

# Remigrant children in European schools

## Theoretical background and research results



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# Chapter I

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## Migration and remigration. Theoretical background and research results

### I.1. Migration

Migration is, in particular, due to the current increase of the phenomenon, a common concept, a term in common language, but still relatively difficult to define from a scientific point of view; “Migration is so familiar to us today that we perceive it as being self-evident. . . . If we are in a position to define migration - things are no longer as simple” (Vlăsceanu, 2010).

The usual definitions of the concept – “migration: mass movement of tribes or populations from one territory to another determined by economic, social, political or natural factors” (Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (2nd edition - revised, 2012) are sufficient to outline an overview of the subject, but do not allow the terminological clarifications appropriate to the scientific analysis of the migration phenomenon.

The definitions in the specialty dictionary, although somewhat deepened, are situated at a level of generality that does not allow operationalization of the concept:

☞ “movement of populations from one country to another or from one region to another. Several cases: Changes in final residence, seasonal or daily movements (alternative migrations between place of work and place of residence)” (Ferreol, Cauche, Duprez, Gadrey, & Simon, 1998);

☞ “a phenomenon consisting in the movement of crowds of people from one territorial area to another, followed by a change of domicile and / or a form of activity in the area of arrival” (Zamfir & Vlăsceanu, 1993);

☞ “the movement of a person or group of persons either across the border of a State or within a State; is a population movement comprising any movement, regardless of the time, composition of the group or causes” (definition given by the International Organization for Migration, <http://www.iom.int>).

This type of definition emphasizes the movement of a person from one space to another, but does not allow for the punctual differentiation of migrants.

An **operational definition** of the concept of migration is offered by L. Vlăsceanu (2010), who said that:

☞ the essential element in defining travelling as a migration is crossing a border, either a border that differentiates between administrative units within the same state (internal migration) or a border that differentiates political units (international migration) - a criterion deemed necessary, but not enough;

☞ the ability of a movement to bring about a change in the way of life of the individual, to induce a movement of the exercise of its activities in another space; as a rule, this change takes place over a certain period of time. The cited author mentions that the conventional minimum thresholds leading to the definition of movement as a migration are 3/6 months;

☞ the stated purpose of movement may be a criterion of differentiation in the sense that it anticipates the content of the movement, being in principle a criterion for exclusion: tourism, religious pilgrimage, medical treatment etc. are not considered as migration;

☞ operational criteria for international migration are: citizenship (the migrant has a nationality other than the country of residence), the place of birth (the migrant is born in a country other than his / her residence), the time spent in the country of destination.

*Internal migration* reflects spatial mobility between different administrative units located within the borders of the same state, while *external migration* involves crossing state borders (Anghel & Horvath, 2009).

*Temporary migration* presupposes a “residency in a country other than the one in which a person has permanent domicile” (Anghel & Horvath, 2009), while *permanent migration* involves the definitive change of the country of residence; however, there is no clear time limit to distinguish between long-term but temporary migration and permanent migration, the transformation into a definitive migrant being usually linked to the nationality of the country of destination (Vlăsceanu, 2010).

*Circular migration* involves a pattern of repeated movements between the country of origin and the destination country, mainly associated with the needs of the labour market from destination and origin (Vlăsceanu, 2010), while the *transitory*



*migration* (called *chain migration*) describes the situation where the migrant moves through several host countries before reaching the final destination country (or rated by the migrant as having the potential to be the final destination country).

*Forced migration* describes situations where “people’s decision to engage in migration is taken in the context of pressures (direct or indirect) exerted by individuals, institutions, or external circumstances” (Anghel & Horvath, 2009) while *voluntary migration* refers to situations where the decision to migrate is taken by the concerned person for purely personal reasons, without external pressures in this respect.

*Economic migration* “has predominantly material considerations and follows the logic of maximizing benefits: stakeholders. . . identify and integrate into those locations or countries where, after the same amount of effort, the benefits are considerably higher”, while *political migration* is considered to be the “a mobility process in which actors engage in migration in the context of unfavourable circumstances created by the political and administrative authorities - failure to observe fundamental rights, unfavourable treatment of minorities, other similar practices” (Anghel & Horvath, 2009).

*Proactive migration* is defined as the situation where “individuals migrate to find more favourable contexts in which they can reinvest the capital they have in order to maximize their benefits”, while *reactive migration* is characterized by the fact that “individuals migrate to prevent or reduce the damage that may result from certain social, political, economic adverse contexts, or due to changes in the natural environment” (Anghel & Horváth, 2009).

## **I.2. Return migration / remigration**

The return migration means a migration process in which the individual returns to his place of birth or to the state of his nationality (Vlăsceanu, 2010).

An operational definition of the return migration concept is given by the United Nations Statistics Division, the collection of data on international migration organized by this institution contributing to the definition of return migrants as “those returning to the country of their nationality after they were international migrants (whether in the short or medium term) in another country and who intend to stay in their native country for at least one year” (OECD, 2008). This definition is also a comprehensive one, taking into account four categories of information: the country of origin, the country of residence, the period spent abroad and the period to be spent in the country of origin, but it raises the question of how to define the country of origin (if we define it as the country whose citizenship the migrant has, it is the issue of those who have taken the nationality of the country of adoption or of the dual

citizenship, so it seems more appropriate to define it as the country where the migrant was born).

Although the *report* between *return migration* and *initial migration* seems pretty linear and clear, recent theories on return migration call into question this simplifying approach: “In the context of the development of the trans-nationalism paradigm in the migration study, return is no longer considered as the last stage of a linear process, as migrants prepare this stage through numerous visits and financial and social remittances” (Vlase, 2011).

Another aspect to be taken into account in defining return migration is when the migrant decides to return to his native country; thus, return migration refers only to the case of “migrants working for a period in the country of destination, and then returning to their native country before the retirement age” (Dustmann, 1996).

Return migration can also be analysed from the perspective of *voluntary remigration - forced remigration dichotomy*, but the operational differentiation between these two types of migration is not as clear as the terminology used. Thus, we discuss about forced migration in the context in which “the remigration decision belongs to the authorities of the host state, which also take the effective measures to implement this decision in accordance with pre-established procedures” (European Commission, 2007); at the diametrically opposed pole, voluntary migration “is based on individual decisions concerning remigration, possibly with the assistance of international organizations (for example, the International Migration Organization) or NGOs in the country of origin or country of adoption. According to this report, it is important to note that there is no clear line of demarcation between voluntary and forced remigration, different states in the EU giving different meanings to these concepts; sometimes differentiating voluntary remigration and forced remigration depends on the legal status of the migrant (legal migration vs. illegal migration).

Also, the distinction between voluntary remigration and forced remigration must necessarily take into account the existence or non-existence of the alternatives available to the migrant: in the analysis conducted by EU, the rhetorical question arises as to the extent to which remigration can truly be considered voluntary in the context in which, if they do not remigrate this way, the forced remigration process will be initiated anyway, while other authors expressly state this: “Remigration cannot be considered as voluntary if there is no plausible legal alternative” (Cassarino, 2008).

*Return migration* should be differentiated from *secondary migration*, although both phenomena imply leaving the country of adoption (the country of destination of the initial migration): in return migration, the destination of migration is the country of origin itself, while in the case of secondary migration, the destination is different from the country of origin.

This differentiation is necessary given the situations in which the last country of residence before returning to the country of origin is not necessarily the destination of the initial migration (successive migration to several countries, followed by return to the country of birth) or situations in which departure from the host country of the original migration is not made back to the country of origin (situations where the return to their native country is achieved gradually with a period spent in another country) (OECD, 2008).

Migration is a phenomenon considered sensitive to the economic changes in the involved countries and ensures the regulation of the labour market both in the country of origin and in the country of destination.

In this context, Zimmermann and Zaiceva (2012) carried out an analysis of migration and remigration in the context of the economic crisis and to expose the way in which economic development influences the trends and the behaviour of remigration.

*In times of economic development*, migrants solve the problem of lack of workers in the host country by occupying jobs, with effects including the reduction of inflation in the country of destination. At the same time, migrants also solve the problem of labour force excess in the country of origin, contributing to the decrease of unemployment and even the increase in wages.

*In periods of economic decline or crisis*, migrants return to their country of origin, having new knowledge and skills, helping to increase the overall human capital available in the country of origin and to increase productivity and employability. When the country of destination of migration is affected by the crisis to a greater extent than the country of origin, migrants return to their native country, where economic conditions are perceived as being better and the use of their own potential seems more likely. This migration flow has two forms: on the one hand, *the return migration* - when the migrant who intends to remain permanently in the destination country decides to return to his / her country of origin (the transformation of the permanent migrant in remigrant); on the another hand, *the accelerated return migration* - when the migrant had any intention of returning to his native country, but after a longer period of time, and the economic conditions determined the temporary overthrow of this event (Zimmermann & Zaiceva, 2012).

### **I.3. Research results**

The analysis of available literature reveals the existence of systematic studies on the adaptation of returnees in Portugal (Neto, 2009, Neto, 2010, Neto, 2012, Neto & Neto, 2011) and in Romania (Luca, Foca, Gulei & Brebuleț 2012, Brebuleț, 2018,

Popoiu, Gherasim & Brebuleț, 2018), with relatively different results in the two countries.

### **I.3.1. Research in Portugal**

#### **I.3.1.1. Behavioural problems of adolescents from remigrant families**

The research “Behavioural problems of adolescents from returned Portuguese immigrant families” (Neto, 2009) aimed to a profound understanding of remigration by analysing the behavioural problems of adolescents from families returning to Portugal after a period of migration to France, one of the countries with a strong Portuguese community, established since the end of the First World War.

Regarding the differences between remigrant adolescents and those who have not left Portugal in terms of behavioural problems, the results show significant differences, meaning that remigrant adolescents report significantly fewer behavioural problems with significant gender-impact, boys reporting more behavioural problems than girls.

The high frequency of behavioural problems is associated with a higher degree of perceived discrimination, assimilation, separation and marginalization, and a lower degree of integration.

Regarding the influence of socio-demographic and intercultural factors on the behavioural problems of remigrant adolescents, the only socio-demographic factor with a significant influence is gender, and the intercultural factors with significant influence are marginalization, perceived discrimination and integration.

F. Neto's study argues that multi-ethnic groups do not have a socio-cultural disadvantage because of their previous migrant status, with remigrant teenagers presenting even lower levels of behavioural problems than those who have never left their home country. The geographical mobility of parents as the main cause of cultural adaptation of children seems to be an incorrect hypothesis, as Berry (1997, in Neto, 2009), concluded that the majority of immigrants are adapting very easily to the new society, despite the difficulties of cultural change and lifestyle.

By means of this study, F. Neto argues the existence of a gender influence on the behavioural problems associated with adolescent remigration by highlighting the higher frequency of these problems in boys compared to girls, consistent with those of previous studies - for example, Tanaka- Matsumi and Draguns show that men are more commonly diagnosed with behavioural problems, and these gender differences are independent of the cultural context.

Discrimination perceived by remigrant adolescents has a significant impact on the frequency of behavioural problems, confirming the results of past studies that

discrimination has negative psychological consequences for the discriminated person (Schmitt et al., 2002, in Neto, 2009).

Marginalization is a risk factor for the behavioural problems of emigrant adolescents, while integration appears to be a protective factor, consistent with Berry's results, which shows that marginalized people feel more sociocultural problems and the best method of achieving acculturation is integration.

The author draws attention to the need for cautious treatment of research results due to the cross-cutting nature of research design that makes it impossible to assess causality or medium and long-term consequences and suggests the possibility of longitudinal analysis to complement research results with an improved vision to allow a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under analysis.

### **I.3.1.2. Mental health of adolescents in remigrant families**

F. Neto (2010) found that, despite the demographic importance of remigration, the social research of this phenomenon is quite limited, and the author aims to contribute to a better understanding of remigration as a social phenomenon and its effects, considering it important to know the factors that may increase the risk of mental illness in remigrant population and protective factors that can be used to minimize this risk. The motivation for choosing adolescents to carry out this study refers to the fact that the remigration decision is for parents, and adolescents did not necessarily want to return to their home country, and the study aims to analyse the relationship between acculturation, adaptation and mental health among adolescents who returned to Portugal from North America.

The results of this research show that remigrant teenagers do not have a psychological disadvantage in terms of mental health compared to native adolescents. Moreover, remigrant teenagers have even lower levels of mental health problems than those who have not emigrated. As such, the idea that parents' geographical mobility is a primary cause of children's mental problems seems to be incorrect. These results are consistent with Berry's conclusion (1997, in Neto, 2010) that most emigrants adapt very easily and efficiently to the rules of the new society, despite the difficulty of asking for cultural change and life in two societies, and different cultures.

Among the socio-demographic factors, a significant predictor is the community of the adolescent (its ethnic component), in line with the known outcomes of the reverse relationship between ethnic homogeneity and the incidence of psychiatric problems (Murphy, 1965, in Neto, 2010).

Among the factors related to intercultural contact, perceived discrimination is a significant predictor of mental health problems, being directly associated with symptoms of mental illness, also in line with past results regarding the negative influence of negative experiences of acculturation on the psychological well-being of

adolescents (Gil et al., 1994, Rogler et al., 1991, in Neto, 2010) and confirming the results of more and more researches demonstrating that ethnic discrimination and prejudices have negative consequences in psychological terms for disadvantaged groups (Schmitt et al., 2002, in Neto, 2010).

The results demonstrate that factors relating to the socio-cultural adaptation of a person predict psychological well-being in a more precise manner than socio-demographic factors and intercultural adaptation; for most remigrant adolescents, school and other educational sites are the main contexts of inter-group relationships and achievement of acculturation, so that school adaptation is a primary task for achieving the cultural transition process and a strong predictor for mental health.

### **1.3.1.3. Life satisfaction of adolescents from remigrant families**

The research “Satisfaction with Life among Adolescents from Returned Portuguese Immigrant Families” (Neto, F. & Neto, J., 2011) has occurred in the context of the authors' findings that intensive studies have been carried out over the last decades on the cultural adaptation of migrants, but much less attention has been paid to those who re-join a cultural space after a period of migration to another country. This research orientation is due to the fact that there is a general tendency to consider that remigration does not raise special adaptation problems because it is a “homecoming”. However, there are situations where this return home is associated with difficulties in re-adaptation to the culture of the native country. An example of the literature is given by Isogay, Hayashi and Uno (1999, in Neto, F. & Neto, J., 2011), which found that most of those who returned to Japan encountered difficulties of re-adaptation, felt often rejected by Japanese society, and often faced identity problems, perceived as having “foreign” characteristics incompatible with Japanese cultural traits, especially if the migration period was long.

Sussman (1986, in Neto, F. & Neto, J., 2011) identified five types of difficulties that remigrants encounter when attempting to reintegrate into their native culture: 1) unexpected character of the problems encountered makes the shock felt even greater - most emigrants expect to experience adaptation difficulties, but remigrants do not anticipate it; 2) the migration period has led to certain intra-individual changes as a result of adaptation in the country of adoption; 3) certain changes occurred in the culture and mentality of the native country during the time the person lived in another country; 4) friends and family expect them to be the same as they were before migration and do not anticipate the presence of new behaviours and values; 5) friends and family are often not interested in the experiences that the migrant lived in the country of adoption, which is frustrating and disappointing for the remigrants.

The authors focused their attention on understanding the well-being of adolescents from Portuguese families who returned to the country after a period of migration. These adolescents have to cope with the changes associated with acculturation in the same time with the changes that are characteristic to the normal ontogenetic evolution in adolescence, and both categories of changes may occur simultaneously and may be radical. Specifically, the study's objectives were: to investigate the way and the extent to which the migration experience influences the satisfaction of the life of remigrant adolescents; to analyse the relationship between socio-demographic factors, re-acculturation, re-adaptation and well-being of returned adolescents, with specific reference to the influences of demographic factors, group identity, social interactions, perceived discrimination, school adaptation and behavioural problems on remigrant adolescents of different ages and genders; to compare the influence of the factors related to the migration experience and the psychological factors on the well-being of remigrant adolescents.

The research has argued that multicultural experiences are not a disadvantage for adolescents, life satisfaction among remigrant adolescents being similar to those who have never migrated. These results are consistent with Berry's conclusion (1997, apo Neto, F. & Neto, J., 2011) that most emigrants adapt very easily and efficiently to the rules of the new societies, despite the difficulty of asking for cultural change and life in two different societies and cultures. In general, Portuguese emigrants are well accepted in other societies, which is partly due to the cultural similarity between the country of origin and the country of adoption. The preferred strategy for acculturation by Portuguese emigrants is integration, although they retain a certain degree of cultural integrity when integrating into another cultural space; the preference for this strategy protects the well-being of migrants, but, in the same time, preserving some components of Portuguese culture facilitates the cultural reintegration of remigrants when they return to Portugal.

Younger adolescents (14-16 years) report a higher life satisfaction level than those aged 17 to 19, also confirming the results of previous research showing that younger emigrants are generally better adapted to the older ones (Berry et al., 2006, in Neto, F. & Neto, J., 2011). These results are not easy to explain, especially in the absence of longitudinal studies, but the authors advance two explanatory assumptions: one refers to the fact that the younger the emigrant, the more flexible he is in solving the conflicts between the culture of origin and the adoptive culture, and the second explanation refers to the additional difficulties that adolescents encounter in their transition from adolescence to adulthood compared to children who only have to cope with the difficulties associated with remigration.

Satisfaction of life is a complex phenomenon, experienced differently by different people in different contexts; like any other complex phenomenon, is the

result of the interaction of personal and situational factors. Research shows that there are relevant predictors of life satisfaction among all three sets of variables under consideration: socio-demographic factors, intercultural contact factors, and factors related to the person's psychological adaptation. Among the demographic factors, age is the best predictor of life satisfaction. Among the intercultural contact factors, social interactions with peers, remigrants or natives, perceived discrimination and group identity have been shown to be significant predictors of life satisfaction, but in relation to age. Among the adaptive factors, relevant as predictors of life satisfaction are: self-esteem, control over one's own life, psychological problems and school adaptation, again in relation to age. Research shows that the best predictors of life satisfaction among remigrant adolescents are factors related to adaptation.

The best predictor of life satisfaction for remigrant adolescents was self-esteem, in line with previous results obtained by Diener (1984, apo Neto, F. & Neto, J., 2011), according to which self-esteem is one of the most important factors of well-being, and Dew and Huebner (1994, in Neto, F. & Neto, J., 2011), which demonstrated a significant correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction in adolescence.

#### **1.3.1.4. Acculturation of adolescents from remigrant families**

In the context of emigration changing the ethnic and cultural structure of more and more countries, F. Neto's (2012) "Re-acculturation and adaptation among adolescents from return immigrant families" analyses the effects of intercultural contact on well-being and the social adaptation of the young re-migrants returning to Portugal, with the aim of examining the influence of migration experience on adolescent adaptation and the analysis of the relationship between acculturation and adaptation, starting from Berry's classification (1997, in Neto, 2012) on the strategies of acculturation: integration, marginalization, separation and assimilation. Integration allows a close connection with both native culture and adoptive culture, while marginalization reflects a very weak link with both cultures. Segregation reflects an appreciation of native culture accompanied by depreciation of adoption culture, while assimilation expresses a preference for the culture of the adoptive country, accompanied by loss of ties with native culture.

The effect of the membership group on psychological adaptation is statistically insignificant, the quality of psychological adaptation being similar in the case of remigrant adolescents and those who have not left Portugal. By contrast, the effect of the membership group on socio-cultural adaptation is statistically significant (although it appears to be rather low in intensity), remigrant adolescents presenting a better level of socio-cultural adaptation compared to native adolescents.



Regarding predictors of psychological adaptation, according to F. Neto's results, the psychological adaptation of remigrant adolescents can be predicted on the basis of language skills, while psychological adaptation difficulties can be predicted on the basis of perceived discrimination.

As far as socio-cultural adaptation predictors are concerned, according to F. Neto's results, the socio-cultural adaptation of remigrant adolescents can be predicted on the basis of gender and age, re-adaptation being more difficult for older boys and adolescents. The "integration" factor (bicultural orientation) is a good predictor of socio-cultural adaptation, while perceived discrimination is a predictor of socio-cultural adaptation issues.

The results of this study by F. Neto reveals the multiple causality of re-adaptation efficiency, arguing the possibility of using two sets of variables: socio-demographic and intercultural contact variables. However, intercultural contact variables are better predictors than socio-demographic variables in terms of both psychological adaptation and socio-cultural adaptation.

Among the socio-demographic factors, gender and age are significant predictors of socio-cultural adaptation, which appears to be more effective in girls than boys (possibly due to the fact that boys tend to more easily outsource the difficulties they face), respectively in the case of older teenagers compared to the younger ones (a more difficult to explain result, but which can be perceived in light of two theories: one refers to the fact that the younger the emigrant, the more flexible he is in managing the conflicts between culture of origin and adoptive culture and the second explanation refers to the additional difficulties that adolescents encounter regarding the transition from adolescence to adulthood compared to children who only need to cope with the difficulties associated to remigration).

Among the intercultural contact factors, perceived discrimination is the best predictor of adaptation; although the level of discrimination perceived by remigrant teenagers is generally low, this variable is directly associated with the level of adaptation, these results being in line with past results on the negative influence of negative experiences of acculturation on teenage well-being (Gil, Vega & Dimas, 1994, in Neto, 2012).

One of the issues that remain uncertain is the existence of specific predictors for each adaptation strategy. Socio-cultural adaptation cannot be predicted on the basis of preferences for communicating with non-emigrant adolescents (contradicting the results of Ward et al., 2001, in Neto, 2012), but has as a predictor the integration factor. Psychological adaptation, on the other hand, is better predicted based on the linguistic orientation factor than on the Portuguese identity factor (according to Ward et al., 2001, in Neto, 2012).

### **I.3.2. Research in Romania**

#### **I.3.2.1. Risks associated to remigration of Romanian children**

The first study to investigate the issue of children's remigration and its effects also included the analysis of contextual factors in which migration and then remigration occurred (Luca, Foca et al., 2012).

The results show that in half of cases, remigration is associated with another phenomenon of risk regarding the psychological development and social adaptation of the child, namely the temporary family abandonment caused by at least one of the parents migrating to work abroad: about 50% of the remigrant children are in the care of both parents, 27% in the care of one parent and 23% in the care of other people (Luca, Foca et al., 2012). The readjustment of the child to the Romanian cultural space means for almost a quarter of them the adaptation from living together with both parents abroad, to live with only one of them in Romania (76.33% of the children lived with both parents abroad, only 50.61% of them live with both parents after returning to the country) (Luca, Foca et al., 2012).

