SMILE

Supporting Multicultural Integration and Learning

RESEARCH REPORT

Level of integration of foreign children
in the services for children in early ages
and on the level of communication and
understanding with parents

October 2009

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Foreword

The SMILE project is an important initiative which tries to find out innovative tools to facilitate intercultural integration of children in early childhood and their families, in five European countries (Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Romania, Sweden plus the silent partner Switzerland) in a special context such as the pre-primary school system.

By 'immigrant children and their families' we mean either children born in another country (inside or outside Europe) or children whose parents or grandparents were born in another country.

One of the first step of the project is to assess the 'state of the art' in these countries from a legislative, social point of view, and with a particular attention to the practices held in early childhood services (pre-primary school). The state of art report tries to assess the 'starting point' in each of the countries involved; trying to identify as well some good practices that may be useful in partners' countries.

Nursery schools and kindergartens are, in a way, the first experience for many foreign families with children, where they meet a collective civic situation and test the rules of living together. Therefore it is really important to seek for helpful tools to work on intercultural education from the very first years of the lives of the children and their families.

The aims of this research are:
- To assess the level of real and perceived integration of foreign children within services for families and children within the partner countries
- To identify the competences and training needs of the educators

- To compile a list of best practices on the methodologies of communication between parents and managers/directors of services for families and children

The research has been conducted in the countries at three levels: a documental level (State of the art reports) on the existing legislation that regulates migration; and a collection of information about pre-school education services and the existing tools that can help intercultural integration in these services.

The second level is represented by the focus groups held to investigate the perceived level of integration into these services and the competences that according to the participants (managers, educators and parents) are required for an efficient communication and effective integration of foreign families.

The third tool consists of questionnaires that have been submitted to parents attending the services, to understand from their point of view the level of integration and the most efficient means for integration.

The legislative, social context and the pre- school systems (from the state-of-the-art reports)

1. Legislative Framework

All partner countries have a more or less advanced system of laws on immigration.

In **Cyprus** the recent 14/02/2007 act has modified the main law (the Aliens and Immigration Law) in the attempt to harmonise some important EU acts concerning the status of third-country nationals or their entry, transit and residence.

In July 2006, the Cypriot Constitution (until then the supreme law of the country) was amended to give supremacy to EU laws. This development is significant vis-à-vis the national anti-discrimination legislative framework because, prior to its enactment, the anti-discrimination provision of Article 28 of the Cypriot Constitution was interpreted by the Courts to mean that any positive measures taken in favour of vulnerable groups were violating the Constitution's equality principle. The new amendment renders the positive measure provisions of EU directives superior to the Constitution and thus unchallengeable on the basis of Article 28.

In **Italy** the main law on immigration is law n.189/2002 (the so-called Bossi-Fini, famous in Italy to be very strict on entry rules for immigrants) which modifies the TU 286/1998. This law aims at preventing irregular streams of migrants, by putting some limits on the annual entrances and by establishing more severe punishment for the irregulars. The main statement is that every immigrant coming to Italy has to have a concrete job opportunity and the employers have to demonstrate that there were no Italians available for that job before giving it to a migrant person. In

addition, the residence permit is shorter and it needs to be renewed regularly, provided that the condition for entrance still exists (i.e. he/she is still working).

In **Sweden** the list of Laws concerning immigrants and refugees consists of 34 different rules and regulations. They are divided into 6 different areas such as: common laws (10) laws of asylum (7), laws of health care (5), laws against discrimination (3), laws about associations and societies (8), and laws about education (1). In the first area you find The Aliens Act (1989:529), the Aliens Ordinance (1989:547) and the Act concerning Special Controls in Respect of liens 1991:547).

The objectives of migration policy are to safeguard the right to seek asylum in Sweden and internationally; to maintain regulated immigration; to introduce greater possibilities for labour immigration; to increase the harmonization of asylum and migration policy in the EU.

The Government's starting point is that immigration helps to vitalise the labour market and the economy as a result of the new knowledge and experience that new arrivals bring from their home countries. It must be easier for citizens of countries outside the EU and the EEA to come to Sweden to work. The present system is far too restrictive and does not take sufficient account of an employer's need for labour. The Government is now preparing a reform to make more labour immigration possible

Since the 1st July 2007, one of the tasks of the Swedish Migration Board and the county administrative boards has been to act to ensure that there is a preparedness and a capacity to receive refugees in municipalities. The county administrative boards negotiate with the municipalities on refugee reception, primarily in municipalities that have an adequate labour market, or where there are opportunities for people to make a living within commuting distance.

Municipalities that have signed an agreement on refugee reception receive basic compensation from the state. They also receive a government grant

per refugee received, (standard allowance), to cover the costs of refugee reception.

Newly arrived immigrants are offered introductory programmes that include tuition in Swedish for immigrants (SFI), and contacts with the labour market, schools and childcare services. The objective is that they learn Swedish as soon as possible and can support themselves.

A recent Research on Nation Minorities (Levente SALAT, Cluj, EDRC Publishing House, 2008, 272 p., ISBN 978-973-7670-09-0) states that in **Romania**, during the nearly two decades of transition to a strengthened democratic regime, the Romanian authorities have undertaken an impressive number of measures that were aimed at the integration of national minorities: almost 200 directives were adopted, public institutions were established with competence in behalf of minority communities and significant funds were assigned to support organizations representing the minorities' communities. Some of the most recent measures are: Ordinance regarding the status and regime of refugees in Romania (Ordinance no. 102/2000, adopted as Law 323/2001); Law no. 612/13th of November 2002 regarding the establishment of the Committee for the Elimination of the Racial Discrimination; Government Ordinance regarding the Social Integration of Aliens who Were Granted a Form of protection in Romania (Ordinance no. 44/2004).

The complexity of the system of national minorities' renders Romania an indisputable leading place in the international context. Although, it is not less true that the measures adopted and pursued by the state have not always led to expected results: there are still a lot of controversial aspects regarding the relations between the majority and various minorities that are waiting to be resolved by appropriate state policies.

In **Germany** there are several important laws on aliens condition and on integration of migrants in social. The most recent and important is the Law on residence of foreign nationals (Aufenthaltsgesetz-2005) but there are

also the Federal Law on displaced persons and refugees (1953), the nationality law (1999), the Asylum Procedure Act (1993) and, finally, some chapter of the Social Code (II, III, VIII) are very relevant for integration in labour market, vocational training and education.

2. Demographic profile, employment and criminality

The presence of migrants within the partner countries varies, since the quantity of autochthonous population is extremely different.

Based on the 2006 demographic report prepared by the Statistical Service of the Republic of **Cyprus** from a total of 867.600 inhabitants of the Republic, the estimated composition of the population by community was: 76,1% for the Greek Cypriot community and 10,2% for the Turkish Cypriot community. Moreover, the religious minority groups recognised by the Constitution (and which in 1960 opted for joining the Greek Cypriot community) totalled 0,2% Armenians; 0,6% Maronites; 0,1% Latins of the total population . Third country nationals living or intending to live in Cyprus for more than 1 yr were 13.7% of the total population.

There are annually reports and research studies published in **Sweden** concerning immigration and integration. The National board of Migration and the SCB (Swedish Bureau of Statistics) annually publish reports on this matter.

The population of Sweden in January 2009 was 9.259.828 persons. Population 2007 for the Municipality of Uppsala was 187.541. Inhabitants of foreign origin (=Born abroad or born in Sweden with both parents born abroad) were a total of 35.602 within the Municipality, around 18%.

The most frequent original countries of third-country nationals were Iran (4.218), Iraq (3.137), Turkey (1.915), Lebanon (1.150) and Syria (1.144).

Out of the population of 187.541 in the Municipality, 10.663 were children age 1-5. Of them 9.133 were enrolled in pre-school day-care.

