secondary schools are available at:

http://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/education/the_irish_education_system/parents_and_education.html

²² Council's website: <http://www.npcpp.ie/>

²³ Council's website: <http://www.npc.ie/>

²⁴ Available online: <http://www.npc.ie/attachments/cbdcfd37-98b5-4698-86aa-3f30c38fcecd.pdf>



children's learning. It has a helpline for parents seeking help, information and support for special interest groups²⁵. Among the latter is also a 'migrant parent group' – a representative group for parents of children from the migrant community. Unfortunately, the only information available on the website is the contact address for further information on how to get involved. The special interest groups are entitled to have one representative on the NPC Assembly, which is the body within NPC concerned with developing educational policies. Some years ago, a voluntary Immigrant Parents and Guardians Support Association (IPSGA) was set up, to address an apparent gap in support for migrant families²⁶. There are several other voluntary organisations that support migrants more generally (e.g. Fingal Ethnic Network, Changing Ireland Community and others). Additionally, there is also a free networking tool for parents: The Parents' Network²⁷. The Parents Network allows an individual parent to communicate with other parents in their child's school year at either primary or secondary level, via the school pages on the site Schooldays.ie, which can help with practical issues such as arranging school runs, sharing childcare, arranging school social events, and so on.

It is possible to explore the nature of parental involvement through various national databases. For example, the Quarterly National Household Survey (2012) contains a section of parental involvement in child's education. Information on parenting and involvement in child's education and school is also included in the national longitudinal Growing Up in Ireland study. Furthermore, the 'Parent and Student Charter'²⁸ – published in 2016 – is intended to strengthen the relationship between parents, students and schools as well as the position of parents and students generally within the school system.

Relevant initiatives of parents' involvement in education

Parental Involvement Project (PIP) Early Intervention Initiative

The PIP initiative is an early intervention programme that supports teachers in providing high quality evidence-based practices in the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy while also enabling them to facilitate the involvement of parents. The initiative provides teachers with the skills and resources needed to involve parents, and offers a model of how to get them involved both in school as well as at home. The initiative was piloted in two DEIS (designated disadvantaged) schools over the school year 2012 – 2013. The initiative involves in-school workshops; educative trips; work with target pupil groups offering in-class support.

The Home-School Community Liaison Scheme

The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Scheme is a central component of the Department of Education and Skill's DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools). An action plan for educational inclusion, which aims to combat educational disadvantage, through a range of interventions and strategies, designed to improve educational outcomes for children. The underlying vision and thrust of the HSCL scheme is preventative; thus, it seeks to promote and develop real partnership between parents, teachers and communities, in order to enhance pupils' outcomes and learning opportunities, through improved attendance, participation and retention in the education system.

Under DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools), the HSCL Scheme is available to all DEIS Urban Band 1, Urban Band 2 and DEIS Post Primary schools. On January 1st 2014, the statutory functions of the NEWB under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, were transferred to the newly established Child and Family Agency Tusla (the Agency) and the NEWB was dissolved. Responsibility for the services, formerly provided by NEWB, now rests with the Educational Welfare Services (EWS) of the new Agency, which is the dedicated state agency responsible for improving wellbeing and outcomes for children.

A Special interest group – Migrant Parents within National Parents' Council, Primary schools focusses on the exploration of key issues facing migrant parents of children in primary school in Ireland²⁹.

²⁵ Special interest groups (includes migrant parent group): <http://www.npc.ie/group.aspx?contentid=70>

²⁶ For further information see: <http://www.sirius-migrationeducation.org/ireland-immigrant-parents-and-guardians-support-association/>

²⁷ For further information see: <http://www.schooldays.ie/articles/parents-network>

²⁸ For further information see: <http://www.education.ie/en/Parents/Information/Parent-and-Student-Charter/>

²⁹ For further information, see: <http://www.npc.ie/group.aspx?contentid=571>

Over the years, various toolkits have been issued with a view to support migrant parents and various organisations involved with migrants:

- Pathways to Parental Leadership³⁰
- All Ireland Programme for Immigrant Parents³¹
- Toolkit for working with migrant parents³²

Useful information is also provided by other similar toolkits, such as:

- All-European Toolkit on parental involvement³³
- Parental involvement across Europe³⁴

While these toolkits provide useful practical advice, research evidence to date is sparse on the extent to which these toolkits are being utilized.

4.3.3 Parental Engagement

While there has always been some degree of ethnic diversity in Ireland, since 2004 Irish immigration reform legislation opened the doors to many more ethnic minority families whose cultures, mother tongues and beliefs were vastly different from the cultural majority.

Many new arrivals have been accompanied by school-aged children, which necessitated the establishment of links to local schools that their children attend. Most of these children are first-generation 'immigrants', thus issues concerning knowledge of the school system, language proficiency and integration have been particularly pertinent. Earlier studies have demonstrated that both immigrant parents and children are facing a number of challenges trying to navigate their way in a new country with an unfamiliar educational system (Devine, 2005; Smyth et al., 2009). Dealing with ethnic minority families also poses considerable challenges to schools that are not sufficiently equipped to address the needs of an ethnically and culturally diverse student body and their parents. Further challenges have been posed by the recent economic downturn that saw many educational resources previously available to ethnic minority groups severely cut (Smyth et al., 2009).

Parents' engagement in their child's education needs to be understood through the extent to which these parents are able to participate in this process. Recent work in Ireland by Bleach (2010) highlights the need to keep parents informed of their own children's learning, as well as ensuring their involvement in decision-making at all levels within the school and education system. However, immigrant parents still remain on the margins of the home-school interface in this regard. It is important to note that the relationship between parents and the formal institutions of education is complex and may be different for different groups of parents (Cregan, 2008).

Research by Hanafin and Lynch (2002) on the views of working-class parents on home-school links in Ireland shows that parental involvement in school is limited to the giving and receiving of information, restricted consultation and engagement in some supplemental responsibilities. The authors note that although parents participating in the study were interested, informed and concerned regarding their children's education, they also felt excluded from participation in decision-making processes at the school level, about issues that had personal and/or financial implications to them, and about their children's progress at school. The new arrivals are often viewed through a 'deficit' lens, i.e. lacking certain cultural attributes that are valued by the majority culture (Dwyer et al., 2006). Subsequently, the majority within the school culture (largely mediating white middle class values), replicates existing inequalities and operates to disadvantage newly arrived ethnic minority families.


³⁰ For further information, see: http://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Pathways%20to%20Parental%20Leadership%20Toolkit_-_Full_version.pdf

³¹ For further information, see: <http://www.childandfamilyresearch.ie/media/unescochildandfamilyresearchcentre/documentspdf/Globe-Full-Report.pdf>

³² For further information, see: <http://www.culturewise.ie/resources/globe-aipip-resources/toolkit/>

³³ For further information, see: <https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/en/pub/resources/toolkitsforschools/area.cfm?a=4>

³⁴ For further information, see: http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/experts-groups/2014-2015/school/france-parental-involvement_en.pdf



Importantly, Cummins (2000: 8) argued that 'if ability to speak English and the knowledge of North American cultural conventions are made prerequisites for parental involvement, then many of those parents will be defined as apathetic and incompetent and will play out their pre-ordained role of non-involvement'. It is important to acknowledge that many ethnic minority parents can be quite involved with their children in their home environment. Many ethnic minority children (particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, speakers of languages other than English, etc.) are at a significant disadvantage with respect to culture and social capital given that their parents have little knowledge of how majority culture schools function, of the practices and behaviours rewarded by teachers and schools, and even of their rights with respect to educational issues. Schofield (2006) argues:

"In fact it is common for immigrant, minority and low-income parents to feel alienated, powerless, and culturally estranged from their children's school and to avoid involvement in them. [...] In addition, immigrant parents may have quite different ideas regarding the proper role of schools and parents than do their children's teachers or feel different or embarrassed interacting with teachers, especially if they lack fluency in the language of the host country or have little education themselves." (ibid: 101).

To date, research on ethnic minority parents in the Irish context is sparse, with occasional glimpses provided by studies exploring the school experiences of migrant children (see Devine 2005; Ní Laoire, 2009; Smyth, et al., 2009). Darmody and McCoy (2011) found that the major barrier to activating the cultural and social capital of ethnic minority parents is a lack/low proficiency in English and unfamiliarity with the new educational system. This prevented many parents from actively engaging with their child's school. In particular, the secondary school teachers noted that language barriers made it difficult to explain the school processes to the parents and to engage them in parent-teacher meetings. Occasionally children, who often had better English than their parents, had to act as interpreters between teachers and schools. Limited language proficiency among these parents is likely to influence children's academic achievement, as the parents may not be able to seek additional assistance from school or monitor their homework. In addition, at secondary school level children in Ireland need to make subject choices that are likely to affect their future options. If they are not able to fully participate in school life, ethnic minority parents with very different social and cultural capital will be further disadvantaged.

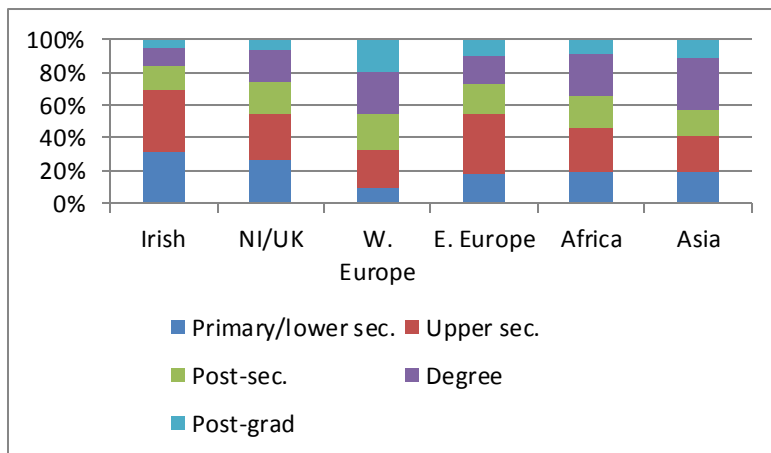
Migrant parents in Ireland – background

Census 2016 provides the most recent information on the population profile in Ireland³⁵. It shows that regarding nationality, 88,4% were Irish and 11,6% non-Irish. The latter is made up by the following categories: Polish (2.7%), UK (2.2%), Lithuanian (0.8%), Romanian (0.6%), Latvian (0.4%), Brazilian (0.3%) and others (4.6%).

Mothers with a migrant background tend to be more highly educated than Irish mothers. However, levels of education vary across national groups; with newcomers from Western Europe and Asia more likely to have a degree (undergraduate or post-graduate) (see Figure 1). The latter pattern is not surprising given the reliance on a work permit system for non-EU entrants, the aim of which is to attract highly skilled workers, mostly to fill positions in sectors like ICT, engineering and medicine. Eastern European mothers tend to have lower levels of education than other migrant groups but their levels are still higher than those among Irish mothers. Considering the relatively high level of education among the immigrant population, it is not surprising that newcomer parents tend to have high educational expectations for their children. Figure 2 shows that the majority of mothers with migrant backgrounds across all national groups expect their child to go on to third-level education and expectations among migrant mothers, especially from Africa and Asia, are somewhat higher than among Irish mothers. The Adapting to Diversity study (Smyth et al., 2009) indicated that school principals had high opinions of migrant students in the school. The national study indicated that these students had high aspirations and motivation, but more modest levels of achievement, possibly due to low levels of English language proficiency (see Figure 3).

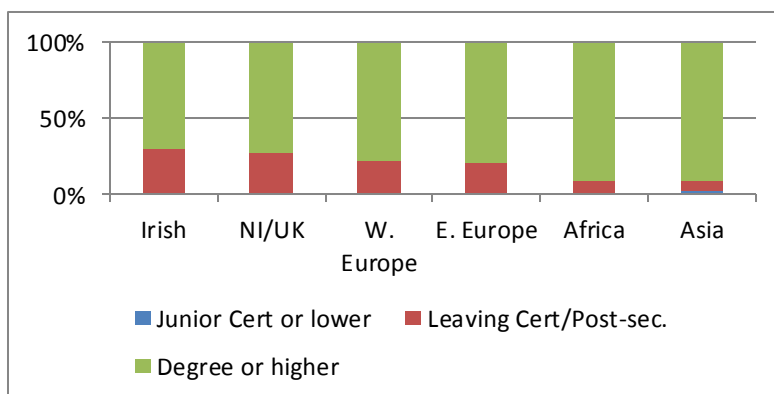
³⁵ See: http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/population/2017/Chapter_5_Diversity.pdf

Figure 5: Educational level of mothers in Ireland by national group



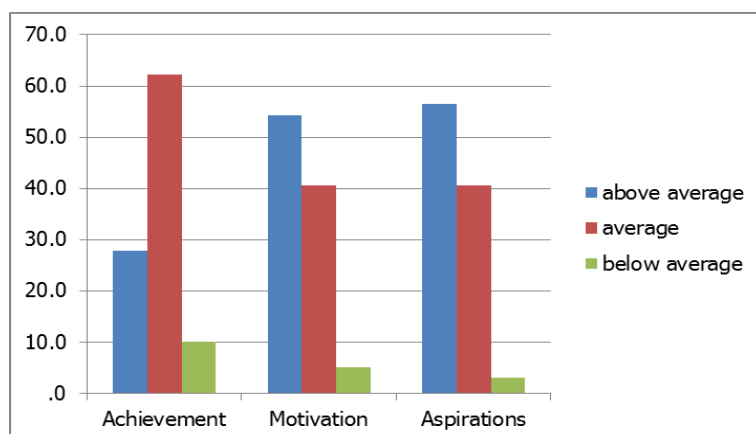
Source: GUI child cohort aged 9, weighted data. Published in Darmody et al. 2016

Figure 6: Educational expectations of newcomer mothers by national group in Ireland



Source: GUI child cohort aged 9, weighted data. Published in Darmody et al. 2016

Figure 7: Principal's perceptions of migrant students in Ireland



Source: Adapting to Diversity study (primary school). Published in Smyth et al. 2009

4.3.4 Case study school profiles

This study is based on information collected from two case study schools in Ireland, known to have a significant immigrant intake. Initially several schools were contacted at primary and post-primary level in order to engage them in the study. During the process, the school profiles have been examined, focusing on the extent to which they had specified link with parents on their websites. The final choice was made based on schools' location in terms (areas with higher concentration of migrants); information gained from school principals over the phone; and assessment of available web-based and other documents. Interviews with school principals and parents took place at school premises as a location preferred by the participants. The interviews with school principals based on semi-structured interview guides lasted between 45 minutes to one hour and were recorded with the permission of the principal. The topics explored included issues such as the demographic changes in the area in the last decades, the profile of students attending the school, the extent to which parents engage with the school and approaches taken to encourage parental engagement. Regarding migrant parents, initial information was collected using a short survey on the background of the individual and their assessment of the level of engagement with the school their child attended. The interviews took place in focus groups (between 4-6 individuals in each). In the primary school three such interviews were conducted, each lasting for approximately an hour. At post-primary level, a similar approach was taken.

The study has several limitations. Firstly, the parents participating in the study are a self-selected group. Although the researcher endeavored to get access to parents from different background and gender, only relatively well engaged parents with good command of English attended the interviews. The initial contact was made through their child's school by letter explain the study. The participants needed to sign a consent form indicating that participation is voluntary, that the purpose of the study has been explained to them and that they are free to stop the interview at any point.

Case Study 1: Maple Leaf Primary school

The school is situated in the county of Dublin. It is a growing area within the commuting distance from the capital. The school type is a non-denominational Educate Together³⁶. The Maple Leaf School has 16 full classes and a staff of 34: 32 full-time and 2 part-time. The staff consists of a secretary, a caretaker, 26 teachers, 5 special needs assistants and 1 student counsellor/mentor. Initiatives such as Math's Recovery, Reading Recovery, Team Teaching, Aistear, Student Council and much more are all running successfully within the school. They have also been awarded a Yellow Flag from the Irish Traveller³⁷ Movement for initiatives around diversity and inclusion.

Mission statement:

- We endeavor to create a happy and safe environment in which children learn and play inclusively.
- We want everyone in our school community to feel comfortable and secure, to be themselves.
- Just like Educate Together's motto, "No Child is an Outsider", we embrace and welcome the diversity of our school community.
- We are committed to developing and fostering a life-long love of learning in each child, in an atmosphere of mutual respect, creativity and fun.
- We believe in a child-centred curriculum. We strive to meet the needs of each child so that they can achieve their full potential: academically, emotionally and socially.

³⁶ There are various school types of primary schools in Ireland: denominational (mainly Catholic, but also Protestant); there are 2 Muslim and 1 Jewish primary schools; multi-denominational community national schools (new type of school, currently 11 such schools in Ireland); non-denominational Educate Together schools (currently 78 such schools in Ireland). The schools can also be single sex or mixed; some schools operate through the medium of Irish – an official language of Ireland. Secondary schools fall into the following categories: voluntary secondary (mostly denominational in character), vocational and community comprehensive schools. There are now a few Educate Together schools in this sector. Schools can be single sex or mixed and some operate through a medium of Irish.

³⁷ Indigenous ethnic minority in Ireland; they achieved an official recognition as 'ethnic minority' in 2016.

School ethos:

- Educate Together schools are legally obliged to cherish and respect the religious, cultural and social identity of every child and family that attends its schools. The Board of Management of Maple Leaf Educate Together National School cannot promote or favour any particular religious' persuasion.
- The school organizes a comprehensive programme of education about the major religions and faith systems in the world but does not teach any particular faith or creed. It teaches children core values of appreciation and respect of social, cultural and other human difference; social responsibility and rights and other features necessary to inform a child's developing mind to live in our rapidly changing society.
- Maple Leaf Educate Together National School does not prepare children of any denomination for sacraments or religious events, but facilitates any group of parents who wish to organize religious instruction for their children outside school hours.

The intake of the school is very diverse, reflective of the community³⁸. According to the 2016 Census, the majority of the population is Irish – defined by country of birth (57.2%), followed by people from 'other country' (17.4%); EU28 (11.9%), Poland and Lithuania (10.8%), and UK (2.6%). The diversity is significantly higher at the school, compared to the general population: in 2016 the Census indicated that non-Irish make up 11.6% of the population. Here, non-Irish nationals make up 42.8%. The diversity is driven by a mix of housing: apartments and houses, which makes it easier for migrants to find affordable accommodation. The school has about 400 pupils and is over-subscribed. Regarding school types there is a choice in the area: the village itself has 5 primary schools and 2 secondary schools within a kilometer radius. There are 3 Educate Together schools, including one secondary; community national schools (primary and secondary), and 3 Catholic primary schools not far from the village. Additionally, there is Gaelscoil (Irish-medium school) within reach and a Muslim primary school on Navan Road within driving distance. A private Muslim school in Mulhuddart, opened in 2015.

The school has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA). All parents/guardians and teachers in the school are automatically members and meetings take place in the school once a month. Breakfast mornings take place once a month the Maple Leaf school. It is a chance for parents to meet with each other, to relax and enjoy a breakfast morning. The class parents' children attend joins it briefly to sing a song or say a poem. The monthly meetings take place in the Home-School Room.

Case Study 2: Green Hill Secondary school

The Green Hill community college is part of the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board and was established in 1995. The area where the school sits is a suburb of Dublin. Being near to the capital, it has access to different types of second level schools (see footnote). The area is culturally very diverse, reflecting the population change in Ireland in general. According to the Census, non-Irish nationals make up 21.6% of the population in the area³⁹. Like any area close to the capital, this region has experienced rising rents and housing shortage in recent years – likely to impact on more disadvantaged families in the area. The principal noted that approximately 15-20% of the student intake is of non-Irish background with 25 different nationalities represented in the school. However, many young people now present as Irish, although they come from a different heritage. This can also be an issue collecting any information from school regarding students' background, as many see themselves as Irish, rather than 'Irish with Polish heritage'.

The school initially had a higher intake of immigrant-origin children and had to react quickly to the increasing diversity in terms of language support and other areas. In terms of language support, the school became a model of best practice. In recent years they have not had students who arrive in the middle of the school year, possibly because the school is full and there are no places available. The second reason is that the rental prices have risen sharply in the area, making it difficult for parents to afford to move into the area. According to the principal, the students whose parents were of immigrant background were more likely to have changed address, compared to Irish families. These families are often pushed out to the border areas outside the capital. However, many are still commuting in daily to attend the Green Hill school once they had enrolled there. The college is a co-educational post-primary school catering to an ever-increasing population in the area.

³⁸ See: <https://www.citypopulation.de/php/ireland.php?cityid=0287>

³⁹ See: <https://ugeo.urbistat.com/AdminStat/en/ie/demografia/dati-sintesi/castleknock/44/4>



Mission statement:

- To enable and encourage the full growth and development of each student intellectually, creatively, physically, morally and socially.
- To create a caring, safe and supportive environment in which each student will have the opportunity to fully develop her/his aptitudes and talents.
- To promote gender equity, self-awareness and responsible attitudes in personal relationships, while encouraging dignity and respect in all our endeavors.
- To foster consultation and the involvement of parents in the development of school policies, and in its social and recreational activities.
- To engender feelings of self-esteem and the creation of sensitive, caring and politically aware members of society.
- To create opportunities for parents and other adults to further their academic or social education by the provision of a community education programme.
- To aspire towards excellence in all areas of work and involvement, thus promoting an image and a reputation for our college, which will command the respect and the pride of the community.
- To be true to our motto "Mol an óige and Tiocfaidh Sí" and thus instill a feeling of self-esteem within all students.
- To provide a pastoral care programme that is central to the life of the college.
- To provide for the cultural and aesthetic needs of the community through the arts.

School ethos:

The philosophy of the school is one of inclusiveness in which the College supports the principles of partnership, equality of access and participation in the school. The school philosophy highlights the importance to respect diversity, parental choice and equality. Parental involvement in all aspects of the school development is seen as an essential and appreciated part of the College. Parents are represented on the Board of Management and there is a vibrant Parents' Association. The aims of the parents' association are:

- To represent the views of parents and guardians
- To inform parents and guardians of developments in the College and in the wider area of education
- To foster cooperation between parents/guardians, teachers and College Management
- To arrange talks of interest for parents throughout the academic year
- To raise funds for the benefit of the students in the College

The Parents' Association have hosted many beneficial Information Evenings addressing such topics as Self-esteem & Young People, Drug & Substance Abuse, Eating Disorders, Bullying, Parenting Courses, Cyber Bullying, Literacy & Numeracy etc. Many parents offer their time and expertise in a voluntary capacity to assist the Physical Education Department with various sporting activities, the Guidance Department with mock interviews, the Learning & Language Department with house and mock examinations to name but a few. The Association, together with college staff organises the past pupils reunion annually. Parents launched a campaign and secured funding for an extension of the school that consisted of a new Sports facility and ten classrooms.

Pastoral support within the school includes guidance, counseling, learning and language support. The Guidance & Counselling Department, while working to the College's Mission Statement, has a remit to help students make informed personal, educational and career decisions, set realistic personal and career goals and develop the skills necessary to accomplish these goals. The service also offers students support in coping with personal problems or academic concerns. The Guidance & Counselling Department provides an "Open Door" policy to students, parents and teachers. All students are informed of the service provided at the beginning of each year and are encouraged to avail of it. They can request an appointment by filling out an appointment card that can be found outside the Guidance Counsellor's Office. Teachers and parents can also make referrals, on behalf of students. All Leaving Certificate students can avail of as many appointments as they need during sixth year.

The school uses the resources provided by the DDLETB and the Department of Education & Skills to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with a range of learning difficulties. The students are free to participate in the life of the College in as far as is reasonably practicable. Students with special educational needs are integrated into regular classes and withdrawn for extra tuition from our Learning Support team.

4.3.5 Case study findings

Role of school leadership

In both schools – Green Hill (secondary) and Maple Leaf (primary) – the school principals were supportive of diverse background of the students attending their schools. Both schools mentioned the importance of engaging with parents in their mission statements and had devised various opportunities for parents to link up with the schools. This was particularly noticeable in the Maple Leaf Educate Together⁴⁰ school, where the principal made every effort to meet the parents at every opportunity. An important approach adopted by the school is not 'labelling' parents but treating them all as individuals:

"As a school, there is no formal or planned approach; we just think of parents; we do tend to highlight the fact that we are DEIS⁴¹ school with a very diverse intake; we talk about ourselves as this fantastic school that does great things. When we talk about parents; the whole lot of them. They are all individuals. My personal philosophy is that I take people as individuals; I don't even think of where they are from, what language they speak; personally – it doesn't matter. [...] There are times when we have to make practical considerations. And we would have to stop and think – well, do they understand what we are doing [...] do we need interpreters, do we need translators; so in practical terms we make accommodations." [Principal, Maple Leaf primary school]

Adopting inclusive approaches in the Maple Leaf primary school has been easy because of the diverse student intake:

"We do not have a majority or minority so it is difficult to differentiate at group level who is more or less involved. Who do we compare against who? We have lots of big groups; we cannot say that the Irish parents are a dominant group here. There are 2 maybe 3 children in each class that are ethnically Irish; and there may be 2-3 Polish or 2-3 Nigerians, 2-3 Romanian, so there will be no minority or majority groups. Nobody stands out as any different." [Principal, Maple Leaf primary school]

The principal noted that the parents of the children attending the school have been "active choosers" as this may not be the local school for many but chosen because of the Educate Together ethos. Hence, such parents are more willing to engage with the school. She also noted that: "If our Parent Teacher Association would only be made up of white Irish people, I'd be seriously worried".

Furthermore, the principal made sure that right teachers and other staff are selected:

"We recruit very carefully. Teachers, secretary, caretaker – to make sure the school is very friendly and welcoming, to promote the ethos of the school. We have a very clear vision of how we want the school to be. If we plan anything we look if there is any way that anybody might feel they are excluded from this by the way, we are doing it and we look at it and if we find that there are families and children who cannot take part in this – then we don't do it. The school is like a community – from the man who meets them at the gate, the caretaker, the secretary [...]. When we recruit we make clear that it is very clear that it is a diverse school, it is very clear how we speak to people, how we treat everybody equally." [Principal, Maple Leaf primary school]

⁴⁰ Educate Together are a specific type of primary and secondary schools in Ireland. For the full description of the profile see: <https://www.educatetogether.ie/about/what-is-educate-together>

⁴¹ Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) the Action Plan for Educational Inclusion, was launched in May 2005 and remains the Department of Education and Skills policy instrument to address educational disadvantage. The action plan focuses on addressing and prioritising the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities, from pre-school through second-level education (3 to 18 years). DEIS provides for a standardised system for identifying levels of disadvantage and an integrated School Support Programme (SSP). 825 schools are included in the programme in the 2016/17 school year. These comprise 640 primary schools (328 urban/town schools and 312 rural primary schools) and 185 second level schools.