The subjective perception of the reasons for remigration in case of the Romanian children includes almost exclusively family-related motives or parents' choices (the main reasons being the remigration of the whole family, the inadequate adaptation of the child at school abroad, the financial problems, the social and cultural difficulties in the host country), which confirms the reduced or non-existent involvement of children in the decision to return to the country, as the authors of the study mentions: "the child's consultation on the return to Romania was done in the vast majority of cases (86%), but this consultation is often formal, parental decision being based on reasons independent of the will of the child" (Luca, Foca et al., 2012).

Regarding the countries where the children return to Romania from, the children that return from Italy (39%) and Spain (35%) predominate, those being the countries that Romanians preferred most for migration, and the authors of the said analysis concludes that "remigration follows the specificity of migration" (Luca, Foca et al., 2012). In most cases, remigration occurs after a period of at least three years abroad, generally in a large city, and many of the children returned to Romania (39%) regret the "life there".

Despite the fact that the vast majority of re-migrated children appreciate that they have already readjusted to the socio-cultural and educational environment of Romania, about 16-17% of them explicitly acknowledge the presence of negative emotions following the remigration: shame, fear, sadness, anger or sentiment of abandonment (Luca, Foca et al., 2012), these effects being stronger for children in urban areas, children aged 15-17 (compared to 12-15 years), children returning from

countries with less developed Romanian communities and those who have stayed abroad for more than three years (Luca, Foca et al., 2012).

Regarding the psychological effects of remigration, Luca, Foca et al. (2012) finds that about 20-30% of them are at risk (big or very high) of developing a specific disorder at emotional, behavioural, attentional, social, or relationship level. According to the authors, the risk is higher if the child has not had frequent contact with the Romanian lifestyle during the period spent abroad (returns from a country where the Romanian communities are less developed), if the child has not wanted to return to the country; a good predictor of this risk is the child himself, the risk of psychological difficulties being higher in the case of children who state that they have not readjusted to life in Romania (Luca, Foca et al., 2012).

The reintegration of Romanian remigrant children is associated with a “sharp decline in the standards that they impose on themselves, especially in terms of school performance” (Luca, Foca et al., 2012), this low level of aspirations being explained by the remigrants in relation to the higher exigencies and standards in the Romanian educational system and to the linguistic difficulties they have. Nevertheless, the authors of the research emphasize the role of the low self-esteem in explaining the low level of aspiration of the remigrant children.

#### **I.3.2.1.1. Risk factors in readjustment of Romanian remigrant children**

According to Luca's results (2012), the risk of having difficulties in social and cultural readjustment upon return to Romania is significantly influenced by a number of factors, including:

- ▢ time spent abroad, readjustment in Romania being more difficult for children who have had a migration period of more than three years;
- ▢ the constant connection with members of the Romanian cultural space, the re-adaptation to Romania being more difficult for the children coming from a country where the Romanian community is less developed;
- ▢ parents' capacity to actively involve children in the decision-making process, readjustment being more difficult if the child was not consulted on migration and / or remigration;
- ▢ the child's consent to migration and the desire of the child to go abroad, readjustment being more difficult for children who have refused to return to Romania and / or who wish to return abroad;
- ▢ a very good predictor of inadequate risk is the self-assessment performed by the child, the readjustment difficulties being correctly assessed by the remigrants; as such, there is a major risk of inadequacy for children who admit that they have not socially and educationally adapted to Romania;

▣ the child's uncertainty about the future has a negative impact on the child's motivation for social and educational reintegration, especially if the child is aware of the possibility of a new emigration and knows that his opinion will not be taken into account in the parents' analysis of this possibility (Luca, Foca et al., 2012).

#### I.3.2.1.2. Protection factors in readjustment of Romanian remigrant children

The re-adaptation or readjustment of the children remigrating to the Romanian socio-cultural context is facilitated by three categories of factors: individual, family and school.

The *individual factors* are considered by the remigrant children as the main factor facilitating their readjustment in Romania, as they mention the importance of knowing the Romanian lifestyle, the ability to easily making friends, the self-confidence, the courage, but also the ability to ask help when it deems necessary or the ability to make decisions independently (Luca, Foca et al., 2012).

*The family* is the main source of affective and social support for the child, and the importance of the family environment is even greater in the case of children whose social adaptation is hampered by the experience of migration and remigration. As we have already mentioned, engaging the child in making decisions about going abroad and returning to Romania can facilitate their reintegration. Simultaneous migration and remigration of the whole family make it easier for the child to stay in direct contact with both parents throughout his or her lifetime, the emotional support received from both parents being a decisive factor both in adapting the child abroad and in his readjustment to Romania. Although parents focus on returning to Romania on the reintegration of children and on providing the financial resources needed for the family, taking into account their psychological needs to a lesser degree (Luca, Foca et al., 2012), the family remains the environment in which the child feels secure, which can provide him with the psychological support needed for rapid and effective readjustment.

*The school environment* can positively influence the reintegration of remigrants both through specific psycho-pedagogical counselling activities and through the intervention of teachers and other pupils who can provide a secure educational climate facilitating reintegration. Although in 2012 the school councillors stated that "they did not carry out systematic activities with remigrant children but only punctual activities, in particular cases, when the children requested support for the readjustment in Romania" (Luca, Foca et al., 2012), drawing attention to the lack of a clear, specific and systematic methodology for intervention in remigrant risk cases, more recent studies reveal the positive impact that psycho-pedagogical counselling can have on the readjustment of the remigrants.

### 1.3.2.2. Psychological adaptation of Romanian remigrant children

In the context in which OECD concluded in the 2008 report that social sciences, despite the demographic importance of the returned migration, know relatively little about this phenomenon, and its understanding is still fragmented, partly because of the measurement difficulties and lack of comparative data (OECD, 2008), Brebuleț (2018) conducted an analysis of the psychological effects associated with the return of Romanian children after a period spent abroad, analysing comparatively the results of some psychological assessments of the remigrant children and native children (who have no migration history) and elaborating a *psychological profile of the remigrant child*.

Thus, according to the cited author, the child remigrating in Romania can manifest (Brebuleț S. D., 2018):

▣ *low self-esteem*, the child has difficulty in accepting himself completely and unconditionally, independently of his own behaviour, its consequences or the social validation it receives;

▣ *high anxiety*, especially with regard to social phobia and separation anxiety; the child exhibits an exaggerated fear of the social situations in which he might fail or may be ashamed of the results of his activities (hence is likely to avoid social assessment situations) and is overly fearful of a possible separation the persons to whom he attached himself, especially his parents;

▣ *a particular cognitive coping style* centred on looking for guilty people (the child's thoughts about remigration are centred on either self-blame or blaming others); the tendency of resignation associated with returning to Romania and the limited possibilities of changing this situation is counterbalanced by the tendency to think about positive things and to avoid thinking about its situation after the return home. With the time passing, the tendency to self-blame decreases, being replaced by the explicit accentuation of the negative consequences of the return to Romania;

▣ *a relatively high level of disadaptive cognitive schemes*, especially with regard to the assumption that security, safety, care, empathy, acceptance and respect (disadaptive thoughts specific to separation and rejection) will not be met. It is likely that, after the remigration, the child considers that: the family does not offer the protection, understanding and emotional support they need, perhaps because they will not be present or available; those around him will suffer, will hurt him, even intentionally; he is socially isolated, different from others, and cannot integrate into any group; he is inferior or incapable of certain important aspects of his life, and those around him will, at some point, realize this aspect and will cease to love or respect him; he cannot fulfil his daily tasks without help from others, which can generate a constant sense of helplessness; it is necessary to place first the needs of others and

not his own, so that he is not perceived as selfish and have a positive social image; it is necessary to inhibit the feelings and the tendency of spontaneous communication in order to avoid the social assessment situations in which it may be disapproved.

This psychological profile is based on the statistical probabilities of adaptability difficulties, with reference to the native population, and the information presented refers to *the difficulties that the remigrant child is more likely to have after returning to Romania* (Brebuț S. D., 2018).

In the same study (Brebuț S. D., 2018) there is also an analysis of the factors influencing the psychological readjustment of the Romanian remigrant children, with reference to the gender influences, the family environment and the country where the child was born.

The psychological adaptation of the remigrant children is gender-influenced (with greater readjustment difficulties being more likely for girls than boys), the family environment (adapting is more problematic for children who do not live with both parents) and the country where the child was born (the greater difficulties of rehabilitation are more likely in the case of children born in Romania). The influences of the residence environment and of the period spent by the child abroad are limited and unspecific.

The best predictor of the difficulties in the psychological adaptation of remigrant children is the family environment; the involvement of both parents in raising and caring of the child (when living with both parents) is an important protective factor for its psychological adaptation as he returns to Romania. Children living with both parents have a significantly higher level of self-esteem, lower anxiety (both social phobia and separation anxiety), they blame themselves less for the remigration and use the disadaptive cognitive schemes less (especially emotional deprivation, abandonment, emotional inhibition).

A good predictor of the difficulties in the psychological adaptation of remigrant children is the country where the child was born; seemingly paradoxical, the risk of difficulties in psychological readjustment is greater in the case of children born in Romania, who have a lower level of self-esteem, greater separation anxiety and more intense disadaptive thinking (social isolation / alienation, self-sacrifice), but this higher risk is explained by the fact that these children have undergone two successive migration stages (from Romania and back to Romania), the risk of non-adjustment being cumulated.

Brebuț (2018) also mentions *the fact that the evolution of the psychological and school adaptation of remigrant children in time is proving to be extremely varied:*

☞ certain difficulties of re-migrating children decrease with the passage of time: self-coping as a coping strategy, abandonment, social isolation, addiction, emotional inhibition, seeking approval, penalizing as disabling cognitive schemes.

☞ other difficulties felt constantly by the child after remigration: social phobia and separation anxiety as dimensions of anxiety, emotional deprivation, distrust, defect / shame, and self-sacrifice as disadaptive cognitive schemes, self-esteem, and low academic motivation.

☞ unfortunately, there are also dimensions of psychological adaptation that worsen with the passage of time from remission: catastrophe and culpability of others as coping strategies, unrealistic / hypercriticism standards as a disadaptive cognitive scheme, test anxiety.

However, as a whole, the cited author considers that the *general tendency is to reduce the difficulties encountered by the remigrant children with the time spent in Romania* (Brebuleț S. D., 2018).

### **I.3.2.3. Educational adaptation of Romanian remigrant children**

The analysis of the educational adaptation of the Romanian remigrant children (Brebuleț, 2018) was made in the context in which the previous Romanian studies emphasized that there is little knowledge of the effects of remigration by specialists, teachers and school counsellors and recommends “scientific analysis of the psychosocial effects of the remigration to establish a theoretical framework appropriate to the Romanian cultural and educational context and not a general one regarding migration” (Luca, Foca et al., 2012).

By comparatively analysing the results obtained by the Romanian remigrant children and the natives ones on psychological tools for analysing the pupils' educational adaptation, the quoted author realizes an *educational profile of the Romanian remigrant child*, mentioning that it could manifest (Brebuleț, 2018):

☞ *ability to understand texts* in Romanian less developed than expected in relation to the ontogenetic level or the current educational level;

☞ *specific learning abilities* focused on individual effort and less on the expecting learning directions from teachers: developed skills to systematically concentrate on revising and material learning, such as the regular use of memo-technics and other memory-enhancement mechanisms; internalized behaviours and effective skills for reading, texting, and extracting key ideas; self-documentation skills, gathering information from a variety of sources, developing an organized documentation and information plan, integrating ideas, reviewing materials, and completing more and more complex research tasks; significantly less developed skills of taking notes, marking the main ideas in a text, listening and identifying the main ideas in the material they are listening to.

▣ *low academic motivation*, especially in terms of intrinsic motivation, personal desire to acquire new information;

▣ *high anxiety about the tests* - the child is concerned about school assessment, he is emotional before and during evaluations, which can also lead to poor learning and social learning habits.

As with the psychological profile, the author emphasizes the statistical character of this profile and the fact that *some children returning to Romania may show only a part of these particularities or none of them*, being also known from previous studies (Luca, Foca et al., 2012), as well as from practical experience, examples of remigrant children whose educational readjustment in Romania is done on its own, in optimal conditions, without intervention or external support and without requiring specialized interventions.

In the same study (Brebuleț, 2018) there is also an analysis of the factors influencing the educational re-adaptation of the Romanian remigrant children.

The educational adaptation of remigrant children is significantly influenced by the country in which the child was born (the risk of educational difficulties being higher in the case of children born abroad) and the time spent by the child abroad (educational adaptation is more difficult in the situation where the child spent more than seven years abroad). More limited influences might have the gender variables (which only affect test anxiety and is higher for girls) and the residential environment (which only influences academic motivation, and this is lower in rural areas).

The best predictor of the difficulties experienced by remigrant children in educational adaptation is the period spent by the child abroad; if this period is more than seven years, the ability to understand the texts (in Romanian) becomes significantly lower, the academic motivation decreases and the anxiety about the tests increases significantly, all of these being risk factors for the school adaptation the remigrant child.

Well-founded predictions of the risk of the educational difficulties of remigrant children can also be based on the child's birthplace, with the risk being significantly higher for children born abroad: they have less developed ability to understand the texts (in Romanian) and their academic motivation is lower.

### **1.3.3. Comparative analysis of studies from Portugal and Romania**

On the one hand, F. Neto (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012), analysing the case of remigrating Portuguese adolescents, argues the lack of behavioural or adaptation problems, while pointing to similar mental health status and similar life satisfaction for remigrant adolescents and native adolescents. F. Neto argues the results of his researches (the absence of behavioural or adaptation problems of remigrant



adolescents, similar mental health and life satisfaction for remigrant adolescents and native ones), based on Berry's (1997) conclusions that most immigrants are adapting very easily and effectively to the rules of the new society, despite the difficulties in addressing demands for cultural change and life in two different societies and cultures. The author considers Park's broader theory of migration (1950), which argues the positive consequences of migration, claiming that migration turns the migrant into a person "with a penetrating intelligence, with a broader horizon characteristic of a more detached and more rational point of view" (Neto, F., & Neto, J., 2011).

On the other hand, Luca, Foca et al. (2012) describe the Romanian remigrant child as "fearful, hesitant in relations with adults but also with peers, without a constant concern of social relation and involvement in the groups of those having the same age, with low confidence in their own traits" and Brebuleț (2018) mentions psychological difficulties (low self-esteem, high anxiety, especially separation anxiety, the particular cognitive style of coping, the relative high level of disadaptive cognitive schemes) and educational difficulties (limited ability to understand texts, specific learning style, low academic motivation and assessment anxiety) associated with the Romanian remigrant children. The results of research on Romanian remigration (Luca et al., 2012, Brebuleț, 2018) can be argued in relation to the findings of Phinney and Alipuria (1996), according to which migrants can be described as troubled, anxious, without a clear identity (Neto, 2010), or by reference to the general theory of migration of Stonequist (1961), which argues the existence of negative consequences of migration, claiming that "the migrant is a person caught between two cultures, never finding their place in any of them".

Brebuleț (2018) considers that a more in-depth analysis of the differences between studies in Portugal and those made in Romania is needed, identifying 5 factors that could explain the differences between these results.

First, conceptualization of the term "remigrant" is slightly different, so the groups targeted by the two researches are slightly different. If in the case of F. Neto the majority of the subjects in the group of "remigrants" were born across the border (90.8% in the studies in 2009 and 2012), while the researches in Romania included a larger number of children that experienced two migrations (from Romania and back to Romania), which could accentuate the difficulties of readjustment (in Brebuleț's study (2018), only 59.3% of the group of remigrant children were children born outside Romania).

Secondly, the age of the subjects in the studies conducted in the two countries mentioned is different, so that the conclusions of the two categories of studies, although contradictory, could be valid, but for different groups. Thus, if F. Neto analysed the acculturation of remigrant Portuguese teenagers (the average age of the

experimental group being 16.51 years in the 2011 study or 16.8 in the 2009 and 2012 studies), Brebuleț's (2018) research targeted the remigrant children in Romania, the average age of the experimental group being 13.09 years. Taking into account the results of Neto (2012), which stated that adaptation and acculturation are more difficult for older teenagers or those of Berry et al. (2006, in Neto, 2012) showing that younger migrants generally adapt better than older migrants, we can assume that the different age of the subjects significantly influences the results.

Thirdly, the inter-cultural, social, educational differences between Romania and Portugal could explain the different adaptation of remigrant children or adolescents in the two countries; the only way to validate the influence of the cultural context on the adaptation of the remigrants is a comparative inter-cultural analysis, in which, using the same research methodology, the reintegration of the remigrants in Portugal and Romania (or elsewhere) can be analysed.

Fourthly, the different results of the Romanian and Portuguese studies may be explained by the different adaptation period of the remigrant children (the time from the return to the country of origin until the evaluation). In the case of F. Neto, this interval was very large (8.41 years in the 2011 study, 8.2 years in the 2009 and 2012 studies), in the case of Brebuleț's research (2018), the average time between returning to Romania and the evaluation was 2.91 years. If we consider that the extent of the psychological and educational difficulties experienced by the remigrant children decreases with the time passed from the remigration, we can advance the hypothesis of significant difficulties in the post-remigration period (according to the Romanian study), difficulties which completely disappear after 8-9 years of remigration (according to F. Neto's studies).

Last but not least, the differences between research results in Romania and those of F. Neto may be due to the research methodology used; in the case of research in Romania, especially in Brebuleț's (2018), only psychological tools adapted and calibrated on the Romanian population were used, while F. Neto also used questionnaires built in the respective research (self-reporting and self-diagnosis performed by remigrant children), whose psychometric properties are insufficiently known and whose validation has been carried out only within the framework of the respective research; from this point of view, the methodology used in Romania can be more accurate in evaluating and highlighting less obvious differences.

As regards the more general theories about the consequences of migration and *the duality between Park's theory* (which argues the positive consequences of migration, claiming that migration turns a migrant into a person “with a penetrating intelligence, with a wider horizon characteristic of a more detached and more rational viewpoint”) and *Stonequist's theory* (which argues the existence of negative consequences of migration (Neto, 2010), claiming that “the migrant is a person

caught between two cultures, never finding his place in any of them”), the results of the research in Romania seem to be closer to the last of the two theories, arguing that there are difficulties of adaptation of the remigrant children. However, considering the diminishing of these difficulties with the time of their return to the country, Brebuleț (2018) *advanced the explanation of the existence of short-term difficulties in the psychological and educational adaptation of the remigrant children, but which disappear in the medium to long term, the psychological and educational adaptation of remigrant children could become similar to native children if enough time has passed since remigration.*

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## Chapter II

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# Educational aspects associated with remigration

### II.1. Educational counselling of remigrant children

#### II.1.1. Concepts

*Counselling* is “a complex process involving a very wide range of interventions requiring specialized professional training ... it describes the inter-human relationship of help between a specialized person, the counsellor, and another person seeking specialist assistance, the client” (Egan, 1990, in Băban, 2009).

The term “counselling” refers to “a psycho-pedagogical action to help in the life and development of man” (Tomşa G., 2006), this action being set by the quoted author directly in relation with psychotherapy and education, all of which aim to ensure the existence of a balanced and a better life.

F.P. Robinson (in Dumitriu Tiron, 2005) defines counselling as a “way of support for people who want to reach a higher standard of living, overcome certain obstacles, or build personal life strategies with reference to: maturing personality, personal integration in the situations of current life, assuming responsibility”.

A more comprehensive definition is given by the British Counselling Association, which defines counselling as “the ability to use self-knowledge, self-acceptance, maturation and optimal development of professional resources with the ability and principle of relationship” (Holdevici & Neacşu, 2006)

*Psycho-pedagogical assistance* is an “interdisciplinary activity, carried out by the school counsellor (psycho-pedagogue) in order to assist the pupils, teachers and parents in understanding the personality, in the scholar and professional

orientation and overall in increasing the efficiency of the instructive-educational activity”. (Tomşa G., 2006).

*Educational counselling* is “a type of counselling that has, at the same time, psychological and pedagogical objectives. It aims to empower the person (child, young or mature) in order to ensure optimal functioning by making evolving changes whenever the situation demands” (Dumitru, 2008) or “an intensive process of granting psycho-pedagogical assistance to pupils, students and other persons involved in the educational process (teachers, parents, tutors and school authorities) ... a particular form of interaction and influence that contributes to the homogenization of the groups of students” (Tomşa G., 2006).

The role of educational (school) counselling is, in particular, proactive, with counselling being aimed at preventing personal and educational crisis situations; school counselling aims at personal, educational and social development of pupils, especially through preventive and personal development activities: “School counselling has as a fundamental goal the support of the client (student, parent or teacher) in order to be able to help himself alone, to understand both himself and the surrounding reality”(Tomşa G., 2006).

*The purpose of educational counselling* is defined by reference to the “optimal psychosocial functioning of the person / group” (Băban, 2009), the quoted author defining three objectives associated with this purpose: promoting health and well-being, personal development (self-interpersonal relationships, stress control, effective learning etc.) and prevention (risk behaviours, social deprivation, crisis situations etc.). G. Tomşa focuses on the last two objectives: “school counselling attempts to prevent personal or educational crisis situations in school and, at the same time, pursues the personal, educational and social development of students” (Tomşa G., 2006).

### **II.1.2. Counselling of remigrant children**

Remigration of children in Romania is a relatively new phenomenon and the effects of child remigration are still relatively little known, so we cannot discuss about scientifically or empirically validated strategies of psycho-pedagogical counselling of Romanian children returning from abroad.

School counsellors confronted with this phenomenon are in a position either to analyse each individual case and/or to develop a customized counselling strategy, either to refer to general theoretical information. This second strategy mainly refers to adapting the knowledge, tools and methods of working with children in temporary family abandonment arising from parental departure to work abroad (as this

phenomenon is better known both from theoretical information and from practical experience.

This way of adapting school counsellors to the new social and educational reality is highlighted by the results of the Social Alternative Association study which show that the counselling activities of remigrant children are based in particular on “the theoretical knowledge in this field and the general information available in regarding migration; the mental constructs related to remigration are in this case generalizations of those related to the effects of migration” (Luca, Foca et al., 2012).

