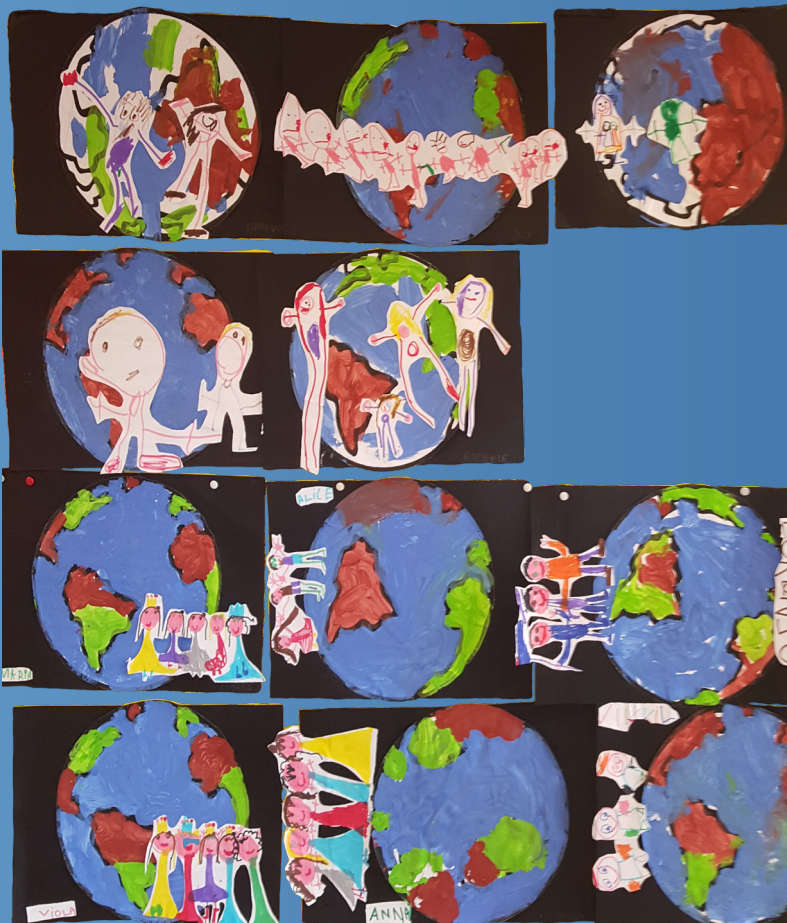




THE INTERCULTURAL NEEDS OF EDUCATORS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

The results of an international research realized in the
framework of the Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships
Multicultural Early Childhood Education
MECEC+ project



This publication has been realized in the framework of the Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships *Multicultural Early Childhood Education – MECEC+* project, with the kind contributions of the authors (in alphabetical order):

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Clara Silva, Department of Education and Psychology of University of Florence (SCIFOPSI - UNIFI) - Florence, Italy and Claudia Piovano (Galileo Progetti Nonprofit Kft)

The European Union promotes an idea of life-long formation through different means, such as directives, recommendations and different financial lines – as the Erasmus Plus one, within which the MECEC project here described is comprised.

The formation is intended as a privileged instrument to contrast the social and economic exclusion, and to fight educational poverty. Everybody's success in their studies is, indeed, a fly-wheel for the growth and the innovation on the collective plan, because it allows access to more qualified jobs. It is, therefore, a generator of economical development, while on the personal plan is a factor of social mobility and integration. In a society in continuous transformation it becomes necessary to explore more in depth the specific educative needs, so to arrange models and practices which are both formative and effective. The MECEC+ project has indeed intended to realize a compared sector study about the intercultural educative needs of the educators employed in the early childhood educative services. The partners of the project are:

- **Galileo Progetti**, non profit organization in Budapest, which has taken care of the general coordination and of the administration of the project;
- **Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest**, the project leader partner, which has taken care of the scientific side, together with the University of Florence, by setting the criteria for the observation and the comparing between the results emerged in the different realities;
- **University of the Studies of Florence – Department of Educational Sciences and Psychology**, with the duty of scientific guide (methodology, setting of the survey instrument, reading of the results);
- **ENCÍS Serveis a les persones**, Catalan cooperative, which, with the scientific support of the University Umanaresa-Fub, has gathered the educative needs of its operators in Catalonia, Spain;
- **ARCA Social Cooperative**, has gathered the educative needs of its operators in Tuscany, Italy;
- **Józsefvárosi Egyesített Bölcsődék**, has gathered the educative needs of its operators in Hungary.

1.1 General objectives

The main objective of the project is to realize a compared sector study about the cultural background of the educators in the partner countries, with attention to the European good practices, through the analysis of the educators competences and their formative needs about the theme of multiculturalism and interculturalism.

The long-term general objective is to contribute to better the inclusion of the children in a situation of disadvantage, and to develop in them the competences necessary to grant the same opportunities in the following scholastic course and the reaching of good learning results. The pre-school education has the highest output in terms of results and of social adjustment of the children. Devise formation courses aimed to reinforce the competencies and the knowledge of the educators about these themes.

1.2 The specific objectives

Specifically, the project has explored the formation of the educators in the partner countries, the norms related to ECEC and integration of the children and of the families of ethnic minorities, or immigrants. It also meant to know the successful experiences, the good practices, the innovations already existing in the EU, especially in the northern Europe (Flemish Belgium and Finland). Another objective was that of sharing the successful experiences of their own Countries (for example Biztos Kezdet – Sure Start in Hungary) for the benefit of the partner, and observe the reality of the early childhood services in the partner Countries (successful experiences, organization, necessities) and the forms of public support to the disadvantaged children.

1.3 The Project Partners

1.3.1 ARCA Cooperativa Sociale - Florence, Italy

www.arcacoop.org



Arca Cooperativa Sociale was founded in 1983 and deals with the management of social, welfare and educational services both designed and provided privately, and in agreement / public procurement with public administrations.

Arca works in Tuscany Region, in the Provinces of Florence, Livorno, Lucca, Pisa, Pistoia and Siena, with services aimed at elderly, minors, disabled people, drug addicts, early childhood and

people with psychiatric discomfort.

Through its many projects and interventions, the Cooperative pursues the general well-being of the community and the promotion and integration of its citizens, in a company that combines the principles of business with cooperation, participation and democracy.

The cooperative involves more than 1.200 people, between members and employees.

Arca is member of the Metropoli Consortium, that brings together Cooperatives of type A and B of the metropolitan area that connects the provinces of Florence, Prato and Pistoia and promotes the associated Cooperatives, and of of the Pegaso Network Consortium of Tuscan Social Cooperation, builded to achieve to a stable local network for development and innovation.

Arca, together with other important Tuscan cooperatives, has founded the company Rosalibri S.r.l., to manage the following structures: Residential community for psychiatric patients "A. Ponticelli "of Panzano in Chianti, the RSA Rosa Libri of Greve in Chianti and the RSA Naldini Torrigiani located in Tavarnelle Val di Pesa.

Arca has promoted and supported the birth of two Type B Cooperatives, the Ulisse Cooperativa Sociale and the Cooperativa Nuova Chianti, whose aim is the insertion of disadvantaged people into the work market. Arca joins the National Mutual League of Cooperative.

Arca has been managing early childhood educational and care services since 1989. It currently manages, on behalf of public administrations or on a private basis and on project financing, about 90 early childhood services: Childcare centers, Play spaces, Child and parent centers, Supplementary services 0-3 , Preschools (nurseries and Kindergartens), and educational activities in the afternoon with an expansion of the educational offer in kindergartens.

The cooperative has distinguished itself over the years for the strong work on workers' skills, that have put ARCA in a position to answer increasingly to the needs and requests from local authorities and families, promoting innovative services aimed at reconciling a high pedagogical quality with flexible and diversified answers and activities.

1.3.2 Department of Education and Psychology of University of Florence (SCIFOPSI - UNIFI) - Florence, Italy

<https://www.scifopsi.unifi.it/changelang-eng.htm>



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE

SCIFOPSI
DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE
DELLA FORMAZIONE E PSICOLOGIA

The Department of Sciences of Education and Psychology of University of Florence was established in 2013, according to the reorganization of Italian public university system.

Although it is a new institutional structure, it takes up the scientific legacy and teaching of two existing bodies: Department of Educational Sciences

and Cultural and Training Processes and Department of Psychology.

The origins of the first, established in 1988, lie in the Pedagogy Institute, formed in 1935; the second, established in 1987, originated from the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology, founded in 1903 and considered the first important centre for experimental research in Italy.

It's Department's task to produce research and divulge knowledge in the sectors of schools, teaching, educational relations, and training; and to carry on research to study training processes, community relations, people's development during the lifespan and in cultural contexts, and individual and group behaviour and mental activity in both normal and vulnerable situations.

Particular interest is placed on the study and carrying out researches on Italian and international ECEC systems, concerning early childhood education and professionals involved in ECEC's training; and on the study of Italian primary school system, on practical, theoretical and historical side.

Our Professors and Researchers are also focused on assessment and development of human resources in public and private organizations; individual, relational, social and environmental wellbeing; development of innovation and entrepreneurship in work contexts; organizational change analysis and development services; building social, health and educational services based on cultural, legal and scientific evidence, and the emerging needs of civil society. The two sections of the Department, Pedagogy and Psychology, develop research projects for the purpose of training new, highly qualified scholars and specialists to work in the social, psychological, pedagogical and educational professions.

UNIFI is an important and influential centre for research and higher training in Italy, with 1,800 lecturers and internal research staff, 1,600 technical and administrative staff, and over 1,600 research assistants and doctoral students.

It offers a wide range of study programmes at various levels and in all areas of knowledge. 132 Degree courses (1st and 2nd Cycle, corresponding to Bachelor's and Master's Degrees) in 10 Schools, with a population of about 51,000 enrolled students, ¼ of which come from outside of Tuscany.

There are over 9,000 degrees awarded each year in Florence.

UNIFI has always placed special emphasis on the process of internationalisation, there are currently 280 cooperation agreements with universities in 70 countries, such as joint study programmes with other universities.

Since 1999 UNIFI has been recognised "European Centre of Excellence Jean Monnet".

1.3.3 Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) – Budapest, Hungary

<http://www.tok.elte.hu/international>



Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) serves the interests of high quality education and research, building upon the best European traditions. The mission of ELTE is to preserve and enrich national and universal culture and civilization, to cultivate science and to pass on academic knowledge, as well as to shape and satisfy the real, long-term needs of Hungarian society and of mankind. ELTE aims to educate intellectuals with up-to-date knowledge and versatile culture.

ELTE is Hungary's most prestigious university with the richest traditions and the highest international rankings in the country, where tradition and innovation go hand-in-hand.

Our lecturers, researchers and students are among the country's best. In recognition of this, ELTE became a Research University in 2010 and received the distinguished title of University of National Excellence in 2013, which attests to our educational and research capacities, scientific results and wide-ranging international relations – all guarantees of the competitive quality of our establishment. We, students and lecturers, endeavor to maintain and improve this quality, while fulfilling our responsibilities to society.

Currently, the university has eight faculties, Education and Psychology, Humanities, Informatics, Law, Primary and Pre-School Education, Science, Social Sciences and the Bárczi Gusztáv Faculty of Special Education.

Over the last hundred years, Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) has had many world famous scientists and four Nobel Prize laureates among its teachers and alumni. The current number of students enrolled yearly has reached 28.000, and there is an academic staff of 1.800 highly-qualified teachers and researchers.

The diplomas issued by Eötvös Loránd University are acknowledged worldwide, and its course credits are transferable in all countries in the European Union.

Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education, the former college, has been an integrated part of Eötvös Loránd University since 2000. On the basis of the great traditions and achievements of its ancestor institution, the Faculty has become one of the most important institutions of the Hungarian primary and pre-school education during the past few decades. In 2011 the training of Infant and Early Childhood Education was also introduced.

Now the Faculty offers training and research activities that meet the social requirements of teacher training for learners' education up to the 6th class of the primary school.

The specialized fields of Primary School Teacher Training, Pre-School Teacher Training, and Infant and Early Childhood Education offer BA level qualifications, and also the option of continuing the studies on MA level.

In addition to the BA degree courses, Masters and specialization courses ELTE provides further training, továbbképzés, particularly important for the continuous development of professionals.

ELTE also has an international dimension and offers more than 60 degree programs in foreign languages, included in the fields of Education and Psychology, currently about 2.400 international students study at ELTE and the community of international students is growing from year to year.

1.3.4 ENCÍS Serveis a les persones – Manresa, Catalonia - Spain

www.encis.coop



ENCÍS is a non-profit cooperative with more than 25 years of experience, whose mission is to design, manage and develop educational, cultural and social projects and services. We work for and to public administrations, associations, groups and people, generating spaces to the growth of the people during all their life cycle. Contributing to social transformation. We have more than 125 services managed in 2017, with more than 500 employees and 47 different clients of public administration.

Our Values:

- Transparency: All our organization work every day to be more transparent;
- Commitment: with de people and socity;
- Laicity: We work to have an own, free-thinking and respectful project;
- Proximity: Our management is characterized by close proximity to the customers, our users and our employees.

Type of our Services:

- Child and young educational leisure activities;
- Support to the community against social exclusion;
- Nursery school and family spaces;
- Services for the elderly;
- Management Cultural facilities;
- School services - training and Orientation;
- Support for children and youth at risk of social exclusion;
- Non-regulated education / Workshops, Social...;
- Support Associationism.

The educational proposal of ENCÍS is defined by the following points:

- Public: supported by public funds, offering equal opportunities;
- Democratic: on the basis of dialogue, participation, information, transparency and involvement of all educational agents (families, teachers and administrators);
- Non-Denominational: respect for different convictions, but extraneousness to doctrinal practices; articulating social coexistence according to shared social values;
- Inclusive: to participate in the specific needs of children and to compensate inequalities;
- Respect for diversity: recognition of the value of cultural diversity, maximizing knowledge and mutual respect and stimulating individual participation of children according to needs and abilities;
- Based on the characteristics of the environments: available to the districts, providing the experience of the cultural and social reality of the surroundings;
- Co-educational: to protect individual development and gender equality, maximizing a mixed school for more equality between boys and girls.

1.3.5 Galileo Progetti Nonprofit Ltd. – Budapest, Hungary

<http://www.galileoprogetti.hu/presentation.html>



Galileo Progetti Nonprofit Kft. is a non-profit organization, funded by Hungarian and Italian partners in 2009 and based in Budapest.

The main objectives of Galileo are the development of social economy and social sector in general and the inclusion policies, also thanks to the exchange of good practices and experiences among the European Union countries, and in particular by developing the Italian-Hungarian relations and encouraging European mobility and exchanges of experiences.

Galileo also aims to develop the feeling of civil participation and European citizenship, and works with particular attention for the inclusion of disadvantaged people or at risk of social exclusion, such as Roma minorities and disabled people. Galileo works in collaboration with private and public local bodies, involving in European experiences other organizations, guided by the belief that international experiences increase personal and professional skills and have a strongly positive impact on the development of the quality of the social sector at local level.

It has the role of motivator, promoter, facilitator, manager and coordinator.

Over the years, Galileo has developed a wide and solid network at European level, especially with social enterprises, educational institutions and VET providers. Is the Hungarian member of ENSIE, the European Network of Social Integration Enterprises for the employment of disadvantaged people, recognized and supported by the European Commission.

1.3.6 Józsefvárosi Egyesített Bölcsődék (JEB) – Budapest, Hungary

<http://www.bolcsode-bp08.hu/>



Józsefvárosi Egyesített Bölcsődék (JEB) was founded in 1994 by the Municipality of the VIII-th District of Budapest, a district in which the ethnic minority population is particularly relevant.

It consists of 7 operating nurseries, managed by 197 operators. These early childhood services can accommodate up to 492 children from 0 to 3 years of age.

JEB provide users with basic mandatory services, as established by the Local Public Administration, and also additional services.

The purpose of education is to foster the development and balance of the physical and mental health of children aged 0-3 years, thanks to favorable environmental conditions and the specific staff trainings, giving children the opportunity to play games, relax peacefully, have a healthy lifestyle and adequate cognitive and social stimuli.

The Józsefvárosi Bölcsődék operates in collaboration with families, respecting their privacy, and is committed to educating children so that they become open to the world, independent, and accept the basic rules of coexistence. The environment is familiar and suitable for current professional requirements.

Józsefvárosi Egyesített Bölcsődék also runs the Józsefvárosi Biztos Kezdet Gyerekház – Sure Start Children Center.

The Biztos Kezdet Gyerekház network works for the social integration of 0-5 aged children with socio-cultural disadvantages and their families. Currently in Hungary there are 114 Gyerekház, among which the first one was Józsefvárosi Biztos Kezdet Gyerekház opened in 2010, managed by JEB.

1.4 The Associated Partners

1.4.1 Erasmushogeschool Brussel - Erasmus University College Brussels - Brussels, Belgium

<http://www.ehb.be>



Erasmus University College Brussels (EhB) is a Flemish higher education institution located in Brussels. It offers 21 BA and 4 MA-programmes in 9 different fields of study which are attended by more than 5.000 students, clustered in 4 departments and 2 Schools of Arts located on 5 campuses throughout the city.

The departements offer Bachelor programs with a strong professional focus while the Schools of Arts offer Bachelors and Masters in Music, Audiovisual and Performing Arts.

Erasmus University College Brussels has about 891 staff members, who count together for 493 Full Time Equivalents (January 2018).

Erasmus University College Brussels applies the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which facilitates curriculum comparison and student mobility.

Erasmus University College Brussels is cooperating actively with the Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB) in the Brussels University Association (UAB).

EhB stands for student-oriented curricula through a personal collaboration between students and professors. The language of instruction is Dutch, however at the Erasmus University-College Brussels English modules are available for incoming students.

During their studies, students at EhB are involved in ongoing research as much as possible, fostering an attitude of innovation and inquisitiveness. This research is embedded in research groups divided over the institution. Artistic research groups within the Schools of Arts carry out artistic and academic research, while several Centres of Expertise engage in practice-based research, multidisciplinary in character.

EhB is strongly embedded internationally by actively participating in international networks, partnerships, projects and Student Mobility Programmes, such as Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus, Transition Fellowship, ASEM DUO or Science without Borders programs. EhB has developed course offerings in English in most of its programs, and created opportunities for traineeships. The Department of Teacher Training and Early Childhood Education & Care.

Shaping tomorrow's society requires competent, passionate and dedicated educational professionals. The internships of our future teachers and pedagogical coaches offer a window on the reality in Brussels, a multilingual and multicultural metropolis which is a challenge as well as a source of inspiration.

Our focus is the particular skill set a teacher or pedagogical coach in an urban context needs. There is intercultural awareness and sensitivity, intercultural communication, teaching multilingual groups and awareness of poverty issues. We also aim to build a network with different educational, social and cultural organizations in Brussels.

1.4.2 Faculty of Social Sciences at Manresa, Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya (UVic-UCC), Manresa, Spain

<http://www.umanresa.cat/en/umanresa-information>

UMANRESA
UNIVERSITAT DE VIC
UNIVERSITAT CENTRAL
DE CATALUNYA



The Fundació Universitària del Bages (FUB) was established in 1990 as a private foundation with the aim of guaranteeing the provision of a significant range of university studies in the central regions of Catalonia, thus contributing to achieve greater geographical balance in terms of university education.

UManresa is divided into two separate faculties: The School of Health Sciences, which offers degrees in Nursing, Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy and Podiatry; and the School of Social Sciences, which offers degrees in Business Administration and Early Childhood Education.

Currently UManresa has a student population of 1,432 – of which 32% come from outside Catalonia – and over 656 members of academic staff.

From the first Nursing graduates 25 years ago up to those who graduated at the end of the 2016-2017 academic year, more than 5,000 people have completed their studies at UManresa. The average of graduated students who then go on to gain employment is 96%.

UManresa also offers a range of continuing education courses to complement our academic programmes. These courses are delivered through our School of Continuing Education, responsible for planning, organizing, publicising and delivering postgraduate training by means of Master's degrees, postgraduate courses, specialist and short courses, conferences, symposiums and seminars.

Chapter 2

ECEC and the European Union

2.1 ECEC in EU – Guide lines and policy

Claudia Piovano

European Union aims to improve Social Inclusion of disadvantaged children, mostly of different ethnic origins such as migrants and Roma, guaranteeing equal opportunity at the school entrance, developing the necessary skills to achieve good learning outcomes and reducing early leaving from education and training (ESL).

Eurydice Report 2009 and Eurydice/Eurostat Key Data Report 2014 say that quality of preschool education positively influences the future school performance of children, in terms of social adaptation and skills acquisition and knowledge. In line with these documents, EU hopes that Member States increase the investments in this field, to strengthen the basis for effective learning, fighting school failure and preventing the drop-out phenomenon. EU emanations references, among the most representative: Recommendation 23/4/2008 (European Parliament and Council, C(2008)/C111/01), which reiterates the importance of a Life-long System Quality Learning from the first years of life; in 2011 EU Commission reiterated the central importance of high-quality educational services for High quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) through the Communication COM (European Commission, COM(2011- 66def) Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing All Children with the Best Start). The 2013 Report on Barcelona Objectives “The Development of Early Childhood Care Services in Europe for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth”, in which EU Commission stated that diffusion and accessibility of 0-6’ education services, their financial sustainability by families, quality of educational proposals are a EU priority, as also demonstrated by the centrality of pre-school learning in the same Erasmus+ program.

Quality Early Education is one of the fundamental tools for reducing ESL rates, which is an essential objective of Europe 2020 Strategy, and EU countries have committed to reduce the early leavers to less than 10 % by 2020. ESL can lead to reduced opportunities in labor market and an increased likelihood of unemployment, poverty, health problems and reduced participation in political, social and cultural activities. Furthermore, these negative consequences have an impact on the next generation and may perpetuate the occurrence of early leaving.

Migrant background, ethnicity, socio-economic circumstances, factors related to the education and training system are some of the elements implicated to the process leading students to leave education and training early. Students from migrant families, minorities and disadvantaged backgrounds are more prone to ESL than other groups (Eurydice/Cedefop Report 2014 - Tackling Early Leaving from Education and Training in Europe: Strategies, Policies and Measures).

Studies confirm that low socio-economic status is one of the key factors that can increase the risk of early leaving. In general, early leavers are much more likely to come from families with a low socio-economic status i.e. unemployed parents, low household income, and low levels of parental education, or to belong to

vulnerable social groups such as migrants and minority backgrounds (EU Parliament, 2011).

Young people born abroad are largely over-represented among the early leavers from education and training: EU-28 average is 22.6 % amongst foreign-born students versus 11.0 % for the native student population.