Empowerment of parents

According to the school principal in the Maple Leaf school problem with English language proficiency is the biggest challenge when trying to communicate with families. In order to overcome this obstacle, the school has taken a pro-active approach involving providing English language classes for parents as well as organising activities that bring parents together and taking steps to help them improve their proficiency in English:

"We do all kinds of interesting things. We run English language classes, first of all, as much as we can. Sometimes we get tutors from ETBs, sometimes we fund these ourselves; we apply every year [...] we get a certain number of tutors [...] if we don't get English language funding, we'll just pay for it ourselves, because that's a kind of basic one. Teachers come in and run the classes. This year we got flower arranging, gardening and English language, you know [...] you get funding for that. You try and kind of 'buddy up' people – you get someone with English language proficiency to communicate with another parent who, you know, can't communicate. That works to a certain extent, it depends, how you choose and how willing the other person is; it takes a lot of time." [Principal, Maple Leaf primary school]

Bringing together parents who had low levels of English proficiency proved important for mutual support:

"There was one lady I remember and she was like: no, no, no; and she was like a granny who dropped the child off every day but had no social interaction with anybody and I asked her little grandson what does 'babushka' mean and he said 'granny'; so we knew what language she was speaking – Russian – so we searched through the files until we found another Russian granny we knew; we brought the 2 together and offered tea. And the next week they both came and they brought biscuits." [Principal, Maple Leaf primary school]

The principal also noted that it helps if the facilities are nice – having operated for years using pre-fabricated cabins – the school now has a nice building and a lot of room. There is a home school room for meeting parents. Even when the school still used pre-fabs, the parents of children in the school started coffee-mornings even though they did not have a nice room. The Maple Leaf school principal noted that the activities targeted at parents need to be meaningful to them:

"So it is a general approach – how to get parents involved. Anything to do with children – the parents are going to come in. People are going to come in when food is involved. People are coming in if there is something fun to do; it does not matter where they are from or what language they speak. There has to be a reason for people to come. Very often parents come in to see children performing, or singing, or they see projects, or photographs [...] that kind of thing. And that doesn't matter then – what kind of language they speak, because they come because of their child. Or they come because they can bring their food and share it and taste other people's food, events like that are usefully very successful. Breakfast mornings or stuff like this. And that doesn't really matter then [...] I don't have to think 'do I have to bring in signs' or something like that." [Principal, Maple Leaf primary school]

While Parents' Association exists in the Green Hill secondary school, the principal noted that immigrant-origin parents do not get involved in its activities. However, the principal said that there are also many Irish parents who do not get involved in the PA. When migrant parents are asked whether they would like to get involved in various activities "very few tick the boxes". All parents are also invited to information evenings on a range of topics such as information technology, mindfulness and so forth, but migrant parents are not likely to attend these. Parents whose children have just started in the secondary school are also invited to the open evening. However, the principal noted that the migrant parents "just don't come". The principal finds it difficult to understand this:

"I don't know; is it because of their experience in their own country in terms of education; I know in Eastern European schools – from talking to parents – you are not encouraged to approach a teacher, approach a principal, so there is a barrier. In fact, going back 40 years in Ireland, your influence ended up at school gate. And it is only relatively recently in Ireland that parents have become partners in education, that barrier – soft as it may be – that barrier has broken down."

Language proficiency has not really been a barrier – the school is using translators where necessary, or children translating for parents. The principal also observed that "the longer the families have been here, the less we see them as migrant parents". The school does not have the resources to appoint a person whose responsibility it would be to focus on school-home link with migrant parents.

Role of social class/education, cultural distance, structural inequalities

A number of factors, including social class or cultural distance, can influence parental school-based engagement. Some parents who have had negative experiences themselves or have been early school leavers may find it harder to engage with the school of their child. In this study, the principals of both schools noted that it is difficult to engage all parents. It was particularly the case in the Green Hill secondary school where the principal felt that as the children had already attended primary schools in Ireland, parents of migrant origin are less likely to engage with school outside the parent-teacher meetings. While the parents of primary school children dropped the children off, it was possible to meet them at the school gate. As children get older, parents are less likely to drop them off, especially if they live within a walking distance.

The primary school principal noted that fluency in the language of the receiving country is not necessarily the only factor acting as a barrier to parental involvement:

"It can be hard to get parents involved but every year you get more. You are not going to get all of the people all the time. But you can get some of the people some of the time. I worked in a school where everybody spoke fluent English and you did not get everybody. It's not necessarily a language thing."

The secondary school principal noted that cultural distance sometimes shapes parent-school interactions. Talking about school enrolment the Green Hill principal noted that one family had not applied to several secondary schools as Irish parents would have done and were waiting to hear from the only school they had applied to. It was fortunate that the school had found a place for the boy. In addition, on another occasion, a Polish family had not engaged with the school in terms of the waiting list to the extent as Irish parents would, thinking that "it is my place to interfere with the system".

Source of information for migrant parents

Moving to a new country can be a daunting process. Lacking "insider knowledge" parents often find it difficult to navigate the new educational system, especially if they are unsure where to look for information. In Ireland, there is a set of school admission policies that schools utilise, especially if schools are over-subscribed. The new School Admission Bill adopted in 2016 has endeavoured to make the access to schools more equitable for all children.

Some parents of primary school children in the study highlighted the "information gap" in their interviews. One South African mother found it difficult to find a school place as most schools in the area were full. She went to find information in the local library where she was told that she should have put the child's name down earlier: "How was I supposed to know that?". Another parent noted: "I had no idea that I had to plan for school 5 years ahead".

Some parents had done a good bit of "homework" before coming to Ireland and knew the characteristics of the educational system. One mother from Saudi Arabia noted that:


"When I came to Ireland I knew the system was predominantly Catholic and that there are some multi-denominational ones. I knew they were very interactive with kids, the same as the British school in Saudi Arabia. That the teachers are very gentle and encouraging."

Another parent had been impressed by the ethos of Educate Together schools:

"Non-denominational and multi-cultural. I wanted my child to experience all different cultures that we have in our country and all the different religions and belief systems. To have freedom – without any ridicule, without any condescending attitudes that other places may have."

Taken together, parents of the primary school children participating in the study were reasonably well informed about the Irish educational system. While many were at home with children, they had high aspirations for their children, not surprising in case of first generation immigrants. Furthermore, many came from professional backgrounds or were pursuing higher education. This is in line with existing research, which shows that immigrants in Ireland are highly educated.

In some areas, parents would like to see some improvement. Firstly, some mentioned to lack a "bigger picture" of the educational system in general and would like to see have training course or information session for parents. Whilst such information is available on various websites (e. g. The Department of Education), some parents were not aware of the option to look for information there. Additionally, the possibility of getting a presentation and having the opportunity to ask questions to a knowledgeable person would be more beneficial for migrant parents. Secondly, although all parents helped their children with homework, several parents saw Irish as a problem. The school had tried to address this by organising



beginners' classes of the Irish language for parents. Perhaps having other opportunities to learn Irish free of charge would be beneficial. Parents also noted that "technology helps a lot - we google for finding out about things".

When asked about the information they get from schools in terms of their child's progress, most were satisfied with the extent of information given: "Without bombarding you with Emails, text messages, letters - they can't do any more they are currently doing". Reminders of parent-teacher meetings were sent to parents by text messages - this highlights the importance of information technology in home-school information exchange. At the beginning of the school year there is an email or letter about forthcoming school events and parents are asked if there is anything they would like to include. It is worth noting that the Maple Leaf school has declared itself as a "green school", which means that they hardly use letters or printed material, as communication is mostly via electronic medium.

Parents of secondary school children commented on the "open door" policy in the school and that there is a good information flow from the school in terms of academic progression of their children. The information is often conveyed by text messages. The parents also find the school's website very informative. However, one Polish mother noted that the situation could be different "if you really have a problem and you have to solve the problem". The mother sees her daughter as a "normal teenager", who "knows what she has to do" and that the mother "has no problems with her". The family has been in Ireland for 13 years and the mother was very complementary about the primary school the child went to noting that: "we didn't even have to ask for help". The daughter is progressing well in the Irish secondary school, although there are some difficulties with the Irish language.

The mothers of secondary school children noted that they did not have enough information about the different types of secondary school programmes leading to terminal state examination (leaving certificate established, leaving certificate applied, leaving certificate vocational): "I haven't got a clue". However, each of the programmes is quite distinct and one has no direct entry route into tertiary education. Interestingly, the parents noted that they tend to 'absorb' information that is relevant to their children at any given time - when their children enter primary school - this is when they gather information about this phase of their child's educational career and not think about secondary school. However, in Ireland primary schools are "feeder" schools for certain secondary schools, hence enrolment into primary school may determine which secondary school your child will end up going. One parent argued that there are sectoral differences in terms of communication with schools:

"In primary school the principal is nice, you can go any time you want to talk to someone, you can talk to the teacher first thing in the morning or after school; the teachers are available to talk to you for 5 minutes; for 10 minutes. That stops when the kids go to the secondary school."

The parents also conveyed that their children do not necessarily expect much input from the parents, knowing how little they may know the Irish system; rather, they source the information themselves. Overall, the mothers of the children felt that more information is needed about the education system at post primary level. The mothers were aware of information on the Department of Education's website in different languages about the Irish education system, but argued that most of the information concerns primary schools.

Isolation of parents

Linking up with school can be difficult for some parents for a number of reasons. One factor is work, especially when both parents work full-time and engage in shift-work. Another is having a large family that leaves little time for individual children, as observed by the primary school principal:

"It is difficult when you have very big families; we have some where there are 13-14 children - some of the Romanian families are very big, it is difficult to get 'alone time' with each one."

In order to encourage parents to come to the school one needs to create opportunities for them to get involved so that a visit to the school is not associated with negative feedback:

"If events like this are set up the parents would come, they come and they chat. Otherwise, the only time parents come in is to complain, or when there was something wrong, which was such a negative thing; this is why children never wanted to see their parents in school. When they see parents in this school, the children do not assume there is something wrong, 99.9% of the time they come in for a good reason, and if they ever have to come in [...] it's not so hard then, having built up this really positive relationship. And if there are difficult conversations, it is not anywhere near as difficult because of the positive relationship. The parents are very comfortable in this school. A little additional touches: additional little round table at the door of the office where to sit down with parents; never sit across from the table; trying to make it as relaxed as possible. To avoid the 'fear of the Principal's office' to try

and get past that. Sometimes she meets a parent in a home-school room if it is free. It can be stressful for people – the school and the whole hierarchy and all that.” [Principal, Maple Leaf primary school]

Mothers of secondary school children felt that parents vary in the extent to which they want to get involved in school-based activities, especially if these are in English. One mother attends various events because she is interested in her daughter’s education but noted that some other migrant parents “may not be as hungry [for the information]”. The mother noted that lack of participation could be the result of low proficiency level in English as the school uses ‘complex language’:

“When I went to the meeting with the CAO⁴² I didn’t even know what the words mean – if somebody would say this to me in Polish – it would click to me [...] I was sitting and listening but I wasn’t sure what I was listening to.”

Schools’ definition of partnership with parents

While both schools mention the link with parents in their mission statements, the principal of the primary school noted that they have not adopted any additional policies regarding integration or inter-culturalism as everything they do is inclusive: “We don’t have anything on paper (intercultural policy or anti-racism policy), because everything we do is totally inclusive, and nobody is an outsider – no parent, no child”.

The primary school principal noted that ideally they would like to see parents involved in various activities during the school day; however, this may not be feasible because parents either work or have other children they need to attend at home:

“From school’s point of view – a parent who comes to the meetings at school they need to come to. They come to the basic ones anyway – they come to the annual parent-teacher meeting. And if a teacher asks to meet them – that they come; ideally, you’d like them to do more than that; that they would get involved in their child’s class if they have time; time is a huge factor. But the benefits for the children [...] you can see the children blossoming when their parents are involved in their school. Because they get a powerful message from that; they get a message that my school, my education is really important; learning here is important; my mum and dad are coming into the school – so school must be really important. This is stuff they cannot learn from a book or from a teacher, and to see their parents and teachers working together in a classroom, planning things and doing projects, the simplest thing would be ‘Math for Fun’, the children are divided into little groups [...] and just playing educational games with parents taking part. This is saying: there is a school community here and parents are part of that. And parents are welcome in the school. Then they also see parents in the home-school room, also learning. So they see parents are coming to school to learn about flowers, they are learning yoga, they are learning how to bake and they are learning how to [...] the parents are learning too [...] they are all learning.” [Principal, Maple Leaf school]

Parents’ definition of their role in education process

Parents participating in this study generally saw their role as secondary, mostly helping with homework, if possible. However, the primary school had attempted to give parents a greater role in the school-based education of their children. One English mother noted that:

“I come in [to the school] and read to the children; 2 different classes, and I was asked would you like to do something for the school and I replied I love reading, I’d love to pass on my love of reading to other people, and they were like – ‘ok, read for this class. Let’s go from there’.”

A Spanish mother noted that there are opportunities for parents if they want to have school-based involvement: ‘we can pick if we’d like to participate in different subjects, like parents can come in and talk about their professions; I was here talking about celebrations in Spain, sometimes you actually feel there are too many options for getting involved’.

A Pakistani mother felt empowered to be asked to prepare information for her child’s class on religion:

“I was asked to come in to tell when do we pray, how do we pray, what book do we read. They invited me for one class but I ended up going to 3-4 classes – I prepared the whole slide show and everything. I feel so good [...] teachers are asking me to come and I feel really-really good about it.”

⁴² CAO refers to central applications office: <https://www.cao.ie/>



Conclusion


It is important to note at the outset that parents' rights are enshrined in the Irish constitution: which states that parents have primary responsibility for educating their child and it guarantees the parents' right and duty to provide for their children's education. It also says that the State requires that children receive 'a certain minimum education'. This certain minimum has not yet been defined in legislation or in official policy. *Education Act (2000)* parents must make sure that their children receive a certain minimum education from the age of 6 to the age of 16. According to the Act there is no absolute legal obligation on children to attend school or on their parents to send them to school. Parents may decide the school to which they wish to send their children but there is no constitutional obligation on a particular school to accept individual children. Parents are also entitled to provide education outside the school system if they wish.

Recent policy documents have pointed to the need to strengthen the contacts with immigrant parents and migrant communities in order to enhance the success of immigrant children in the receiving countries (see European Commission, 2009; Niessen and Huddleston, 2009; Heckmann, 2008). It is important to note that the immigrant population in Ireland is highly diverse with families arriving from a wide range of countries. Furthermore, over a hundred and fifty languages are currently spoken by the new arrivals. This is likely to present a challenge for the home-school interface and parental involvement. Ireland is an interesting case particularly with regard to the heterogeneity of immigrants: on the one hand there are parents from the UK who may not have language-related difficulties (part of cultural capital) when dealing with the school, but who, on the other hand may have limited social capital (social networks) to draw on. Many families from African countries, for example, may experience difficulties in both areas. Eastern European parents, usually perceived to be expressing a positive disposition towards academic achievement and motivation by teachers may also experience difficulties in both areas. All these parents may experience some challenges in the home-school interface process, but these challenges may be different for different (groups) of parents. Schools in Ireland are largely denominational, representing White, middle class Christian values. A meeting of the 'two worlds' that both possess different cultural and social capitals can be a challenge for the school and home as well as an opportunity. Ireland is an interesting case as its immigrant population differs from many other countries in terms of its profile. Previous studies have shown that the majority of new arrivals to Ireland are highly educated; their knowledge and skills could easily be utilised in the new society. Their children often have been perceived by teachers in Ireland as highly motivated and ambitious (Smyth et al., 2009).

It is important to recognize the importance of the home-school interface and to assist ethnic minority parents in activating their social and cultural capital and not adopt a deficiency perspective. In her study, Creagan (2008) found that the institution of the school varies in relation to how it interacts with these families. The process of involving ethnic minority parents in the school that their child attends should include a critical dialogue between the home and the school, and culturally sensitive parental education initiatives that should recognize the cultural background, values and beliefs of ethnic minority families. The recommendations include information programmes targeting these parents, the involvement of community mediators, translation/interpretation services and the provision of guidance in the language of origin. In addition, addressing the learning needs of both parents and children has been highlighted teacher training programmes in the receiving country should adopt equality and intercultural education perspectives, encouraging all parents as partners in process of educating children.

Finally, in line with Devine (2011), it is important to acknowledge that schools differ and vary in how they address establishing contact with migrant parents. While some schools may proactively seek to engage these parents in various school activities and contributing to the work of parents' associations and school boards, others see migrant parents' involvement in more 'tokenistic' activities centred around intercultural festivals/days. Devine's research has also shown that when schools have a significant migrant intake; i.e. where the majority of student body is of migrant background, parents, almost 'by default' become more involved in boards and associations. Importantly, social class tends to play a role with more highly educated and confident migrant parents more likely to get involved. It needs to be borne in mind, however, that teachers and schools are often the "gatekeepers" of the system and may sometimes make erroneous assumptions that parents/migrant parents with low levels of education are not capable of being in the centre of decision-making process. It is possible that if there is an authentic welcome for these migrant parents and if they feel their opinions are respected, they are then likely to proffer. Such parents may not always be accorded the respect that better-educated get – and demand.

Getting involved means also freeing up one's time by getting childminders to look after smaller children during the school day; and generally being free to allocate time for school-related and school-based activities. In order to ensure attendance, parent-teacher meetings generally take place in the evenings. This is likely to give all parents a better opportunity to attend. Some research has also highlighted the role of social class and background on non-school based activities: better-educated parents are generally more likely to feel comfortable assisting children with homework and invest in out-of-school educational activities. At the same time, it needs to be acknowledged that, in line with many international studies, first generation migrants feel supportive of their children's education and have high ambitions for them. However, in Ireland,



most out of school educational and sporting activities need to be paid for, thus making it difficult for migrant parents, many who tend to work in lower-income jobs.

In the two case study schools selected for Ireland, a more pro-active approach is being undertaken to encourage active involvement and engagement of migrant parents. Those who spoke about their experiences expressed their satisfaction with the openness of the schools to all parents, not just migrants. However, it often remained up to the parents themselves to show initiative and have time and opportunities to get involved. It could be that each school should have a designated person who will connect with vulnerable parents to help to break down the barrier between the institution and families.

The primary (multi-denominational Educate Together) school, in particular, showed a good range of activities aimed for parents. In addition, the role the Principal played in contacting parents played a very significant role in creating an inclusive atmosphere. Unfortunately, it was not possible to contact parents who were not actively involved – their perspectives could have provided invaluable insight. However, other research indicates that issues such as unfamiliarity with the expectations of the school; being less confident; having difficulties in expressing oneself in English can all contribute to lower levels of engagement; this dovetails with demands of childcare and employment which could mean that parents are not available to avail of the opportunities available in the school. In the Irish secondary school, almost all parents attended parent-teacher meetings and major events organised by the school. In this school, staff made a special effort to connect with migrant parents particularly, some of whom had major socio-economic challenges. In general, the school had a very good response to invitations to participate. The main obstacle that turned out to be hard to negotiate was men from some communities not allowing the mothers of their children to attend school events.

Existing studies show that parents, irrespective of the background generally want the best for their children. Newcomers may find it daunting to encounter a new educational system, new demands and expectations. Often they do not have the support from the already established migrant enclaves. Schools generally vary in the extent to which they engage and empower these parents and proactive approaches in this field would go a long way for establishing a sense of parent community in the school.

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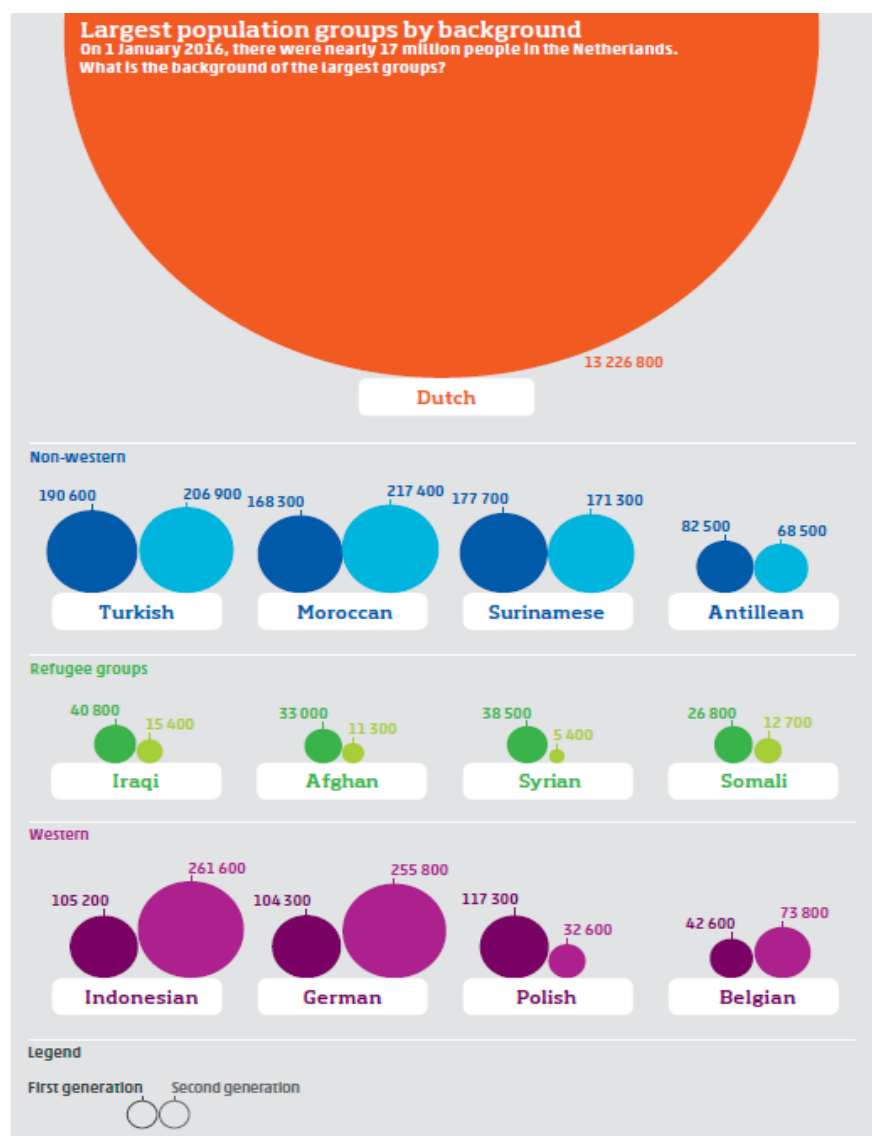
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4.4 Netherlands

4.4.1 Migration situation

The latest version of the annual report of the National Bureau of Statistics CBS (Ooijevaar, J & C. Bloemendal, 2016) provides some useful information on the population in the Netherlands. It covers integration developments in education within the four largest non-western origin groups (Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans), six non-western refugee groups (Afghans, Iraqis, Iranians, Somalis, Syrians and Eritreans) and three east European groups (Poles, Romanians and Bulgarians).

Figure 8: Largest population groups by background in the Netherlands



Source: CBS, 2016

Population

The population section of the monitor shows that on 1 January 2016, altogether 3.8 million inhabitants (22.1 percent or over one in five of the total population) had a migrant background. One in eight people (2.1 million) had a non-western background and one in ten (1.7 million) a western background. Almost half of those with a non-western background were either second generation or born in the Netherlands. This non-western second generation is still young with an average age of 18. The third generation – with at least one second-generation parent – presently still forms a small and mostly underage group.

The largest non-western groups have Turkish (397 thousand) and Moroccan (386 thousand) origins, followed by Surinamese (349 thousand) and Antillean (151 thousand) migrant groups. These four groups have grown in recent years, mainly due to second-generation births. The size of the first-generation groups decreased in the period 2011–2015 by an average of nearly 2 thousand persons per year. As for people with a Turkish or Surinamese background, departures from the Netherlands have exceeded settlements. However, net migration in the Netherlands has increased over the past decade, due to growing labour migration from new EU member states. Poles constitute the majority of migrant workers, but since the abolition of the mandatory work permit, more Bulgarians and Romanians have settled in the Netherlands as well.

Couples with a Turkish or Moroccan background are the least mixed in terms of background: they mainly marry partners of similar origin. This may be a partner of the same origin resident in the Netherlands or a partner migrating to the Netherlands. The number of migration marriages among the second generation has halved. Among the group coming from a non-western background, mixed partnerships are most common for Antilleans, while for those with a new EU background, mixed couples are most prevalent among Romanians.

People with a migration background live unevenly distributed across the country: non-western people mainly live in cities or towns in the western part of the Netherlands. By contrast, persons with a new EU background are more often found in municipalities with a predominantly agricultural character.

Refugees

Among people with a migration background are also refugees who have settled in the Netherlands. CBS regards as refugees, persons with an Afghan, Iraqi, Iranian or Somali background. In view of recent developments, people with Syrian and Eritrean backgrounds are included as well. Their migration balance increased substantially in 2014 and 2015. On 1 January 2016, there were 44 thousand people with a Syrian and 8 thousand with an Eritrean background in the Netherlands. The largest refugee group in the Netherlands are individuals with an Iraqi background (56 thousand).

By the end of the twentieth century, most immigrants with Afghan, Iraqi, Iranian and Somali backgrounds came to the Netherlands to seek asylum. More recently, there has been an increase in family migration in the context of family reunification. In recent years, people with Syrian and Eritrean backgrounds have come to the Netherlands primarily for asylum. More than half of persons with a refugee country background live in families. Individuals with a background from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran or Somalia, more than persons with other non-western backgrounds, live spread out across the Netherlands. Many people with a Syrian background live in Twente.

Table 6: Population and population growth of refugee groups in the Netherlands, 1 January 2016

	Number of persons	Percentage of total population	Increase since 1 January 2005	Proportion of second generation	Average age ¹⁾	
					first generation	second generation
	x 1,000	%	x 1,000	%	years	
Afghan	44	0.3	7	26	36	8
Iraqi	56	0.3	13	27	39	9
Iranian	38	0.2	10	23	42	12
Somali	39	0.2	18	32	30	8
Eritrean	8	0.0	7	9	24	5
Syrian	44	0.3	35	12	28	10

Source: CBS.

¹⁾ The average age of native Dutch is 43.



Education

This section shows that there are different levels of education and educational participation among the various background groups. Most students with a non-western background appear to opt for a VMBO (pre-vocational secondary education, the lowest level) level secondary school while students with a Dutch background are more likely to attend HAVO (senior general secondary education) or VWO (pre-university secondary education). In addition, VMBO students with a non-western background tend to take lower VMBO levels than native Dutch students. On the other hand, the percentage share of non-western students attending HAVO/VWO is growing, but this is also true for native Dutch students. Most students with an Iranian background attain HAVO/VWO levels, with the share even higher than among native Dutch students. Pass rates vary as well. It appears that in all types of secondary education, native Dutch students pass final exams more often compared to students with a non-western background.

After secondary education, most students continue on to upper secondary vocational education or tertiary education. Here, too, the various background groups' show marked differences. Over the past decade, relatively more students with non-western background have pursued a higher level of upper secondary vocational education (MBO) than have native Dutch students. Furthermore, non-western background MBO students will generally prefer Economics programmes while among native Dutch students, Technology programmes are more popular.

A similar picture emerges in tertiary education: students with a Surinamese, Antillean or other non-western background now enter tertiary education almost as often as native Dutch students. Among students with a Turkish or Moroccan background, this is less common, although Turkish background students have caught up more significantly. Upon graduation, students with a non-western background are older on average than native students.

Sufficient qualification for the labour market is another important indicator for integration. Figures indicate that people from non-western backgrounds drop out of secondary school relatively more often than native Dutch. On the other hand, the proportion of early school leavers without basic qualifications is lower than ten years ago. Especially girls with a Turkish or Moroccan background nowadays more often have a basic qualification, but also boys with a Surinamese or Antillean background have caught up.

Labour

Performing paid work contributes to integration in Dutch society as well. It appears that people with a non-western background less often participate in the employed labour force than either those from the new EU countries or native Dutch. Due to the economic crisis, people across all groups of society have lost their jobs in recent years. The drop in employment was more pronounced among the four largest non-western background groups, however, than among native Dutch.

Labour participation of women is encouraged in Dutch society. Women with a Surinamese or Antillean background are more often employed than women with a Turkish or Moroccan background; native Dutch women still show relatively the highest employment rates. People from other non-western backgrounds are in employment nearly as often as native Dutch.

In 2015, a person with a non-western background was three times more likely to be unemployed than a native Dutch and 50 percent more likely than someone with a background from the new EU member states. The highest rise in unemployment because of economic crisis has occurred among people with a Surinamese background. A high education level tends to reduce the risk of unemployment.

Among higher educated people with non-western backgrounds, unemployment is less than half that of the lower educated within the same background group. Nevertheless, higher educated with a non-western background are still two to three times more often unemployed than higher educated native Dutch. Twenty-two percent of 15 to 25-year-olds with a non-western background are unemployed, against 9 percent of native Dutch youngsters. Since 2008, unemployment among non-western youths has increased more than among native Dutch young people. Flex workers are also more vulnerable in the labour market than employees on permanent contracts. One in three employed persons with a non-western background have flexible contracts, versus one in five native Dutch workers.