The school counsellors surveyed in the study underlined the lack of a general counselling strategy for the scholar and social reintegration of the remigrant children, both in preventive counselling and in crisis counselling, mentioning only specific activities in particular cases of children, parents and teachers, activities aimed in particular at counselling for development (self-esteem, self-confidence), risk counselling and corrective counselling in the case of inappropriate behaviour at school or in society, activities that “have been directed to achieve specific goals without a general strategy designed to facilitate the child's adaptation to the Romanian school and sociocultural context” (Luca, Foca et al., 2012).

In this context, and given the specific results of the above mentioned study, the Social Alternative Association Iași team subsequently initiated the steps to develop a complex intervention methodology, establishing a first set of measures for social, educational and psychological assistance to facilitate the re-adaptation of remigrant children to the social, cultural and educational context in Romania.

The role of the school counsellor is defined in relation to specific tasks and specific counselling topics (Luca, Pivniceru et al., 2012):

▣ adaptation of the child to socio-economic conditions in Romania, the counsellor focusing on: encouraging the child to express emotional states associated with remigration, including differences in living standards abroad (generally higher) and those in Romania, which the counsellor can turn into a motivating factor for the child; the child's awareness of the benefits of the period spent abroad (knowing a foreign language, another culture etc.); identifying together with the child some constructive ways of spending leisure time, forming a group of friends;

▣ fear and anxiety, the counsellor focusing on guiding the child to understand his own emotional experiences, identifying positive alternatives to counterbalance negative thoughts;

▣ the feeling of abandonment, felt by the remigrant children especially if one or both parents remained abroad, in the foster county, the counsellor focusing on the awareness and expression of emotions, for example through role play;

▣ labelling, the counsellor focusing on the awareness of the emotions associated with the labels and identifying similarities with the majority population to develop a sense of belonging;

▣ the anger, the counsellor concentrating on identifying together with the child the contextual factors that facilitate the emergence of this negative emotion, the assessment of the level of anger felt, the identification and awareness of the processes involved in the genesis of this state, the development of emotional self-control and the expression of feelings in an assertive manner;

▣ self-esteem, the counsellor's activity being focused on self-knowledge, emotional self-control, valorisation of qualities, identifying and capitalizing on the potential of people's resources to increase the self-esteem of the child.

Brebuleț (2018) mentions that positive results in counselling the remigrant children can be obtained through other types of specific activities:

▣ involvement of remigrant children in informal and non-formal educational activities together with other remigrant children (for instance, summer camps for remigrant children) facilitates children's awareness of the fact that the difficulties they face in social and educational reintegration are not due to personal factors and are not specific to them, but are due to contextual factors and characteristic of many of the children in a similar situation; Also, constant interaction with other remigrant children facilitates awareness of emotions and facilitates their expression in a secure environment;

▣ conducting joint counselling activities with remigrant children and their parents facilitates both intra-family communication and the creation of a family climate favourable to the development of the remigrant child, as well as awareness of the emotions of others and their expression, understanding the thoughts and emotions of other people involved in migration / remigration;

▣ conducting counselling activities in mixed groups consisting of remigrant children and native children facilitates mutual communication and understanding, allows the remigrant children to capitalize on the strengths gained during their experience abroad (knowing a foreign language, getting acquainted with another cultural space and intercultural experience, etc.) in front of the group, facilitating the integration of remigrants in the native children group and the development of a positive self-image (while combating group labelling and anxiety of the remigrant child to the group);

▣ analysing, with the remigrant child, of the educational systems in Romania and the country of migration, of the similarities and differences in teaching-learning and assessment methods facilitates the child's understanding of the reasons why his educational performance may be below his own potential during the period necessary



to readjust to the Romanian educational system, contributing to maintaining a positive self-image and motivation for learning.

### **II.1.3. The effects of educational counselling on remigrant children**

An analysis of the impact of the educational counselling of the remigrant children was carried out at the end of the implementation of the project “Remigrant Children in Vrancea County - educated, supported, counselled!”, the results of this analysis (Popoiu, Gherasim, & Brebuleț, 2018) showing that the participation of children in the educational counselling activities has had positive effects on their psychological and educational development, regardless of the age range of the children. The psycho-educational evaluation of children at the end of the intervention program, following their participation in the psychological and educational assistance activities, reveals the significant development of many of the psycho-educational features concerned.

Regarding *remigrant children between the ages of 8 and 12*, the participation in counselling activities has significant effects on (Popoiu, Gherasim, & Brebuleț, 2018):

▣ the development of temperamental features in the direction of social desirability: after the counselling activities, the children manifest to a significantly lesser extent the need to get closer to others, the dependence on others; are less affected in the ongoing tasks by negative or inappropriate emotional manifestations; present significantly less negative affective states such as anxiety, nervousness, anticipation of pain or distress and / or potentially threatening situations; have a significantly slower rate of initiation of the psychosomatic response, a lower level of impulsivity; have a more developed capacity to plan future activities and suppress inappropriate responses; present a lower level of pleasure or enthusiasm in situations involving low levels of stimulation, complexity, novelty or incongruity; present a lower level of negative emotions, reduced energy, and diminishing mood as a result of physical suffering, disappointment, loss; develops the ability to react quickly and uninhibited in situations characterized by novelty and uncertainty; develops an active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity and intellectual curiosity; shows rapid return of emotional responses to a basic level after high levels of distress, positive emotions or general arousal.

▣ the inhibition of the disruptive behaviours: the child begins to learn to be patient when he wants to get something, listens to what he is asked, and does not speak without asking, adhere to certain rules set with adults, and think before acting, is less prone to impulsive responses. At the same time, the relationship of the remigrant child with adults improves through the diminution of the presence and intensity of

challenging, defiant behaviour towards adults; the child learns to obey the rules of adults and to seek compromise in dealing with adults.

▣ reduction of anxiety, especially in terms of: exaggerated fear and worry about several events or activities (children have less difficulty in controlling the feeling of fear); persistent fear of social situations where failure can lead to feelings of shame; fear in relation to separation from home or people with whom an attachment relationship has formed; a reaction to persistent fear related to a particular object or situation, associated with a reaction to immediate fear and manifest to the exposure to that object / situation.

Regarding remigrant children between the ages of 12 and 15, participation in counselling activities has significant effects on (Popoiu, Gherasim, & Brebulet, 2018):

▣ development of personal autonomy, especially in terms of behavioural autonomy and emotional autonomy: at the end of the counselling activities, the remigrant children act according to their own decisions, without taking into account the opinions of others, do not abandon the execution of a task if they encounter difficulties but strive to deal with themselves; have no reservations about expressing their feelings, even if they are not shared by others.

▣ optimization of the personal cognitive-emotional coping strategy: at the end of the counselling activities, remigrant children use significantly less such cognitive mechanisms as self-deprivation, disaster and blaming other, but use significantly more such mechanisms as acceptance, positive refocusing and refocusing on planning. As a result of participating in educational counselling activities, remigrant children (12-15 years old) replace the tendency to focus on looking for guilty persons for negative situations (whether it is their own or about others) and the recurring trend of evaluating the situation as negative with a tendency to accept the situation as it is, to focus on the planning of future activities and the positive events of the future. This cognitive-emotional change facilitates the social and psychological adaptation of remigrant children and can be an important factor in ensuring the psychological and physical well-being of children after remigration.

▣ reduction of anxiety, but only in terms of the emotional-physiological state (the emotional and physiological manifestations of the current subjective state of anxiety are reduced as intensity); counselling activities do not have a significant impact on the anxiety as a personality of returnees participating in these activities.

▣ optimization of learning strategies, especially in terms of study, writing and organizing skills, these being significantly more developed at the end of the counselling program compared to its start. Specifically, by participating in educational counselling activities, the remigrant children develop their skills to

identify and to apply a learning strategy as well as to identify important information, to connect through the learning process, to use different resources when he does not understand a concept and use strategies for memorizing and coding; their ability to make notes and mark up strategies, which are specific learning strategies associated with the ability to distinguish between important and irrelevant information; their skills in organizing the study and school materials, in structuring the tasks received during classes or at home, in structuring the homework. All these aspects facilitate the subsequent educational adaptation of remigrant children, a benefit aspect in itself, but also an important prerequisite for the psycho-social adaptation and reintegration of the remigrant child.

☐ inhibiting factors limiting the achievement of their own educational potential by significantly increasing the academic motivation and decreasing the assessment anxiety. Specifically, the counselling program determines a significant increase in the student's intrinsic motivation to engage in different school tasks and to successfully complete them, enhancing the intrinsic need for success, including at school level, focusing on internal control. At the same time, the child feels significantly less the anxiety symptoms directly associated with participating in a test or subjecting to any kind of performance assessment.

## **II.2. Educational consultancy**

### **II.2.1. Concepts**

The consulting process was initially defined, in a very broad view, as a process in which “an expert offers specialist services to another person. . . in which a professional consult another” (Tomşa G., 2011), but this general way of defining does not reflect the essence of this phenomenon and does not sufficiently differentiate consulting from counselling.

A.M. Dongherty (1991, in Tomşa G., 2011) defines the consulting in a more specific and useful way: “a process in which a professional in the field of human services assists another specialist on a problem related to his activity with a client, to help both the one asking for consultation and the client”. Therefore, the consultancy involves three social actors (the consultant, the consulted and the client), the aim being to solve a client's problem through the collaboration between the consultant and the consulted, this point being stressed by D. Dinkmeyer et al. (1994, in Tomşa G., 2011), defining the counselling as “a process in which the relationship is mainly focused on a third person”.

Depending on the specificity of the situation and the problem, the focus of the consultancy process can be put on: the client (and working strategies with the

client, the consultant can interact with the client himself); the consulted (its distorted perception of the client's problem being corrected by the consultant's intervention as an external and more objective expert, the direct relationship being strictly consultant-consulted); program (service planning, efficient staff training - consultant intervening for program evaluation and intervention recommendations to optimize it); the program administrator (in issues related to program planning and implementation, and interpersonal relationships) (Tomşa G., 2011).

The consulting process in the school units is based on the behavioural model of the consultancy, according to which the identification and control of the situational factors by the consultant is the solution for the desired changes, in the context in which “the problems that arise are the result of the situational factors” (Tomşa G., 2011). According to the quoted author, the behavioural model of the consulting process aims at both correcting the client's behaviour and initiating and / or maintaining behaviours of the consultant or certain situational factors that contribute to the correction of the client's behaviour.

The triad involved in educational counselling consists of: consultant (school counsellor), consulted (teachers, parents, school leadership) and client (pupils / children), the latter not being directly involved in the consultancy activities that are limited to the interaction of “adults trying to change educational relations” (Tomşa G., 2011).

## **II.2.2. Educational consultancy offered to the remigrant children's parents**

### **II.2.2.1. Objectives**

Starting from M. Haddou's theoretical vision, C. Luca examines several issues that can be addressed by consultants working with parents to facilitate the reintegration of remigrant children: the positive relationship with the remigrant child provides him with a valuable image, showing the child confidence in him, the importance he has within the family; assuming a parental style focused on positive oriented educational behaviours, centred on explaining the rules and prohibitions and their assumption primarily by parents; encouraging the child; allocating the time needed for relationship with the child; developing the child's collaboration skills; empowering the remigrant child, developing his autonomy and his ability to take on the consequences of its own activities; expressing willingness to listen to the child, spend time with him, understand and support him (Luca, Pivniceru et al., 2012).

Brebuleţ (2018) argues the positive impact of specific activities of consulting the parents of the remigrant children:

☞ the most important activity that the school counsellor can do in consulting the parents of the remigrant children is informing them of the difficulties encountered by their children in their reintegration into the Romanian educational and cultural context; as the results of previous studies show, “the general attitude of parents towards the readjustment of children in Romania is centred on school reintegration and on the support given to children to cope with school issues and gain the optimal school results, almost completely neglecting social reintegration and cultural rehabilitation issues” (Luca, Foca et al., 2012). Due to the difficult procedure of the re-enrolment of the child in the Romanian educational system, on the one hand, and to the difficulties that parents themselves encounter in readjusting in Romania and in providing the necessary financial resources, on the other hand, this parental attitude prevents adults from becoming focused on the support required for remigrant children to readjust. Much of the parents argue for a reduced involvement in facilitating child readjustment through arguments such as “the child has returned home, why would he need support?”, rhetorical questions that do not take into account the fact that the parents return “home”, but not the children, many of them being left from early ages, more and more of them being born abroad. As such, it is very important that parents take on their specific role in the cultural and educational reintegration of the remigrant children and become aware of the specific difficulties the remigrant children experience. The school counsellor concentrates on facilitating affective identification with the child in this situation, developing empathy and communication in the family of the remigrant child;

☞ making parents aware of their important role in the affective development of the remigrant child, in reducing the anxiety associated with reintegration efforts, in developing a positive self-image and increasing the self-esteem of remigrant children, in combating feelings of abandonment and dysfunctional thoughts, in creating a secure framework for optimal child development; of course, these issues are valid for all parents, not just in the specific situation of those who have re-migrated with their children, but in this particular case, the impact of the family is all the more powerful as the difficulties faced by children are greater;

☞ organizing joint activities with parents and remigrant children facilitates intra-family communication and parental awareness of the importance of personal involvement in the psychological, social and educational development of remigrant children.

#### **II.2.2.2. Effects of educational consultancy offered to the remigrant children’s parents**

The analysis of the impact of the educational counselling provided to the parents of the remigrant children (Popoiu, Gherasim, & Brebulet, 2018) argues that

their participation in the consultancy and counselling activities adds more information regarding the specific situation of children, but this difference is not statistically significant; parents of remigrant children already know well enough about their children's situation and the difficulties they encounter in social and school readjustment, the point of view of specialists noting the already outlined image without significantly changing it.

Following their participation in consultancy and counselling activities, the parents of these children have a higher degree of acceptance of the psychological, cultural, educational difficulties experienced by their children after remigration, and show willingness to listen, communicate, talk to their children.

Following consultancy and counselling activities, parents feel more capable of facilitating the psychological and educational reintegration of their children, they feel they have the necessary work skills to a greater extent than before these activities.

Parents' interest in carrying out concrete activities to facilitate the reintegration of their children after remigration was already high before the start of the consultancy and counselling program, and the activities are not such as to cause a significant increase in this interest.

School counsellors or specialists involved in consulting activities for parents of remigrant children should consider adapting the plan of activities and focus on raising parental interest as the primary motivational vector for their subsequent involvement in activities with children, after specialized intervention reaches the end.

The utility of an institutional intervention strategy to facilitate the reintegration of remigrant children is argued by parents by their direct participation in the organized activities and is therefore assessed more positively at the end of these activities; however, specialists involved in counselling remigrant children and consulting their parents should consider the balance between personal involvement and institutional involvement in order to avoid the undesirable situation in which parents, by making excessive use of educational intervention at the institutional level and overestimating the positive effects of this strategy, abandon the individual efforts and diminish their motivation for personal intervention.

### **II.2.3. Educational consultancy offered to the teachers working with remigrant children**

#### **II.2.3.1. Objectives**

The analysis of C. Luca's recommendations regarding parents' consulting on the reintegration of remigrant children (Luca, Pivniceru et al., 2012) reveals that the vast majority of them are valid for teachers and specialists involved in the educational

reintegration of remigrant children as well: valorisation of the child through direct interaction with him, manifestation of confidence in the child's abilities and its responsibility, positively oriented educational behaviour centred on explaining the rules and assuming them primarily by adults (assuming the role model of the teachers), making time to relate and communicate with the child and the making himself available to listen to the child, the development of personal autonomy and the ability to take the consequences of their own actions are central elements that should guide the work of all educational staff carrying out educational activities with remigrant children.

Brebuleț (2018) states the utility of some specific activities for consulting the teachers working with remigrant children:

☞ it is very important to inform teachers about the specific difficulties faced by the remigrant children in their social and especially educational reintegration, facilitating emotional awareness, affective transposition, cognitive identification with remigrant children; encouraging teachers to inform and know the differences between the educational system of which the child came from and the Romanian educational system may prove to be important for the teachers to become aware of the difficulties that the remigrant children have in accomplishing the learning tasks, unsatisfactory school progress, difficulties in adapting to institutional rules and educational procedures in the Romanian school;

☞ teachers' awareness of the fact that, unfortunately, the educational system is one of the factors contributing to the labelling of remigrant children and the creation of stereotypes of perception of them, especially in the immediate aftermath of remigration. An example from Romania is the “audient student” status attributed to the remigrant child until his re-enrolment in the Romanian educational system (subject to the subsequent equivalence of the studies abroad), the status implying the recording of the results of the assessments and the school frequency in the provisional school rolls (according to article 207, paragraph 1 and 2, OMEN 5155/2014). Teachers can identify, with the help of the school counsellor, effective ways of facilitating understanding of this status by native pupils, assume the purely procedural character of this status, depending on the number of remigrant pupils, the level of development and ability of students' understanding, class specificity, and the quality of the relationship between the teacher, remigrant children and native pupils. Despite the fact that the re-enrolment of remigrant children is being carried out, starting with the school year 2015-2016, according to a simplified procedure, their reintegration is still difficult and the teachers still have to take these aspects into consideration;

☞ the development of pedagogical competences of teachers who face a pedagogical situation that was not anticipated at the time of their initial training and is

insufficiently present in the continuous training of teachers. Teachers who have remigrant children in their classes do not have the tools and methods to organize their teaching in an effective way for these children, and identifying such solutions together with the school counsellor can streamline their work; collaborative learning, student group activities, interactive methods, knowledge of learning styles and their use in teaching activities are some possible solutions;

▣ communicating with the parents of the remigrant children is another aspect on which the counsellor can concentrate in his consulting activities for the teaching staff, the purpose of these activities being the teachers' awareness of the “cultural shock” that adults and children feel when returning to Romania and the development of a positive relationship with the parents and to ensure the coherence of the educational efforts made for the reintegration of the remigrant children;

▣ creating a secure environment within the pupils' group, including by combating labelling and stereotyping, developing group cohesion are also important issues for teachers; with the support of the school counsellor, teachers can identify effective ways to achieve these goals by reference to the individual specificity of the class in which the remigrant child is reintegrated. For example, this goal can be achieved by designing individualized educational tasks so as to enable remigrant students to capitalize on personal experience and achieve maximum performance in certain activities, the experience of success being also a powerful motivating factor for the remigrant child.

Brebuleț (2018) also states some of the fields of interest for consulting the school managers:

▣ awareness of the importance of speeding up the process of recognition of the studies completed abroad and motivation for personal involvement of managers in this process and the transition from the status of “audient student” to a status with full rights; recent legislative changes give a more important role to decentralized structures in the equivalence of studies (done at county level by a County School Inspectorate commission based on a file submitted to them or to the school unit, without the direct involvement of the Ministry of Education - according to OMECS 5268/2015, which entered into force on 01.10.2015), and the involvement of the school management structures in the educational integration of the re-migrated children increases correspondingly to the minimisation of the role of the centralized structures;

▣ identifying solutions for organizing specific activities to develop the communication skills in Romanian language for the remigrant students who do not speak Romanian at an adequate level for their effective social and educational integration, depending on the number of these children in the school unit, the level of knowledge of the Romanian language, the available resources. Making the managers



aware of the impact of the low degree of knowledge of Romanian language on the academic performances of remigrant students may be a motivating factor for school leaders;

☞ awareness of the importance of developing a medium and long-term strategy on the reintegration of remigrant pupils at school level and on ensuring equal opportunities and access to education for these children, all the more important as the number of remigrant children is rising, and the percentage of pupils returned from abroad in the total school population is increasing in certain school units;

☞ awareness of the necessity of continuous teacher training in the area of facilitating the educational and social reintegration of the remigrant children; making the managers aware of the need of collaborating with the school counsellor to elaborate a personalized teachers training strategy adapted to the local specificity, to the share of remigrant pupils in the total school population and to the estimations regarding the subsequent evolution, to the specifics of the teaching staff, to the motivation for the continuous training of the teachers etc.

#### **II.2.3.2. Effects of educational consultancy offered to teachers working with remigrant children**

The analysis of the impact of educational counselling for teachers working with remigrant children (Popoiu, Gherasim, & Brebulet, 2018) argues that their participation in consultancy and counselling activities adds value to the level of information of the teachers about the specific situation of the remigrant children and the difficulties encountered by them when they return to Romania, the teachers being considered significantly more aware of the specific needs of the remigrant children after the counselling program.

After participating in the consultancy and counselling activities, teachers feel not only more informed about the specific situation of remigrant children but also more likely to accept the difficulties they experience (teachers are no longer focusing on the difficulties they have themselves in organizing didactic activities, teaching and evaluating, but are willing to change the perspective of analysis and see things also from the point of view of children), show greater willingness to communicate and responsiveness to communication initiatives coming from children whom they work with in the classroom.

Teachers consider that at the end of the counselling and counselling program they are more competent in dealing with remigrant children, more capable of acting directly to facilitate the social, psychological and educational reintegration of children after their return to Romania.

Educational consultancy and counselling activities are not likely to lead to a significant increase in the interest of teachers in personal involvement in activities to

facilitate the reintegration of re-migrant children. In the medium and long term, specialists in education that develop new educational services should consider not only the cognitive-instrumental side (information, awareness, work skills) but also the motivational side, they should consider identifying and implementing solutions and effective ways to motivate teachers to organize and implement concrete work with remigrant children.

The utility of an institutional intervention strategy, as perceived by the teachers, increases significantly after the consultancy and counselling program. These results are, on the one hand, an acknowledgment of the need for institutional intervention, confirming the positive impact of the consultancy and educational counselling program on teachers, but at the same time, these results can be analysed as a rationalization made by the teachers to justify the lack of personal involvement, as the institutional involvement and a coherent strategy at the institutional level is considered more important.

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## Chapter III

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# Re-adaptation of remigrant pupils in the Republic of North Macedonia

### III.1. Introduction

The question of migration has always been under discussion, particularly in contemporary times, as the world faces migration of large proportions. People migrate for many different reasons, such as economic, social, cultural etc. With large numbers of people migrating to different parts of the world, it is only natural that there would be an increased remigrant population. Remigration poses a range of issues and questions such as: Can remigrants simply reintegrate and pick up where they left off? Do they have specific needs? How should society respond to remigration and remigrants?

