

EMBRACING MULTILINGUALISM IN SCHOOLS

A comparative country report for
reflection



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RISBO, NETHERLANDS;

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INTRODUCTION

Multilingualism and its importance have been recognized as relevant within the European context. The importance of language diversity and creating a supportive environment that respects and embraces linguistic diversity is an integral part of international policy documents advocating for inclusion, equity, and quality education for every child. Multilingualism and the importance of the preservation of linguistic diversity have been recognized in European policies as essential for creating a democratic culture and social cohesion through (1):

- recognizing that language is essential for understanding, assessing, and formulating the arguments and opinions that are essential to democracy;
- recognizing that quality language education plays a crucial role in developing the will and ability of individuals and societies to understand those whose backgrounds and views are different from their own;
- recognizing that multilingual and intercultural competencies contribute to equitable and inclusive education, educational success, participation in a democratic culture, and societal integration;
- enhancing language learning and supporting and promoting languages not taught in the curriculum, all of which underpins the culture of democracy that enables democratic institutions to function properly.

- recognizing that the digital environment provides an unprecedented means for people to express themselves using different languages and opens new opportunities;
- recognizing that multilingual and intercultural education also supports the educational and social inclusion of migrant and marginalized learners.

Moreover, when educational systems adopt approaches to teaching and learning that welcome and engage with linguistic and cultural diversity, they can more easily develop their own democratic culture, providing pupils and students with first-hand experience of democratic processes and supporting the democratic culture of society as a whole (2).

The brochure is a summary of a comparative country report created with the intention of encouraging teachers, school leaders as well as educational authorities, and policymakers to think about the forms and levels of support that multilingual children have in schools. Additionally, the brochure also provides different approaches to the education of multilingual children in four countries: Croatia, Estonia, Italy, and the Netherlands.

We invite you to rethink your practices and experiences with creating a supportive environment for multilingualism by answering reflective questions and/or discussing the findings with your colleagues.

Before you continue think about:

- National legislation addressing the education of newly arrived migrant students (NAMS) in your country and to what extent it promotes multilingualism and intercultural education;
- National legislation addressing the education of minority students whose home language is different from the language of schooling and to what extent it promotes multilingualism and intercultural education.



(1) Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for a democratic culture
(2) Explanatory Memorandum Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM AND SCHOOL TEACHERS



CROATIA

Description

Primary and lower secondary education (ISCED 1 and ISCED 2) is organised as a single structure system and delivered by the network of elementary schools ("osnovna škola").



ESTONIA

Primary education (ISCED levels 1 and 2) is the minimum compulsory general education, which is acquired in the basic school (põhikool) and which gives the right to continue studies at an upper secondary education level. Primary school includes grades 1-9. The successful completion of the curriculum and passing the final examinations are the conditions.

Level of teacher education

University level

University level

Primary school teachers education

Primary school teachers for grades 1 to 4 are educated in integrated 5-year university study programs that end with a master's degree and the teaching profession;

Primary school subject teachers for grades 5 to 8 and secondary school subject teachers are usually predominately educated in their subject with additional education in the field of pedagogical competencies.

Besides electives and the master thesis module, the main components of the initial teacher training (ITE) are:

- studies in general education;
- studies related to specific subject(s) and methodology;
- professional studies in educational sciences, psychology and didactics, including teaching practice.

In addition, besides educating class teachers, special programs exist in Estonia for those who are interested in becoming subject teachers. However, to receive a teaching profession one needs to continue studies at the master's level.



ITALY

The first cycle of education is compulsory and is made up of primary and lower secondary education.

Primary education (ISCED 1) (scuola primaria) starts at 6 years of age and lasts 5 years.

Lower secondary education (ISCED 2) (scuola secondaria di I grado) starts at 11 years of age and lasts 3 years.

Within the first cycle, students pass from primary to lower secondary education without exams. At the end of the first cycle of education, students sit for a final exam that, if successfully passed, allows to progress directly to the second cycle of education, being the first two years of the second cycle compulsory.