Netherlands

Total migration inflow to the Netherlands continued to rise between 2015 and 2016 (from 205 000 to 231 000 persons) but levelled off in 2017 at 234 000 persons, the highest level in this decade (all 2017 figures are preliminary). Total migration outflow in 2017 (151 000) was similar to the previous two years. Net immigration to the Netherlands thus rose considerably, from 55 000 in 2015 to 79 000 in 2016 and 83 000 in 2017. By 2017, the stock of the foreign-born population in the Netherlands exceeded 2 million for the first time.

In terms of nationality, inflows of persons born in Asia grew from 49 000 in 2015 to 65 000 in 2016, before falling to 52 000 in 2017. Inflows of persons born in other EU countries rose from 77 000 in 2015 to 93 000 in 2017, accounting for about 40% of total migration inflow. The main origins of foreign-born persons arriving in 2017 were Poland (23 700), Syria (16 800), Germany (10 600), the former Soviet Union (8 500), China (6 700), the United Kingdom (6 600), Italy (6 500) and the United States (6 300). As in 2016, the inflow of persons born in the Netherlands reached 32 000 in 2017. Dutch citizens accounted for about one-fifth of the total migration inflow in both 2015 and 2016, compared with a quarter in 2013 and 2014.

The Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) issued almost 25 000 residence permits for family migrants in 2016, including 10 600 to children, more than in 2015 (21 700). The main nationalities were Syria, Eritrea and India. Another 14 600 residence permits were granted to labour migrants, notably under the knowledge migrant scheme (9 100) and the scheme for researchers (2 500). The number of new knowledge migrants has grown rapidly, increasing by 1 200 between 2015 and 2016. In the knowledge and talent migration schemes, the main nationalities were India, the United States and China; in other labour migration schemes, the main nationalities were China, India and the United States. 16 300 residence permits were granted to international students, led by citizens of China, the United States and Indonesia. In total, 73 000 international students were enrolled at Dutch universities in 2016.

Persons born in the Netherlands (42 300) were by far the largest group in the migration outflow in 2017, followed by persons born in Poland (14 200), Germany (8 100), the United Kingdom (4 300) and China (4 200). Their main destination of emigrants were the United Kingdom or Germany.

First requests for asylum in the Netherlands fell by half between 2015 (43 100) and 2016 (19 400) and continued to decline in 2017 (16 100). A similar decline was seen in asylum requests by unaccompanied minors from 2015 to 2016. The nationalities most frequently recorded in 2017 were Syrian (3 000), Eritrean (1 600), Moroccan (1 000),

Algerian (900) and Iraqi (800). While approval rates are particularly high for nationals of Syria or Eritrea as well as stateless persons, the Netherlands also operates a list of safe origin countries whose nationals are likely not to be eligible for asylum and are instead fast-tracked with a focus on return. Following sudden increases in asylum requests by nationals of Morocco (from 80 in 2015 to 1 300 in 2016) and Algeria (from 40 in 2015 to 1 000 in 2016), these two countries were included in the list. The number of these requests fell from 2016 to 2017, but still remains high.

Dutch citizenship was acquired by 28 500 persons in 2016, most often by nationals of Morocco (3 400), Turkey (2 800) and Iraq (900). Since February 2017, it became possible to withdraw Dutch citizenship from persons (with additional citizenships) who have participated in terrorist organisations. Previously, a withdrawal could only be based on a conviction for terrorist activities.

A change of rules for high-skilled labour migrants (notably the knowledge migrant scheme), researchers and international students allows them to engage in entrepreneurship in the Netherlands as long as the basis for their residence permit remains their primary activity. In addition, researchers no longer need a work permit.

In July 2017, a pilot programme for short stays of highly skilled labour migrants was made permanent. It allows registered sponsors to employ non-EU/EFTA citizens in the Netherlands for up to 3 months without a work permit, in a context of cross-border collaboration. This scheme complements the knowledge migrant scheme for stays over 3 months, without requiring particular salary levels (except the minimum wage). The one-off fee for becoming a registered sponsor of highly skilled labour migrants, researchers or students was reduced by half for small enterprises (EUR 2 592 instead of EUR 5 183).

For further information

www.ind.nl

www.cbs.nl

<https://www.epnuffic.nl/en/internationalisation/mobility-statistics>



4.4.2 Policy review

Some thirty years ago, parent participation started based on the idea that good contacts between the school and the parents would be in the interest of the child. It would benefit the pupils if also parents would be welcome at school. Besides 'participating', parents also wanted to have a say in what their children learn and how education is given shape (Smit & Van Esch, 1993).

The Educational Participation Act (1992) and the (New) Primary Education Act (1985, 1998) have been in effect as the statutory regulation of parent participation in the Netherlands. The Educational Participation Act provides a structure for both parents and teachers to be a member of school participation councils, as well as to be able to monitor and influence the school governing body's policy. The Act also allows parents to establish their own parents' council. This council has the authority, whether requested or not, to advise the school governing boards, the head teacher or participation councils. Article 44 of the Dutch New Primary Education Act stipulates that the proper authorities must enable the parents of pupils to conduct supporting activities on behalf of the school and education. This Article also stipulates that parents, in conducting activities, are bound to follow the instructions of the school principal and other teaching staff, who remain responsible for the state of affairs. So teachers and parents themselves are able to determine how they will give form and content to parent participation.

The importance of parental involvement

Parental involvement is categorically not an objective in itself (Lusse, 2013, p. 36). The involvement of parents in the school and the curriculum is important for a number of reasons: to reduce the school's workload, to coordinate children's upbringing and to support the learning process. It is also a means to express citizenship and achieve cultural integration (Education Council, 2010). Encouraging parents to become involved is also said to have a positive effect on the learning achievements of students (Hofman, et al., 2002; Smit et al., 2006) and increase the scholastic success of students (Lusse, 2013, p. 43). It is also assumed that greater parental involvement can help to prevent early school leaving (Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2009; Lusse, 2013, p. 25). Incidentally, there is not a great deal of literature on these alleged relationships (Lusse, 2013, p. 32). Furthermore, parental involvement is one of several ways to deal with educational deficiencies (OECD, 2012).

Parents usually have limited formal influence

Research shows that parents usually perceive their influence on the (quality) policy of schools as minimal. They believe that team members, the management and the school board have significantly more influence. The perceived influence of parents in the (joint) participation council is also minimal. Parents in the (joint) participation council usually feel that parents have an information disadvantage in relation to the staff. Moreover, members of the (joint) participation council are sometimes involved in processes at a late stage. This could create a sense of "discussion after the fact" (Bekkers et al., 2012).

Effective school leaders structurally integrate parental involvement into the school policy; ensure that the implementation is the responsibility of the entire team and that the staff is up to the task. Because schools have a different orientation towards parental involvement and no two-parent populations are the same, tailor-made solutions are needed to forge contact with parents (Lusse, 2013, p. 54).

Relevant initiatives on parents' involvement in education

There are numerous examples of activities to strengthen parental involvement in school (Onstenk, 2012). This may involve providing good information about education via a website, information evenings or theme weeks. Also by discussing school performance openly. Onstenk (2012) mentions activities in which people get to know each other better, such as during a multicultural evening, cooperation with cultural work, parents in the classroom or coffee mornings. Although there is no evidence that these initiatives have an effect on the learning outcomes (Broekhof, 2006), a number of examples that are implemented in practice are described in this section. They are randomly chosen, and hopefully serve as a source of inspiration.

Increase parent involvement through social media

This project was started at the OBS De Dijk in Zaandam in 2011: 'Facebook page for parents and teachers of children in-group 8'. Parents can exchange questions and advices with each other in this special Facebook group, register for activities at school, place photos and videos. The purpose of this is to stimulate contact between parents and provide more volunteers for school activities. The result is that the relationship between the parents has become closer; there is more involvement with each other and with the school. Parents sign up for activities more quickly and in greater numbers and nobody needs to miss anything thanks to photos and regular updates.

Home visits

The Hervormd Lyceum West in Amsterdam school is convinced that home visits provide valuable information and that a basis is created for a relationship of trust between teacher and parents. Parents often feel safer in their home situation to talk about their needs, wishes and problems than when they are at school. During such a home visit, a mentor can - often without explicitly requesting - collect the necessary background information about a pupil and his/her home situation. The mentors receive a clock hour per week for the parent visit. When parents do not sufficiently speak the Dutch language, the school has appointed two non-Dutch pupil counsellors who, if necessary, accompany the mentor.

Partnership with parents

Wittering.nl, a primary school in Rosmalen (village in Holland), sees parents as partners in the guidance of their child. The basic rule is that parents prefer to 'rotate' for a few hours every year in their child's unit to get an idea of what their child is doing during the day. Because they experience it for themselves, they can place the stories of their child well. At Wittering.nl, parents use their qualities, expertise or networks for the school. The input varies from assisting in classroom, giving a workshop on a theme in which the parent is well versed, helping to organize activities, participating in the participation council etc. All parents automatically become members of the parents' association when they register their child, unless they do not want to.

Parent room Zwijndrecht

In Zwijndrecht, a small village in the midst-south of Holland, a parents' room has been set up where parents can catch up on school matters, upbringing and everyday affairs. There are biweekly fixed mornings where parents are welcome. On average there are between six and fifteen visitors. The parents can take courses or receive information, for example about the CITO national test and what the results mean for the school career of their child. In addition, parents become acquainted with the subjects that are taught at school, so that they can help their children. There are regular speakers from all kinds of organizations, such as the Child Care and Protection Board, the Health Care or the Institute for drugs and alcohol. The parent room shows that in addition to differences, there are many similarities and parents can learn from each other.

4.4.3 Parental networking

Diffuse catch-all term

Parental involvement is a diffuse catchall term, which is used in different ways in the literature and in practice (Vogels, 2002; Smit et al., 2007; Education Council, 2010; Lusse, 2013). Parental involvement implies a relationship between parents and schools. This relationship can be defined in different ways, ranging from "formal" participation (participation in decision-making) to "informal" support activities, such as doing odd jobs for the school. These activities, which are performed within the context of parental involvement, can take place in school and at home (Lusse, 2013, p. 32). Parental involvement at home concerns educational support activities, while parental involvement in school concerns both parental contact and parental participation (Lusse, 2013, p. 48).

Four dimensions of parental involvement

We can roughly distinguish four different dimensions of parental involvement, namely: parental participation, support for learning at home, cooperation between school and parents and parental support. In case of parental participation, parents take an active part in school activities by doing odd jobs for the school or by taking part in the participation or parents' council. Support for learning at home implies that parents have a positive attitude towards the school, and support the learning and career development of their children. In case of cooperation, the school and parents collaborate on a student's education and upbringing, both at home and in school. In case of parental support, the school offers parents additional activities in order to strengthen and/or augment parenting ability and support for learning at home (Lusse, 2015, p. 12).

Different forms of parental involvement

There are different forms of parental involvement, and the reasons may differ from one parent to another. Most parents are involved with their children and thus attend parent-teacher meetings and parents' evenings. A much smaller number of parents actively provide assistance in school. However, parents who carry out support activities in school do not do so primarily to voice their opinion about the school. Only a small proportion of these parents are, or become, active in order to exert greater influence on their children's education (Karsten et al., 2006).

Parental involvement vs. parental participation

The mutual involvement of parents and the school implies a relationship. Parents can be involved in a school in different ways. For example, parental involvement consists of the involvement of parents in the upbringing and education of their children, such as reading to them at home and discussing their children's school reports with the schoolteacher. Parental participation can be regarded as the active participation of parents in school activities, whereby a distinction can be made between non-institutionalized forms of parental participation, such as doing odd jobs, and institutionalized forms of parental participation, such as serving on the participation council or school board (Education Council, 2010). Parents with a low socio-economic status generally feel more inhibited to participate in school than middle-class parents (Lusse, 2015, p. 13).

Educational partnership

In addition to parental involvement, the term "educational partnership" is also being used as a concept to shape meaningful collaborative relationships between schools and parents (Smit, Driessen & Doesborg, 2005; Lusse, 2013). Educational partnership implies the mutual involvement of parents and schools in order to create optimal developmental and learning conditions for children, at home and in school. This assumes knowledge of and respect for each other's responsibilities (Education Council, 2010, p. 45). A real educational partnership in education does not yet seem to exist (Education Council, 2010, p. 7). The position of parents in relation to the school is often relatively weak (Smit et al., 2006). Teachers usually do not regard parents as equal partners. Moreover, parents often have an information disadvantage (Bekkers et al., 2012).

The importance of parental involvement

Parental involvement is categorically not an objective in itself (Lusse, 2013, p. 36). The involvement of parents in the school and the curriculum is important for a number of reasons: to reduce the school's workload, to coordinate children's upbringing and to support the learning process. It is also a means to express citizenship and achieve cultural integration (Education Council, 2010). Encouraging parents to become involved is also said to have a positive effect on the learning achievements of students (Hofman, et al., 2002; Smit et al., 2006) and increase the scholastic success of students (Lusse, 2013, p. 43). It is also assumed that greater parental involvement can help to prevent early school leaving (Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2009; Lusse, 2013, p. 25). Incidentally, there is not a great deal of literature on these alleged relationships (Lusse, 2013, p. 32). Furthermore, parental involvement is one of several ways to deal with educational deficiencies (OECD, 2012).



Active vs. passive parents

The involvement of parents is related to background characteristics and denominative preferences. We can roughly distinguish four different groups of parents, with different levels of parental involvement (Vogels, 2002): two groups of active parents ("partners" and "participants") and two groups of passive parents ("delegating" and "invisible" parents). *Partners* are parents who are closely involved with the education and school of their children. They strive for an influential position in the school and seek cooperation with the teachers. *Participants* are also closely involved with the education of their children but do not participate as much in the formal school bodies. *Delegating parents* are mainly parents with religious beliefs. They have less need than other parents do for daily influence on the school policy and curriculum. *Invisible parents* are mainly parents with a low socio-economic position. They are significantly less well represented in the formal school bodies. Other studies also show that parents' background characteristics play a role. In schools where highly educated parents are the dominant group, the parents are usually active on all fronts and there is frequent communication between the school and the parents. Schools where parents from disadvantaged groups are the dominant group are not worried about the influence of parents on the school policy and look for different ways to keep the often difficult lines of communication with parents open (Karsten et al., 2006).

Parents usually have limited formal influence

Research shows that parents usually perceive their influence on the (quality) policy of schools as minimal. They believe that team members, the management and the school board have significantly more influence. The perceived influence of parents in the (joint) participation council is also minimal. Parents in the (joint) participation council usually feel that parents have an information disadvantage in relation to the staff. Moreover, members of the (joint) participation council are sometimes involved in processes at a late stage. This could create a sense of "discussion after the fact" (Bekkers et al., 2012).

The importance of tailor-made solutions

Effective school leaders structurally integrate parental involvement into the school policy; ensure that the implementation is the responsibility of the entire team and that the staff is up to the task. Because schools have a different orientation towards parental involvement and no two-parent populations are the same, tailor-made solutions are needed to forge contact with parents (Lusse, 2013, p. 54).

Managing parental involvement amidst diversity

Parental involvement has an extra dimension in large cities since many parents are from different cultural backgrounds. For example, parents from minority groups quite often experience difficulties communicating with schools. This could have to do with language problems, but also with cultural differences in communication and different views on the responsibility for upbringing and education. The challenge for such "coeducational" schools is therefore not just to encourage parental involvement, but **also** to manage parental involvement amidst diversity (Smit, Driessen & Doesborgh, 2005, p. 10). Specific communication skills for dealing with heterogeneous languages and cultures are indispensable here (idem, p. 12).

4.4.4 Case Study Profiles

Case Study 1: Primary School Profile

In the Netherlands two elementary schools have been visited, both located in the city of Utrecht. Utrecht is a town with approximately 350.000 inhabitants; it is the fourth city of the Netherlands by population. Utrecht is a multicultural city; the percentage of immigrant residents is roughly a third and will probably remain stable in the coming decades. This amounts to approximately 100,000 residents of non-Dutch origin, of whom approx. 65,000 are of non-Western origin, consisting of Moroccans, Turks, Antilleans, and Surinamese of whom the first two groups form the majority. Utrecht is a city with many young people and relatively few elderly people. More than 64,000 students live in Utrecht as well.

School A is located in the northern part of the City of Utrecht. School A is selected because the pupil population is mainly from ethnic minority background (Moroccan, Turkish). The school principal characterizes the school neighbourhood as one where many challenges come together. The school team is native Dutch. Many parents do not master the Dutch language sufficiently, are from lower social economic background and/or are divorced.

School B is located in the southern part of the City of Utrecht. There are several reasons why school B is selected. Firstly, a few years ago the school was a mix of children from lower and higher social economic background and from ethnic minority and majority descent. Due to demographic developments in the neighbourhood, the pupil population has become more homogeneous. Nowadays the pupil population of school B is predominantly white and from highly educated parents and can be considered as the opposite of School A. This opens up the research opportunity to compare parental involvement in different school contexts. Secondly, School B is interesting because a number of teachers and the vice-principal have teaching experience in both a predominantly migrant and a predominantly non-migrant context (respectively at former schools and at School B), which gives them the opportunity to compare parental involvement in both settings. During the fieldwork, the school team of school B was mainly native Dutch.

Interviews were conducted with two school management members (School A: the school principal; School B: the vice-principal) eight teachers (School A: three teachers, who are members of the Working Group Parent Involvement in formation; School B: five teachers), who teach groups varying from group 1 (children of 5 years old) to group 7 (children of 11 years old) and seven parents from ethnic minority background (School A: six parents; School B: one parent). The groups the parent's children attend vary from group 1 to group 6. The interviews were held in January 2017, except the interview with the parent of School B, which took place in July 2017.


Case Study 2: Secondary School Profile

We based our secondary fieldwork findings on a dissertation of a colleague, Mariette Lusse (Lusse, 2013), who did fieldwork in an urban pre-vocational education school (secondary pre-vocational educational school De Hef). A school that the authors visited regularly and therefore we combine our findings with hers. De Hef is a very interesting school, since it focusses on the individual needs of pupils intensively in an area with many nationalities, within the school they have 520 pupils coming from 40 different nationalities. Many pupils have Turkish, Surinam and Moroccan descent. Rotterdam is the second largest city in the Netherlands, with more than 630.000 inhabitants. The ethnical background in the city with over 175 nationalities is as follow:

Table 7: Ethnical background, De Hef

Native Dutch	49%
Surinam	8%
Antillean	4%
Turkish	7.5%
Moroccan	7%
Cape Verdean	2.5%
Other Non-western migration background	9%
Other Western migration background	5%
Other from European Union	8%

Source: Risbo, based on Lusse, 2013



De Hef, with 520 pupils, is based in Rotterdam-South, an area with predominantly high numbers of low-educated migrant families. In addition, the school team as well as the student are very diverse in ethnicity, with the highest numbers from Moroccan and Turkish descent. Furthermore, Rotterdam is the city in the Netherlands with the highest level of poverty, the lowest average level of education and the highest level of school dropouts in the country. This research therefore focuses on the relationship between parents and the school in the context of the highest potential dropout risk in the Netherlands and in an area where schools face difficulties in establishing relationships with parents.

The school takes its pupils to a higher level by acquainting them with artisanship, both in the school through personal mastery of the school staff, and outside by internships and excursions. They work together with parents because the school believes that they are indispensable for the success of their child. They enthusiastically build bridges to everything and everyone. Interviews were held with school management, teachers and a focus group with parents.

The involvement of parents in urban pre-vocational education

In urban pre-vocational education barriers occur which make it difficult for schools and parents to maintain a relationship. In pre-vocational education, there are fewer contact moments than at primary school and often parents and schools only meet when problems occur. Furthermore, the barrier to visit the school is higher for parents with a lower socioeconomic status⁴³. These parents express their commitment mainly at home, while teachers presume that parents who come to school are more committed at home. A good relationship between parents and school contributes to a bigger overlap of the spheres of influence of school and home (Epstein, 1995; 2009), because of which the pupil is not split between these two educational environments. Positioning the pupil well between school and home seems especially relevant with this age group and with major differences between home and school culture (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Parents who trust their own abilities will more likely be involved than parents with more complex living conditions. The way the invitation of the child is perceived especially affects educationally supportive behaviour at home and the teacher's invitation helps the parent to overcome the barrier to visit the school.

Effective use of the relationship with the parents requires a parent-school partnership, effective leadership, customisation, and integration of parental involvement in the school policy. This demands schools to create a welcoming environment and to work proactively. In order to build a relationship of trust, the school should first focus on the individual contact with parent about their child. A positive relationship and offering clear expectations both help to lower the barriers. Not just parents, but also teachers and other school employees should be ready to start such a partnership.

Parental engagement according to the school plan

The vocational school is open from 7.45 am to 4.30 pm. Parents are welcome. If they want to speak to someone, you can book in advance and make an appointment. Parents, school and students are together responsible for optimal performance of pupils. Good cooperation and good parent contacts are important for the success of the students. That is why they like to maintain good contact with pupils and their parents and / or caregivers. What they do for and with parents is the following:

- Acquaintance meeting for the parents with the mentor at school at the beginning of the school year
- Parents sign an agreement with the school in which mutual expectations and / or obligations are written down
- Discuss and evaluate development perspective plan with parents
- Immediate contact in the absence of their child (same day)
- Access to homework via the internet or by e-mail
- Insight into current performances of their child via internet
- Personal collection of reports by parents at school
- Organize speaking nights as a result of the report
- Organization of informative (theme) meetings at school

⁴³ Bakker et al., 2007; Booijink, 2007; Davies et al. 2011; Desforges et al., 2003; Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Epstein et al., 2009; Jaynes, 2010; Lareau, 2003; Peetsma & Blok, 2007; Pels, 2004; Pomerantz et al., 2007; Weininger & Lareau, 2003.

4.4.5 Case Study findings

Role of school leadership and role of social class / education

School management and teachers in the primary schools distinguish parental involvement from parental participation. The focus of parental involvement is on enhancing parent support of the educational development of children at home, while parental participation has to do with the participation of parents in school events, such as festivities and excursions. School management and teachers consider parental involvement far more important than parental participation. The assumption is that parental involvement has more impact on the cognitive, emotional and social development of children than parental participation. For example, a child benefits more from a parent who can help with home assignments than a parent who helps decorating school for a festivity. However, although not proven, parental participation can be a stepping' stone to parental involvement, since parental participation is an accessible way to interest parents for parental involvement.

Teachers and school management in the primary schools mention several reasons why parental involvement of ethnic minority is hampered. One possible reason is insufficient mastering of the Dutch language for parents to assist their children. Another reason can be a lack of skills or unfamiliarity of parents how to assist their children. A third possible reason is culturally framed: parents are not used to support their children on school matters. It is, for example, no habit to read to children. On the other hand, parents do not feel the responsibility for the cognitive development of their child, because -from the perspective of these parents- this is the school's responsibility. Another reason may be the busy daily life of parents, especially when they have to run a one-parent household, which - above average - seems the case in the neighbourhood of School A. A fifth reason, mentioned by teachers and school management, is that perhaps teachers are not clear and specific enough in instructing parents. Teachers add that in the dynamics between teachers and parents, parents also have an active role: teachers are willing to support parents in their parental involvement efforts, but - because of the limited time of teachers - parents have to ask for help.

The challenges concerning parental involvement are different for school management and teachers of School A compared to School B. Although at both schools the importance of parental involvement is emphasized, at School B parents are involved (sometimes too involved), for example questioning the quality of the school and of teachers. This can cause stress among some teachers, feeling they have to prove themselves to these parents, especially in the first months of the school year. Teachers explain this attitude of parents by their educational level: these parents are highly educated. Having said this, at School B there are plenty of parents who are explicit in complementing teachers, which is very rewarding. One teacher of School B concludes: "Rather a parent who is critical about school, then a parent who doesn't care".


Experiences of the interviewed school management, teachers and parents, indicate that schools have to invest into parental involvement of ethnic minority parents and have to play an active role to stimulate this (the example of School B shows that ethnic majority parents are active themselves, partly related to their high level of education). It seems clear that trust is an important aspect to focus on. Regularly, but not always, both teachers and parents notice a certain distance in their mutual contact that hampers parental involvement: teachers are not sure if parents understand how to put parental involvement into practice, while parents are not sure what is expected from them.

We know from various studies that the barriers for lowly educated parents are high. A proactive, sensitive attitude helps to minimise these barriers. The school tries to organise that by a friendly tone (also in letters, telephone communication and in case of problems) and a good organisation.

Many contact moments are mainly on collective contact moments, i.c. parents gathering for organising festivities or to discuss a problem. Parents told the researchers that they were more inclined to come to school when they know and trust the mentor of their child.

Furthermore, parents pointed out that there is often a one-way traffic with information mainly focused on the development of their pupils at school and they would be more inclined to come to school when the relation with the school mentor is reciprocal.

Not surprisingly, school management of both School A and B see more budget to enlarge the personnel capacity as an important prerequisite way to increase the parental involvement of ethnic minority parents. School management and teachers refer to successful examples from other schools and other periods - when money was less a problem - where one or more staff members are made responsible for parent involvement and are facilitated to work properly on parental



involvement activities. These staff members can reach out to parents, explore what is needed to improve parental involvement (for example, more specific instruction) and translate this into concrete action (for example, a walk in project for parents at school to share experiences on parental involvement, or a 'buddy' project for parents to support each other). School A tries to solve this personnel challenge by forming a Working Group Parental Involvement, consisting out of three teachers. At the moment of interviewing this Working Group just started, with an initial focus on formulating a school vision on Parental Involvement, planning activities and recruiting parents. At School B parental involvement is less an issue, because of the already active role of (the mainly ethnic majority and highly educated) parents. In cases like these, policy/procedures on parental involvement seem less urgent.

If we compare that to secondary (vocational) education a clear perception of one's role and a positive expectation of one's effectiveness and abilities helps parents to support the education of their children at home. In the vocational school, there is little attention towards a proper realisation and support of educationally supportive behaviour at home. School management stresses that it becomes easier to involve these parents when they clearly communicate to them what is expected of them and in what way the school can help.

The vocational school starts by visiting new students at home; this is a good way to have a conversation in a culturally specific context and to understand where the child comes from and how parent-child relationships are built. However usually these visits are not reaching their full potential since it is used as a first encounter and not really anything more. What does help is that every child in the school has a mentor and in that way parents have a 'face' where they can come with all their questions, etc. Mentors say that the conversations with parents are 'time-consuming' but they are 'surprising', 'fruitful' and 'very useful'.

Empowerment of parents

The focus of the contact is as important as to have contact at all. Teachers said that when they communicate to parents on what their child is doing wrong, it becomes difficult to create an inviting attitude and welcoming school. The focus on positive feedback with point to work on helps the parents to feel invited.

When the incidental intervention of involving migrant parents is developed into an integrated approach at schools more attention needs to be paid to the following elements: the reciprocity in the relations between parents and schools, the discussing of the development and the guidance of the pupils at home and the giving of more attention to the choices and disappointments that occur in the school career.

Designing contact with parents in vocational education requires a guide that is more focused on the specific context.

Lusse (2013) provides a list of 10 factors for success to improve contact between parents and the school:

Factors for success to make contact between school and parents

1. School makes sure parents feel welcome
2. School becomes acquainted with all parents at an early stage
3. School has contact with a parent or another caretaker of the child

Factors for success to cooperate between school, parents and pupils

4. School always invites pupil to attend regular contact moments with their parent
5. School makes sure there is dialogue and an exchange of information with parents
6. School feeds the conversation between parent and child at home
7. School (also) pays attention to positive things

Factors for success to support the career perspective of the pupil

8. School takes pupil's school career as a focal point in its contact with parents
9. School initiates a plan focused on points of development for the pupil clearly indicating the roles of the pupil, parent and school
10. School discusses disappointments regarding school career with parent and child

Co-operation between schools and parents is a matter of confidence. Confidence between schools and parents in each other as well as in the child supports the self-confidence of the pupil and leads to growing trust in the future.