What if we put these questions in the context of pupils and school? There are many pupils who leave school, because their parents for some reasons decided to move to another country, but then they decided to come back, and therefore pupils come back to school as well. In this context, researchers have to find out:

- ☞ What happens in this situation? Do pupils have the required support to go back in the school and just continue from where they left off?
- ☞ How does the time spent out of the school in the home country affect the continuation of the educational process of the pupil in that very school?
- ☞ Does the pupil have the required knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence to continue the education and take all the benefits from it?
- ☞ Do schools have such program in their curriculum that will help the pupils in this adaptive period?
- ☞ What happens when the country is multi-ethnic, and the school is multi-ethnic?

### **III.2. Current situation of migration and remigration in the Republic of North Macedonia**

All of these questions arise from the current situation in Macedonia.

The visa liberalization, which was adopted in 2009, enabled Macedonian citizens to be able to freely travel in the EU countries. This visa liberalization refers only to 90 days stay in the EU countries. With this law, many people who travelled abroad, took advantage of the visa free regulations and illegally surpassed the approved amount of days in order to stay abroad. Before the Visa Liberalization, Macedonia and the European Union had signed an Agreement for Acquisition of People Residing without a Permit (Law on Ratification for Agreement Between the Republic of Macedonia and European Union for Acquisition of People Residing Without a Permit, Official Gazette of RM, no.141/2007), by which Macedonia has responsibility to take its citizens back to the country.

After this regulation, the amount of migration from and remigration to Macedonia significantly increased. The Asylum Quarterly Report of Eurostat shows that in one quarter of 2018 the number of Macedonian citizens asking for asylum in EU countries reached up to 1115 Macedonian citizens. The European Union mostly rejects the asylum requests that come from Macedonian citizen, as they consider Macedonia to be “a safe country” – a country in which the life and security of its citizens are not put at risk. This is confirmed by the evidence from the Eurostat Report where it is stated that only 20 out of this 1115 were approved.

With this in mind, one has to be aware of the number of pupils that return to their home country and school, after they have been deported back for illegal residence or simply could not manage to stay in the countries abroad. What is the actual situation in educational system in Macedonia and in the schools? How is the country coping with the remigrant pupils and who is responsible for the adaptive period overall for the remigrant pupils?

In this article review, we are going to discuss the adaptive period of the pupils remigrants in education in primary and secondary school in Macedonia.

### **III.3. Methodology**

For the purposes of gathering data for this article, we have been looking for existing researches, studies and articles in Macedonia related to the topic. We have found very scarce information on the topic, which shows that this topic is still not very discussed in Macedonia, even though the situation is such, that there are remigrant pupils in Macedonian schools. Therefore, we reached out to research centers as well, and to our disappointment, didn't find as much research and data as

we hoped to. To make this more relevant, we have conducted informal interviews with teachers, school principals, and school pedagogues and psychologists from two primary and secondary schools in Macedonia (OU “Bratstvo-Migjeni” – Tetovo, Macedonia and OU “Kiril Pejcinovikj” – Tearce, Macedonia).

The main questions (guidelines) in our discussions with the school specialists in our region were:

1. What is the situation with remigrant pupils in your school?
2. Do you keep record of your pupil remigrants?
3. What are the steps and procedures that a remigrant pupil goes through when back in the school?
4. Who provides the help and support?
5. How does one adaptive period of a remigrant pupil look in your school?
6. Do you think employees in your school are equipped with the required materials or trained to handle the situation and provide help and support for remigrant pupils?
7. Does your school provide any language courses or additional activities for pupils remigrants?
8. Who provides help for the remigrant pupils in terms of psychological and social aspect?

Nevertheless, after taking into careful consideration the research that we found, in this article we can present the state in which the Macedonian education system is, through the prism of the adaptive period of a remigrant pupil.

### **III.4. Results from related research and analysis**

#### **III.4.1. Analysis of the educational system and specialized programs for reintegration in terms of adaptive period for remigrant pupils**

Before getting to the, however, scarce research that are out there on the topic of pupil remigrants in Macedonia, we wanted to analyse the educational system in terms of the pupils remigrants. What are the steps that a remigrant pupil goes through when coming back to their home country where they have previously been a pupil? What is the official legal procedure of reintegrating remigrant pupils into the educational system which they were previously a part of?

According to the Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia, Article 44, “Everyone has the right of education. Education is available to everyone under same conditions. Primary education is mandatory and free”. This law is regulated with the Law on Primary Education of the Republic of North Macedonia. With this

law, everyone in the country has the right of education, and the pupils remigrants are part of this as well.

In order to be able to analyse the situation in Macedonia with the pupils remigrants, we wanted to have the data about the number of pupils remigrants in the country. We have tried contacting the statistical offices in the country but unfortunately, we were informed that there is no system for registering remigrant pupils. We were informed that in the schools there are many different situations and that there is no real system of keeping records of the remigrants. There are pupils that have spent only couple of months abroad and some schools do not even register them. Another situation is when the pupils have spent couple of years abroad and when they have come back, they did not return to school. Additionally, there are situations when the school has registered the pupil as a pupil that moved out of the country but when they came back, even though the school has registered them as remigrant, still the community where the pupil lives has no information of the case. This is due to the lack of clear procedures and existing system for registering the remigrants, so the responsibility to register the pupil again as remigrant in most cases falls upon the parents, grandparents or caregivers of the pupil. Moreover, there are no clear procedures for monitoring remigrant pupils at school level and at local community level as well. Because of this lack of system and procedures for remigrant pupils in Macedonia, there is no clear evidence of the exact number of remigrant pupils, which is noted in the Program for Reintegration of the Republic of North Macedonia as well as confirmed by the school employees later on in this review.

Another issue with the remigrant pupils, is the adaptation period that they require after returning to the country and trying to be reintegrated in the educational process. In most cases, when the pupils are back in their home country, they do not have a legal document or any sort of certification of the level of education that they have completed abroad. This is due to the fact that the pupil has left the school in the middle of the school year or they were simply deported back. Moreover, The Law on Primary Education of the Republic of North Macedonia has no developed system of profiling pupils, that is, of examining the level to which they belong. This puts the pupils remigrant in the position to go back to the grade from which they left when leaving the school, or taking some exams in order to be put in the grade that corresponds with their age. This can create frustration for the remigrant pupils as they might sometimes be classmates with pupils that are younger than them, or try to catch up with their peers without the required help from the school.

It is worth mentioning that in 2010 and according to the Readmission Agreements in the country, the Government of Republic of North Macedonia adopted A Program for Assistance and Support for Reintegration of the Remigrants in the Republic of Macedonia. This program was designed in order for the process or

reintegration in the education system in the country to be more successful and it was mentioned that a coordinative body for monitoring the situation was going to be formed. With this program, it was anticipated that the educational level of the pupil remigrants is going to be determined and this data would be forwarded to the schools and the pupils would be registered in the centres specialized for remigrants. In the program it is also mentioned that the pupils would get the required information for continuing the education, help for finishing the missed grades, IT courses, and certificates and diplomas notification. The program foresaw an overall adaptation program for the pupils remigrants, as “the main problem that the pupils remigrants face when they are back in their home country is the reintegration in the education system when they don’t speak Macedonian language, have issues with certification or do not possess any document for their previous education, and are in need of psychological support and socialization due to their change of environment” (Program for assistance and support for reintegration of the remigrants in the Republic of Macedonia).

However, this program was only adopted by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia but never carried out in reality. There are no actual records that show neither that this program has been executed nor that the coordinative body has been formed in order to monitor the process.

In the Law on Education of the Republic of North Macedonia, by article 7 paragraph 2 it is stated: “The children of citizens of the Republic of Macedonia that has lived abroad and came back to Republic of Macedonia where they begin or continue their primary education, the primary schools are obliged to help them in the process of learning their mother tongue”. Article 7 paragraph 3, 4 and 5 continue to explain that the schools are obliged to organize additional individual and group program for helping pupils remigrants learn the mother tongue and also learn the material of the grades that the pupils have missed. It is also stated that this program should be carried out by following curriculum that has been designed by the Bureau for Development of Education, and that this program can last up to one year after the pupil remigrant has been back in the school. In the reality of the schools in Macedonia, there is no evidence that neither these types of programs are designed nor conducted in the schools. This remains only as a regulation in the Law on Education of the Republic of Macedonia and we will discuss it further in the following part below.

#### **III.4.2. Informal interview with school employees**

In order to be able to analyse the situation from more aspects, we wanted to gain information about the situation in the reality of the schools in Macedonia. We

have contacted two schools and had informal interviews with the principals, the pedagogue, and the psychologist of the schools.

From the conducted informal interviews, we understood that in Macedonia the number of remigrant pupils is not recorded in the schools, due to the fact that the school has no such obligation or an assigned employee that is going to keep records of this. However, there still are a number of remigrant pupils that are coming back in the schools. It doesn't happen often that a pupil that has moved from the country after a period is back in the country and in the school, but there still are some cases and, according to one of the principals, it is mostly the Roma pupils that come back.

*“Two years ago, we had an entire Roma family move out of the country which for our school meant three pupils from different grade. They went to Germany without informing the school and came back one year later.”*  
(interview with a principal).

After they spent one year in another country and as a part of another educational system, on return, pupils wanted to continue their education in the same school. The Law on Primary Education of the Republic of North Macedonia determines that they must pass an exam in each subject of the school year that they missed in order to continue where they would be if they have not left the country. The materials and mentorship is provided by the subject teachers. The remigrant pupil then takes an exam in each subject and the subject teacher is the one who is giving the grade.

In the case of the three pupils previously mentioned the action undertaken by the school was to provide relevant subject materials which was then followed by three days of examination. These consisted of oral examinations with the subject teachers. One of the pupils, was eighth grade, so they had to take 12 exams, the same number of subjects in eighth grade, in order to continue his education in the ninth grade. After they passed the examination, they continued their education in the school.

*“What followed after this was just a large portion of work for the pedagogue and psychologist of the school as well as the homeroom teacher for the help and support that the pupils needed. In the education system of Macedonia there is no program that will enable teachers, other staff, pupils and remigrant pupils to go much easier through the process of continuing the education in the same school as a remigrant pupil. The teachers or the schools are not equipped with required materials, as literature, trainings, and handbooks. Yes, by the Law for Education we should have it, but in reality, we don't. So, we did what we could with that we had.”*



The most portions of work and effort fall upon the pedagogue, psychologist and the homeroom teacher, that help the remigrant pupil in the only way they know how. According to one of the psychologists, they had not been trained to work with remigrant pupils, nor did they have the required materials and handbooks to do so. However, the remigrant pupil, whether they ask for help or not, needs to go through the adaptive period, and in Macedonian schools the homeroom teacher, psychologist and pedagogue have the responsibility of making this period stress free and supportive. One of the principals stated that one cannot find this information in the official curriculum, but this is something that happens unnoticed and off the record.

*“The situation with the adaptive period of pupils remigrants goes under the hidden curriculum, whether we are aware of that or not. There is no program for the adaptive period that the pupils are going through, but it is in mutual understanding between the school and the parents of the pupils that we, as school, are going to help the pupil go through that period more smoothly. Whether this effort of ours is helpful and whether the pupil successfully goes through this period, I cannot say, because we have not been trained to work with remigrants, nor do we have the required materials to do so. We have faced many different cases, so sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn’t.”*

When asked about the article of the Law on Primary Education that obliges schools to create additional group and individual lessons in order to help pupil remigrants learn their mother tongue, we had the following response:

*“We have not enough teachers nor do we have classrooms for such additional program. Actually, most of the pupils remigrants do not spend a big amount of time abroad, so they could forget their mother tongue. Some years it happens that a pupil would leave and come back in the same school year a couple of times so they don’t really have the chance to forget their mother tongue. But even with the cases where the remigrants need this additional program and they struggle with the Macedonian language, the school doesn’t have the necessary conditions to do so. Our question is, who is going to conduct those classes and who is going to pay the teachers for them?”*

Macedonia is a multicultural society and with that, some of the schools are as well. There has been a research about “Multiculturalism and Inter-ethnic Relations in Education”, which shows that many of the schools in Macedonia tend to be separated in terms of ethnicity. There are schools that are multi-ethnic, but operate in separated facilities, so pupils from each ethnicity study in their mother tongue. There are tendencies of bringing the ethnicities closer to each other, but that is still a big issue

in Macedonia, and the process seems more successful on paper rather than in Macedonian reality.

In terms of the remigrant pupils returning to this multicultural society and going back to multi-ethnic school which is under the same management but still operates separately, there are a lot of underlined elements that the pupil remigrant needs to be aware of.

*“Depending on the period that the pupil spent abroad, the required amount of help that the pupil needs, can vary. If the pupil for instance is seventh grade, and has spent only a year abroad, the cultural norms and differences might be still fresh in their memory and they might need only a bit of refreshment in order to remember how things worked in the school. However, if the pupil has left the school in his early education and now is coming back as a grown-up pupil, there might be a big amount of underlined norms and rules that the pupil should be aware of in these multi-ethnic schools.”*

Again, the pedagogues and psychologists claimed that this was mostly falling upon them, it should be highlighted that teachers and classmates also encountered additional workloads and roles and in particular the remigrant pupils themselves specifically had a significant task to undertake.

*“Nobody takes into consideration the psychological and sociological aspect of the adaptive period of pupils when they come back. We tend to give bigger importance to the academic achievement that we forget that these pupil struggle and desperately need help from a grown up person in the school. There are so many underlying things going unnoticed, that the pupil remigrant has to fight on its own.”*

When we asked them if these pupils ask for help (wether from the homeroom teacher or other teacher that they feel more comfortable with, or from the school psychologist or pedagogue), they told us that wether they do or don't, again all of the help again falls upon the good will of the school employees, that have no program, have not been properly trained nor have the required material to provide the required help that the pupil remigrant need in the adaptive period.

### **III.5. Conclusion**

The topic of migration and remigration is an existing issue in Macedonian reality and with that in Macedonian educational system. However, this is still not treated as a point of discussion in the schools.

Despite the non-existing system and procedures for registering pupil remigrants on state and school level, it might seem that Macedonia deals with the issue with remigrant pupils and has a clear picture of its next steps. Nine years ago, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia has adopted the “Program for Assistance and Support for Reintegration of the Remigrants in the Republic of Macedonia” by which it was expected the adaptation period of pupils remigrants to be made more successful. This Program anticipated that a coordinative body will be created, that is going to monitor the processes for the adaptive period of the pupils. Moreover, in the Program it was mentioned that the pupils remigrants were going to receive the necessary help and support as well as the required information, courses and handbooks for continuing the education. In addition, by the Law on Primary Education in Macedonia, the school should organize additional language courses for remigrant pupils who have difficulties with their mother tongue.

However, the reality in Macedonian schools is different from what might seem like a good measurement on paper. The remigrant pupils undergo an adaption period that has not been previously structured or in any sense organized by the school. The remigrants are only instructed on how to catch up with the missed materials if they want to be in the grade that is corresponding with their age. What happens next and how these remigrant pupils go through this adaptive period, is a different case for each pupil. There is no record of neither language courses or any other cultural courses that will make the adaptive period successful. Macedonian schools also struggle with the lack of organization in a sense of teachers that are supposed to organize these additional courses and lack of classrooms. The school employees are aware of the issue with remigrant pupils, but are not powerful in a sense of changing the situation on a national level or sufficiently resourced to do so at a local or individual level.

### **III.6. Recommendations**

It is apparent that something needs to be done in order for the situation in Macedonia with the remigrant pupils to be improved. We saw that school employees are unsatisfied with how the Bureau for Development of Education handles these existing issues, and with this, they lose motivation and hope for the situation with their remigrant pupils. What we could suggest for the near future is designing tools with which the teachers could handle their situation on their own, at least in the beginning of the adaptation period.

What we could suggest is designing activities that will help the adaptive period of remigrant pupils. These could be focused on their mother tongue or on the culture in the multicultural schools in Macedonia. These additional activities could

be applied by the homeroom teacher during homeroom period, or by any teacher during their lessons. This does not change the situation on a national level, but certainly is a straw of hope that the teachers and remigrant pupils can catch upon.

We can also follow the international recommendations of using the intercultural education and its methodology in order to facilitate the social and educational integration of the remigrant pupils and the developments of their social and communication skills. Adapted curricula could also be a short-term solution for the remigrants, especially regarding the adapted evaluation tools, as the lack of speaking Macedonian could negatively influence the school evaluation of the remigrant and could decrease its interest in education.

Also, we can focus on collaborative tasks and cooperative learning as methodological tools to get remigrants really involved in the educational process and ensure their participation and learning.

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## Chapter IV

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# Cultural identity in the context of migration and remigration

### IV.1. Cultural identity

#### IV.1.1. Concepts

The most common components through which cultural identity is described are: ethnic or national origin, religion, race, gender, language, country, education, occupation, age, family and status (Altugan, 2015).

Ibrahim (1993) talks about cultural identity components with the following nuances: gender and gender identity, age and life stages, status and status disability, ethnicity, family, community and nationality.

In 2015, Ibrahim and Heuer complete the list with the following: race, ethnicity, nationality, migration and indigenous status, migration as a phenomenon in the membership group, dominated or domineering status of the membership group, sociopolitical history, gender and sexual orientation, social and economic status of the family, religion and spirituality, level of education, family characteristics (number of parents, other close members, single parent family), capacity and disability of the social status, country and region of origin, and residence of the moment.

Authors such as Wulf (2005) focus on a single component, namely the intangible heritage, which it is analysed through variables such as mimesis and mimetic learning, body, rituals and social practices, and alterity.

Wan and Yuen-Ga Chew (2013) speak of three components of cultural identity, namely cultural knowledge, categorization and social relationships. For the

two authors, cultural knowledge goes beyond mere knowledge of values, norms, traditions and customs, and involves an individual psychological connection that validates, by sharing, the knowledge provided by the membership group.

The categorization refers to Turner's (1982) theory, which refers to group, chosen or imposed grouping, and provides consistency of cultural identities to the extent of identification. The third component, the social network, is made up of individuals who facilitate the individual's access to cultural knowledge and model the self-categorization. The social network includes family members, teachers, study and work colleagues, friends and relatives. The need to explore a component, adding or grouping others is further evidence of the irony of the ambiguity of the identity concept that grows with the deepening of the study. In fact, the desire to study cultural identity comes from real problematic situations, given either by a particular component or by proportions and combinations that seem to force the boundaries of the contextual order.

#### **IV.1.2. Components of cultural identity**

Popa (2017) synthesizes the elements of cultural identity by reference to key concepts, such as:

▣ ethnicity, conceptualized through social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), the theory of self-categorization (Turner, 1999) and the theory of adaptive communication and ethnolinguistic identity theory (Giles, Coupland and Coupland, 1991);

▣ race, component related to the concepts of discrimination and stereotype;

▣ nationality, component related to the concept of imagined communities (Anderson, 2000);

▣ language, component related to ethnolinguistic vitality (Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal, 1981), with native language and learning of the second language;

▣ religion, component related to religious confession, church, traditions and religious customs;

▣ status, component subjectively related to hierarchy and goal with income and career;

▣ family, component related to the family type concept;

▣ cultural heritage, a component related to traditions, customs, myths, symbols, but also to social memory;

▣ gender, component related to attitudes, feelings and behaviours that a particular culture associates with biological sex or with gender-related behaviours through cultural prism;

▣ age, component related to Piaget (1968), Vygotsky (1986), Kohlberg (1981), Erikson (1965).

### IV.1.3. Dimensions of cultural identity

Cultural identity is spoken on many levels. Otovescu (2011) synthesizes four dimensions of cultural identity: individual cultural identity - individual cultural profile: knowledge, values, thought patterns and behaviours both appropriated and promoted; group cultural identity - refers to all members of a social group who share the same values, ways of thinking and behavioural patterns; regional cultural identity - delimited by geographically significant areas through the expression of values, customs, traditions; national cultural identity - encompasses the national community, territorially bounded by borders.

Following these dimensions, the quoted author proposes the following definition:

“Cultural identity can be understood as a set of knowledge and values, habits and mentalities, patterns of thought and action, lifestyle styles and behaviours, traditions and symbols that characterize, in a certain historical context, a social group, a wider community or a national community, and through which it differs from other groups, collectivities and communities.” (Otovescu, 2011)

For the studies carried out, overlapping the social identity with the cultural identity, Rusu and Comşa (2010) defines the concept as “the result of an identification process - emotions, cognitions, representations, attitudes, speeches, behaviours. - similar to others, with values, collective memories, symbols etc.”.

From the point of view of the educational process, Popa (2018) defines cultural identity as “the ensemble of components (grouped into knowledge, affections, attitudes, behaviours, representations, social relations), passed through the filter of social memory, transmitted and acquired for the identification and update, on the one hand, of the significant ones in the process of transmission and, on the other hand, of the self”.

In relation to education, Pourtois and Desmet (1997) propose a scheme on the basis of which we build our identity; the *paradigm of the 12 needs* is based on: affective need, cognitive need, social need (socialization) and the need for value, and derived from it: affiliation, knowledge, social autonomy and ideology.

The connections between the first four needs and their derivatives are evident (affective need - affiliation, cognitive need - knowledge, social need - social autonomy, need for value - ideology), but the two authors sketch multiple determinations. Thus, affective need can even influence ideology.

Every fundamental need corresponds to a pedagogical model. For the affective need, the authors suggest the approach to pedagogy of positive experiences, human pedagogy and project pedagogy. For cognitive need, the two see a connection with behavioural pedagogy, active and differentiated pedagogy. For social need it is

proposed to approach institutional and interactive pedagogy, and for the need for value, all pedagogies are subscribed as long as they are based on fundamental values: good, beauty and truth.

The purpose of the scheme proposed by Pourtois and Desmet (1997) is to help the educator to position himself best in accordance with the needs of the one who facilitates the discovery and construction of his own identity.

#### **IV.1.4. Construction process of children's cultural identity**

“Although affective processes often influence what children recall and what integrates from different experiences, their cognitive level determines how they process information” (Ramsey, 1987). The author considers that it is important for adults working with children of different ethnicity to know these psychological features and presumes that only in this way educators can “positively challenge children's attitudes” and notice the reactions of children receiving “discrepant information” that can create confusion of identification.

Vaughan (1987) emphasizes the determination of cognitive and affective processes in building the ethnic identity of children. The two processes, which determine the formation of the ethno-cultural conception of oneself, are in relation to the existing social structure, which imposes categories and creates predefined situations. Moreover, social structures are subject to change, forcing the updating of the ethnic identity of children and provoking the affective-cognitive determination in the predefined context. Vaughan's (1987) studies align with the Tajfel's theory of determinism in the construction of social identity and Bourdian theory of habitus.