Roma minority has been identified as being among the most disadvantaged groups in education and consequently at greater risk of ESL (Luciak, 2006; Jugović-Doolan 2013). According to the Hungarian study by Kertesi-Kézdi (2010) about 50% of Roma population finishes upper secondary school: very low compared to the 85 % of non-Roma population.

ECEC can lower the risk of ESL: the preschool education has the highest returns in terms of results and social adaptation of children. Non-participation in ECEC, difficulties in accessing high quality education, not least as a result of socio-economic segregation, lack of parental support, insufficient skills in the language of instruction: all have an impact on the attainment of migrant students (European Commission, 2013b).

Educational approaches and teaching methods that don't pay sufficient attention to the needs of these students, as well as ethnic discrimination in some educational institutions may further impede students' chances of success in school (Luciak, 2004).

To improve quality ECEC services and to strengthen the profile of the ECEC educators, is a way to achieve to a more inclusive and supportive early education, with special attention to children from vulnerable groups, for combating social exclusion, reducing poverty and fight early school leaving.

2.2 ECEC in the Flemish Context, Belgium – Erasmus College

Kaat Verhaeghe and Bert Wastijn

2.2.1 ECEC situated in the Belgian structure

Before going into details of how the field of Early Childhood Education and Care is organised in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium, a word of the federal structure of Belgium is in place. Since its independence, the country evolved to a federal kingdom that has redistributed decision and policy to different areas. This division occurred regarding two lines. A first division was created related to the spoken language. These three areas are called communities and in Belgium there is the Flemish Community, the French Community and the German-speaking Community. A second way of creating areas is based on economic goals and elements. These three regions are called the Flemish Region, the Brussels Capital Region and the Walloon Region. As the communities and regions do not have the same territory, multiple structures of authority are in place. (“Belgium, a federal state”, 2013)

In the federal structure, human policy areas such as education, family services, child care services, youth work, welfare art and culture are under the supervision of the communities. As all three Belgian areas are offering similar services in the field of Early Childhood Education (and Care), different emphases and accents exist in each community. (Peeters, 2014)

2.2.2 Split system

“ECEC services tend to be organised in either split or integrated systems. In split systems, services for the youngest children (childcare, usually from birth to age three or four) are separate from pre-school or early education programmes, usually under the auspices of different government departments (social welfare/education). (Urban, Vandebroecck, Van Laere, Lazzari, & Peeters, 2012, p. 512)”

In all communities divisions are made between childcare and education, and services for children from 0 till 3 and 3 till 6. The childcare services for the youngest children are under the responsibility of the policy department of Welfare. Each community created governmental organisations to guarantee the quality of the services and supervise the implementation of the childcare policies. In the Flemish Community that organisation is called Kind en Gezin, literally translated Child and Family. (Peeters, 2014)

From the age of 2,5 years old, parents are stimulated to enroll their children in early childhood education (ECE) schools. These schools are under the supervision of the Department of Education. These schools are integrated in the elementary school system for children from 2,5 till 12 years old. A division is made between compulsory Primary Education from 6 to 12 year old and non mandatory pre-primary education or ECE from 2,5 to 6 years old. (Peeters, 2014)

2.2.3 Childcare

Since April 2014, important changes are made in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care. A new decree was implemented that reorganised the types of ECEC providers and defining new quality indicators. In this decree, two types of formal childcare are defined within the Flemish community: family-based and centre-based childcare. Both types of services can provide services for babies and toddlers, either together with school children or not, or school children from nursery and primary school, called out-of-school care. (Verhegge, 2015)

2.2.3.1 Kind en Gezin (Child and Family)

“Kind en Gezin, together with its partners, aims to create as many opportunities as possible for every child, regardless of where he or she was born or where and how he or she is growing up. (www.kindengezin.be)”

Eight duties are carried out by Kind en Gezin concerning care for babies, toddlers and out-of school care. Most of them imply the practical organisation of (new) childcare services. This includes rewarding certificates and giving out licenses for the centers. It also includes the follow up and guaranteeing the by the decree described (quality) parameters. Also the department of welfare entrusts Kind en Gezin with the responsibility to support the creation of new childcare services over the whole territorium of the community and to distribute subsidies equally when available. In addition, Kind en Gezin advises the Flemish government on qualifications and competences for the professionals working in formal childcare. To conclude, towards families, they take on the duty to inform about childcare possibilities and options. (Verhegge, 2015)

2.2.3.2 Childcare services

Child services in the formula of Family-based (or Home-based) care, is mostly provided by one childcare professional, organized in the professional's own home or in another location, for example a school building. As the new decree defined new quota of children present in the care service, the average of children in Family-based care is around 4, increasing at peak moments. As a license is necessary to provide the care, the license of the specific service mentions the maximum amount of children for the service and cannot be higher than 8. (Verhegge, 2015)

When childcare is Centre-based (organized private or public), several childcare professionals work in a larger setting. This setting is usually within a space that is intended for childcare with a specific establishment. The maximum number of children per caretaker is 8, when only 1 professional is present. When at least 2 caretakers are working with the group of children, each professional, the ratio per person is 9 children at the most and the size of the group is maximum 18 children. In these settings, at least 9 children are present at the same time. (Verhegge, 2015)

The two types of childcare as described above, only take the formal landscape of organised childcare in account. It does not include informal childcare, i.e. care provided by grandparents, friends, family, au pairs, babysitters, etc. In the formal part of the sector, all places are licensed or certified by Kind en Gezin. To obtain a license to organise childcare, specific requirements are prescribed, depending on what age and amount of children the service is aiming for. The requirements involve for example specific demands for infrastructure, hygiene and qualification types for the staff. (Verhegge, 2015)

In the formal childcare sector, the government tries to support both organizers of this care and parents. It is possible for the service to receive subsidies. As there are 4 levels of subsidies (from level 0 till 3), each level comes with extra subsidies, conditions and tasks. As from level 2, the formal care also gets an income related fee subsidy. As all formal care comes with a fee for parents, this subsidy makes it possible for organizations to let the fee parents pay depend on the income of the paying parents. (Verhegge, 2015)

Childcare also exists for children who attend Early Childhood Education or primary schools. This care is also possible both formal and informal formula. When formal organized, professionals are paid to provide care and activities during out-of-school hours or during school holidays. An important division should be made with formal Youth Work or Sport clubs, which are not part of the sector of welfare. As mentioned, also these family- or centre-based childcare must have a licence, accreditation or certificate with Kind en Gezin. (Verhegge, 2015)

2.2.4 Pre-school education

In Flanders, Education is also regulated on the community level, except the age of the beginning and end of compulsory education, minimum requirements of diplomas and the age of retirement for employees in the educational system. As education is compulsory in Belgium between the age of 6 until 18 years old, this does not imply the duty to attend a physical school. However the constitution states a freedom of school choice, implying the accessibility of a school in reasonable distance of their residence. Home schooling is also allowed. (Eurydice, n.d.)

Because of the constitutional right of freedom of education, every legal person may organise and establish schools to that amu. Also the government must organise undenominational education. This results in various educational networks. In Flanders there are three. The GO! Education is the official education organised by the Flemish community. This is prescribed as neutral. The Government-aided public education are schools run by the municipal or provincial authorities. The Government-aided private education is organised by a private person or organisation. Most of the networks are catholic schools. Next to these denominational schools, it includes also schools that are not linked to a religion, for example the alternative schools based on methods like Freinet, Montessori or Steiner. (Eurydice, n.d.)

The Flemish education system has different levels: elementary education including pre-school and primary education; secondary education and higher education. Next to these levels, there separate schools for special need education and initiatives for alternating learning and working. Young children attend pre-school from the age of 2,5 to 6 years old. It tries to support versatile formation and to stimulate their development. (Eurydice, n.d.)

2.2.5 Curriculum and quality assessment

2.2.5.1 Pedagogical framework in childcare

“Childcare for babies and toddlers in Flanders helps to ensure that every child feels good about himself, is challenged and feels connected to the people and his surrounding environment. Childcare wants to shape children’s education together with the parents. At the same time it aims to support parents in their child-rearing responsibilities. A childcare facility wants to be a place where every child, parent and practitioner feels at home. In this way it helps realise equal opportunities for children, as well as for adult men and women. Embedded in warm relationships with others, childcare wants all children to be able to grow up into adults who are confident in life and contribute to a learning, democratic society, where people treat each other and their environment in a respectful and sustainable manner.” (MeMoQ, 2014, p.8).

Since 2014 there is a pedagogical framework in Flanders, it is a concise vision text on quality childcare. It clarifies what childcare means to children, families and society. The framework offers direction, a firm basis to be committed to. The dialogue about it with all parties involved, results each time in different practices, customized to the local context. It contains a best efforts obligation for childcare facilities, which is a commitment to work along the lines of the vision. This does not imply an obligation to achieve results. Quality will not be judged by measuring children’s development. (MeMoQ, 2014).

2.2.5.2 Developmental objectives in pre-primary education

For pre-primary schools developmental objectives need to be aimed at for all the 2,5-6 year olds. These are minimum objective of knowledge, competencies and attitudes that are considered to be desirable for a particular pupil population and that the school must strive to achieve for all pupils by the end of pre-primary education. These developmental objectives form the common core curriculum. These are formulated for five areas of learning: physical education, art education, dutch, world studies and mathematical initiation. Every governing body or school board must include the attainment targets or developmental objectives in the curriculum. But the way in which these developmental goals are translated in a curriculum is decided by the school. Schools decide autonomously on their educational methods, curriculum, timetables and the recruitment of their personnel. (Peeters, 2014).

2.2.5.3 Quality as a negotiable construct in childcare

In 2004, a new participatory approach on quality assessment was introduced, defining quality as a negotiable construct, jointly determined by parents childcare workers, children, and the management board of centres.

The assessment scales on well-being and involvement developed by Laevers were introduced. All subsidised services have to meet minimum quality standard and have to develop a quality handbook. As result of the new law of 2014 about childcare services, there is a scientifically based tool developed to measure the educational quality of the entire childcare sector. It is a mentoring process that engages and supports staff, parents and children. (Peeters, 2014)

2.2.5.4 Educational inspectorate

The pre-primary schools for children from 2,5-6 are inspected on a regular basis to ensure that the developmental goals are being met. Developmental goals are minimum objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding, skill and attitudes. The educational inspectorate of the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training acts as external supervision and assesses the implementation of these developmental objectives. These goals deal with a number of basic competences children are supposed to have in the area of physical education, artistic education, language training, world orientation and mathematical initiation. The word development refers to a process of growth, possible pathways to achieve results. Every toddler goes through this process his own way and at his own pace. Developmental objectives are aims. They do not have to be fully achieved but they are the ultimate aim. (Peeters, 2014).

2.2.6 Training

“There is a close connection between systemic professional competence and curriculum development. National curricula and pedagogical frameworks for competent systems set out values, purposes and overarching goals of ECEC in a society without being prescriptive. These are then interpreted and co-constructed with stakeholders locally. General pedagogical frameworks at national level also contribute to coherence and integration of professional preparation and development and collegial learning.” (Urban, et al., 2012, p. 518)

2.2.6.1 Child caretakers and the pedagogical coach

Formal qualification levels and requirements differ. There are examples of high-quality services with staff qualified at secondary level, usually in systems where continuous professional guidance and/or development are provided. Other countries have been seeking to link quality improvements to higher (tertiary) levels of qualification. (Urban et al., 2012) Research of Verhaeghe, Den Haese & De Raedemaeker (2016) showed the conceptions of child caretakers about how others value their job. There was found a devaluation of ‘the art of caregiving’. This devaluation of the job is still showing. The current situation has arisen from the historical context of early years provision that has traditionally been divided between care and education. This context has allowed a concept of professionalism to emerge those values some practitioners’ areas of expertise more than others (Manning-Morton, 2006).

To work in a subsidised child care centre a 1 year training on post-secondary level as kinderbegeleider (childcare worker) is mandatory. Childcare workers in Flanders receive training on the vocational level after 7 years of secondary vocational school. This initial training is embedded in a long history of hygienic and technical professionalism and is poorly adapted to the considerations on the educational and social functions of child care. Belgium was one of the only European countries where no bachelor in early childhood education exists, preparing the workforce to work with families and children below 3 years of age. (Bauters & Vandebroek, 2017). A study on professionalism in Flemish childcare and some international reports were making the case for a bachelor’s degree to break the cycle of de-professionalization. Therefore a profile for a new bachelor’s degree was drafted. In September 2011 the initial training course Pedagogy of the Young Child was established in Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent. This new profession focuses on continuous professional coaching of the child caretakers. They work as pedagogical coaches or advisors. Besides professionalization, the pedagogical coach has responsibilities to different groups involved: the children, the families, the staff, the sector and broader society. (Peeters, 2014; Urban, et al., 2012)

2.2.6.2 Pre-primary school teachers

Most of the teachers (99%) in early education (pre-primary school teachers) are trained on a bachelor level (3-year tertiary qualification). Training to teachers in pre-primary schools is provided by educational guidance service (PBD), which ensures professionals internal support to schools and centres. (Peeters, 2014)

2.2.7 Needs and good practices

2.2.7.1 EduCare

As Belgium has a split system in the field of Early Childhood, this implies a transition for children around the age of 2,5 years old that come from a childcare service and attend pre-school. About that transition, Borström (2005 cited in Peeters, 2008) states that to many children experience this as a cultural shock where every day brings to many challenges or a wrong kind of challenges. (Peeters, 2008)

Dividing care and education is a known critique in the split system, that led to the introduction of the concept of EduCare (Picron, 2018). Van Laere (2017) concludes how EduCare, suggesting a combination between Education and Care in one integrated concept, is important for every individual. Care and education are one and cannot be divided: processes of care imply also an educational effect and supporting learning processes demand a caring attitude from the professional. (Van Laere, 2017)

According to Peeters, this leads in Belgium to a negative effect on professionalism: with highly educated educators in the kindergarten and low-schooled professionals in childcare. (Peeters, 2008) Having the educational programs Pedagogy of the Young Child and the Teacher Training Early Childhood Education training professionals for this split system, the Erasmus University-College tries to meet the still ongoing needs by creating common projects both during the training as combined with initiatives in the ECE(C) field. By building bridges in the programmes, pre-service and inservice professionals in both areas got to meet each other and discover what they can offer to one another. One example is the EduCare project in which students of both trainings work together on creating a smooth transition for children between childcare centers and preschools, being present in both contexts. The aim of the project is not only to prepare future professionals to combine care with education and to work together in the future, but also tries to sensitize all in-service coaches, caretakers and teachers about the topic and coach them by executing the project.

Filling in the need of an integrated system, a first Child Center (in Bruges) was created. Together with GO! Education the Erasmus University College Brussels participated with students and research. One practical research focused on what competences the new integrated professionals need in these integrated system, based on the competences used in international contexts and provided in the national trainings. Picron (2018) concluded how many competencies are required in different fields: personal and professional competences, competencies towards the child and competencies towards the team, parents and external parties. These findings will assist in the creation of new child centers in Brussels in close cooperation between the university college and the GO! Education.

2.2.7.2 Sociocultural awareness

“All we have is who we ‘are’, and this in turn shapes what we do. Being is sometimes thought of as something intangible, abstract, or even ineffable, but it is actually quite real ... Being is the context from which all of our thinking and actions spring, as opposed to doing, which is just a content that flows from the context. (Hargrove, 2003, p. 45)”

For a long time the medicalization was the main discourse in ECEC. The pedagogical part was neglected. A method to enhance pedagogical quality imposed itself. Inspired by literature and practice-based research, an alternative route to improve the quality of provision for birth to three years old in group day care was explored (Verhaeghe, Den Haese & De Raedemaeker, 2016). Research of Eurofound (2015) showed that coaching in practice has the best chance to support professionalization. It has to be focused on the creation of intrinsic motivation (Eurofound, 2015).

The developed coaching method (Verhaeghe et al., 2017) lays identity at the core of professional identity. The childcare worker and his narrative were the starting point to develop a narrative coaching method to deepen professionalization from within. Through construction and reconstruction of our stories we are able to grow. Research from a biographic point of view starts from the conviction that actions are influenced by stories. (Verhaeghe & De Raedemaeker, 2015).

Identity is a key concept when discussing either education or how to deal with diversity. Educational professionals steered by their perspective on reality (Golombek, 2015), have significant impact on the behaviour of children in contexts of diversity (Vandenbroeck, 2001). A clear understanding of meaning and values helps to clarify the goals that govern these actions (Stelter & Law, 2010). Individuals act on the basis of implicit knowledge. (Stelter, 2007). Narrative coaching facilitates the development of a reflective space during the dialogue by focusing on values, meaning-making and space for the unfolding of narratives, deepening the coachee's cultural awareness and creating a conscious professional identity. Through discovering other possible narratives the coach and coachee co-create new ways of acting in pedagogical practice. (Stelter, 2009).

The awareness of the own identity creates openness to a diversity of other identities. Coping with challenges of a world in transition the research wants to build personal and collective identities as well as tolerance, acceptance and appreciation of others. The context of Brussels gives a nutrient ground to experiment with the strengths of diversities.

Teaching and learning occurs in social contexts as people negotiate meaning with one another. This process is political and a means of reproducing dominant ideologies and practices. The question of which values should be promoted and whose culture will be validated in schools and other pedagogical organisations is prominent. (Tschida, 2009).

Follow-up research focuses on the awareness of educational professionals of their own biases. How their perspective on the world is composed and developed. We refer to the process of worldview development as ideological becoming, to the ways in which we develop our beliefs, values, and ideas, or more broadly our way of viewing the world (Bakhtin, 1981). Aiming to create socio-cultural awareness, the understanding that one's position in the world is mediated by their cultural identities (race, ethnicity, gender, social class, etc.) and their particular way of seeing the world is shaped by this position rather than universal (Tschida, 2009). This awareness influences understanding and comprehension for the narrative space of young children and their families. It is crucial for working with culturally diverse groups. Socio-cultural awareness creates possibilities for durable changes in the pedagogical thinking and action. It develops a strong attitude to cope with diversity (a diversattude) and creates cultural responsive interaction. Coaching methods, using narrative imagination and reflection, will be created. The professionalization must change from a focus on behaviour to a focus on identity, the being of professionals instead of their becoming.

2.2.7.3 Cultural sensitive schools

Looking at the competences of the ECE(C) professionals, the idea of competence is according to Urban, Vandenbroeck, Van Laere, Lazzari and Peeters (2012) a characteristic of the Early Childhood system. As competences are linked to the individual professional who gained these elements of knowledge, attitudes and skills during their training, this interpretation can be challenged as narrow. As the development of capabilities of the individual (as example 2.2 Socio-Cultural Awareness) is also depending on the team and the institution of the professional. Urban et al. (2012) describe this as the competent system. This concept implies relationships between individuals, their team, their context (or institution) and the broader socio-political system. Resulting in four levels:

1. Individual level,
2. Institutional and team level,
3. Inter-institutional level,

4. Level of governance. (Urban et al., 2012)

As ECE(C) professionals are part of their service or school and rely also on their team and institution to meet the needs of the development of the children, it is also the institution has a responsibility to develop the competence requirements containing dimensions of knowledge, practices -instead of skills- and values -instead of attitudes- within the second level. (Urban et al., 2012) And because of the characteristics of the present society, the development of competences to meet with the needs of diversity within the Early Childhood Education field is becoming relevant. (Strohmeier, Gradinger, & Wagner, 2017)

What values, practices and knowledge do educative professionals need for the present society? What are the expectations for the school? And how can schools create an environment that works on these knowledge, practices and values that meets the needs about diversity? How can the institution stimulate both the professional (level 1 of the competence system) and itself (level 2) competences to modify care, education and support to the present demographic challenges?

Ongoing research of the Erasmus University-College Brussels aims to support schools to develop pre-conditions needed for the cultural sensitive attitude of early childhood education (and care) professionals. A method, tool or program will be designed to work with the topic and stimulate school principals, teachers and policy makers in this process (all layers of the competent system). First relevant findings can already be distinguished. Analysis shows already the importance of principals in creating a positive school vision, with values and an open culture. This culture can be linked to policy and leadership and showed an impact on teachers' commitment to professional and school development (Aelterman, Engels, Petegem, & Verhaeghe, 2007; Engels, Hotton, Devos, Bouckenoghe, & Aelterman, 2008). Results of the same interviews and focus groups show also how important the continuation of reflection upon these themes with peers (level 3 of the competent system) is important to keep up with the rapidly changing settings. Including the idea that developing competences, including multicultural ones, requires a lifelong learning process (Deardorff, 2015).

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2.3 Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland

based on the training materials of Tulja Turunen, Lapin Yliopisto University of Lapland

2.3.1 Multicultural Early Childhood Education

The ratio of immigrants in Finland has been growing significantly since 1990 and is currently 4,5 per cent of the whole population. In European framework this is not much, but in Finland the change has been substantial. It has had an effect on the discussion about the practices at the educational settings including early childhood.

The most common foreign languages spoken in Finland give a more detailed overview of multiculturalism than the number of immigrants. Majority of the immigrants come from the neighbouring countries like Russia and Estonia. It is noteworthy that languages like Somalian and Arabic are now equal with English. This detail is mainly a consequence of the crisis in Somalia and Syria and the resulting fluxes of refugees.

Finland has also ethnic groups and minorities: Sami, Russians, Roma, Jewry and Tatars. Most residents come with Finnish background and only small percentage of the whole population is with foreign background. From those with foreign background, 16% were born in Finland.

Migration to Finland is mostly from other EU countries. From outside Europe, the main reasons to migrate are family connections (28%), studies (19%) and work (12%). Only few migrants (8%) come for humanitarian reasons. This is important to notice; it is important to understand that immigrants are not a homogenous group but consists of people with diverse backgrounds.

In addition to migrants, substantial number of people moving to Finland is returners: people who have stayed abroad for example for work or studies and return back to Finland. In 2000, every third person moving to Finland was born in Finland. Furthermore, the number of second generation migrant population is growing. This is a natural consequence of the recent years growing migration numbers. These people are often Finnish citizens, but might have language other than Finnish as a first language.

Finnish politics related to multiculturalism generally guarantee to the immigrants the same rights and obligations as Finnish citizens. This means that migrant children have the same rights for early childhood education as Finnish children. The politics in education is based on a principal that a strong cultural identity is an important foundation for successful integration to Finnish society. In the current curriculum document, it is clearly stated that the variety of cultures are an enriching feature of early childhood education, and need to be taken into account in everyday practices in early years settings.

The Government Platform encourages open discussion and better integration policies, but racism and xenophobia are present.

2.3.2 Finnish ECEC in a Nutshell

Finnish early childhood education and care is based on the principal of EDUCARE. The concept of educare combines education and care meaning that every activity in an ECEC setting is always an educational activity. Education is the primary aim of ECEC, and happens during the everyday activities. Direct teaching is not a common mean of educational activities. Learning activities emerge from children's interests and are inquiry based. This means that a teacher is part of the learning community rather than a person who knows the right answers.

