



# ArtsTogether Guidelines



**Migrant Children  
Integration Through the  
Arts in Early Childcare and  
Primary Schools**



Co-funded by the  
AMIF Programme  
of the European Union

## Project Information

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## Document History

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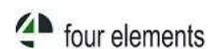


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The ArtsTogether project aims at developing and testing a curriculum based on artistic activities and collaborative approaches that will be used in order to equip teachers for dealing with diversity, fostering mutual understanding and respect among their students and improve the educational performance of migrant students. The proposed integrated approach is to make a more inclusive education system. This corresponds to the main objective of the ArtsTogether project which is to create specific measures that target migrant children in early childcare and primary education, aiming to provide comprehensive support to eliminate the educational disadvantage they experience and cultural barriers.

Although, access to education for migrant children is almost universally guaranteed in the EU, but this does not automatically equate to access to adapted education, taking into account specific needs linked to socio-economic disadvantages and linguistic challenges. Furthermore, social and ethnic school segregation constitutes a serious barrier towards access to good education for migrant children. This document aims to equip teachers with methods and comprehensive tools that can implement within classrooms that will help them to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers and would facilitate the integration process for all migrant children.

### Consortium partners:



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## Introduction

ArtsTogether guidelines aim to be a valuable tool for teachers, educators and the school community in order to embrace diversity and create the appropriate conditions for better integration of migrant children. Its content is a continuous research based on interviews, focus groups, policy roundtables in Greece and Italy, and the expertise of the project partners who have contributed through various ways. ArtsTogether guidelines aim to examine the educational framework and provide advice and guidance to teachers and educators on how they can prepare classrooms to accept diversity and can also enhance their knowledge on issues that should be aware of when need to address a particularly challenging issue, the integration of migrant children in the schooling environment. Taking into consideration previous research held in Greece and Italy and needs assessment in national levels, these guidelines try to build upon initiatives that were discussed with teachers and educators and to provide an alternative for individual initiatives that are not necessarily based on national and public actions, but they emerge through the cooperation and pool-sourcing of different organisations. This guide can be reviewed in parallel with the best practices report and the Curricula material that can be implemented within classrooms.

### **ARTSTOGETHER GUIDELINES CAN BE USED BY:**

- ❖ **TEACHERS who want to enhance their knowledge on how to embrace diversity**
- ❖ **SCHOOL PRINCIPALS who want to organise activities to welcome migrant parents and their families**
- ❖ **EDUCATORS who want to find ways to address challenges within education system**
- ❖ **MIGRANT ORGANISATIONS who want to provide information on parents about school systems**
- ❖ **SCHOOL COMMUNITY who want to develop networking opportunities with other organisations**
- ❖ **ARTS EDUCATORS who want to develop more opportunities for artistic education**

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**SECTION 1**

A green banner with a white border and a drop shadow, containing the text 'THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN EUROPE FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN: A CHALLENGE OR OPPORTUNITY?'.

**THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN EUROPE FOR  
MIGRANT CHILDREN: A CHALLENGE OR  
OPPORTUNITY?**

## The social context of migration in Europe

The last 20 years, European cultures have been more diverse and multicultural than ever before. The number of children who have migrated directly being immigrants or refugees themselves or indirectly as first- or second-generation immigrants is constantly increasing. The situation has even more altered with the migration crisis in Europe where large influx of migrants arrives in Europe through transit countries such as Greece and Italy. The destination of migrant children has actually changed over the years. While migration within Europe was actually a phenomenon of the Eastern European countries immigrating in Western Europe as economic migrants to escape economic deprivation, the last five years the countries of destination have completely changed. The political and economic situation in many countries of North Africa, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and in a number of countries in Africa, have created the largest numbers of migrants currently arriving in Europe.

The term 'migrant child' can refer to two groups of children: first generation migrants as "children born abroad within or outside the EU" and second-generation migrants "children whose one or both parents were born abroad" (Janta & Harte, 2016:12). *"They are defined as newly arrived/first generation, second generation or returning migrant children and young people. Their reasons for having migrated (e.g. economic or political) may vary, as may their legal status – they may be citizens, residents, asylum seekers, refugees, unaccompanied minors or irregular migrants. Their length of stay in the host country may be short- or long-term, and they may or may not have the right to participate in the formal education system of the host country."* Migrant children might come within or outside the EU (Eurydice, 2019:11). Minors have a universal right to education, and is independent from their status, background and current country of residence (Koehler & Schneider, 2019

Minors of age have a universal human right to education: Children's right to education is independent from their status, background and current country of residence. Refugee-receiving states tend to argue that this right can be fulfilled also in the country of origin and would thus not represent an obstacle to deportation. While it could be argued that some children are deported into countries whose educational systems are hardly able to effectively fulfil the right to education, it definitely represents a strong argument for an immediate access to education as soon as possible after the arrival which simply should and cannot wait, until their or their family's legal status and legal perspective have been

checked by the authorities. It also means that refugee children cannot be offered a sort of 'second class-education', but that they receive the support needed to succeed, and that they are protected from discrimination. And it means that the access to schools must also be guaranteed

for children without any legal status: schools must be exempted from any obligation to report them and their families to the immigration authorities.

Since January 2003, minors who are children of asylum seekers or are themselves asylum seekers have been able to access the education system under conditions similar to those applicable to citizens of the host Member State. Such education is provided in accommodation centres and needs to be continuous. Education may not be postponed for more than three months once an application for asylum has been submitted. In particular circumstances of a minor, and when access to education is not possible, the host Member-State might find another educational arrangement. In the case of immigrant children who are irregularly present on European Union territory, no form of educational entitlement is specified in European legislation (Eurudice, 2004:12). The most recent initiative includes the European Commission's 2016 Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals<sup>1</sup> and the 2017 Communication on the protection of children in migration<sup>2</sup>. Both documents highlight the importance of education and training as the powerful tools for integration, providing needs assessment of children arrived as early as possible and providing immediate access to schooling without delay and regardless of status (Eurydice, 2019:10).

For migrant children and their families, school is the gateway to the host society and represents its ability to accept or reject them. Therefore, school is the key to a new world and future opportunities (Dusi et al, 2014:1394). Integration is a function of time within a local culture and society. For children in education, transnationalism might present particular difficulties and challenges regarding school achievement. The process of learning and adapting to a new school system are repeatedly interrupted and new challenges arise (NESSE, 2018:33). Schools are the main agents for cultural integration, where migrant students have the opportunity to get introduced to the main elements of the host society such as language, culture, values, norms, standards and behaviours without necessarily give up their family background (NESSE, 2018:47). Especially designed programmes such as language introduction and intercultural learning can facilitate learning and foster integration by building bridges between communities and individuals from diverse backgrounds (European Commission, 2008).