#### **IV.1.5. Psychological limits and possibilities of preschool children in construction of cultural identity**

From the age of three, children are able to differentiate one member of their own group from another, especially when it comes to obvious differences, such as skin colour or language (Aboud, 1987).

Moreover, the studies of the cited author demonstrate that, from the age of 3-4 years, children are able to perceive similarities between their own person and their group, characterize the membership group based on perceptual indices, label groups (this characteristic being determined significantly by the social environment), and to assume the definitive aspect of the ethnic label. One of the problems that the author perceives and proposes for study is child biculturalism.

Katz (1976) draws attention to the need to know how children get information about other groups and their own ethnic group. Identification with the ethnic and



cultural self depends on the knowledge and awareness of the essential ethnic and cultural attributes in group differentiation (Aboud, 1987). Knowledge and awareness depend on the consistency of the ethno-cultural attributes built by those who transmit them (the sociocultural space itself, the school environment, the family). The investigations conducted by Aboud (1987) have led to the conclusion that children's ethno-cultural attitudes precede their identification with the self. And with aging and with the development of perceptual and cognitive capacities, increasing the capacity to understand the various ethno-cultural attributes that are being noticed, children begin to identify themselves more and more with their own group.

“Proper ethnic identification may be latent until the child develops a consistent view of ethnicity” (Aboud, 1987). Of course, the concept of ethnicity strongly depends on the cognitive state of the child and its ability to categorize.

Ramsey (1987) advances the idea that inconstancy, inability to differentiate, the need for concrete and idiosyncratic limits the cognitive level of children. Overgeneralization is an essential feature of the discussed age. Children tend to assign to supernatural forces the events they go through for the sole reasons of seeking coherence. Adults are also turning to this mechanism, says the author cited above. “God knows better,” “It's a wonder” are examples of adult and infant overgeneralization. What makes the difference is the inconsistency of children in attributing these generalizations, coming from lack of desire and ability to be constant (Ramsey, 1987).

## **IV.2. Identity and migration / remigration**

### **IV.2.1. Biculturalization and dual socialization**

The ethnic identity of children changes under conditions of socio-cultural modification (Diaz-Guerrero, 1982). “However, children may not have a bicultural self-identification, this means that they cannot be labelled as belonging simultaneously to two different ethnic groups (except children from mixed families)” (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987).

This type of socialization occurs when a child transfers the experience from one environment to another (school-family). But, according to Dencik (1992), “the significance of what happens in an environment depends on how that exponential element integrates into the total configuration of the socialization experience”. At large, we also find here the idea of coherence.

#### **IV.2.2. Ethnic and cultural socialization of children**

The ethnic identity of children is defined by the thinking, feelings and behaviour produced in relation to the sense of belonging to an ethnic group (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). The quoted authors distinguish ethnicity from ethnic identity, attributing to the first notion not only the origin, religion, race, cultural heritage, but also the thinking, feelings and behaviour of a group. The second, or ethnic identity, refers to the purchases of this patterning.

“From the perspective of children, culture consists of common interracial routines and shared perceptions that allow individuals to participate in social activity” (Youniss, 1922). The cultural identity of children can therefore be considered the common denominator extracted from the components of ethnic identity, which allows and satisfies their belonging to a specific group.

The components of ethnic identity (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987) are: awareness of belonging to an ethnic group distinct from another; ethnic identification of the self (the label used for its own ethnic group); ethnic attitudes; ethnic behaviour, materialized in pattern.

*Awareness of belonging to an ethnic group*, distinct from another, begins with perceiving language differences, physical differences (different looks, skin colour, eye shape), or different habits (religious, cultural, food).

*Ethnic identification of self* aims at the conscious and consistent acquisition of the label used for the ethnic group of membership, based on its own perception of belonging to the respective ethnic group.

*Ethnic attitudes or feelings* towards one's own ethnic group and others are polarized around positive or negative, becoming stereotypes and prejudices.

*Ethnic behaviours* are grouped by the authors of “Children's Ethnic Socialization” in four dimensions (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987), namely: individualism - collectivism, active - passive, authority - equality, expressiveness - restraint.

Popa (2017) associates the components of ethnic identity synthesized by Phinney and Rotheram (1987) with the role of early education as it is configured for the Romanian educational system.

Paun and Iucu (2002) attribute the following roles to Romanian pre-school education: “identifies the start of development; builds the premises of socialization and participation of the child; equalizes the chances of development, participation and integration of each individual; responsible for family, educators, community, society; sees school / kindergarten as an institution of development, eliminating sanctioning vision and labelling”.

### **IV.2.3. Nationalism and identity**

Anderson (2000) puts the development of nationalism on cultural artefacts and language, as an element of administrative centralization, which led to strong attachment feelings and a profound necessity of community continuity. But the community receives the attribute of being imaginary, being built in the minds of the members.

A common point in the discussion of identity and nationalism is language. According to Anderson (2000), the language, more precisely written, printed language, is the one that invents nationalism. The author assigns the language a creative role in building the national identity; the function of the language is, according to the author, to create imagined communities.

As a result, Anderson (2000) argues that those who want to enter the imaginary community can be invited because the nation was originally conceived as as based on language, without the need for a blood link.

Today, 64 million people live in a community other than the origin of their family, have not stepped on the land of origin and did not speak the language of their ancestors (Iyer, 2013). Imaginative communities are built much easier, based on fragmented identities in modern components, and access to a particular community can be done by knowing the language.

The anomalies highlighted by the American sociopsychologist in “Identity: cultural change and the struggle for self” reside in the inability of modern components to fulfil the fundamental criteria in building a compact identity, namely respecting the balance of continuity and difference.

Anderson (2000), however, puts anomalies on account of forgetfulness, coming from the narrative of identity, which, like any reproof, escapes elements and individualises the narrative truth. The idea of forgetting is also found in Renan (1882) in the form of shared forgetfulness or at Bartlett (1932), which approaches, five decades earlier than Anderson, the phenomenon of forgetfulness as a meaningful restructuring of memory. Bartlett's experiments have led to the conclusion that meaningful restructuring, called generic remembering, is determined by cultural elements.

Bruner (2006) speaks of the narrative of history, that of the past acts we use as a means of understanding what is about to happen. Just because a culture can not exist and can not be conveyed without internal contradictions, by which it is also formed, the narrative of history is our way of making the compliance of the human spirit with the constraints of cultural experiences compatible.

In relation to Anderson's argument about the collective social form of identity transposed into national identities, Hall (1991) states that “they do not function as

assemblies. If they have a relationship with our cultural and individual identities, they no longer have any force of stitching, structuring, or stabilization, so that we can know what we are simply by adding the sum of our positions in relation to them. They do not give us the ID as it happens in the past.” (Hall, 1991).

However, our national identity is clearly defined by the identity document which specifies the nationality acquired by birth or that to which we adhere in accordance with specific laws.

There are also questions about the size of nations and the power of influence in building the national sentiment. “National feeling may be offensive (power will) or defensive (the will to survive as an independent state); the first, following the example of the French or the Germans, will tend (often unconsciously) to design any interstate construction at European scale as an extension of their own national power; those in the second row, such as the Scandinavians or the inhabitants of Benelux, will try, by regional regroupings, to find a complement to national integrity” (Girault, 2004). The cited author presumes the deformation of national consciousness under the influence of the great powers.

Thus, Popa (2018) adds to the identity matrix the following concepts: national boundaries and their opening; identity act and social mobility (along with all modern components of identity); forgetting, remembering and, returning to the need for positive evaluation, the need for a positive identity.

#### **IV.2.4. Identity and identification**

Identity can only be understood as a process of being and becoming, a process traced somewhere between the need for similarity and difference and characterized by the dynamics of agreement-disagreement, convention-innovation (opening to the new), communication-negotiation (Jenkins, 1996). Today, the construction of identity no longer carries doubts about the process itself, it is a reality that social actors not only realize, but also assume and / or apply it strategically in different proportions.

In relation to building identity based on difference, Hall (1996) said that identities “are rather a product of difference and exclusion, rather than the sign of an identical unit, naturally constituted. . . Above all, and unlike the form in which they are invoked constantly, identities are built through, not beyond the difference. Identities can act as points of identification and attachment only because of their ability to exclude.” (Hall, 1996).

The need to differentiate and search for differences in the construction of one's own identity occurs at a time when “cultural diversity is, indeed, the fate of the modern world” (Hall, 1992 in Jenkins, 1996). Hence, on the one hand, the

opportunities, and on the other hand the difficulty of assuming the differences according to the need for similarity to yourself and to the area of belonging. The need to be different determines the fragmentation, assessed as dangerous for society. And “continuity over time is the main feature of identity” (Baumeister, 1986).

Giddens (2000) argues that it is not the issue of differentiation, reflectivity on identity, self-consciousness is not a new issue and modernism should not be considered a period to reinvent these concepts. What is necessary, however, taking into account the determinants of coordinate change in the construction of modern identity, is to find a “generic framework for understanding the way in which identification works, hosting its roots in human nature, as well as understanding how to construct and its urgency” (Jenkins, 1996).

Identification results from those aspects of self-image derived from the social category of belonging (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The question of identification and belonging is not whether “I like other individuals?” but first, “Who am I?” (Turner, 1982). *The identification starts from the group itself* and follows a path determined by the need for affiliation to a positively perceived group. Turner (1982) insists on the idea that attraction is not determined from individual to individual, but from individual to group, and is based on the awareness (on the cognitive attribute) of the elements themselves, on the one hand, and the group elements, on the other hand.

The identification may change according to time and space, depending on the people we contact at any time (Huot & Rudman, 2010; Spencer, Dupree, & Hartmann, 1997; Umaña-Taylor, 2011). The change comes from the need for differentiation, equal in intensity to identification, but unlike it, constantly *updated*.

#### **IV.2.5. Linguistic aspects of ethnic identity**

Preservation and use of language, say Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977), are related to the self-esteem of members of an ethnic group. Van Lier (2004) states that “a crucial factor in identifying (as designs of self) is the use of language, both by oneself and by others. In fact, identity and language are mutually constitutive.” And Belz (2002) describes the connection between language and identity as “intimate and mutual”.

If the *identity-language* relationship is outlined in this way, by moving the individual group-level discussion, the communication adaptation theory and the ethnolinguistic identity theory explain the communication between groups, justify the use of language in different groups and project the consequences of use.

#### **IV.2.5.1. Theory of communication adaptation and theory of ethnolinguistic identity**

The two theories start from the need for a positive assessment of social identity (Tajfel, 1978). In the opinion of the authors Giles, Coupland and Coupland (1991), the members of a group aim to achieve some desiderates such as social endorsement, effective communication, and positive assessment of social identity.

Linguistic behaviour is characterized by choosing the appropriate linguistic repertoire in relation to the interlocutor. In fact, the interlocutors are mutually adapting using a complex set of alternatives, organized in strategies (Giles, Coupland and Coupland, 1991). Adaptation of communication is through convergence and divergence. Convergence is defined as a strategy by which interlocutors mutually adapt to communication through speech, pauses, length of communication, smiles, mimic approval. And divergence, a somewhat opposite strategy, is used by interlocutors to emphasize verbal and nonverbal differences, and, by extrapolation, to expose ethnic differences. Depending on the goal pursued by the linguistic behaviour, the individual adopts one strategy or another.

The theory of ethnolinguistic identity is developed within the adaptation to explain the use of strategies to adapt communication between interethnic groups for the purpose of positive assessment of social identity. Social mobility, social creativity and social competition are the ethnolinguistic strategies used in the linguistic behaviour for maintaining or accentuating the positive social identity.

#### **IV.2.5.2. Ethnolinguistic identity**

Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal (1981) propose the term ethnolinguistic vitality for the sum of factors that maintain and enable the distinct existence of an ethnolinguistic group. The three dimensions that determine the ethnolinguistic vitality and preserve the language, according to the authors are: demographic variables; social and institutional support; social status.

Demographic variables represent the “absolute number of members that make up the language group and its distribution throughout the regional or national territory” (Bourhis, Sioufi & Sachdev, 2012).

Social and institutional support is, according to the three authors, the degree of control of the linguistic community over the institutions that can ensure the survival of their culture. Institutions may be official or unofficial, and support may be formal or informal. This category includes the church, school, government, mass media or the economic sector.

The status of the group is a result of historical prestige, social characteristics (prototype, stereotype) and the importance of language on national and international level (Sachdev & Bourhis, 2006).

The spoken language and the characteristics of the cultural footprint remain vocal and expressive vectors of our identity. Just as poetry recognizes the value when we hear it recited, so our identity also gets meaning through language.

#### **IV.2.5.3. Learning a second language**

Heller (1987) exposes in “Children's ethnic socialization” the sociolinguistic perspective on the learning and use of two different languages, mentioning two important conclusions from the language learning perspective.

Language constrains participation in certain activities and the formation of relationships. By doing so, language is at the same time creative of cultural boundaries that open up through its knowledge;

Language is the decoditor of common children's experiences; to have real access to these experiences, children need to know the language.

The scientific literature of the last 10 years abounds in neurological approaches to everything that pursues human specificity. According to Blakemore and Frith (2005), the number of such items has increased by 800% in the last decade. Neuroscientists' reaction to the trend of explaining human behaviour through the perspective of brain connections is not delayed. Blakemore, Dahl, Frith and Pine (2005), similar to educators with gardeners, presume: “... gardeners can not grow roses without first having the right soil and roots, but a good gardener can do miracles with what is already there” (Blakemore, Dahl, Frith & Pine, 2005).

Neuroscientists claim that there are parts of the brain involved in the early processing of language issues. Furthermore, “different regions of the cortex can be involved in the actual acquisition of language [in the care of infants] of those that are important for the use of language in adults” (Johnson, 2011). The statement demonstrates the gradual engagement of different regions of the cortex in the manipulation of language according to the experience the individual goes through during his lifetime. Experience can mean trauma, in which case other parties take on functions, but not at the maximum capacity as the original, or may mean the socio-cultural context that facilitates the development of specific connections.

Studies of speech processing studies in infants have shown not only that infants can discriminate these sounds early in life, but that the type of language they hear in their environment shapes the way children experience later sounds of speech. Specifically, behavioural experiments show that infants younger than about 6 months can discriminate against speech sounds that are present in their native language as well as those that are not.

In other words, infants up to 6 months are what Kuhl (2010) calls citizens of the world. The ability to absorb and discriminate sounds in the first 6-8 months of life is recognized. From this point forward, the language customization begins.

Regarding the affectivity of sounds and implicitly the transmission of mother tongue through mother's voice, studies suggest remarkable and sufficiently early specialization for processing human voice and negative emotions (Blasi et al., 2011). The authors demonstrate the impact of linguistic retention under the affective stamp. Physical contact, authentic presence in agreement with positive emotional expression determines the degree of structuring of assimilated statistics (Kuhl, 2010).

In 1978, Grigoroviță writes in "Revista de Pedagogie" about the issues raised in the field of modern language education. The author draws attention to the necessity of linguistic awareness, assuming that "the theory that a foreign language is appropriated by imitation (like mother tongue) is false". The relationship between thinking, mother tongue and foreign language is treated by the author quoting by emphasizing the presumption that a message can be encoded only in the mother tongue (Grigoroviță, 1981). Language requires a message restructuring, initially coded in the mother tongue, and the restructuring process may generate discrepancies. "In the case of such discrepancies between the need for expression and the possibility of expression, the learner is obliged to restructure his or her expression in the native language and to find the simplified replacement solution" (Grigoroviță, 1978). The conclusion would be that "everyone's mind is intimately tied to his tongue" (Renan, 1858).

Currently, neurological studies on learning a foreign language confirm the same results. Winkler et. al. (1999) conclude that learning a new language "requires the formation of recognition models for the discourse specific to the newly acquired language", and the recognition is based on the mother tongue model.

The similarities between the hypotheses verified in 1978 and of those neurologically analysed nowadays makes us return to the gardener's metaphor. The results obtained both by classical methods and by advanced neurological technologies presents us with models of learning a new language and assert our brain capacity from the earliest days of life for this type of learning. So the question is not whether children are able to learn a new language, but what the effects of learning a second language are, especially after the age of three years, a period covered by this study. What is the purpose for which children would learn, under the present sociocultural conditions, a new language and what would be the long-term personal and general outcomes? Van Lier (2004) presumes that "we can not speak a second language only when thoughts, identities and self are aligned" (van Lier, 2004).

Barlogeanu (2005) argues that the native language "is the privileged identity support, having an extremely strong symbolic role in the management of the relations



between the cultural communities in cohabitation” (Barlogeanu & Crisan, 2005). The quoted author draws attention to educational anthropology studies that “indicate that the symbolic inequality of the languages used in the social space and the compulsion of the child to learn at school a language considered more prestigious than the mother tongue gives the feeling that society is disadvantaging its own language” (Barlogeanu & Crisan, 2005). The consequences of produced sentiment affect significantly, the researcher claims, the image of the self, the family and the community to which the child belongs. An avalanche of personal and professional negative effects is a long-running echo.

Of course, the advantages of bilingualism must not be denied, and the limitation of language supply, in the conditions of inertia of globalization, is presented as a big mistake. Barlogeanu (2005) supports the idea of an intercultural project that fosters authentic communication and equal valorisation of languages. For this desideration, self-knowledge is essential, as well as giving value to the mother tongue.

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## Chapter V

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### Teaching in a multicultural classroom

#### V. 1. Introduction

##### V.1.1. Remigrants in schools

Remigrants are persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short term or long-term) in another country and who are intending to stay in their own country. However, this definition excludes circular or cyclical migrants who routinely move back and forth between two countries for work, and also repatriated refugees (Sills, 2008).

As remigration is defined as a movement of persons to their own homeland, together with culture, behavioural pattern and memories of an environment imprinted in their original homeland, the way and the level of a school-aged student adapts to different learning systems is mainly influenced by the family, the social background, the educational background, and it reflects upon school success in a new environment, even if it is a return to the homeland. Of course that the school success depends also on the student`s age: if the remigrant is in primary school it can be easier than in secondary school, according to the learning curriculum from where he came and comparing with the place where he lives now.

Based on this idea, the method used in this investigation was the questionnaire-based research, as a starting point. The study was carried out on basic and secondary schools from the participant`s countries in this project (Italy, Portugal, Romania, Iceland and North Macedonia), during the current school year and have enrolled not only remigrants pupils in their classroom but also all the class students around them, teachers and staff. The study objectives were aimed at analysing the factors involved in adapting remigrant`s pupils to their new schools, the environment

around them and their difficulties according to the curriculum in the homeland country. We considered very important to understand the way in which teachers mediate the adaptation to school for the remigrants pupils, as well as the correlations between school adaptation and the call of teachers for psycho-pedagogical counselling.

As a result of our investigation, we concluded that there is a need of developing intercultural methodologies of teaching and learning in the classroom, so that remigrants students can feel more included in the new environment, but always respecting the school curriculum.

### **V.1.2. Intercultural education**

Although the vast conceptual discourse on intercultural education represents different perspectives, types of opinions, and positions, their common ground is that intercultural education is not a curriculum, educational program, school subject or a study course. It is pedagogical approach that acknowledges diversity of learning and its benefits in all areas of human life. Intercultural education implies the potential to shape the society where humans with diverse cultural identities can co-exist and live successfully. Thus, intercultural education not only enables shaping and development of person's cultural identity but also promotes equality and human rights, prevents discrimination, and facilitates well-being, coherence and sustainable development of an individual and society. Hirsch (1987) is one of the first authors who described the notion of cultural literacy.

Everybody is intercultural as interculturalism is natural human experience. A person's cultural identity is shaped by his or her nationality or ethnical belonging, religion (belief, faith, position, system of spiritual values), language, gender or sexual belonging, age or generation, physical and mental exceptionalities (both learning difficulties and advanced performance), profession (occupation, business, engagement), residence (rural and urban), class (economical status, income level), education level, etc. These characteristics are the types of culture that are universal and present in every culture, and that open up numerous ways in which individuals are unique and diverse. People can identify themselves with several cultural types simultaneously. According to Heyward (2002), an interculturally literate is a person who acknowledges his or her own transcultural identity and is able to "shift between multiple cultural identities". Cultural types can be both mutually compatible and exclusive. Cultural conditions of different countries result in different views of national identity. Thus, society is not a patchwork of fixed identities but a web of crosscutting identifications or as Welsh (Velšs, 2005) puts it, "modern societies are multicultural and encompass a variety of life forms".

An argument that person's cultural identity can simultaneously be shaped by several types of culture has to be considered in terms of the variety of these types. Besides, some types of culture are more visible in educational process than others. Therefore, educators' pedagogical mastery includes skills of ensuring equal possibilities and attitude, high expectations, purposeful support, and caring environment for learners of all types in educational process. Teachers have to learn how to recognize, honour, and shape their teaching strategies to diverse cultural characteristics of learners (Gay, 2000). Also, the voice of students should be considered as a source for learning.

### **V.1.3. Globalization of culture**

Even if we speak about culture every day, it is rather challenging to grasp this notion. Conceptual understanding of culture represents it as a dynamic and complex process of meaning construction. Also, culture can be considered as a product of human creative activity.

In the present time any society, both global and national is multicultural. Cultural processes influenced by multiculturalism expand their traditional form, are enriched by different content, and challenge their habitual meaning. Process of globalization emphasizes that not any culture is authentic and self-sufficient (Stigers, 2008) that is confirmed by a large scale of expansion of cultures, their mutual influence, and construction of new symbolic cultural expressions. Similarly, these changes initiate the development of critical theories on culture with an aim to interpret the ongoing processes.

According to Welsh (Velss, 2005), we are living in the time when traditional isolation-based structure of a culture is changing into transcultural structure. Thus, understanding of culture should overlook the dichotomized division into civilization vs. nature, wide culture vs. subculture, high culture (literature, art, music, fashion) vs. low culture (mass, popular), open culture vs. closed culture, public culture vs. private culture. These understandings are homogeneous as they imply isolation, separation, inequality, and polarity.

The traditional and transcultural understandings of culture are crucial for teachers as they have strong relevance for education. Educators have to consider that traditional understanding of culture as ethnical affiliation is rather flat and politically tactless.

If teaching to perceive, to understand, and to interact with others is built on the traditional understanding of culture, such teaching facilitates a feeling of disconnectedness, insecurity or disrespect towards the unknown and the strange. Traditional understanding of culture does not encourage the ability of equal

interaction in the environment where different communication styles, needs, norms, traditions are represented. The current expression of culture can be characterized by the processes of confluence, interconnection that are beyond contrasts between one's own and others. It gives a possibility for teachers to reconsider their understanding of culture and to broaden it.