Children have a subjective right for ECEC. The amount of ECEC hours have recently been reduced to 20 hours per week, if the parents are at home.

Early childhood education and care is addressed to 1-5 year old children. Include care, education and teaching, supports children's balanced growth, development and learning and is guided by the National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education 2014. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uo0Wtc6Acg8>)

2.3.3 Preschool education

In Finland, pre-school education is specified as the year before children start school. The basic education starts when children are seven-years-old. In 2015 pre-school education became compulsory for all six-year-olds. Before that, the parents could make a choice of using pre-school services.

Pre-school is free of charge for all families. One group with four adults caters approximately for 20 children and 4 adults (2 qualified preschool teachers and 2 qualified assistants). At least two of the adults have to be qualified preschool teachers. Education in pre-school is play-based. Daily working hours are combined with free choice activities, structured play and intentional teaching: 4 hours per day (½ free choice, ½ a mix of structured play and intentional teaching).

2.3.4 Multiculturalism in Finnish ECEC

Early childhood education and care in Finland is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is an integral part of the basic values. Immigrant children often start in early childhood settings very soon after arrival to Finland. ECEC might be the first place for the child, parents and other family members to get acquainted with Finnish culture: ECEC is an important part of integration for children and their families.

According to UN's Convention on the rights of the child, Article 30, children and their families have right to practice their own culture, religion and language at ECEC.

UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 30: *"You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion - or any you choose. Minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right."*

<https://audioboom.com/playlists/1252169-it-s-your-right-un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child>

National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care, published in 2016 by Finnish National Board of Education, provides guidelines for all early childhood education in Finland. According to this document, children have right to grow up both to their own and Finnish cultures. In practice, this means that children's cultural and language heritages are supported by providing language support if possible. The interpreter services are widely used when communicating with parents. The cultural habits are promoted in ECEC settings' everyday practices. Different cultures and languages should be visible in everyday practices and all children should be educated to respect cultural and linguistic diversity. Especially in the capital area, where cultural diversity broad, the ECEC settings pay special attention to cultural diversity.

2.3.5 ECEC Educators and Multiculturalism

Cooperation with parents is an essential part of early childhood education and care. To emphasize parents' role as the most important people in a child's life, the cooperation is nowadays called educational partnership. It calls parents as equal partners in ECEC and highlights multiagency as form of cooperation. Educational partnership is characterized with trust and respect. Parents have everyday expertise of their child and family life. From multicultural point of view, this is extremely important because the ECEC educators have only limited experience and knowledge about families with diverse cultural background. Mutual respect can be gained by gradually and systematically building trust between parents and ECEC educators.

It is also important to take notice that migrant parents might not have any experience on Finnish ECEC practices and thus they need special guidance to navigate it.

2.3.6 Educational Partnership

- Partnership with parents: combines the knowledge and experiences of parents and ECEC staff, both of which are important influences on the child's life.

- Building trust and respect is crucial as parents' experiences in ECEC are echoed later on in children's educational career.
- It is essential that educators understand the different cultural backgrounds as parents' attitudes and actions reflect it.

2.3.7 Multicultural Skills and Cultural Sensitivity

From 2016 *Teacher Education Forum* has been operated with three years mandate to improve Finnish teacher education from early childhood to upper secondary school and vocational training. The Finnish Teacher Education Forum identifies teachers' multicultural skills as one of themes needing more in educational services.

In the projects emerging from the forum's work, DivED, <http://dived.fi/what-is-dived/>, is especially concentrating on cultural and language sensitive teaching and learning: according to the UN's recommendations, Finnish educators should have more knowledge about different language and cultural backgrounds. (Lapsiasiavaltuutettu 2013)

What is Cultural Sensitivity?

Cultural sensitivity is based on the concept of social justice: *"the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation"* (Young, 1990). It has many definitions, but they all host a basic idea of providing equal opportunities for good life for everybody, regardless of one's cultural, socio-economic e.g. background. To be able to act in culturally sensitive manner, teachers need to be culturally aware, understand, value and recognize cultural similarities and differences and respect different ways of life.

It is: treating all people with dignity and respect.

2.3.8 Cultural Interface

Cultural interface is a concept created by Martin Nakata, an Australian Indigenous scholar. He describes it as a multi-layered, multi-dimensional and dynamic space bringing together people from different cultural backgrounds. It is a space where people are active subjects, making sense of their lives. It can be a learning space about oneself and others. When a person enters to this space, it shapes his/her understanding of his/herself and others.

"It is a space of many shifting and complex intersections between different people with different histories, experiences, languages, agendas aspirations and responses". (Nakata, 2007)

2.3.9 Individual planning in ECEC as a tool for cultural sensitive education

Working with multi-cultural families is promoted with various tools. Each child has his/her personal learning plan which is drawn together with parents. Often a child also participates in the process. The purpose of such plan is to support a child's growth and learning in best possible way. When they are working with parents, educators awareness of each child's situation increases, helping them to build a strong and supportive Mesosystem for the child.

<http://www.mantylharju.fi/tiedostot/paivahoito/LapsenVasuVALMIS.pdf>

2.3.10 Conclusive thoughts

The sociologist Bourdieu has stated that educational settings with other institutions are usually reproducing the existing social relations. In the field of multi-culturalism this means that the values and ways of life of dominant populations are promoted. However, in the world with growing numbers of migration, it is important that ECEC educators are aware of this and knowingly act for practices that value all cultures and ways of lives as equal. Critical reflection of attitudes and practices is needed to ensure that every child and family feels welcome and valued at ECEC.

2.3.11 “Fire stick” philosophy

It places ECEC settings within a context of cultural relationships where students and families are valued for what they bring to the new setting and are encouraged maintaining those values as they develop those of the ECEC. (Clancy, Simpson, & Howard, 2001)

Australian Aboriginal scholars share “fire stick philosophy”. It originates from traditional way of living, when the people had a nomadic way of life moving constantly from place to place. To make these transitions as smooth as possible, the main thing was to keep the fire alive. It helped settling into a new place. Children and families from different cultural backgrounds bring their fire, their values and ways of living, with them to ECEC. With guidance of fire stick philosophy, the most important thing is to keep this fire alive. There is no need for families and children to fit in with the ECEC setting. Rather, ECEC, need to cater for everybody.

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Chapter 3

Research methods and tools

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Today's societies are increasingly plural, from a linguistic and cultural point of view, and multiculturalism also invests Early Childhood Education and Care services (ECEC), raising the need for educational staff, new knowledge and tools to accommodate and accompany the growth of all children.

In order to detect educators' knowledge and skills on this issue, we decided to adopt a data collection tool that allows to involve a large number of people and gather their knowledge, attitudes and approaches about a certain, given reality. The empirical research conducted allowed us to "listen to" the real educational needs of educators: «to listen, to understand, to know, to gain awareness (and make it acquire to the research subjects), thus becoming able to make informed decisions to intervene on a reality, and improve it» (Trincherò, in Robasto, 2014, p. 10).

To explore educators' training needs on intercultural relations, the University of Florence research group, coordinated by Ph.D. Prof. Clara Silva, established to adopt the questionnaire, as research tool. This methodological choice was dictated by the need to create a «link between the observable dimension of behaviour and that of ideas, or representations (social, individual and cultural), and the involvement of all protagonists of the research, that is asked to think and (re-)think about their own educational experience and their sense attributions through questions, stimuli, curiosities, attitudes, and tools (narratives, or visuals) of researchers» (Bove, 2009, p. 12).

Starting from the assumption of the centrality of the observation in the scientific investigation, before proceeding with the construction of the research tool, we carried out an exploratory study on the reference population to collect information on the reality to which the questionnaire is addressed (Caselli, 2005, p. 55).

Subsequently, after having specified the aims and objectives of the research (Gattico, in Id., Mantovani, 2000, p.119), we defined the areas and the constructs to be investigated, subdividing the questionnaire structure into six main thematic areas: knowledge of the phenomenon, intercultural training needs, initial training, in itinere training, relationship with families and approach with other diversities. Then, outlined the items on which to structure the survey, the questions to be submitted to the educators were elaborated and the order of presentation of the same was decided on the basis of a "funnel succession", passing from general questions to more specific questions, to give the respondent the opportunity to focus on the theme of interculturality. The result was a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of 31 closed-ended questions (multiple-choice, multiple-choice and filter questions), and 3 open-ended questions.

The questionnaire elaborated was then shared with the other Project partners, who adapted it to their own contexts and realities. Each partner then proceeded to carry out the empirical survey, after identifying the sample.

As far as the Italian context is concerned, the survey took place in Tuscany, and the sample was composed of educators involved in ECEC services and pedagogical coordinators working in “Arca” social cooperative.

The questionnaire was sent online and, after several reminders, we got 101 answers from educators and pedagogical coordinators.

We have chosen to use an online questionnaire because, comparing it to traditional methods of ‘research management’, it has multiple advantages:

- **A speeder survey management:** the timing of the survey is undoubtedly lower than a survey carried out employing traditional methods (by ordinary mail, by phone, or by face-to-face interviews);
- **A quick data monitoring and analysis:** execution times are reduced. The faculty to be able to enter and analyze data just contemporarily to their availability is a fundamental feature of online surveys, which positively affects execution times, by reducing them significantly.
- **Lower costs:** research conducted online has a lower cost, compared to similar surveys carried out employing traditional methods;
- **A non-intrusive data-detection:** a questionnaire completed online is a questionnaire the user decided to respond to, on the request of very few external agents. Therefore, this improves not only the spontaneity of the answers, but also their fidelity. Furthermore, anonymity allows respondents to be truly themselves, to give their opinions even when inconvenient or ‘unpopular’;
- **Achievement of different targets:** Thanks to the online administration, it is possible to cover a wide geographical territory. The survey has therefore extended to all educators working in “ARCA” social cooperative’s ECEC service, in the Provinces of Florence, Livorno, Lucca, Pisa, and Pistoia.

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Chapter 4

ECEC in the 3 partner countries: Hungary (Budapest Region), Italy (Tuscany), Spain (Catalonia)

Local context and theoretical aspects

4.1 ECEC in Hungary - History of the Hungarian nursery and the education of nursery professionals

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4.1.1 Preface

In accordance with SZMM policy no. 7/2010. (II.19.), the Nursery Day is held on 21 April in every year, paying respect to the opening of the first nursery in Hungary, in Pest, founded by Pesti Első Bölcsődei Egylet (First Nursery Union of Pest). It means that the Hungarian nursery was 166 years old on 21 April 2018.

The first nurseries were founded at around the end of the first industrial revolution, in the middle of the 19th century. The increasing demand for workforce expanded to women, too. The foundation of nurseries in Europe started in Paris, followed by Brussels, Copenhagen, Vienna, London, Milan and Pest. In the beginning the women of socially struggling families were forced to look for work in the industrializing Hungary. Nurseries endeavoured to substitute mothers with central care.

In the period between 1945-1970, nurseries had an important role due to mass employment of women and the necessity of improving the protection of mothers and childcare services.

From the 1970's until nowadays the operation of nurseries is characterised by preserving the social services function as well as meeting family needs.

This era starts from the foundation of the National Methodological Institute of Nurseries (BOMI) which is a particularly dynamic period of Hungarian nursery education. This period is characterised by the preservation and the further development of the social service function, the restoration of the leading social role of the family, emphasising the necessity of raising children together, a more differentiated (though professionally justifiable) adjustment to family needs, the utilisation of the findings of Hungarian and international research in the interest of children, and the appearance of social services. New methodological papers, professional concepts were born, professional qualifications were improved, and the nurseries joined the international professional community. Further to nursery care, and supplementing it, different forms and services of day care for toddlers appeared from the middle of the 1980's (Nyitrai, 2015).

However, since 1985, the number of institutes and the capacities has been constantly decreasing. The decrease accelerated particularly after the system change. One of its triggers was the decrease in the number of children; the other one was the deterioration in the income of municipalities operating the nurseries, and the collapse of corporate social institutions (KSH, 2008).

The number of nurseries was the highest in 1979 when there were 71,911 toddlers at nurseries in Hungary. The bottom was in 2002 with 28,847 children. Since then the number of toddlers at nurseries has constantly been increasing (KSH, 2008).

4.1.2 Day care of children - European principles in the first decades of the 21st century

In 2002, the European Council agreed at its meeting in Barcelona that, latest by 2010, within the scope of institutional childcare, full-time daycare is to be provided to at least 90% of children over 3 years of age but still not in school age, and to at least 33% of those fewer than 3 years of age.

High quality education at early childhood (nursery, kindergarten) has a privileged role in increasing equality in education and in compensating disadvantages, and an indirect role in reducing the number of those who fall out of school too early or live in poverty. In the field of education and nursing at early childhood the proportion of cases yielding a return on the investment is the highest in the case of those with disadvantages.

In the EU member states childcare in the fields of care (or education) and nursing is characterised by diversity. The Europe 2020 strategy provides opportunity for a harmonised, integrated approach.

“Services related to early childhood education and nursing are to be designed and executed in a way that, all needs (cognitive, emotional, social and physical) of children must be met. These needs are different from those of elder, school age children. Acquiring non-cognitive skills (i.e. perseverance, motivation, being interactive) in early childhood is crucial to successful learning at later stages and to the successful social engagement. Therefore the contents of the applied syllabus in early childhood education and nursing have to cover not only the cognitive learning but also the wide range of socialisation and non-cognitive aspects.

I.e. care and education must be integrated, regardless of whether or not the system of early childhood education and nursing divide into two stages (childcare from birth to 3 years of age and kindergarten education from 3 years until school age) or covers all ages from birth to school age in a uniform structure” (Publication of the Commission: “Education and nursing of children at early childhood: to substantiate every child’s future” COM (2011) 66.3).

The high quality and receptive early childhood education and nursing, covering everyone and available to anyone, obviously can only partly compensate the disadvantages suffered in a family. For disadvantaged children it is only possible to achieve the long-term, positive effect with a comprehensive strategy, working together with other initiatives of other policies (healthcare, housing, employment, etc.).

The foundation of high-quality, early childhood daycares services can be provided together by the factors as follows.

The education of nurses must be aligned with the education of kindergarten teachers. The international tendencies consider early childhood age (0-7 years) as a whole, in consideration of professional principles, practices and central coordination. The implemented higher education programme should provide higher reputation and wages for industry professionals. The development of common professional principles and methodology is imperative for any form of early childhood care. A complex approach (cooperation with other organisations dealing with children) is crucial amongst professional principles as well as the cooperative work supporting the transitions across the lifespan. The approach of “continuous learning and self-development” is expected from educators and nurses in the daily work. Further to the traditional professional trainings it is essential to have a professional supervision within the institutions. A uniform measurement-evaluation system should be developed, including the evaluation of changes in the complex (covering all areas) competences of children, and the detailed registration of the professional work (Surányi and mtsai, 2010).

4.1.3 Substantial changes in daycare of children in Hungary

As of 1 January 2017, as the result of the amendment of the child protection act (GYV, 1997), the daycare of children was substantially transformed. As per the act the childcare for those under 3 years of age must be organised within the scope of nursery services, and for making this possible to be implemented, different forms of care services were developed that were more flexible than the earlier services. The aim of the amendment was that, these new forms should provide such daycare services for children that take the child population of communities and the employment conditions into consideration.

These services can be provided by standard nurseries, “mini-nurseries”, workplace nurseries or family nurseries. Further to that, daycare services for children at or over 3 years of age, and the alternative daycare similarly as it was before, complement the range of the offered daycare services (KSH, 2018).

Before the statutory amendment it was compulsory to organise nursery services in communities of more than 10,000 inhabitants, but from 2017 it is a compulsory task for municipalities of every community where more than 40 children under 3 years of age live, or where there is a demand for the service in relation to at least 5 children. The statute gives time to perform this obligation and to create the appropriate conditions until the end of 2018.

According to the data from KSH, in 2017 the number of children registered at the 4 types of nurseries and at the daycare services for children were 44,896. 2% of the registered children were in need of special education, whereas the number of disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged children was more than 1300 (KSH, 2018).

Due to the substantial expenditures in recent years, and the prioritised governmental support of this field, the coverage is at approximately 16%. This, however, is still way behind the 30% target. A significant step forward is only expected if longer term the capacity and infrastructure development of the institutions providing daycare remains a priority, primarily in those areas that are without service.

In line with the quantitative development of the service, the qualitative side is also an important issue. The primary factors defining quality are the qualification of professionals and the development of knowledge related to this field of practice. The perspective in this field, on one hand, may be the uniform expectation of high quality education, and on the other hand the increasing intensity of research regarding early childhood, which would also substantiate the high quality education.

4.1.4 Educating professionals taking care of toddlers (0-3 years of age) in Hungary

The high quality early childhood education and nursing yield only in the long run, therefore ensuring a high service standard is as important as its accessibility and affordability.

Professional competences of educators and nurses play a substantial role in the quality of early childhood education and nursing.

In the field of early childhood education and nursing there are basically two types of practice in Europe. The first one is a divided system where educators attend to children over 3 years of age, and professionals with other qualifications attend to those children that are younger than 3 years. Pedagogy qualification is at least BA level, whereas the other qualifications are usually from lower level education. In the other approach teachers with same qualification deal with children up to 6 years of age, in different institutional frameworks. It is generally a typical endeavour that, those working in childcare and dealing with children until school age, should complete at least a 3 years long undergraduate course.

There is a major difference between countries in a sense that, to what scale does the education specialise in the age of early childhood, and to what scale do theory and practice align.

In Hungary a substantial development curve is clearly visible in the field of educating nursery professionals.

There has been professional education on multiple levels for caring and nursing children between 0-3 years of age. In the 1950's and 60's healthcare and nursery education took place in the scope of skilled worker education and secondary school education. From 1975, those who chose this profession attended basic healthcare courses or a 10 month course if they had secondary education, primarily while working as a nursery nurse.

In this period the caretaking and healthcare factors dominated the professional care of 0-3 years old children, therefore the education of childcarers belonged to the framework of secondary education (Gyöngy, 2014, Podráczky, 2015, Nyitrai, 2015).

The approach focusing on the unity of education and nursing started to strengthen gradually from the middle of the 70's, where further to the principles of nursing required to healthy physical and psychological development, the topic of education and the contribution to the social wellbeing of the child and its family, the support of the functioning family became important. At that time the unity of education and nursing prevailed only with a strong emphasis on nursing, the educational aspects were limited to situations related to nursing.

In order to satisfy the increasing requirements in terms of professional nursing, in the beginning of the 1990's a 2 and 3 years long, post GCSE education supported by the World Bank was started, and in the second half of the 90's the NQR (National Qualifications Register) accredited nursing course was started. After that, for the initiative and with the cooperation of the National Methodological Institute of Nurseries dealing with nurseries, nursery education and nursing, the Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education of the Eötvös Loránd University worked out the accredited "Infant and Early Childhood Educator" higher education programme and submitted it for approval. The development of this programme was under the coordination of the Ministry of National Resources.

In accordance with the decree no. 1999/6/VIII/2., dated 4 July 1999 of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee the Infant and Early Childhood Education programme was stated to be a higher education vocational training.

The development of the programme was preceded by working out a two-level education system and a questionnaire-based research amongst nursery directors and nurses. These were related to the colleagues at the National Methodological Institute of Nurseries (Mátay, Nyitrai és Stróbl, 1997).

In the next step, as part of the award of contract of the HEFOP tender in 2005, the professional reconsideration of the higher education accredited "Infant and Early Childhood Education" major took place. (Tender no. HEFOP-3.3.1.-P-2004-09-0150/1.0 on "The structural development of teacher training"). The main candidate was the Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education of the Eötvös Loránd University.

One of the most important characteristics of the "Infant and Early Childhood Education" major is that, it is integrated into the so called Bologna Process in higher education. The major's structure, the subjects' contents and compatibility with each other satisfied the requirements of credit transfer prescribed by law. The Bologna Process made it possible for students to enter different education systems compatible with each other.

In 2013 the higher education vocational training went under the regulation of the Higher Education Act. The name of the qualification was Degree in Infant and Early Childhood Educator Assistance. The major's last course was in 2016/17.

4.1.5 Infant and early childhood educator, undergraduate major

In 2008 a new undergraduate major was added to the Hungarian teacher training programmes. This was when the Infant and Early Childhood Educator Bachelor's (BA) programme application was approved in teacher training. The opportunity to obtain a higher level professional qualification in this field of practice was remarkable even in international comparison.

The name of the undergraduate major is: Infant and Early Childhood Education

Obtainable qualification level on undergraduate major and the name of qualification on the certificate:

- qualification level: Bachelor's (BA) degree
- qualification name: Infant and Early Childhood Educator.

Scientific field: teacher training

Course length in semesters: 6 semesters

Number of credits required for Bachelor level: 180 credits

The ministry (the Childcare and Youth Care Division of the former Department of Labor) absolutely supported the endeavour that, professionals working with 0-3 years old children in nurseries should possess Bachelor's degrees in higher education. The obtained knowledge can provide better social status as well as higher professional quality. In accordance with nursery principles it also indicates the reformation of the profession in the sense that, it puts the emphasis on educational, development and socialising activities and not on nursing (Bimbó, 2015). From 2012 the use of term of “nurse” in Hungarian was changed to “child educator”, indicating the paradigm shift in childcare, i.e. reflecting the unity of education and nursing. The diverse ways of education in the profession (qualifications obtained in the fields of healthcare, social services, pedagogy) mean differences not only in the educational levels but also between different industries, i.e. different priorities will prevail in the service (Podráczky, 2015, Nyitrai, 2015). Nowadays it is possible to obtain a nurse status with qualifications achieved on different educational levels. According to the new regulation promulgated in January 2017 the aim is to employ nurses with at least BA level qualification at nurseries and “mini-nurseries”.

The educational and qualification requirements of the infant and early childhood educator undergraduate major were worked out after joining the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) in 2008. This framework distinguishes different educational levels in particular educational fields (Government, 2008). The educational framework is “outcome-oriented”, it registers the typical training and outcome requirements of the particular educational level (Derényi, Vámos, 2015, idézi Gyöngy, 2015). In terms of the particular qualifications (EMMI, 18/2016) these are regulated by EMMI decree no. 18/2016. (VIII. 5.).

The training and outcome requirements indicate four categories: knowledge, skills, attitude, autonomy and responsibility. The scientific fields, the fields of practice, are the theoretical and practical perspectives of pedagogy, psychology, social science, IT, health science, institutional early childhood education at nurseries, development assistance and the methodology of nursing. In consideration of the optional specialisations it is possible to obtain specialised knowledge in some areas related to the potential fields of practice, or to the position, or to the further education of the infant and early childhood educator (institutional childcare, innovations in childcare, supporting education at home, child protection, educating children in need of extra attention, artistic education in early childhood, early childhood and foreign languages, inter- and multicultural education). The group work and the individual institutional practices, and evaluating, documenting them, and the related field work, all form part of the professional practice. It indicates the popularity of the major that, in 2016, amongst those applied to higher education in Hungary, and marked this major on the first place of choice, this course was in the top 10 in terms of popularity (Felvi, 2016).