Institutional responses to challenges posed by the new waves of migrant and refugee children are many and more are evolving, some general practices followed are easy to identify (Koehler

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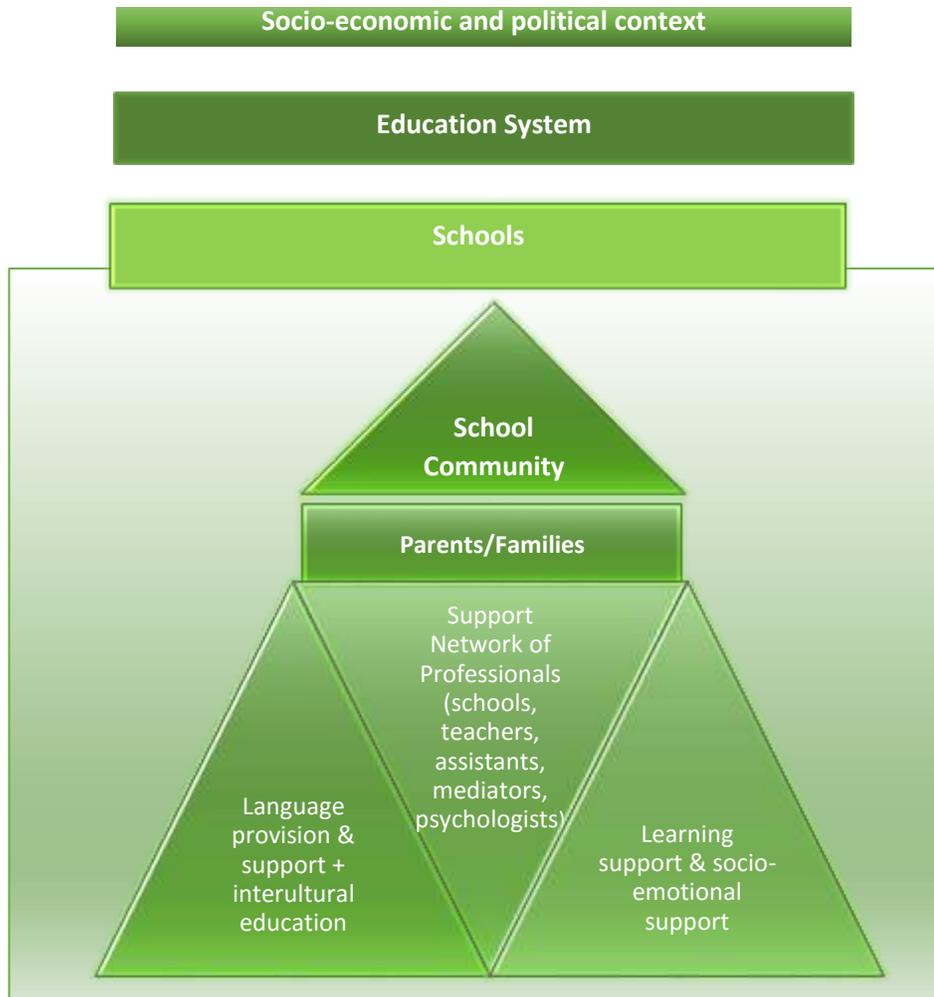
<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication\\_action\\_plan\\_integration\\_third-country\\_nationals\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/proposal-implementation-package/docs/20160607/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170412\\_communication\\_on\\_the\\_protection\\_of\\_children\\_in\\_migration\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/20170412_communication_on_the_protection_of_children_in_migration_en.pdf)

& Schneider, 2019:7). On the one side, many schools have already lessons learnt from previous experiences and mistakes of the past, but generally the underlying idiosyncrasies of teachers' methods are difficult to change. For example: to prefer separation that inclusion, to give priority to national laws than to universal children's right to education and to reply on ad-hoc basis instead of adopting a central plan which would reflect the diversification of students and the new challenges to come within the class ( ibid). The two main models which are usually followed are: *the integrated model*, in which migrant students are placed within the same age group in mainstream education and follow the same methods and curricula as the native pupils. In this case, individual support is given within normal school hours or extracurricular tuition might also be provided, in the school premises. *The separate model*, on the other side, has two forms of either migrant children grouped together, and separately from other students, in order to receive personal attention, who might follow classes in the mainstream education, or special-classes within the school for long-term. In this case students often grouped together based on their linguistic skills (Koehler & Schneider, 2019:41-42).

Education produces inequalities if exclusion or segregation (Chomentowski, 2009), leads to lower educational attainment of migrant children (EUMC, 2004:3). Educational segregation across socio-economic characteristics has been found to contribute to polarised education systems and inequality in students' educational outcomes. Crul and Schneider (2009) argue that segregated schools limit the probability that a migrant child will continue to secondary education (Janta & Harte, 2016:24). Although education for migrant children has been secured within European territories, it does not necessarily imply state action, unless families or students claim that right, or educational authorities take action for making migrant children attend school classes. In certain cases, even when state actions cannot guarantee quality access to education for migrant and refugee children, independent actions from teachers, educators and school community have a great impact in the lives of those children for integrating them in the host societies.

*Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the analysis of educational policies for migrant children*



## The relationship between student and teacher

The teacher-student relationship plays a major role in shaping the integration process for migrant children. Low expectations of teachers have been identified as one of the factors influencing academic achievement of migrant children. Within certain boundaries, if teachers believe in a migrant student's ability to make a difference, then their performance will improve (Farley 2005, 401). Several other factors related to the actual feeling of the teacher within the schooling environment, also have a decisive role in student's improvement, especially when increased academic demand combined with individualized support (Schofield 2006, 96), such as a warm and pleasant classrooms and with a capable teacher able to keep the order having the possibility to learn new skills (NESSE,2008:50).

Teachers expectation affect student performance in any national educational system, and the content of their interaction is central to migrant children performance (NESSE, 2008:28). Migrant children who attend school for first time in their host countries, become vulnerable in front of the complexity of the schooling system in the new country. Teachers are the main contact persons for migrant children, who influence the perception of the new educational environment. Thus, adaptation of schooling systems in the new social realities is rather low in Europe, and teachers are not prepared to accept such a diversity in the class and large numbers of migrants in the classroom (Pitkänen et al. 2002). Primary as well as pre-school teachers need to be trained and be qualified for this new challenge and be prepared to function in a bilingual capacity. Teaching methods and didactic tools can better contribute to success of teaching migrant students. A variation and mix of tools can function to serve multiple purposes. For example, teachers using e-learning and video games to overcome linguistic barriers or using theatre education to help students integrate socially.

Teachers' behaviour affect students' achievement in different ways, either by affecting the social and emotional behaviour and school performance, the individual support offered and the learning material provided as well as the children's participation in the class (Schofield 2006). Usually students who do not show verbal participation in the class or their interaction with the teachers is lower, are more likely to generate lower teachers expectations, which has implications for their educational performance. This is the case for migrant children since their linguistic ability has negative impact both in their communication with their teachers and with their non-immigrant classmates (Schofield, 2006:94).

## WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO?

- Treat each migrant child with respect about his culture, religion or ethnic origin. Take into consideration that this country, culture and school environment is completely new to him/her.
- Prepare the class for accepting new students by introducing the new child into the class. Explain to the students the situation that many migrant children face in their own country and try to find out how you could help this new classmate integrate in the class. Building new group activities for both the migrant students and native-born would help to bridge peers together and avoid discrimination.
- Try to find out his/her background and explain to the students his/her story. Make a conversation within the class about difference and diversity.
- Discuss with the school directors and other teachers, the possibility to organise a welcoming event for the new children and try to involve migrant parents into schooling environment.
- Establish a festival “celebration of cultures” within the school or class environment and involve all students through artistic activities. Activities like theatre, drawing, photographing, dancing and other arts activities do not require linguistic skills and can bring children together.
- Assign native-born students to act as tutors to the new children. Give them the opportunity to guide them through the school environment.

“The Erika-Mann-Schule is a school for primary education in a quarter with a large migrant population in Berlin ([www.erika-mann.de](http://www.erika-mann.de)). A main feature of the school, the central element of its school profile, is the application of methods of theatre education in most subjects and regularly. Learning social roles, language, facial expression, body movements, symbols and gestures in a playful way successfully supports the cultural and social integration particularly of the migrant children”. (NESSE, 2008:5)

### **Sense of belonging at school**

An indicator of how well migrant children are integrating into the new community, beyond their performance in school, is the sense of belonging that have developed for their new environment. For children the most important social environment is school. According to OECD (2015:6), the psychological wellbeing of immigrant students is largely affected not only by the differences between their own countries and receiving countries, but also by the level that the schools and local communities helping them to integrate into schools and build a new life. Concentration of migrant students at the same schools is a

phenomenon in many European countries. Usually migrant students are concentrated in the same schools, mainly either because they live in the same neighbourhoods or due to the school systems that place them together due to similar performance patterns (OECD, 2015:6)

## **WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO?**

- Organise activities that could help migrant students learn about the new schooling environment.
- Help migrant children to connect with native-born children through different events and group activities.
- Speak to the school counsellor and psychologists for the best ways to approach migrant children within the class.

## Kindervilla practices

Children and families in Kindervilla come from 24 different countries and speak 18 different languages. It is important that all parents and children in the institution are well informed and integrated. Every single family, whether with or without a migration background, has the opportunity to always be up to date through our multilingual educators and assistants. Children with another first language than German, they run through a special programme.

Each family is greeted with an initial interview at the facility. If there are families that do not speak German, a language assistant is called in to support them. At this first meeting with the educational director, the parents are shown the premises, presented our pedagogical concept and answered the first questions. After the family has decided to attend "Kindervilla", the respective teacher approaches the family to be informed about the next steps, namely familiarization. Again, the families and educators are accompanied by a language assistant if necessary. At the beginning, parents receive a Kindervilla- Reader and a welcome folder with all the most important information.

Learn more: [ArtsTogether Best Practices](#)

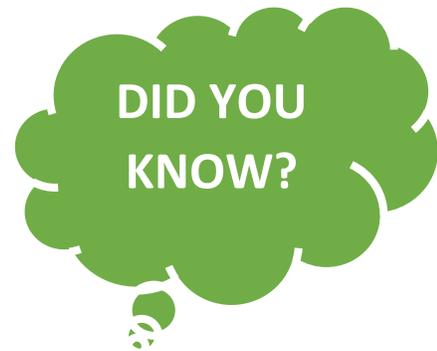
## Relations to parents and communities of migrants

Most migrant families come from countries where their welfare systems are merely developed, so the social support is largely based on family ties and inter-generational solidarity. This reinforces the central decision of the family to immigrate and improve the family life, due to reasons that were perceived important for someone to leave his home country. This reason is also related to parents' interest for the children to achieve educational and social mobility and improve their lifestyle and economic and social status. In the case of refugee children escaping war and violence and being able to follow a normal educational path is perceived as strong element to help migrant children to help them escape deprivation and long-term trauma. The involvement of parents in schools is central for two main reasons. Firstly, because it keeps the relationships between the generations as they were and second because migrant parents often lack the required knowledge of the educational system and the new culture, which keeps them distant from schools in this new country (NESSE, 2008:53). Despite the interest of the parents for their children, their involvement hardly can be seen in the school environment. As Schofield describes (2006:101), it is common migrant parents to feel isolated and culturally estranged from their children's school and to further avoid involvement. Parents might have a different perception of the schooling environment or might lack specific linguistic skills that prevent them from interacting with teachers.

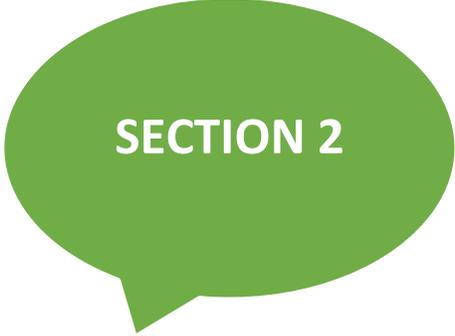
Mobilisation of parents and incentives that will integrate them to the school environment are needed. In this case, schools should be proactive (Portes and Rumbaut 2006, 370), and create the right conditions for that. Parental involvement also plays a role in student's achievement. Research shows that family involvement is positively related to achievement (Schofield, 2006:12). Carefully structured programmes can enhance this effort.

A range of strategies are needed to engage migrant parents. Most of the parents are unfamiliar with certain aspects of the education system in the host countries and the schooling environment, homework, class attendance and progression. Thus, building constructive partnerships with the parents from an early age is really important. Provision of translation/interpretation services to parents need to overcome certain linguistic barriers. Schools can involve parents in a wide range of ways, including parents as ambassadors which will support their children's learning (Manzoni & Rolfe, 2019:9). School events and workshops can enable children to meet other parents, involve in school environment, mix together with native-born families and gain new skills. A good welcoming of migrant parents from the start and activities throughout the school year can certainly help migrant parent which might have not come in contact with other cultures before (ibid).

**Learn more:** ["Kindervilla kindergarten practices"](#)



“Through ‘Neighborhood Mothers’ started in Berlin and then replicated across the country, women with their own history of migration and integration are trained to act as contact and resource persons for families and particularly other women in the neighborhood (for instance by working in schools or by visiting families in their homes). Similar programmes have also been developed in Denmark and the Netherlands. Since 2009, the French government is implementing a national programme ‘Opening school to parents for successful integration’ which aims to engage parents of migrant and refugee children. In 2017, over 300 schools were involved, offering free of charge French language and training courses for parents, increasing their understanding of the French education system and providing them with practical advice on how to better support their children in the learning process.”

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## SECTION 2

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# THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN EUROPE FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN: A CHALLENGE OR OPPORTUNITY?