Source of information for migrant parents


The main source of information for parents on the educational development of children, decisions that have to be made and other school matters are the teachers (and depending on the subject also school management). Most of the information is communicated by face-to-face contact. From school B it is known that parents are also informed by means of a digital tool called 'Social Schools' (for example if children made their homework and when tests are scheduled). Parents appreciate this tool. Another source of information for parents are other parents.

If we focus on the main source of information migrant parents' use when they choose a secondary (vocational) school, the straightforward answers from migrant parents were the influence and advice of the primary school. The hardly use internet as a source to see what kind of schools there are for their child. In addition, the proximity of the school in the neighbourhood pays a role.

Schools and parents' definition of partnership and their role in the educational process

School management and teachers from both schools emphasize the importance of parental involvement, especially in the case of ethnic minority children of which many have language deficiencies. They share the same challenges concerning parental involvement of parents from ethnic minority background. Teachers experience a certain distance between teachers and parents that makes teachers uncertain if their message and instruction on parents' involvement is fully understood by parents. For example: if a teacher asks a parent to help his/her child with home assignments, such as watching the clock, naming forms (triangle, circle, square etc.) or reading and understanding texts, the teacher is not sure whether this parent is capable enough to assist his/her child or has understood what one is expected to do. Teachers notice this uncertainty in interactions with parents. Because teachers feel they have a certain status and authority among many ethnic minority parents, they experience that these parents treat them with respect and keep a certain distance. Because these parents are not very outspoken (from the teacher's perspective), it is difficult for teachers to 'read' parents and to see if they have reached them. Teachers check the involvement of parents in different ways. They use certain computer tools to see whether pupils have done their home assignments, or ask, for example, if parents have been to the library with their child to choose some children books. On school information events, the turnout of ethnic minority parents is low. At School A, on average parents of only five children out of a class of 25 children attend these events. To enhance parental involvement at School A, the individual '10 minute talks' between teachers and parents are obligatory for parents. Parents, who do not show up for these talks, do not receive the school report of their child. The turnout at these 10-minute talks is successful. Almost all parents show up. For teachers, these talks are an opportunity to stress the importance of parental involvement. School B also has '10 minutes' talks' with parents, but these are -contrary to school B- not obligatory and do not have be, due to the intrinsic engagement of almost all parents.

Parents make a distinction between good and bad teachers. Most parent respondents have experience with both. Good teachers show sincere interest in the development of children and give parents advice how to support their child, for example by providing exercise books, by stimulating parents to go the library with their child or to watch programs like Sesame Street. In addition, these teachers create safe learning environments for the children. Bad teachers are very strict in applying the rules. In some cases, parents feel excluded from what is happening inside class, do not feel connected to the teacher and have the feeling that they are not taken seriously. To illustrate this: one parent stresses that good teachers are involved with his children. They have an eye for the challenges his children face, asking about the parent's opinion and gives him the feeling that there is a mutual responsibility for his children. But other teachers are more distant and underestimate the capabilities of his children: one of his sons had good test scores on the national school tests, but got the advice to follow one of the lower secondary education tracks, despite questions of the parent why this discrepancy exists




(the parent himself put his son on one of the higher secondary education tracks). Elaborating on the parent's role in the secondary school choice, this example shows that parents can play a role in this choice. However, this depends on how well informed and determined parents are. In many cases, parents from non-western migrant (and lower social economic) background are not so well informed, partly because of the complex education system in the Netherlands. So here, the parent's role in the secondary school choice is reduced to a minimum, while the role of the school is maximized.

In general, interviewed parents experience a lack of specific instruction by teachers how to put parental involvement into practice. They are willing to support their children, but some of them do not know what is expected from them. For example, children come home with working sheets containing home assignments, but parents have no idea if and how they should help their child with these assignments. A last important comment the head master of the vocational school made was that an encouraging attitude from parents contributes to a pupil's positive self-image and he saw that disappointments in the school career makes it difficult for parents to be encouraging towards their children. Both school and parents have a task here to feel proud of the child, create a positive learning environment and to see opportunities for school careers. It probably helps when parents are gathered together to help each other in raising their child and to know how to help them.



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4.5 Spain

4.5.1 Migration situation

The kaleidoscope of immigration in Spain: From sending country to host country

A retrospective look at what happened in Spain in recent decades allows us to appreciate that the role of this country with respect to migration has changed significantly. There has been a shift from being a sending country to becoming a host country, which is welcoming a growing number of people from different origins and cultures. Consequently, the phenomenon of immigration is something rather new in this country, becoming a host society, in all its different autonomous communities.

According to the final report on Migrant Education Monitoring Assessment of the European Parliament (Essomba, M.A.; Tarrés, A. & Franco, N., 2017), we can corroborate that Spain is a new immigration country. Its immigrant population rose from 1% of the total in the early nineties to 12% in 2011. Within its wide diversity of origins, Ecuadorians, Romanians and Moroccans were the most numerous groups in 2015, and Colombia, Venezuela, Italy and Honduras becoming the most numerous groups in 2016.

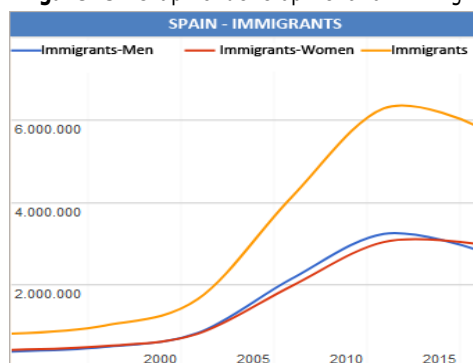
The deep analysis carried out in this recent report emphasizes that due to the difficult economic crisis the country is undergoing, the figure had dropped to 10.4% by 2014. Half of the total of immigrants is concentrated in just three provinces of Spain (Barcelona, Madrid and Alicante). In 2015 immigrant children represented 8.8% of the total child population. The most numerous groups come from North Africa (13% Morocco), South America (11% Ecuador) and Europe (9% Romania).

Table 8: Immigration in Spain, 1990-2016

Year	Immigrants Men	Immigrants Women	Immigrants	% Immigrants
2015	2.855.179	2.997.774	5.852.953	12,60%
2010	3.238.238	3.041.827	6.280.065	13,46%
2005	2.140.680	1.966.546	4.107.226	9,33%
2000	838.058	819.227	1.657.285	4,08%
1995	499.114	520.953	1.020.067	2,56%
1990	390.448	431.157	821.605	2,11%

Source: Datosmacro.com

Figure 9: Graphic development of immigration in Spain, 2000-2015



Source: Datosmacro.com

Reinforcing the above, the most recent data from the National Institute of Statistics in Spain (INE, 2017), shows that migratory balance of foreigners was 112,666 people in 2016, positive for the second consecutive time since 2010 and 176.3% higher than the previous year. In sum, 241.795 people migrated and 354.461 immigrated.

Table 9: Migration movements in Spain, 2016

Foreign migration movements-Provisional data 2016			
	Immigration	Emigration	Migratory balance
Total	417.033	327.906	89.126
Spain nationals	62.572	86.112	-23.540
Foreigners	354.461	241.795	112.666
The sum of the disaggregated data may differ from the total due to rounding. Migratory balance = Immigrations - Emigrations			

Source: INE 2017 - National Institute of Statistics. Publication date: 29/06/2017

Description of the employment and education situation of migrants

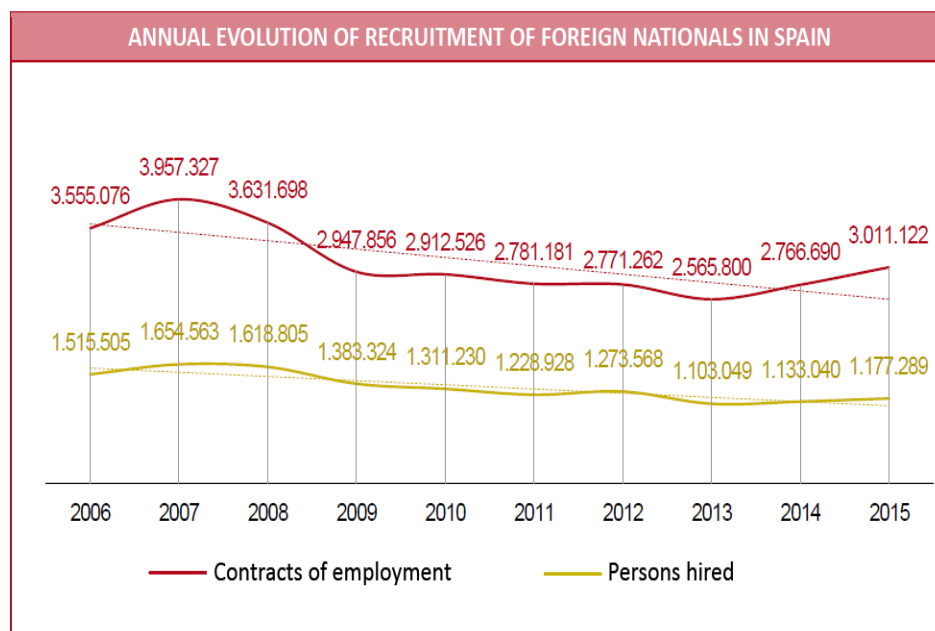
During the expansive phase of the Spanish economy that preceded the crisis, which began in 2008, there were many studies that showed that the immigrant community was disproportionately affected by adverse and precarious working conditions, discrimination by reason of origin, low salary levels and occupation in informal work activities. The labor insertion of immigrants (especially those from third countries) in the Spanish labor market during the economic expansion was characterized by a marked horizontal and vertical stratification. In short, immigrants used to be especially affected by the disagreements of a segmented and dual labor market (Godenau, D.; Rinken, S; Martínez de Lizarrondo A. & Moreno Márquez, G., 2014).

According to the Public State Employment Service under the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Security (2016), foreign workers in our country are one of the groups of interest for employment due to their special difficulties in finding a job, and for this reason, they collected a series of indicators that show the situation of the group in the Spanish labor market. In this sense, it can be said that the year 2015, taking into account the decrease in the registered population, has been better than the previous year.

Occupancy data showing affiliation to the Social Security system registered an increase of 5.04% of employed foreigners, when in 2014 the increase was 0.24%. The hiring of foreign workers in 2015 presents an increase of 8.83% (7.83% in 2014) and as regards the registered unemployment in the group, is below half a million unemployed with a decrease of 8, 24% (in 2014 -4.45%).

With data from the Labor Force Survey for the last quarter of 2015, the foreign active population continues to decline, in line with the general decrease in foreign population, and the unemployment rate of the foreign group reached 28.38% in that quarter, seven points and a half more than the unemployment rate of the whole national labor market (20.90%). The hiring of foreign workers that shows increases in the last two years, after a continuous decline since 2007, registered in 2015 a temporary rate of 89.55%, almost two and a half percentage points less than all the workers of the country (91.88%) and a percentage of permanent contracts of 10.45%, higher than 8.12% of the total national labor market.

Figure 10: Recruitment of foreign nationals in Spain, 2006-2015




Source: Occupations Observatory of the Public State Employment Service, 2016.

Table 10: Recruitment of foreign nationals by nationality in Spain

RECRUITMENT OF FOREIGN NATIONALS BY NATIONALITY		
COUNTRY	CONTRACTS	% VARIATION (2015/14)
Rumanía	628.893	9,05
Marruecos	580.611	12,37
Ecuador	178.951	-3,51
Bulgaria	99.770	4,38
Colombia	99.724	2,50
Italia	95.929	21,47
Senegal	92.304	24,23
Bolivia	84.374	-4,90
Mali	77.082	16,16
China	65.681	0,37
Portugal	59.669	10,73
Pakistán	59.391	8,94
Dominicana, República	52.066	13,21
Ucrania	51.763	11,53
Perú	49.010	-3,94

Source: Occupations Observatory of the Public State Employment Service, 2016.



Another important and very specific fact of this group is the high labor mobility that it traditionally registers. In 2015, it reached a rate of 21.68%, almost nine points more than that registered by the total number of workers in our labor market (12.86%). This rate means that 650,249 contracts signed by foreign workers required interprovincial displacement, a figure that represents 9.88% more than in 2014.

The economic sector in which foreign workers are mostly employed in our country is the service sector, and it is also the sector where most demand of employment exist. In terms of the occupations where foreign workers were most used in 2015, 59.94% of contracts registered in the Large Group of Elementary Occupations stand out, which in turn concentrates 46.06 % of the demand for employment. The majority of workers in the catering, personal, protection and sales services depict the second group with the highest proportion of contracts and job applications.

Finally, the most recent data from January to October 2017 (Ministry of Employment and Social Security, 2017) indicates that the total number of contracts of employment of foreigners reaches 3.091.597. Within these, temporary employment contracts (2.754.069) far exceed indefinite contracts (337.528) as well as obvious differences between men and women opportunities, in which women (1.118.718) that have less contracts than men (1.972.879) are visible. The main groups demanding a job in Spain are from Morocco, Ecuador, Colombia and Ukraine.

One of the social policies that has been fundamentally affected by the migration phenomenon is the education policy. Education is certainly one of the main bastions to facilitate and guarantee the integration and socialization of foreigners, since it facilitates the learning and assimilation of history and culture of the destination country and, above all, of the language (Rahona and Morales, 2013).

Returning to the final report on Migrant Education Monitoring Assessment of the European Parliament (Essomba, M.A.; Tarrés, A. & Franco, N., 2017), "It is at the sub-state level that immigrant children are taken care of in terms of legislation and policy practice. In this sense, specific programs have been developed independently in some autonomous communities and there is no homogeneous system. Examples of policies implemented at regional level can be found in the autonomous community of Madrid, with its Aulas de Enlace ("bridging classrooms"), or the Reception Classrooms in the autonomous community of Catalonia. Such policies consist of transitional classrooms that offer intensive language courses along with subjects such as history, where knowledge of the language is necessary. Immigrant children are integrated in classrooms with natives when the subjects do not require such a proficient knowledge of the language, as in the case of maths or science.

The general law establishes that it is the mandate of the educational institutions to implement practices that foster the integration of children into the education system. Accordingly, it is up to the autonomous communities to develop systems. As a result, in Spain we find a heterogeneous map of 17 regions implementing their own education systems, and given the principle of school autonomy, homogeneity is not found even within the autonomous communities themselves. Nevertheless, some practices tend to spread, with the focus on language teaching and support for teachers.

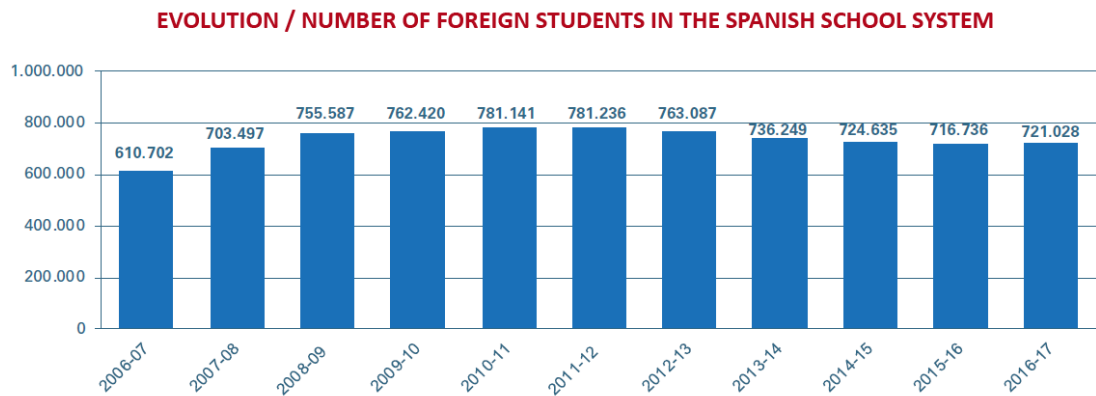
The use of reception classrooms is a common practice in a large number of schools, insofar that these are set up for at least 10 students. They focus on intensive teaching of the language (Spanish, and in some cases a co-official language such as Catalan in Catalonia) during school hours, while a subject that requires wide knowledge of the language is being taught in the ordinary classroom (see sources for regulations in the autonomous communities of Murcia, Madrid, Andalusia and Castilla y León). Learning the language is considered a very important aspect for foreign students to be able to integrate better in the school environment. Its knowledge is also essential to carry out the learning of the curriculum. For this reason, most of the autonomous communities consider it convenient that immigrant students, at the beginning of their schooling, have a period of adaptation to learn Spanish.

Additionally, Spanish legislation includes support for teachers as a measure of attention to diversity (in order to focus on learning deficits, ranging from language to basic instrumental skills). This measure has been implemented, for example, in the autonomous community of Murcia, through the PROA program, which has been introduced in three dimensions of secondary education: direct support for students, for families, and improvement of the educative environment. There have also been some other sporadic initiatives to support teachers, by offering specific training in Spanish as a second language, and training in intercultural issues. However, such activities are voluntary and have been characterized by low demand.

Another important indicator is the high percentage of students with an immigration background who do not successfully complete compulsory education. The numbers of early school leavers suggest that immigrants are almost doubling the number of Spanish students in this matter (Ivie & Bancaja, 2011 in Fernández Sierra, 2017). This is a widespread concern in the field of educational practice and policy in Spain. National and international studies show how dropouts and school failures are correlated especially with the sociocultural level of families, a fact that reiterates one of the weak points of the

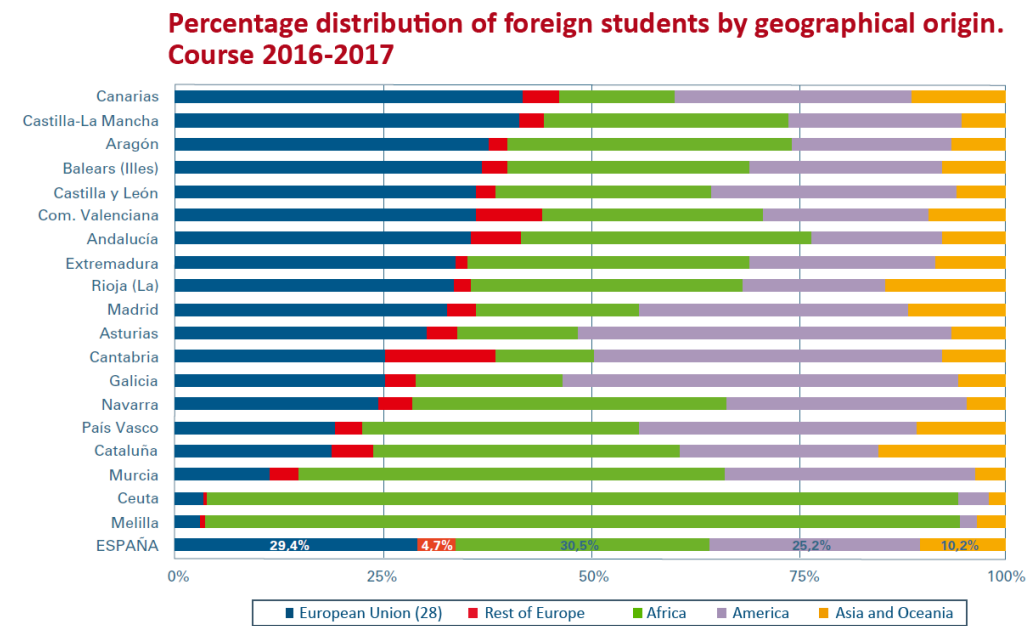
spanish system, but at the same time it can serve as a justification or mitigating, more or less conscious or underlying, for the different heads of education.

Figure 11: Evolution, number of foreign students in the Spanish school system, 2006/07-2016/17



Source: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Curso escola 2016/2017

Figure 12: Percentage distribution of foreign students by geographical origin, 2016/17



Source: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, Curso escola 2016/2017

Spain

In 2016, net migration of foreign nationals rose to 112 700 from 40 800 a year earlier. Most of this increase is explained by a 22% rise in immigration, while emigration declined by 3%. With an inflow of 354 000 people, immigration reached its highest level since 2009. Moroccans were the leading nationality of immigrants in 2016, with an inflow of 30 000 and a 25% increase compared to 2015. They were followed closely by Romanians (29 000, as in the previous year). Colombians and Venezuelans were the two main net migration nationalities, with a positive balance of 16 000 each. Net migration of Romanians was negative in 2016 (-24 000). Spain remained the main European destination for UK citizens. As of January 2016, there were close to 300 000 recorded British residents in Spain, about one third of all British residents in the European Union.

Emigration of Spanish nationals in 2016 declined for the first time in more than a decade, to 86 000. As in the previous year, the main destinations, which accounted for 45% of the total, were the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the United States.

Improving economic conditions led to an increase in immigration of Spanish nationals: 62 000 arrived in 2016, compared to 52 000 the previous year. Although net migration of Spanish nationals remained negative in 2016 (-27 200), this was lower than in 2015 (-42 500).

The economic recovery was also visible in improved labour market outcomes for immigrants. Although the unemployment rate of foreigners remained high, at almost 25% in the last quarter of 2016, this was 3.7 percentage points lower than in the previous year. This decline was steeper than the decline for Spanish nationals (2 percentage points, to 18% in the last quarter of 2016).

The total number of first permits granted to foreigners from non-EU countries increased from 193 000 in 2015 to 211 000 in 2016. Most of the increase occurred in the family category, which represented more than 50% of all first permits, while there was a decline in permits issued for economic reasons.

In the first half of 2016, 93 000 naturalisations through residence were granted, up from 78 000 in the same period of 2015. Yet, the overall data show a reduction in naturalisations each year. The main nationalities of origin were Morocco, Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador, which accounted for about half of the total.

There was an increase in irregular border crossings in 2016 and again in 2017, compared to previous periods. This was mostly due to increased arrivals by sea through the Strait of Gibraltar, while crossings to the Canary Islands decreased. According to the Ministry of Interior, boat landings amounted to 22 100 persons in 2017, compared with 8 200 in 2016. Migration pressure is a

challenge for Spain; therefore, there is a continuation of the close co-operation on combatting irregular migration with countries of origin and transit, such as Morocco, Senegal and Mauritania.

There was a 6.6% increase in asylum applications in 2016 to 15 600. Preliminary data for 2017 show an even larger increase to approximately 31 700, the highest on record. There was a sharp increase in applications from Venezuelans, from 585 in 2015 to 3 960 in 2016 and to more than 10 600 in 2017. The second largest group in 2016 and 2017 was Syrians (6 975 and 4 300 respectively). Spain granted international protection to 6 900 persons in 2016 (in most cases, subsidiary protection), a strong increase compared to the previous year (1 000); preliminary data indicate that the 2017 figure should be lower. In addition, Spain took part in the EU relocation and resettlement programmes. By September 2017, about 1 300 asylum seekers had been relocated from Greece and Italy to Spain, due to the difficulties of implementing this new process. Spain also committed to resettle about 1 400 refugees from countries neighbouring Syria and had reached about half of this target by September 2017. The increase in asylum applications in Spain has led to the restructuring of the asylum system to manage larger numbers of applications and to increase the capacity of the reception system.

Due to the lack of parliamentary majority during most of 2016, no major legal changes were implemented. A number of measures to attract highly skilled immigrants, in particular investors and entrepreneurs, have recently been taken. Therefore, migrants to Spain have higher qualifications than in earlier years. In addition, a “Rising Start-up Spain” pilot project was launched in 2016. This project offered foreign entrepreneurs and start-ups who promote entrepreneurial activity with a scalable and innovative project: EUR 10 000, a free office space in Madrid or Barcelona and specialist mentoring to support the financing process and other services. The second call for this scheme, which received a total of 155 applications in its first edition, was considered a success.

For further information

<http://extranjeros.empleo.gob.es/es/index.html>
www.empleo.gob.es/es/estadisticas/index.htm
www.ine.es

4.5.2 Policy review

It is generally recognized that the involvement of parents in the education of their children is an essential aspect. In Spain, the figure of parents in the educational process has historically gained relevance, which can be seen, at a macro level, through the evolution of education legislation in the country, where they are considered actors of first order in the educational process. This is confirmed by Andrés and Giró (2016) and Egido (2015: 16), who also observed a kind of evolution in which "the participation of parents, understood as a collective right and obligation, has been extended to the involvement of families individually, as a means of improving results".

- General Law of Education of August 4, 1970
- Organic Law regulating the Right to Education (LODE) of July 3, 1985
- Organic Law of General Organization of the Educational System of Spain (LOGSE) of 1990
- Organic Law on the Quality of Education (LOCE) of 2002
- Organic Law of Education (LOE) of 2006
- Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE) of 2013

In these laws, reference is made to the role of mothers and fathers in the education system, but also to the articulated mechanisms of participation, their weight, as well as the role of all other agents within the educational community, mainly the directors of the educational centers and teachers, with special importance of the faculty (Andrés & Giró, 2016:34).

José Antonio Marina (philosopher, essayist and pedagogue) illustrates this evolution with the three fundamental pillars of education:

"Parents alone cannot educate their children whatever they do, because they cannot protect them from other very powerful influences. Teachers alone cannot educate their students, for the same reason Society cannot educate its citizen, without the help of parents and the education system. The intervention of parents and teachers is essential, but we must all know their limitations and recognize that in the dense network of influences in which we live, we all exert an educational influence, good or bad by action or omission [...] It is essential an educational mobilization of society, which calls for a return of the spirit of an old African proverb: It takes an entire village to raise a child".

The role of parents in education


The role of parents in education in Spain has been the subject to numerous investigations, and in this regard a dichotomous vision of the role and participation in the educational process is commonly identified through two profiles: parents who participate and those who do not participate. This appears like a very polarized perception that we believe is far from reality given the richness of cultural diversity of families and students in our schools.

In a recent nationwide study (García Sanz, Hernández Prados, Parra Martínez, & Gomariz Vicente, 2016), it is pointed out that approaching the involvement of families in school settings from dichotomous perspectives is a reductionist position. To speak exclusively of participative versus non-participative families implicitly denies the diversity of forms of relationships which derive from the commitment to total or partial involvement a family acquires among the different alternatives the scholastic institution offers.

Based on the conclusions of this study, it was possible to verify a greater diversity in family roles, from which four different models of family participation emerged from higher to lower participation:

PROFILE 1 represents the **non-normative participative profile**: it presents a participation model highly committed to the educational center in all the aspects contemplated, except in the involvement in the AMPA (Associations of Mothers and Fathers of the Students) and in the CE (School Council). It is predominant among families of Spanish nationality, although they are not necessarily those with the greatest educational resources at home, nor possess the highest level of education. This model is present exclusively in the concerted centers, and covers almost half of the Spanish autonomous communities contemplated.

PROFILE 2 corresponds to **a non-participatory profile with a sense of belonging**, that was developed by families of students enrolled mostly in public and private schools, which have the lowest participation rate in the center's activities, but a high feeling of belonging to it. It includes the smallest number of families of all those configured, which are distributed mainly among six autonomous communities. Valdés and Uribe (2011), for example, find that parents consider it important to participate in the education of children from home, but do not take into account communication and support to the school.



This profile consists of the youngest families, of non-Spanish nationality and with the lowest level of studies. García Sanz & others, (2016) point out that we must recognize that there is a clear interest by immigrant families towards the schooling of their children, which helps to awaken the feeling of belonging.

However, we agree with Maiztegui-Oñate and Ibarrola-Armendariz (2012), when they affirm that families of immigrant origin show less involvement in supporting their children with school matters, as we have also observed in the Alfirk case study for this project in Barcelona. This is the case, despite the recognition of parents that the schooling of their children is a key factor of stability and social integration, which will allow them to prosper in the host society and materialize a social mobility project.

Some of the previous studies on family participation and immigration had already shown that levels of participation are usually higher in families of Spanish nationality compared to non-Spanish nationality (Garreta, 2008a and b, Santos and Lorenzo, 2009). In view of the above, we can affirm that, unfortunately, this duality according to nationality continues to be present in the Spanish panorama of family participation in educational centers.