The teachers' career path scheme was extended from 1 January 2016 to those nurses, professional consultants, special education teachers, psychologists who, further to their basic professional qualification, also obtained higher education qualification, i.e. a degree. IN 2017, OUT OF 7000 PROFESSIONALS WORKING AMONGST CA. 11,000 NURSERY EMPLOYEES, APPROXIMATELY 1000 PEOPLE WERE AFFECTED BY THIS MEASURE COUNTRYWIDE. A booklet detailing the teachers' qualification system was published, and its content meets that of the national core policies on Nursery education and nursing, with particular attention to the sections on the tasks of nursery education, the most common situations of nursery education, the peculiar conditions on the execution of nursery education, and the methods and possibilities of family support (Útmutató, 2016).

4.1.6 Final considerations

A new interdisciplinary science is in development, the early childhood neuropedagogy, which was born out of the discussions of the findings of early childhood neurology research, the theory of the physiology of the nervous system in early childhood, and the pedagogy of early childhood (Wasserman, 2013, Battro, 2013).

The affectionate and professional, i.e. scientifically substantiated education, is for establishing a happy and satisfied human life (Diamond and Hopson, 1999, Evangelou, Sylva and Kyriacou, 2009). In the long run

a society can only be competitive if it considers the family, the parental and nursing work as core values, and if it can raise mentally and physically healthy generations. I.e. the high-quality early childhood education enjoying priority in every aspect is not only a pedagogical but also a social question. The necessity and pay off of programmes ensuring a healthy development in early childhood is undisputable (Shore, 1997, Sousa, 2010).

The Hungarian social, economical, demographical changes reinforced the endeavour of nursery services that, the principle of education and nursing should be prioritised. In 2008 a new undergraduate major was added to the Hungarian teacher training programmes. This was when the professionally supportive Infant and Early Childhood Educator Bachelor's (BA) programme application was approved in teacher training. The opportunity to obtain a higher level professional qualification in this field of practice contributed to the social and professional reputation of nursery professionals.

As of 1 January 2017, due to the amendment of the child protection act, the daycare of children was substantially transformed. The aim of the amendment was that, the new system should provide such daycare services for children that take the child population of communities and the employment conditions into consideration.

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4.2 Interculturality, Cultural Differences and Pluralism

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4.2.1 Ethnic and cultural pluralism, in Europe: the role of educational institutions

Nowadays, immigration undoubtedly represents a real planetary emergency, and although the phenomenon of migration has always been present in the history of humanity (Ambrosini, 2011), in recent decades the number of people forced to leave their Country of origin and to take root in another, near or far, is significantly increased, doubling in less than twenty years (UN, 2017, p. 4). Multicultural societies are actually not an absolute historical novelty, and neither are the processes of interaction between the groups that compose them (Sassen, 1996; Martiniello, 1997). Looking back at the past, several societies shown traits of an ethno-cultural and linguistic pluralism: for example, the imperial project of Alexander the Great during Hellenism, which envisaged the coexistence of peoples of different languages, religions and traditions, within a single State-entity, marked by a common official language (Greek), and a single currency (the drachma). Many pre-modern empires could also be defined as multicultural: from those of the Habsburgs and the Romanovs, to the Ottoman, the Persian, or the Chinese ones. Nevertheless, multiculturalism that characterizes today's societies, both in Europe and in other continents, is in some ways unprecedented, and partially unprecedented are also the reasons that, today, push people to abandon their native Country for venturing into a foreign one. Alongside economic reasons, people leave their Country to avoid wars, persecutions, and deprivation of rights, or to try to achieve a state of economic and social well-being seeming unattainable in their Country of origin.

On the other hand, the current massive presence of migrants in many European Countries may represent a great resource for Europe provided that the Countries of destination carry out social and educational actions that effectively promote social inclusion (Ambrosini, 2009). There are many reasons why, in Europe, we should look at migrants in a positive way: demographic, economic, and cultural, among others. In a context of generalized drop in the birth-rate and accelerated population aging, as those ones occurring in many European Countries, immigrants plays a crucial role in demographic rebalancing, also representing a pool of workforce indispensable for the production system; their presence also stimulates both the labor market and the society (Dalla Zuanna, Farina, Strozza, 2009; Portera, 2006, p. 17). The positive acceptance of the presence of immigrants and their children does not mean to disregard the risk of possible social and cultural imbalances generated by the dynamics connected to the increase in migratory flows. Nowadays, immigration requires a joint political commitment of all European Countries, calling into question the practical management of institutions and services of their territories (police headquarters, social and health facilities, schools, education services) to jointly carry out the best cohesion social strategies (EC, 2010; 2015). International, national and local institutions are therefore required to lead the evolution of multiculturalism, with effective interventions and policies that allow to give concrete answers to the urgent needs expressed by migrants, also identifying inclusion strategies and ways of intervention to effectively fight the prejudices and stereotypes behind those racist attitudes that may affect host communities (IDOS, 2015, p. 4, Perillo, Manenti, 2016, p. 137).

Allocation of scarce resources in social welfare makes the dynamics of the relation between natives and immigrants more difficult, as unfortunately occurred in recent years also in Italy, where in troublesome contexts degenerative tensions developed into bloody events, as happened for example in Rosarno, near Reggio Calabria, in 2010, with the assassination of a Nigerian political refugee, in Fermo, in the Marche, in July 2016, and, most recently, near Vibo Valentia, with the mafia execution of a Malian union activist for the rights of laborers.

4.2.2 Interculturality: an educational model for multicultural societies

Migratory processes, initially studied by Sociology, Anthropology, and Economics, in the last fifty years have also attracted the attention of Pedagogy, due to the fundamental role of education in foreshadowing a new anthropological *status* for today's humanity (Demetrio, 2002; Silva, 2005; Cambi 2006). The need to respond to the problems of cohabitation between immigrants and natives, which are often amplified by stereotypes or prejudices, and to the difficulties of including the former into the new context (for linguistic, legal, and even cultural reasons), has led pedagogists to strictly correlate the management of cultural pluralism with the migratory phenomenon (Abdallah-Preteille, 1999, pp. 43-44). Hence, with different times and methods according to the different Countries, it was defined a specific field of pedagogical research, aimed at developing educational models and practices useful to meet needs of multicultural society, with a focus on school. Over the years, this research field has been defined as *intercultural education* (Damiano, 1999).

Since the Seventies, the European Commission and the Council of Europe were increasing their interest in immigration topics, starting from the question of maintaining the mother tongue of intra-European immigrants and their children (Perotti, 1996, Campani, 2002), then achieving a first definition of *intercultural education*, configured not only as a response to the specific needs of immigrant children, but as «an education aimed at all students, whether they are native, immigrant or of foreign origin; it involves all school subjects, and not just language teaching; it involves the revision of school programs and texts, taking into consideration the dual function of language (as a means of communication, and an identification tool), also opening up to interaction with extracurricular educational agencies» (Silva, 2005, pp. 113-114; our Eng. Trans.).

Hence, the debate on interculturality – within the development of intercultural education takes its roots – has its focus on inclusion and integration of immigrants and their children, in all contexts of social life (Silva, 2005, p. 111). Multiculturalism of today's society is considered by Pedagogy as an opportunity to deepen the knowledge of the culture of the Other and he/her vision of the world, in order to recognize and enhance them, constructively grasping the contribution that those groups have given, and are giving, in the development of human societies (Santerini, 2003). However, it is not enough for multicultural school to recognize the differences within, as a reflection of the transformation of societies, but it is also needed to enhance the similarities, and the shared values and principles, so as to build and strengthen the relationships between subjects and groups, within the framework of a participatory and inclusive citizenship, which must be built just 'at school desks' (Fiorucci, Catarci, 2015; Fiorucci, Pinto Minerva, Portera, 2017). In fact, there are two principles to be placed at the head of intercultural educational practices: diversity (ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious), and commonality, as a set of factors that bind people together, as members of the human race. If the commonality refers to universality, diversity highlights the particularity and singularity of each subject. In the intercultural perspective, universality and singularity are actually not to be understood as antinomies, or opposites; instead, they are two interrelated dimensions of the same human reality (Silva, 2011; Zoletto, 2012).

In Italy, this idea of *inter-culturality* was endorsed by the Ministry of Education, which, from the Nineties, through official newsletters and specific guidelines, defined in an increasingly clearer manner the characteristics and areas of intervention of intercultural education at all levels of school (Favaro, 2012; MIUR, 2014; 2015a; 2015b). Opting for an intercultural perspective, we can read in the ministerial document entitled *The Italian Way for Intercultural School and the Integration of Foreign Students* (2007; original title: *La via italiana per la scuola interculturale e l'integrazione degli alunni stranieri*), does not mean «to carry out just mere integration strategies of immigrant pupils, nor compensatory measures», but «to assume diversity, as a paradigm of the very identity of the school in pluralism, and as an opportunity to open the whole system to all differences (of origin, gender, social level, personal school paths, etc.) (MPI, 2007, p. 9). Interculturality is also based on «a dynamic conception of culture, which avoids either the closure of pupils/students in a cultural prison, or stereotypes, or folklorization» (*ibidem*). A concept of culture that is not static, but seen as a social reality, and an individual heritage in continuous transformation (Geertz, 1973; Clifford, Marcus, 1986; Clifford, 1988; Nigris, 2016). Interculturality should therefore not be confused with multiculturalism: a notion instead referred to a factual reality (and to its objective description), and precisely to the coexistence, on the

same territory, of different human groups, as regards their origins ethnic-cultural, and sometimes for their linguistic and/or religious characteristics. The term *multiculturalism* refers to a static conception of social pluralism, which, in fact, is limited to the acknowledging the existence of a plurality of communities within the same territorial context (Pinto Minerva, 2002, p. 13).

The adoption of an intercultural approach to education is not achieved automatically; instead, it is the result of a collective and individual effort, aimed at overcoming the diffidence to identify forms of coexistence in diversity, in the perspective of turning it into an opportunity for a mutual enrichment. Hence, the intercultural perspective combines the dimension of relationship, exchange and reciprocity, with the existence of a difference between the collective historical-social identities and the single subjects linked to. Strictly connected to the notion of education, it expresses the need for a pedagogically oriented relationship, aimed at fostering the relationship between the ethnic-cultural or other kinds of diversity that inhabit the societies we are living in (Cambi, 2001; Pinto Minerva, 2002). *Inter-culture* therefore corresponds to the overcoming of a closed and univocal vision of the relations between cultures, to activate a model of relationship based on the positive nature of encounters and mutual exchanges (Silva, 2005; Cambi, 2006; Portera, 2006).

Hence, intercultural relations today constitute an educational priority, not only in Italy and not exclusively in Europe, but rather in the world: not only at school, but in the whole society. Interculturality is – and must become – the “driving force” that accompanies the interaction and mutual exchange between the groups that inhabit societies, transforming multiculturalism into peaceful coexistence, thus avoiding that cultural differences, socio-economic asymmetries, disparities rights, and dissimilar opportunities, may degenerate into conflicts, or push the most vulnerable groups towards social marginality. Where this has happened, conflicts and tensions have arisen, with heavy consequences for both the natives and the immigrants. From this point of view, an intercultural approach in education is also a tool for prevention of conflicts and social marginalization (Silva, 2015; Tarozzi, 2015).

4.2.3 Interculturality: a crucial education approach in educators and teachers’ training

Faced with the process of migrants’ integration in the destination Countries, school, and more in general, education and training, play a key role in building a civic sense, based on the values of pluralism and the principles of democratic coexistence (Silva, 2015). In fact, educational institutions are privileged places for the promotion of new models of human relationships and exchange, between subjects having different life experiences and cultures. To put the school at the center means to legitimize it as a social space able to generate positive changes, recognizing it also as a place of human emancipation and cultural growth of citizens (Catarci, Macinai, 2015).

For that to happen, it is necessary that educators and teachers get both initial and in-service training on intercultural topics; a training that should be seen as an irreplaceable opportunity for the growth of their own professionalism. With reference to the Italian case, since the Nineties interculturality has become more and more a ‘matter of teaching’ within the courses for teachers and educators’ training (Fiorucci, 2011). Therefore, in the academic world, the interest in intercultural topics has progressively increased, especially in University Pedagogical Departments. The main goal of this type of training is to generate a new *forma mentis* in educators and teachers, which allows them not only to develop emergency practices specifically designed for foreign students, or as an answer to their need, but also to orient education strategies addressed to all students (Silva, 2005). This type of training is nowadays also required for educators of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services, who find themselves hosting – just as in school – a growing number of immigrants’ children. However, in many European Countries to date, a University education is not required for educators; therefore, not always interculturality is part of their initial training. Hence, the need to explore training needs on interculturality, also those ones of educational staff working with the 0-3 age group. This need has been met thanks to the “Multicultural Early Childhood Education” – MECEC+ Project, which is based on the idea that a training in interculturality also represents a prerequisite for educators or operators of ECEC services, in view of the acquisition of theoretical-practical tools allowing them to interpret the historical-cultural reality of our time, so as to better fulfill their task and their role.

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4.3 The Catalan case: cultural diversity and pedagogical practices in ECEC contexts

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Times are changing. The current political context of economic crisis and political turmoil are making immigration, Roma citizens and children or adults from a migrant (or other-religious background), an easy target for xenophobic campaigns and hate policies in different European countries. Such current context ought to conduce specialists in intercultural education and policy-makers interested in the wellbeing of plural and open societies, to question their own role in allowing this to happen, and to examine carefully how to redress the current situation of fear towards those socially constructed as “the others” (or, in Foucaultian terms, constructed as the “pathological” ones –i.e. against those included within the constructed category of “normalcy”).

Promoting intercultural societies is not only an issue involving the good will of European citizens but also involving their active role as members of the Public Sphere and their active role as social policy actors and actresses within everyday situations. Daily situations where rights and obligations, cohabitation and false rumours, leeway or walls are built up or demolished piece by piece, by small actions and by words (or lack of actions and words) by talking with or avoiding talking with, by looking at straight-in-the-eye or looking downwards (or aside). Promoting intercultural societies is not just a matter of tolerance, or a matter of accepting diversity. It is also a matter of denouncing biased usage of images in traditional and innovative media, in everyday discourses and in institutionalised laws, in big public discourses and in the small-talk of social media. It is beyond accepting other cultures as Cultures (with Capital Letters) because in fact, cultures are not monolithic entities but rather multi-faceted, interactions, subjective and dynamic interpretations of the world (Camilleri, 1985; Juliano, 1993). Interpretations and behaviours that social actors and actresses have, share modify and exchange in a constant process of co-modification. In addition to this it is vital to promote an understanding of cultures and migrations as structural to human beings rather than conjunctural and external to us: migration and diversity are not punctuated-events in history but are there to remain and to shape us constantly, inevitably, superbly.

Yet, today there is a growth (and a growing demand) of discourses based on fear and on false rumours that reinforce segregationist practices, themselves fed by an iconosphere (Stoichita, 2016) of stereotypes based on apprehension and on the naturalisation of the constructed-other (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2000; Juliano, 1993). Images of invasion, hyper visibility of the different as deficient-or, as the-other-in-need, that is, depicted in paternalistic and charitable terms -Dominguez, 2004), amongst other strategies. These current practices –or rather strategies–promote a conceptualisation of migrants and Roma communities as mere service users and passive citizenship, rather than as service providers and active citizens which, de facto, have enriched and nourished (and are still enriching and nourishing) European societies and Modern Life.

More than just “good will” ought to be mobilised in order to halt those Policies of Fear that are again accusing migrants, Roma or citizens with a diverse religious or cultural background, of problems provoked, ab origine, by specific economic, social and political Top-Down policies. Actively engaging, from an intercultural perspective, with the media landscape and with the social imagery in children’s books, in newspapers and in internet (or street) rumours; co-modifying specific spaces with invisible (or visible) barriers and actively engaging with everyday social dynamics not just for migrants and Roma but rather with migrants and Roma (as active actors and actresses, as service providers, rather than as mere spectators and passive users and service-users) can promote the visibilisation of those already existing good referents in Roma and in migrant communities that are currently being invisibilised (or stereotyped as suspicious, and bad-intentioned) and that could act as a lighthouse for the new generations of children (from any cultural origins) and adults, specially, policy-makers that currently may not take into account those existing good referents in various communities.

Working in favour of an intercultural and open society requires thus much more than theoretical activism.

It requires us to search, find and promote active changes in local spaces, in neighbourhoods, in nurseries and in schools. in detecting and modifying how children's books depict, stereotype (and invisibles) specific communities; also requires nourishing the public sphere with complex discourses that could dismantle those simplistic ideas and plain terminologies often used to construct and depict the constructed-“others” as Marcussian one-dimensional (and dangerous) beings: Requires promoting a Hermeneutic Public Sphere of Interpretation(s) rather than a Private-Sphere-of-Truths; a latter sphere that promotes the acceptance and endorsing of supposedly objectivist conceptions of the public discourses of Fear as if they were already clear-and-crisp and ready-for-digestion by the passive citizens (who are too often unaware of their lack of tools and of the procedures and concepts necessary for a critical analysis). in short, promote intercultural and open, Wide Open, and rich societies, however, is a difficult and risky task. Nowadays, more than in previous years. But it's a task worth fighting for.

But only working on it day by day, hour by hour, place by place, in small, little, simple and even symbolic actions and talks, rather than just in terms of Big Issues, Big Emergency or Solidarity Campaigns and Big Policy-Makings, will we reach the minds and ears of those who only hear fearful storytelling of invasion and of loss of their (falsely naturalised) values. A struggle that requires in-depth analysis and preemptive actions, which requires slowing-down time (for thinking) and lengthening the processing of public discourses (for analysing them). This requires approaching contexts and persons, singular persons, and also examining specific needs before they occur, not just in emergency situations which too often may lead to post hoc ergo propter hoc type of useless or clearly insufficient, actions.

Thus, in what follows, some analysis will be presented to understand specifically how cultural diversity is tackled in Catalonia and how it is being dealt with and managed, specifically, in the ECEC years. This might give us a measure of current policies and needs in ECEC contexts, as well as ideas on how to redress or improve specific pedagogical practices in nurseries and schools, both in Catalonia and in other European contexts.

4.3.1 The Catalan context concerning migration and diversity: historical background, current context and regulations

In order, however, to provide a general understanding about how cultural diversity is taken into consideration in nurseries and schools in Catalonia and to understand the effects of such diversity upon educational institutions, educators and families, it is first required to briefly understand the historical role of immigration in Catalonia. In doing so, some of the specificities of the territory in terms of norms, social interactions and institutional practices will be better understood.

Catalonia has been historically one of the main industrial and economically active territories within Spain. Due to this as well as to its geographical position in relation to the Mediterranean and to France, it has been a place where different migration waves have occurred periodically (Cabr , 2001). During the XIXth and XXth Century (as well the in the XXIst century) Catalonia has received a large number of migrants who came due to the working opportunities of the industrial activities in this region. The low degree of fecundity in Catalonia, the job opportunities and the possibilities of social and economic intergenerational promotion also facilitated these migration waves (Cabr , 2001). Perhaps the two most remarkable current aspects of today's migration phenomena are: on the one hand, that immigration is no longer basically internal (coming from different parts of the Spanish territory, as it traditionally occurred) but rather external (from outside Spain, that is migration is both extra and intracommunitarian - Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010). On the other hand, and due to the recent economic crisis, the migration phenomena occurring at the beginning of the XXIst century (with over a million arrivals in Catalonia approximately in 10 years) has now come to a halt, with an important number of migrants returning to their home countries and also, now, similar to what it occurred during the 60's of the previous century, a large numbers of Catalans migrate overseas to find a job (or to find better job conditions).

Another aspect that ought to be pointed out to understand the current Catalan context in relation to its social, geographical cultural and religious diversity, is that Spain is not a highly centralised country but

rather a country with its own decentralised regions (“Comunidades Autónomas”) that have as well their own semi-constitutions (“Estatutos”). Thus, these different territories within Spain have their own internal autonomous regulations or co-regulated policies with Spain in several political areas, such as, in the Catalan case, with policy areas such as Education, Immigration or Health, amongst others.

In the case of migration policies there are three levels of normative regulation (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014): at the EU level (with some regulations such as Schengen or the Visa procedures), at the Spanish level (for example with the LOEX/reLOEX laws), and at the Catalan level (with specific laws on social and health issues, on the family regrouping policy and on welcoming policies and working allowances). In addition to this also the different municipal authorities play the role of first contact referent and welcoming for those arriving so allowing them to attend closely the needs of those newcomers. Besides these norms, of course Spain (and Catalonia) are bound by the international treaties they signed and also by the bilateral treaties with specific countries. Now, this decentralised policy and co-regulated norms allow attending the phenomena of migration with specific measures depending on the singularities of each territory and allows also coordinating the different social and institutional actors in a closer manner. At times, however, there have been conflicts in the coordination of specific laws that affected immigrants such as a recent law from the Spanish government that limited the right of access to health services to irregular immigrants and that was actively opposed by the Catalan government, in favour of maintaining a universal right to access to health services regardless the legal status of the applicants to those services.

In Catalonia, the interest to create a specific regulation on extracomunitarian immigration, begins in 1992 when this phenomenon was starting to be relevant (although the numbers of newly arrived population were still low in comparison with the arrivals occurring in early XXIst century). The Catalan government decided to coordinate better its actions in terms of migration policies and thus created an Interdepartmental Coordination Group which developed its First Interdepartmental Plan. So far, 6 of these plans (“Pla per la Ciutadania i la migració”) have been elaborated until today taking progressively into account not only a diagnosis of the situation but also a number of analysis on how to implement different policies and specific measures to allow taking both appropriate preemptive policies for the welcoming of migrants as well as for promoting their active public participation as Catalan residents. These plans include actions concerning the procedures of arrival and settling of newly arrived migrants, working on the social cohesion of civil society and the fight against discrimination, promoting, as well, the active participation of migrants in the national construction and implementing an intercultural approach in education (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014). This interest in regulating and planning the policies concerning immigration led in 2005 to the elaboration of a Catalan National Plan for immigration (PNI) built up with a wide consensus together by the Catalan Government, several political parties of the Catalan parliament, local associations, economic and social agents and also members of the Table of Citizenship and migration. The policies on migration thus have been so far generally built in terms of political consensus coordinating different actions of diagnosis and reception of migrants both at the governmental and local level. The PNI defines Catalan society as “a diverse society committed to cohesion, the result of building a shared common project created through the participation of all and governed by the defence of individual and collective rights.” (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014: 18). In 2012 the plan is renewed by unanimity.