Italy's figure on migrant presences is slightly over the European average (6,7% of the population against the European 6%). In December 2007 (source: Caritas Migrantes "Iimmigration report - 2008") the estimated migrant population was around 4 million people. The distribution of aliens is as follows: North 62,5%; Centre 25%; South 12,5%. The regions with greatest presences are Lombardia (815.000) and Lazio (391.000). The main groups are Romanians (625.000 residents), Albanians (402.000), Moroccans (366.000), Chinese and Ukrainians are both around 150.000.

On the basis of annual increase, female presence (equal to the masculine one), the increasing tendency to stabilise, the increasing relevance of children and 'second generations', all the national researches in Italy agree on the fact that immigration is a structural dimension.

The official statistics elaborated by the National Office for Refugees shows the fact that, from January 1991 up to December 2003, there have been around 13.200 requests for asylum and more than 2.000 persons were provided protection.

As far as **Romania** is concerned, despite the fact that the immigration level is low, two trends can be observed, which seem to be shaping the current migratory flows into Romania.

First, disturbances in neighbourhood countries have pushed migrants into Romania, with the hope of a better life, security and protection. Those migrants came especially from the Republic of Moldavia.

Second, Romania's geographical position has made the country a transit zone for migrants intending to reach the western countries. Immigrants arrive from Asian and African countries with the intention of staying temporarily in Romania. Generally, political reasons for migrating are often stressed by asylum seekers coming from Asian countries, and economic issues by African migrants (economic migrants).

In 2002, the number of official immigrants settled in Romania was 6 600

persons, representing around 0.03% of the total population. Most of them came from the Republic of Moldavia, 5.200 persons representing 78.79% of the total immigrant population.

The migrants coming from the Republic of Moldavia have a special status. They don't appear in our statistics because they are not considered to be migrants. They are referred to as Romanian people who regained their Romanian citizenship. That is why we cannot handle in figures related to this matter. However, in international statistics, they are referred to as migrants.

In what relates to national minorities living in Romania figures shows that from the total number of 21.680.974 inhabitants: Romanians 89.47%, Magyars 6.60%, Romany people 2.46%, Ukrainians 0.28%.

In **Germany** the proportion of migrants in the total population of Germany is 18.7 % (the population of Germany is 82.3 million in total, of which 15.4 million persons have a migratory background).

Labour market and criminality

Based on labour statistics for 2007 prepared by the Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, 67.7% of all third–country nationals in **Cyprus** are employed in the following areas: the majority in private households with employed persons; hotels and restaurants, construction, wholesale, retail trade

The data at hand with regards to the crime rate for third-country nationals, according to the criminal statistics report for 2006 (Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, 2006) indicate that 44.8% of convictions in drug related cases and that 39.2% of convictions in non-drug related crimes involved third country nationals. It should be noted that a number of these convictions concern visa and work permit violations.

Despite demographic diversity being a historical feature in these countries, there is concern about the common feeling regarding this phenomenon.

Studies show that immigration is not welcomed by Greek Cypriots, both youths and children. For example, a study conducted amongst European young people by Eurobarometer (Konstantinou, 2003) indicated that 79% of Cypriot young people state that there are "too many foreigners" in Cyprus, whereas the countries approaching accession had a mean of just 17%. Accordingly, Cypriot youth were the least likely in Europe to agree that foreigners and locals have equal rights: only 25% agreed, while the mean in the 13 accession countries is 51%. Finally, an even smaller percentage stated that they were "happy that foreigners live in my country". The 13 countries' mean is 45%, while only eight in every hundred Cypriot young people feel happy about this.

In **Sweden**, the unemployment rate was 7,3%. But for those born outside Sweden the figures can be as high as 30% according to a recent study.

About the crime rate for third-country nationals the data don't give any answers to this.

A study published by the National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå-report 2005:17) had the objective to update the picture of registered crime among immigrants (residents 15-51 age). The study shows that the differences between men and women as regards crime are bigger than the differences based on whether or not a person was born in Sweden. It is 3.5 times as likely for men to be suspected of crimes as it is for women. The figures for those born in Sweden to one or two foreign-born parents are 1.6 compared to a person born in Sweden to Swedish parents.

Irregular work is unfortunately a huge phenomenon in **Italy**. The statistics show more than 1.500.000 foreign workers (most of them from Europe), that represent 10% of the total. In Lombardia, nearly 50% of the newly employed are third country nationals.

As far as criminality is concerned, the convicted foreigners are nearly 30% of the total, and the most frequent crime is smuggling.

In Italy is more and more common to associate aliens with criminality and the present government does not make enough efforts to avoid growing racist feelings in Italian people.

If such views can be considered as one of the key reasons why minority groups experience marginalisation, then the role of education becomes evident.

In **Germany** the proportion of migrants in the working population is 16.8% (persons gainfully employed totals 38.2 million in Germany, of which 6.4 million persons have a migratory background). Workers with a migratory background are twice as likely to be employees as those workers without a migratory background (48.6% compared to 26.4%). Public employees and civil servants among them are correspondingly rare (1.2% compared to 7.1%).

With the tasks predominantly carried out by employees, it first came to attention in 2007, that the largest differences occurred in the area of "cleaning, rubbish collection, recycling" in which 9.2% of all workers with a migratory background were employed, but only 2.8% of workers without. The areas "catering and hospitality" follow with 8.1% compared to 3.3%. "Maintenance, installation and assembly" with 14.3% compared to 9.6% and "setting up and monitoring machinery" with 10.5% compared to 6.7%.

3. Educational framework

The organisation of pre-school educational systems varies in the partner countries. In all these countries we refer to services for children from 0 to 5 year old.

In **Cyprus** there is a tradition of private, unregistered local care givers who look after young children in their home but for whom no official statistics are available. The different kinds of services are called *Paidokomikoi stathmoi* (pre-school day care) for children 6 weeks to 4 $^2/_3$ years. These may be

public (12), community (47) or privately run (177) services. *Nipiagogeia* (kindergartens) for children 2 to 5 $^2/_3$ years. Of these 246 are public, 63 community and 136 privately run. Pre-primary education is compulsory and free at public kindergartens for children from 4 $^2/_3$ up to 5 $^2/_3$ years.

A total of 11528 foreign students attend kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, analysed as follows: kindergartens 2053, primary schools 4.953 and secondary schools 4522. The total number of Cypriot pupils attending educational institutions is 138262: kindergartens 24455, primary schools 52539 and secondary schools 61268 (Statistics of Education 2006/2007). At one particular Nicosia primary school 71 out of a total of 87 pupils (81.6%) are non-Greek native speakers. In one primary school in Limassol, 55 out of 146 pupils (37.7%) are non-Greek native speakers while in another 97 out of 245 (39.6%) are non-Greek native speakers. In a primary school of Paphos 203 out of 241 (84.2%) are non-Greek native speakers (The Report on Measures to Combat Discrimination - unpublished)

The pre-school system in **Sweden** is intended for children from one year old and until they start in pre-school class or compulsory school. The pre-school system consists of pre-schools, family day-care homes and open pre-schools.

Pre-school today is an intrinsic part of the daily lives of families with children and a precondition for being able to combine parenthood with employment. In 2007 just over 85 per cent of all children aged one to five are enrolled in the pre-school system. Regarding the percentage of migrant children who attend day-care, there are no specific figures.

Since the autumn of 1998, pre-schools have had their own curriculum in the form of an ordinance. Attention is thus drawn to the importance of pre-school as the first step in lifelong learning. The curriculum is intended to serve as a guide for family day-care homes. The pedagogical principles of the pre-school curriculum are based on the idea that care and the learning situation are linked.