The understanding of the concept "culture" should be based on a systemic approach that considers the complexity of society with all groups of a culture sharing their multiple perspectives and interacting together towards a common goal.

#### **V.1.4. Intercultural dialogue**

The intercultural dialogue is an efficient tool and a metaphor of the initiatives of building a culturally inclusive and sustainable community. Dialogue means both speaking and listening, and the process itself that reveals both common understandings and real differences. Dialogue does not mean to agree with each other. Dialogue cannot be simplified to imply only sharing ideas about different cultures, religious traditions and ideologies, or to imply only listening to others (Giddens, 1994). The dialogue is a process of progression to something different from where one starts. Effective dialogue requires mutual respect, coherent language of communication and a common platform of equal sharing of power. It also assumes the good will of partners in dialogue. The notion of dialogue involves inter-subjectivity that means being oriented towards the other. Jackson (2004) refers to Iggrave's dialogical approach making a distinction between primary, secondary and tertiary notion of dialogue. According to the primary notion the dialogue acknowledges different experience, viewpoints and influences in learners' social back-grounds. Secondary dialogue represents a positive response to primary dialogue, characterized by openness to difference. Bringing together points of view is seen as a positive activity to all students. It encourages openness to the ideas of other students. Tertiary dialogue is the activity of a dialogue itself.

Dialogue is an important process in which challenges are named and solutions are looked for. In education dialogue is meaningful tool of learning because it opens up an opportunity to share experience and thoughts in a supportive and constructive atmosphere. In this situation, students can be involved in activity to identify what is oppressive and how one might take steps to end that oppression. This however must be done carefully. Freire (1970) argued that dialogue must include profound love for the world and for people, humility, hope, and mutual trust: "true dialogue cannot exist unless the dialoguers engage in critical thinking-thinking which discerns an indivisible solidarity between the world and the people and admits of no dichotomy between them-thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather



than as a static entity-thinking which does not separate itself from action, but constantly immerses itself in temporality without fear of the risk involved” (Freire, 1970).

Intercultural education provides a transformational process through which all aspects of education are examined and critiqued and rebuilt on ideals of equity and social justice. Cochran-Smith (1991) have shaped an agenda of incorporating social justice in teacher training programs that should help teachers to broaden their visions and develop the “analytical skills needed to interrogate and reinvent their own perspectives”. Contemporary scholars have set standards for teachers exceeding the description of a craftsman. Giroux (1992) argued that teachers should be transformative intellectuals. Cummins (1995) asserted that “teaching for empowerment, constitutes a challenge to the societal power structure”. In Cochran-Smith’s (1991) words, teaching requires attention to socio-political factors. Thus, educators should assist teachers to develop a social justice perspective based on various effective teaching applications. This will ensure educating reflective teachers who are concerned about issues of social justice. Banks (2003) outlines four approaches on intercultural curriculum design: contributions, additive, transformation, and social action approach. Banks believes that educators begin with the contributions and additive approaches and do not move beyond the other two approaches. Banks asserts that intercultural education “as a process of curriculum reform can and often does precede from the contributions and additive approaches to the transformation and social action approaches”. The key curriculum issue involves not just adding ethnic heroes or heroines, but the use of different perspectives.

### **V.1.5. Education for intercultural dialogue**

Education in both the formal and informal sectors plays a key role in implementation of intercultural approach. Several educational initiatives have been put into practice in Europe in the last ten years. The majority of them have sustained their contribution to intercultural education by producing publications of their experience. Although each publication is unique, all of them give some assistance to educators who consider cultural aspect as an important drive of successful learning. Some of the published materials seek to bring attention to the issues of intercultural education placing teaching in a wider context and demonstrating its political and ethical implications. These initiatives introduce new views e.g., euro-centeredness of the concept of intercultural competence (Byram et.al., 2003). Other materials provide integrating content of education into units meaningful to multicultural settings (IN-TER Project, 2002). Other publications discuss methods that can be used by teachers at schools or those who work with young people on different education projects (Council of Europe, 2005a) to promote positive attitude towards diversity,

to enrich and personalize participation and human rights (e.g., Council of Europe, 2005b; 2007). Educators can also find documents and recommendations on implementation of intercultural education provided for national use (e.g., National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2004; 2005) and international use (e.g., UNESCO, 2006).

A teacher's individual attempt to implement intercultural education requires her/his strong position, motivation and courage. Implementing all three components in education teachers should move from an essentialist understanding of curriculum to a more constructive one where learners' critical thinking is encouraged. However, success initiated by whole-school approach will be rather effective than changes that take place in a single classroom by an isolated teacher. Values should become words and actions that have to be reinforced until they are integrated in school's culture.

## **V.2. Pedagogical challenges of teaching students to live in a multicultural world**

The term diversity and difference are often used synonymously, but in the context of a society of unjust relationships their meanings are significantly different. Diversity indicates the multiformity and variety of human experience represented in various social groups. Various sources disclose debates about the best ways of conceptualizing difference. Differences exist in sex, sexuality, traditions, memories, aptitudes, and beliefs. The avoidance of the reality of difference can create more divisions than unity. Thus, when speaking of multicultural society diversity cannot be adequately understood without understanding it in relation to difference. Unities and differences are constructions rather than representation of actual and fixed groupings of people. Difference may be constructed as an ideological weapon and be a part of a strategy of domination.

Instead of fostering a politics of difference she suggests creating a politics of identification. There are numerous types and forms of difference and need to be taken into account, such as temporal, political, emotional, experiential, material and structural. Archer suggests engaging with "non-binary" differences, particularly regarding questions of power. It requires breaking hierarchies and challenging the language of polarity. There are inherent ambiguities within notions of difference, since differences embrace both activity and passivity, both, actively constructed and structurally imposed reality, shifting, ever changing and patterned reality (Archer, 2004). It is rather difficult to talk about persistent, enduring differences. Social identities are always fluid, shifting, and discursive, and the boundaries of difference always are to be re-negotiated. Therefore, differences should be viewed as processual, contextual and constantly re-worked.

The intercultural society considers the issues of justice and equality to be of primary importance. One of the challenges about these issues relates to confusion of equality with the sameness. Equality does not mean an advantage, inclusion or assimilation. It reasserts the issue of social location and requires one to think of ways of tackling processes that deprive people of autonomy and justice and prevent access to social resources. The idea of equality can be thought out within the framework of multicultural society that dismantles the preconditions positions that are generically disadvantaging and limiting of human capabilities.

Talvacchia (1997) suggests framework for intercultural education, as a justice hermeneutics which provides the moral vision, and which focuses towards the use of emancipatory educational practices. In an unjust world, the classroom can become democratic.

### **V.3. Appropriate methodologies to include remigrants students in the classroom**

Processes of globalization and inclusiveness increased technological development and re-evaluation of human potential challenge traditional conceptions and narratives of society and confront educators with unfamiliar reality that goes beyond individualism, dogmatism, indoctrination, and hierarchical structure of organization, and fosters the development of whole field of education. Historically teachers and teacher trainers have always faced social and technological innovations. Teachers are also one of the first to encounter the dynamically changing intercultural and media contexts, since it is they who should to be ahead of the time and adapt educational content and strategies to the needs of students. Otherwise they risk losing correspondence of education to the needs of students and the social contact with them.

It should encourage teachers to develop their roles as learning facilitators and promoters of creativity and help teacher education institutions to respond to the new demands of the teaching profession.

At the same time, it is recognized that fostering creative abilities and attitudes within schools also requires the support of an organizational culture open to creativity and the creation of an innovation friendly environment in general.

Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training has been named as one of the four strategic objectives of European Education and Training 2020 (Council of the European Union, 2009b).

Looking around what's happening in this globalized world, it is important to recognize the characteristics of modern methodologies and the way to achieve STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) and CPS

(Collaborative Problem Solving) methodology; and appropriate the concept of Modern methodologies to the inclusion of the remigrants students in the classroom.

### **V.3.1. STEAM methodology**

STEAM is an educational approach of learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. The end results are students who take thoughtful risks, engage in experiential learning, persist in problem-solving, embrace collaboration, and work through the creative process. These are the innovators, educators, leaders, and learners of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In order to accomplish these goals, schools must consider a variety of factors:

- ▣ collaborative planning, including a cross-section of teachers on each team
- ▣ adjusting scheduling to accommodate a new way of teaching and learning
- ▣ professional development for all staff in STEAM practices and principles
- ▣ STEAM schema-mapping for the curriculum and assessment design process
- ▣ alignment and unpacking of standards and assessments
- ▣ seamless lesson implementation processes and strategies

STEAM projects require students to systematically think through problems, applying the information they learn along the way about technology and engineering to figure out the best solutions. Cross-curricular projects also engage different parts of students' brains so that they are seeing the project through different lenses, focusing on details while also learning to step back and look at the bigger picture. It increases critical thinking.

STEAM projects in schools improve the focus on developing the knowledge, skills, habits, and experiences for success and motivate students in learning through a strong instruction in science, technology, engineering, and math which will be essential to preparing students for success in life. The program of studies in schools should include the following:

- ▣ more minutes in math and science than the state requirements
- ▣ engineering integrated within courses, but also offered as a standalone course
- ▣ computer science offered to all students
- ▣ teachers enhancing student learning through authentic performance assessments, project-based learning, standards-based instruction, technology integration, cooperative learning, personalization, and cross-curricular instruction.
- ▣ partnerships with STEM professionals and the community enrich learning opportunities for students. Partners may include business/industry, university/college, informal learning institutions

☞ providing mobile devices for students (sometimes in the forms of computer labs, and other times in the form of 1:1 – a single device for each student)

☞ after-school STEAM clubs or programs and robotics programs.

The concept of future classroom lab and STEAM point of view, for education and training which can be very useful for remigrants students, because is based on group work and group inclusion.

It's difficult to discuss the classroom of the future, as if it is something that it exists in some faraway time. The truth is, education is changing right now. Technology and expanded knowledge of the learning process have already resulted in a metamorphosis of the classroom and of teaching methods. There will be even more changes in the future.

Technology will certainly be a major factor in how education in the future differs from education today. However, it won't be the only influence. Successful educators will realize that they need to rethink the entire model of education and redesign it so that it is more student-centered. This means adopting new technologies, but it also means giving up on archaic attitudes about what constitutes educational success and recognizing that educational competition is a reality.

### **V.3.2. The Future Classroom Lab**

Created by European Schoolnet, the Future Classroom Lab (FCL) is an inspirational learning environment in Brussels, challenging visitors to rethink the role of pedagogy, technology and design in their classrooms. Through six learning zones, visitors can explore the essential elements in delivering 21st century learning: students' and teachers' skills and roles, learning styles, learning environment design, current and emerging technology, and societal trends affecting education.

The Future Classroom Lab is formed by six different learning spaces. Each space highlights specific areas of learning and teaching and helps to rethink different points: physical space, resources, changing roles of student and teacher, and how to support different learning styles.

All together the spaces form a unique way to visualize a new, holistic view on teaching. The zones reflect what good teaching should be about: being connected, being involved, and being challenged. Education should result in a unique learning experience, engaging as many types of students as possible.

### **V.3.3. Promoting the cultural diversity in education with photos**

Reading and understanding photography for intercultural purposes, specially connected with the place from where the student comes, can be very useful for inclusion, in order to make the others understand better who is there and why.

Photographs, because they are exceptionally evocative (evoking past memories, feelings and experiences), are relatively open to interpretation. When we find a photograph meaningful, we are lending it a past and a future (Berger & Mohr, 1982). But what does it mean to read a photo? Most importantly, it means that we have the prerequisites. This statement alerts us to the fact that a photo is not simply a copy of “reality” or an unproblematic representation of what we observed.

In the same time photos bring us closer to the subject in ways that words can't. As the words, photo has an author, so between photograph and us is another person: the photographer.

There are many photos and they could be included in some categories: landscapes; people and landscapes; portraits of people; people in action; objects.

Reading the photo suppose three categories of actions are important: “look at...”, “look for...” and “ask myself...”.

These actions are developed in the context of the next questions: Who or what do you see? What is/are the subject(s) of the picture? What is happening in the photograph? When was this photograph taken? Where was this photograph taken? Why was this photograph taken? What kinds of scenes did the photographer focus on?

These “W...” questions (What, Who, When, Where and Why) generally guide us on reading the photograph, action that is done in four stages: describing the photo, analyzing the photo, interpretation and evaluation.

### **V.3.4. Collaborative work for a better understanding of the cultural challenges**

Working on a better understanding of the cultural challenges is usually done by intercultural education, but it doesn't necessarily include elaborated tasks that require a lot of preparation. Simple tasks can also be implemented by the teacher in order to understand interculturality.

For instance, a collaborative work in groups of 3 students can involve three specific roles: storyteller, interviewer and note taker. The main question is related to a previous intercultural experience that the storyteller had, assuming that all of us already had an intercultural experience during our lives.

The discussion will take about 10 minutes, and after that the roles will change and the discussion starts all over again.

#### **V.4. Discussions**

Implementation of the described concepts in teacher education can be started with identifying issues of metacontent that characterize or are related to the particular study course or study program. After it the content of the study course has to be restructured highlighting metacontent issues and integrating them with content issues into meaningful units. Intercultural and media issues in teacher education are approached from constructivist and transformative framework that form the core of a learner-centered approach and imply an engagement of students in active construction and transformation of their own learning process and outcomes rather than in instrumental, passive and value-neutral transmission of information. Thus, constructivism and transformation serve as epistemologies that encourage learners to be actively involved in challenging, construction and reconstruction of their knowledge, attitude, and action in a culturally sensitive educational environment. Implementation of these epistemologies is based on learning from rather than learning about, highlights collaboration and supports cultural and media sensitivity of both teacher educators and learners.

Considering intercultural and media literacy as metacontent issues of formal education even if it is recognized throughout preschool including higher education, is merely an incomplete contribution to ensure sustainable functioning of society in the era of globalization. To create inclusive and open environment in society all three types of education, formal, non-formal and informal must consider the issues of intercultural and media literacy as a priority of educational content and policy, and both governmental and non-governmental sectors have to assume equal responsibility and involvement in its implementation. Multi-disciplinary vision and action to increase understanding about urgent intercultural issues, such as, tolerance, equality, inclusion, and to encourage interculturality and media literate co-existence and cooperation of individuals and organizations should be particularly promoted.

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## Chapter VI

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# Career development for students with a migrant background

### VI.1. Introduction

Migration flows are profoundly changing Europe. Whatever the history and context in each country, growing diversity represents nowadays a common scenario and this is particularly true for educational settings. Roughly 10% of the EU population are from a migrant background (Eurostat, 2018) and migrant children constitute a considerable proportion of the total migrant population in EU member states. Up to 11% of students in European classrooms are now from other countries or remigrant (Hippe et al., 2016) and each year thousands of migrant students complete school in Europe.

Within this context of fast-changing intercultural societies and globalisation, education systems are central in preserving social cohesion and promoting cultural integration. They play a crucial role in preparing all students for the reality of the world into which they are transitioning (Hooley, 2015).

The process of equipping students for building their future is, however, particularly challenging for the diverse group of migrant children who often face a variety of difficulties which might put them in a disadvantaged position vis-à-vis native children (Janta & Harte, 2016).

Students with a migrant background are, in fact, more likely to underperform in basic competences (OECD, 2018a), to have lower academic attainment, to obtain lower level of qualifications, to progress less into higher education, to preferably choose vocational pathways and to get stuck in the lower end of the social ladder.

These factors often pair with feelings of isolation and exclusion (Eurodiaconia, 2014).

Supporting children with a migrant background is therefore a main priority of the education systems and several policies have been recently proposed focusing on factors influencing students' educational success and integration across different levels.

In this chapter, we will specifically focus on the potential role of career guidance interventions to help students with a migrant background find their way and build their future in the host country.

A great wealth of literature supports the strategic role of effective career development interventions to help students successfully manage their career journey. These interventions aim at offering each student the conditions to reach their full potential with the mission of leveraging social disadvantage and promoting social mobility (Musset and Kurekova, 2018).

This chapter will look at the integration process from a new angle, by examining the relevance of effective career development services for students with a migrant background at school.

This work will start with a detailed description of the current situation of students with a migrant background in Europe, it will then explore the meanings and aims of career development interventions in a diverse and multicultural world and present a methodological and theoretical framework for leading career development activities with this group of students.

## **VI.2. Students with a migrant background in Europe: educational and professional perspectives**

When analysing the picture of students with a migrant background in Europe, it is worth mentioning that this population represents a very diverse group and that Member States show different types of migration flows and inclusion policies.

While in some European countries EU nationals constitute a considerable proportion of the migrant population (with the specific case of remigrants in some countries), other Member States are destination of third-country migration flows (Eurostat, 2018).

Migrant children constitute approximately 5% of the under-15 EU population (Janta and Harte, 2016). This proportion varies considerably both in the different Member States and within the same State where in some urban areas, such as Rotterdam, Brussels or Vienna, nearly half of the pupil population in certain schools are migrant children (first- and second-generation inclusive; OECD 2010).

Among the migrant student population, only about one out of five is an EU migrant, while most migrant students come from countries outside the EU (Eurostat, 2018).

Moreover, the profile of migrant students strongly depend on the children's country of origin, their age, their length of stay in the host country (newly arrived or not), if they were foreign-born children (first generation; 42% of the total migrant student population in Europe) or not (second generation), if they were native students of mixed heritage parents or foreign-born children with native parents who returned in the country of origin after years abroad (remigrants).

While acknowledging the great diversity of this group, we will discuss a series of challenges frequently faced by migrant children in regard to their educational and professional career.

### **VI.2.1. Academic attainment**

Students with a migrant background face greater vulnerability than native students when it comes to academic resilience and this is particularly relevant for first-generation migrant students. While acknowledging the multiple factors that contribute to academic attainment (the students' personal history, the characteristics of the school system, etc.), academic underperformance is reported to be common to most students with a migrant background (OECD, 2018a). This performance gap is found in 29 out of 59 OECD countries and PISA 2015 data shows that half of the first-generation immigrant students failed to reach baseline levels of academic proficiency in reading, mathematics and science, compared to 28% of students without a migrant background. The gap tends to be wider in reading and this suggests that limited or no command of the host society language represents the most common barrier for educational success (OECD, 2010).

Across European countries, students with a migrant background who do not speak the language of assessment at home are around 9% less likely to be academically resilient than native-speaking migrant students (OECD, 2018a).

### **VI.2.2. Educational choices, the case of Italy**

Students with a migrant background seem to be over/underrepresented in certain school types vis-à-vis native students and national reports describe the higher tendency for migrant students of choosing technical and vocational schools.

Overall in Italy, 92.1% of the students with a migrant background who obtained the lower secondary school diploma in 2016 opted for a vocational education or training course: 83.2% enrolled to upper secondary school (vocational

or technical) and 8.9% chose regional vocational training. The choice of upper secondary school strongly correlates with the result obtained in the lower secondary school exam and with their migration status (first or second generation) (Miur, 2018).

### **VI.2.3. Access to higher education**

Across EU countries, students with a migrant background are 7% less likely than native students to progress into higher education.

However, the same students, when asked to report what job they expect to hold at the age of 30, are more likely to hold ambitious career expectations or to have similar expectations compared to their native peers. These ambitions are although less likely to be met as only 65% of immigrant students with ambitious career expectations reach a level of basic academic competence in all EU countries (vs. 80% of native students) (OECD, 2018a).

### **VI.2.4. School dropouts and NEETS**

As stated in the report “Reducing early school leaving: key messages and policy support” (EU, 2013), early school leaving is a multi-faceted and complex problem caused by a cumulative process of disengagement. When looking at the specific population under discussion, early school leaving rates “are nearly twice as high as for the native population” (European Commission, 2016). A recent study investigated the reasons behind migrant students’ school dropouts and highlighted that, once we control for individual and school characteristics, it seems that migrant status does not have a significant effect on the expected likelihood of early school leaving (Hippe and Jakubowski, 2018). It seems, instead, that socio-economic background is the most predictive factor (regardless of the migrant status) which is, however, unequally distributed between natives and migrants (see Hippe and Jakubowski, 2018 for details on the role of other factors such as students’ epistemological beliefs, grade repetition and school level).

Young migrants are also more likely to fall into the NEET category (people not in education, employment, or training). On average across OECD countries, 18% of foreign-born 15-29 year-olds are NEETs, while 13% of native-born 15-29 year-olds are in this situation. The differences are largest in Austria and Germany, where the percentage is about 25% among foreign-born 15-29 year-olds and below 10% among native-born 15-29 year-olds. In Greece, Italy and Spain, about one in three foreign-born 15-29 year-olds are NEETs. In these countries, a high share of native-born 15-29 year-olds are also NEETs, but to a much lower extent than foreign-born 15-29 year-olds (OECD, 2018b).

### **VI.3. Understanding career development**

Building a personal identity is a major developmental task (Erikson, 1963). Starting from our personal story, we define who we are and project ourselves in the future. This future dimension becomes particularly relevant during late childhood and adolescence when students start to face for the first time the complex and lifelong task of defining a life plan. The choice of the educational pathway represents, in fact, one of the most delicate and important tasks in the multifaceted process of identity building (Kroger, 1988). To a certain extent, the student's ability to live and flourish in a society will depend on it (Boerchi, 2014) as the educational choice has been shown to be a foundational step in the individual's career development with strong links with the risk of school dropout, academic attainment and success (Ferraro & Burba, 2017).

As previously reported, students with a migrant background tend to show career development trajectories that favour vocational education and less participation in higher education. Higher school dropout and young unemployment are also described as more frequent compared to their non-migrant peers.

If we reflect on these data with a developmental perspective, it is worth reporting that students with a migrant background are often in the situation of building their educational and professional journey in a more complex and non-linear scenario compared to their non-migrant peers. Together with considering personal interests, skills and opportunities, this population has to design their career facing possible psychological vulnerabilities and adverse circumstances associated with their migrant background, family expectations and cultural values that might not be in line with those of the hosting country (Sultana, 2017).

The Socio-Ecological model proposed by Bronfenbrenner might represent a useful theoretical framework to better understand and identify this complex process of career development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Career development has in fact to be considered as an "act-in-context" with a systemic approach where internal and external factors (at different levels) are deeply interconnected and interacting. Development is influenced by sources that can be thought of as nested systems, one inside the other forming the ecological context where the individual tries to thrive (Heppner, 2008).