Now, the latest ECRI reports (2011; 2018) acknowledge significant advances both in Spain and Catalonia concerning the implementation of policies for newly arrived migrants and Roma (2011) and the adoption of measures for their appropriate integration and to fight xenophobic or hate speech (2018). It is also true, nevertheless, that significant aspects concerning specific policies addressing the immigrant population and the avoidance of segregation practices ought still to be improved and are thus explicitly addressed and analysed in-depth, not only by these ECRI reports (Council of Europe, 2011; 2018) but also by the Catalan Ombudsman (Síndic; 2015a; 2015b) as well as Fundació Jaume Bofill –a Catalan institution specialised in analysis of the educative system (Benito & Gonzalez, 2007; Bonal, 2012). It is important to point out here that these processes of self-segregation are also actively promoted by middle-high class population (Top segregation), as Bourdieu pointed out, as a result of a process of a class-strategy where often families opt for a private or

semi-private centre (“*escola concertada*”) or to alternative public schools or nurseries where they feel their children may be able to interact with peers from a similar (or better) social class.

Yet, while still important reforms –both at the government and at the local municipal level– ought to be implemented to favour the coexistence within a diverse society and avoiding practices of exclusion and segregation, it is also true that the perception of immigration as a problem or a danger has been lowered down to a very significant level (even though in 2017 the immigrant population in Catalonia constituted a total of 13% of the Catalan population, from an original 2’9% in 2000). Thus the latest Barometers of Political Opinion (CEO: 2018) shows a significant reduction of the preoccupation concerning immigration issues (from a third position in 2011 with a 23’1% interest -in relation to other topics of interest- to a 9th place in 2018 with only a 3’1% of interest on this topic). This, is the result not only of the new political context in which new social demands have been a principal worry by Catalan population –demand of an improvement in wages, demonstrations in favour of a national referendum of independence or unemployment– but surely also because of the success of some of the above mentioned measures proposed and implemented through the above-mentioned PNI, which was built up through a wide social and political consensus and adopted to promote the inclusion of the newly arrived migrants and their children and to promote, as well and above all, the active participation of immigrants in the national construction of Catalonia.

4.3.2 Early Childhood Education system: norms, transitions, Curriculums and current context

In relation to the ECEC institutions, norms and regulation the Catalan Government has full competences on the provision of a regulatory framework and economical support. The Early Childhood Education system is divided in 2 stages: a 0-3 years period (“*Escola Bressol*”) and a 3-6 period (“*Escola*” o “*CEIP*”). The latter stage is usually located in regular schools. Both stages are non-compulsory and a number of measures are taken into account to promote the equality of opportunities in children, the promotion of appropriate levels of learning and the autonomy of children. Also a proper welcoming process, participation and integration of families and their children, as stated in the Catalan Education Laws (Llei 12/2009 del 10 de juliol and Decret 101/2010 de 3 d’agost), are taken into account as part of the nursery’s and school’s functions. It also stresses the importance of facilitating and promoting the transition between the different learning stages and thus to coordinate better the pedagogical actions and interventions from nurseries (pre-school, 0-3 years) to the 3-6 and primary school periods. In general terms the curriculums of the 0-3 and 3-6 periods are quite open due to the regulation on the Autonomy of the Centres. Thus, these laws offer a general background and aims for the educators/teachers to apply but leave also an important degree of action to nurseries and schools on how to implement the curricular objectives of each period. The nurseries and schools have to elaborate a Centre’s Educative plan (“*Pla Educatiu de Centre*”), which explains and justifies the specific pedagogical aims and methodologies of the centre and which act as the blueprint for the educators’ specific pedagogical actions and orientations within their respective nurseries and schools.

Within these 0-3 and 3-6 curriculums as well as within the legislation mentioned above there are several sections that explicitly address the importance of diversity, of taking into account the special needs of children, the centrality of inclusive and coeducative pedagogical measures and the fight against any form of discrimination towards children.

Thus, for example, both the laws and the 0-3 and 3-6 curriculums explicitly address issues related or connected with the cultural and social diversity. In the curriculum case: elements connected with this issue are taken into account such as the notions of “culture”, “diversity”, “cultural mediation”, “integration” and “inclusion”, the importance of “welcoming” and familiarising newcomers with their nursery/school, taking into account the “mother-tongue” of children and of promoting an awareness of the process of marginalisation, exclusion and creation of barriers, etc. In fact, the 3-6 curriculum, seems to be more sensitive to this than the 0-3 curriculum (perhaps due to the fact that in the 0-3 period still significantly a lower number children from migrant background attend to nurseries –see Generalitat de Catalunya, 2016: 100). Yet, there are certain ambiguous concepts that still ought to be disambiguated in order to better tackle these issues on the part of

the professionals dealing with intercultural education. Thus the concepts addressing the notions of “diversity”, “family” or “everydayness” are too general and furthermore, implicitly seem to refer to those typical of middle-class white population (rather than addressing the specific everyday realities of those other families from migrant or diverse cultural from different socioeconomic strata). It is true that the curriculum and the laws that make it possible, exist only to provide a general framework so to further develop specific policies and pedagogical actions. Yet, it is surprising that these topics are not very much developed given the importance immigration played in the past, as well today, in Catalonia due to the recent increase of new arrivals (IDESCAT, 2018). It is also surprising that the Law previous to the Decret 101/2010 that established the political framework for the actualisation of the 0-3 curriculum (that is the Decret 282/2006) makes specific references to a multicultural framework in education and such reference disappears in this actualised version of the law (i.e. in the Decret 101/2010) only by making references to general notions of “inclusive” education and “diversity” in those general terms mentioned above. Is it perhaps because the notion of “multiculturalism” is considered superseded in favour of an intercultural inclusive approach or is it because such term is now considered irrelevant? Or perhaps is it considered redundant in this actualisation of the law? Further enquiries could be made but such absence may point towards important implicit set of values that differ from those of the previous policy-makers.

Also, it is relevant to point out that both the 0-3 and 3-6 curriculums, and also the legislations that give rise to them, ignore (or invisibilise) the acculturating role of nurseries and schools thus making it more difficult to promote, in educators, a self-awareness of their own acculturating roles as cultural subjects themselves (i.e. and thus their potential conflicting role towards the families’ cultural and religious values) and what such position implies for the newly arrived families. Finally, it is also important to point out that the curriculums don’t give any advice on how to avoid a folklorist/exotist approach (Baraibar, 2005) towards families and children from a migrant background, making it thus more difficult for the educators to act in accordance with an intercultural approach, which, without no further explanations or examples, it is easy for the non-expert to confuse with multicultural or the above-mentioned folklorist/exotist approaches.

In terms of accompanying instances and measures which favour the integration of children from a migrant background and Roma children, both at the local municipal level and at the Catalan government level, several measures can be found. On the one hand several cities are developing an Environmental Educative Plan (“Plà Educatiu d’Entorn”) which attempts to promote a better transition and coordination between the everyday life within nurseries and schools on the one hand with the more general cultural and social activities and institutions of the city and its public life on the other hand. In some cases those municipal plans are coordinated with local associations, social mediators and others institutions and communities or networks. In addition to this, along the Catalan territory, several Pedagogical Resources Centres (CRP), dependent upon the Catalan Government, can be found. In particularly the CRP’s have a specific section department or area (ELIC) specialised in attending and supporting children with a migrant background requiring specific measures. Also the schools and nurseries ought to have a Welcoming protocol for newcomers and the autonomy of nurseries and school allow them a wide margin of action to adopt specific pedagogical measures to welcome and support families and children with specific requirements. Finally special programmes with specialised entities (such as Fundació del Secretariado Gitano) are developing programmes and promoting school or social educators (“Promotores Escolares”) to work closer with the Roma children and their families (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2014b).

Yet it is also true that recently due to the economic crisis the Catalan government reduced significantly its economic support to nurseries. This implied an increase in the cost of specific nursery services to families as well as an increase in the ratios of children per educator (Blasco, 2016). It is expected that, in the current context of economic improvement, and in response to the demands and analysis presented by the Catalan Ombudsman (Síndic, 2015a; 2015b) and by Fundació Jaume Bofill (Benito & Gonzalez, 2007), that some of the economic needs may be addressed as well as some general policies to school avoid segregation will be implemented. Recently a publication about good Municipal Practices against school segregation was presented (Bonaf, 2012) providing thus new tools to city planners and political representatives to redress school seg-

regation favouring a more distribution of children in nurseries and schools (for example showing successful cases of innovative programmes against school segregation in the case of the Catalan cities of Terrassa, Olot, Girona, Manlleu, Valls and Mataró). Some of these successful plans against school segregation include: the modification of the schooled areas where families can choose where the children can be schooled, the promotion of new stimulating singularities in specific schools that were less valued in the past by families, such as, for example, by promoting specific schools to be transformed into specialised schools on music, or science, promote the creation of strong links between a particular school and a socially recognised institution (in the city) in specific scientific areas (Magnet Schools), create and promote the role of Municipal Offices (OME's) in controlling the fraud of families in schooling their children where they shouldn't, and in orienting and planning in advance how to distribute children with specific needs, reduce ratios in specific schools and redistribute children with a criteria of equity, etc. In addition to this, resulting from the new favouring context of pedagogical innovation in Catalonia, new (or further) plans are being adopted by the Catalan Government such as the promotion of Environmental Educative Plans ("Plans Educatius d'Entorn" –mentioned above) in coordination with the Pedagogical Resources Centres (CRP's), or with other existing associative networks which might be helpful in working closely with families from a migrant and Roma background and in promoting their integration. In addition to this, the 2011 ECRI report (Council of Europe, 2011) already acknowledged the improvement, in Catalonia, of access to other mother-tongue languages for children from migrant origins and the Welcoming-classrooms programme. Also the latest ECRI 2018 report acknowledges as well the improvement in the number of Roma children enrolled in pre- and primary school (Council of Europe, 2018). Also the measures adopted to avoid their school drop-out are well considered, although this latest ECRI report still points out several measures that ought to be tackled to avoid the large degree of school and high-school drop-out of children, and specially of Roma girls (Council of Europe, 2018; Fundació del Secretariado Gitano, 2013; 2018; Santiago & Maya, 2012)

In terms of the assistance of families and their children, besides the official nurseries controlled by the Catalan government, there are other services which either exist as legal or semi-legal alternatives to nurseries or provide an alternative assistance to families with children allowing them to meet with other peers and educators some days each week (thus allowing families, and specially women, to create an informal net of social support as well as some hours with the assistance of educators who provide them with pedagogical resources or with lifelong education assistance). This is an important aspect to take into account given the differences in numbers between schooled children from non-migrant and migrant backgrounds in nurseries (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2016: 100). In a recent publication, however, Fundació Jaume Bofill suggests the Catalan Government still ought to adopt more proactive measures to coordinate and regulate legally those other pedagogical initiatives in order to provide a better service without necessarily limit their degree of autonomy (Blasco, 2016: 8). Also while this publication acknowledges an important increase in the number of new public nurseries created from 1998-99 to 2014-15 (from 327 to 925) and thus in the number of schooled children in them (from 31% to a 44%), nevertheless it also acknowledges that generally there is a significant intraterritorial variation of the number and quality of nurseries and that generally more (and better) nurseries exist where they are least needed (in terms of economic and social needs) (Blasco, 2016: 5). So further territorial planning would be required as well in coordination with the implementation of pedagogical plans.

4.3.3 The ECEC's professional's role in Catalonia: degrees, quality and competences to promote Intercultural Education

The Catalan law on education (Llei 12/2009 del 10 de juliol), article 109 states that the initial training skills of educators/teachers ought to include the capacity for teaching and to allow confronting the challenges of the educative system, provide professional attitudes to students, promote knowledge of the basic contents of this degree and also provide Psychopedagogic skills, knowledge of an additional foreign language, capacity to use the information technologies and a basic knowledge of Catalan institutions and Catalan culture. This law also specifies what is the corporative body of professionals who can work in ECEC (article 112, section d).

In addition to this, the law that specifically develops the 0-3 period (Decret 101/2010 de 3 d'agost), points

out that each group of children must have a tutor who will have the role not only of favouring the welcoming and learning of children but also of attending and coordinating his/her actions with the families and/or with other external services that might be useful for the proper accompaniment of children (Article 10). Also Article 11 develops the role of the Pedagogical Team which must present a globalised approach to develop learning in children, programme and evaluate the sessions that will take place with the children and also prevent and redress the difficulties that might appear in children (which, implicitly could include those learning difficulties occurring due to their linguistic difficulties or their being a recent newcomers with adaptation difficulties). The last Article (Article 12) pays special attention to the awareness and assistance of educators towards diversity and thus, specially addresses this issue.

It is important however that, as stated above, the Laws concerning the 0-3 and 3-6 periods give a wide capacity of action to educators and nurseries/schools to adopt different pedagogical approaches (article 9) thus promoting an important pedagogical autonomy to the nursery or school to welcome and accompany the families and their children. In terms of the professional's academic Degree and skills, the law that precedes and substantiate these ones (Decret 282/2006 de 4 de juliol), in Article 11, specifies that to be an educator in a Nursery it is required to either be in possession of the Degree on Early Childhood Education (or equivalent) or a lower non-university degree -or equivalent- that is also specialised in ECEC (Technical certification in child education -"Tecníc Superior d'Educació Infantil"). It is mandatory, however, that for every 3 groups (or fraction) of children there is at least one educator with the University Degree in Early Childhood Education (or equivalent).

Concerning the educators' competences after finishing a BA the Law 1/2003 de 19 de febrer, Article 9, defines that "The contents of the syllabus and the syllabus should facilitate the student, at the end of their studies, to develop their skills and acquire the skills that allow them, with a high level of autonomy, to integrate and interpret fundamental data for issue judgments, have their own social, scientific and ethical attraction, communicate information to all types of audience and acquire the necessary skills to continue progressing in the study and in their training." Due to the process of adapting the careers of education to the European Space (EEES) an impulse towards learning through competences (i.e. contextually) was further promoted and there was a study made by the National Agency for the Evaluation of Quality and Accreditation (ANECA) pointing towards the most relevant competences (and most valued amongst professionals) in education. Amongst those most important competences was that of "Capacity to recognize the diversity and multiculturality" (Freixa, 2017: 19). Others were the competence of oral and written communication, and planning. More specific ones were those of having appropriate psychopedagogic knowledge or promoting a learning adapted to the age of children. Resulting from this ANECA document, a number of competences in ECEC are finally introduced in the Ministerial Order ECI/3854/2007 del 27 de septiembre. The competences for ECEC educators presented in this Ministerial Order are (in short) the following ones: having a proper knowledge of the curricular contents and of evaluation criteria, promote a globalised learning in children taking into account their different cognitive, emotional psychomotor and volitive dimensions as well as their singularity and potential autonomy, be able to design and regulate space in context of diversity taking into account gender and human values, promote the coexistence of children and the pacific resolution of conflicts, promote the reflection, in children, about the norms and the respect towards others, understand the language development and (its potential disfunctions) in children and be able to promote language learning in multicultural and multilingual contexts, have a good understanding of the usage and implications of the information technologies, having a good knowledge on healthy food and hygiene in children, understand the school organisation and its functions and be keen, as educators, to enter into a life-long learning process, reflect on the practical aspects of education and understand the possibilities and limits of education in current society and finally be able to act as guide in relation to families (and to relate appropriately with them). (Freixa, 2017: 20)

It is important to point out as well that in the Law 12/2009 de 10 de juliol, Article 37 Section 2, it is stated explicitly that any act or behaviour which would imply any form of discrimination would be considered especially serious.

4.3.4 Need-analysis on intercultural issues: from the data obtained to its implications

Now, in terms of the needs detected on the part of the professionals' roles and activities concerning the attention towards cultural diversity, inclusive education and an intercultural approach towards children (and their families), a questionnaire was conducted during the course 2016-2017 as part of the MECEC+ project. This questionnaire was anonymous and aimed at detecting the competences of educators, their self-awareness concerning their roles when dealing with a context of cultural diversity and the needs they have to promote intercultural education in ECEC settings. The questionnaire was first drafted by Firenze Università, further revised by members of the MECEC+ project and submitted in each territory corresponding to those of the MECEC+ members (Italy-Tuscany, Hungary-Budapest, Spain-Catalonia) with its translated and properly adapted versions (with the proviso of taking into consideration the specific social and cultural contexts of Italy, Hungary and Catalonia).

Resulting from this questionnaire and its later analysis a number of observations can be now pointed out. It is clear, however, that due to the number of responses and to the preliminary approach to this topic, such observations are not conclusive but rather conducive to further enquiries and more detailed analysis.

In the first place, after collecting these questionnaires and taking into account at the same time the above-mentioned, it has been observed that a large number of workers have incorporated to the profession quite recently: a majority started working in these nurseries since 10 years ago and most of these workers have between 31 – 40 years. The huge majority of them are women and thus it can be observed that it is a highly feminised job. In terms of studies, most of them have a University degree (BA) on Early childhood Education, followed by those who have a lower non-university degree (“Tècnic en Educació Infantil”). In the third and fourth place they have other degrees or a degree in Pedagogy, Psychology or a Master's degree.

Besides these general answers which allow us to have a better idea of the framework we are dealing with, it is also possible to observe, through some of the answers to these questions, the willingness, of most of the educators, to learn more about intercultural practices and about the specificities of certain cultures or cultural values: An important amount of subjects acknowledge their lack of –or insufficient– knowledge on certain cultural communities or on useful intercultural tools or practices (see questions 8, 9, 15, 16 and 17). They generally also see the positive aspects of learning more about intercultural practices and strategies (questions 18 and 30). In addition to these, the answers to question 10 show that most of them acknowledge that CIRRF¹ tend to be victims of prejudice thus assuming that more needs to be done to favour a proper inclusive and intercultural approach.

In general, in question 12, most of the educators respond that they feel positively involved with CIRRF children (although it is not possible to know the degree of truthfulness in such answers) however such positive response is accompanied by answers to question 14 in which there is a general acknowledgment that pluralism may generate organisational problems (the second largest group states that “yes, quite”). Question 20 may be the answer to this as the third largest group responds that some methods and aspects of the programme were modified to attend CIRRF (very close to the second group which is a very ambiguous response because it corresponds to the answer “Others”). Question 14.1, on the other hand, shows that most educators respond that mostly the difficulties when dealing with CIRRF are linguistic, secondly cultural, third economic, and in the fourth and fifth place, difficulties of integration and “others”. It is important to point out again, however, that these answers can only be dealt with certain degree of scepticism in the sense that these are the mere opinions of the subjects who responded the questionnaire rather than the objective truth about the real difficulties arising in these nurseries (educators might consider that the problems are linguistic but maybe are cultural, or they may believe that are cultural when in reality may be economic – see some of the confusions between “culture” and “culture of poverty” – Baraibar: 2005). Yet, these answers are informative for us because they provide a general impression of the educator's perceptions and thus what kind of issues, topics or tools should (or could) be introduced in a potential lifelong-learning course addressed to teachers on Intercultural education. This can be observed again in questions 18.1 and 32.1, where the educators respond

¹Acronym for “Children from Immigrant, Refugee and Roma Families” (CIRRF)

on some suggestions about what they believe they should know better (so to deal with families and children from a migrant or Roma background). Most of them, in question 18.1, acknowledge their lack of knowledge of the neighbourhood services and associations where these families and children live. Also they respond on the option concerning the improvement in the daily routines and on the space management to receive the families. Answers to question 32.1 point towards a similar direction (acknowledge of a poor knowledge of the neighbourhood/associative life and on the need to improve -and have more- meetings with families).

Some other questions are addressed to reveal the number or quality of intercultural activities in the nurseries; in question 19, the larger group states that nothing new (in terms of intercultural education) is done in their nursery but the second group states that they deal with the intercultural dimension through diverse activities, the third says on occasions they work on intercultural aspects and next “others”. It is difficult here, however, to know in certain questions, what these educators understand by “intercultural practices” or an “intercultural approach” (see questions 14.1, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 24 and the final open questions) given, on the one hand, that interculturality is not a mere multicultural approach (Blanco, 2006) and –as mentioned above– that it differs radically from a folklorist or exotist approach (and thus it is a complex approach that requires a multiple type of analysis and understanding of the issues at stake) and, on the other hand, that many teachers in previous questions acknowledged their lack of knowledge of how to deal with CIRRF families and their insufficient knowledge of intercultural tools or knowledge. So further work should be done to clarify what interculturalism is and what tools, resources and strategies are (and aren’t) useful to promote it.

Now, while the previous responses seem to present a quite idyllic context of teachers in relation to diversity where most of them either don’t see many problems or if they find some, they respond generally that the problems might arise due to their own insufficient -or lack of- knowledge on intercultural issues and tools, questions 21 and 22 reveal something quite different. While question 21, points towards the idea that relation between local and non-local children are from “excellent” to “quite good”, the next question concerning families is very different. While there are still some (few) who also respond with an “excellent” and a “very good”, most of the educators respond to “quite good” (on the relations between local and non-local families). This, indeed, is a subtle conceptual difference but which may reveal that the relations in schools between (and with?) CIRRF families as not idyllic as they first appeared. Furthermore, in question 23, while the largest group says that there are no problems, the second largest group points towards the idea that there are problems on both sides. And in question 28 the largest group by far responds that sometimes (not always) there is need of a linguistic and cultural mediation (the “always” group is the second one on the list). Further enquiries however are required in order to reveal the types of interactions between educators and CIRRF (and non-CIRRF) families (and between families themselves) and the types of problems arising.

Concerning how often families participate in school meetings and activities, the first group responds “usually” and the second group “seldom”. Yet when providing an answer to why there may be a lack of participation of the IRRF families, teachers seem to be quite comprehensive responding that either these families want to come but they can’t due to their working hours/obligations or due to the fact that they don’t have proper language skills to understand the conversations, the third group (with the same amount of answers than the 2nd) state, however, that these families may not consider it important to attend and the 5th group states that in their country of origin such meetings are not usual. While again these responses are subjective, they point towards the importance of approaching the reality of the CIRRF families (and the different types -geographically, culturally, sexually -or others- types of family) and their specific needs, so to understand their respective behaviours towards schools and nurseries (and educators).