In **Italy** the traditional pre-school services are: nursery school from 0-3 years (asilo nido) which can be public (52%) or private (54%); kindergarten from 3-5 years (scuola d'infanzia) which are mainly public (75%) but can also be private (25%). There are a number of non traditional services, the so-called integrative services (servizi integrativi), whose names change depending on the region where they are settled. The laws and principles regulating all nursery schools and integrative services in Italy are regional and can differ a lot. The most relevant integrative services are: family space for families with very young children (0-3 years), called "spazio-famiglia", these are protected spaces where it is possible to play, meet other parents, discuss with educators on different topics; and playground, called "ludoteca", these are similar to the first one but children are usually 12 months to 5 years old.

In the year 2007/2008 non-Italian pupils in the national school system were 6,4% of the total (574.000). Within kindergartens, non-Italian students are 6,7% of the total. We do not have national data on nursery schools but we do have data on the two biggest cities (2002): in Milan 17% of foreign children aged 0-3 are attending a nursery school (Italians are 17,3%); in Rome 12% of foreign children aged 0-3 are attending a nursery school (Italians are 11,5%).

In **Romania** there are two main kind of services for children's needs:

- Nursery schools (Crese) up to 3 years old. They offer two types of programs: *daily program* (10 hours per day), and weekly program (1 week) in which case the child is taken home only in weekends.

The main task of these institutions is to answer the basic needs of each child: the physiological and the security ones. Generally they are state owned.

- Kindergartens (Gradinite) state- and private-owned schools, set up by the County School Inspectorate and the Inspectorate of Bucharest. They offer various types of programs: *normal program* (5 hours per day), *long*

program (10 hours per day), providing educational activities and social protection (meals, rest hours), *weekly program* (1 week) targeted mostly on children from families facing economic hardships, providing educational activities as well as social protection (meals and accommodation).

The pre-school education is organised by age classes: the lower class (3-4 years old), medium class (4-5 years old), upper class, preparatory for school (5-6 years old). A class comprises an average of 15 pupils (a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20).

There are also other auxiliary services provided for the children with special social, psychological or physical needs, such as: centres for counselling and family support; maternal centres, community centre of resources for child and family.

According to *Statistical Yearbook of Romania during 1999*-2004, in the North East Region of Romania there is a number of 1.371 of kindergartens out of 7.616 (whole country) and 126.175 of children out of 636.709 (whole country) who are enlisted in preschool education.

The percentage of children attending the above mentioned services is as follows:

- In nursery school: 21% of the children with ages between 0 and 3 years
- In kindergartens: 69,16% of the children with ages between 3 and 6 years
- In centres for child protection: 2% from the total number of the children with ages between 0 and 18 years.

The distribution within the different types of institution shows as follows:

- normal program cover around 76,7% of the total number of children
- long program cover around 22,2%
- weekly program cover around 0,8%.

There are no statistics for the number of migrant children enrolled in pre-school education or in out-of-school institutions. From the total number of

migrant population 10% are represented by children aged between 0 and 17 years, 2,2 % between 0 and 4 years and 7,8 % between 5 and 17 years.

In **Germany** day-care facilities for children are structured as follows:

1. Day nursery: care for children under 3 years old in one or more groups

2. Kindergarten: care for children from 3 years old to school starting age in one or more groups

3. After school club: care exclusively for school children

4. Other Facilities: care for children of various ages, which can be in combined groups of children of day nursery, kindergarten and/or after school club ages or providing care for children grouped according to their ages or a combination of these two options.

In the western regions day-care is more widely available than in the eastern regions, whereas in eastern Germany there is greater availability of day nurseries. This is a result of both parts of the divided Germany developing differently from 1949 to 1989.

Children under 3 years

In March 2008, 16.920 children (45% of all children under 3 years of age) received child day-care; of these 12.939 children (77%) attended a day-care facility for children, and 3.981 (23%) were cared for by a childminder.

Children from 3 to 6 years

In March 2008, 35.897 children between the ages of 3 and 6 received child day-care. In total approximately 94% of all children in this age group were provided for by a day nursery or by child day-care, 35.149 children (92.2%) were cared for day nurseries but only 748 children (2%) in this age group took advantage of publicly funded child day-care.

4. Intercultural education

The system of services for children is an important pathway of integration, already for children of pre-school age.

The quality of acceptance within nurseries is therefore a priority of the strategies of intercultural comparison.

However, the reality of the individual countries – according to the data that have been gathered – seem to differ quite a lot.

In **Cyprus**, the Greek-Cypriot educational system has been managed by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus since 1965. Policies and practices to address multiculturalism in the educational system have only recently appeared. The rhetoric of 'intercultural education' was first introduced in a circular (circulars are documents circulated in all public schools to indicate Ministry policy on all school issues) for the school year 2001-2002. This document welcomed multiculturalism as a recent, rather than a historical phenomenon in Cyprus (Gregoriou, 2004); subsequent policy documents and reports on intercultural education by the Ministry confirm the legal right of migrant children to free education irrespective of their parents' legal status on the island. However, these documents have also been heavily criticised for the narrow scope they ascribe to intercultural education, the main aim of which is construed as the 'integration' and 'assimilation' of immigrant children (Papamichael, 2008). The term used for these children is 'other-language' ('alloglossa'), which indicates the emphasis on the fact that they are non-Greek speakers; by extent, the measures undertaken by the Ministry to address the needs of these children are largely restricted to the provision of classes of Greek as a second language, with extra periods in the school timetable being given over to this for migrant children. However, this results in the segregation of non-Greek speakers from the rest of the children, since Greek as a second language is taught to them at the primary school level when the rest of the class attends History or Religious Studies (Demetriou & Trimikliniotis, forthcoming). Similarly, another measure implemented by the Ministry, which is the creation of 'Zones of Educational Priority' to guarantee high quality education in more 'sensitive' areas (including those with a high

concentration of immigrants), has been encouraging the segregation of these populations (Symeou, Karagiorgi, Kalogirou, & Roussounidou, 2009).

Other measures and guidelines provided to teachers in Ministry documents can be ascribed to the 'additive' approach of multicultural education, since they encourage the respect for the cultural identity of children through the celebration of traditional customs, flags, dance, dress, cuisine, etc. This approach has been criticised as 'exoticising' minority cultures and as not addressing racism and xenophobia (Papamichael, 2008). These methods and terminology seem to remain the same even in the recent documentation produced by the Ministry in the process of implementing an Educational Reform and developing new curricula; it is yet to be seen how the actual curricula and practices adopted will address immigrants and issues of diversity.

In **Sweden**, the government and the parliament have established a curriculum which indicates the pre-school values and its goals and tasks.

When reading the Lpfö 98 curriculum, one can learn about the expectations and demands one as a parent can have about pre-school.

The curriculum should guarantee that all children receive an equally good pre-schooling education, regardless of where they live. Since every pre-school service follows the same curriculum, they also have the same goals. On the other hand, their methods of working may differ. The curriculum does not specify how the pre-school services should achieve their goals; this is something that the pre-school staff decides, together with the parents and children. What works for one pre-school service might not work for another. No group of children is alike.

The curriculum specifies that pre-school work should occur in close and confident cooperation with the family, which is why communication with the staff is so important.

In **Italy**, due to the huge scale of the migration phenomenon, intercultural education was at first seen as an answer to the problems of foreign

students: in particular, the focus was on the right to education, on learning the Italian language and on the valorisation of the mother tongue (see C.M. 8/9/1989, n. 301, Insertion of foreign pupils within mainstream schools. Promotion and coordination of the initiatives for exercising the right to education).

Then, the focus is put on the involvement of Italian pupils within an interactive relation with the foreign students, for a mutual enrichment (see C.M. 22/7/1990, n. 205, Compulsory Education and foreign pupils. Intercultural education). This document stresses for the first time the concept of intercultural education, seen as the most important and global way to prevent and combat racism and any kind of intolerance (see also the statement of the C.N.P.I. of 24/3/1993, Racism and anti-Semitism today: the role of the school). Europe is seen as a multicultural society, founded on the values of unity, diversity and their dialectical conciliation, and the European dimension of teaching is placed within the framework of intercultural education, with reference to the Treaty of Maastricht and to the documents of the European Union and of the Council of Europe (see document "Intercultural dialogue and democratic cohabitation, published with the C.M. 2/3/1994, n. 73).