In light of this model, at its centre we will see the student with his/her profile of abilities, interests, potentials, values, self-awareness, self-esteem, self-efficacy and emotional regulation. This puzzle of individual features will operate in relation to the family microsystem which passes on to their children values, models, rules and expectations which contribute to shaping the individual trajectory. This is particularly relevant in the case of migrant families as often family's values and models differ

and sometimes contrast with those of the hosting country. This might trigger a disorientating process for both the parents who might lose solid reference to traditional educational styles and cultural models and for the children who might find themselves in a struggle for identity in between values and systems. The child's career development might be strongly influenced by parents' expectations and parents' migration plan which might in turn depend on their perception of integration and their choice of settling in that country. Parents might push the child toward a more professionalising career or, in certain cases, might advocate for a social "redemption" persuading the child towards certain academic pathways which might not be in line with the child's real interests and skills.

The individual with his/her family will then act within and in relation to the wider "*ecosystem*" which, in this case, would be represented by the educational system. School and family are meant to collaborate in order to support the student in his/her career development journey. This alliance or relationship is often delicate in cases of students with a migrant background and might be at risk of imbalanced roles or of prejudices and biases which might not be functional in helping and valuing the student in the process of building his/her own career. It might be the case of absent parents or of a school who does not have tools to be interculturally sensitive.

*While we recognise the challenges of this intercultural collaboration between migrant families and the school, we want to highlight the great potential of schools which become culturally open, socially transformative and emancipatory.*

On the last wider level, we find the "*exosystem and macrosystem*", the cultural and political context within whom the student develops. In relation to the topic of this work, we define the macrosystem as the different migration and integration policies, the hosting country's openness to a multicultural society and the social, cultural and economic scenario. These variables strongly interplay with the career journey of the student who will behave according and in response to national regulations on immigration but also to the perception of cultural identity, integration and globalisation.

In line with this model, the individual journey is therefore the result of a series of complex and interacting factors and systems (biological, psychological and social) which interdependently shape the development process. These systems are fundamental and need to be taken into account when thinking of potential interventions for promoting successful career development of migrant students.

This line of thought is also crucial for introducing another theoretical perspective that might guide us understanding this phenomenon and help us plan effective interventions.

When talking about the relationship between personal characteristics and external circumstances, the Indian economist Amartya Sen highlights the

intermediate construct of “capabilities”. With this concept, the Nobel prize moves the attention from what a person ends up with (e.g. the decision to abandon school) to the process and the way a person reaches a choice (Sen, 2009). Sen focuses on people’s actual opportunities to choose to live different lives, he highlights the idea of actual freedom. Capability refers, in fact, to ‘a person’s actual ability to do the different things that she values doing’ (Sen, 2009) and this introduces a set of important questions: is the student able to process his/her life circumstances and transform them into functionings that will help him/her build their career? How free is this student in taking this career direction? (Boelskifte Skovhus, 2016).

This reflection represents the rationale for presenting the strategic role of career guidance to promote migrant students’ career development.

#### **VI.4. Career guidance for social justice**

Drawing on these theoretical perspectives and in light of the complexity of the contemporary socio-economic scenario, career guidance is defined as “a wide range of activities which support people to think about and progress into their futures” (Hooley, 2015). At its heart, a recent definition reports that the main aim of these activities is to develop “individual and community capacity to analyse and problematise assumptions and power relations, to network and build solidarity and to create new and shared opportunities” (Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen, 2017). Career guidance is therefore aimed at empowering individuals and groups to “struggle within the world as it is and to imagine the world as it could be”.

This definition underpins a paradigm shift in lifelong guidance which abandons a “test and tell” or matching paradigm. This model moves away from a limited view of career guidance as activities focused on choice making in a circumscribed moment of transition in favour of a learning and development paradigm (Jarvis, 2003). In this view, guidance activities are considered learning opportunities, a process of learning and development which goes on throughout life (Super *et al.*, 1996).

The skills required to enable individuals to function in this fluid environment are called “Career management skills”. These are “are competencies which help individuals to identify their existing skills, develop career learning goals and take action to enhance their careers” (ELGPN, 2015; LEADER project). In this view, the term “career” is used to depict how individuals live their lives across different context and settings, including education, work, family and leisure time. Careers are constructed rather than chosen (Neary, Dodd and Hooley, 2015) and individuals need the exercise of CMS to carefully coordinate their life, work, learning choices and experiences, at all ages and stages throughout their lives (Vaughan, 2011). Moreover,

the social, cultural and organisational context within which an individual operates impacts the way a career unfolds and, as they navigate within these structural constraints, individuals can exercise varying degrees of agency over the development of their careers. This exercise consists of a skilled process whereby the individual considers the interplay of their skills, interests, aspirations and responsibilities with the possibilities that exist for them within the world around them and the conditions of their surrounding systems. “This capacity to exercise agency and to influence the development of one’s own career is what is often described as career management” (Neary, Dodd and Hooley, 2015).

The CMS framework provides an instrument which connects career theory, practice and policy (Hooley et al., 2013). It also defines a focal point for interventions in a complex and multicultural society: instead of focusing on the end-process of a choice (e.g. choosing a school or abandoning school), the framework supports activities which aim at equipping students with those “capabilities” (Sen, 2009), with those tools that will enable them to gather, analyse, synthesise and organise self, cultural, educational and occupational information to make and implement decisions and transitions.

In the case of students with a migrant background, these activities would represent a comprehensive tool that, drawing on the individual histories, will give the energy and the momentum to start building a life plan (Batini, 2018).

Prior to describing the framework in detail, it is worth mentioning that this paradigm shift goes in line with a change in the terminology used. “Career development” and “career learning” are now much preferred compared to “career guidance” and the element of social change is increasingly highlighted in recent literature (see Sultana, 2014; Hooley, Sultana & Thomsen, 2017). Careers are central to people’s ability to self-actualise and social mobility is at the core of a socially just society. Here it comes the socially transformative and emancipatory role of these interventions: they have the potential of making a positive difference, possibly contributing to equalising life-chances rather than just reproducing social class destinies (Sultana, 2014). This is particularly the case of students who come from a migrant background who will need to be provided with the tools to overcome those constraints which bind their career development options and reduce the degrees of freedom of their future trajectories.

Instead of thinking of guidance as a spotlight that advises students while focusing on a smaller and smaller range of future options, guidance here has the role of shedding light on a greater range of opportunities. It aims at widening horizons, increasing aspiration, fighting stereotypes. According to this view, career learning is about helping “children to understand who they could become and helping them to develop a healthy sense of self that will enable them to reach their full potential” and



to feel part of their community (Kashefpakdel et al., 2018). This entails a learning component and cannot be done in once-in-a-lifetime intervention prior to school transitions. This has to be lifelong and has to start early. As longitudinal studies have shown, holding biased assumptions and having narrow aspirations may influence the academic effort children exert in certain lessons, the subjects they choose to study, and the jobs they end up pursuing (Kashefpakdel et al., 2018).

Career development interventions are meant to remove the obstacles that block a child from reaching his/her full potential and, in the case of children with a migrant background, will need to specifically work on factors such as, for example, ethnic prejudices, ethnic identity and values, understanding the hosting country's world of work (Boerchi, 2014). In this context career guidance means opening options, supporting reflection, and giving students a genuine opportunity to make other choices (Boelskifte Skovhus, 2016).

## **VI.5. The career management skills framework**

A number of career management frameworks have been developed in different countries (Hooley *et al.*, 2013) and we report below the framework developed and validated by a European consortium in a recent project (LEADER project, [www.leaderproject.eu](http://www.leaderproject.eu)). The framework provides a reference tool for educators to guide interventions and for policy makers in considering what programmes to fund or promote.

The framework is declined with a general description of the CMS areas and, for each area, we will then discuss some critical aspects associated to the specific population of students with a migrant background.

### **VI.5.1. Personal effectiveness**

This area focuses on developing understanding of the self in order to build and maintain a positive self-concept. This area encompasses the ability to reflect on strengths and weaknesses, on who I am and on my personal story. Here we find those skills who allow students to capitalise on their skills and personality to reach specific objectives, make career decision and maintain positive attitudes when facing setbacks. Self-efficacy, self-awareness and resilience are the core concepts of this area.

When considering the specificity of students with a migration background, several aspects should be considered.

First of all, we need to examine the role of ethnic identity in defining “who I am”, interests and strengths. Ethnic identity is described as “feelings of ethnic

belonging and pride, a secure sense of group membership, and positive attitudes toward one's ethnic group" (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). Research shows that ethnic identity does correlate with the beliefs in one's abilities in a specific domain ("self-efficacy", Bandura, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy beliefs influence outcome expectations which, in turn, are thought to define career interests, goals, and ultimately, career behaviours (Lent et al., 1994, 2002).

Researchers working in this field (Socio-cognitive career theory, SCCT, Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2002) claim that interests are not merely expressions of personality but they suggest that the construct of self-efficacy and outcome expectations are located in between personal identity and the development of interests. Personal inclinations might be transformed into vocational interests only if a person believes that she/he can do something and that she/he will be successful. This becomes crucial if we consider that social factors such as ethnicity, gender and culture strongly influence self-efficacy.

When working with students with a migrant background, it is therefore important to consider the possible role of cultural stereotypes and certain aspects of ethnic identity in shaping the students' concept of self and self-efficacy perceptions.

This might be a powerful explanatory model for understanding why many students with a migrant background tend to prefer vocational education. This might be associated with low self-efficacy in studying and basic competences, with specific family models, with ethnic prejudices.

All aspects have to mindfully be taken into account during career development interventions as a thoughtful work on this would unblock some of the barriers to the child's actual freedom to design his/her life. Reflection and constructivist approaches have been shown to be particularly powerful in helping the child process these complex interdependencies.

Another crucial element for working on these aspects is the role of learning experiences. Learning experiences are known to be most influential on self-efficacy beliefs. Repetitive experiences of success or failure in certain activities will produce a change in self-efficacy belief. This might be the case of negative learning experiences at school which slowly shape the child's interest in further studies (via low self-efficacy in study abilities), the case of limited and biased experiences that gradually circumscribe beliefs and interests of a child.

Here there is room for improvement, for offering a wider and enriched range of positive learning experiences which might in turn widen the child's interests and strengths.

### **VI.5.2. Understanding the world**

This second area focuses on the understanding of the world of work and its professional profiles. The area highlights the changing nature of work and the relationship between work, society and the economy. This entails the development of a vocabulary to talk about professions and has the objective of promoting reflections on how work and learning are impacted on by wider issues in society. While the first CMS area focuses on more personal aspects, this area looks at the labour market, at its job profiles and at how these change within a complex socio-economic scenario.

This component of the CMS model represents a fundamental aspect as students are reported to have an extremely limited knowledge of occupations and the world of work. This emerges clearly in a recent OECD report where one third of PISA respondents (540,000 students from 72 countries) expressed interest in just 10 different occupations.

Children begin to understand the world and their roles within it from a younger age than previously thought (Gottfredson 1981 and 2002) and it is from an early age that they start perceiving the suitability of different sectors and careers paths (Kashefpakdel et al., 2018).

This process that defines careers aspirations is however strongly influenced by their exposure to the world of work. Jobs children aspire often depend of the ones that their closer community or networks, or on what they see on the TV and/or social media. This exposure shapes expectations with the serious risk of biased and narrow aspirations that might restrict children's futures by limiting what they believe they can do and the jobs they might end up pursuing.

One of the main sources of exposure are family and parents with their history, expectation and values (Batterham and Levesley, 2011; Howieson and Semple, 2013). They influence the child's career aspirations in complex ways and, among those, the effect of the family's socio-economic status has been clearly seen in many studies (Howard et al., 2015). This holds true also when controlling for proficiency levels (e.g. students from low socio-economic background are less likely to want to go to university than higher SES students at the same proficiency level in mathematics, PISA: OECD, 2018a).

Lower social capital and poorer access to information offers poorer contacts with the world of work (van Tuijl and van der Molen, 2015) and this means that some groups of students, the disadvantaged ones, are less likely to consider certain education and job paths with the risk of intergenerational cycles of disadvantage (CEDEFOP, 2016).

Similarly, migrant and minority background shapes the exposure to the world of work (Basit, 1996, Fouad et al. 2016; Ma and Yeh, 2010; Mitchell and Bryan, 2007; Bimrose and McNair, 2011; Kristen, Reimer and Kogan, 2008).

If, on the one hand, one line of influence is attached to the lower socio-economic status often linked to immigrant background (Bimrose and McNair, 2011), on the other hand, family roles and the role models in their surroundings might differ according to the ethnicity. It is reported, in fact, that different ethnicities in Europe tend to occupy specific niches of the labour market (ISTAT, 2018); this might restrict the children's exposure to professions and might lead students with a migrant background rule out future options for themselves and enter career paths that reproduce intergenerational cycles of disadvantage (Drawing the Future, 2018).

Another driving factor that is known to mould and shape the understanding of the world of work is represented by work values and gender stereotypes. This factor has been transversally shown to impact career development over and above ethnicity and it is already by the age of 8 that girls and boys routinely develop gendered ideas about jobs and careers (Gutman and Akerman, 2008). These naive early understandings represent a delicate factor for students with a migrant background for whom gender stereotypes might merge with work values and cultural beliefs.

If career guidance focuses on actual freedom of choices and broadening horizons, then encouraging a deeper understanding of vocational options is crucial. Career development theorists converge around the emphasis on career exploration as a foundational step in each career development intervention (McMahon & Watson, 2017). These interventions can play a key role in widening the child's exposure to the world of work: via career talks, workshops, school trips or other employers / employees engagement activities, they can provide children with role models and real-life, authentic experiences that can tackle stereotypes and raise aspirations. These allow them to draw new and better links between their current and future imagined lives; encourages children to broadly consider a multitude of options and to go beyond limited views of their possible futures (Kashefpakdel et al., 2018).

Recent research has shown that teenagers engaging in higher volume incidents of employer engagement through their secondary schools, tend to go on to earn more as young adults (Mann & Percy, 2014).

### **VI.5.3. Finding and accessing opportunities**

This area focuses on the need to develop those skills that enable individuals to effectively navigate into and onto learning and working opportunities. The main

objective of this third CMS area is to ensure citizens are able to find and access both learning and professional opportunities for their career.

In a fast-changing world, actively engaging in learning and being aware of the strategies for accessing learning and work opportunities have become crucial elements for building a career.

While this is fundamental for every citizen, people with a migrant background might face specific difficulties in accessing opportunities and successfully navigating from the world of education to the world of work (Diemer, Wang and Smith, 2010).

A first element of difficulty refers to the understanding of the educational requirements of different jobs. Longitudinal research suggests that students who at age 16 have underestimated the level of education required for their desired job are more likely to end up being NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) before the age of 20 (Yates et al., 2010). This underestimation is more frequent in young people with disadvantaged background.

This mismatch between educational pathways and professions seems to be a crucial issue also for migrant students who are reported to often hold ambitious expectations but to lack the basic competences needed for accessing those job roles. Throughout Europe, students with a migrant background who aspire to complete tertiary education and who also attain the basic academic proficiency are 5% lower compared to native students (OECD, 2018a).

It seems therefore that even when career aspirations are high, students and their parents lack knowledge and understanding of the reliable requirements needed to achieve career ambitions (Menzies, 2013). This represents an important obstacle for their career development and requires significant work for engaging parents and children themselves to help them understand what the aspirations involve and which skills will help achieve them.

Basic proficiency in core PISA subjects is often a prerequisite for realising ambitious career plans and, as shown in the PISA 2015 report, students with a migrant background are less likely to reach a basic level of academic competence in all EU countries. This specifically refers to reading abilities and suggests that language barriers to text comprehension may be a key factor in explaining performance differences.

Limited language proficiency is also often a significant obstacle in exploring all range of career opportunities for young immigrants (Ma and Yeh, 2010; Mitchell and Bryan, 2007) and career guidance counsellors are recommended to take this barrier into account. They might collaborate with native language teachers to promote language proficiency and teachers might use informative materials such as college brochures or job advertisements as part of their reading comprehension material. It

may also be helpful to teach common terminology from the world of work, job or college application terminology or phrases that students are likely to encounter. Mock interviews might also be useful to teach students the national etiquette in interviewing (Musset et al., 2018). The OECD recent report on career guidance highlights the possible role of structured workshops in the immigrant communities with information in the native languages and bilingual role models. In USA, a study reports that these events led to better awareness among parents and increased demand for career information (Evanovski and Tse, 1989).

#### **VI.5.4. Managing relationships**

Relationships with the others are an important factor which impacts how we manage our career. This fourth CMS area focuses on the need to recognise that we have different relationships with others depending on the context and that these can help us build a career. Two main line of thoughts can be offered in relation to this area. First of all, this area works for the development of those fundamental communication and interpersonal abilities that enable students to confidently and effectively interact with others. These skills have to be considered a priority area for career development interventions specifically targeted to the migrant population.

The second area highlights the importance of support networks in providing career information, mentoring and scaffolding throughout students' career development and access to career opportunities.

As previously outlined in other sections of the chapter, the surrounding network of relationship represents a fundamental variable and area of intervention in case of children with a migrant background as these often are found to rely on comparatively low reserves of cultural capital and can lack networks of contacts to provide "hot knowledge" and support for assisting them build their career (Thomas and Jones, 2007).

Social networks are functional in distributing information and "a well-connected individual could expect to gain easier access to new and useful information about labour market opportunities" than a peer who has a limited social network (Granovetter, 1973; Mann et al., 2018).

A recent evidence of the role of networks comes from the Italian context where nearly 90% of unemployed Italian people report to use informal channels when looking for a job. In this regard, a factor warranting acknowledgement is that these informal channels of social networks are significantly smaller and less solid among those with economic disadvantage and with a migrant background (ISTAT, 2018) with the risk of a dramatic impact on their employment opportunities.

For a young person in an educational setting, the role of engaging employers in career learning activities can replicate the function of social networks providing young people “with an opportunity to gain information, observe, ape and then confirm decisions and actions with significant others and peers. Thus, everyday implicit, informal and individual practical knowledge and understanding is created through interaction, dialogue, action and reflection on action within individualized and situated social contexts.” (Raffo and Reeves 2000; Mann, Rehill and Kashefpakdel, 2018). Moreover, informal mentoring and strong networks of nonfamily contacts can boost teenagers’ future employability (McDonald et al. 2007 in U.S.; Muller et al., 2018).

Finally, students themselves are important partners and resources in the provision of career guidance activities. Peer to peer initiatives and mentoring are well known to be very effective and can be specifically powerful for the population under discussion as they can more easily reach out disengaged students and students at risk of social exclusion (Sultana, 2018).

#### **VI.5.5. Managing life and career**

This last CMS opens up to a wider consideration on career within the more comprehensive frame of the individual’s life and well-being. This fifth area aims at providing those skills to harmoniously combine work and life and to support individuals to effectively progress their career while achieving a balance with their commitments.

A first aspect refers to a successful management of career development. As previously reviewed, students with a migrant background are not only at risk of narrow aspirations but also of unrealistic aspirations which are often not paired with aligned educational choices and trajectories. Together with being “inspirational”, career guidance activities with migrant students should also concentrate on nurturing existing aspirations, on “keeping them on track” with a special focus on how to achieve them. If a pupil wants to be a doctor but does not know that medicine requires proficiency in a series of subjects, that the access is bound to an entry test, then there is the risk that they will realise it only later on and will have limited freedom to achieve their previously high aspirations (Menzies, 2013). It is a priority of schools to work for providing the “how” that is often missing.

Another aspect to consider is related to the students’ meaning of work and career within their life. While we often talk about career in terms of self-determination and self-realisation, others might have lived circumstances where work means survival and struggle to eke out an existence (Blunstein, 2018). We might need to investigate what career and work mean for students and specifically deal with

constructs such as “hope” and “agency” as more and more students might not feel the freedom and the ground where they can plant their dreams. This is a delicate zone (probably the most vital) for schools and guidance services which are asked to target it with special attention to students with a migrant background.

To conclude this session, it is important to remind that successful career development is, in fact, one significant aspect of a broader idea of well-being and that this CMS area is transversal as it includes skills for time management, for decision making, for planning. This help us remember that career development is one of the contributors to social inclusion, integration and general well-being.

## **VI.6. Conclusions**

This work offers an insight on integration from the perspective of career development.

Starting from a rich plethora of data, we have highlighted a series of aspects which might put students with a migrant background in a disadvantaged position vis-à-vis native children when it comes to building their own future and live in the hosting country.

As careers are constructed rather than chosen, we have presented a model of skills which are known to help students navigate their lives and build their career. While those career management skills are transversally important for all citizens, in this work, we have shed light on specific aspects which might be particularly decisive for the population under discussion. We have proposed room for interventions and have defined areas to be tackled in order to overcome those constraints which bind migrant students' career development options and reduce the degrees of freedom of their future trajectories.

Career guidance interventions represent a powerful strategy to promote integration via a comprehensive process of sense-making aimed at widening horizons and raising aspirations. For certain young people, some careers are seen as inappropriate or inaccessible and career guidance interventions might have the power to effectively challenge the cycle of disadvantage by offering those tools to discover and pursue alternatives which they may not have considered.

The focus on career development and career management skills gives guidance interventions a promising socially transformative and emancipatory role and this is especially true for those children who might come from non-traditional backgrounds and who might face additional hurdles in building their future.



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## Chapter VII

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### **Diverse classrooms – diverse society. Preparing our students for diverse society through intercultural education and cooperative learning**

#### **VII.1. Introduction**

Our classrooms, workplaces and society in general is multicultural, even where there is no ethnic diversity. We all have different cultures. Our backgrounds differ in terms of parental education, religion, socio economic status, household, family form, etc. Additionally, they differ in values and attitudes, lifestyles, abilities/disabilities, and ethnicity or nationality. Ethnicity or nationality is therefore only one of the factors that make our classrooms diverse and thus influence our student's culture. The settlement of immigrants has added new "minorities" to the community in Europe and accentuated the social and cultural pluralism which already existed. This fact also means that our workplaces are multicultural – diverse in the broadest understanding of the concept "culture". Again, no matter if there are co-workers or clients with different ethnic background or not and the demand for employees to use this diversity as an advantage instead of seeing it as a problem is obvious just by reading the job advertisements.