## Early pre-school educational programmes

The Parents as Teachers (PAT) programme addresses itself to the age group of 0 to 3 and the parents of these children. It is a home visiting programme to give parenting information and support to parents, includes health and developmental screenings for the children and group meetings, in which parent educators and parents meet to exchange knowledge and experiences in child development. The programme claims to be for families of different socio-economic levels, from rural and urban or suburban communities, but seems to be particularly effective for low-income and minority families.

Source: NESSE Network @ European Commission (2008)

Many newly arrived migrants cannot read or speak well and in most of the cases, they do not have any linguistic competences of the language of the host societies (OECD, 2015:10). For recently arrived migrants new challenges and lack of familiarity with new language and life conditions lead to lower educational performance. The age of arrival plays a major role at the level of integration of students. Migrant children at an early age can more easily learn a foreign language than older children (ibid). While addressing individual needs for migrant students is important, particularly providing language support, absorbing the youngest children into the school system is the most effective way of integrating them.

Early childhood programmes at pre-schooling age can prepare migrant children to overcome barriers that would possibly face when starting school. These programmes are specially designed to improve school achievement by emphasizing on age appropriate educational experiences, and to promote children's health and nutrition as well as their social and emotional development (Schofield 2006, 99). Such programmes might focus on different areas of support such as developing linguistic skills, or learning about the new culture and habits, while other help to advance psychosocial support for children (NESSE, 2008:59).

**“Migrant families and low-income families should be encouraged and enabled to take part in early childhood education development and language learning programmes.”**

Free pre-school programmes can alleviate disadvantages and enhance linkages with the host country's native population, since they allow migrant/refugee children to interact with the local community, learn the language of the host country and acquire social competences. In addition, interaction with native-born children can positively impact on integration in the host societies,

thus develop migrant children psycho-social well-being and self-esteem. Recent studies have found that students who had previously participated in early childhood programmes attained higher scores comparing to students who had not (

Moreover, free pre-school programmes can alleviate disadvantages and increase equity, as they allow children with a migrant/refugee background to interact with the local community, learn the host country language and acquire important social competencies in structured settings. Based on PISA statistics, migrant/refugee students who had participated in early childhood education attained higher scores compared to their peers who had not attended such programmes by an amount that corresponded to more than one year of school.

“Samenspel is a centre based programme that was developed in the Netherlands for migrant children and their mothers. Courses take place in the kindergarten rooms, but not within the regular kindergarten time activities. Children are supported to improve both the language of the immigration country and of the migrant family. Samenspel is directed towards mothers and children of around three years old who often live in isolation. They are invited to group meetings of mothers and their children of the same ethnicity with up to 16 persons. Two educators, one with a migration background from the same country as the participants, work with the group which meets weekly for three to four hours. Language learning is done in a Education and the Integration of Migrant Children 62 playful way in these meetings, both for children and mothers. The mothers receive learning and playing resources which they can use and practise with at home and are instructed in how they can exercise and play with their children (Kühn 2003)”.

## WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO?

- Facilitate access to early childhood educational programmes for young migrant children to encourage entry and integration at the youngest possible age.
- Design programmes at school level to the needs of pre-school migrant children, particularly by offering linguistically related activities.
- Inform migrant parents to raise awareness about the available learning possibilities for their children and how they can enroll their children in these programmes.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of these educational programmes. The quality of these programmes should be identified by measuring whether children’s individual needs have been met.
- Integrate language and subject learning from the early pre-school and primary school years. Integrating migrant children into mainstream education early in the school is associated with better education achievements.

## Tailor-made educational programmes

### Peer-to-peer and group mentoring

Individual and group mentoring can help migrant students to improve school performance and overcome different socio-cultural barriers. Mentoring can exist in many forms such as help with homework assignments, completion of exercises and preparations for tests, as well as participation in artistic activities that can help them to develop their linguistic, communication and social skills. Mentoring can be held by organisations, NGOs, private individuals, social workers etc

An interesting variation of the ethnic mentoring idea has been developed by the Mercator Foundation in Germany. The present project “Förderunterricht für Kinder und Jugendliche mit Migrationshintergrund” (Educational Support for Children and Youth with a Migration Background) does not only aim at the participating migrant participants, but also at the mentors. The mentors are students in teacher training and many of them have a migration background. They are supposed to gain experience in teaching migrant children and thus be better prepared for their future role as teachers who will have to work with a student population that increasingly has a migration background. The European Forum for Migration Studies ([www.efms.de](http://www.efms.de)) is evaluating the project with a control group design.

Source: NESSE Network @ European Commission (2008)

### Extracurricular and artistic activities

Extra-curricular activities, including arts and drama projects, are important in involving migrant pupils in the wider life of the school and forming new friendships and broader educational and social interests. Since the arts is recognized as a universal language, migrant children can benefit through multiple ways by involving in different activities, learning new skills and gaining confidence, while native-born children can become aware of their peers (Manzoni & Rolfe, 2019:10).

### Intercultural education

Intercultural education centres on the inclusion of ‘perspectives, examples and information from a variety of cultures and groups’ in the curriculum and teaching materials (Nusche 2009:30).

**SECTION 3**

**TEACHING IN MULTICULTURAL CLASSES:  
PREPARING FOR DIVERSITY & UNIQUENESS**

## On-going teacher training

Teaching in a multicultural context requires special skills. A large number of teachers on the field do not hold the required skills due to the fact that are not possibly acquired through formal education. Often teachers reported that they have acquired skills 'on the job. Those skills include supporting migrant children in the first steps into a new education environment, bringing students from different backgrounds together, connecting with the parents. Often teachers need to manage classes in other language than their native or provide classes in pupils that they do not understand neither the national language nor English. Continuous Professional Development is a necessary step to be able to overcome those barriers. Cooperating with cultural mediators, interpreters and class assistant is important. Schools can promote diversity and cultural understanding.

### Measures on how to integrate migrant children at schools

Schools frequently take steps to assist migrant students and parents with enrolment, settling in and accessing information about future choices within the school system. These measures extend from help with administrative formalities to supporting the psychosocial welfare of the child in her/his new environment. They will often focus on improving the quality of information between home and school, particularly by facilitating the use of languages other than that normally used in the school.

#### ⇒ **Written information about the school system**

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In many European countries published information about the school system in different foreign languages in the form of brochures, is very useful in describing the rights and obligations of children and parents in relation to pre-school and primary education. Providing online information about the educational opportunities for migrant children and their families is also very beneficial and can function in school level with the help of volunteer translators and NGOs (Eurydice, 2018:38).

### ⇒ **Provision of interpreters**

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The provision of interpreter under official setting is rather rare in Europe due to high costs involved, but this measure is used to cover situations in which school/home communication takes place usually in parent-teacher meetings (Eurydice,2018:39).

