



# Conference on 'Migration and Education'

Larnaca, 15 – 17 October 2012.

## First announcement

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### 1 Central question

#### **Migration and Education**

European countries have moved away from the seemingly culturally homogeneous place they may have considered themselves to be, mainly due to migration. Thus multicultural communities are growing at a rapid pace with many migrants intending to stay for the long term in the host countries. These demographic changes bring out the need and challenge to deal effectively with students from diverse backgrounds and turn diversity into educational success by both responding to the knowledge-based global economy and welcoming the multicultural reality. In particular, there is a need to consider actions that value diversity, confront prejudice and stereotypes and lift any kind of barriers -social, economic, political, ethnic, linguistic etc- to student learning and development. Data from PISA studies (OECD 2010, 2006, 2004) indicate that the educational challenges posed by family background, socio-economic context, and migration status are the main determinants of student performance and thus school education must seek to overcome all inequalities and use the benefits that diversity brings to schools and classrooms.

In terms of school performance, PISA data (OECD 2010, 2006, 2004) show that first-generation students often have difficulty because of the challenges of immigration – learning a new language, adjusting to the culture and social structure of the host country, and adjusting to an unfamiliar school system. On average, across all

participating countries, native students perform better than both first and second-generation immigrants and in a number of countries second-generation students do not perform as well as their “native” peers even though they were also born and raised in the “host” country. However in a number of countries immigrant students perform as well as their native born peers (*e.g.* Australia, Canada and New Zealand). These data are the key elements in the discussing how to improve learning outcomes of migrant students through turning educational systems into more effective and more equitable institutions.

Building on the issues discussed by EUNEC at the seminar held in Amsterdam in May 2012, excellence and equity should be regarded as the two sides of the same coin, since offering equal opportunities to *all* students is critical in the process of building the pedagogical context in which all children are ambitious and are challenged to learn and develop, discover their talents and achieve high standards of the learning outcomes. Research data from OECD shows that more than half a grade level separates the performance of immigrant students who do from that of those who do not speak the language of instruction at home. In other words immigrant students face a significant disadvantage in school. These large differences in performance suggest that students have insufficient opportunities for support (to learn the language of instruction, get acquainted to school conditions etc) and thus participate on equal terms in the educational process. If immigrants do not receive adequate support, their integration in terms of school achievement, educational attainment, and future success in the labor market seems to be hampered.

Given the diversity of the population of “immigrant students” in any country context, there is also a need to disaggregate the data so that different patterns and performance of subgroups within the broader population can be perceived and appropriately targeted by policy and educational interventions. Another point of attention is the fact that some countries not only face incoming migration, but also have to deal with outgoing migration.

In this context, ***the aim of the conference*** is to investigate the way in which education (policy/system level and school level) can become more effective and equitable so that students of migrant origin succeed in school, are challenged to learn and develop all their talents and competences. The conference is structured in such a way that both levels of actions related to migration are examined: the first day of the conference focuses on the policy/system level, whereas the second day focuses on the school level. In order to enrich the discussions that will take place during the conference, all EUNEC members have been asked to prepare answers to two general questions.

- What are, in your country, the biggest challenges for migration and education?
- What are, in your country, the policy concepts related to migration? In other words: in which context is migration placed from the policy point of view? Does it have to do with inclusive policies, with special needs education, with social cohesion policies,...

In order to prepare an answer to those questions, the working group suggests to use the MIPEX index ([www.mipex.eu](http://www.mipex.eu)). MIPEX is an interactive tool and reference guide to assess, compare and improve integration policy. MIPEX measures integration policies in all European Union Member States plus Norway, Switzerland, Canada and the USA up to 31 May 2010.

### **Central themes during the conference**

Based on the objective stated above two main themes -migration and education- are in focus at the conference:

- *Migrant integration policies in Europe*

The first theme would focus on migrant integration policies in Europe since education is taking place in the societal context and cannot be separately discussed. Moreover, presentations of national good practices on integration policies as well as on outgoing migration will create the opportunity for exchanging views and opinions on the topic.