Description



NETHERLANDS

Children may go to primary school from 4 years of age. Children with learning difficulties can go to a special school for primary education. Since August 2014 schools have had a duty of care to offer all pupils an appropriate place. All primary school children in the Netherlands are taught several compulsory subjects. The law sets primary education attainment targets for each compulsory subject. The targets indicate what children should know and what they should be able to do by the end of primary school. The attainment targets only apply to compulsory subjects. These must be taught to all children. Schools decide how the subjects are taught, and choose their own teaching materials. After completing primary school, pupils move on to one of three types of secondary education: pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO), senior general secondary education (HAVO) or pre-university education (VWO).

Level of teacher education

University level

College level/university level

Primary school teachers education

Primary and secondary school teachers are educated according to educational level i.e. the age of the children they work with and teachers in Italy are highly qualified in their profession (trained at tertiary level) and initial education requires pedagogical education. Two main types of institutions for the initial education of primary and secondary school teachers are: the faculty of teacher education (former primary school teacher training college) where preschool teachers and primary school teachers are educated and educational specialization faculties where specialist teachers are educated.

Full-time teacher training course for primary school lasts 4 years, with specialization during the 3rd year. Specialization is possible by by the children's age groups, i.e. specialization for teaching younger children (age 4-8) or older children (age 8-12). In the final year, the students must complete a longer internship in a primary school. There is also a possibility for teachers to be educated at the university level. Additionally, since 2022, a two-year master's degree for teaching in primary school is offered at a few universities (a 3-year Bachelor's degree at the university level is required for entry).



TAKE NOTE THAT

- While in Croatia and Estonia one teacher is working on the classroom level, in Italy students have two teachers and a special training assistant if required. On the other hand, in the Netherlands students have a different class teacher for every year of primary education.
- In the Netherlands, children start with primary education at the age of 4 or 5, and in the other partner countries at the age of 6 or 7.
- In all compared countries, education is regulated at the national level through several legislation acts, and documents, except in the Netherlands where the government just provides a set of core objectives and the schools have a substantial amount of independence to set their own curriculum.
- All the compared countries have public schools, private schools, and religious schools. In addition to that the Netherlands also has private international schools, some of which are partly funded by the government.

Before you continue, think about:

- What are the possibilities for minority and/or migrant students in your country/region to maintain their home language?
- What are the possibilities for the professional development of teachers for working with migrant students?



**“IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE AS TEACHERS, BUT ALSO THE WHOLE COMMUNITY, POSITIVELY VALUE THE IDENTITY OF CHILDREN OF MIGRANTS AND MINORITIES, TO POSITIVELY VALUE THEIR LANGUAGE, CULTURE, RELIGION.”
(TEACHER, CROATIA)**



EDUCATION OF MIGRANT AND MINORITY STUDENTS AT PRIMARY LEVEL



CROATIA

Migrant students are involved in regular classes in primary school and no special curricula are developed for them, but they are/can be involved in additional classes in the official language.

Newly arrived migrant students have a right to 70 hours of additional classes in the Croatian language and this right is defined by a special legal regulation.

National minority students can enroll at schools where the language of schooling is Croatian and students of Croatian nationality can also enroll at schools where the language of schooling is some of the minority languages (eg. Italian, Czech, Hungarian, etc.).

Possibilities for minority and/or migrant students to maintain their home language

There are schools where the language of schooling is one of the national minority languages: Italian, Serbian, Hungarian and the Czech language.

The education of constitutive national minorities is carried out on the basis of three models:

- Model A - all classes are conducted in the language and script of the national minority, with compulsory learning of the Croatian language;
- Model B - there are bilingual classes offered in Croatian and the minority language;
- Model C - all classes are conducted in Croatian but an additional two to five school hours per week are provided for the learning or nurturing of the language and the culture of the national minority.