### ⇒ **Availability of additional resource persons/councils**

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In countries where there is large concentration of migrant children and where asylum seekers are accommodated in residence centres, social workers and relevant staff cooperate with schools, NGOs and other organisations responsible for the education of those children. In most of the cases, social workers cooperate to solve all school issues, inform parents about the school system, educational opportunities and student's achievement.

### ⇒ **Provision of linguistic support**

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Measures to provide linguistic support to students are basically divided into merge of students within the existing school system or providing extra-curricula support outside school hours. Linguistic immersion involves students to be exposed directly to the target language and receive intensive tuition, either individually or in group sessions. Those measures are supported either within school hours or in after-school hours (afternoon sessions).

### ⇒ **Provision of psycho-social support**

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In order to respond to the social and emotional needs of migrant children, often facing post-traumatic effects, the provision of specific psychological and social support is important. It is recommended that teachers or schools contact psycho-social support staff like psychologists, social workers, counsellors on demand, in order to help identify students' needs and develop individual support programmes.

## The contribution of the Arts for the integration of migrant children

Beyond the reasons that force people to immigrate either due to financial hardship or trying to escape war and difficult socio-economic situations, relationships in the host societies is a result of social and cultural networks and interactions. Integration is a difficult situation that precedes a slow and often hard process. In this attempt, the arts have a substantial role and has yielded

results in integration and building social and cultural interconnections. The impact of the arts has widespread benefits in education, creating social understanding, mutual acceptance and improvement in refugee's skills and confidence.

**“Article 27 of the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) declares that ‘Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits’”.**

## The contribution of ArtsTogether project for inclusive pedagogical approaches

The project ArtsTogether was built upon the notion that learning through the arts is an effective way for integration of migrant children and their families. Its different activities emphasize on creative engagement across the school community which will stimulate children's creative thinking and support their cognitive and affective development. Interdisciplinary active learning experiences foster collaborative working practices which function as inclusive methods of migrant children into the school community and wider new cultural context. ArtsTogether involves the meaningful exploration of cultural and creative expressive arts activities across a wide spectrum of age and ability. This inclusive and experiential approach values every child's agency and interests (Craft *et al.* 2014) and supports diverse learning needs. The pedagogical approach of ArtsTogether engages participants in creative, intercultural and linguistic learning across a wider spectrum of arts such as visual, performing and expressive arts.

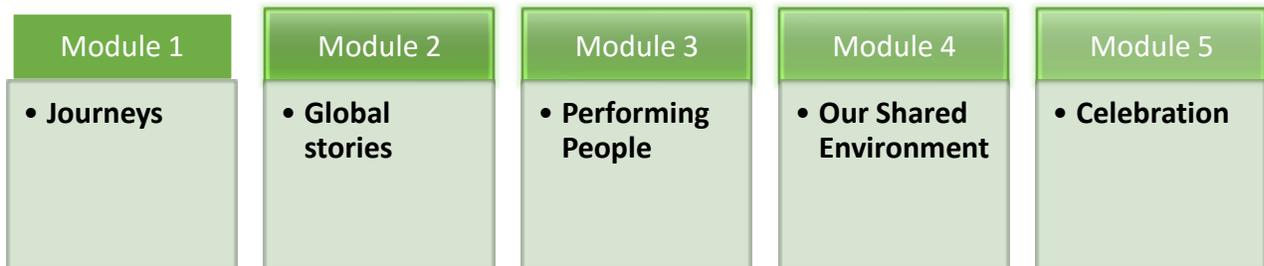
Artistic experiences are an effective way of children to learn through exploring, experimenting and creating without necessarily make use of languages. Creating through an imaginary world and transformation of materials gives children an alternative voice and an opportunity to express themselves and engage in a collective environment together with other children and in environment where they can communicate their ideas with adults. This learning context is part of Montessori educational approach which allows children to

develop 'a degree of choice within a structured environment, to build a climate of order, and to cultivate independence and self-assurance in performing skills' (Montessori 2004:17). In this context ArtsTogether is an innovative project that allows creative and artistic experiences to function inclusively to migrant children to build their cultural identity, understanding and respect to the new world, since it helps to develop individual learning in a community context, and bridge the gap between their culture of origin and the host society. Additionally, it supports new pedagogical approaches for teachers and educators, using an innovative learning method which goes beyond classical teaching, helping to overcome any linguistic barriers and building on the importance of diversity within the class.

ArtsTogether curriculum is based on a variety of artistic activities through drama, painting, music, dance and story-telling, which focusing on verbal engagement and collaborative relationship engaging social and cultural empowerment and raising awareness about new cultures and the positive projection of diversity. Children have the opportunity to reflect their own identities and share their cultural experiences with their peers and teachers within the class as well as learning through universal themes such as seasonal celebrations, the journeys of animals, the image of self and others, the environments we inhabit. Educators on the other side, have the opportunity to organise their classroom, reflect on the weaknesses and strengths of their pupils and create collaborative environments by implementing different artistic activities that can be found in the ArtsTogether curricula and best practices. ArtsTogether project's creative and inclusive pedagogical approaches promote the development of a transformative educational movement within a global context.

## ArtsTogether Curriculum

ArtsTogether Curriculum is based on 5 Modules with the overall theme 'Our Stories, Our Communities'.



## Our stories, Our Communities

### Journeys

Through time, human beings and other animals have travelled across the planet seeking new environments and horizons. We journey in search of opportunities to thrive. This often means seeking safe and hospitable places in which we can express our individual beliefs, attitudes and values. Through our journeys we encounter other cultures, making contacts and connections that can enrich our lives and lead to extraordinary creativity.

Some wonderful examples of the ways in which migration can inspire artistic expression can be found in galleries and museums across the world. This module will explore our shared global movements, investigating the points of intersection and the cultural sparks we generate across time and place.

## Global Stories

Every culture has its own story-telling heritage, yet key elements of these traditions are often shared, with universal themes and narrative structures resonating across time and place. The module will explore a selection of global story themes, touching on their shared elements and investigating the ways they are described and presented within cultural traditions using visual forms and performance techniques such as puppetry and drama to communicate ideas and responses. Participants are supported in exploring their personal and cultural journeys through visual storytelling to share cultural experiences to connect us across time and place.

UNESCO (2017) advocates sharing traditional stories to raise awareness of specific geographical, cultural, religious and economic aspects of different communities and highlights the potential of arts-based learning activities in helping migrant children to bridge the gap between their culture of origin and the host society. Module 2 provides support for exploration of familiar and new narratives, encouraging participants and their families to share experiences across their wider communities. Learning activities encourage participants to reflect on their own specific cultural contexts and to share these as well as to promote curiosity about the cultural contexts of others.

## Performing People

As global citizens we draw influence and inspiration across a range of sources and elements, our identities reflect the impact of the heterogeneous nature of life; Module 3 *Performing People* engages with our capacity to construct and express our identity. Through shared stories and experiences across our diverse communities and networks, we learn about the world and our place within it in relation to social, cultural, political, religious and spiritual ideas, beliefs, and values.