PROFILE 3 is located within the group of families that we have defined as **a non-participatory profile**, those who have enrolled their children in publicly-owned and co-owned primary schools also predominate. They are families of Spanish nationality, all of them from the community of Madrid, with the highest levels of education and the greatest number of resources at home, both for educational materials and learning. However, with regard to participation, these families have low levels of involvement in the educational institution with respect to other profiles, and denote a low sense of belonging to the center.

PROFILE 4 relates to the so-called **normative participatory profile**, which covers a large portion of the participating sample, as well as a greater diversity of autonomous communities; we can affirm that it is a very extended model, and of national coverage. It consists of families in which the communication with the center, the feeling of belonging to it, the direct involvement in the educational process of their children and their participation in the CE have been significant variables for the configuration of the profile. These are families of Spanish nationality whose children go to public and private centers, are highly involved in the AMPA, and have the lowest levels of education, but have many educational resources at home.

Therefore, in Spain, the family is vital both for society and for the development of the human being. Education is the primary task of the family, although it is shared in a meaningful way with the school, the environment and the social context. In consonance with Paule (2013), regarding the transcendence of the role of the family, she emphasizes:

"It is for the child the first transmitter of cultural patterns and its first agent of socialization. The first responsible for the education of children are the parents, the family is the first context where we get in touch with the world, a particular world of each family group, which transmits to the child their habits, their customs, their patterns of cultural transmission; the first interactions take place within the family, the first emotional bonds and experiences are established with the people who are close to them, it is in this environment where the child performs the basic social learning that will help him/her in his/her relationship with himself/herself and with others, little by little he/she will come to know norms, behavior guidelines and human behavior."


Relevant initiatives of parents' involvement in education

Programa Social Para el Apoyo Familiar al Éxito Educativo / Social Program for Family Support to Educational Success

The Social Program for Family Support for Educational Success is an innovation project that aims to improve the educational success of children and youth by working with their families.

The Program is based on the premise that the improvement of the relationship between school and family favors the involvement of families with the education of their children, which, in the medium and long term, has a positive impact on the educational success of children and young people. To do this, the program proposes the realization of a set of activities for families throughout an academic year, organized around four areas that have proven useful for improving the relationship between family and school: positive parenting, learning at home, communication and participation.

The uniqueness of this program, with respect to other programs for families, resides in its community approach, which means that from a good start, families are actively involved and networking is promoted with other educational agents of the territory -professionals of the educational center, technicians of neighborhood entities, responsible for municipal facilities, etc.- in order to work collectively to carry out the activities taking advantage of existing resources in the territory.



The program was launched during the 2013-14 academic year and since then it has been developed in 24 schools (for children, primary and secondary) and 3 educational-based entities in 8 cities in Spain. During this period, 151 activities have been carried out in which 2,088 mothers and fathers have participated. This has had a series of positive impacts both on families and their children, as well as on the community.

<http://pagines.uab.cat/exitoeducativo/>

Xarxa Clau Catalunya 2015-2020 / Key Network Catalonia 2015-2020

The *Xarxa Clau* project aims to have a positive impact on educational success in Catalonia by making available to the Catalan educational community the necessary methodological and organizational resources to implement successful educational actions and raise awareness about the relevance of the participation of families and the impact of the school-family-community connection in increasing the educational success of students.

Educational success includes both academic success as well as functional, emotional, personal and social competencies; likewise, educational success encompasses the dimension of excellence, sustainability and integral well-being, both of the individual and of the community.

Project objectives:

Awareness and Communication

- Awareness raising, information and dissemination to the entire educational community of what educational success we promote and build from the FAPAC (Federation of Associations of Mothers and Fathers of Students of Catalonia); of the elements necessary to achieve the educational success, and the role of the participation of the families, organized and in communication with the whole educational community.
- Raise awareness, educate, train and give tools to improve communication between families, AMPA (Associations of Mothers and Parents of Students in Spain) and the school, and with the entire educational community.

Training for Educational Success

- Train families to become the active protagonists of the permanent education community.
- Train them in the skills necessary to accompany their children in their school stage to achieve educational success.

Participate and generate Sustainability

- Work on all the aspects and tools of community and associative participation in order to consolidate the organization and dynamization of the AMPA.
- Train and train volunteer people.

Lines of action for educational success


- Positive Parenting: Support families to understand the development of their children, and establish appropriate environments at home for the study.
- Communication: Design effective forms of communication between school and families.
- Volunteering: Improve the recruitment, training, dynamization and organization of parent volunteers.
- Learning at home: Provide tools to help our children with academic activities.
- Participation: Dynamize, support and strengthen AMPA, CEC, working groups, commissions.
- Collaboration with the community: Identify and integrate community resources to strengthen family practices and learning.

Source: <http://www.fapac.cat/xarxaclau/presentaci-projecte-xarxa-clau-catalunya-2015-2020>

CEAPA - Confederación Española de Asociaciones de Padres y Madres del Alumnado / Spanish Confederation of Associations of Parents of Students

CEAPA is a social entity, non-confessional, progressive and independent, working for a quality public school, achieve school success for all students, democratize teaching and improve conditions of childhood.

It is the largest confederation of APAS in the entire state, as it groups about 12,000 associations of parents of students of non-university education. For this reason, he is the main interlocutor of the parents before the Ministry of Education in their negotiations on the actions and policies to be promoted in the education system.



CEAPA aims to be a body of relationship and coordination between the federations and confederations that comprise it, in order to enhance their respective possibilities of action, as well as facilitate the work of associations of parents of students.

CEAPA has been successfully developing training programs for several years with the aim of training motivated and interested parents to train other parents.

To prepare the future monitors they offer a free of charge weekend course in Madrid and edit some specific materials so that the trained parent can acquire the necessary skills to teach the courses with ease. The subjects of the courses are:

- Family communication
- Adolescence
- Affective-sexual education for families
- Education for responsible consumption
- Education values
- Emotional education
- Social networks and adolescence
- Basic competences
- School mediation

Source: <https://www.ceapa.es/formacion/formacion-de-formadores>

Projecte Escola i Família. Junts x l'Educació / School and Family Project. Together x Education

One of the axes of action of the Spanish Government Plan is in favor of school success. The Plan for the reduction of school failure in Catalonia 2012-2018 is to facilitate and promote the involvement and commitment of the family in the monitoring of the academic and personal evolution of their children. The Department of Education is available to the schools and provides the "School and Family computer application", with guidelines and resources to promote the involvement of families in the educational process of their children and participation in the operation from the center.

On the one hand, the application raises some considerations that need to be taken into account when addressing this challenge, such as value education, the concepts of authority and recognition, or the competential roles of the school and the family in educational matters.

On the other hand, there are six basic lines of intervention that can facilitate the approach and involvement of families in schools. For each of the lines of intervention, guidance and resources are provided, from a triple perspective, the classroom, the center and the environment, in order to promote the continuity and coherence of the actions that are proposed.

The six lines of intervention are:

- Families' reception,
- Educational commitment letter,
- Shared tutorial action,
- Information and communication,
- Participation in the operation of the center and
- Training for the family.

This project works from three main contextual areas: the center, the classroom and the environment.

Source: <http://ensenyament.gencat.cat/ca/arees-actuacio/centres-serveis-educatius/projectes-educatius/comunitat-educativa-entorn/juntsxeducacio/>

Famílies amb Veu: La implicació de mares i pares en la millora de l'escola / Families with Voice: The involvement of mothers in the improvement of the school

The "*Famílies amb Veu*" project responds to the desire to know and strengthen the participation of families in the school based on the hypothesis that the family sector as a stakeholder in education is under-represented and its action in the system often remains on the periphery. The project includes several searches to explore the size of the participation of families in the AMPA and school boards as well as to capture the reasons and perceptions of Catalan families regarding participation.

To this end, the following actions have been accomplished :

- A survey at 1,500 AMPA in Catalonia and 1,400 school principals to have a reliable and faithful portrait of the AMPA's activity, its relationships, the magnitude of participation and its contribution to quality and educational equity .
- A survey which covered 1,500 families in Catalonia to capture the dynamics and extent of the participation of families in school.
- A participatory process in the metropolitan area of Barcelona and Lleida to involve parents of the AMPA of public and private centers of Catalonia, as well as directors of the center and local education technicians.

The ultimate goal is to generate useful knowledge to strengthen the movement of parents and to draw an agenda for future issues that will allow the sector to be strengthened in the form of a white paper. With the *White Paper*, we want to contribute to structuring a sector discourse, based on a clarifying conceptual framework of future challenges and a proposed agenda of issues for the next ten years. The project has the support and collaboration of the main federations of AMPA of Catalonia.

Source: <https://www.fbofill.cat/families-amb-veu-la-implicacio-de-mares-i-pares-en-la-millora-de-lescola>

4.5.3 Case Study profiles

Rationale for the selection of the case study schools

The selection of case studies in Barcelona was planned and defined, following diverse criteria to select the schools, according to the aims and needs of the project research goals:

- a) Districts with significant foreign population.
- b) Neighborhoods with the highest rate of diversity of nationalities in schools (primary and secondary).
- c) Schools (public and private) with highest rates of foreign/immigrant students.
- d) Educational institutions with parents' associations or networks (AMPA), not necessarily consolidated, in order to have direct access to families.

From the last official data and statistics of schooling in Barcelona (2015) it became clear that the evolution of the rate of foreign students in schools from 3-16 years had been increasing exponentially from 2000 (3%) until 2008 (12,7%), when an economical crisis in Spain began, and since then, the number of foreign students has been decreasing (12,1% in 2015).

Considering the foreign population in the schools, it has been the aim to identify the distribution in private and public schools, and specifically in the educational levels needed for the Alfirk study: primary and secondary education. From these figures, we proceeded to look for foreign students by districts in Barcelona in primary and secondary schools, in order to identify the zones that met the criteria for the definition of the sample of our case study.

The districts in Barcelona that have the highest distribution of foreign students are:

- 1) Ciutat Vella
- 2) Sants-Montjuïc
- 3) Nou Barris

Invited sample

This procedure led us to prepare a list/data base of the schools of Barcelona by the three districts to choose the schools for the **invited** sample of 8 institutions (see ANNEX). For each one of those schools, primary and secondary centers, we made a contact directory to reach directors, school administrators, local parents associations (AMPA), teachers of welcome classrooms for immigrant students and tutors to get an initial interview and formally invite them and students' families to participate in the study.

Final sample

The final sample should consist of 1 to 2 case study schools in Barcelona where migrant children and their families had just arrived or at least had the highest rate of migrant students in their courses and were among the most disadvantaged districts in the city (1 elementary school, 1 secondary school). Furthermore, the final sampling was intended to reach migrant parents in selected schools, not only through schools, but also through different organizations or social entities linked to the educational centers (e.g.: AMPA, AFA).

Consequently, the final sample for the case study in Barcelona, after interviewing all invited samples, is the "Escola Antaviana", primary public school in the district of Nou Barris and "Institut Miquel Tarradell", secondary school in the district of Ciutat Vella; both of them are meeting all the basic intended criteria for the Alfirk project.

Figure 13: Location of case study schools in districts of Barcelona



Source: UAB

Town(s) in which the schools are located

Table 11: El Raval

Ciutat Vella: EL RAVAL

Area:	1,1 km ²
Population density (hab/km²):	43.367
Population by gender:	
Women	21.487
Men	26.130
Population by nationality (%):	
Spanish	52,1%
Foreigners	47,9%
Population by age (%):	
0-14	12,7%
15-24	10,2%
25-64	64,8%
+ 65	12,3%

El Raval is a neighborhood of Barcelona, located in the district of Ciutat Vella, originated from the extension of the medieval walls of the city.

This neighborhood is delimited by the neighborhood of 'Pueblo Seco', through the Avenida del Parallel; with the neighborhood of Sant Antoni, through the rounds of Sant Pau and Sant Antoni; and with the Gothic Quarter, through Pelayo street and La Rambla. Among its main arteries include Carmen Street, Nou de la Rambla Street and Rambla del Raval.

El Raval is one of the most culturally diverse neighborhoods in Barcelona with the highest rate of foreign population in Barcelona in June 2017 (43,2%) according to the [Districts Observatory](#), where locals and people from many different countries and cultures coexist today. In its streets you can see shops of all nationalities and even fashion stores and new trends, especially in the upper part of the neighborhood.



Source: Statistics Department, Barcelona City Council, 2015.

'De la Cera', wax street, is also well-known with a great and historical community of gypsy ethnicity. The name comes from the rivers of wax formed by the numerous candles placed before the virgin of that street, to protect themselves from the plague. The main nationalities of people that live in this neighborhood are from **Pakistan (4.965), Philippines (3.977), Bangladesh (2.588), Italy (1.487), Morocco (1.320) and India (1.015).**

Table 12: Roquetes

Nou Barris: ROQUETES

Area:	0,6 km ²
Population density (hab/km²):	24.179
Population by gender:	
Women	8.034
Men	7.489
Population by nationality (%):	
Spanish	81,0%
Foreigners	19,09%
Population by age (%):	
0-14	14,9%
15-24	10,5%
25-64	56,2%
+ 65	18,4%

Nou Barris is a district of Barcelona located at the north end of the city, between the Collserola mountain range and the Meridiana Avenue.

The thirteen districts that make up Nou Barris, mostly located in what historically constituted the vicinity of the municipalities of Sant Joan d'Horta and San Andrés de Palomar (and later of Barcelona), grew throughout the 20th century, especially between the decades of the 50's, 60's and 70's.

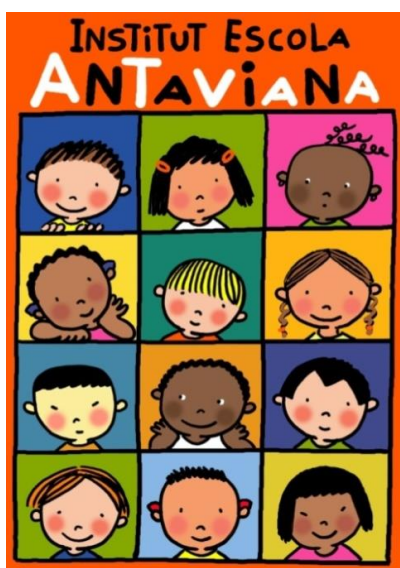
In 1998 the district had an area of 800.2 hectares and a population of 168 837 inhabitants, having lost more than thirty thousand inhabitants in just over seven years. In recent years, the district has once again become one of the main areas of reception of the strong foreign immigration flow since 2000, due to the relatively lower price of housing in the district, significantly transforming the ethnic composition and the network of shops in the neighborhoods. Currently, the district of Nou Barris is in continuous economic growth over other districts of Barcelona. It is estimated that 19,09% of its population is foreign, **being the main foreign nationalities the Honduran (657), the Ecuadorian (292) and the Pakistani (293).**

Source: Statistics Department, Barcelona City Council. Data from 2015.

During the nineties, the investment made in education in the previous decade began to take effect, and the number of population without studies in the district fell from 26.7% (1991) to 23.1% (1996), dramatically increasing the number of graduates in secondary and higher education. In terms of knowledge of Catalan, by the middle of the decade it was already understood by 92.8% of the population, and two thirds could speak it.



Case Study 1: Escola Antaviana - Roquetes



Primary School

- Type: Public
- Location: Carrer dels Nou Barris, 0, 08042 Barcelona.
- Size/number of students: 412
- Rate of foreign students: 40%

Foreign students nationalities: Honduras, Morocco, Pakistan, Nigeria, Equator, Italy, Bolivia, Portugal and Bulgaria, Senegal, Uruguay, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, France, Ukraine, among others.

Parents associations: AMPA Antaviana - FaPaC Federated / Scholar Council;
Website: <https://escolantaviana.org/>

The Antaviana School is defined as an ordinary public center in the Nou Barris area, which teaches students with deafness in the oral form. The School and the CREDAC (educational resource center for students with hearing impairment) collaborate and coordinate to provide an adequate educational response to the students, whose planning involves the attention of the teacher tutor, of the CREDAC speech and of the listener / language teacher.

Character of the Antaviana School:

- Catalan is the vehicular language of the Antaviana school and they use it as the first language, reinforcing its learning through immersion processes.
- The school defines itself as an inclusive, lay and respectful school with plurality, defining features of its own character.
- The basic values of the school include equity, inclusion, coeducation, laicism and respect for plurality, among others; the school applies these values by adopting measures to address diversity and guaranteeing freedom of thought and ideologies.
- The school tries to give their students information in an objective way so that their own criteria are formed and, by analyzing reality, they can make their decisions in a responsible manner. The school also respects the ideas and beliefs of their mothers, parents or guardians.
- In their center they welcome children with physical, psychological and/or sensory disabilities.
- The origin of the school's students is diverse and enriching. However, there are many socially and / or economically disadvantaged families, and from the school, no one is excluded for reasons of origin, ideology, religion and / or economic level.
- The center practices an education for equality without discrimination on grounds of gender.
- The school is defined in accordance with the principles of pedagogical quality, responsible management, dedication and professionalism of teaching, evaluation, accountability, involvement of families and the search for excellence.

These principles inspire the educational project of the center in exercise of the autonomy that this law recognizes. The educational project expressly commits itself to comply with these principles and to determine the relationship with the students and families, the active involvement of the center in the social environment and the commitment of cooperation and full integration in the provision of the Education Service of Catalonia.

The families

It is the main task of the teachers and the management teams to deal with the issues that affect the whole family and together with the center, articulates the mechanisms necessary to facilitate and guarantee the information to all parents and mothers of students.

They participate, by law, in decision-making and in the school government through a representative at the School Board. It allows parents to reflect and think about the daily functioning of the school.

All the activities of the AMPA are aimed to achieve educational improvement of the center, always respecting the field and the technical competencies of the teaching staff and monitors.



Antaviana is also related to the life of the neighborhood. From the center, it works on the network with various entities of the Roquetes Community Plan to organize activities inside and outside the educational center.

In 2014 Antaviana School received the Ciutat de Barcelona 2014 award in the form of education for the contribution to the civic, social and cultural development of the closest environment with an innovative and continuous educational project. It also highlighted its ability to articulate human resources and its own materials to establish a networking work with institutions and entities of the territory.

Case Study 2: Institut Miquel Tarradell – El Raval



Secondary School

- Type: Public
- Location: Carrer dels Àngels, 1 bis | 08001 - Barcelona.
- Size/number of students: +300
- Rate of foreign students: 90%

Foreign students' nationalities: Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Syria, Morocco, Bolivia, Lituania, among others.

Parents associations: AFA / Scholar Council; Website: <http://www.instarradell.cat/>


The INS Miquel Tarradell is a public center for preferential educational assistance located in the Raval district of Barcelona, in the Ciutat Vella district. It is recognized as symbol of the interculturality of Barcelona.

The INS Miquel Tarradell was created in the academic year 1996-97, and at present, it has assigned two lines of ESO and a Baccaureate line (modalities: scientific, technological and humanistic).

From the academic year 2003/04 onwards, the center also imparts training courses for the Family of Sociocultural Services. The training cycles offered are the CFGM for Care for Dependent Persons, the CFGS for Childhood Education and the CFGS for Social Integration.

The educational proposal of the INS Miquel Tarradell pursues the integral training of the students and their development in the personal, social and professional dimensions, from a set of values that includes:

- The promotion of individual freedom from the exercise of the critical mindset and responsibility, the enjoyment of a well-done work and the personal and collective effort.
- The stimulation of coexistence based on solidarity, participation, dialogue and respect.



The Center Educational Project (PEC) is the backbone that determines the actions of our educational community: students, families, teachers, PAS and their relationship with the social environment. At the same time, it responds to our uniqueness and represents a tool to reach educational excellence and a commitment to society. This document is the basis for exercising the autonomy of the center and has been elaborated from a collaborative and participatory framework.

The families

The INS Miquel Tarradell, is aware of the importance of the involvement of families in the improvement of student education and has as a priority value favoring their participation in the center. There are different spaces where parents can contribute their ideas: individual and group meetings with their respective tutors, AFA and School Board. However, the school is valuing all the contributions made to them by families if it allows them to improve their educational quality.



The tutors have a few hours to plan individual meetings with parents or guardians, who have children under the age of 18 (as established by law). These meetings can be proposed by teachers or by families. The purpose of these interviews is to deal with aspects related to the improvement of ones child or guardianship.

The class group tutor organizes at least a joint meeting at the beginning of the course where parents get informed about the contents and novelties of the course, the tutors are presented and attempts to create a proximity dynamic that gives confidence to families and favor their involvement and participation. Subsequently,

each student has an individual tutor who is responsible for the follow-up of each student and the coordination with his family.

From the center, the participation of families is also encouraged in days of special significance (end of the quarter, Carnival, Sant Jordi, Open Doors, etc.).

The INS Miquel Tarradell has had an AFA, which has not been working for many years. Having an association that represents families and that it is strong and dynamic is one of the objectives pursued for several years. During the 2011-2012 academic year, it has been re-established and is very involved in the development of activities for families and students and in favor of participation. And diverse activities have been carried out for families: for example computer and Catalan courses. Families are also represented in the School Board, of the 15 members of the School Board with the right to vote, 2 members of the School Board are parents who have been chosen in a democratic way.

The exchange of information between the center and the families must be promoted, collectively and individually, to ensure that families can exercise their right to be informed. In addition, one of the objectives of the strategic plan is to adapt documents and meetings to families as much as possible, in order to improve communication.

4.5.4 School Policies and Procedures for Families

Table 13: School policies and procedures for families at the case studies schools in Barcelona

School	ESCOLA ANTAVIANA - ROQUETES	INSTITUT MIQUEL TARRADELL - RAVAL
Initial information meetings	Calls to parents by the school to hold meetings for the beginning of the course for the infant, primary and secondary levels.	Calls to parents from the school to inform about the center's educational projects and promote participation. Less participation by families; less interest.
Reception classroom	The origin of students is diverse and enriching. However, there are many families that are socially and / or economically disadvantaged and, from school, no one is excluded for reasons of origin, ideology, religion and / or economic level. In addition, they welcome children with physical, mental and / or sensory disabilities in the center.	Mainly for students, occasionally the host classroom teacher has contact with families but as they are newcomers, language is an important issue to solve through an official translator, sometimes provided by the school, and most of the time it is the father who comes first due to the fact that he is the one who speaks a bit of Spanish instead of mothers.
Curricular diversification	The curricular diversification programmes have the purpose to support the students to reach their goals and obtain basic competences on each level and finally their graduation certificate in compulsory secondary education. These include the organization of the contents and courses of the different curricula. It establishes a general character and a specific personalized methodology.	
	Center for the grouping of deaf students in oral form SIEI (Color Classroom) / Support Unit for Special Education	Shared Schooling Classroom Shared Schooling Unit (UEC)
Individualized plans	Yes	Yes
Individualized tutoring	Yes	A tutor for 6 or 7 students, with direct contact to families, several times a year.
After-school workshops / extracurricular activities	Non-formal education is one of the latest additions. It is a global project that offers the students a range of possibilities in different fields that allow them to meet their personal and family needs while guaranteeing the full development of the person. There are three axes in the proposals that each year are offered from the school with the complicity of the AMPA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforcement activities • Physical-sports activities • Personal Development activities 	The institute offers workshops for families; Positive parenting and specific training workshops, in order to encourage the approach of families to the center. From the center, the participation of families is also encouraged in days of special significance (end of the quarter, Carnival, Sant Jordi, Open Doors ...).
AMPA (Parents association at school center)	Regular meetings with families that are part of the AMPA and continuous dissemination for those families who want to participate in the AMPA in some other way. A welcome service is offered to children who are students of the school.	Workshops for families; informational activities; leisure activities, outings, ...
School Council	Within the framework of autonomy, the School Board and the Administration are the guarantors of social control and academic and administrative control, through the performance of accounts of the degree to which the goals of the Educational Project have been achieved by the management. The School Council participates more directly in the activities of the center through the established Commissions and from specific commissions to its members: Permanent Commission, Economic Commission, Head of Coeducation of the center, Representative of the AMPA (families).	
Mentoring	Not identified	Only students, but the school staff sees the need for



		implementing this policy also for families.
Treatment of languages	Catalan is the vehicular language of the Antaviana school and they use it as the first language, reinforcing its learning through immersion processes. It encourages multilingualism with the collaboration of families: Antaviana actively participates in the JUNTS Project "together" in English, which aims to bring in contact with children from very different realities from cooperative work and contribute to mutual knowledge. It is this knowledge and the respect it entails that will allow them to act accordingly in solidarity. This approach allows working on multilingualism based on the languages of the centers with whom you work and bring about the languages of each of the participating centers. The exchange work on generated multilingual materials in Arabic, Amazigh, Catalan, Spanish, French, Mandinga, Quechua and Wolof that are sent to the libraries of the educational centers with students with these languages of origin.	The vehicular language of the Center is the Catalan language. A significant number of classes must be taught in Catalan, which should facilitate the acquisition of linguistic competence in this language. At the Miquel Tarradell Institute there is a large number of students who do not have Catalan or Spanish as the first language. Many of them speak languages such as Arabic, Urdu, Panjabi, Berber and Tagalog, among others. For this reason, the Center will adapt the teaching of languages to the reality and multilingual wealth presented by its students. Special care will be given to students who do not know a Romance language. The Language Department work in teams in order to achieve the established objectives. It is necessary to create strategies and instruments that involve all the teaching staff in order to achieve the basic linguistic competences.
Home-School - Community Liaison	Pla de Barris (Neighborhood Plan) - Roquetes Schoolyard open to the neighborhood - Antaviana School Institute Educational dynamization activities at the Antaviana School Institute in the 'Open Patio' program	Pla de Barris (Neighborhood Plan) - Raval Networking with entities and participation in environment programs.
Volunteer opportunities for families	Families, if they wish, can participate in both school and extracurricular activities if they wish, even if they are not part of the AMPA. The type of volunteering is linked only to educational, recreational or cultural activities, but not in activities linked to school infrastructure by safety standards that protect the integrity of families.	There are no options or policies initiated by the school. There is an initiative of a mother from the center to teach literacy to mothers who cannot read or write in Spanish and from there she has remained as a volunteer to lead this workshop. This initiative emerged outside of the center's AMPA, although the center is already becoming aware and is promoting the support of this initiative by AMPA, as well as seeking new funds to maintain this activity as permanent. The mother who initiated the initiative has promoted volunteering and there are two Spanish teachers with a linguistic profession who have been in charge of the groups for more than one year.
Agreements with community resources	Consorti d'Educació de Barcelona with the Government of Morocco to bring an Arab teacher to do extracurricular activities that also helps from time to time to become a translator between their families and the center. With the City of Barcelona, there is a game for the center to carry out activities with families.	



4.5.5 Case Study findings

Before presenting the results of the field study carried out in Barcelona, we would like to highlight the participation and involvement of the directors, teachers, responsible tutors for the host classroom and the families of both educational centers who agreed to answer the questionnaire and to participate, both in working groups, as well as in in-depth interviews, with the support of two official translators from Urdu and Bengali from the Teaching Department of the Government of Catalonia.⁴⁴

The case study was carried out with families: 15 in-depth interviews, 7 questionnaires and a workshop group; Likewise, several coordination and management meetings were held with the school staff, as well as documentary analysis of both centers between 2016 - 2018, together with 8 in-depth interviews with the directors of the centers, the heads of the study, as well as those responsible for the host classrooms and the coordinators of the AMPAs (Parents Associations) of these centers.

The purpose of the mixed data collection process that was carried out was to use the strengths of both types of research (quantitative and qualitative), combining and enhancing them to be able not only to describe, but also to understand in depth (Hernández-Samiperi, 2011) the sociocultural background of migrant families (intercultural diversity and inclusion) as well as:

- To analyze the current conditions of the migrant parents and their children to understand their situation in the host countries and from there, identify strategies towards their social and educational inclusion and parental involvement at schools.
- Identify and comprehend in depth the main factors and conditions that promote educational success related to participation of migrant parents at their children's educational centers.
- To understand how migrant families are connected not only with the school but also with the surrounding community as a key strategy for their social inclusion in the host country.