Teacher professional development for working with migrant students

By law, educational work in a school with instruction in the language and script of a national minority is performed by teachers from the national minority with command of the language of the national minority, or by teachers who are not members of the minority, but with competence in the language and script of the national minority. Schools and teachers can decide individually about the areas and specific types of activities regarding professional development they will attend. Various institutions and non-governmental organizations promote the teaching, encourage the development of awareness of minority issues etc. Additionally, the Faculty of Teacher Education, University in Zagreb offers a postgraduate study program related to second language learning.

ESTONIA



The education of migrants is regulated by the Basic School and Upper Secondary School Act.

Newly arrived migrant students are considered as students with a special educational need (SEN). Schools are obliged to assess their needs and develop an individual curriculum for them.

Migrant students are allowed to study Estonian based on the “Estonian as a second language” syllabus in the first six years after arriving in Estonia.

Possibilities for minority and/or migrant students to maintain their home language

The education of minority and migrant students is regulated in the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act where it is stated that the school is required to organize language and cultural teaching of the language if at least 10 students with the same native language/home language request it. However, there is no data on how much the opportunities afforded by law are actually used in schools.

The Russian minority can attend Russian-language schools that follow the same national curriculum as the Estonian language schools and learning Estonian as a foreign language is compulsory from the first grade.

Teacher professional development for working with migrant students

There are no national standard requirements for working with minority/migrant students. However, schools have a lot of professional autonomy and they could potentially set these regulations if they desire.

Current teacher training in Estonia is not consistent in terms of diversity issues and courses about teaching in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms make up only a small part of the degree studies. Although the University of Tartu offers special BA and MA programmes focusing on multicultural education, they provide intercultural competencies only for language teachers. However, there are different in-service training courses and activities (lectures, trainings, consulting, etc.) for improving the intercultural competencies of teachers. All of them are project-based and offered by third-sector initiatives and organisations (e.g., IOM Estonia, Estonian Institute of Human Rights, Estonia Refugee Council, Mondo).

THE NETHERLANDS



Most newly arrived migrants are included in special ISK (International Switch Classes) where they learn basic communication skills in Dutch before transitioning into regular classes. There is no special legislation on the education of migrant students.

The government provides funding for Dutch classes for a one- or two-year period for migrant students.

There is no special language program for children who speak a different language at home because they come from multilingual households or their parents are from former Dutch overseas territories, so they are excluded from language support.

<p>Possibilities for minority and/or migrant students to maintain their home language</p>	<p>The Netherlands does not offer home language instruction at school other than Frisian (in the province of Friesland). Home language initiatives outside schools are implemented through religious or private weekend schools. Language Friendly Schools (3) provide opportunities for students to use their home languages as part of the learning process.</p>
<p>Teacher professional development for working with migrant students</p>	<p>Education consultancies provide training and courses in several subjects related to multilingualism, the well-being of newly arrived migrants, learning Dutch, and didactic and pedagogical approaches for multilinguals. <u>LOWAN</u>, a platform for schools receiving newly arrived migrants, offers training and collects training opportunities from other consultancies.</p> <p>In the Netherlands, in-service degree programmes of 1 or 2 years, called post-HBO programmes, focus on teaching Dutch as a Second Language (NT2) to newly arrived migrants. There are no special provisions for teaching students belonging to recognized linguistic minorities, such as Frisian. There is little focus on using the home languages. The PABO teachers suggest that they want to do more with multilingualism, partly because multilingualism will soon be part of the required knowledge for PABO students, however, they say they lack time and knowledge (Masselink, 2020).</p>



WHEN IT COMES TO ASSESSING CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE. KNOWLEDGE IS ONE, BUT LANGUAGE- THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH LANGUAGE IS EXPRESSED - IS SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. THIS IS WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO. IF YOU LOOK AT WHAT ARE WE LEARNING AND WE CAN'T ACCESS IT OR WE CAN'T REACH IT THROUGH ENGLISH, WE CAN GET IT THROUGH OTHER LANGUAGES THAT ARE STRONGER. SO WE USE THAT LANGUAGE. BUT ALSO AT THE SAME TIME, THE TEACHERS NEED TO VALUE IT MORE. BECAUSE THE CHILDREN WHO ARE DOING IT THROUGH TWO LANGUAGES, THEY ARE WORKING TWICE AS MUCH. THEY SHOULD BE AWARDED FOR THAT. IT'S NOT THAT IT'S EASY FOR YOU, YOU'RE DOING IT IN YOUR HOME LANGUAGE. NO, YOU ARE DOING TWICE AS MUCH."