While cultural synthesis is a key characteristic of identity within 21<sup>st</sup> century living, transition and change have always been important factors in the development of human societies. Judith Butler (2015) uses the term 'performativity' to describe the capacity to generate and create identity through a range of signifiers. Amongst these is the construction of appearance and our capacity to perform aspects of social and cultural identity through body ornamentation, gender presentation, clothing, style, and drama, communicating cues about who we are.

## Our Shared Environment

Within our urban and wild places, humans and other species share an interconnecting environment. The module will explore contemporary concerns and issues through a range of expressive media both visual and performing arts. It will generate a range of responses at all levels, evoking a sense of place which touches on the personal, communitarian and universal.

Through our encounters with different cultures, we can make creative and collaborative connections with notions of difference, diversity and inclusion. This module is centred on the notion that human beings build their sense of self and relationships with others through the different environments they inhabit and in relation to the wider issues of global migration. Participants can explore creative experiences that highlight an inclusive approach to cultural identity and sense of place.

## Celebration

People, across different times and places, celebrate and commemorate their lives, heritage, experiences, beliefs and values through celebrations and festivals based around the seasons; cultural and religious; national, regional and family traditions. UNESCO advocates sharing traditional food, costumes, music, and dancing, to raise awareness of specific geographical, cultural, religious and economic aspects of different communities (UNESCO, 2017).

Module 5 focuses on exploration of the meaning and practice of seasonal celebrations and festivities across a range of perspectives, providing opportunities for participants to share their own cultural experiences, as well as gaining a wider understanding of elements of global, seasonal commemorations within diverse settings and contexts. Module 5 provides support for exploration and dissemination of familiar and new celebratory opportunities, encouraging participants and their families to join in and generate seasonal events and festivities, sharing traditions of food, costume, music and performance across their wider communities.

## How educators can use ArtsTogether curriculum

The Curriculum is designed for flexibility of use and access - participants can engage with the whole *ArtsTogether Curriculum*, working through the Modules sequentially, or can work with an individual Module's themes and activities. Each Module incorporates 3 Learning Activity Plans providing a range of levelled activities, which are supported through accompanying PowerPoint Presentations and other digital resources.

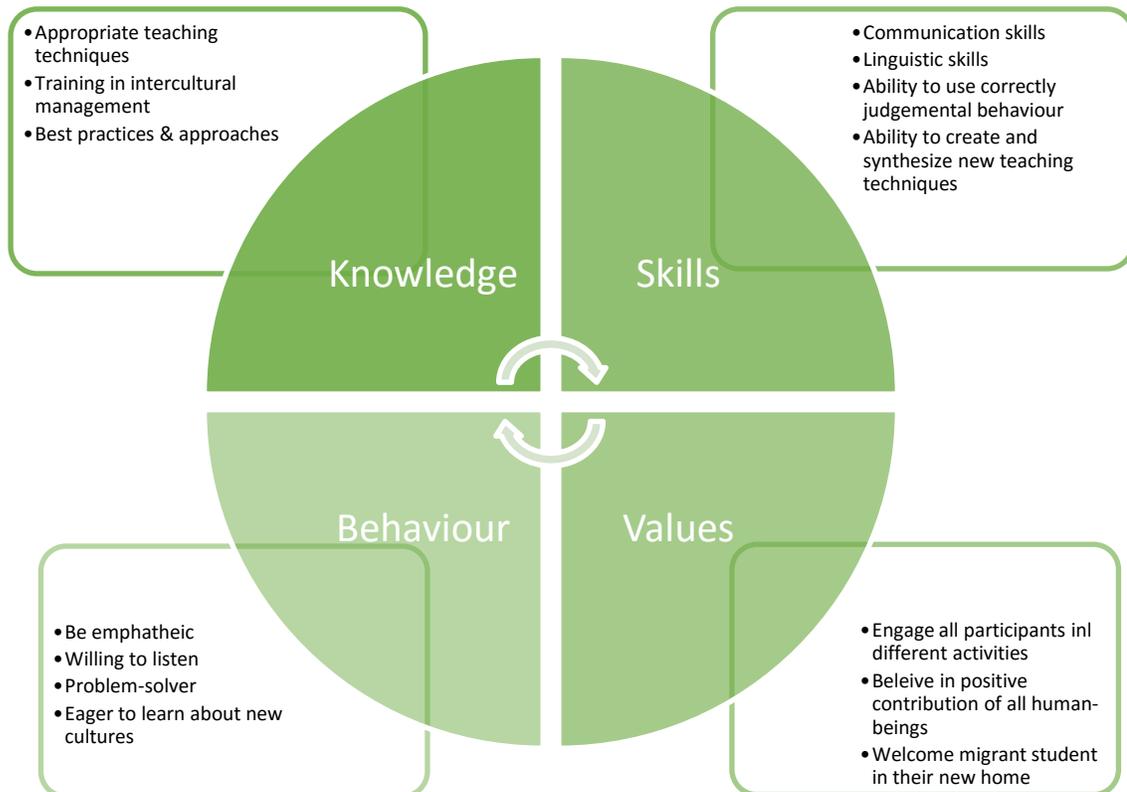
*ArtsTogether Curriculum's* 5 Modules explore the theme of shared stories and communities through integrated expressive arts engagement, presenting visual, oral, written and performance arts experiences, differentiated at 3 levels:

- Modules incorporate 3 Learning Activity Plans, differentiated at 3 Levels, suitable for adaptation within age-specific phases or in intergenerational contexts (15 Learning Activity Plans in total).
- Each Learning Activity Plan provides an interpretation of an aspect of the Module's core theme, engaging participants with introductory to more advanced knowledge and skills in creative, intercultural and linguistic learning, across the spectrum of expressive visual and performance arts.
- Each Learning Activity Plan is supported by a PowerPoint Presentation, and additional electronic resources, literature, and weblinks (15 Learning Activity PowerPoint Presentations in total).
- Best Practice projects and links support the Modules' key themes and the individual Learning Activity Plans.

## Accessing your own teaching competences

Teachers or facilitators who plan to implement ArtsTogether Curriculum activities should first assess their own knowledge on working with migrant children and have the appropriate skills as well as behaviour in contributing positively.

Teachers who plan to implement teaching methods needs to have specialized knowledge, skills, values, behaviour which is essential when teach in diverse classes. Familiarity with the local context, the background of students and their families, knowledge about best practices and programmes implemented elsewhere, good communication skills and ability to combining intercultural learning with activities with engage all participants.