"The relevance of establishing communication links and mutual collaboration between families of the students and educational centers to develop comprehensive education of students is today an undeniable reality. From the perspective of inclusive education, the relationship between respective institutions must integrate parents of all students, including those who have some risk of social exclusion. This group includes immigrant families." (Hernández, Gomariz, Parra y García, 2016; Essomba, 2006)

The first results show us that the families of both schools have a very high cultural diversity and the main countries of origin of the families are mainly from South Asia: Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and the Philippines; likewise, there are many families from the American continent, specifically from Central and South America such as: Honduras and Ecuador. To a lesser extent than the previous ones, but with a high presence there are also diverse families from Morocco and southern Africa such as Nigeria and Senegal. In the Antaviana school for example, there are more Latin American families, followed by Pakistanis and Moroccans, with an approximate rate of immigrant students of 40 percent. On the contrary, the Miquel Tarradell Institute has a rate of around 90 percent of immigrant students, so the diversity and complexity of the center is even greater. The main nationalities of origin of the families are from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco and the Philippines, and in a much smaller proportion families of Latin American origin.

"The level of families that come from abroad is very high, very high. The number of people here is negligible by comparison. Classes are 30 students and maybe there are four children from Barcelona and all the others are from outside." (Representative of AMPA IES Tarradell)

In general, the socioeconomic situation of the families of both centers is very difficult, although it is more pressing in the Raval neighborhood. They are families who work all day, with difficulties to make ends meet and who have between 3 and 5 children, some born in their country of origin, and the smallest ones already born in Spain.

Through the study we have also seen that one of the factors that significantly influence the social integration of these families is the language, and we have found that many of the families of these centers, although they arrived in Spain, more than 10 years ago, many of them, especially women, do not speak Spanish or Catalan and many of them cannot read or write. Broadly speaking, what we have observed is that those families in which they have some level of education, it is

⁴⁴ Note by the authors of the case study



easier to integrate and learn the Spanish language and have a tendency to participate more in the school of their children, not only for the academic issues of the children, but other activities outside school hours.

In this sense, it is also important to mention that the children have been integrated into the educational centers in an adequate manner and with respect to the language, when they already speak Spanish and Catalan. The faculty of both educational centers of the study tells us that the children use the Catalan language in the classes, the Spanish language in the patio and breaks, and at home a mixture of their native language and Spanish or Catalan.

From the various interviews and daily contacts with families we have discovered one the one hand, that they do not feel a strong or important need to "integrate" in the country and learn the language, since there is a high rate of immigrant population living in their neighborhoods and a large part of the local businesses are managed by the families of the same nationality; this makes them "live" practically in their neighborhood since that is where they speak their language and cover their daily needs. On the other hand, given that the field study was carried out at a primary school in the Raval neighborhood and a high school in another neighborhood considerably separated from the other, the case of the transition from primary to secondary was not especially approached of. Within the few questions that arose on this aspect, we noted that in the case of the Miquel Tarradell Institute from Raval, located next to the primary school "Milà i Fontanals", that the families who send their children in this school, usually enroll their children in the Miquel Tarradell, taking advantage of the fact that they are stuck wall to wall. Furthermore, we could also observe that those families that participated in the AMPA of the Milà i Fontanals school were the most motivated and those that continued participating in the institute, are now forming parts of the new AMPA in Miquel Tarradell Institute.

Role of school leadership

With respect to school leadership, both schools have been taking steps and developing action plans for improving and fostering the participation of families in schools and the community. Both of them integrate diverse policies and measures to address this important aspect in their Educational Project of the Center (PEC).


Both schools recognize diversity and that the culture of families is a value to enrich the local culture, a factor to favor the inclusion of families as well as the better integration of children in schools. The schools carry out various initiatives to encourage the participation of families: through the AMPA, the center itself and with the collaboration of other entities and social services of the environment that are existent in great quantity and diversity in the Catalan and Spanish territory. At the Miquel Tarradell Institute, for example, there is a shared leadership with the teaching staff through individualized tutoring where each teacher is responsible for direct contact with 7-8 families in order to follow up on a more personalized basis.

"In Bangladesh I do not have this privilege of having a teacher or a school principal in which the children's topics are discussed with the parents; in Bangladesh, every school has its routine, its norms and parents are not taking into account, and here, teachers and all the people consult with parents and with children, they have a good relationship, children love to come to school, in change, in Bangladesh you have to push them to go to school because the teachers there, are harder, with punishment, but not here, here there is a better way to teach making friends with the children and there in Bangladesh, that does not exist." (Mother from Bangladesh)

The management of both centers already looks for resources to improve the management of the school to favor and facilitate the participation and assistance of the families to the center, attending to the needs and casuistry of these. Nevertheless, more support from the educational administration is needed to support the policies of integration and participation of families in educational centers, for example in Roquetes, emphasis is placed on the need that when the educational administration provides resources, give more freedom to the centers to properly distribute resources with respect to the needs of families and the characteristics of the center.

"The Administration sometimes does not know how to spend the money, that is, how to invest it since resources often appear from nowhere." (Antaviana School Principal)

In Raval, the school is required to have the necessary resources, both human and financial, to be able to keep the school open beyond school hours and to make it available for the participation of families. Also, since most of the families, as already mentioned, have many children it would be very necessary to allow mothers to come with their young children and have a service from another classroom and a couple of monitors to take care of the children while the mothers carry out activities at the school. The school could take the initiative to connect with the other school, Milà i Fontanals, located next to the Tarradell in order to share resources and spaces, define new policies of the centers: use of classrooms in the



afternoon, allowing the assistance of young children so that mothers participate or lead activities, rethink school security so that there are open doors for families.

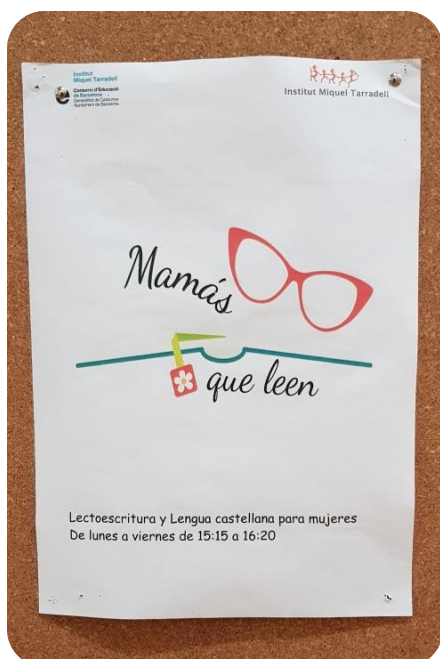
Another important aspect where the leadership of the school is evident is to work in a network environment and connect with the entities of the community development. According to Tort and Collet (2017), to educate today, networking is essential with co-responsibility among families, teachers and the community. In this sense, both schools are linked to the educational plans of their corresponding neighborhoods (Pla de Barris Ciutat Bella / Pla de Barris Roquetes) in which they participate in a series of community projects.

According to Epstein (2009), in addition to the above, to develop good leadership that promotes the participation of families with the school, it is also essential to have good communication and inform families appropriately; develop action plans to establish activities and mechanisms to make such participation viable, delegate and share responsibilities including families, assess progress, especially to evaluate the practices and the quality of participation of families and the community with the center, and of course, it is essential that schools guide, motivate, accompany and share the success of these actions with families and the educational community. In this sense, both schools have designed policies and actions to communicate and inform parents constantly about their children: before joining the center with initial informative meetings, during the course through tutoring and individualized plans as well as extracurricular activities so that the families participate, welcome classrooms, participation and representation of families in the School Council and parent associations AMPA.

"Mutual respect is about being able to speak in your language, but if at a certain time someone does not understand, we can change and that is why we have two languages, and if needed, ask for extra reinforcement [...] and everyone is welcome to do so, we accept anybody else, a family member of the center, someone's friend from their culture, etc. so he/she can come to the school and become a translator between us and the families[...] we always look for the way to be able to communicate with them. This is not a problem, it is work, but it is not a problem: it means coordination, make predictions; it is an open society, I believe that it is an open society and we have to adapt to all this, so that people can understand and can love the culture here, and that's how they know that the center is receptive and it's open." (Antaviana School Principal)

Empowerment of parents

Empowerment is a process in which people work together to accomplish changes in their communities and exert more power and influence over the issues that matter to them. The very fact of involving parents in schools is a process of empowerment. By forming cooperative linkages between the school and families, parents became aware of their children's conditions in their school and their rights as parents to collectively collaborate with others who shared their experience, to cooperate with the schools, and to create change in the schools through improved programs and policies, which then led to continued dialogue between the schools and the families (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991).



"When parents emerge as leaders, their roles change. Rather than sit at workshops as passive recipients of knowledge and communication from the school, they can begin to help set the agenda for educational change and program development. Rooted themselves in more extended parent and community networks, parent leaders can help shape initiatives that authentically reflect the values, concerns, and needs of students and their families." (Maury, 2014)

During the case study in Barcelona we identified diverse examples and indicators of empowerment of families in both schools, but even more so at the Raval neighborhood where the families experienced, within a year and a half, an empowering process that has led them to evolve as human beings, as empowered mothers or women throughout the "Mamás que leen" (Mothers who read) Literacy Program, led by a volunteering mother at Miquel Tarradell Institute.



Little by little, the Tarpadell AMPA was strengthened and the mothers started this literacy and learning program of Spanish for the vast majority of mothers of foreign origin who took their children to the institute. The mothers themselves proposed to the center's management both, the activity and the possibility of requesting some type of support or resource to be able to have expert teachers in literacy in Spanish who would accompany them in the process.

Within this group of "Moms that read", there are several mothers in which their testimonies and experiences through this bond and support with the center were strengthened, and we were able to observe a series of experiences of empowerment and very positive impacts on each one of them.



Part of the empowerment of these families also happened because the classes were based on the needs, real concerns and cultures of the families, and the pedagogical activities were aimed at solving these essential and daily issues that were very useful.

In this initiative men also participated, although it is a symbolic participation since parents usually do not participate much in the center, but their presence is considered important. There were an uncle of a student and a cousin, both from the Philippines, who regularly attended classes in this group with around 40 mothers per class.

It is also important to mention that most of the families in the program were of Muslim religion, and at the beginning they were not allowed by their husbands to come, but even so, they arrived at school 1 hour before picking up their children to be able to attend the class.

As they learned to read, write and improve their communication in Spanish, many of them went through very strong empowerment processes through which, after more than a year, many of them have improved their self-esteem, the image of themselves and have not only made their husbands accept that they come to school to learn, but also face the greater family nucleus and the social pressure exerted on them. In addition, this experience has improved the perception of their own children about them, since instead of looking for the father when they have any questions or issues to solve in school, now they go directly to the mother as they witnessed that she has learned many things.



"Now that I am learning Spanish here at my children's school, I feel capable and better now, I love coming to class to learn the language, the only problem or difficulty I have is that I also have an 18 month old baby and I need a service or somebody to help me to come with the baby, but I cannot find it; here in this school sometimes you can come with baby, but not always" (Bangladeshi mother).

"What motivated me to come to Spain was mainly because I wanted to change my life and I like it a lot; I have learned to speak Spanish listening to people, but still I cannot write. And I want to write. Well, I have dreams, I'd like to work and have a normal life, where you have to fight a lot and you study; I say to myself, 'the woman is stronger than man' she is the mother and the woman, good fighter and hard worker, and I like a lot that here, people think this way. They give right to a lot of women and that gives me courage, and can keep going. The truth is that when I arrived, I did not feel like doing anything, and once here, seeing people, I have to say that I was interested to know what they think, because when you arrive in a country you are afraid of people, but I said to myself: no, I am going to break this fear to know what they think and it has helped me a lot. I have Spanish friends who helped me a lot and I liked it, I liked it! [...] I was not strong before, no, it was not like that, but the last few years that I have met many people from here, the truth is that they push me forward; and this tells me a lot of people, that I have changed a lot, yes, I have more confidence in myself, I feel that I am strong and a woman, and I can fight and I can do many things without a man! (laughs); because years ago, I was afraid, I do not know, I do not know how to explain it, before, I couldn't go walking without my husband, I cannot live without a husband, but now, yes, I want to continue [...] I want to get my driver's license, I'm fighting for this, I want to get it, because always,





when I was little, they told me that women cannot do this or that, and it has affected me a lot, that women cannot study, that women cannot do this, and when I was little, I remember those moments and I have suffered a lot, really. And I want to teach everyone that I can do it, and also make my father and my mother to see and realize that women can do many things than men. There are things my mother says, for her men serve more, and they always put it in our heads that the man is stronger than us, and we cannot live without a man, but no, when I arrived here, I have erased everything!!!: the woman can live without a man and can do herself; rather, man cannot live without a woman, because he does not know how to clean, he cannot cook, almost nothing, and he cannot hang clothes, and this message has to reach all of us here, for example, my countrywomen or from another country, they all have to know that women can do many things". (Moroccan mother)

In both centers, families became aware of and have seen in different ways that their culture is important for mutual enrichment between them and the center, as well as an important element for the best educational development of their children. They are always involved in the academic decisions of their children and are always given the option to participate also in the School Council, that is, they are encouraged to have a voice and vote. Another important aspect, in addition to the initiative of the families and their individual processes of empowerment, is that in both centers they try to call the parents so that they themselves can lead a workshop for other families. Teach things of their own culture and language and increasingly, families become a regular part of the classes.


"Both, in the second year of the Baccalaureate and the fourth year of ESO, we would like to make a farewell to the group as it moves on to high school or leaves school [...] through a snack, a lunch, a dinner. Then that would be the plan, to share the diverse of food cultures that everybody likes, and then do it in different languages. Try to reach them in some way so that they know that, well, that their children are going to go out into the real world and see that they are there, right? Yes because one of the parents that I say is Syrian, he is a very good person. He will translate us because this man speaks 7 languages, yes, yes, yes. A very majestic man, in fact he is working here as a laborer worker but he is a dentist by profession. Well, this father wants to translate and has many ideas to make and share at school. Both, he and Gaby, who is a mother from Argentina, she also has many ideas and is eager to share it with all families; because let's see, we will have here our children for four years, and we have to raise them forward. We have to do activities, and I focus more on culture. I am more of Catalan popular culture. Because sometimes knowing your culture in the country where you live, you can get to better understand what you are living." (Representative of Miquel Tarradell Institute's AMPA)

It should be mentioned that at the beginning of the study it has been observed that the Tarradell AMPA was just beginning to be established, while in the Antaviana the AMPA was already considered a well-established group of highly participatory families committed to the center and the community. In the case of the Antaviana school, there are more Latin American families -and therefore native Spanish speakers-, particularly Honduran, who are very participative; it is followed by the presence of families from Morocco and Pakistan, although to a lesser extent, but in which, however, there are also examples of considerable empowerment. There are cases such as Moroccan mothers who often help each other, those who have been here for more years and usually act as translators with new mothers because they know more Spanish or Catalan.

"And African families, too; when the process of registering their children in school is carried out, among them they help themselves to translate, and Pakistani or Hindu families also do it, there is always someone who knows more and generally accompanies the others". (Representative of the AMPA in the Antaviana school)

At the Antaviana school, there are many opportunities for parents to design, organize, direct and coordinate various activities at the center. At the website of the center there is a space where you can see all the activities and projects in which families participate, either in the center during school hours, or outside the center in non-classroom activities linked to the community and the territory.

"When we tell families to come to the P3 class to tell stories about their culture, they all come, and when you tell another family of the first to come and explain traditions of their culture or a trade or something, they also come many families; or ask a musician father to come along and plays the guitar or someone else comes along to do some activity, -that is, we can do even more, huh?- But when we do it, it's successful and it's a way to participate in school [...] This also reverts to the educational success of the children since they discover, for example, the diversity that is very important because one day a gypsy will come to you one day, and the story he will explain or the trade he will explain or the job he will explain, It will be very close to his or her culture, therefore, we are diversifying, we



are enriching these children culturally... And then, when a child sees his father coming, who is Arab and comes with the veil... and then the child sees that he enters the class with the veil and the mother too, and sees that you are taking into account everyone, that child, gives him an impressive self-esteem." (Antaviana School Director)

The assessment of the participation of families in this center and how much they are linked to the center and the territory is very positive; the versions of the director, the head of studies and that of the families belonging to the AMPA coincide in this:

"Here there is a lot of diversity; here the AMPA is very powerful, very very participative, very organized; In addition to organizing activities and parties, families are very involved in the neighborhood, but it must be mentioned that the bulk of the families that are part of the AMPA are indigenous people here, people who have always lived in the neighborhood, people who are very integrated to social movements, politically active people, in addition, they make a commitment to the public school, they are militant people, and many of them come from the social sphere and also have studies and this would be the main group, they would be the ones that lead and pull stronger from the participation car to the center. Yes, there is participation from new families from outside, but at the beginning this participation tends to be more punctual in the AMPA and it is not such an institutionalized participation, but when an activity is organized these families do participate, especially Moroccan mothers, they love it, and what they do have, is that when they participate, they all together have to do it, it is difficult, for example, that there is only one alone participating". (Head of Studies, Antaviana School)

Role of social class / education, cultural distance, structural inequalities

That the family is important for the educational success of the children seems beyond doubt. However, in addition to the necessary involvement of parents in the educational process within the family and in the school, there are other factors that multiply the complexity for the understanding of this topic, such as the factors of social class, cultural distance or structural inequities that can significantly condition the participation of families.

In Spain, and more especially in Catalonia, diversity and equality are fostered and promoted in all respects, regardless of the socio-economic or cultural conditions of the families of the center. However, it is evident that in centers with a higher immigrant population, this is associated with a social and economic situation with strong difficulties. This situation is more evident in the Raval, where from a study on childhood, adolescence and Raval families (Truñó, 2007), it is clear that the population flows of the Raval during the twentieth century have been very variable, also due to the diverse currents of immigrants coming from the Catalan regions and the rest of Spain, especially until the seventies. Since the nineties, the immigrant population has mostly come from areas such as the Maghreb, South America and Asia. In the Raval, as well as in the city, the highest values of population arrival have been reached since 2000.

Sometimes there is a risk that some families associate some schools as centers for the immigrant population, and the locals then, do not enroll in it and instead go to private or concerted schools, as their family income allows it. Although the rate of families of immigrant origin in both centers of the study is high, the situation of the families of the Miquel Tarradell del Raval Institute is more complex, since in each classroom, at most, there are only 4 native students and the rest are from other countries; this makes some indigenous families perceive this as a big cultural distance, a source of inequities in educational attention by the center and pose many doubts from local families regarding this as an issue that could diminish the educational achievements of their children.

"The level of families that come from abroad is very high, very high. The number of people here is negligible by comparison. The classes are of 30 students and maybe there are four children from here all the others are from outside [...] For me, as a family it is always positive because everything you know is good but on the other hand it is also quite negative because there are times these consequences delay our classes and delay our own children."
(Representative of Miquel Tarradell Institute's AMPA)

Yet, the social and coexistence climate in this center is perceived as very positive and in which advantage is taken of the high diversity of its population. For example, the impact that children and families have when they arrive in a new country is stronger, where there is a big amount of things that they do not know, that are otherwise or that they do not initially understand because of the language. Immigrant families value and appreciate the fact of having friendships with local people, and they emphasize that they receive support from other families as well as from the school staff for their better integration at all times.



The Tarradell's Welcome Classroom, for example, is described by both, its director and the teacher responsible for this classroom, as a more emotional than academic reception, where more than compensating the knowledge and language skills or specific school content (of which there is follow-up through individualized plans and continuous tutoring in parallel), students and families require more emotional reception to overcome the transition that involves, in many cases, the separation of their main family, their costumes, or that they flee from the violence and the bad socioeconomic conditions of their countries of origin. It is worth mentioning that usually the father comes first to settle down, find a job and then, sometimes years later, gets the family regrouping and bring his wife and children. On several occasions, the father comes first with one of the children (only men), without the mother or the sisters (women), and that is a hard blow for the children; In the case of when they are more adolescents, the separation of their nucleus of friends in their territory also influences them, in an age where they suffer from many emotional changes. We have also seen several cases where the mother is alone with many children and it is still a more complicated situation for her to survive economically and, at the same time, be able to participate in her children's school.

"I think it is more an emotional reception what is done in the Welcome Classroom, than academic, because in the end everyone learns, helps each other, there are people who have been here longer and can help for example, in reading. [...] when the parents arrive first with one of the children, it means that in their countries the women have remained, that is, their wife and sisters, so I still have students who carry for example, two years without seeing their mother and then, sometimes they have more emotional problems than not reading or writing or other academic" (Head of the Welcome Classroom, Miquel Tarradell Institute)

The tutors of the project „Moms who read“ also corroborate this, who deal daily with mothers in their literacy process and in which special emphasis is placed on identifying and understanding their needs in order to adapt and facilitate learning to be more meaningful and motivating for them. Many of them participate in school and discover a world of possibilities to improve their situation and where their children will have more opportunities for study and have a better life in general.

"What for us is very familiar or common, it is not for families from other countries [...] especially about characters, cultures, events, concepts [...] you have to help, teach, guide and support, really having more knowledge of the needs as well as of the specific cultures of the families of the centers; the center should also promote teacher training in these aspects [...] Even the family term itself is not the same for all culture." (Volunteer tutor of the program "Moms who read", Instituto Miquel Tarradell)

In both educational centers of the study, the reception and participation of families in general and also of families who come from abroad are taken very seriously; in the educational project of the center, is especially oriented to the foster the link of the school with the community, families and the territory, as well as with the support of schools and from the local administration, social services and other non-governmental entities of the environment as they recognize that they are crucial to cover these inequities or deficits and complement the educational task. They also make heterogeneous classes to favor diversity and inclusion.

"I think it is better to treat all people in school as equals, and that we do, another thing is that we are wrong sometimes, or another thing is that something ever fails, right? Treat people equally, not looking if you are an immigrant, or if you are a gypsy; it is, do not see that. It is simply a question of seeing the problems that exist in a certain way, for example, the gypsies here have the problem of absents, unfortunately, and this absenteeism must be treated in some way, right? And if they are immigrants, it depends, if they are Muslims, for example in the dining room they should consider their type of food, and if we go on a field trip, we must take into account their needs or costumes to inform the colonies team. Therefore, it is about trying to make people feel comfortable in the Center Project, and that this community of people loves it, and participates." (Antaviana School Director)

Source of information for migrant parents

One of the goals of our research was to identify if parents are well informed about the school and the opportunities to participate among parents, the school system, and the community. Regarding then school-parent communication and provision of information, in general we can say that both schools make the necessary provisions in order to maintain parents well informed, even before the course begins. They both use diverse communication channels and ways to inform families: websites, social networks, brochures in diverse languages, tutors and teachers, brochures and by telephone.



Both schools consider adequately informing parents from the beginning of the school year and throughout the course and at the end. Initial meetings, individualized tutorials, mentoring and accompaniment, workshops, leisure activities at the end of the course and information and activities of the AMPA.

"Dissemination of school information is made by Internet, thorough the school board, by brochures that are sent to them and yes, they do come. Among three hundred families, they come around 15." (Representative of Miquel Tarradell Institute's AMPA)

Through the questionnaire, families in general agree that both in the reception environment at school is quite good, that they feel very well valued when they visit the school and that the information and communication with the school is adequate.

Families agree that, as parents/tutors receive timely school communication and in many different ways, such as: parent information packages, telephone calls, newsletters, e-mail, parent-teacher meetings, home visits, public meetings and school websites. In addition, that this communication is available in a clear manner, which is easily understood by everyone, but the majority of times the information is in Spanish and Catalan, and only in few occasions school provides information in our mother tongues.



Furthermore, the Miquel Tarradell Institute has its own School Magazine "Ravalesa", the journal of the institute that the students of the center manage and write under the coordination of the teachers of the department of languages and Veronica Santos, who also is in charge of editing and layout of the magazine and who inform about other experiences of the center.

The magazine is structured in different sections: News of the institute, articles of the outputs that the students make, a creative writing space, a very interesting section of science "Cajón de la Ciencia", and "your opinion" a section of writing in English. All the articles are written by the students of the center, they are the ones who choose the topics, those

who look for the information, etc. Once they have the article written, the teachers do a structure review of the draft, and return it to the students. This exercise, beyond encouraging reading and writing, gives students the possibility to see and be aware of the reality that surrounds them and to experiment with their creativity. Once the magazine is published, a copy is delivered to all students of ESO and their families, apart from the copies that can be found in the center's library. We also found all editions on the website of the institute that have been published so far: <http://www.instarradell.cat/la-comunitat-educativa>

Furthermore, families usually come with a certain information base through the support of social services. In the case of families that go from primary to secondary school, they are already better informed and have more knowledge of the operation of the center and the educational system with regard to the registration of their children; this is more evident in the Tarradell institute, since they come from the school Milà i Fontanals (which we have commented previously), and in fact the families that tend to participate in the AMPA in the primary school, usually want to continue participating in the AMPA of the secondary school.





In the cases of some academic problem of the children, families usually come, sometimes more men than women, due to the difficulties of the language and cultural aspects. It is seen especially in the Raval, since in the Antaviana school, Latin American families predominate and they are already Spanish speakers. It is important to reiterate that among the families themselves, they inform and help each other periodically. In addition, there are families who, through other friends, know about other schools and even take Spanish classes in other schools and come to Tarradell to complement their studies.

Isolation of parents

During the field study and the collection of information in the two schools, we verified that the families do participate in the school. However, this participation is unfortunately not massive, that is, not all or most of the families do not participate in some way in the educational centers of their children. In the case of the participation of families in the Antaviana school, it is greater than that of the Miquel Tarradell's; in the Antaviana, the head of studies comments that it is rather 8 percent of the families that participate more in the school. This means that there are many families that still remain in the shade or isolated, probably given their socio-economic difficulties which forces them to work all day, leaving them with little time to dedicate and accompany their children.

"In addition, it seems that the participatory culture that parents come from in their countries of origin is less than what we have here and that influences participation in school. We propose that all families participate in general, which for now, only few families participate in general, come from wherever they come from." (Representative of the AMPA in the Antaviana school)

What is certain is that there is more interest when families are summoned for topics directly related to children and their academic performance, than when they are called to perform other types of activities. The academic staff interviewed told us that this may be because families do not have much free time and go to school for the most urgent things about their children.


The main aspects or factors that we have observed that affect this participation are diverse, but the main one is the language. As we discussed earlier, many of the families that come to Spain have been living here for approximately 10 years, but do not have, according to them, the need to learn the language or the desire to integrate apparently, since they are isolated in their neighborhood with people of their own culture and who speak their own language.