(TEACHER, NETHERLANDS)



(3) www.languagefriendlyschool.org

ITALY



Migrant students are involved in regular classes in primary school and no special curricula are developed for them, but they are/can be involved in additional classes in the official language.

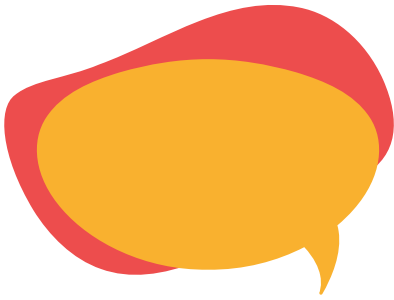
According to guidelines for the integration of foreign students that schools can but are not obliged to follow, students have the possibility to attend a language workshop in Italian for 8 to 10 hours for 3 or 4 months during the first year of schooling in Italy.

The French and German minority students in two regions of Italy can study their home languages at school. Students of other linguistic minorities don't have this possibility.

<p>Possibilities for minority and/or migrant students to maintain their home language</p>	<p>The Italian educational system does not provide the possibility for minority and/or migrant students to learn their home language at school, except for French and German minority students in two regions. Other linguistic minorities can study their home language only through private courses given by private associations and religious communities. A school can start a course on its own given school autonomy.</p>
<p>Teacher professional development for working with migrant students</p>	<p>Teachers, and their schools, can decide about the areas and specific types of activities regarding professional development they will attend.</p>



Although there is no legislation or other formal policy banning the use of a home language, in many countries teachers encourage children not to use it believing that the national language will be learnt faster that way. Even in informal situations, only speaking of the national language is encouraged. However, there is the awareness that if children are not allowed to speak their home language, they are given the message that that language is 'not good' and in that way, are at risk of developing a negative language identity.



Explorative questions

- How does the educational system affect the self-identity of students unfamiliar with the language of schooling?
- How do you support students whose home language is different to the language of schooling?
- Are there any materials for working in a multilingual setting available for you? What kind of support would you need to develop new or adjust existing materials to this context?
- How do you support parents with a home language different to the language of schooling?
- Is there something you would like to change in your practice in relation to the children with home a language different to the language of schooling?



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING MULTILINGUAL AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION CULTURE (3)



CIAO!



HELLO!



SALAM!

- Encourage school leadership (principals, directors, administrators, etc.) to implement whole-school policies and practices that welcome and valorize linguistic and cultural diversity, promote language learning and the development of multilingual repertoires, encourage intercultural learning, and prepare all learners to participate in a democratic culture.
- Request institutions responsible for the initial and continuous education of teachers to focus on pedagogies that foster inclusive multilingual and intercultural education and enable student teachers and teachers to implement them across the curriculum.
- Encourage universities and other competent institutions and agencies to engage in research that contributes to the international understanding of multilingualism and intercultural dialogue at all educational levels and in all social domains.
- Encourage agencies, organizations and networks that promote non-formal and lifelong learning to foster multilingualism and intercultural dialogue and recognize their benefits for education and a democratic culture.
- Encourage school inspectors and agencies responsible for quality assurance and quality improvement to foster and support multilingual and intercultural education in all educational sectors and at all levels.
- Support collaboration between educational and cultural institutions, civil society and businesses to promote multilingual and intercultural learning for a democratic culture.
- Support the efforts of relevant bodies to encourage public debate about languages and cultures, language learning and multilingualism, and their importance for personal and professional development, quality education, societal integration and access to human rights and democracy.