In the Immigration Law n. 40 of 6th March 1998, art. 36, the educational value of language and social differences is stressed and initiatives of integration and Exchange are promoted.

Law of 25th July 1998, n. 286 pays a specific attention to the real exercise of the right to education, to the organisational aspects of the school, to teaching Italian as a second language, to the preservation of the language and culture of origin, to the training of teachers and to social integration. Such principles are guaranteed to all foreign minors, regardless of their juridical situation, as explicity foreste by the Act of the President of the Republic of 31st August 1999, n. 394, Implementing Regulation. In particular, we can read in the document that one can enrol into a school at

any time during the school year and that it is up to the Teachers' Committee to make proposals in order to split foreign students in the various classes, thus avoiding the presence of sections with mainly foreign pupils, and to define, in relation to the levels of competences of the individual pupils, the necessary adaptation of the teaching programmes.

C.M. n. 160/2001 aims instead at the activation of courses and training initiatives for foreign minors and their families, in order to concretely fulfil the right to education, in a framework in which the school community welcomes language and cultural differences as a founding value of mutual respect and exchange between cultures.

Law of 30th July 2002, n. 189, the so-called Bossi-Fini, that modifies the previous law on immigration and asylum, has not changed the procedures of enrolment of foreign students at school, that are still disciplined by Regulation n. 394 of 1999.

C.M. n. 24, of 1st March 2006 *Guidelines for welcoming and integrating foreign pupils* gives a general framework on how to organise the measures for the insertion of foreign pupils.

In **Romania,** immigrant children who don't know the Romanian language are entitled to attend, free of charge, an initiation course in this language. Language training lasts 1 year and children are grouped according to their age in two groups: 6-12 and 12-15 years of age.

In the 2002/03 school year, according to official statistics, 884 children from other countries were enrolled in compulsory education (primary and lower secondary levels). The proportion of those children in the total population enrolled in compulsory education is 0.04%.

Migratory backgrounds lead to disadvantages at all levels of the school system.

In **Germany**, pupils with migratory backgrounds at the same social level are far less likely to go to a grammar school and are much more likely to attend a lower status school. Twice as many foreign young persons than

Germans leave a general education school without even achieving a school leaving certificate, whereas Germans are three times more likely to achieve the qualification required for entry into university.

Delayed and less successful transition into vocational training for young people with a migratory background *(those who are still in education are not taken into account)*:

- No general school leaving certificate: 12.6%
- No professional qualification: 46,0 %

Whereas half of young people without migratory backgrounds are successful in securing a trainee position with further education within three months, young people with a migratory background achieve this outcome only after 17 months. As a result 60% of foreign young people are to be found in this period of transition, but only 40% of Germans. The differences have increased in the last decade.

5. Intercultural training for educators

None of the partner countries have provisions for specific professional educators who can facilitate the integration of migrant families/children (such as a mediator) within the services for children.

In **Cyprus** issues of intercultural education are touched upon thematically during the four year bachelor degree required for early years and primary teacher training but no specific training is given. There are also a number of venues for in-service training for pre-primary and primary school teachers on issues of intercultural education, undertaken either during postgraduate studies, or as optional in-service training provided by the Pedagogical Institute or other organisations such as teachers' professional associations, universities, NGOs and other organised groups.

In **Sweden** in the LPFÖ 98 one can read that no child should be subjected to discrimination at pre-school based on gender, ethnic belonging, religion or other belief, sexual orientation of a family member or disability, or

subject to other degrading treatment. The internationalisation of Swedish society imposes high demands on the ability of people to live with and understand values in cultural diversity. Pre-school is a social and cultural meeting place, which can reinforce this and prepare children for life in an increasingly internationalised community. Awareness of their own cultural heritage and participating in the culture of others, should contribute to the children's ability to understand and empathise with the circumstances and values of others. The pre-school can help to ensure that children from national minorities and children with a foreign background receive support in developing a multicultural belonging.

The pre-school also should try to ensure that children, whose first language is not Swedish, develop their cultural identity as well as their ability to communicate in both Swedish and their first language.

To work at pre-school you need a Bachelor of Education Degree with qualification for teaching in pre-schools. The curriculum includes a course called Cultural Encounters where the students shall develop a general competence for teaching migrant children.

In **Italy**, law 394/1999 states that, in order to support teachers, the Ministry of Education has the duty to plan training courses at local and national level on the themes of intercultural education. In general, the duty to make integration of foreign families easier within the services is given to all professionals working within the services. In order to work as a children educator a degree in Science of Education is needed in most Italian Regions (but each region has its own rules). This pathway includes some courses on intercultural education that the student can decide to take.

In **Romania** a mediator is working under the effects of the Law no.192/16th of May 2006 regarding mediation and organizing the mediator profession.

There is a Mediation Council, a Professional Mediator's Romanian Association and also a Mediator's Professional Ethical Code.

As far as the facilitation of the migrant families/children's integration is concerned Romanian work with professionals prepared in legal, social and medical assistance throughout the refugee status determination procedure.

A continuous training for specialists in the asylum field is provided: students in Social Assistance and Law Schools - through programmes carried out in the Legal Clinic, the Social Clinic and the Summer School, entitled *Integrated Assistance to Refugees and Repatriated Persons*.

We can also refer to the terms "community facilitator" as someone who helps a group of people understand their common objectives and assists them to plan to achieve them without taking a particular position in the discussion. In Romania, the facilitators are working with Roma population supporting the cultural and ethnic relations between Roma and the other minorities and teaching Roma population how to use their own inner strength and abilities to successfully integrate in the local communities.

In **Germany** in day-care facilities for children there are no specially qualified staff who are exclusively responsible for questions around integration. The local authorities employ staff to deal with issues of migration, integration and foreign nationals.

There are no legal requirements in terms of intercultural expertise in day-care facilities for children.

The majority of persons employed in the facilities are teachers. The training takes 5 years. Of these 2 years are spent in preparation for a teaching career, ending with a qualification as a social assistant. The next 3 years are to qualify as a teacher. The qualifications social assistant and teacher cover the age range from 0 to 18 years.

The training does not deal with intercultural topics. A qualification relating to this area can be obtained later through further education.

Also specialisations, e.g. experts in music, environment and nature, integration of disabled and not disabled children, children with challenging behaviour, are supported by education providers.

Furthermore day-care facilities for children employ qualified social education workers, educationalists and remedial education workers. Just as the importance of education has increased at the elementary level (0 to school entry age) and primary level (school entry age to 11 years) it has also increased in the intercultural context. Education providers offer advanced learning to improve the intercultural expertise of teachers.

The integration according to the families: level perceived and level of communication and understanding (from the parents questionnaires)

In each country where the questionnaires were distributed, about 5 services for children aged 0-5 have been involved. In these services an average number of 30 questionnaires where successfully filled out and then used for the research.

The services, mainly traditional ones, i.e. nursery schools and kindergartens (both public and private), have been chosen because they are located in areas where there is a high presence of aliens or because they represent examples of good practices in integration.

About the interviewed profile

Gender: around 85% were female and around 15% male, except for Cyprus and Romania where about 45% were female and 55% male.

Country of origin: in Cyprus, Italy and Romania about half of the questionnaires were filled by autochthones; for Cyprus the other two most frequent origins were Asia (16%) and EU countries (19%); 4% were from Africa; 2,9% from America and 1,5% from European non EU-countries. In Italy about 15% were from UE countries; 11% non-EU European countries; 11% American; 7% Asian; 3% Africa; in Romania aliens who filled in the questionnaires were from Greece, Spain, Palestine, Italy.