"Anyway, I think that I am the one that has less contact with families, less, because we do not understand each other, I mean, there is the difficulty of the language." (Head of the Welcome Classroom, Miquel Tarradell Institute)

"I think it's so hard to say. It is that many times it is lack of understanding. Because I am a person who speaks for example very fast. Then, of course, I try to explain with all my desires what I want to do. But half of the words have been lost [...] At this moment we are talking about English, Urdu basically. They are the least [...] those who understand me the least because with the Filipino community there is no problem, we understand each other perfectly. But Filipinos are people who work alone. Filipinos work perfectly with each other but they do not relate much to others and they are very much for their children and that also has to be said. The South Americans are also different if they are more between them and they are more of their own things. But for example the Pakistani, I think many times Pakistani / Hindu, they do not understand us, we do not get to the bottom because there are people who have been here for 15 years who still do not speak our language. The girl who has just joined AMPA a great girl, she has been in Spain for 15 years and does not speak Spanish. She comes with his daughter who translates her mother all." (Representative of Miquel Tarradell Institute's AMPA)

The issue of gender is particularly notable as another barrier to family participation, in particular this is seen through Muslim women and especially Pakistani, Bengali and Moroccan women:

"But of course we set up workshops but people do not come to us. So, we always return to the same thing, whether we have something constituted or not. We wanted to make a group of women, in this case because we have detected that women, if they are alone, that is, if it is a group of single women, husbands leave them, right? But if it is a group that there are men and women they do not come anymore. They themselves feel displaced. I suppose the husbands do not allow them to participate. We want to make a conversation group to talk, simply to talk. Because sometimes we listen, and we learn more when we talk than with a pencil and a paper but we have not achieved it either. I see it from the point of view as a woman or as a mother. I would like people to integrate themselves into the world, into life, not specifically into my culture, but into the world, into life, into other things that are not always closed to a world as small as what they have [...] I am very feminist. It is very cruel at times for the tunnels that



they have to pass [...] I want to unite and I want this Pakistani mother to come one day and can say to me: hey let's make a coffee [...] but with the utmost naturalness of the world. And me telling her, let's have a tea, with the same naturalness; make her see that we are equals." (Representative of Miquel Tarradell Institute's AMPA)

"Yes, the woman is important., And yes, we fulfill the word more than the man, because the men come from work, they shower and dine, but women do not, we are all day shopping food and looking for the children, and showering them, preparing dinner and everything at home, and of course, the woman works all day; I have checked it and yes, the woman is stronger, I say it and, to say the truth, I say it to all my family, 'the woman is worth more than the man' but this does cost a bit to accept, there are people who do not understand this very well, men have a hard time understanding this fact that women are stronger, but for me, and even my children they are with me. I want to get my driver's license, I'm fighting for this, I want to get it, because always, when I was little, they told me that women cannot do this or that, and it has affected me a lot, that women cannot study, that women cannot do this, and when I was little, I remember those moments and I have suffered a lot, really. And I want to teach everyone that I can do it, and also make my father and my mother to see and realize that women can do many things than men. There are things my mother says, for her men serve more, and they always put it in our heads that the man is stronger than us, and we cannot live without a man, but no, when I arrived here, I have erased everything! The woman can live without a man and can do herself; rather, man cannot live without a woman, because he does not know how to clean, he cannot cook, almost nothing, and he cannot hang clothes, and this message has to reach all of us here, for example, my countrywomen or from another country, they all have to know that women can do many things". (Moroccan mother)

Likewise, gender as a barrier has also been observed in those who generally participate more in school that are rather mothers and not fathers. In the Tarradell institute, the willingness to participate and come to the school comes from mothers, although many times the language barrier makes that the one who come to attend the academic affairs of their children is the father, since he is the one who speaks Spanish and the one that usually leaves home.

In the case of the Antaviana school, mothers, not fathers, have the largest participation in schools, taking into account that most families are of Latin American origin and the language issue does not represent a problem.

"Here in general, mothers participate more than fathers, although there are fathers who have come to the class to explain, to play music, etc., but proportionally, men participate less than women and this is an issue that is happening already a few years ago." (Antaviana School Director)

"In the Arab families, for example, there are people, especially mothers, because the parents are certain that we see them less, no matter where they are, but we see them less; fathers born in Spain also participate less". (Representative of the AMPA in the Antaviana school)

Although it may not seem like it, men are also interested in participating. However, they need to work to solve the economic situation of their family and attend school at some time, but in the end they have to leave and disengage from the center. In the Tarradell institute for example, at the beginning of the "Moms that read" program, several fathers came, but little by little they could not continue attending because they cannot neglect their work to support their family.

A third important aspect that conditions the participation and isolates families is religion and culture:

"The issue is more cultural and religious; for example, the issue of swimming pools for girls when they go on a field trip "de colonias"... all that is still pending to attend." (Head of the Welcome Classroom, Miquel Tarradell Institute)

"During these 11 years that I have been here, I had never left home to learn the language, I was always at home because I had my personal and health problems, so it is the first time I go out to learn Spanish in a public place; just to learn a little, it's nothing about to help my children about school matters or anything similar, nothing, I do not reach that level, but sometimes when I talk to my children, some words in Spanish comes out of me; and for me this little aspect is very important, even if they are only few words in Spanish. My children speak in Catalan among themselves and I tell them, 'as I have been in this country for 11 years and I have not learned yet, why don't you speak with me a little bit of Spanish so I can learn?" (Pakistani Mother)

As can be seen, what should be understood first, is that families have to cover their basic needs for work, housing, food, and health, among others, so that later, they can consider participating in their children's school. In addition, we reiterate that they are diverse families and not only have their 3-5 children in charge, but many times they are also in charge of some other relatives, like brothers or uncles of one or both of the parents in the same house.



Moreover, parents seem not to be well aware that their role is crucial for educational success of their children.

„At this moment I have an open activity for children from here at school both for the whole school and for the whole neighborhood. And children do not come close to this activity because this activity has to be done with the parents and automatically, they do not come closer. For them it is necessary [...] I do not want to say this outrageous thing but for them, the school it seems like a parking lot where they leave their children and do not worry about them. They only worry about their academic results that they believe are part of the school only. They forget that education is a shared role, part of the school and part of the parents. Because if you're not behind, nothing is achieved. And you have to play with them and do homework with them and you have to go out with them. It is not simply having a child and leave it in a school and pick them up when they finish. It is much more. It seems difficult to be understood by them, because they have other ways of living, other ways of understanding life.”
(Representative of Miquel Tarradell Institute's AMPA)

School's definition of the partnership with parents

Both, the school and the institute, consider very important that families link up with the center in one way or another, either through recreational and cultural activities, or activities linked to the contents of the curriculum and based on multicultural experiences and experiences of families, and their participation in the School Board meetings.

In the Tarradell Institute, it seems that the participation of the families improves when it comes to playful-cultural activities and not so much academic, by the own barriers of language and academic formation of the families. For this reason, and as we mentioned above, the participation of families has increased positively from the various efforts of both the center, and the AMPA and especially the initiative of a mother - Karin - that realized that it was important to give voice to the women and mothers of the center so that they will empower themselves and also help their children in school; she has managed to implement an extracurricular activity of literacy and learning of Spanish for families, as a first step to strengthen the bond of families with the school.

"Parents have something very positive, they have high expectations from their children. But of course, they have to see also the limitations and the possibilities, both of them are important and they have to consider both of them. We, for example, from the institute, do mentoring to help the students. It helps them a lot! But maybe it would also be necessary to mentor parents to see how all this is going. Because parents are very clueless with all these things. And simply because they do not know about these aspects.” (Miquel Tarradell Institute, School Director)

"I do not want to say this outrageous thing but for them, it seems that the school is like a parking lot where they leave their children and do not worry about them. They only worry about their academic results that they believe are part of the school only. They forget that education is a shared role, part of the school and part of the parents. Because if you're not behind, nothing is achieved. And you have to play with them and do homework with them and you have to go out with them. It is not simply having a child and leave it in a school and pick them up when they finish. It is much more. It seems difficult to be understood by them, because they have other ways of living, other ways of understanding life.” (Representative of Miquel Tarradell Institute's AMPA)

At the Antaviana school, for example, the participation of families with the center has a balance between all these types of participation, both leisure and cultural activities outside school hours and with the community, as well as academic activities during school hours, which have a very important weight in the participation of families in regular class days, especially taking advantage from their own multicultural experiences and technical or professional knowledge that parents already have, to help enrich the learning experiences of all children in the school.

"Now that many projects are done at the school, all the projects go through a timely participation of families who want to come to see the process of the Project, and in the end, the Project's exhibition is also with families where they themselves make exhibitions oral with an audiovisual presentation "... By seeing this level of participation, the level of commitment of families towards the education of their children is here in Antaviana, the AMPA is powerful, and it helps us so much that everything this works It's complicity and there's always a lot of mutual complicity between AMPA and school!". (Antaviana School Director)



Antaviana's AMPA actively participates in the "School and Family Project. Together x Education" as another example of their involvement with school and the community⁴⁵.

One of the action lines of the country Government Plan is mainly in favor of educational success. In this sense, the Plan for the reduction of school failure in Catalonia 2012-2018 aims to facilitate and promote the involvement and commitment of the family in the monitoring of the academic and personal evolution of their children. To this end, the Department of Education makes available to the schools and families, a computer application with guidelines and resources to promote the involvement of families in the educational process of their children and their participation in schools. The application has six lines of intervention (family reception, educational commitment letter, shared tutorial action, information and communication, participation in the operation of the center and training for the family) that work from three areas of work action: the center, the classroom and the environment.

Parents' definition of their role in the education process

As far as we have been able to observe, we could say that the participation of families in both centers is divided in different phases. At the Tarradell Institute, families are in a more complex situation and are at a premature stage, so to speak, in order to participate more in the center and have the skills to be able to support their children in the educational process. Above all, because as we have seen, most families do not have studies and there is a high degree of illiteracy. In this sense, the perception of families about their role in the educational process is still very far for them.


"During these 11 years that I have been here, I had never left home to learn the language, I was always at home because I had my personal and health problems, so it is the first time I go out to learn Spanish in a public place; just to learn a little, it's nothing about to help my children about school matters or anything similar, nothing, I do not reach that level" (Pakistani Mother)

"The ideal role of families is difficult to define since there is a lot of diversity; an ideal or standard role is very difficult, not so much because of the number of immigrants, but because there is great social diversity. This social aspect is complex and often prevents us from finding and setting an ideal role for our families, because the human and social condition of our families is very heterogeneous." (Antaviana School Director)

Conversely, at the Antaviana school, due to the characteristics of the families in that center, we can say that they are at a more advanced stage, since the AMPA has been constituted for several years and the issue of the language is not a problem with Latin American families. In addition, as for the families that are not Spanish speaking, the matter of the language is being managed better. This means that these families are already participating in an important way: in the center, in the classroom directly and in the community; nevertheless, the school keeps trying to promote this participation more. The overview for this center indicates that the number of families could continue to increase in the coming years. Given the above, the perception of the Antaviana families of the role they should play in the education of their children and their relationship with the community is much clearer and more robust.

"We, the families, have to accompany the education of our children that they develop in school, or this part of the growth, or this part of the educational process that our children develop in the school; we have to accompany them; and accompanying means a lot of things: it means that we have to come to school, that we have to come when is needed, that we have to contribute what the school have asked us to contribute, that we should ask to our children: How did it go?, that we put interests and support in their learning; I think it is important that children see their families at school and that families are linked to the school, that is very important too. Because sometimes there are children who see what happens at home and what happens at school, and often it's different, and the school's message when they talk about some topics and see how things work at home, sometimes it's so different, it even becomes contradictory. So, the fact that families are linked to the school, makes children have a vision and lets them to say: Ah, look, they all go for one, or they are all part of the same! That's very important, that's why I believe that families have to accompany. We do not intend to tell teachers how to do their work; they are the teachers and they are the ones who have to do the work and it would also be good if they did not tell the families how we have to do our work at home, but this is another issue. I think it would be good to ask all families what they think about what is their role in school, in general, and we should also ask the same to families that come from other

⁴⁵ Projecte Escola i Família. Junts x l'Educació / "School and Family Project. Together x Education" <http://junts-cooperem.blogspot.com/p/el-projecte.html> - <http://ensenyament.gencat.cat/ca/arees-actuacio/centres-serveis-educatius/projectes-educatius/comunitat-educativa-entorn/juntsxeducacio/>



school cultures. Because surely there will be some parents who think that they only have to take the children to school, and that their children go to school with their homework done and nothing else". (Representatives of the AMPA in the Antaviana school)

Even though these families are at a more advanced level of participation, it is interesting to see, for example, that specifically the parental skills workshops organized by the school do not just work for them and do not participate much in them.

"This parental workshops do not work entirely, because very few families have signed up, and apart, what was attempted from the school is not to tell families that they need strategies, but we wanted this training to be more enriching; and in addition, those who register are just the families that always register to all the activities and that already have many strategies, but those families that needed it the most are not still participating; there is no way, it is not working at all". (Head of Studies, Antaviana School)

Parents' role in secondary school choice

Participation and commitment of participation of families, when they go from primary to secondary school is high at the beginning, but then it decreases drastically, especially in the Raval, where families meet each other since primary school and where they begin to enroll their first children, but later on, those families are having many more children and it is increasingly complicated that they have the time and space to connect with the center at secondary school.

„Right now, with the 4 to 5 people that I am sharing and collaborating in the AMPA, the participation is one hundred percent. Right now, the level of commitment is quite high. They are also families who are in the first year of high school and come with a lot of enthusiasm, with a lot of push. Afterwards, the level of participation and commitment is lower, much lower. This can be seen in the first year, in the first meeting that takes place in the school theater with all the families to make the presentation of the center, and then we go to each of our children's classes. Every year there are fewer people [...] Normally they are Pakistani families, and it is because the first year that I arrived, for example, maybe they only had two children. Now they have six or seven children. The oldest children are those who manage the matters that parents should do, leaving them, leaving them, leaving them until they disappear from the scene." (Ampa Tarradell)

Needs acknowledgement of parents by schools

Schools recognize the value of sociocultural diversity of parents. However, it is necessary to delve more deeply into the needs of families to promote their involvement with the center, and improve their training so that they can really support their children in their education more adequately. The detection of parents' needs is not formally collected and analyzed, and the needs detected by the centers are indirectly met through the activities of the center or even by the tutors and teachers of the host classrooms.

Families must also understand that they should make their situation, problems, needs and concerns explicit with the staff at the center; minimize the fear of contacting the center, whether for cultural, religious or language issues.

"The high diversity that exists in the institute must be experienced as strength, not as a problem. It is part of the cultural identity that is a thing that distinguishes them, that makes us different and that makes us live many things, many cultures. Right now we have the multicultural foods party, then, well, hey, this is very enriching. And with respect to the families, I would also tell you, that families, and also children in general, are all very grateful. And that is also a strength that we have. The fact that you make an effort as an institution and try to improve things, and that teachers see it and then what families return is a lot!" (Miquel Tarradell Institute, School Director)



Contributions to questions at stake

Key elements identified through the collection of data by all the people interviewed, including families, in order for them to link and participate more in schools.

Key aspects from schools' staff

- Mutual predisposition from families and educational centers.
- The school must be more and more open to initiatives.
- Another key is to work in a network, in a community. Not only teachers and the AMPA, but with all the entities of the neighborhood and within the territory. All to one: entities, social services, health services, schools, institutes, the city council, the CRP, residents' association; There are many and will be more.
- Work not only to improve the participation of families and the education of their children, but also to encourage above all non-formal education.
- A lot of complicity with families in both the classroom and non-class activities.
- Encourage activities between families and children in diversified contexts, open to new families from other centers or territories and not only from the same neighborhood; may avoiding the risk that ghettos are created.
- That schools keeps open for as many hours as possible, including non-academic or non-formal activities and have more possibilities to open spaces for activities with families.
- Continue and strengthen the activities and programs for the involvement of families in the classroom dynamics, not only at specific moments of the projects, but in a more systematic work, such as a learning community.
- Another fundamental aspect, is the figure of the tutor. The tutor is the first person that families see and who they see every day; if there is a problem, families will go to talk to him, who has earned moral authority with the family and is the main reference for families. We need to motivate, recognize and train them.
- Foster more agreements and pacts with the educational administration or other entities of the environment in order to carry out and improve activities with families.
- Maintain closeness with people, with families, so that they want and can participate in schools. Promote a good social climate.
- Courtyards are spaces open to families; it is an open door for families to propose and do other activities.
- Reinforce the individualized plans with families that should go hand in hand by the education administration to provide more resources, more staff.
- Promote teacher motivation since many times this implies that they have to do more hours outside of their workday; in this sense, that the teaching staff has less teaching hours and more time to plan other kind of activities and community projects with families.
- Strengthen after-school activities; there should be more and with more quality.

Key aspects pointed out by families

- We should accompany the education of our children, the educational process that our children develop in the school;
- Accompanying means a lot of things: it means that we have to come to school, that we have to come when is needed, that we have to contribute what the school have asked us to contribute, that we should ask to our children: How did it go? that we put interests and support in their learning.
- It is important that children see their families at school and that families are linked to the school, that is very important too.
- It would be necessary to ask all families what they think about what is their role in school, in general, and we should ask the same to families that come from other school cultures.
- That our languages are taken into account in classes and activities with families.
- That we can really be taken into account in the decision-making processes of the educational centers and not only for leisure activities.



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Further Links to projects for parents with migration background and further information

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sAnMxI1Uq8&feature=youtu.be>
- <https://escolantaviana.org/category/projectes/>
- <https://escolantaviana.org/2017/12/16/decorem-el-passadis-amb-les-families/>
- <https://escolantaviana.org/2017/06/26/10337/>
- CEAPA - Confederación Española de Asociaciones de Padres y Madres del Alumnado / Spanish Confederation of Associations of Parents of Students: <https://www.ceapa.es/formacion/formacion-de-formadores>
- Famílies amb Veu: La implicació de mares i pares en la millora de l'escola / Families with Voice: The involvement of mothers in the improvement of the school: <https://www.fbofill.cat/families-amb-veu-la-implicacio-de-mares-i-pares-en-la-millora-de-lescola>
- Programa Social Para el Apoyo Familiar al Éxito Educativo / Social Program for Family Support to Educational Success: <http://pagines.uab.cat/exitoeducativo/>
- Projecte Escola i Família. Junts x l'Educació / School and Family Project. Together x Education: <http://ensenyament.gencat.cat/ca/arees-actuacio/centres-serveis-educatius/projectes-educatius/comunitat-educativa-entorn/juntsxeducacio/>
- Xarxa Clau Catalunya 2015-2020 / Key Network Catalonia 2015-2020: <http://www.fapac.cat/xarxaclau/presentaci-projecte-xarxa-clau-catalunya-2015-2020>



4.6 United Kingdom

4.6.1 Migration situation

Shaping up as a Nation-State the United Kingdom (UK) has historically witnessed migration from Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Jute, Viking, Norman and Fleming populations. From 16th century onwards the nation's migrant history started to change noticeably as England emerged as a trading power. Thereafter, the UK underwent a wave of demographic changes occurring from African slave trade, migration of Jews and Europeans and people from Asia and America. The British Nationality Act 1948 effectively brought more migrants from Commonwealth background into the country. The growth in the number of immigrants was steady in the decades following World War II until 1990. This growth changed in the next decades, witnessing a rapid increase in the decades following 1990– by 1.1 million between 1991 and 2001; by three million between 2001 and 2011, which was unprecedented. The first official Census of 1851 recorded the percentage of people born in foreign countries as 0.6. This percentage in 2011 was 13.4. (www.migrationwatch.com).

In the recent decades migrants coming into the UK have various reasons including employment, seeking asylum, joining family, study and training purposes and movement from European countries. The National Census of 2011 recorded 13 % (7.5 million) of the resident population of England and Wales as overseas-born. Migration seems to be the single-most factor triggering that number which also points out population diversity – the top five non-UK countries of birth in 2011 were India, Poland, Pakistan, Republic of Ireland and Germany. On the other hand, the number of people moving from Europe has declined after the Referendum of 2016 which sought that Britain left the European Union as a member.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), UK defines a migrant as 'A person who moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least a year (12 months), so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.'

In August 2017 ONS reported that the net long-term international migration in the UK was estimated to be +246,000 in March 2017, down 81,000 from March 2016; immigration was 588,000, down 50,000, and emigration was 342,000, up 31,000. The emigrants were mostly from European countries.

The prospect of a definite job or work is the most common reason for immigration into the UK. Majority of immigrants arriving in the UK for work are EEA nationals (60%) who have different rights as compared to non-EEA nationals who are affected by government policies differently (ONS, 2017).

Table 14: Latest changes in international migration, UK (in thousands)

	Mar 2016	Mar 2017	Difference
Net migration	+327	+246	- 81
Immigration	638	588	-50
Emigration	311	342	31

Source: Office for National Statistics

Table 15: UK, year ending March 2016 and year ending March 2017 (in thousands)

	Mar 2016	Mar 2017	Difference
Total	+327	+246	-81
British	-43	-60	-17
EU	+178	+127	-51
(of which) EU15	+76	+74	-2
(of which) EU8	+39	+7	-32
(of which) EU2	+61	+43	-18
Non-EU	+193	+179	-14
(of which) Asia	+120	+110	-10
(of which) Rest of World	+60	+57	-3

Source: Office for National Statistics, Long-Term International Migration

Description of the employment and education situation of migrants.

International Passenger Survey (IPS) of the UK has revealed that by the end of year March 2017 people who immigrated for work-related reason were 275,000; of those, 188,000 had a definite job in their hands. However, there has been a decrease among immigrants from Europe arriving in the UK either with jobs or looking for work – EU citizens, down 29,000 to 47,000 in March 2017; EU citizens looking for work decreased by 12,000.

By the end of March 2017 the estimated number of non-EU immigrants arriving to work in the UK was 72,000; of these, 20,000 arrived looking for work. Most non-EU nationals, of this category, came to the UK to take up skilled jobs. The following table gives statistics related to the types of visas that the Home Office issued in 2016 and 2017 pointing out the difference.

Table 16: Work-related visa grants in the UK

Type of visa granted	June 2016	June 2017	Difference	% change
Total work-related	166,590	163,594	-2,996	-2%
Tier 1 visas	4,531	4,729	198	4%
Tier 2 (skilled) visas	93,980	92,805	-1,175	-1%
Tier 5 (youth mobility and temporary) visas	43,342	41,731	-1,611	-4%
Non-PBS/Other work	24,737	24,329	-408	-2%

Source: Home Office, UK

The Labour Force Survey, UK shows the statistics of estimated UK and non-UK nationals involved in employment, unemployed and economically inactive providing strong inputs into the calculation of net migration. Latest estimates of June 2017 showed there were 3.56 million non-UK nationals in employment in the country, 199,000 were unemployed and 1.12 million were economically inactive.

The UK Home Office has stated that in June 2017 Indian nationals accounted for 29,800 (54%) of Skilled work sponsored visa applications, with US nationals being the next largest group (5,686 or 10% of the total). Australian skilled workers were 2262 followed by Philippines 2239 and China 1728; other nationals accounted for 13,403.

Of the five top skilled work areas Information and Communication receives most skilled workers (42% of skilled work visa applications). Other top areas of skilled sponsored work included Professional, Scientific and Technical activities, Financial and Insurance activities, Human health and social work activities, Education and others.

Migration Watch has reported that between 2009 and 2015 nearly 200,000 non-EU migrants, who originally arrived through the student visa route, were granted settlement in the UK. This effectively shows higher levels of education of non-EU migrants and their skills are closely linked to the employment sector in the country. On the other hand, migrants from the



Eastern European members of the EU have also influenced UK's labour market. Educational levels of these migrants did not correlate with the jobs they took up, replacing British-born workers having lower levels of education.

The National Census of 2011 recorded 35% of non-UK born holding a level 4 (degree level) or above qualification. Polish-born (41%) and Chinese-born (23%) residents displayed the highest levels of 'Other' qualifications. These countries of birth also had relatively high numbers of recent arrivals (40% and 51% respectively). Among all the non-UK born populations, the highest proportions of residents with no qualifications also were those who had lived in the UK for more than 30 years. Irish-born (49%), Pakistani-born (49%) and Bangladeshi-born (49%) residents who had lived in the UK for more than 30 years had the highest levels with no qualifications, much higher than for the UK-born (23%) and the overall proportion for non-UK born (19%).

Regardless of length of residence, American (57%), Nigerian (56%), South African (46%), and German-born (37%) residents held higher proportions of level 4 and above qualifications compared to the UK-born population (26%), while Jamaican-born (21%) and Bangladeshi-born (18%) residents displayed lower proportions of level 4 and above qualifications. Recent arrivals (Census 2011) born in India were more likely to have level 4 or above qualifications (59%) than Indian-born residents who had been in the UK for more than 30 years (25%). A similar pattern is evident for Pakistani-born residents (36% and 16% respectively).

Table 17: Highest qualifications of UK-born population, and non-UK born population by length of residence

Highest qualification	UK-born in thousands (%)	Non-UK born in thousands (%)	Recent arrivals %	5-10 years %	11-30 years %	More than 30 years %
No qualification	9,023 (23.4)	1,285 (18.6)	10.9	12.4	17.2	32.2
Level 1, 2 or 3	16,802 (43.5)	1,802 (26.1)	21.3	26.2	30.4	25.6
Level 4 or above	9,981(25.9)	2,403 (34.8)	37.7	37	36.3	28.7
Other qualification	2,781 (7.2)	1,422 (20.6)	30.1	24.4	16.2	13.5
Total	38,586 (100)	6,911 (100)	100	100	100	100

Source: Office for National Statistics

As regards to occupations, for the non-UK born, professional occupations, such as dentists, teachers, and solicitors were most common (21%) followed by elementary occupations, such as security guards, cleaners and bar staff (16%). For the UK-born there were lower proportions in both the professional occupations (17%) and elementary occupations (10%) compared to foreign-born residents.

Indian-born (199,000) and Polish-born (133,000) populations had the highest numbers of residents employed in highly skilled occupations, which may reflect their respective positions as the top two non-UK born countries of birth in the resident population. While the proportion of Indian-born in high skilled occupations (53%) was slightly higher than that of the non-UK born (51%), the proportion of Polish-born population in high skilled occupations was lower (32%). The proportions of residents in highly skilled occupations were highest for those born in the United States (76%, 73,000), South Africa (68%, 90,000), China (67%, 39,000), Ireland (60%, 106,000), and Germany (60%, 96,000), which all exceeded the proportion in the UK-born (53%) and non-UK born (51%) populations.

The diversity of migrants living in the UK also reflects rich sociocultural contexts including languages spoken, religions and faiths practised, customs and cultures followed. London, being most ethnically diverse, recorded the highest proportion of usual residents born outside the UK and non- UK nationals and also has the highest proportion of people practising a religion other than Christianity.

The 2011 Census also recorded that English language was "the main language for 92 % (49.8 million) of usual residents aged three and over. Of the remaining 8 % (4.2 million), who had a different main language, the majority (3.3 million) could speak English well or very well." Of those who reported another language as the main one (7.7 %), Polish topped the list as the other significant main language (546,000 people). The next most common main languages were from South Asia, Panjabi (273,000 people) and Urdu (269,000) and Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya, 221,000) and Gujarati (213,000).



This was followed by Arabic (159,000) and French (147,000). From 2011 Census it is also known that 19 % of people aged three and over in Wales were able to speak Welsh (562,000); 14.6 % of the population in Wales were able to speak, read and write Welsh.

The UK's Referendum of 2016 (Brexit) to leave the European Union is most likely to change the rights of the citizens of EU countries living in the UK including work. Non-EU citizens continue to meet the eligibility criteria set out by the UK government to enter, study, work or be with family. The criteria set out for asylum-seekers and refugees fall outside of the above two scenarios i.e., citizens of the EU and non-EU countries. The Home Office, UK adopt case by case approach whilst dealing with individuals seeking asylum in the UK for different reasons.

The Refugee Council has stated that the number of applications seeking asylum in the UK decreased in the second quarter of 2017 compared to Q2 of 2016 and also compared with each of the last four quarters as per the table below.

Table 18: Asylum applications in the UK by quarter (excl. Dependants)

Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	Q1 2017	Q2 2017
7,839	7,186	7,442	6,516	6,172

Source: Refugee Council, UK

The Home Office, UK has stated that by the end of March 2017 9,634 people had been granted either asylum or an alternative form of protection to main applicants and their dependants. An additional 6,245 people were newly provided with protection and support under a resettlement scheme the UK. Asylum-seekers and newly settled refugees undergo various processes of education for children, work for adults and settlement in local communities.

United Kingdom

Leading up to September 2017, net migration to the United Kingdom fell, as immigration decreased and emigration increased. In the year ending September 2017 net migration was +244 000, down 29 000 compared with the previous year. The decline was driven by a fall in net migration from EU nationals, down 75 000 to +90 000. However the number of EU nationals coming to the UK remains higher than the number leaving. Over the same period, there was an increase in net migration from non-EU nationals (up 40 000 to +205 000) and British nationals (up 4 000 to -52 000). Net migration has shown a general downward trend since early 2016.