CIAO

CONCEPTS AND TERMS

In order to keep this document accessible and easy to read, through the document we have used the term "multilingualism" referring to both the individuals and the environment.

However, in different literacy and policy documents, we can find different terms important for understanding the process of embracing multilingualism in schools. For example 'The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages' differentiates terms and concepts in the following way:

PLURILINGUALISM

The "potential and/or actual ability to use several languages to varying levels of proficiency and for different purposes" (Guide for the Development of Language Education Policies in Europe, p. 10). Plurilingualism is a "communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contribute and in which languages interrelate and interact". Plurilingualism develops when an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether learnt at school or college, or by direct experience)".

MULTILINGUALISM

The presence of two or more languages in a community or society.

LANGUAGE/S OF SCHOOLING

The dominant language/s of learning and teaching, extra-curricular activities and institutional management. It embraces both language as a subject in its own right (literacy, literature) and language in other subjects (for example, history, maths, science). In most contexts, the language of schooling is a national or official regional language. Sign languages may be used in the education of students with impaired hearing.



HOME LANGUAGE/S

The language/s of domestic communication and the language/s acquired in early childhood, including sign languages. The term is used to refer to any and all languages used in a home context and does not imply a value judgment.

ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

An umbrella term that refers to any language an individual learns in addition to their home language/s. By focusing on the individual's developing plurilingual repertoire rather than specific languages, the term avoids the confusion that can arise, for example, by labelling as "foreign" a language that is foreign to the majority but the home language of a minority of learners.

PLURILINGUAL AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

A holistic concept that has an impact on all areas of education policy and practice. Setting out to foster the development of integrated linguistic repertoires in which languages interrelate and interact, it takes explicit account of and seeks to bring into interaction with one another:

- other languages and cultures that learners bring with them, including sign, minority and migrant languages and cultures;
- other language/s of schooling, which vary in genre and terminology according to the different subjects taught and differ in significant ways from the language of informal everyday communication;
- regional, minority and other languages and cultures that are part of the curriculum;
- foreign languages (modern and classical);
- other languages and cultures that are not present in school and not part of the official curriculum.

RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS, GUIDELINES, FRAMEWORKS AND DOCUMENTS

Convention on the Rights of the Child;

European Social Charter (ETS No. 163);

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and in particular SDG 4;

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157)

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ETS No. 148)

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (FREPA)

From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education: Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe

Croatia

Current state in the education area on the language and script of the national minority in the Republic Croatia in the 2018/2019 school year

Education of national minorities and interethnic attitudes in Croatia, current state, challenges, perspectives, 2019

The Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities - Croatia, 2002

Ordinance on teaching assistant and communication mediators

Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities

National Roma inclusion strategy 2013-2020 / NRIS

Action plan for the implementation of NRIS

Strategy for combating poverty and social exclusion in the Republic of Croatia (2014 - 2020)

Education in language and script national minorities Act

Ordinance on conducting preparatory and supplementary classes for students who do not know or do not know enough Croatian language and classes in the mother tongue and culture of the country of origin of students

Estonia

Statistics Estonia (2020). HT12: Stationary general education.

Statistics Estonia (2020). HT16: Share of pupils in stationary general education studying in Estonian by county.

Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act (2010)

Ministry of Education and Research (2019). Põgenike perede laste haridus [Education for refugees' families]

National Curriculum for Basic Schools

The Education and Youth Board

Rajaleidja is a network of educational counselling centres

Italy

Ministry of Education / Elementary education, description

Document / guidelines for the reception and integration of foreign students

Ministry of Education

The Netherlands

The Dutch Government

Primary Education Act

Teacher training in the Netherlands

Degree program for teaching Dutch as L2 is based on the Competence Profile

LOWAN, a platform for schools receiving newly arrived migrants, offers training and collects training opportunities from other consultancies