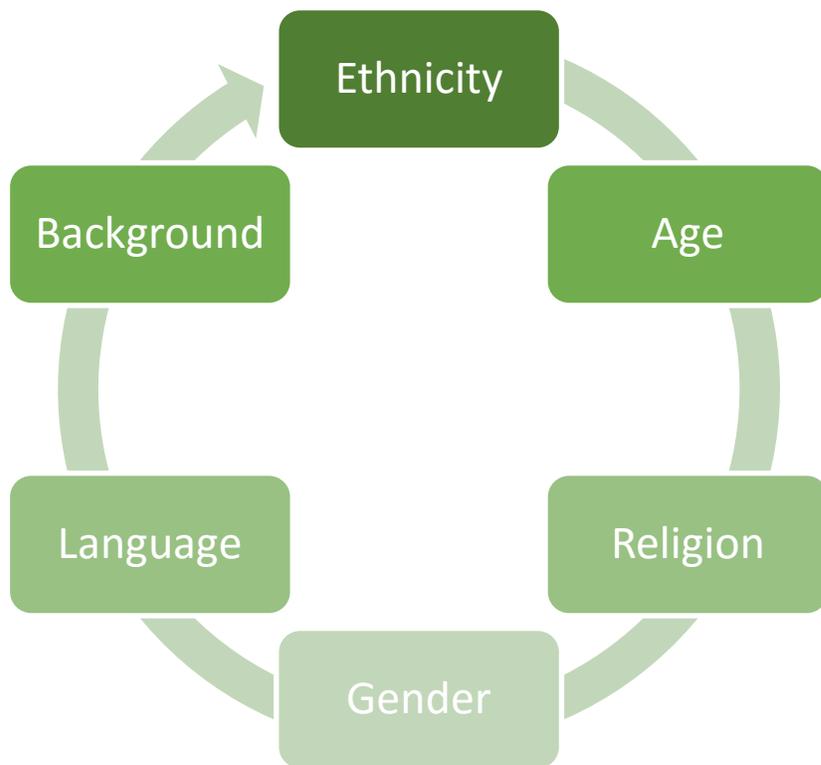


Source: 1: adapted by Cultural Orientation Resource Center, 2014: 20-25

## Planning intercultural activities

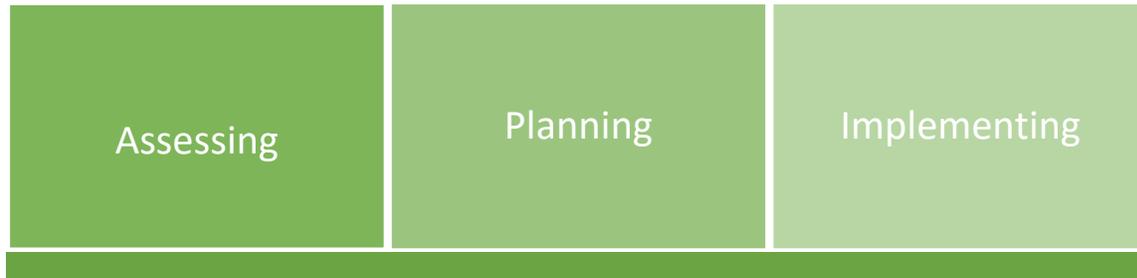
Before planning, there are several things that teachers and educators should be aware of. Teaching in a diverse classroom might mean that there are different cultural groups mixed together with their own characteristics. There are not one defined teaching methods since educators need to take into consideration the particularities of their groups and make a detailed assessment of the situation. Needs assessment includes self-orientation in the process of evaluating our own skills, knowledge and attitude towards diversity, multicultural environment and somebody's culture including our own.

Teachers need to be familiar with:



**“Needs assessment should reflect on the age, culture, linguistic skills, idiosyncrasies, ethical considerations of their student groups.”**

## Preparing to teach in diversity



Make a list of the following items to consider:

- ✓ Identify the age groups of your students
- ✓ Identify their language skills-common or different languages
- ✓ Think about religious differences/commonalities
- ✓ Consider gender specifications of the new culture
- ✓ Find information about the background of your pupils. Traumatized experiences should be considered when planning activities

### Organise your activities:

- ✓ Define the objectives of intercultural activities
- ✓ Design the content of the activities
- ✓ Engage all participants
- ✓ Integrating linguistic methods into sessions
- ✓ Determine any materials needed
- ✓ Define the need for interpretation
- ✓ Examine the involvement of facilitators and cultural mediators

## How to use the ArtsTogether curriculum material:

It is recommended that teachers and facilitators implementing the curriculum materials study at all Levels within the Learning Activity Plans when selecting materials suitable for their participant groups. Levels are indicative and activities should be regarded as flexible and suitable for adaptation across age-bands:

**Learning Activity Level 1:** entry level capacity for language development, creative, and intercultural development (equivalent to average Nursery standard)

**Learning Activity Level 2:** mid-level capacity (equivalent to average Primary standard)

**Learning Activity Level 3:** advanced level capacity (equivalent to average Secondary standard)

Learning Activity Plans can be adapted for appropriate use with learners across a wide age-range, informed by their prior arts, language and intercultural experience and skills:

Learners can:

- engage in all levels of Module's Learning Activities
- engage with an appropriate level of Learning activity, selected by teachers and facilitators depending on linguistic, intercultural and academic abilities and needs

Modules and Learning Activity Plans connect around the core theme 'Our Stories, Our Communities' enabling synthesis of different Modules' elements across the *ArtsTogether Curriculum*. Teachers and facilitators might combine different activities according to the needs and target of the training.

- Plan provides an interpretation of an aspect of the Module's core theme, engaging participants with introductory to more advanced knowledge and skills in creative, intercultural and linguistic learning, across the spectrum of expressive visual and performance arts.
- Each Learning Activity Plan is supported by a PowerPoint Presentation, and additional electronic resources, literature, and weblinks (15 Learning Activity PowerPoint Presentations in total).

- Best Practice projects and links support the Modules' key themes and the individual Learning Activity Plans.

## Recommendations for teachers

The inability to communicate with migrant/refugee children poses serious challenges for teachers. As interpreters and translators are usually unavailable, teachers often feel overwhelmed by their responsibility to teach migrant children while not neglecting the other children in their class. Moreover, in addition to lack of a common language, another major problem is that refugee children generally have little or no prior school experience. Some of them do not even know how to handle books or hold crayons.

In order to help establish communication with newly arrived refugee children the following activities for early childhood teachers are recommended:

- Use material such as drawings and photos to help children recognize and express basic emotions (e.g. happy, sad, anxious, surprised, and angry) and develop empathy towards their manifestation in others. Ask students to mimic these emotions and to tell their native language's words reserved for these emotions to foster communication with their peers and teachers (UNHCR, 2017). Some kind of introduction of refugee children mother tongue language in the initial courses could facilitate transition to instruction in a new language (Save the Children 2018, 21).
- Use basic sign language symbols and artistic material to teach children core values such as peace, friendship, love and care for others.
- Keep at all times a positive and reassuring attitude and a corresponding body language in all interactions with refugee children. Try to gain their trust and be prepared to listen to them expressing their emotions and their fears.
- Create a sense of community, explain cultural similarity and diversity, and help students celebrate diversity as a richness in our world. A starting point maybe to teach children about different ways of greeting each other in different countries/cultures. Encourage children to explain in class some of the games they practiced in their homelands and give them the opportunity to play these games with their peers. Introduce children to music and art of different countries/cultures.