In Sweden, out of 17 questionnaires that were filled in, only one was by a Swedish parent; the other 82% were from Asia; 12% from European non-EU countries; 6% Americans.

In Germany: none were filled by German parents; 44% by EU countries and 44% European countries non EU; 11% from Africa

Level of education: in two cases (Italy and Cyprus) we can find a high percentage 65% of University education (in Sweden it is 35%); among the others interviewees 40% have secondary education; 20% primary education. In Romania 1/3 of the interviewed has non formal education, 1/3 has primary education and the last 1/3 has secondary education (just 1 university).

Permanence period in the host country: most of them have been living in the host country for more than 5 years but in certain countries (Sweden) a number of aliens (10%) arrived not later than one year ago (35% have been living there for no more than 5 years).

About the reason why the parents enrolled their child in the service: the main reason (50%) is to let them socialise with other children; and another (35%) is because of work commitment; in Cyprus a considerable number (46%) didn't answer this question; it is interesting to note that in Germany more than 25% answered that the reason is to let them learn German and that in Sweden 5% answered that it is 'to educate myself'.

1. Accessibility of the services

Are the information materials written in other languages?

It is important to notice that in all countries more than 50% of the interviewees answered that the information materials are written also in other languages, even if in some cases (in Germany and Cyprus) around 30% pointed out that their language was not in the list.

Cultural Mediator

This professional figure is provided in Sweden (but it is actually a mother tongue teacher - 65%) Italy and Romania (70%). When you ask people

whether they would consider it helpful for integration process, it seems to be very useful in Sweden 60% but not so much in the other countries.

2. Features of the service

As far as the features of the service are concerned, we would like to stress the fact that a very good percentage of parents (average of 90% in the various countries) state that they know how a typical day in the service is. This is a good data in order to understand the level of communication between the service and the family and the level of 'tranquillity' with which the parents experience the detachment from their child.
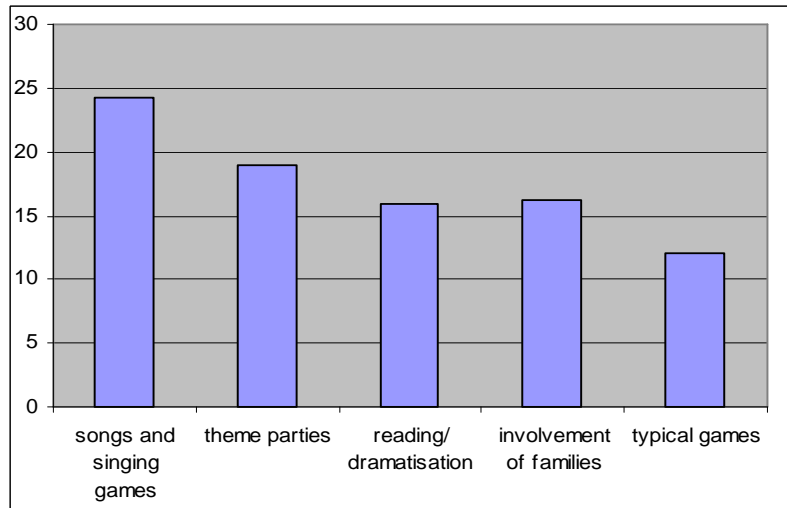
Satisfaction on different aspects
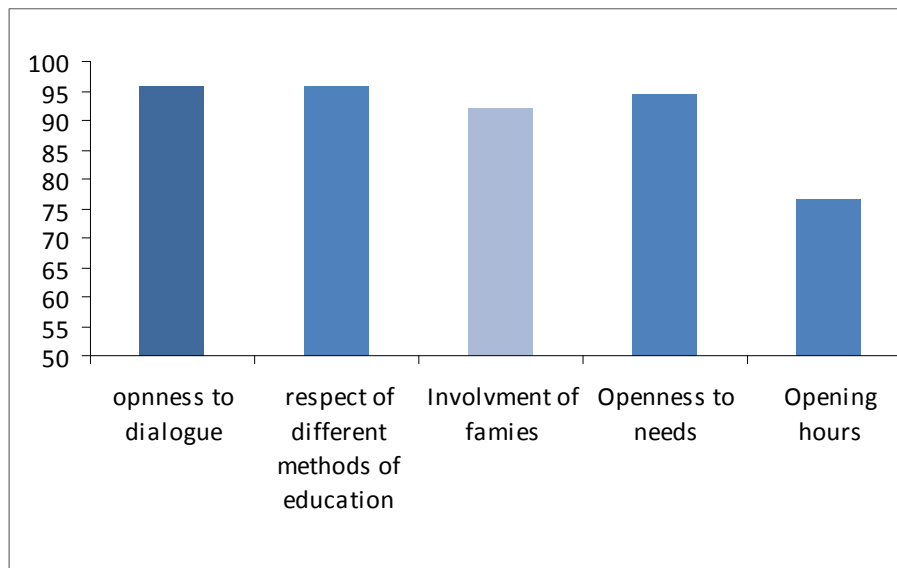
Families seem to be very satisfied with the considered items concerning the relationship with the service.
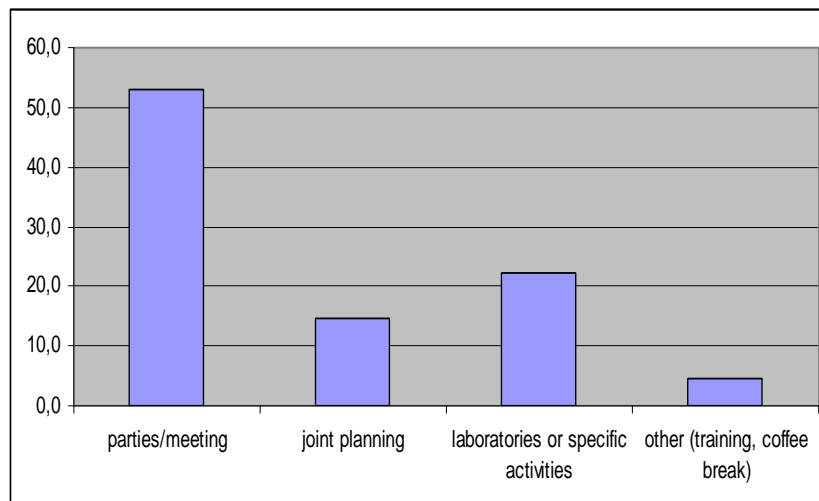
What proposals are made to valorise different cultures?

About the different **food regimes,** the consideration varies considerably within the countries: an average of 60% answer that different types of food are provided.

3. Involvement of families and communication with parents

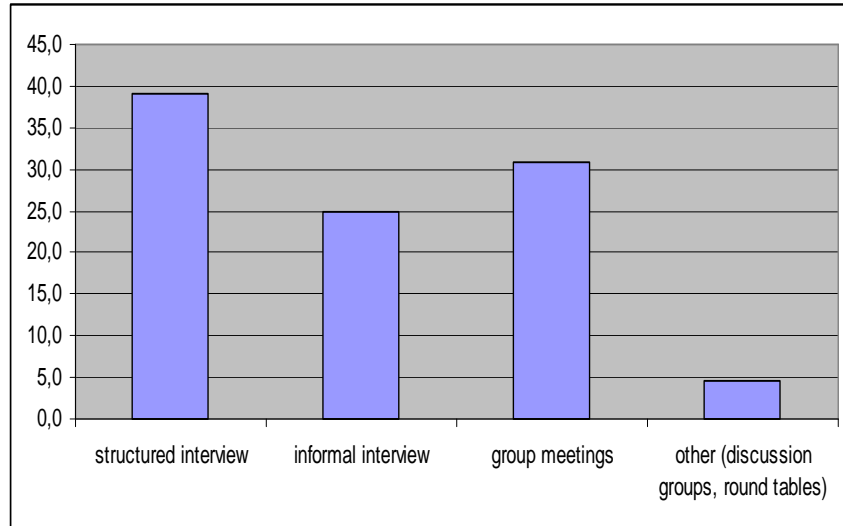*Does the service propose specific activities dedicated to parents?*