The task for the educator then becomes that of preparation of students for the social diversity of their future workplaces, in addition to providing the environment that will produce active minds and critical citizens trained in key competencies and social skills alongside academic and vocational subjects. Critical and creative thinking skills, problem solving, independent working and related skills must become the platform for all learning.

There are two main questions that we need to consider in this context:

1. The why question. Why should a teacher consider changing their teaching style? What in our society has changed to call for different educational approaches? Why is the teacher's attitude towards diversity important?

2. The how question. This is the question that I have heard most often in my work, giving training on intercultural education. How do we reach the aims of intercultural education in our classrooms? How can we organize our teaching in order to reach those aims? Are some methods more likely to work than others?

## **VII.2. Why do we need to make changes?**

This question is very important when we discuss education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with student teachers as well as with in-service teachers. Why should teachers change their way of teaching if they do not see any obvious reason for changing it? We can probably introduce as many methods and materials as we want, but if a teacher does not see the advantage of those methods for their students and themselves, they will not achieve the desired outcome. The attitude of the teacher is key.

Most educationalists agree that education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is more about learning new skills and competences than collecting information and remembering facts. However, the question is which competences we see as important in our diverse and intercultural societies. Which competences do we need to train and equip our students with in order to prepare them for life in a pluralistic workplace and society and to become active and critical citizens? Which competences increase their employability?

When I ask my students or participants on European training courses to identify the competences that they see as most important for their students to acquire in order to live and thrive in modern, diverse society, I normally get more or less the same list of competences, no matter if the participants are Icelandic teachers or student teachers or international groups of in-service teachers of all school levels and subjects from all over Europe. The list of competences that they consider of most importance for their students looks something like this: communication skills; cooperation skills / team work / being able to work with a diverse group; open mindedness / anti prejudice / non-judgmental; be able to see things from different aspects; creative thinking; flexibility; critical thinking; language skills; conflict management; initiative; independent working.

When motivating students for working cooperatively during class, which they often neither want nor know how to, it's a good idea to give them real job advertisements to analyse and ask them to find out which three competences are mostly asked for when looking through all advertisements. They tend to find the following; almost all advertisements ask for good communication skills, secondly

they ask for cooperation skills (being able to work in a team) and thirdly they ask for initiative. After that they will see that flexibility and independent working inevitably follow. Obviously, there is also some knowledge or experience required but the request for social competences surprises the learners. They have become convinced that only high grades count when entering the labour market but they see that social competences are just as important for employability as grades.

Tony Wagner writes about “The Seven Survival Skills for Careers, College and Citizenship” and as we can see here the skills are more or less the same as the learners find in the job advertisements. (Tony Wagner, Harvard University, 2009):

1. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving
2. Collaboration across Networks
3. Flexibility and Adaptability
4. Initiative and Entrepreneurialism
5. Effective Oral and Written Communication
6. Accessing and Analysing Information
7. Curiosity and Imagination

Wagner also notes the gap between the skills learned at the colleges and what students actually need in real life: “The Global Achievement Gap is the gap between what even our best schools are teaching and testing versus the skills all students will need for careers, college, and citizenship in the 21st century”. (Tony Wagner, Harvard University, 2009)

Further, we do not expect to travel the world in the same way we would have done in the 1960s so we need to consider why we might prepare learners for the world in the same way as we did then. A system designed to elicit the obedience and conformity required by the industrial factory system is not a suitable model to elicit the creativity and problem solving required in the current employment market.

But being an active citizen is not only about work or employability. It's also about being active participant in creating a just and equitable society. A citizen who fights actively for equal rights and opportunities for the non-dominant groups and values and respects the diversity instead of passively tolerating it is actively involved with and linked to their community and wider society. In 1996 the International Commission on Education for the twenty-first Century identified four key objectives that education must be organized around and which will be in a way the pillars of knowledge: Learning to learn, learning to be, learning to do, and learning to live together. Learning to live together, learning to live with others. This type of learning is probably one of the major issues in education today. („Learning: The Treasure within”, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, UNESCO Publishing, 1996, 1998, 266 p.)

This shows us that it's been recognized for a long time by teachers and educationalists that education is so much more than just learning and memorizing facts. In contemporary society, where millions of „facts” are just one mouse click away the ability to select, prove and use those facts may be lost in a system that still focuses on learning for an exam. With the abundance of information available the skill to identify bias, sort fact from fiction and to build a network of trusted sources becomes more important than recall of a set of pre-ordained facts decided upon by committees and bureaucratic structures such as some exam boards.

There is also a direct connection between intercultural education and cooperative learning when it comes to training students to become anti-racist. A research that InterCultural Iceland completed in 2013 about every-day discrimination showed that 93% of people with migrant background, living in Iceland had experienced some form of hidden, everyday discrimination once or more during a 14 day period. ([http://www.ici.is/assets/Everyday\\_discrimination\\_in\\_Iceland.pdf](http://www.ici.is/assets/Everyday_discrimination_in_Iceland.pdf), for further information).

Alvarez (2010) defines everyday racism as hidden, everyday forms of discrimination, examples include being ignored and isolated, made fun of and embarrassed, or being in some way treated differently than people belonging to the majority group. According to Alvarez (2010) these are incidences that would seem innocent and harmless but when they build up they can greatly affect people's mental and physical well-being. So this is about everyday behaviour towards minority groups in the society and obviously this kind of behaviour is dangerous as it becomes an accepted structure by the dominant group.

So what needs to change so that people everyday interaction is based on respect and equity? It is clear that the power structures in society are much more solid than something that can be changed during a couple of hours during class but our belief is, that the individuals who maintain those structures can and must take the responsibility to make changes over time in their own society and this starts in the classroom.

The competences that need to be trained in order to work against the underlying attitudes of superiority, and the maintenance of existing power structures are diverse. One of the most important competences that needs to be trained and supported is in my opinion the ability to think critically, to question „facts”, to research where information come from, if it's possible to see things from other perspective etc. This is especially important in the information society where social media, memes etc. are our students sometimes main source of information. It is essential that they learn to differentiate and that they also have the thinking skills to draw conclusions instead automatic acceptance of what an authority figure tells them is the truth.



Critical intercultural education has the aim to give students the opportunity to practice their critical thinking, cooperation and communication skills and the understanding that diversity in society is an advantage and not a problem. To understand that people's cultures are not determined by the place they or their parents are born in but everything that has influenced them through their life.

Does traditional teaching give our learners the opportunity to interact, cooperate, compromise, understand... in other words; are we teaching them to live with others in our traditional classrooms? We will discuss further in the next sessions why and how creative cooperative learning gives every learner this opportunity and at the same time gives them the necessary skills and competences they need to gather, select and discuss critically information about their subjects.

### **VII.3. How do we teach in order to train student's key competences and reach the aims of intercultural education?**

If we think how traditional didactics (frontal teaching where the teacher speaks and the pupils listen most of the time) prepare our learners for "real life" we see that there is in fact a gap. We are not really increasing our student's communication, cooperation or conflict solving skills by sitting and listening to the teacher or working alone on a task and do they learn creative or critical thinking when they are reading, listening and remembering facts that will be tested in the exam? How will they be able to discover the advantage of diversity when the only competence that is valued is the competence of reading, writing and memorizing? As Elisabeth Cohen says: "We actually teach these skills in kindergarten and sometimes in the first 4-5 classes but then most of the teachers start working more and more the traditional way where the teacher speaks, the pupils listen and memorize. In high school it's the same. When those pupils graduate we want them to know these skills again to be able to function at multicultural/diverse workplaces." (E. Cohen, 1997)

The answer to these questions isn't easy or simple because there is no one single teaching method so good that it suits all students all the time. The answer lies in diversity – diverse teaching methods and approaches. Teaching methods where the student is active, where there is interaction and communication taking place and where there is structure that increases the possibility for every student to have access to the learning process, are best suited to activate students, train their social skills, give them the opportunity to learn in a creative way where higher order thinking skills are necessary and thus prepare them for life in a pluralistic society and workplace. There are also no special cooperative learning methods that suit every student better than others. It is always up to each teacher to evaluate which cooperative learning

method suits best to reach their educational goals – they are after all specialists in their subjects.

Cooperative learning methods, using activities and games, using controversial problems in the classroom are all approaches that have shown to be useful to reach those aims.

Teachers may have some bad memories from their own school years or as teachers from group work experience that went wrong. Cooperative learning is always group work but group work is not always cooperative. Group projects are a prescription for an inequitable distribution of the workload. Cooperative projects are not. With group work tasks, the teacher assigns a task to a group and leaves it to the group to determine how to structure how they will work together. In unstructured groups, it is most likely that the status ordering within the class will allow some students to take over while others contribute little or even nothing or can't even get their hands on the task. In contrast, cooperative learning tasks are carefully structured.

To ensure cooperation in a group, it must be very structured and certain principles must be followed. If poorly managed and structured group work it can even be worse than individual work for some students who for example suffer from anxiety or fear of failure. They may possibly hate it because they don't know for certain what will happen (they can make a reliable prediction during a traditional lesson). So structure is the key word. The more structured the work is, the more students can work independently, there will be more interdependence and support from group members and insecure students will actually know what will happen and that they will have support from other group members instead of competition where the fear of failure will be a factor impeding learning and activity.

Obviously, it takes much more than this presentation to explain in depth structure of cooperative learning, but the fact is that no other educational approach has been as well researched as cooperative learning. What we want to discuss here among other things is which steps we need to take in order for cooperative learning to be of real use for our students, for their learning and to prepare them to become active, open minded and critical citizens.

## **VII.4. Organizing cooperative learning**

Teachers need to make sure that:

☞ students and teachers understand the “why” question. Why is it important for us to learn and train our communication and cooperation skills? Why are social skills in general just as important for real life situations as the knowledge that we gain at the college? Why is the learning deeper when we discuss the content with others?

☞ teachers know methods (activities) that increase a positive and safe class atmosphere and understand why that is so important.

☞ teachers know how to prepare students for cooperative learning and teach them norms and behaviours necessary when working with others.

☞ teachers know examples of cooperative teaching structures that improve student's key competences and give a diverse group of learner's better access to the learning process.

#### **VII.4.1. Pre-reading**

Before using the methods introduced during the teachers training InterCultural Iceland organizes, their trainers advise teachers to read some articles/books about cooperative learning:

Complex Instruction: <http://cgi.stanford.edu/group/pci/cgi-bin/site.cgi>

Complex Instruction and maths: <http://nrich.maths.org/content/id/7011/nrich%20paper.pdf>

Cooperative learning returns to college:

[www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2014.ptw.%2849%29.pdf](http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2014.ptw.%2849%29.pdf)

Articles about cooperative learning: <http://rer.sagepub.com/content/64/1/1.short>

#### **VII.4.2. Prepare the class**

Changes are in general difficult. Teachers are all in the strange situation of doing a job where they have already experienced the situation, but as students. I have noticed through my in-service training courses that many teachers actually liked the traditional system as students because they were good at it. They were good at reading, writing, memorizing, sitting still and they had good grades. This can lead to a self-perpetuating system where practitioners may be loath to change a system that worked perfectly well for them. Of course, most teachers can see further than their own experience and they understand that for other students this system doesn't work that well at all.

For students it may be the same, changes are difficult and they have been taught certain norms and behaviours that are considered positive in the traditional classroom and for many students its stressful to leave this "safe" structure which they know and know how to succeed in. However, we must bear in mind that many also 'fail' in this system leading to a considerable waste of potential and at an individual level loss of self-esteem and incorrect belief about ability.

Learners are also more used to competitive or individual structures where the aim is to do better than your classmates. So, before you start any cooperative lesson you need to prepare the class. Two things are essential at the beginning: (1) create a

safe, friendly and supportive class atmosphere and (2) train student's certain cooperative norms.

Starting with a great complex cooperative learning task without preparing the class is not unlikely to fail so time for preparation is definitely not a lost time.

### **VII.4.3. The class atmosphere**

If you plan to use cooperative learning you are expecting your students to learn closely together, you expect them to trust each other, respect each other and in general be open and active. But how can you expect anyone to behave like that with a group of strangers? That's why it is essential to take some time to create a safe and trusting class atmosphere. When teachers are asked what they think characterizes a good class climate, they normally come up with similar answers like: trust, friendship, relaxed interaction, support and solidarity, respect, no judging, active participation and care for one another. In order for us to trust, support and care about someone, we have to really get to know them first. This does not happen by its self, just by sitting next to each other.

So what can we do to create and support this atmosphere? There are several different ways to improve the class climate but in general it certainly starts with the teacher's attitudes and behaviour.

📖 *lead your students by example.* Changes begin with the teacher's open minded, caring attitude and respect. This refers to the teachers' behaviour both within and outside of the classroom, towards students as well as towards other staff members or people in the school community.

📖 *discuss with students what they consider a good class atmosphere to be.* You could first have them brainstorm about it in small groups and then make a poster where their own ideas of a good class atmosphere are displayed.

📖 *get to know each other.* Use variety of games and short activities that give students the possibility of getting to know each other on a personal level. They may have spent a lot of time together in the same class but still only really know a small group of their classmates. Just a short talk to someone, finding out similarities and common interests can make all the difference in future interaction during team work.

📖 *make sure that the students know and understand WHY they are "playing games".* In this scenario as in others, if they don't understand why – they will not be motivated, they will think it's only supposed to be fun and the activity will lose its purpose. They will only actively participate if they understand why the class atmosphere is so important.

☞ *plan lessons that allow students to actively participate in the learning process.* Read about cooperative learning, create your own cooperative learning tasks and practice with simple but purposeful tasks.

☞ *don't be afraid of losing authority.* Students respect a teacher that listens to them and respects their opinion more than one that has the need to show their power and authority.

☞ *don't give up* – even though you don't see that much change after the first few lessons. Change takes time so give yourself and your student's time to get used to the new methods and time to trust each other. We all learn through our mistakes so don't be afraid of them, just learn from them. Recent researches also show when comparing cooperative learning classes and traditional classes that the difference in success doesn't start to show until the students have got the opportunity to get closer to each other and really learned to work together.

Using short activities with students in order to give them the opportunity to get to know each other better on a personal level is a very powerful way to create a more trustful and respectful class atmosphere. Activities where students have to communicate with each other – find similarities and differences, talk about everyday issues, their dreams, hopes and fears. When using learning activities (not to be confused with energizers or icebreakers) it is very important to reflect after the activity with students about how they felt, what the activity was about, what they learned, how the experience can contribute to a better class climate. You can find a variety of short activities under these links that have the goal of creating a better class atmosphere:

☞ <http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/secondary/differentequal-en.pdf>

☞ [http://eycb.coe.int/compass/en/chapter\\_2/2\\_1.html](http://eycb.coe.int/compass/en/chapter_2/2_1.html)

#### **VII.4.4. Skill builders – Give students the opportunity to train cooperation norms and behaviours**

Students are used to certain school norms. Preparing students for cooperative groups requires you to decide which norms and which skills will be needed for the group work setting you have in mind. These norms and skills are best taught through exercises and games, referred to as “skill builders”. People rarely learn new behaviours or convictions concerning how one ought to behave through lectures or general group discussion alone (E. Cohen, 1997).

When we think of real life work situations, it's not often that we are expected to sit silently and listen to one other person tell us some information for a longer period of time and remember it. It's possible, but not very likely scenario on any given workplace. So we need to re-train our students for new norms that are necessary

during team work. In the opinion of Pieter Batelaan of IAIE (International Association for Intercultural Education) the following skills are important when working cooperatively with others:

1. task-oriented skills: check whether the others understand the work; contribute as regards information, ideas, opinions; talk about the task; keep working; keep members of the group involved in the work; listen; restate; ask questions; follow hints; share material; stay at the place of the work; look for information, ideas, opinions; meet the function allotment;

2. process-oriented skills: encourage; mention names; invite others to talk; react on the ideas of others; keep eye contact; express appreciation; share feelings; check whether a consensus is present; be of different opinion without rejecting; avoid tension and conflict; listen in an active way; recognize contributions; compliment group members on what they have done well; show the will to find a consensus celebrate success; give and receive feedback in a constructive way.

So called “skill builders” have been especially developed with the purpose of training those skills and consists of short exercises that train certain cooperative norms. The teacher can then refer to these experiences before and during cooperative learning tasks later on. The best way to develop the new norms and skills required is by using and naming them. This learning process is systematically stimulated and supervised with the skill builders.

#### **VII.4.5. Explain how to use the roles**

Start by preparing your own set of role badges (Organizer, Material manager, Time planner, Reporter and Harmonizer) Go through some simple cooperative tasks where students practice the roles. Remember to think for yourself “why am I doing this activity? – What is my aim? What do I want the students to understand?” When starting to use the roles it’s important to give students time to really talk about them and take them seriously. You choose the best way to do so depending on the student’s age but they must be aware that you are observing how they master their roles and you will be giving feedback on it after the presentation. All the roles involve important life skills so when using the roles, you are not only giving the team work structure, but also preparing your students for taking responsibility for a certain task and following it through. It is for example important in most work situations to be able to organize the work with colleagues, to manage the time, to take notes and stand in the front of colleagues to explain or report outcomes of a project. The better your students understand the purpose of the roles the more seriously they will take them. It is not unlikely that some of your students will complain about the roles. Take a clear note of who they are and what is their status within the class. Often the high

status or dominant students don't like the roles at first because they feel they lose certain authority in the classroom but with rich, complex tasks also they will discover that they are not good at everything.


#### **VII.4.6. Start with simple cooperative learning tasks**

Cooperative learning can be simple or complex. Complex, well designed cooperative learning lessons provide the deepest learning experiences for students that cannot be obtained if we use only the simple structures. But good cooperative learning does not require complex lesson designs, lesson planning, or special preparation of materials all the time. An additional benefit of starting with the simple structures is that later, when one does a complex cooperative learning lesson, the simple structures are used as part of those lessons, greatly enhancing outcomes. So start with simple things like “think-pair-share” or “timed-pair-share” during a lecture.

Have students work in pairs on prioritizing or explaining to each other, collecting information and discovering each other's competences and skills. Once a teacher knows and uses on regular basis the simple structures, every lesson becomes a cooperative learning lesson.

Some simple structures can be found here:

 [www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key\\_stage\\_3/ALTM-KS3.pdf](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk/docs/key_stage_3/ALTM-KS3.pdf)

 [www1.umn.edu/ohr/prod/groups/ohr/@pub/@ohr/documents/asset/ohr\\_89185.pdf](http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/prod/groups/ohr/@pub/@ohr/documents/asset/ohr_89185.pdf)

#### **VII.4.5. Create and use more complex cooperative learning structures**

When the teacher and the students have taken some time to get used to the cooperative learning structures and norms, they can start to offer more complex cooperative learning tasks. One of the mistakes a teacher can do is to offer students an individual task but expect them to work on it as a group. If the task is structured in a way that it would be much easier and quicker to finish it alone, if it does not call for any interaction, no structure for interdependence, has closed questions with only one correct answer etc. it is unlikely and unfair to expect the students to work on it as a team. “It must be emphasized that the success of cooperative learning is, in large parts, determined by the quality of the activity in which students are asked to participate. If cooperative learning is simply used for completing repetitions drill and practice worksheets as part of a lock-step, skills-based curriculum, it is unlikely that students will be motivated to do their best work, to exercise creativity or to employ higher-order reasoning abilities. (JoAnne W. Putnam, 1998)

When creating a rich cooperative learning task there are some basic principles that should be followed: open ended questions/tasks; multiplied abilities/intelligences;

interdependence and individual responsibility; connection with the main concepts of the curriculum; connection with “real life”.

When creating such a task the first thing the teacher needs to do is to think about his/her learning goals. What do you want your students to learn or understand? Then you think of the best cooperative structure to reach that goal and at last you create questions or tasks that you think will help the students discuss and understand the content on a deeper level as well as activating student’s different abilities and skills. So the tasks need to offer some creativity – otherwise we are still only reaching the students that are good at reading, writing and memorizing.

You can find some ideas of the Jigsaw method and Complex Instruction here:

📖 cooperative learning: 7 Free Jigsaw Activities for Your Students:

[www.dailyteachingtools.com/cooperative-learning-jigsaw.html](http://www.dailyteachingtools.com/cooperative-learning-jigsaw.html)

📖 complex instruction - <http://cgi.stanford.edu/group/pci/cgi-bin/site.cgi>

#### **VII.4.6. Role of the teacher**

The role of the teacher is very important in intercultural education and cooperative learning. As stated before, the attitude of the teacher towards the diversity is essential for real equity in the classroom. A teacher leads their learners by example and just like you cannot teach democratic behaviour through authoritarian teaching methods, you cannot teach social competences through lectures. To learn communication skills, you need to get the opportunity to communicate and to learn to live and work with others you need to have the opportunity to cooperate on a common goal in a structured way.

To have an effective, cooperative learning group, teachers must know their students well. Grouping of students can be a difficult process and must be decided with care. Teachers must consider the different skills and competences, socio-economical background, personalities, status within the group, and gender when arranging cooperative groups. Much time is devoted to prepare the lesson for cooperative learning. However, teachers fade in the background and become a coach, facilitators and observers after the lesson is implemented. For many teachers this is the biggest challenge – to let go and allow students to learn independently and learn by their mistakes. Teachers who set up a good cooperative lesson teach students to teach themselves and each other instead of competing with each other in a win-lose situation.



## VII.5. Conclusion

There is a direct connection between intercultural education – anti-racist education and well structured, creative cooperative learning methods. Creating equity and mutual respect as well as preparing our students for life in a diverse society and training the skills and competences that the labour market wants and needs in their employees in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, does not happen by using traditional teaching methods. They were good for their purpose in the times of a very different labour market but today they create a gap between learning process and the needs of the modern society. This calls for changes. Teachers need to change the way they teach and students need to change the way they learn. Cooperative learning methods have shown to be a useful way to meet these needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In conclusion, Cooperative learning is a very broad concept and teachers need to be well trained in order to generate cooperation between themselves with other teachers and have the support from the school or college management to make new paths in teaching and assessment. Thus, the most important steps would be: attitude of the teachers for change, good practical training for teachers, time to get around and prepare the changes, time to cooperate with other teachers, flexibility and support from the school and college management and suitable environments to facilitate the forms of learner activity that cooperative learning entails. Assessment policies need to move in conjunction with these changes so it is vital that National Agencies such as Examining and Awarding Bodies, Inspection regimes and teacher training have an understanding of the methodologies of intercultural education and cooperative learning and its products and learner processes.

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