Some other answers reveal that part of this need-analysis, is precisely the need to promote a transference-process of specific existing tools strategies or resources that some educators might not be aware of. Thus, regarding the answers to question 27 (about the translation of documents to families) the first group responds that they don’t have resources to translate them, something that might be actually unnecessary because there are already existing resources to solve this issue (there are already officially translated documents existing in the internet). In addition to this some schools have already solved this communication problem in documents by using cultural mediators -mostly mothers or ex-school mothers. So making teachers meet or visit

those mediators or schools could facilitate their applying similar strategies in their nurseries/schools with similar success. Question 25.1 could also easily be dealt by learning from existing strategies by visiting other schools/nurseries that are already working with cultural mediators or volunteers to promote a better understanding between educators and CIRRF families. Answers to questions 32.1 and 18.1 also show that just by visiting and exploring other neighbourhood services with social educators or representatives from the different institutional and non-institutional networks, could improve their relations with the CIRRF families and their children (by discovering new neighbourhood networks that would be useful to families and children outside school).

To conclude this section: in general terms, thus, there is an awareness, on the educators' side concerning their limited knowledge concerning how to tackle diversity from an intercultural approach and at the same time there is their willingness to learn more about this approach. Some other responses reveal, as shown above, the need to understand better the connection between nursery/school and its neighbourhood services and networks (i.e. its associative life, cultural activities, institutions,...) so to better attend CIRRF families and children. The responses also point towards the need to get closer to the CIRRF's everyday realities and contexts to understand their relations in and towards schools/nurseries. Finally another aspect revealed by this need-analysis shows that some problems or issues at stake related with a context of cultural diversity, could be solved in a relatively easy way: not by long theoretical sessions explaining intercultural theories or by implementing radical changes in schools but rather by a simple process of promoting process of transference through fieldwork visits (of nurseries/schools characterised by their good practices, through neighbourhood visits/walks with social educators as guides, or through the presentation of some existing online resources) or by inviting experts at implementing specific initiatives to promote intercultural values in local realities.

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Chapter 5

ECEC in the 3 partner countries: Hungary (Budapest Region), Italy (Tuscany), Spain (Catalonia)

Good practices

5.1 ECEC in Hungary – Good practices

*Józsefvárosi Egyesített Bölcsődék, Budapest
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5.1.1 Features of the supply area of Józsefváros and its target group

Józsefváros, one of Budapest's most centrally located (6.85 km²), very densely populated district (1 km² with 11.131 inhabitants). The territory of Józsefváros is divided into 11 socio-economic units, "quarters". The quarters differ considerably by socio-economic-architectural-historical-cultural aspects and their geographic location, which determines also the social composition of the population.

Population data

The population composition of Józsefváros is varied, there are many foreigners settled, 20% of the inhabitants are non-Hungarian nationals. In Budapest 2.83%, in Józsefváros 4% of the population declares themselves Roma. The group of 3050 people who claim to be a Roma represents the most populous Roma community in the city, 15.14% of Budapest's Romani and Boyash population. There are also German and Romanian nationals, as well as migrants from China, Vietnam, Arab and certain African communities (source: CSO census data 2011).

In 2017, the population of Józsefváros was 76.152 (source: CSO census data 2018.), of which 0-3 aged 2.409 persons. Currently, among them in total 150 children live in deep poverty (eligible for extraordinary child protection benefits), 86 are disadvantaged (HH) and 8 children are with multiple disadvantages (HHH), among them 61 do not attend institution (source: Comprehensive assessment of child welfare and child protection duties of the Municipality of Józsefváros in 2017, database of JPH Family Support Office, Winszoc database 2018.06.04.).

Housing, quality of life

34% of the housing stock is below 40 m². 10% of the apartments in 2011 were still without comfort which indicates the low quality of housing stock. In Józsefváros the proportion of the one-room apartments is above average (36%) (source: CSO 2011 census data). The equipment and comfort of the apartments are closely related to the size of the apartment and the number of rooms.

Education-Employment

In Józsefváros, 21% of the adult population has no secondary education. 10% of the working aged residents are registered unemployed. In 2015, the number of registered jobseekers is 2320 (source: 2016 Review of the Local Action Plan for Gender Equality). The net income per capita in Budapest is lowest in Józsefváros.

Social Characteristics - Situation of families with small children

Józsefváros places great emphasis on the development of areas with unfavorable socio-cultural disadvantages and at risk of segregation, so major urban regeneration programs have started in recent years, such as the Magdolna Quarter Program, which started in 2005. The three-phases program consisted of a soft work program for catching up and empowering the local population of the quarter and of the realization of housing and environmental infrastructure development investments, to which the Municipality of Józsefváros spent almost seven billion forints from the tender source.

The social situation of children and families in Józsefváros is closely related to the quality of the apartment they live in. People with poorer social status, generally with low educational attainment, live in poorer, non-comfort homes. Among them, the proportion of the unemployed is high, who live from social aid and casual work. In these families, the mental, psychiatric illness is a higher risk factor for children's development.

There are differences between the quarters of Józsefváros in terms of the housing situation, the level of education and the income situation. Accordingly, the social situation of families using nursery services is also different.

Despite the urban rehabilitation programs in Józsefváros, in 2018 the Magdolna quarter was burdened with social and environmental problems. In this area, the concentration of disadvantaged families is high, the physical environment has deteriorated, and there is also the biggest lag in the economic potential, the employment situation and the level of education. Gives a great opportunity for families with children 0-3 years old the "Biztos Kezdet – Sure Start" program functioning in the Magdolna quarter, which is a unique initiative in Budapest. The aim of the program is to provide social catch-up and prevention services for parents and 0-3 aged children together, by supporting the healthy development of children with sociocultural disadvantages, mainly children eligible for extraordinary child protection benefits, compensating the developmental lags, enhancing parental competences. The program works for the child's successful integration into kindergarten and for the successful social integration of the child and the family every working day of the year.

The best way to help healthy development children under the age of three is to provide a high quality day care for institutional placement. This need is met by providing a nursery service in different parts of Józsefváros. The nurseries in Józsefváros do not differ in the infrastructural, professional and high professional standards, but the territorial distribution of families from different social environments and their attachment to member institutions can be observed.

Parents have the option of free nursery facilities, depending on vacant places, so practically they define the community of children's groups. Thus, it is also possible to see the social composition of a "quarter" based on the data of the nursery data. Based on the utilization of the nursery places, the development of the 0-3 year old age group, the decrease of the number of births, and the stagnation of the birth rate can be clearly observed in Józsefváros.

Year	Population no.	Births no.
2014.	79.660	622
2015.	76.957	502
2016.	76.811	570
2017.	76.152	562

(source: KSH, JPH. Hatósági Ügyosztály Anyakönyvi Iroda)

The statistical data show that the existing 492 places are indispensable to accommodate the need of local families of Józsefváros. Taking into account the characteristics of the supply area, it is necessary to provide professionally developed, high-quality services that focuses also on families with children in different programs.

5.1.2 Principles of Early Childhood Education in Hungary

The National Training Program for Education and Childcare is intended to provide a framework for professional work in the institutions and in the different services of Children Care in Hungary. In Józsefváros, nurseries have their own programs that take into account local characteristics in accordance with the Fundamental Program.

Principles of Early Childhood Education in Józsefváros

The Family is Observed as a System: the JEB considers the family as a complex system and this plays a significant role in the development of parental competence. Familiarizing and supporting the strengths of the family takes place by highlighting the positive aspects. The goal is to contribute to improving the quality of life of the family so that young children learn the skills and abilities that help them to behave effectively and in a balanced way in their own cultural environment, to adapt successfully to its changes.

Early Childhood Interventional Approach: the task of the educators is to recognize and signal the developmental disadvantages and breakdowns that may arise.

Primary Respect for Family Education: The nursery work is based on family education, supplementing it with the development of the children of Józsefváros. Parents engage actively and at different levels in the life of the nursery and communicate information on the child's development. Forms of contact: family visits, insertion, parental meetings, parent group meetings, reception hours, open days, daily conversations, arrival, homecoming, message booklet - written information.

Respect for the Young Child's Personality: Nursery education is aimed at the full development of childlike personality and the development of personal, social and cognitive competences, with respect for the fundamental rights of the child.

Adoption of Early Childhood Intervention: In line with the approach of early childhood intervention, the JEB is also engaged in preventive activities covering all young children and their families.

The Decisive Role of the Educator's Personality: Due to the age-specific characteristics of the age group, the role of the educator (pedagogue) is decisive, through his/her own personality has an important effect on the child and the family. He/she is a model with her personality and educational attitudes. The JEB ensures the

professional knowledge of small-degree educators and the development of their professional competence.

Creating Security and Stability: The persistence of the personal and material environment of the children ("their own nursery" system, ascension system, personal and group placement stability) increases emotional safety, serves as a basis for orientation and good habits. "My educator" means the guarantee of creating security and stability, which means that up to six children are directly attached to an educator who takes care of the child's insertion into the nursery and remains with him/her during the nursery years (ascending system).



In the nurseries of JEB, children's agenda and daily program are well-organized, continuous and flexible, taking into account the needs of children, thus creating the conditions for peaceful, continuous education, care and delivery, thus providing them with security, predictability, activity and self-sufficiency.

In a nursery group, 12-14 children can be brought up for care. If a child with special educational needs (SEN) is involved in the group, 10-8-6 can be brought up for care. Children attend the same group of children during the whole nursery care service. There are homogeneous and mixed groups, but the JEB strives to have children with difference of age not more than 8 or 10 months, in few cases 12 months.

Making Progressive Stages: The gradual acclimatization of a child to new situations will help him adapt, accept changes, discover new things, situations and habits.

Validation of Individual Treatment: We take into account the spontaneous maturation of the child, the grade of the personal development, the current physical and psychological status, competence, ethnicity, ethnic, cultural and religious affiliation.

Careful Situations are of the Utmost Importance to JEB: Careful situations are the intrinsic situations of educators and children interaction. Professional care contributes to the positive development of personal relationships and is one of the highlighted areas for the realization of educational tasks. Emotional filling of communication with the adult, the signal of the educator about the child has implications for self-acceptance and personality's healthy development. The quality of care has a significant influence on habits and the process of self-sufficiency.

Supporting Child Competency Building: Early life years are based on cognitive, emotional and social competencies, so their support is of paramount importance in our education.

Particular attention is paid to establishing a healthy lifestyle, developing emotional and social competences, and assisting the development of cognitive processes. All this is embedded in the game activity with the active participation of the educator, that we achieve through the right environment during the education and care. The primary task of our nursery education is to create the possibilities of play, movement, literary education, music and creative helplessness.

5.1.3 Presentation of the JEB

United Nurseries of Józsefváros (Józsefvárosi Egyesített Bölcsődék: JEB) is a service provided by the Municipality of Budapest VIII. district – Józsefváros. Its operation is governed by the Act XXXI of 1997 on the Protection of Children law. There are currently 197 full-time public servants working in the organization.

The JEB provides services for 492 children aged 0-3. (website: <http://www.bolcsode-bp08.hu>). The nurseries are open from 06.00 to 18.00, Monday to Friday.

Nursery services of Józsefváros:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| – 1083 Budapest, Baross u. 103/A. - Mini-Manó Bölcsőde | places: 75 children; 6 groups |
| – 1083 Budapest, Baross u. 117. - Babóca Bölcsőde | places: 75 children; 6 groups |
| – 1085 Budapest, Horánszky u. 21. - Játékvár Bölcsőde | places: 74 children; 6 groups |
| – 1082 Budapest, Nagy Templom 3. - Gyermekkert Bölcsőde | places: 72 children; 6 groups |
| – 1087 Budapest, Százados út 1. - Fecsegő-tipegők Bölcsőde | places: 50 children; 4 groups |
| – 1084 Budapest, Tolnai Lajos u. 19. - Tücsök-lak Bölcsőde | places: 74 children; 6 groups |
| – 1089 Budapest, Vajda Péter u. 37. - Katica Bölcsőde | places: 72 children; 6 groups |
| – 1083 Budapest, Szigetvári utca 1. - Biztos Kezdet Gyerekház | 60-70 families |

The main purpose of JEB's activities is to implement a public service mandate for compulsory municipal nursery care.

JEB's Tasks

Nurseries in the city of Józsefváros provide services as a support to raise up children under 3 years of age in the family, and provide services according to the situation and needs of the child and family. If the child has reached the age of 3 but is not yet mature for kindergarten education, due to his/her physical or mental level of development, he/she can remain until the 31st of August after the 4th birthday.

A child can be taken into the nursery, when his/her parents are not able to take care during the day, due to their job or other reasons.

The fee paid by families (meal fee, care reimbursement fee) varies according to the per capita income of the family. In addition to children care, JEB provides services to support child rearing, strengthening relationships between child and parents, child's socialization, and other leisure and prevention services to support families.

A periodic childcare service is provided for a fee, too. Parents can ask a child's supervision during the day of the nursery's opening hours for a few hours. Unpaid services include a playhouse, development tools, rental of basic childcare tools, preventive development programs, psychological counseling, home childcare, early childhood education, integrated parent / infant consultation, development of children with special educational needs and the Sure Start Children's House.

5.1.4 The characteristics of the member nurseries of the JEB

Tücsök-lak Nursery - integration of children with special educational needs (SEN)

The Tücsök-lak Bölcsőde provides the education and care of SEN children living in Józsefváros. Here, the number of the children in the group is up to 10, 8, or 6. In the nursery we provide care in partial and full integration. Children receive daycare for individual development in a dedicated gym.

Salt room

There is a salt room in the nurseries in Józsefvar, which helps to increase the resilience of children, to prevent respiratory illness and to relieve symptoms. The use of the salt room is free of charge, according to a schedule scheduled for autumn / spring, twice a week, for a period of 20 minutes. Educators play with slimming exercises with children.

Mini-Manó Nursery and Babóca Nursery – Diversity, inclusions, equal opportunity

The two nurseries are geographically located in the part of Józsefváros where there is a large number of Roma and immigrant families. 70-80% of the children in these two services come from these families. The nursery is the first scene of secondary socialization. The basics of social behavior and integration are taught by children at this age. In order to integrate families and their children of minorities and of foreign nationality, the majority society must be open, acceptive and receptive to the values of other cultures. Our educators try to create openness, culture and inclusion in groups through individual treatment, differentiated attitudes, and creating a supportive environment (inclusions).

Children with difficulties arising from linguistic or cultural differences are helped to understand the situation, self-expression and self-validation of the situation by means of different methods. Adaptation of children from different cultures to the new environment can be successful if the conditions of their reception are favorable, their reception is affectionate, their environment is emotionally safe, receptive and helpful. According to the method of intercultural education, the path towards integration, if the child and his parents feel the reception.

In the future of Józsefváros, the nurseries have a key role: the foundations of social integration are here. In our nursery education, the intercultural approach is not only about acceptance, but also the difficulties that arise, and the details that seem to be problematic at first glance are treated as values. A child from another culture carries not only difficulties but also added value, and ultimately benefits the majority community.

We strive to have a sincere, direct, good relationship with families in need of care. Multicultural education has its own challenges and messages for the wider community, as well as for society as a whole. Institutional education alone is not enough in itself to accept minority groups, if a child in the society, outside of the nursery, sees various forms of rejection, exclusion, discrimination. Multicultural education strives to develop verbal and nonverbal skills that work together with different cultures and cultural groups together with the ability to communicate with other groups. In Józsefváros, we consider it a task to develop a collaborative, acceptance environment where there is no prejudice and, in addition, every child can later utilize positive elements of the culture of the home.

Játékvár Nursery

This nursery is the only institution in Józsefváros, where children's afternoon sleeping is done on a covered terrace, free air until 5 °C degree below zero, regardless of the season. In extreme weather or lower temperatures, sleeping occurs in the group rooms. Our children and their parents are also very fond of outdoor sleeping, which greatly contributes to the strengthening of our children's immune system.

Sure Start Children's House

The Program Safe Start is implemented by the Sure Start Children's House of Józsefváros (SSCH), which aims to combat the disadvantages of birth and family, and that is a realistic program for children in early childhood, with integrated, complex development and with the active involvement of the family and the wider environment. The SSCH can be visited free of charge by parents and children of 0-3 years old who are not enrolled into the nurseries.

The only condition is that the family has to live necessarily in the city of Józsefváros. The SSCH provides children a skills-based development, competence and condition check and development, and personality and competence development programs for parents, as well as other preventive programs and community events.

Children's playgrounds take place in the morning, after which they take themed weekly thematic tasks (eg singing-music, storytelling, big gym, visual activity, festivals, culture, environmental awareness, recycling). Snacks are made together with parents, taking into account the modern, healthy eating principle and the particular age of children.

Parents' activities are of paramount importance because in the early childhood the parent pattern is a decisive primary source. The SSCH provides assistance to parents who are lonely and unscrupulous in their childbirth – without relatives and family support, and positive reinforcement. Parent forums, regular conversations provide opportunities for sharing and processing current problems, issues, difficulties, pleasures and successes.

5.1.5 JEB's Projects

JEB - Interculturality in Organizational Development - Internal Training Working Group



According to the concept of inclusion, all members of a host community feel that they belong and are part and valuable members of the host group. In Hungary, there are laws that support reception, but each institution has to plan for itself the way in which it is best able to implement the reception. The JEB's leadership recognized in time that thinking about children can not be imagined without multiculturalism, since the better and more supportive environment is a prerequisite for involving parents and the community.

The goal is to create an institutional environment that can effectively support co-reflection along the different cultural traditions. The elementary part of high-quality pedagogical work must be basic knowledge of the theories of globalization, the colourness of cultures and the interest in interactions between them.

What does multiculturalism mean in early childhood education, in what direction is it possible to plan the steps of organizational development?

The concept of multiculturalism is a cultural habit, which means the provision of environmental elements aimed at accepting cultural diversity as a value. Multiculturalism focuses on the preservation of specific cultures and thus the preserva-

tion of traditions.

The effectiveness of early childhood education is closely related to wider societal opportunities, and pedagogical methods that can help better adaptation and more effective support can not be ignored. The participants in the elaboration of the pedagogical method of JEB carefully considered and analyzed the characteristics of Józsefváros and worked out solutions that were sensitive in the course of the ongoing changes.

The preliminary experience and knowledge of the nursery was done in a workshop.

As a result of multicultural developments, a professional team has been developed a program, which is consistent with both the educational competence model and the training aspects. The workshops aim to identify and improve some service elements in some areas of cooperation, which offer methods that can be directly used in practice.

The organizational development work in the JEB allows the renewal of pedagogical work and the deepening of literacy (literacy, nutrition).

JEB Internal Training Working Group - Professional Protocol

The Internal Training Working Group (Task Force) organizes regular visits and observations on nurseries on various topics, thus ensuring the knowledge of each other's work and the opportunity to take good practice.

During the continuous meetings of the Working Group, the JEB's Professional Protocol provides agreed opinions and materials. The Professional Protocol is a set of rules of professional work performed in every nursery of JEB, it is based on legal and professional principles, takes into account local conditions, existing material and personal conditions, includes the description of current activities, and the possibility of continuous improvement by defining the optimal path. The aim was to define a common policy that supports not only our first-time colleagues, students and students who are practicing JEB, but also our colleagues with many years of experience.

JEB Literary Working Group - Literature Project

Recitation, narrative, picture book view, are all an intimate communication statue and at the same time a condition and a result of the fundamental emotional security of the children. The experience of shared stories helps to develop active vocabulary and to acquire knowledge about the world.

In 2016, at JEB, a complex project project began, including the possibility of professional development of educators, enhancing the relationship between children and the arts, widening aesthetic experiences, and addressing parents. In order to reach our goals, we work with the assistant professor of the Hungarian Language and Literature Department of the ELTE Teacher and Educator Training Faculty. The common thinking was followed by courses and workshops that introduced the new directions of Hungarian children's literature and the practical application of modern methodological procedures.

The working group installed panels for 'literary pockets' on the nursery wall to inform the parents about the texts of the works implemented in the spontaneous situations of daily educational work. Folk and contemporary rhymes, classical and poems for children of contemporary authors, contemporary and folk tales have become easily accessible to parents as well.

The JEB literary booklet is a resounding long-term project process, the basic idea of which is to get a better understanding of the relationship between the family environment and culture. The booklets are designed to preserve the common work of the nursery and the home at the same time as the reverberation, the versatility, the listening to the tale, the work of the educators, the family and the child, and the imprint of shared literary experiences. This initiative is another step in involving family members in early literacy processes in nurseries. As a continuation of the program, the introduction and understanding of the Roma and other nationality children's literature in the nursery of multiculturalism.

JEB's Nurseries' Children Nutrition Program

The primary goal of JEB is to provide each child a proper energy and nutrition diet corresponding to their age group, which accounts for 75% of the daily requirement. In view of this, four meals a day are provided. The food is made in kitchen in the nursery building, with the great advantage that it will be placed on the children's table in the shortest time and, so the consistency and temperature of the food will not lose its edge value.

The up-to-date and standardized menu is prepared by dietary nutrition managers of the JEB. In the menu design, we take care to offer a variety of foods to the children, and to let them like it. Main considerations are diversity and keeping the season. Reform meal is gradually being introduced for both raw materials and kitchen technology. In the course of meals, the education of children is also a goal of self-reliance, so they are actively involved in distribution and serving.

The main guideline for our approach is to satisfy not only a basic need of nutrition, but also to try to educate children about their health. The child learns to properly use mealtime tools. Learning food, eating experiences, knowledge, eating, spreading skills, habits, or social nutrition-related rules are also part of the culture.

The nutritional habits developed and shaped as infant and toddlers have a full-fledged flavor-forming role.

5.1.6 Summary

Based on paradigm shift in early childhood education, JEB - United Nurseries of Józsefváros offers services of an inclusive perspective and with a pedagogical attitude.

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5.2 Practical aspects – “Staying together is not enough”

Arca Cooperativa Sociale – Tuscany - Italy
Silvina Andrea Mateo

5.2.1 Presentation of the service and the institution

Arca cooperativa sociale has started its work in the education field 0-6 in 1989 with the opening of a nursery and until today it manages a total of 90 educational services (52 nurseries, 9 Play centers, 7 family and kids centers, 2 primary schools, integrated educational service in 6 nurseries and integrated educational service in 14 primary schools). It counts a group of pedagogical coordinators, external to services, that guarantees a regular monitoring of activities, supports the implementation of the educational project and defines training courses for educators, teachers and operators.

Within the MECEC+ project two nurseries were presented: the private service “AlberoNido”, (authorized and accredited by Comune di Calenzano), realized by Arca on Project Financing and the municipal service of Florence, “Pandiramerino”, managed through a tender procedure. Both of the services welcome children from 3 to 36 months old and are structured with differentiated time modules with breakfast, lunch and snacks. There is an internal kitchen for the preparation of meals. Their opening is established from Monday to Friday, from 7.30 until 17.30. They are characterized by the attention and the care to the environments and relations and for the strong connection with the territory in which they are located.