Means of communications between parents and educators

Most effective means to express observation
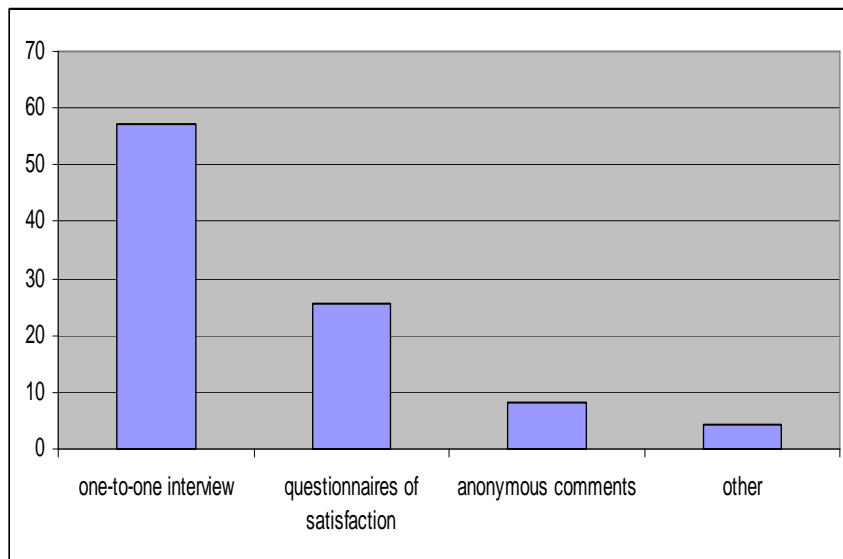
4. Relations with other parents

88% of the interviewees declare that they have had the chance to get to know some of the parents attending the service.

85% declare that they have participated in exchanges/meetings/parties together with the other parents and the main examples are: festivals, celebrations, round tables for parents, laboratories, birthday parties…

It is important to notice though that an average of 10% have never participated in to any of these opportunities.

In conclusion 90% think that their children like attending the service.

We must add a note though on the fact that some interviewers observed (according also to their professional experience) that in a large part parents (especially aliens) don't feel comfortable in answering questionnaires and that they would never discuss the educators' behaviour or activities. So the data collected and illustrated above has to be read with great caution.

The integration of foreign families according to the operators: level perceived, competencies required to operators, existing best practices
(from the focus groups)

The focus groups have been held within particular contexts, i.e. environments that are traditionally sensitive to the theme of intercultural education. This is why people attending the focus groups have a certain idea of what integration is and what needs to be put in place.

These environments were language schools attended by foreign people and a 'permanent laboratory for peace'.

From the focus groups some very important points on the integration process have come out, as well as some interesting suggestions on the skills required of educators and some interesting examples of good practices.

A general consideration that we have to bear in mind is that sometimes immigrant families have a different idea of the relationship that you should have with schools and institutions in general: schools should use a wider range of tools to make immigrants understand that their participation to educational life (inside and outside schools) is fundamental in this specific context. On the other hand we should make a more intensive effort to understand their point of view: this attitude may help us to question our rules.

1. What can help the integration process

We have listed some of the main interesting ideas that have emerged during the focus groups and that should be taken into consideration:

- Studying the host country language is very important for integration ('it is the key that opens the doors')

- Teaching a language to young children or their families: alternative ways have to be found to introduce and explain the material used in class (games, songs and IT).

- Let children act as 'translators' for less skilled peers. Families are also encouraged to support their children's learning with activities at home when this is possible, though there are cases of parents learning the language with and through their school child (unless we have to bear in mind that to 'force' a child or a family to speak a different language may produce adverse effects on the child's balance).

- Schools have to find the way to mediate with different cultural traditions (eg. swimming wear for Muslim females is not recommended)

- Propose more multicultural themes promoting universal values rather than the traditional beliefs of one religion.

- Intercultural education was described as 'celebrating diversity while recognising the similarities',

- Give information about life and society of the host country. This is where they get their knowledge about basic facts and rules (Sweden).

- Offer a combination of services (social workers, physiotherapists, dieticians and child psychologists, physical training).

- Be pro-active but gradually and with tact.

- Try to reach a certain level of confidence with the parents, through an informal relation

- To put oneself into their shoes (if we want a relationship to be a certain way we also need to understand how the other would like the relationship to be!)

- Educate the educators to pay attention to each specific need of parents, both foreign and autochthonous

- Share objectives and define good practices of comparison between workers, but also between workers and parents
- Subject of the learning of the prevalent language and conservation of the mother tongue (facilitation techniques and inhibitor behaviours)
- 'Get used to' seeing some people and try to valorise their skills
- Stick to the informal level
- Networking with other services located in the area: the importance of other approaches and educational experiences
- Special library with challenging points on the various cultures (idea for a training course)
- Update the competencies of the educators, keep the idea of lifelong learning alive
- Let parents be protagonists (eg. choose the topic from their interests and needs); involve the parents themselves in the planning of the contents of the different courses or activities
- Integration often goes only one way. It is the immigrants' struggle to become integrated. It should be the other way round too!
- The area where immigrants live must not be segregating: we must mingle more in our ordinary daily life
- Some professional workers can help the integration process (i.e. the mother tongue teacher or the cultural mediator) or at least have the cooperation of someone who himself has a background of migration.

2. The educators training needs and competences

To plan intercultural pathways in the services for children means to take part in the creation of a flexible, open, interested mind. To everything that is 'new', 'different', 'not interested'.

It is necessary to lay the foundation of integration that is seen as the promotion of everybody's identity, and not as integration in the sense that we perceived somebody as vulnerable.

In order to do this, it is important to 'do project work': i.e. following less structured working pathways, that are gradually built, and are thought and realised starting from:

- the competence of the children
- need, questions, peculiarities
- answers they give us when we propose some games

Thus valorising what hadn't been foreseen at the beginning.

It is not a question of:

- building special spaces
- make separate interventions
- know/teach the mother tongue of each child
- include ethnical elements, thus increasing folk images or stereotypes

It is a question of recognising and valorising each culture through:

- valorising everybody's peculiarity
- welcoming different cultural elements
- in a dimension of exchange and mutuality

And how do we do this? According to the participants to the focus groups, educators and workers in child care services need:

1) An understanding and appreciation of cultural differences based on knowledge and interest for each culture's practises, values and core beliefs without parents having to explain them.

2) To know the social, religious and cultural characteristics of the main ethnic groups they encounter everyday and to be open minded.

3) An understanding of the nature of racism and the need to display the ability to step outside of themselves, to critically examine and to identify and readdress any inherent racism within their own behaviour.

4) You need exactly the same competences as when you work with Swedish parents. There is no difference. They have to be able to stress the similarities not the differences

5) You must talk to each other, be open and friendly. Ask questions, be curious. You must be human and show empathy.

6) Effective communication techniques

7) Good knowledge of the opportunities available within the geographical area of reference could be an effective competence in order to support the integration of foreign families: in this way we can in fact help them in using these available resources in a better way

8) To keep on researching and experimenting

A suggestion was made for the opportunity to gain teaching experience from a variety of schools with different cultures and philosophies. There is a need to share information between schools and countries in order to identify alternative strategies and problem resolutions.

3. Good practices

In **Cyprus**, in a school some parents assist in the classes listening to children read. Parents are also invited to join excursions with their children, as well as to numerous events during the school year such as sports days, swimming galas, quizzes and assemblies. The Parents' Association not only organises its own activities within the school for the families, such as cheese and wine evenings, May fairs and Christmas parties, but also assists the school in its functions and organises specific events to raise money for charity. It does not have any jurisdiction in running the academic side of the school.