- Stimulate the empathy of native children about the causes of refugee flows and the hardships facing people fleeing their country out of fear of persecution. Ask children to use art (e.g. to make a drawing) in which they describe how they could help a person, facing such a situation (UNHCR, 2017).
- Articulate the challenges of teaching and learning in multicultural environments in and out of school.

To comprehend the necessity of activities promoting tolerance of diversity, teachers should be constantly reminded that migrant children have in several contexts faced prejudices and have often been victims of harassment, bullying and policies of discrimination, resulting in large numbers of dropouts from school (Knefel, 2015).

Artistic expression is a non-verbal language that can provide young children with the means to engage, build identity, and tell their stories, bypassing the deficit position because of language. Investing in teachers' arts education and training is important. Many teachers avoid intervention when it comes to art education. There are two ways with which arts education can be promoted: first, the laissez-faire approach that is more suitable for children and, secondly, the guided approach (Wright 2003). The laissez-faire approach relies on children's 'natural' development, and from several respects protects their individuality, creativity, self-expression and self-esteem. The laissez-faire approach retains its attraction for many teachers. A more guided approach to learning in the arts calls for the direct teaching of skills and techniques and teacher and children working together as co-artists (Wright, 2003). The guided learning approach requires of the teacher a level of discipline, knowledge and expertise that in most schools is non-existent. One cheap way of addressing teachers' inexperience in the arts is to invite artists into the school, and to work alongside teachers and students.

Play and artistic expression workshops in the classroom can have a beneficial effect on the self-esteem of migrant and refugee children from various cultures and backgrounds. Several qualitative and quantitative studies have shown that the workshops help "in the reconstruction of a meaningful personal world while simultaneously strengthening the link of the child to the group" (Rousseau 2005, p. 180 ). They also "transform the teachers' perceptions of newcomers by placing an emphasis on their strength and their resilience, while not negating their vulnerabilities" (Rousseau 2005, p.).

Children rarely resist the temptation to draw, expressing feelings which can be less threatening than having to speak about them. Malchiodi (1997) has correctly argued that art encompasses many of the senses, whether they are visual, tactile or kinaesthetic, and even the rhythm could help reduce stress. The visual arts can provide refugee students with constructive platforms for developing their self-confidence and strengthening their life skills needed to integrate both in and out of school. The art room has proven to be “an especially effective place for immigrant and refugee students to exhibit an awareness of their new environment... and to confront disturbing issues and use problem-solving techniques through artmaking processes” (Brunick, 1999, p. 17).

Design after-school artistic expression activities which allow children to communicate feelings, experiences and their knowledge regarding certain concepts. A widely used technique is the ‘elementary creative workshop’ programme that “is made up of three types of activities and always combines verbal and nonverbal means of expression (drawing or painting a picture and telling or writing a story); during the activities the children alternate between working on their own and going back to their groups to listen or to present their work” (Rousseau et al 2004, p. 78). This activity reinforces the dialogue between children and their parents about positive aspects of their past and helps bridge the gap between home and school by symbolically introducing the family into the classroom.

Another interesting programme aimed at encouraging children to explore hope and how hope is enhanced by using collages, drawings, paintings, and photography. One component of the programme uses photography to engage the children (Yohani 2008, p. 315):

**“Each child was given a disposable camera with 24 exposures. They were instructed to take pictures of anything that described hope to them and made them hopeful”.**

Thus, the use of photography allowed children to explore hope in the various contexts of their lives.

At the high-school another programme that is also based on artistic expression is the ‘playback theater’, a type of improvisational theater aiming to achieve personal and social transformation. The goal of the theater programme is to “give young immigrants and refugees a chance to reappropriate and share group stories, to help them construct meaning and identity in their personal stories and establish a bridge between the past and the present” (Rousseau and Guzder 2008, p. 540).

Problematize the inaccuracies and omissions of traditional Western art education curricular models and the power structures which sustain these falsifications or injustices. Conventional art

methods—printmaking, collage, painting, etc.—that may seem common or even trivial by Western standards can take on new meaning or direction when working with refugee children, who are sometimes unfamiliar with traditional Western art-making materials.

Promote collaborative activities in artistic expression. Not only does collaboration build community among students, but it can also help develop the host country's language skills in a much lower risk situation than large group instruction. Several studies have documented the overall positive development of art workshops in the children's confidence and reflect their increasing skills in social interaction within the classroom.

Teachers can utilize children's literature to help non-refugee children learn about the experiences of forced migration. Such children's books can also help refugee children to identify with the pictures.

It is important to establish Positive Parent/Teacher Relationships – gradually overcoming the language barrier. Teachers should always remember that parents themselves are going through major transitions in adjusting to new living conditions. Home visits are valued by refugee families. It is very important to locate interpreters for families who could bridge the communication gap between the teacher and parents or guardians. In cases when direct communication is not possible because no interpreter is available, teachers should provide written communication, so the parents or guardians can find someone to assist in understanding the information about their child's progress. Teachers can also utilize drawings to communicate procedures to children and families.

Teachers should not focus primarily on the result of the process but on the process itself. Drawings and art works created through methodologies such as the ones developed by the ArtsToGether project are not to be judged based on their quality, as the main function is on enhancing engagement of both native and refugee children and create common spaces and experiences.

Teachers should realize that artistic activities can be utilized for advancing their main objective which is the linguistic development of refugee children. Hence, it is not time spent for only psychosocial development but time productively used with a dual purpose.

Teachers need to draw their attention to the differences between native and refugee children. Though art can be used for simplifying the transmission of messages and enhancing communication, it can also has adverse effects on refugee children when not used with caution. Stories or themes that can lead to recalling negative emotions and difficult situations, for example fleeing their home, can have negative results although it could be beneficial for native children that are unaware of the experiences of the refugee children.

Enhanced results can be reached when teaching is combined with community events. These are after-school events in which both children and parents are invited to, for example, present the art works of children. Such events can create opportunities for both teachers and parents/guardians but also for both native and foreign parents to interact with each other, thus building or strengthening relationships.

## Conclusion

The ArtsTogether guidelines have been developed to provide guidance to teachers and educators planning to teach within a diverse classroom. Since integration of migrant children is a reality in many European countries and needs special attention. Intercultural learning is an effective way to prepare students to interact with their peers from different cultural backgrounds. In combination with ArtsTogether curriculum and best practices report, guidelines provide all informational and practical tools that facilitate teacher's work in the classroom. The use of artistic activities and their pedagogical approach, provide the opportunity to combine learning activities for different age groups and learning needs and help students to overcome linguistic and intercultural barriers as well as better integrate in the school environment and in a new cultural context.

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