5.2.2 ECEC guidelines and methodology, principles

The pedagogical project at the base of the services is inspired by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and it has been defined through the years, with the contributes of the scientific researches and the experience gained in the educational services. The project aims to: promote the overall well-being of the child: physical, mental, emotional. A well-being that allows the children to build meaningful relationships, develop their own identity, have experiences with other children and adults, in short, to grow according to personal rhythms and paths, within an educational community; to promote the hospitality of the families and the active participation of all the adults that are part of the educational system; to build a relationship of exchange and collaboration with the territory, with a view of developing a culture of shared childhood.

The pedagogical attention in these services also aims to build paths and strategies that promote the inclusion of migrant children and families. These families could present, besides the needs of the other families with babies, needs that go far beyond the organizational issues of reconciliation between the time dedicated to work and the time dedicated to caring of one’s child; as the needs linked to linguistic and cultural diversity, to economic difficulties, to difficulties of maintenance of an appropriate accommodation or integration difficulties.

The quality of listening and the availability towards the relationship offered by educators can be decisive in the development of an image of a welcoming society, both for children and for their families and in this sense it is important to favour the planning and documentation of all the activities and initiatives promoted by the working group.

It is also necessary to periodically encourage a review of the disposition of the service spaces, materials



and games available to children, introducing ethnic dolls, diversified geographical images, fabrics of different cultures, etc. To finish, it might be stimulating to propose stories that talk about the diversity to children in their everyday life of the nursery; listening to songs from many parts of the world; listening to lullabies and doggerels proposed by the migrant and native mothers; the set up of ethnic and Tuscan recipe books, the sharing of appetizers and ethnic dinners, initiatives dedicated to adults in which they can cook and eat together.

Starting from the contingent problems that an intercultural situation offers we believe it is important to work to promote a social welfare situation by redefining an educational perspective that favors pluralism. “Staying together” in fact, is not enough to favour an intercultural education. According to Meertens (1997), the essential conditions to educate children to diversity are: the promotion to equal opportunities; the definition of common objectives; the rejection of stereotypes; the encouragement to carry out exchanges rich in personal information and feelings and the definition (and respect) of norms and values that promote equality.

Therefore the educational project of services aims to create competent systems, capable of creating a welcoming, circular, governed context where it is possible to support and respect the diversities only thanks to the dialogue.

5.2.3 Good practices (pedagogic projects and educational practices)

Our educational experience in the highlighted services refers to groups of children and families of Italian prevalence, which include a percentage that could vary approximately from 15 to 20% of children and families from other cultures in each service.

This percentage increases if we also consider children from mixed couples (one Italian parent and one parent without the Italian citizenship) and children from international foster care paths. The recognition

of the diversities in our experience occurs since a very young age and includes a specificity linked to values, codes and symbols of culture. A good practice is possible if first of all there is an organic frame of reference (political and pedagogical) which can effectively allow to implement a change in the direction of hospitality and recognition of rights. The good practices privileged by us in relation to Interculture can be in this way highlighted:

- **Educator training**, essential aspect to support an educational work that respects diversities, which values subjectivity and uniqueness and accompanies the construction of a solid multiple identity of a child (which doesn't exclude his past nor his present) and a positive image of himself. First of all, it results essential to favour a basic training which promotes the sharing of the educational guidelines for the care and education of the childhood, which supports a self-reflexive work methodology, centred on the research-action and which allows to maintain a constant bond between theoretical aspects and good everyday life educational practices. Complementary to the training described there is a need to realize specific paths on intercultural pedagogy, taught by competent trainers to allow to highlight how the cultural stereotype affects the ability of hospitality, awakens fears and insecurities and leads to an overall consequential impoverishment of relationships.
- **Creating hospitality, welcoming**, thanks to the care and disposition of the environments of services it will be possible to favour a perceptual and aesthetic pleasure. The spaces must be personalized and must allow to leave a trace of oneself and to invite to a definition of bonds and shared narratives. The hospitality also includes the respect of the methods of care proposed to the child (suitable for each culture) and of nutritional choices linked to religious and/or cultural reasons. Lastly, acceptance includes getting to know the geography, politic situation, language, history, culture, traditions, religion, cuisine of countries of origin of migrant families. In this sense the proposal of the creation of the "book of the heart" of the family with meaningful pictures, available to children at the nursery, results in a good start of mutual knowledge.
- **Favouring periodical meetings moments with families at the nursery**, inviting them to participate to shared activities such as parties, labs, snacks, reunions and councils of the nursery, in which the adults can build relations of friendship and/or compare each other on educational topics. The definition of a programme of periodical initiatives with families, which take in account the familiar diversities (single parent families, homosexual families, mixed families), will be able to support and promote paths of exchange, dialogue and comparison.
- **Provide invitations to parents to spend "a day at the nursery"**, with their own child, following a calendar which allows all families to live the educational experience in first person and observe their own child in the community.
- **Recognize the value of "the words", gestures and images**. It is necessary to question the correctness and clarity of the messages given to the migrant children and families, as it is essential to verify the correspondence of the meanings assigned to the words and gestures of others. In this sense it is important to provide the redaction of documents in multiple languages for the families, to use a translator or cultural mediators in the first relation with the families when the linguistic incomprehension is an obstacle for the communication and to recognize the effort and the need of time necessary for the children and adults to learn a new language and also to learn to speak two or more languages at the same time. The educators have to compare with their own communicative limits and to identify daily strategies which are able to create closeness and exchanges that facilitate the nursery-family coeducation and the continuity between these two areas. A particular attention has to be payed to the choices of images and pictures, documentation and restitution of daily activities.
- **Encourage exchanges between educational services**. The participation in the MECEC+ project is an example of the good practice, thanks to which it was possible for the coordinators and educators to open the doors of their own services, to visit others, to accept criticism and suggestions, ask themselves new questions, gain greater awareness and thus redefine its pedagogical identity.

5.2.4 Reflections on the analysis of the questionnaire results

We retain that the questionnaire proposed within the MECEC+ project has been very useful to valorise the experience and the points of view of the educators. The pedagogical coordination group of Arca was able to analyse the answers given by the group of Tuscan educators and seize ideas on how to review their own intercultural approach through them. The answers are very interesting.

We would like to dedicate a few paragraphs to some information that is mostly significant to us. The first one refers to the percentage of participation: the educators involved in the survey were 340 and only 101 have actually participated. Of particular interest are the answers concerning the knowledge of the situation of immigrant, refugee and / or ROM families in the territorial reality where they work (25.7% enough, 57.4% a little and 14.9% do not work at all), as well as the knowledge of the needs of the BFFIRR parents (children of immigrant, refugee and ROM families) (Yes 4%, yes - but not enough 49.5% and No 46.5%). It is also confirmed that there is not enough awareness from the part of the staff of the educational services about the cultural and linguistic plurality in the current society (Yes, 13.9%, yes but not enough 77.2% and no 8.9%).

Other answers relevant for us refer to the training: many educators have a critical perception about their own intercultural education instruments to accommodate the BFFIRR (Yes but not enough 68.3%, I do not retain to have any 25% and yes, I retain to have them 4%) and about the competences gained from professional activity (Yes 13.9%, 69% I don't have any but I think they are necessary, 17.8% yes, even if I think it is not necessary to have these specific competences and 0: no and I don't think they are necessary). Few educators have been able to elaborate the topic of intercultural on their own training on service (Yes 11.9%, yes but just in part 45.5%, no, not at all 40.6%) and they feel like they need an intercultural training which could help them to answer the needs of BFFIRR in a better way (Yes, a lot 24.6%, enough 56.5%, few 17.4%, not at all 1%). The area in which you can find a particular lack is the one of managing the moments of care (39.6%), but also of structured activities (24.8%), of games (6.9%) and of the relation with families (17%).

However, 21.2% of the educators feel "good" for the strong presence of the BFFIRR: 46.5% feel professionally involved and 64.6% feel humanly involved, while 6.1% feel uncomfortable and 4% express indifference. An in-depth reading of the subsequent answers shows that migrant families and children are perceived as "in difficulty" and that they outline complex relationships of delicate management. Pluralism itself creates few problems for some educators (47.5%) or no problems at all (9.9%), while for many others it creates enough (41.6%) or many problems (1%). The most critical issues highlighted under the intercultural profile are the linguistic (78.2%), and the cultural ones (62.4%), followed by integration (52.5%), religious (18.8%) and economic issues (15.8%). Another critical information is the one that refers to the participation of BFFIRR parents to meetings organised in educational services: at reunions (3% always, 34% usually, 58% rarely and 5% never) and at parties (10% always, 44% usually, 43% rarely and 4% never).

The final part of the questionnaire included some open questions such as: „What does intercultural education mean?“ and „in your opinion, how are the educational services for the childhood perceived by the BFFIRR families?“

The key words identified to define intercultural education were the following: Knowing and respecting "cultural diversity", breaking down prejudices through knowledge and dialogue, mutual respect, sharing, enhancing interactions, welcoming and enriching each other, building the identity through the relationship with others, openness, availability, dialogue, listening, interaction, comparison, constructive exchanges, sensitivity, involvement and mutual help, possibility of growth, possibility of widening one's own knowledge, reflection, living diversity as a resource.

In relation to the second question, it is noted that according to about half of the educators involved in the survey, the services are perceived by the parents as safe places where you can find care, education, enrichment, growth, help, support; as places where there is the possibility to promote the integration of their children in the society and to support language learning; while the other half perceives a detached attitude of the families, who found themselves making an "obligatory choice to go to work", which lives the service as a "parking" and as a choice suffered in front of the absence of other alternatives. Therefore, a place of mainly welfare nature, distant from their cultural reality, where the families also run "a risk of being judged for their own

culture” or to which they have to passively adapt to. Lastly, some educators are aware that the passage from a first relational moment of „need” from the part of the migrants families to a next one, characterised by the „educational sharing”, occurs thanks to the targeted, soft and respectful intervention of the educator, who has the task to „accompany holding by the hand” these children and these families.

In conclusion, the questionnaire has permitted to highlight the latent problems in the relation between services and BFFIRR families. Many educators perceive the difficulties of these families (by favouring the linguistic one), but they barely recognise their needs. They know they are a point of reference for them and they mainly feel professionally involved and humanly even more. Maybe because their basic training, as well as the following ones, have relatively favoured the development of specific competences and the identification of valid instruments. In fact, many of them, express a need of training related to this area.

The relation between native children and migrants’ sons, gradually, affirms itself as positive, even if not all of the BFFIRR attend the service willingly. The relational path „with the families” results different from the one „between the families” and it seems to stop at the initial difficulties.



The relation between educators and migrant families might be good, but (due to difficulties of one or both interlocutors) it is often characterised by prejudices, which define a distance that is difficult to fill in many cases, and it is marked by linguistic and / or cultural obstacles in others. In fact, the cultural and linguistic mediator's figure is retained important and sometimes essential for many educators. The appointments scheduled for all the families who attend the service are not particularly effective in developing positive relationships with the BFFIRR families, indeed, their participation in these events is poor and for this reason it is necessary to define new alternatives urgently. Other immediate problems emerged in the answers, for example, the translation of some documents and educational projects, could be solved, inverting the current relational trend, strongly characterized by a movement that goes "from the family to the service" and not vice versa. Furthermore, within the planning meetings with the coordinators it would be necessary to take more time to discuss these aspects, in order to activate alternatives and identify new customized initiatives. Certainly a specific training is necessary, because of the high interest expressed by many of the interviewees.

In conclusion, we retain essential to continue our reflection concerning the intercultural education in the area of first childhood, which today more than ever has become a disturbing social aspect. As stated by M. Vandebroek (2004), the image of oneself and the one of the other, are in the centre the educational process. It is therefore fundamental to be aware of our own vision of the world and the vision of the world that is transmitted, to be able to investigate our practices in a critical way and adapt them if necessary.

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5.3 ECEC in Catalonia, Spain - Good practices

ENCÍS Serveis a les persones

Ita Sánchez, Beatriz Gomez, Victor Martinez, Laura Sácer, Núria Vilardebo

From Encís, we was asked to explain the good practices that, daily, educators, children, families, city councils etc. develop in nursery schools, 0-3 years.

One of the goals that we set ourselves from the pedagogical area of Encís is to provide the necessary support so that educational services can understand inclusion, not as a simple question that is being worked on in the educational services, but as a way of doing and understand education that goes beyond the service itself.

The MECEC+ project has made us reflect on the word inclusion and its meaning: is the opposite of exclusion? We could find some other word that reflects values such as respect for differences, equity, recognition of rights, participation, etc.

5.3.1 Inclusion as a principle to understand education and society

“An inclusive school is one in which different students can learn together, a school that does not exclude anyone because there are no different categories of students and there is only one category of students. Students, without any adjectives, are obviously different. In inclusive school there are only students, with no adjectives; there are no ordinary students and special students, but simply students, each with their own characteristics and needs. Diversity is a natural fact, it is normal: it is normal for us to be different (fortunately)”. (P. Pujolàs and JR Lago, 2006)

Needless to say, 0-3 childhood education is the most important stage in the education system. It is the ideal framework for working social cohesion and carrying out strategies and pedagogical resources to address individual differences.

The curricular objectives of this first stage 0-3 are the same for all children. It is for this reason that nursing schools must offer individualized attention in order to promote development and learning. In this sense, we understand that inclusive education is a principle that must be present in the school and educators must be **trained and prepared to innovate and address the world of differences**. We have to learn to live with the difference, and take advantage of the challenge of diversity.

Below, we detail some of the characteristics of the inclusive classrooms for nursery schools run by Encís:

1. School-environment relationship
2. Family participation
3. External support, advice etc.
4. Continuous education and opportunities for collective growth
5. Global educational project shared with the entire educational community
6. Vision of students from their capacities and not from difficulties
7. Heterogeneous groups
8. Flexible proposals
9. Favourable and safe climate
10. Learning and work cooperative between children and teachers
11. And a great one etc.

Below, we detail the nursery schools that have participated in the Erasmus+ MECEC+ project, and some of the good practices that are carried out in their “day to day” life.

Name of the Nursery	Town
La Romànica	Sabadell
CEIF Espronceda	
La Casa del Molí	L’Hospitalet de Llobregat

5.3.2 La Romànica and CEIF Espronceda of Sabadell

The *La Romànica municipal* nursery school and *CEIF Espronceda* are located in the VI district of the city of Sabadell. Sabadell is a city that has a population of 208.173 people and an area of 37,87 km². The two neighbourhoods where the schools are located host one of the highest immigration rates in the city.

They are close and welcoming schools that favour the relationship between the people who live there by their own structure. The educational project is global, inclusive and shared by the entire educational community. Focusing on the accompaniment, both families and children, as well as in the management and resolution of possible problems in collaboration with the municipal networks 0-3, Social Services, Baula, city council, etc.

AjuntamCEIF Blog Espronceda: <http://ceifespronceda.blogspot.com.es/>

Bloc EBM La Romànica: <http://eblaromanica.blogspot.com.es/>

5.3.3 La Casa del Molí de L’Hospitalet de Llobregat

The municipal nursery school La Casa del Molí is located in the neighbourhood of Pubilla Cases-Can Serra, located to the northwest of the city of L’Hospitalet de Llobregat. They have an area of 0.29 km² and 0.62 km², respectively. Urbanistically, they are neighbourhoods that grew during the migratory decades of the sixties and seventies, with a population density much higher than the city average.

The educational project of La Casa del Molí is based on an inclusive and inclusive educational model, which respects the plurality and diversity of children and their families, which meets their individual needs and contributes to social cohesion, within a framework of equal opportunities, to promote future school success for children. The school has two projects that favour the inclusion of both socioeconomic and educational levels of children and their families:

5.3.4 Good practices La Casa del Molí of L’Hospitalet

– Solidarity Market:

In 2012, with the impact of the economic crisis, the disadvantaged situations of the families of our center are aggravated, and we find that children and families often can not buy suitable seasonal clothing. We consider what action to be carried out from the school to respond to this need, and the idea of creating solidarity markets arises. We send a circular to families where we explain what a solidarity market is and what it is. We encourage families to bring everything that they no longer need or use but can still be used. For example, the clothes of your children are small, toys that no longer use or without interest, stories and other objects for children and adults in disuse.

You don’t have to contribute anything to get something out of it, since the purpose is to take care of and extend the life of these objects to collaborate with the planet avoiding massive consumerism and the unnecessary production of thousands of products that may not it would have to be renewed.

In this solidarity market, families and their children are the absolute protagonists, since from school we want to encourage the participation of both parties for a common goal: the education of values.

Small independent "networks" have been created between families that are already known and that the materials are exchanged. On many occasions these small events generate solidarity and complicity that lasts and transcends in time until after the children stay at EBM La Casa del Molí, and creates friends both inside and outside the school.



- Multisensory classroom:

The sensory stimulation classrooms are physical installations with intensive equipment for image, sound and support furniture. These are accompanied by a program of sensory stimulation with didactic projects. They are innovative spaces of learning that reinforce the competences in the different educational stages of the child. More specifically, this project initiates new lines of assistance in Special Educational Needs: investing in municipal nursery schools, consolidating 0-3 in the educational system and promoting inclusive education in a key stage of the person's development.

The basic objective of the multisensory classroom is that children who use it receive controlled (programmed) stimuli that allow them to receive and perceive these stimuli with all the senses, either in a differentiated or joint way (several senses), but which favours its global development.



5.3.5 Good practices La Romànica

A fundamental aspect for the whole team of the La Romànica, is the adaptation of measures to respond to the demands and needs of these families. Here are some of the proposals and resources we make at school:

– Workshops and courses

The school encourages the participation of families with spaces that are interesting to them pedagogically, such as the workshops and talks offered, on issues of raising: food, limits and relaxation, management of emotions... or on the other hand, workshops that offer resources to share fun with other families such as: storytelling workshops, recycled toys construction, family yoga.

– Individual attention to diversity (psychopedagogical advice)

As mentioned above, many of the families in the school are tracking social services and other networks where they are helped to live with dignity. For this reason, from the school, the cases are monitored together with the professionals in charge, ensuring that we adapt to all the needs that may be presented by our children, be they educational or social. On the other hand, to take better care of the different cases with some types of special needs, we have the NEE technique. This represents a very important figure as it carries out each individualized plan (PI) in conjunction with the center's psychopedagogue. This course, in addition, at school we enjoy Coeducation training, where we consider personal differences apart from sexual stereotypes, taking into account individual values and abilities, regardless of whether they are considered male or female. The aim is to develop to the maximum the potential of each individual to form autonomous, fair, respectful and supportive people, aware of their own capacities and offering to all the same opportunities. This service is offered to CEIF Espronceda.

– Communication with families

At school we find that a large number of children are not always collected by the father or mother, but by grandparents, uncles and aunts or even a family's friend. This makes the school particular attention to the use of communication channels that make it possible to exchange information bidirectional and that these are appropriate to the reality of each child. So apart from using the classroom panel, the agenda, the blog or the information via email, the individual moments with each family are encouraged, with a close and familiar treatment.

In the second quarter we conduct a follow-up interview with families to talk about the child and the common goals, from respect and mutual trust.

At the end of the third quarter we submit a report written on the evaluation as a cognitive, emotional, critical and constructive process.

– Project of Yoga

Within the educational project of our school, one of the distinctive features that stand out in the work of everyday life is the look we make of the emotions and the balance between the body and mind of the children. That is why the entire educational team has been trained in this discipline, to offer, within the daily proposals, a globalized resource, which we present to children at various times, through play and imagination. With yoga, you can move around, pause, think, hear and listen to yourself especially in a world where everything is going very fast.



5.3.6 Good practices CEIF Espronceda

We are an inclusive school since 2009 when we started our project as an inclusive school. This project was created with the support of the Research Group in Infant Education (GREI) of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Our main objective is to analyze the factors, policies and processes that can promote inclusion in the 0-3 years.

For this reason, it began to work with various educational agents, looking for new methodologies and creating activities aimed at parents and mothers such as coffee time and family celebration. Through these, all parents are welcome to share experiences and knowledge.

When looking for the most suitable methodology, in order to accommodate all children, it was determined to work in the environments. A methodology of respect for children according to their needs, their concerns and interests, as well as their maturational and learning pace. Therefore, the environments are prepared so that each child can do what he needs according to his time of development. Children throughout the year know the different spaces that exist in the school to finally circulate delivery by the center. In this way we will empower the younger ones to choose and decide their day to day and the type of game they want to develop.

In order to give consistency and value to our methodology, work spaces were created with families through activities related to traditional celebrations in Catalonia.

In this way, today, in our school, small workshops can be observed:

- Christmas cookies.
- “Panellets” workshop.
- Sant Jordi’s bread.

On the other hand, it is necessary to specify that the CEIF Espronceda enjoys a **multisensory classroom** (like the home "Casa del Molí").

Multisensory classes are designed to assist Special Educational Needs, as well as to promote inclusive education.



5.3.7 Good shared practices

– Networks Networking

Is very important and it is part of the neighborhood and district facilities. Networking encourages individualized monitoring of children, in order to know and meet their needs.

Our schools are connected to different municipal services, all of them related to early childhood care.

– Municipal network 0-3

The idea is to establish a system of mutual support between organizations and services of the different sectors in the field of the care and education of minors.

The objective is to facilitate the coordination and use of resources for educators (as a provider of information about organizations, mutual support groups, volunteers...). The members of the municipal nursery schools of Sabadell i L'Hospitalet de Llobregat participate in different working groups as "the Catalog of services for children in the city", "Protocols for care and referrals for children with special educational needs and care criteria in case of illness in nursery school".

– Family Spaces

They pay attention, advice and work as a reference for families and adult groups responsible for the care of children. This service offers children under 3 years of age and their families a place for socializing and normalizing everyday life. At the same time, it intends to offer support and help in order to achieve its own functions and to avoid difficult situations.

– Open spaces for support for families from 0 to 3 years

It is a service that supports families in raising and educating their sons and daughters of up to 3 years. It helps to understand the importance of a stage that is key in the physical and emotional development of children. It is a preventative service that is considered as a meeting place and socialization for families. In the space they have specialized technical support to resolve doubts and enhance the self-organizational capacities of the parents.

– **Breeding Network and City Education**

Professionals and representatives of families that work in different services and entities for the care of children (schools, “Esplais” (children’s centres), library, health centers, Social Services, CDIAP, EAP, LIC, CRP, PEE, PAEF, AMPA and others).

– **Libraries**

The municipal libraries have children’s rooms for the children’s leisure, with a specialized background for ages and with the loan of books, CDs, DVDs and magazines. In addition, activities aimed at the child population are organized such as:- The Time of the story - Workshops - Movie theater - Family shows. The offer is complemented with the corner of parents. It is a fund, also located in the children’s section of the libraries, with information on aspects of parenting such as health, learning, education, psychology or adolescence, among other thematic.

– **Center for Linguistic Normalization (CNL)**

Center for Linguistic Normalization (CNL) of L’Hospitalet and Casal Pere IV of Sabadell has a very wide offer of training in Catalan language that is adaptable to the needs of the users.