Formal parent-teacher meetings are held twice a year to discuss a child's progress but parents are free to make an appointment with a member of staff at any time to discuss any issue they may have. Teachers sometimes invite parents to the school if there is an issue which requires attention.

In **Sweden**, Kristallen is a special kind of nursery school called "Open nursery school or kindergarten" it is open for mothers to come and bring their children and to stay with them. The children get the opportunity to

play and attend different kinds of activities and the mothers to meet other mothers and also professional staff. The head of the nursery school Kristallen takes responsibility both for the children and for the mothers.

The mothers also may attend SFI (Swedish for Immigrant) in the same place. There are about 40 students (mothers) divided into four classes and there are two full time teachers. Kristallen also offers a range of courses and activities aimed at women/mothers such as computer courses, information about Swedish life and society in cooperation with midwives, nurses, dieticians, child psychologists and social workers.

The aim of the activity is therefore to give the possibility to learn Swedish during a period when the immigrant mother is kept back by small and often many children and sometimes even by her husband. It is also meant to be a support and help for her to get acquainted to her new role as a woman and a mother in the new country.

In **Italy**, there are several very good experiences on the topic of intercultural services for children. We mention some useful examples in the area of communication:

- "the multicultural shelf " in the libraries of schools and childcare services (provided by the Network of Intercultural Canters): it offers an extensive bibliography and encourages educators to use books and narratives as instruments for intercultural education.
- using the "narrative method" is an important tool to compare different intercultural situations; in Italy the "narrative method" means 1) to propose a selection of tales and narratives dealing with general trans-cultural issues such as emotions, mythological stories and bridge-characters for enhancing the common elements in the different narratives, searching the differences and opening to other horizons
- comparison of different languages, telling bilingual stories, using narrative texts from different periods and places
- using autobiographical narrative and life stories.

In children services, educators often play games and exercises for actively involving children in experiences later revised and discussed within the group. Some examples <u>in the area of game and involvement</u>: games of knowledge, construction of own family's book (family's tree with names of relatives, photos and drawings), socialization games.

To reduce the feelings of discomfort in foreign children caused by the unknown with a language and to create with them a verbal communication bridge. Some examples <u>in the linguistic area</u>:

- using the 'first aid' language: a list of words in the origin language of the child that teachers use with him: the COME Center has developed a 'first aid' list translated in several languages (www.centrocome.it)

- using 'the language of hospitality' (Favaro, 2002). It is an arrangement for the use of Italian language as the following: speaking slowly without changing the rhythm of the words, clear pronunciation of words highlighting keywords, simplifying the sentence structure and using concrete references, a small use of synonyms and pronouns preferring the basic words and the names of people and objects

It is necessary to encourage the linguistic exchange between children (i.e. situations of work or play in which children may communicate in their own language), games with a prevalence of verbal exchanges, rhymes and mimes, carrying out posters, words' booklets, phrases or songs in which the subjects have registered a high interest.

In **Romania,** 2004 was a very good year with regards to the cooperation with the Romanian authorities from the asylum field, this cooperation being considered a model in the region. The Protocols of Cooperation signed by Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR), a non-governmental organisation recognized as being of public utility in 2003 with the National Refugee Office, the Border Police National Department, and with the Aliens Authority contributed to the diversification of activities carried out by its foundation and to the recognition of its valuable contribution in this field.

Together with its partners, CNRR organised training sessions on access to procedure and to the territory for 21 Directions and county Border Police departments. Due to the new competencies established through adopted legislation, CNRR was involved in training the magistrates from Galati and Timisoara. CNRR organised seminars for the Aliens Authority staff working in the accommodation centres for aliens detained for illegal stay on Romanian territory. The asylum-seekers and refugees from Romania were able to find support in the Romanian National Council for Refugees with regards to legal, social and medical assistance throughout the refugee status determination procedure. Priority in assistance was given to women, children, seniors, and refugees with disabilities. The Romanian National Council for Refugees continued to be involved in the training of future specialists in the asylum field: students in Social Assistance and Law Schools - through programmes carried out in the Legal Clinic, the Social Clinic and the Summer School, entitled *Integrated Assistance to Refugees and Repatriated Persons*.

In **Switzerland**, there are several initiatives and activities completed and in progress. A website list follows of institutions working in the intercultural field and with regard to the integration of early childhood. Visiting them, it is possible to find official guidelines, methodologies and the running of intercultural projects.

– www.ti.ch/DI/temi/delstra/default.asp: Official website of the Canton Ticino, page of the delegate for the integration of foreigners and anti-racism

– www.ti.ch/decs/ds/uffsc/programma.asp: Official website of the Canton Ticino, DECS department (education, culture, sports) - municipal schools - see the document "Orientations of the Children School"

– www3.ti.ch/index.php?fuseaction=temi.home&id=305|1451: Official website of the Canton Ticino, Education training and culture

−www.genitorinforma.ch: site of the Cantonal Conference of parents, official page of the meetings

−www.e-e-e.ch/content.asp?navigationID=98&sprache=I: project presentation "Education makes strong" addressed to parents, meetings of parents and educators

−www.labor-transfer.ch: homepage of the laboratory for guidelines and people skills development and orientation to job search. Since this year it proposes a training course for trainers about the parental highlighting aspects of migrants integration (http://www.labor-transfer.ch/content/ffa1gen.php)

−www.ondemedia.com/biblioteca.interculturale/index_file/frame.htm: intercultural Library of Italian Switzerland. It is interesting to exchange experiences for integration activities also addressed to children and young

−www.pro-juventute.ch/Per-i-bambini: association that works in children rights

−www.gender.supsi.ch/pagine/04nido.php: professional school of the Italian Switzerland University

−www.montecarasso.ch/p5_4.asp: presentation of the Committee for the Integration of the City of Monte Carasso, village near Bellinzona, capital of Ticino. This working group has held several children and parents integration activities.

Conclusions

As a conclusion we may say that all partners agree on the statement that *integration has to be seen as the promotion of everybody's identity, not as the perception of somebody being vulnerable or different*.

We sum up below some of the most interesting outputs of the research.

As far as intercultural education concerns[1]:

- All partners' countries have policy documents or laws stating the legal right of migrant children to free education irrespective of their parents' legal status

- All the considered countries explicitly provide courses on the host country language and some of them stress the importance of the valorization of the mother tongue and culture

- None of the partner countries have provisions of legal requirements in terms of intercultural expertise in day care facilities for children: issues of intercultural education are touched upon during the study curricula

About the level of integration:

the followings are the outputs from parents' questionnaires

- 50% of the information materials on accessibility of the service are translated in different languages

- The cultural mediator is provided in few countries, but it's not kept in high consideration in integration process

- 90% of parents declare to be aware of the 'typical day' in day care facilities for children, demonstrating that they understand the information coming from different sources (teachers, information materials,…)

- the satisfaction with different aspects of daycare facilities is very high. Each items reach 95% of satisfaction

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[1] See Eurydice research *Integrating Immigrant children into schools in Europe*, April 2009 whit a particular attention to the measures to foster: Communication with immigrant families and Heritage language teaching for immigrant children

- the most effective tools to reach involvement of families, in parents' perception, are the specific activities which are planned at this aim by the facilities; and the means of communication

- Relations with other parents: 85% participated to meetings 10% didn't

These are some important tools or behaviors which help the integration process and, below, the competences required to the educators in this field, according to people participating to the focus groups :

What helps integration process

- Acknowledgement of host country language and valorization of the mother tongue

- mediation with different cultural tradition (i.e. swimming wear)

- promote universal values rather than local tradition

- give information about life and society of the host country

- offer a combination of services (i.e. physiotherapists, psychologists,..) or networking with other local services