As in 2015, the largest group of non-British long-term immigrants to the United Kingdom in 2016 were estimated to be from Romania, accounting for 12% of arrivals, followed by India (8%), China (8%) and Poland (6%). Other European countries were also well represented.

In the year ending September 2017, over 40% of all long-term immigrants to the United Kingdom (248 000 individuals) said their main reason for coming to the United Kingdom was to take up a definite job offer or to look for work. The number of immigrants coming to the UK for work reasons fell compared with the previous year. Over the same period, the number leaving the UK for work reasons increased to 179 000. It is important to note, however, that some of those leaving for work reasons are likely to have originally entered for other reasons such as study.

The number of long-term immigrants to the United Kingdom who arrive for the purposes of study has fallen since its peak of 246 000 in 2011. However, the most recent period shows immigration to study was 163 000 in year ending September 2017 (up 29 000 on the previous year). Home Office visa data for the calendar year 2017 show the number of study-related visas issued has also increased (up 8%) in the last year, and applications sponsored by the university sector have risen (up 6% to 177 775). The fall in long-term immigration for study since the peak in 2011 is largely a response to tighter government policies to address non-compliance with the immigration rules, especially in the Further Education sector. A further 81 000 migrants arrived in the UK to accompany, or to join, their family, 7 000 higher than the previous year.

Reasons for coming to the UK continue to vary between OECD (excluding the UK) and non-OECD area citizens. Overall, those from OECD countries continue to appear predominantly work motivated (64%) compared with 37% for non-OECD countries. Those from elsewhere are more likely to express study or family reasons for coming to the United Kingdom than those from OECD countries.

The number of EU citizens moving to the United Kingdom to look for work decreased by 35 000, at the year ending September 2017. Those coming for a definite job also saw a small decline. The latest data still show that more EU citizens are arriving in the UK than leaving, meaning that the numbers of EU citizens in employment have continued to grow, although the rate of increase has slowed for a variety of reasons.

Asylum applications in the UK from main applicants decreased by 14% in 2017, to 26 350. This continues a downward trend since 2015. The largest number of applications for asylum came from nationals of Iran (2 600), followed by Pakistan (2 500), Iraq (2 400), Bangladesh (1 700), and Sudan (1 700). The majority of applications were made by people already in the country (85%) rather than immediately on arrival. Of the 21 300 initial decisions on asylum applications from main applicants, 32% granted some form of protection, down from 34% the previous year.

In addition to offering protection through asylum routes, the UK has other channels such as resettlement schemes. The UK granted asylum, alternative forms of protection, or resettlement to nearly 15 000 in 2017. Nearly 6 000 of these were children under 18 years old.

In 2016, the UK transferred over 900 unaccompanied asylum seeking children to the UK from Europe. In July 2017, following consultation with local authorities on capacity, the Government announced that the specified number of children to be transferred would be 480.

Policy on future immigration from the EU and on the position of EU citizens in the United Kingdom was set out in July 2017 in a Command Paper, "Safeguarding the Position of EU Citizens Living in the UK and UK Nationals Living in the EU". The paper sets out a series of principles, including the expectation that the EU will offer reciprocal treatment for United Kingdom nationals resident in its member states. Meanwhile, negotiations continue.

For further information

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office
www.ons.gov.uk



4.6.2 Policy review

The role of parents in education

Education is compulsory in the UK for all children aged between 5 years and 16 years although children start early at 4 years in Northern Ireland. The five stages of formal education – Early Years, Primary, Secondary, Further Education and Higher Education – mark the educational journey of children and young people.

All parents or legally responsible adults along with the State are responsible for a child's education (The Children Act 1989) and they can choose the most suitable form which may include schooling, home education or other. Local education authorities have the obligation of finding a free school place for all children who are of compulsory age – until 16 years of age, and/or post-16 education or training and to monitor and evaluate the suitability of educational provision to those children who are educated outside formal education (Home schooling or other). The government has specified that such school admission policies be clear, fair and impartial which is legally binding. The government guidance called the School Admissions Code is available on www.gov.uk.

Pupils, school and parents must adhere to the Home-School Agreement which sets out the role of the three core agents.

Describing pupil, parent and school as the three pillars of a child's educational journey (The Children Act 1989), the government stipulates policies and procedures that all stakeholders must follow – children, parents, legal guardians, school management bodies and various government departments. Therefore, a parenting contract which is a formal written and signed agreement between school is generated every year of schooling. Parents must agree to comply with whatever requirements are set out in the contract.

The Department of Education is responsible for children's services and education including policies, and hence sets out the guidance for parents and local authorities which must be followed. The DfE is supported by OfSTED which is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, a non-ministerial department, Equality and Human Rights Commission, National College for Teaching and Leadership and other agencies.

At the school level, the parents' association takes up an active role in improving the standards of their school through their voice, promotion of school values, raising essential funds for school activities, being a watch dog of issues related to everyday school life, policies and general management of the school. Parents' – Teachers' Association (PTA) is one of the most popular schemes which facilitate parents' involvement in school life.

Relevant initiatives of parents' involvement in education

As with the statutory guidance that the Department of Education provide to educational institutions and local authorities the guidance to parental involvement in education has been largely grounded in behaviour, learning outcomes and safeguarding children. Through a number of programmes, home-school agreements and strategies applied for effective parental involvement the government agencies ensure children's progress in education and development as per set objectives and milestones. Parents are expected to adhere to regular school attendance, participation in pupil's achievement of expected standards in curriculum learning, and maintain expected standard of behaviour throughout. School Head Teacher and their staff, along with their governing body, are expected to respond to ethnic diversity, language development, appropriate response to the local community life besides regular school activities.

However, in recent years there has been an increase in the attention paid to parents' engagement. The trend is often associated with England's neo-liberal approach to education which is particularly evident in policies about school choice and schools' accountability to parents.

The Schools White Paper (2010) and the Field review on poverty and life chances (Field, 2010) which was commissioned by the Prime Minister are indicative of the Government's response to this trend and they both identify a central role for parents in raising students' achievement levels, improving pupils' behaviour and lowering the attainment gap. Following the same vein Local Authorities have launched several initiatives supporting parental involvement.



In Leeds the *Parent, Carers and Families Voice and Influence Group* which operates under the Local Authority's Children Services brings together several organisations concerned with family life and aims to engage children and parents in creating a child-friendly city. The remit of the Group's operation and influence includes parents' engagement in their children's education and schooling and several schools have received guidance and support in developing relevant strategies. In some cases, family support workers assigned with the responsibility to enhance parental involvement are placed within particular schools for part of their working week, offering more intense support and guidance.

Specific situation of immigrants including asylum-seekers and refugees

Schools in the UK are bound by a legislative duty to promote inclusion and race equality under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Schools have a responsibility to ensure children from refugee background who are in the age group of 5 to 18 years have equal access to education and receive quality education on par with all other children. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 specifies that all maintained schools in England must promote community cohesion which ensures effective inclusion and integration of those children. Although enrolling children in primary schools (4-11 years) is easier than the secondary school enrolment (11-16 years) both stages of schooling life carry many challenges for families having ethnic minority status.

The differences in home and school cultures pose a challenge to young children. Most schools in England have English as an Additional Language (EAL) Coordinator depending on the number of students whose first language is not English. In England, the Department for Education stated in January 2013 that the school census results showed that one in six primary school students (a total of 612,160 students) spoke a different language as their first language. In secondary schools the figure was 436,150 with one student per eight who spoke English as their first language. Combined with figures from special schools and pupil referral units, the total number was over a million, doubling since 1997 (<https://www.naldic.org.uk>).

The EAL Coordinators support students with EAL to develop and enhance English language skills to reach the expected level of academic performance. It is up to the EAL Coordinators how they design such support programmes to include not only the students but also their parents and their local community showcasing cultural awareness, diversity and inclusivity to find opportunities for intercultural education. Once again, the appointment of an EAL Coordinator, the mentoring programmes, language skills help, and the running of home-work clubs are dependent on much-needed funds. It becomes a new role for the schools' governing body, the PTAs and the Friends of the School to raise funds for such significant inclusion programmes. This, again, needs support from the local community that is empathetic and compassionate.

All schools in England have a governing body made up of several governors including a staff governor, the head teacher, a parent governor and from the local community. Besides, schools have a separate body known as Friends of the School made up of all parents of children studying in the school and any volunteers. These two individual bodies are other sources of support children coming from ethnic minority communities, asylum-seeking and refugee families.

The UK government at the national level, LAs at the regional and local level collaborate with national NGOs such as British Red Cross and Refugee Council, and also a number of county-based organisations to support refugee children and their families in their integration process. All these organisations have a range of programmes and activities promoting inclusion and effective transition into a happy life in Britain.



4.6.3 Case study findings

Role of school leadership

The pivoting role of the school leadership in the establishment of effective partnership between parents and the school is evident in both case studies conducted in England. The school leaders of both schools discussed passionately about their commitment to facilitating parents' involvement in the life of the school and the significance of such involvement particularly for migrant children and their families. Both Head teachers pointed out that traditional systems used by many schools to facilitate the communication between parents and the school proved insufficient in catering the needs of migrant parents. Extra resources needed to be found for the translation of newsletters and of the written and verbal communication between parents and schools, for seminars for parents and for leaflets sent to them with information about the English educational system and about the curriculum. The schools also invested in the organisation of events aiming to motivate parents, including migrant parents, to visit the schools regularly (such as the Food for Nations or the Open Markets, see below).

As the Head teacher of the primary school pointed out, the allocation of resources to all the above was possible only as part of a wider strategy, which aimed to empower parents and encourage them to engage actively in the school life. For this strategy to be developed and implemented the Head teacher had to convince the management team and the school community (including staff and Governors) about its significance.

The coordination of the implementation of the strategy in both schools is assigned to members of the management team with specialism either in educational inclusion (Secondary school's Special Needs Coordinator) or in supporting students with English as Additional Language (Primary school's EAL coordinator).

Empowerment of parents

Staff from both schools commented on how the systems used by most schools to facilitate the communication with parents proved to be insufficient in supporting migrant parents' involvement. The most widely used methods (newsletters, letter or emails to parents, etc.) are not suitable for communication with those who are not proficient in English. Difficulties in communication affect also migrant parents' participation in relevant events (parents' evenings) while the knowledge that the expectation from parents to attend these events is not always explicitly expressed but it is often based on parents' direct experience as former students in the English educational system. Importantly, staff interviewed in the two schools reported that many migrant parents seem rather reluctant in engaging in the life of the school in general as they consider such involvement as interference. Both Head teachers referred also to personal experiences from direct communication with migrant parents, which they believe that indicate lack of confidence in the communication of parents with public institutions.

The above justify the efforts of school leaders and staff in both schools to reform the systems of communication between parents and the school and not only to inform parents about these systems but to empower them to use them. The Primary school's EAL coordinator described this as an active inclusion strategy, explaining that the efforts of the school are not only to develop a welcoming environment but also to motivate parents to take advantage of the opportunities that this environment creates and to participate in shaping that environment.

Such initiatives include:

- Welcome classes for parents: Semi-formal events which are organised by the staff of the Primary school in the beginning of the academic year with the purpose to communicate key information about the school and the English educational system to parents. The classes are not explicitly for migrant parents but are open to all those who wish to familiarise themselves with or to freshen up their knowledge about the educational system.
- A food market: Local shops (grocery shops and supermarkets) supply the school with products that are near their expiry date. These products are offered free of charge to parents in a market that is set up by members of staff and parents in the school grounds once a week. It is important to note that school staff have been encouraged to shop at the market as a way to encourage parents to do the same.
- Lunch for the Nations: The secondary school EAL coordinator organises dinners in the school premises with food cooked by migrant parents. The initiative uses food as a tool for intercultural exchange and it allows parents to meet other parents and the school's teachers in an informal setting. At the time of our visit to the secondary



school, the EAL coordinator was working with parents in preparing a United Tastes cookbook with recipes from the home countries of migrant parents.

- Parents and students' classes: Parents in the primary school are encouraged to attend classes with their children in the first month of the school year. Arrangements are made in advance in communication with the classroom teachers who may advise parents to avoid specific classes, subjects or dates. The initiative started as a method to help students to settle but it was made clear very quickly that it was very effective in helping parents to understand their children's school experiences.
- Maths and Science for parents: Special classes on Maths and Science held during school hours and after school to help parents familiarise with the school curriculum. The classes are also opportunities
- English as an Additional Language classes for parents: Both schools offer Language classes for parents ran by school staff. An additional benefit for parents from attendance of those classes is the opportunity to meet with other migrant parents.

Role of social class / education, cultural distance, structural inequalities

The primary school is located in a socially deprived area, a fact that does not act beneficially to the social inclusion of migrant parents. This is for a combination of reasons, which relate to high levels of crime in this area, the feeling of insecurity that parents experience as a result, but also the frequency of incidents of antisocial behaviour, which leads parents to protect their children by keeping them and themselves disengaged from the community they live in. Experiences of racism and of xenophobic behaviours further exacerbate the above. It is worth noting also that the demographic identity of the area is alien to many of the parents (and children) who were residing in affluent or middle class neighbourhoods in the country of their origin.

For the above reasons a couple of parents gave a description of the school as a safe, predictable oasis for children and for their families situated within an unpredictable, unsafe environment. In school parents seem that they feel that their identities (social, ethnic, cultural) are respected and their concerns are heard and shared.

Recognising this role, the school staff make conscious efforts to offer opportunities of informal communication with parents and to create a welcoming environment, which parents feel that they can visit almost any time. Indicative of this is the reference of the Head Teacher to the school as a safe social and educational centre for the community.

One additional problem which relates to the demography of the area is that for many parents their residence in it is being considered as temporary and they are reluctant to develop strong ties with the school while in some cases they discourage their children from seeing their attendance as permanent or long-term.

Source of information for migrant parents

Despite all the efforts of the Local Authorities towards developing methods for direct communication with parents and the conveyance of key information about the English educational system and school choice, the main source of such information seems to remain the informal networks of friends and family. These networks have undoubtedly some strengths as sources of such information but there are also some significant disadvantages. One strength is that it allows parents to enter and to maintain ties with groups of people with whom they share similar experiences, language and customs. Another strength is that information about systems and services in the host country (including education) is usually presented in a comparative manner (features of the English educational system in comparison to the educational system of the migrants' home country) which makes such information easy to understand. However, the dependency of parents from the networks for accessing such information has also significant disadvantages. Misunderstandings about systems and misinterpretations of information circulate also easily within such networks, especially within networks of ethnic and national groups which do not have a historical presence in the country. Another significant disadvantage is that these networks often facilitate the communication and maintenance of stereotypical expectations and the social pressure for exhibition of particular behaviours from people of the same origin. This often affects the communication with and attitudes towards the school. Indicative of this is the information shared by the head teacher of the secondary school who reported that the school is rather unpopular among certain ethnic groups, which consider the its ethos as being too liberal, and the school's multicultural intake as being a rather problematic feature. The EAL coordinator of the primary school reported on the case of one Y6 girl who, despite her academic skills and her evident satisfaction that she was drawing from attending the school, the frequent interruptions in the attendance, which were inflicted by her parents made it very difficult for her to sustain her commitment to her studies. According to the EAL coordinator, these interruptions seem to relate to the parents' beliefs about the role that their



daughter is expected to have as an adult within her ethnic community and the seeming irrelevance of her academic skills to that role.

It is such stereotypes that schools and Local Authorities are called to challenge as well as to address several misconceptions and misinformation about English education and about parental involvement in schools. It could be argued that the task at hand for Local Authorities and schools is often to educate parents on the role and function of education in the host and in the new possibilities that their migration has created for the education, social role and the future of their children.

Recognising the strengths of the participation of parents in and the use of their informal networks as source of information about education and schools, the primary school's Parents Welcome Classes are often led by migrant parents. The guest speakers represent various ethnic/national/linguistic backgrounds and have experience in the English educational system (either as parents or as former students). Their understanding of the background of the migrant parents attending these classes is key in gaining their trust and in educating them on the above.

Isolation of parents

It has already been mentioned that the significance of schools' role for migrant families is not to be measured only against students' academic attainment but against the contribution that they make to the social integration of the whole families. This was repeatedly mentioned by staff in both schools which we studied here. One particularly significant service that they are in position to offer is the interruption of migrant parents' social isolation, especially in the first years after their arrival in the new country.

Evidence drawn from interviews with staff and parents show that this isolation can take several forms and can relate to several factors:

- Language
- Sense of insecurity
- Financial problems
- Long working hours
- Legal status
- Gender stereotypes
- Cultural insecurity

Women from certain cultural backgrounds and/or from certain countries often experience a particular form of isolation, related to at least the last two of the factors above. These women are usually not in employment and their culture (or the particular interpretation of their culture adopted by themselves and/or by their husbands) forces them to stay at home while their children are at school and their husbands at work. The staff in the primary school described two such cases. They also reported that in both cases it is the fathers who drop their children off to school on the way to work and who pick them up during a scheduled break from work. The school staff has met one of the mothers only once while the visits of the other one are very infrequent. As they pointed out, a particular form of empowerment is required here for the breaking of such isolation. They also recognise that the school is not in position to respond to what is required in order for such empowerment to be developed and that this should be the result of the work of multi-agency teams.

Finally, some parents described how they experience another particular form of isolation. This is the isolation stemming from the feeling of being uprooted and not-belonging; the maintenance of close connections with other migrants from the same country at the expense of the development of ties with locals and migrants from other countries; and the progressive integration of their children in the host country. Parents reported their experiences of the painful satisfaction which comes together with the fulfilment of what was for some of them one of the goals for their migration: the educational progress of their children and their preparedness to take up the opportunities that the host country offers for the development of their academic and professional trajectories. They report how the successful integration and the development of their children's sense of belonging exacerbates their sense of exclusion and isolation while at the same time justifies their decision to migrate. School plays an important role in this as it is perceived as the space which actively encourages the process of integration, a process that they appreciate and despise and a process from which they are either exclude, wittingly or not.



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5 Conclusion and Recommendations

The presented case studies of several European countries provide distinct practical issues and guidance on how to involve migrant parents in educational matters. However, these recommendations need to be interpreted in the context of the different context in the respective countries. This is necessary, given the distinctive historical backgrounds regarding migration which prompt diverse initial conditions in terms of education of children with migration background in general and the subsequent empowerment of their parents in educational matters.

Consequently, in the case of the discussed countries, it has to be considered that Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are perceived as a 'immigration countries' since several decades. While the share of Non-German nationals and German nationals with migration background is steadily increasing since the 1950s, a similar development can be observed in both, the Netherlands and United Kingdom.

On the contrary, Bulgaria depicts an example for rather low levels of migration inflow. As it is predominantly considered a 'transit country' for refugees and asylum seekers on their way to Western Europe, the UK and Germany are often considered the desired destinations. One the one hand, this is due to the long-lasting status of the UK and Germany as 'immigration countries', on the other hand, this may be due to the often negative attitude towards refugees from parts of the population, as well as the negative political discourse about this topic in Eastern European countries.

Whilst all of these countries are influenced by political decisions on the European level, the intensity and fluctuations of migration figures also depend on regional decisions and local policies. Specifically, Ireland and Spain can be regarded as 'new immigration countries', who witnessed significantly increasing migration figures in recent years, which is posing partially unknown challenges in terms of integration.

Before this background, the following section summarizes the key issues and discusses possible recommendations on migrant parent empowerment and engagement in everyday school life, through the lens of distinctive national conditions.

First of all, one of the main recommendations from the case studies is to create a **welcoming atmosphere at school** for the migrant students as well as for their parents, who play a pivotal role in engaging their children for school and a successful learning process. Therefore, it is necessary to establish the contact with the parents at an early stage and make sure they feel welcome at the school as partners for the development of their children. However, it is important that the dialogue between schools and parents is not only limited to the school admission of the children, but is seen as a constant process in which parents need to be kept informed and engaged in school matters (see for example 3.3.5 Case study findings, Ireland or 3.6.3 Case study findings, UK).

Furthermore, **language** still poses a barrier to an effective communication and the establishment of a trustful relationship between migrant parents and the respective schools. Thus, in order to create a short-term solution many case studies recommendations elucidated on the importance of **providing guidance material and interpretation services in the mother tongue** of migrant parents. In coherence with the welcoming aspect mentioned above, mother tongue information and guidance also ensures that parents receive all the necessary information, e.g. regarding the school system, the idiosyncrasies of the schools' philosophy, it's approach to teaching and learning, development opportunities for their children, as well as information about what is expected from parents and how they can get actively involved to ensure that their children integrate and progress well in their new environment. Thus, it is vital from the perspective of the schools, to allocate additional resources and educational manpower to translate the material in respective languages (see for example 3.6.3 Case study findings, UK).

To reinforce a more sustainable and long-term effect, it has been argued in the case studies that the introduction of **'language classes'** for migrant parents at the school, especially for refugees, can have positive effects on social integration within society, which in turn results in migrant parents' better comprehension for school related matters and a basis to support their children with homework issues (see for example 3.1.5 Case study findings, Bulgaria or 3.6.3 Case study findings, UK). While it is widely known that especially children at a young age are able to quickly learn and adapt to a new language within school, it is substantial for parents to receive language training and support, particularly when they are in precarious employment situations. The involvement of parents without a migrant background or migrant parents who are familiar with the language and local structures for supporting migrant parents in formal or informal settings to teach and practice the new language, may be a fruitful approach (see for example 3.5.4 School policies and procedures, Spain).



In addition, the collaboration and networking between parents without a migrant background or migrant parents who are familiar with the language and local structures as well as newly arrived migrant parents can be fostered by the school through **providing space and certain allocated time slots at the school facilities** where they can come together and exchange experiences, ideas and talk about school issues. This serves not only the positive effect of migrant parents having a fixed point of contact and getting essential information on their children's education, but moreover enables them to establish contacts with other parents. Consequently, this regular knowledge exchange promotes parental engagement and cooperation between parents of different cultural backgrounds, which hence fosters societal integration (see for example 3.4.2, Policy review, Parent room Zwijndrecht, Netherlands).

On a more comprehensive scale, another measure to reinforce the collaboration of migrant parents is the establishment of **migrant-parent-networks**. As practiced successfully in Germany, such networks can target migrants from diverse cultural backgrounds and support them in daily issues, as well as providing a platform to help each other in terms of orientation in the new environment. Migrant-parent networks can for instance be constructed by identifying a volunteering parent with a migration background who experienced similar situations as newly arrived migrant parents do and is thus able to relate to the challenges that newly arrived migrant parents face in school and educational matters. When this volunteer lives in the same district as the migrant parents who are being guided by him/her, the volunteer is easily able to support and give recommendations about school matters, but also assist with general difficulties, e.g. with authorities or the public transport (see for example 'Elternlotsen' 3.2.3 Parental Networking).

Moreover, a **family or community mentor** for migrant parents can be an effective method to establish a personal contact. The mentor can provide trustful assistance and act as a mediator between school and parents. This has the advantage of having someone in place who is close to the family from an early stage on and can therefore relate to the issues they are facing over time. It seems especially fruitful in the time frame of arrival in the country, in which many aspects seem unclear and certain issues may be difficult to be solved without knowledgeable assistance (see for example 3.3.5 Case study findings, Ireland or 3.5.5 Case study findings, Spain).

Another prevalent recommendation is geared towards the **individualized planning** of migrant students' learning development together with their parents. This is particularly relevant, as many migrant students often join the classes at different levels of their learning progress. Therefore, a mechanism to plan the individual progress and to work on deficiencies in specific subjects is seen as an appropriate approach towards integration into the new educational system. As mentioned in some of the case studies, some migrant parents often feel that they do not get sufficient information on how their children perform at school and what possibilities are existent for support. Particularly, the parent-teacher meetings often do not seem to provide enough time to discuss all these issues. Consequently, a contact person at school who is able to provide individual support for migrant parents and their children would ease this process (see for example 3.5.5 Case study findings, Spain). On top of that, the **access to an online platform** where parents have the chance to read up about e.g. the progress of their children, the pending exams, upcoming events or about any question they have regarding school issues is generally seen as a simplifying innovation that would foster an independent organization of the school routine for migrant parents. This can be a useful tool, especially in a later stage of integration, when parents have got mostly accustomed to the school system and do not want to consult other parents or the teacher for every question. Moreover, it creates an area where parents would have a chance to gather knowledge about the school and educational matters in their own time and have the chance to discuss important topics with teachers or educational staff on a more proficient level (see for example 3.2.5 Case study findings, Germany).

Finally, the practice to **motivate migrant parents to get involved into everyday school life** has been recognized as a beneficial and effective way for social integration and cultural understanding. This could be done in informal settings such as certain school events and activities, but also during class when migrant parents agree to do presentations, for instance about their cultural practices or religious background. This promotes not only cultural understanding amongst children without a migrant background and migrant children, but can also depict an effective method to counter prejudices towards certain cultures, nationalities or religions. Thus, a proactive approach from schools towards intercultural exchange is necessary to create the prerequisites for such activities, but also to encourage both parents with and without a migrant background to get involved in school routine and bring in their own ideas (see for example 3.1.5, Case study findings, Bulgaria).



ANNEX

ALFIRK Interview questions: School staff and Head Teacher

1. School background
 - a. Cohort
 - b. Number of students
 - i. with English as Additional Language (EAL); or
 - ii. not born in England; or
 - iii. with parents not born in England
 - c. Trends
2. Vision with regard to inclusion of migrant students
 - a. Role of parents
3. Vision with regard to parents' engagement.
 - a. Relevance to migrant parents
4. Describe the profile of the ideal parents in terms of:
 - a. their engagement with the school life;
 - b. the support they provide to / their engagement with their children's education.
5. Is there any scheme aiming to promote parents' participation?
 - a. Volunteering?
 - b. PTA or other?
 - c. Are there any schemes particularly targeting newly arrived families?
6. Evaluate level / quality of parents' engagement in this school
Patterns observed in terms of ethnicity / background?



ALFIRK Interview questions: Parents

1. Background
 - a. Origin and countries of temp settlement in which children attended education.
 - b. Children in this school, in other schools, children completed school
 - c. Parents' education.
 - d. Parents' language skills at the time that children started school – quality of communication with school.
 - e. Parents' employment (if appropriate).
2. Self-evaluation: from 1 to 10, how well do you feel that you know the English Educational system?
 - Would you be able to describe English educational system to someone who just arrived in England?
 - Would you be able to advice parents who just arrived in England how to choose a school for their children?
 - For Primary: How did you /will you choose the secondary school for your child/ren?
 - For Secondary: Would you advice your child/ren which GCSE exams to take / what to do after competing school?
3. How happy are you with the provision of educational services by this school to your children?

Academic achievement	Inclusion / Integration
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- a. What are you happy about?
 - b. What are you unhappy about /what could it be improved?
 - c. Have you ever communicated the above with the school?
4. Do you attend the regular meetings with teachers (parents' evenings)?
 - Do you think that you are well informed about your children's progress?
5. Are there any other opportunities for parents to come to school (apart from regular meetings with teachers)?
 - Would you have liked more opportunities to be offered to meet teachers from this school?
6. Would you be interested in offering some services to the school voluntarily?
 - Do you know whether such opportunities exist in this school?
 - Have you ever offered such kind of support to schools that your children attended in other countries (if applicable)?
7. Do you offer support to your children in completing their homework? (PRIMARY)
 - a. Do/es your child/ren ask for such help?
 - b. Are you aware of the homework that they need to complete?

ADDITIONAL

8. Let's imagine that your child arrives home one day and says that is very unhappy with the support that s/he is receiving from school and that s/he feels that the school is failing her/him. What would you do?

Prompts:

- Would you discuss with her/him to find out more about the reasons for this?
- If such discussion does not help you to clarify what is going on, what would you do?
- How likely is it that you will visit the school and discuss with the teachers to find out what is going on?
- Assuming that from your conversation with your child you cannot find out if this is a result of a problem with a particular teacher, whom would you ask to speak to?