– **Pedagogical Resources Center**

The Educational Services of the Department of Education provide support and advice to public and private educational centers of non-university education levels. Each educational service is made up of a multidisciplinary team. A 0-6 network is made between schools to deal with educational issues.

– **Center for child development and early care**

Take care of children between the ages of 0 and 6 who are at risk of suffering, or suffer a disorder of development of psychological and/or social organic origin.

The Early Attention Service is a service dependent on the Catalan Institute of Social Services and Assistance of the Generalitat de Catalunya, develops its activities in the fields of prevention and detection of disorders in the development of the infant. His work focuses on therapeutic attention to the child and his family; support in the process of school adaptation; coordination with the different specific, healthcare, social and other Centers and Services, as well as other training, research and teaching activities.

– **Social Services**

Through this service a multidisciplinary team caters for families with children up to 3 years of age who have specific social needs. The purpose of the childhood centers is to support families and train them in caring for their children. To access the service, the diagnosis, the social valuation and the referral by the professionals of the Basic Area of Social Services is necessary previously.

– **EAIA - Childhood and adolescence care team**

It is a care service for child and adolescent, and their families. This service is provided from the teams of attention to childhood and adolescence (EAIA), territorially distributed, and is devoted to the assessment, performance and attention of children at risk of homelessness or homelessness, as well as the monitoring and treatment of their families.

– **CREDAV**

Resource center for the deaf (Vallès): it is a support service for schools with children with severe deafness, language or communication problems.

– **TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS**

Our school project attaches great importance to popular festivities. These are often a measure to adapt to the environment and a tool to work on interculturality. We understand the celebration of the Catalan festivities as the approach to the customs and cultural traditions of our country, thus favouring the knowledge on the part of the children, and their families of other origins. Now, we understand that all children have their own reality, therefore we also provide the knowledge of their own culture, in order to be able to make it visible as well as the smallest ones they can perceive, that there are other ways of understanding the world.

– **Departures and activities at the school itself**

As we have described, the CEIF School Espronceda, EB La Románica and EB The Casa del Molí, serves a population with scarce economic resources. This fact implies that as a team we are rethinking a new formula of activities that until now were carried out outside the school environment. Thanks to the participation of the AMPA and the collaboration of families with a small fee we can enjoy different shows at the school for all levels. Also activities in the school yard itself, without the children living it as a stressful situation and with the utmost calmness, not changing their space.

– **Family Day**

We spend a Saturday together with family and school doing different traditional games and a lunch or dinner of brotherhood, where each one brings a meal from the country of origin to share with the rest of the families and the team.

– **Work in small group**

The fact of reducing groups and using all the spaces of the school makes it possible to divide by groups, and work with half of children per educator. This fact allows each and every one of the spaces of the school to be used, not just properly the classroom, and not always with the same reference, but, depending on each child, they choose a different proposal every day, thus responding to their own interests.

– **Project External space and Agenda 21**

Agenda 21 Escolar is a program that fosters **participatory practices in educational centers from the point of view of sustainability**.

Schools of Encís are adhered to and receive a subsidy. Through coherence and effort, emphasis is placed on a sustainable external space; this makes it possible to raise awareness among children and families about the subject and involve them so that they are part of the change and transformation. It is intended to make the outside space a more classroom, where all the children find the stimulus and experience that gives the natural space. We consider this a strong point in our project, since the majority of children, as we have commented, come from newly arrived families where they live in small spaces and lack of contact with nature.

Chapter 6

Need Analysis - Comparisons of National Research Report

The urgency of the problem of designing new curricula of teacher training due to the reform of education in universities: decrease of pedagogical disciplines, strengthening intercultural training.

Angéla Bajzáth, Eötvös Loránd University

The focus of the article lies in identification of the main components of the new paradigm of teacher training. Our perception of inclusion is that in an inclusive community every member feels they belong, that they are valuable members of the inclusive group (Sapon-Shevin, 1996, 15. Strekalova-Hughes, 2017).

The results of the study can be useful in designing new strategies for early teacher training development. This research study contributes to this body of the literature and to educators' and professionals understanding of intercultural competence.

Caring for children, being able to develop an ever better and more supportive environment is inconceivable without the involvement of parents and the local community. The real question is not whether we need complex thinking about development but what the most optimal solutions would be, taking the given circumstances into consideration. How to create an institutional environment that is capable of effectively support common thinking amidst differing cultural traditions.

The principles of the Children's Centre are based on this recognition: easing social and cultural disadvantages; strengthening parenting competences; prevention aimed at narrowing the social gap; voluntary access for all stakeholders; operation as an open service based on local needs.

Our professional guidelines are characterised by the idea of partnership (with professionals and parents); our service is universal and targeted, the target group being pregnant mothers and children aged 0-3 and their parents who start life with serious disadvantages. We are convinced that the MECEC+ is a badly needed programme because offsetting social disadvantages, "breaking the cycle of propagation must be started in the first years of life" (Köllen, 2012). One of the main goals of the programme is to cooperate with parents having or expecting children to achieve this goal.

6.1 Methodology

Our document analysis was based on an empirical research method (Falus, 2000. 263.; Kontra 2011. 44.), which was suitable for drawing important conclusions regarding the professional programme of the institution. The online questionnaires allowed us to gather a large data stock within a short time.

We analysed the level of educators' knowledge of intercultural skills and their further training preferences. We gained an insight into the knowledge colleagues with different degrees of professional experience had gathered in the field of intercultural education, and the forms of training they would find best for their own development. From the training needs analysis realized during the MECEC+ Project, we work on the definition of TOPICS of the training, the topics that we believe are important to address during the training to respond to needs (detected by the Needs Analysis). In addition to the questionnaire we analysed the Professional Programme of Józsefváros Joint Crèches to determine how important literary education is in the everyday work of crèches. A SWOT analysis and an inventory of resources were prepared and at a later stage of implementation (28 April – 2 May 2017) I conducted a questionnaire-based survey and based on the findings I adjusted the steps of the development process.

The aim of this questionnaire was:

- To gather data with the aim of progressing in this research project
- To know which the real needs of the professional nursery teams in relation to cultural diversity are
- To know the degree of knowledge these nursery workers have in relation to interculturality

In addition to a professional development, individual professionals may seek out their own professional development, such as taking courses on diverse issues, reading books, or participating in community activities. This questionnaire has 31 questions with different options and 3 open questions.

The questionnaire was sent in Spain (Catalonia) in 2017, to different regions in Catalonia (Bages, Solsonès, Anoia, Barcelonès, Segarra, Vallès Occidental, Baix Llobregat, Segrià, Berguedà, Moianès). This questionnaire was filled by 67 teachers.

In Italy the questionnaire was sent in the summer 2017 in Florence and surroundings, as well as in other Tuscan realities, such as Livorno, Borgo S. Lorenzo, Montelupo, Forte dei Marmi, Elba, Reggello, Cerbaia, Fucecchio, Vinci, Sesto Fiorentino, Serravalle, Vicchio, and other, 101 answers was collected.

In Hungary the questionnaires were sent in the summer 2017 to teachers working in the Józsefváros nurseries in Budapest, VIII district, the answers was 97.

Given the array of professional development undertaken in the schools and by individuals, this study cannot determine the effects of any specific professional development. Rather, this study illustrates the change in intercultural competencies as related to professional development initiatives that are guided by the developmental goals and tasks. These goals and tasks were explained and communicated to district staff and teachers when they created their professional development activities.

6.2 Participants

The participants in this analysis include 265 teachers (87 in Hungary-Budapest, 101 in Italy-Tuscany, 67 in Spain-Catalonia).

The limitations of this paper do not allow a detailed description of the research; therefore, I only highlight the key points of the process, as well as the results of our procedures. Some findings of the analysis of responses to the questionnaire. Most of the educators in the institutions belong to the young generation; their knowledge acquired in their initial training are still fresh, therefore they are open to innovation. They constitute the active core of the group supporting the development project. The preliminary experiences of

early childhood educators were processed in the form of workshops. Awareness of these experiences is important because they basically determine educators' attitudes to difference, to ethnic groups that differ from their own (Spodek and Saracho, 2014).

The analysis prevalingly based on the fieldwork conducted by means of an online questionnaire, including multiple choice and open-ended questions, prepared in the frame of the MECEC+ Project.

The respondents encompassed by the research are all members of educational services personnel employed by the three institutions.

The sample of 101 (Italy) 97 (Hungary) 67 (Spain) and educational workers who answered the questionnaire offers sufficient data to draw a number of research findings, and to formulate relevant conclusions and recommendations. The main training needs in the 3 countries and the similarities, differences with data.

The professional *qualifications* obtained through initial training offers a rather heterogeneous picture: most of interviewees hold a degree in Pedagogy, Educational Sciences, Childhood Studies, or equivalent fields.

Whether and to what extent are they aware of the training needs based on the responses?

Most observed that *questionnaires* are used as a tool for training needs assessment: a few of them added that surveys through questionnaires are run on annual basis, in the form of *annual worker satisfaction questionnaire*; others suggested training needs should be identified through questionnaires "*like this one*", considering them "*efficient tools*" or "*a start(ing point)*", as such thematic questionnaires may let understand what are the needs of an educational team. The research was specifically interested in knowing the involvement of educational personnel with immigrant, refugee, and Roma families, as main categories perceived as "different". About their *familiarity with the condition of immigrant, refugee and/or Roma families present in the territory they are working in and how do they feel about a strong presence of CIRRF*, more than half of the interviewed answered to be not much (*a little*), or not at all familiar with the condition of immigrant, refugee, and/or Roma families present in the territory they are working in; a part of them maintain to be quite aware of their conditions, instead.

The concluding question is interested in knowing whether educators *feel the need for a specific training on diversity in general that could help them better meet the needs of children and their parents*. Many them strongly affirm that, some feel a little need of such a specific training, while a very small part do not need it at all.

The main findings were as follows:

- The distribution of staff by experience is uneven across the member institutions;
- Due to retirements there is several new staff in the institutions;
- Early childhood educators have differing levels of intercultural knowledge;
- Early childhood educators consider different learning organisation methods useful;
- Early childhood educators like using different types of books.

Regarding **training needs of educators** and the relevant **assessment**, some interviewees answered what would be the "right" tools and methods to identify training needs of educators, while some others described the tools and methods used to this purpose within their services.

When exploring educational support, different approaches of trained and untrained carers of young children are worth distinguishing. Based on their reports, early experience is driven by curiosity about the unknown, by the desire to understand and process physical differences, colour and prejudice.

The patterns and associations identified in the above analysis reveals some interesting trends within and between the study countries. To understand better how these factors impact on system performance requires: more research evidence which can definitively look at the impact of each of these indicators on system performance in relation to child outcomes; more qualitative and fine grain national and international comparisons

to examine how different cultural contexts affect the impact of the early childhood care; enhancing practitioner qualifications; well documented and controlled innovations to explore the impact of enhancing staff qualifications and different kinds of professional training.

The need analysis/national reports of all three partner countries (Hungary, Italy, Spain) are available via the following links:
<http://www.arcacoop.org/cms/fondi-ue/603-progetto-mecec.html>
<http://www.galileoprogetti.hu/projects.html>

Chapter 7

Conclusions

Claudia Piovano, Galileo Progetti Nonprofit Kft.

Intercultural education is an inclusive education. Often the concept of inclusion is used as a synonym for integration, but inclusion is not integration or even assimilation. Some time ago, there was talk of scholastic and social integration of disadvantaged pupils, promoting the creation of opportunities and educational and training situations able to remove barriers and obstacles. Today, rather than integration, we talk about INCLUSION, starting from the assumption that change can not be unique but mutual sense: subject and environment.

Inclusive education is understood as the process aimed at guaranteeing the right to education for all, regardless of the differences of each one that may derive from conditions of disability and / or psycho-physical, socio-economic and cultural disadvantage. It goes beyond the confines of the school and projects itself in every context, extra-curricular, informal, non-formal, enclosing all the educational environments. Therefore, inclusive education has as its purpose the adaptation of the school itself to the educational needs of each child, so not only does the child have to adapt to the school but it is a mutual process.

The European Union has put the theme of INCLUSIVE EDUCATION at the heart of its policies: through the educational activity of educational institutions, it is possible to realize the priorities of a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth based on the promotion of an economy with a high employment rate, which fosters economic, social and territorial cohesion, as required by the Europe 2020 Strategy.

An appropriate education helps to ensure that children and young people acquire the qualifications and skills required by the labour market, but it is not relevant only for economic issues, but also for a broader social and educational reason that the European Union has recognized as a strategic objective: education and training policies must ensure that all citizens can acquire and develop, during their life, the skills and knowledge necessary to promote their employability, professional training, active citizenship and multicultural dialogue.

Situations of educational disadvantage due to the contexts of origin can, and must, be overcome from the earliest childhood, to guarantee all children equal opportunities for academic success and full fulfilment in adult life. It is essential that the children access to the educational institutions (primary school) equipped with the necessary skills to start their training in the best way. Teachers play a key role in this process: they must therefore receive the necessary training and competences to support all children in acquiring skills, with attention to diversity and inclusion, and meeting the needs of disadvantaged children.

Early childhood education services play a crucial role in the inclusion not only of children, but also of their families: especially in the case of newly immigrated families, the nursery school is sometimes the only service with which family has a direct contact and trust, and in some cases the educators are the only "local" people that the family - especially the mothers - knows, asking for information and contacts even outside the

topic of education of the child. In this case, the child plays the role of tool for the insertion of the all family. Educators are therefore asked to play a fundamental role also with families in situations of vulnerability, and it is necessary that they are prepared to this task. Lastly, early intercultural education is not addressed exclusively to children we define as disadvantaged, but involves and impacts positively on the entire group of children, contributing to the growth of new generations of adults who are more open to others and to diversity, fundamental conditions in a Europe that is changing fast.

We can therefore conclude that the role of the teacher in preschool services (0/3, but also 3/6 years), is fundamental, both for the development of each child and for the development of the community. In any case, the ethnic composition of children groups in nurseries will be increasingly multi-ethnic, and teachers and educators are mostly open and interested in gaining skills on how to manage these composite groups. Universities and companies have already begun to offer training on this topic, but it is important that the theme of interculturality has greater weight within the initial training pathways and during professional activity, both from Higher Educational Institutions than by the organizations managing services for early childhood.

Interculture and inclusiveness are broad and varied concepts, very linked to the knowledge, experience and personality of each person and each teacher, who must therefore be supported in a path of knowledge, study, and approach.

Questionnaire



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The present-day societies are characterised by an increasing both linguistic and cultural plurality: this multiculturalism involves also early childhood education services by raising the need of new expertise and tools for educational personnel so as to be able to welcome and guide the growth of all children and their parents.

In the light of this, the Department of Education and Psychology, University of Florence, is conducting a research in the frame of the European MECEC+ (Multicultural Early Childhood Education) Project with the goal of getting a better knowledge on training needs that educators, teachers, pedagogical coordinators, and auxiliary personnel may have with respect to intercultural issues*.

Thereby, while kindly asking you to fill out the following questionnaire, please be assured that your answers will remain completely anonymous. Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

* In relation to educational services for children aged 0-6, “*intercultural*” is used for an educational approach based on recognition and valorisation of individual specificities of both children and their parents, which simultaneously cultivates common and shareable values while envisaging the creation of a peaceful and harmonious society.

** CIRRF acronym comprising Children from Immigrant, Refugee and Roma Families is being used in the present questionnaire.

1. **Specify your role inside the service**

2. **Length of service (years)**
 - 0-5
 - 6-10
 - 11-16
 - 17-20
 - 20+
3. **Age (years)**
 - 18-30
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - 50+
4. **Sex**
 - Female
 - Male
5. **Marital status**
 - Married
 - Cohabitant
 - Single
 - Divorced
 - Separated
 - Widowed
6. **Qualification¹**
 - diploma in management of early childhood services
 - diploma in primary education (primary school teachers)
 - diploma in social psycho-pedagogical education
 - another secondary school diploma (_____)
 - degree in Pedagogy, Educational Sciences, Childhood Studies, or equivalent
 - degree in Primary Education Studies
 - degree in Psychology
 - other degree (_____)
7. **Are you familiar with the condition of immigrant, refugee and/or Roma families present in the territory you are working in?**
 - Yes, I am well-aware of it
 - I am quite aware of it
 - Not much
 - Not at all
8. **Do you feel like having the necessary intercultural and educational tools for receiving CIRRF2 and their families?**
 - Yes
 - Yes, but not sufficiently
 - No
 - Other (_____)
9. **Are you aware of the CIRRF parents' needs?**
 - Yes
 - Yes, but not sufficiently
 - No
 - Other (_____)
10. **Do you think that CIRRF and their families are victims of prejudices?**
 - Yes, a lot
 - Quite enough
 - Not much
 - No
11. **In your opinion, do CIRRF come willingly to the nursery?**
 - Yes, a lot
 - Quite enough
 - Not much
 - Not at all
12. **How do you feel about a strong presence of CIRRF?
(More answers allowed)**
 - I feel good about it
 - I feel involved professionally
 - I feel involved humanly
 - I feel uncomfortable

¹ Regarding the qualifications, each country may include the options in conformity with its own education system.

² CIRRF acronym comprises: Children from Immigrant, Refugee and Roma Families.



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- It is indifferent to me
- I feel inadequate (incompetent)
- Other (_____)

13. The present-day societies are characterised by an increasing both linguistic and cultural plurality. In your opinion, is educational services personnel aware of this “plurality”?

- Yes
- Yes, but not sufficiently
- No
- Other (_____)

14. In your opinion, does this pluralism create organisational and management problems with regard to care and education of children?

- Yes, a lot
- Yes, quite enough
- Not much
- Not at all

14.1 If yes, what would be – in your opinion – the most critical issues from an intercultural point of view? *(More answers allowed)*

- Language difficulties
- Cultural difficulties
- Religious difficulties
- Economic difficulties
- Integration difficulties
- Other (_____)

15. Have you had any opportunities to enhance your intercultural knowledge during your initial training?

- Yes
- Yes, but only partially
- No, not at all
- Other (_____)

16. Have you had any opportunities to enhance your intercultural knowledge during your in-service training?

- Yes
- Yes, but only partially
- No, not at all
- Other (_____)

17. Do you feel like having the necessary intercultural skills to interact effectively with CIRRF and their families?

- Yes
- Yes, although I do not think it is necessary to have specific skills in this regard
- No, but I feel the need of
- No, and I do not feel the need of

18. Do you feel the need for an intercultural training that could help you better meet the needs of CIRRF?

- Yes, a lot

- Quite enough
- Not much
- Not at all

18.1 If yes, in which area do you feel a particular lack of it?

- In managing daily routines (change, sleep, lunch, etc.)
- In structured activities
- In free play
- Other (_____)

19. Does your educational service promote and implement specific projects aimed at fostering interculturality?

- Yes, it takes intercultural dimension into account throughout its activities
- Yes, it has implemented intercultural programmes and activities, but only occasionally
- No, it has not introduced anything new
- Other (_____)

20. Has the presence of CIRRF implied changes in organising and managing your way of working?

- Yes, I had to review my programme and educational methods completely
- Yes, I had to review my programme and educational methods partially
- No
- Other (_____)

21. In your opinion, what are the relationships between autochthonous children and CIRRF?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fairly good
- Indifferent
- Other (_____)

22. In your opinion, what are the relationships between autochthonous and CIRRF families?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fairly good
- Indifferent
- Other (_____)

23. Do you believe there are difficulties in the relationship between educators and CIRRF families?

- Yes, on both sides
- Yes, difficulties are mainly felt by educators
- Yes, difficulties are mainly felt by families
- No



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23.1 If yes, what kind of actions could improve the relationship between educational services and these families?

- Organising reflection meetings on the most significant educational issues
- Arranging systematically individual parent-teacher talks
- Organising meetings aimed at facing specific problems of each class
- Arranging meetings among parents
- Other (_____)

24. Does your service organise meetings and intercultural training courses for families?

- Yes, often
- Yes, sometimes
- No

25. According to your experience, to what extent do CIRRF parents attend meetings organised by childhood services and schools? (*Select one answer per row*)

	Always	Usually	Rarely	Never
Meetings				
Parties & festivities				

25.1 In your opinion, what are the reasons why parents do not attend or attend such events only rarely?

- They do not understand the language well
- They do not consider it important to participate
- Parental involvement in this kind of events is not a common practice in the respective countries of origin
- They would like to, but their work prevents them from participating
- They feel uncomfortable in the presence of other parents
- They feel uncomfortable in the presence of educators
- Other (_____)

26. What is the position of your educational service on specific diets required by some parents for their children (for religious or other reasons)?

- Our service accepts the request being it a right of both children and their families

- Our service accepts the request so as to allow all children to learn about different tastes and traditions
- Our service refuses the request as children should all be treated equally even at mealtime
- Other (_____)

27. Regarding the documentation and information sent by educational services to families: in your opinion, should it be translated into the languages of CIRRF parents?

- Yes, it has already been translated in our service
- Yes, it would be important, but we have no resources to do it
- No, there is no need of translation
- Other (_____)

28. Do you think there is a need for a linguistic-cultural mediation service?

- Yes, always
- Yes, it is sometimes necessary
- No, never

29. Have you ever had children of same-sex parents in your section/class?

- Yes, in several cases
- Yes, but in very few cases
- No, never

29.1 If yes, how did you feel in those cases?

- I felt good about it
- I felt professionally and humanly involved
- I felt uncomfortable
- It was indifferent to me
- I felt inadequate (incompetent)
- Other (_____)

30. Do you feel the need for a specific training on diversity in general that could help you better meet the needs of children and their parents?

- Yes, a lot
- Yes, quite enough
- Not much
- No, not at all

31. Do you believe you are a go-to person for families? (also for CIRRF families)?

- Yes
- No
- Other (_____)



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OPEN QUESTIONS

32. In your opinion, what does “intercultural education” mean?

33. How (tools and methods) are the training needs of educators being identified?

34. Describe briefly how do CIRRF families perceive early childhood education services (in your opinion)?

This publication is the summarization of the results of the Erasmus + KA2 MECEC+ project, born with the goal of contributing to the improvement of the inclusion of disadvantaged children and the development of their skills, for guaranteeing equal opportunity to access to school education, to achieve good learning outcomes. The aim of MECEC+ aim was to realize a comparative analysis of early childhood education and care in three countries (Italy, Tuscany – Hungary, Budapest region – Spain, Catalonia) through the analysis of skills, educators’ training and studies, systems and regulations, the observation of educational services for children, and the knowledge of European best practices.

The results of this project will be developed by the partners in a new Erasmus+ KA2 project *Intercultural Early Childhood Education and Care – Curriculum Design for Professionals* starting in September 2018, with the aim of creating a new curriculum of intercultural education for early childhood.