- establish informal relations and confidence with parents

- take into consideration others' point of view

- involve parents in the planning of objectives and contents

- mingle in ordinary day life

Competences required to educator

- have a 'work in progress' approach: start from single child competences, needs and peculiarities and valorize what hadn't been foreseen

- recognize and promote each culture: valorize everybody peculiarity, welcome different cultural elements, promote exchange and mutuality

- be curious and interested on each culture's practices, values and core beliefs

- have ability to step outside yourself, critically examine your behavior

-    exactly the same competences you need when you work with autochthon parents (stress the similarities, not the differences)

-    Have a good knowledge of the opportunities available in the area to properly address the families

SMILE

Supporting Multicultural Integration and Learning

ANNEXES

RESEARCH REPORT MATERIALS

SMILE PROJECT - WP N. 2 RESEARCH REPORT

DATA COLLECTION

Specific objective:

- to investigate the national background on intercultural integration, particularly in the educational field

- to identify the areas where the questionnaires and focus group should be held, in accordance with the highest percentage of migrants and concentration of early childhood services and in accordance with the existing best practices on communication with migrant families

Notes:

- a 'migrant' in this specific context is a person who moved into your country from abroad (either inside or outside the EU)

Work phase: WP2		
Name of partner-organisation:		Country:
Address:		
Person responsible for collecting the data:	Position of person in the organisation:	
Date:		

ABOUT INTERCULTURAL INTEGRATION IN YOUR COUNTRY

1.1   Please list the main laws on the subject of the integration of third-country nationals that are in force at local or national level (in general and, specifically, within the educational field)

1.2   Please list the main reports and research studies that have been drafted in your country on the distribution of third-country nationals and their integration and, if possible, please highlight

- data (in percentage) on the presence of the main ethnic minorities

- data (in percentage) on the employment situation of third-country nationals

- data on crime rate for third-country nationals

CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION

2.1 Describe the different types of services for children (preschool and out-of-school care) in your country (i.e. childminders/crèches/nurseries/kindergartens/day-homes)

Please use the national names for each service and explain in English.

2.2 What is the distribution of the services for childhood within the different areas/region of your country?

2.3 What is the percentage of children who attend the above mentioned services? (Please indicate for each of the services if possible!)

2.4 What is the percentage of migrant children who attend the above mentioned services? (Please indicate for each of the services if possible!)

2.5 Within the services for childhood, are there specific professional figures that can facilitate the integration of migrant families/children (such as a mediator)? Please specify whether these figures are foreseen by law or whether they are appointed by the services themselves on a voluntary basis.

2.6 Please give us some information on the vocational training which is required for the educators of these services and specify whether a specific training on intercultural integration does exist

2.7 Is it possible to identify some good practices on the subject of the methodologies of communication between the services and the migrant families that attend those services (for example, because specific research have been conducted or because they are famous at national level)? If so, please give us a brief description of the best practice, with references (i.e. name, website).

SMILE PROJECT - WP N. 2

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
FOR PARENTS

GENERAL DATA OF THE PERSON

☐ Male
☐ Female

1. Country of origin: …………………………………………………………

2. Level of education

   ☐ primary

   ☐ secondary

   ☐ university

   ☐ no formal education

3. How long have you been living in this country for ?

   ☐ Less than 1 year

   ☐ Between 1 and 5 years

   ☐ Between 5 and 10 years

   ☐ Over 10 years

   ☐ always

4. Why did you enrol your child to this service?

   ☐ So that he / she could meet other children

   ☐ Because of my work commitments

   ☐ In order to have some free time for myself

Other……………………………………………..

ACCESSIBILITY OF THE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

5. Are the information materials about the service written in other languages?

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ Yes, but not in my language

☐ No

☐ Don't know

6. In your child's service, do you have a cultural mediator?

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

    ☐ Don't know

7. If yes, do you think it's useful in terms of facilitating your relations with the service?

    ☐ A lot

    ☐ A bit

    ☐ Not much

    ☐ Not at all

FEATURES OF THE SERVICE

8. Do you know how a typical day is organised in the service and what are the main activities?

    ☐ Yes

    ☐ No

9. Are you satisfied with the following aspects of the service?

- Openness to dialogue

☐ Yes   ☐ No

- Acknowledgement and respect for different methods of care and education

☐ Yes   ☐ No

- Involvement of families in the experiences and proposals that are organised

☐ Yes   ☐ No

- Open to needs and requests from parents

☐ Yes   ☐ No

- The opening hours fit my work commitments

☐ Yes   ☐ No

10. What proposals are made in order to valorise the various cultures within the service?
- ☐ Typical games from various parts of the world
- ☐ Reading/dramatisation of tales, nursery-rhymes, stories from the world
- ☐ Songs and singing games from different parts of the world
- ☐ Involvement of families (both foreign and non-foreign ones)
- ☐ Multilingual materials
- ☐ Themes parties and snacks with a multiethnic feature
- ☐ Other (specify)…………………………………………………..

11. Do the meals and snacks provided take into consideration also different food régimes? (ex. vegetarian, no pork, organic,…)
- ☐ Yes, ex……………………………………..
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE FAMILIES AND THE LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION

12. Does the service propose specific activities dedicated to parents?
- ☐ Parties and/or meeting
- ☐ Joint planning of activities
- ☐ Laboratories or activities ruled by parents
- ☐ Other……………………………………….
- ☐ I don't know

13. What possibilities are given to the parents in order to communicate with the educators?

(ex. it is possible to choose more than one option)
- ☐ Structured individual interviews
- ☐ Informal interviews
- ☐ Group meetings
- ☐ Other…………………………………………………

14. Which methods used in the service, if there are any, do you think are more effective in order to express your observations, criticisms, suggestions?

☐ One-to-one interviews

☐ Questionnaires of satisfaction

☐ Anonymous comments

☐ Other……………………………………………………………

THE RELATION WITH THE OTHER FAMILIES/PARENTS AND CHILDREN

15. Have you had the chance to get to know some of the parents that attend the service?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. Have you ever participated in exchanges/meetings/parties together with the other parents of the service?

☐ Yes.
Ex…………………………………………………………………...

☐ No

17. Do you think you child likes to attend the service?

☐ Yes

☐ No

SMILE PROJECT - WP N. 2

FOCUS GROUPS: THE INTEGRATION OF FOREIGN FAMILIES IN THE SERVICES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD: LEVEL PERCEIVED, COMPETENCIES REQUIRED TO OPERATORS, EXISTING BEST PRACTICES

Frame*:* the focus group should be held within one/two of the services which has been identified on a basis of good reputation, good intercultural approach and relevant presence of immigrant families.

Participants*:* minimum 6 and maximum 10 people. Approximately:

- 1 strategic manager (president, member of the board directors,….)
- 1 coordinator (service or area coordinator)
- Educators
- Auxiliary workers
- Representatives of parents that are already members of participative bodies (and that have not filled in the questionnaire)

Duration: minimum 1 and ½, maximum 2 and ½ hours

Ways of conducting

- The group should be conducted by a couple: 1 facilitator and 1 observer, that has the task to record the group dynamics and the contents of the exchanges/discussions.

Agenda of the meeting:

Introduction to the meeting: where is it placed, motivations, objectives, use of results,..

First round of suggested questions

- How long have you been working in education?
- What place does diversity has within the educational themes?
- The professional tools at your disposal are…..……
- What is an obstacle and what makes easier the integration of different people in groups such as the school?
- …………………

Second round of suggested question

- Do you think that presence of foreign families has caused a change in the attitudes and educational strategies within the service?

- If yes, where did you most notice this change? (i.e., communication with families, individual attention towards the children and their families, quality and diversification of the proposal

- What competencies are needed in order to work with immigrants?

- The cultural mediator: pros, cons, other………according to your experience

- Communication and involvement of families in the service: best tools you know and difficulties you may face.

- What training to get intercultural competences? To whom?

- ………..