- *Educational models for the integration of migrants in Europe*

The second theme would be educational models. While focusing on educational policies an overview of the diverse pedagogic answers and the underlying paradigms to strengthen the education careers and pathways for youngsters with a migrant background during the past 20 years will be the starting point. The presentation of different school models and identifications of policies based on regional (e.g. educational priority zones, inclusive school models), social or economic indicators, an inclusive school model will create the background for critical reflection of policies in relation to diverse migrant populations and societal context.

The exploration of different models and the role of the “significant others” in educational systems will give the opportunity for further investigation of specific aspects of education for migrants.

A first level is the role of the school unit. The school unit as an organization and its environment is related to the performance of migrant students. Migrant students' results vary systematically between schools within the same education system (OECD, 2010). In this sense, the conference will focus and reflect on the different aspects of school structure, organization and management styles that can influence the effectiveness of the teachers' and students' interaction and work.

In this context the issue of host country language instruction as part of the educational policy for migrants can be raised. For example, the PISA study results (OECD 2010, 2006, 2004) in relation to students of migrant origin confirm the importance of learning the language of instruction for academic success. Differences in academic performance suggest that students with migrant background had insufficient opportunities to learn the language of instruction and thus adequate support for learning the language would improve their integration in terms of school achievement, educational attainment and future success in the labor market (Christensen and Stanat, 2007). These conclusions can initiate a debate on the effectiveness of measures taken in different countries regarding the linguistic integration of immigrant students as well as on their partial character (NESSE, 2008, Christensen and Stanat, 2007, Gotovos, 2007, Merkens, 2007).

A second lever is the role of the teacher. The professional domains required in order to facilitate migrant pupils' personal development and learning, the preparation of teachers to fulfill all their roles and to carry out their responsibilities depend greatly on their training and professional development. The adequate development of teachers' intercultural competence cannot be achieved exclusively through policies or materials. Teachers' awareness and understanding of the main issues in intercultural communication, is very important for the students' progress. A key recommendation from the PISA studies was that schools should do better in building on the emotive capital of immigrant students as a driving source for enhancing their learning. One way in which they can do this is to use the strength and flexibility of their teachers – but of course for this to be effective teachers must receive appropriate support and training. Besides presentations of methodological aspects and approaches related to teaching in heterogeneous multicultural classrooms through instruction session or other school activities as a basis for discussion, interaction and critical reflection on every day practices would add on the core themes of the conference

A visit to a local school of educational priority zone will give the participants the opportunity to meet and interact with head teachers, teachers and pupils and will observe the work in the school unit and classroom. A discussion will follow on issues about this specific school model in relation to the students' achievement. The idea of

affirmative action as the cornerstone to develop activities that enable students, the school, families and the community to participate and succeed in the learning process will be reflected on. This will be related to the shift from folklore approaches of culture and identity to their impact on school achievement. Apart from caring for the fulfillment and development of multiple identities, it is the obligation for education to reject any kind of exclusion and combat inequality in educational achievements via the routes of methodology and material, strategies and practice.

## References

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## 2 Programme

*Sunday 14 October 2012*

**18.00: EUNEC Executive Committee meeting (for Executive Committee members only)**

*Monday 15 October: Focus on “Migration and education at policy level”*

<b>9.00 – 9.30</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
<b>9.30 – 10.30</b>	<b>Overview of Migration and integration policies in Europe</b>  <i>Possible speaker: Jan Niessen (Director of the Migration Policy Group) (to be confirmed)</i>  <i>(40 minutes presentation and 20 minutes discussion)</i>
<b>10.30 - 11.00</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>11.00 – 12.30</b>	<b>Presentation of examples of good practice of integration policy for migrants from: Portugal, Netherlands, Quebec</b>  <i>(For each country presentation 30 minutes: 20 minutes for presentation and 10 minutes for discussion)</i>
<b>12.30-14.00</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>
<b>14.00 – 15.30</b>	<b>Diverse pedagogic answers and the underlying paradigms to strengthen the education careers and pathways for youngsters with a migrant background during the past 20 years’, by Piet Van Avermaet – University Ghent</b>  <i>(50 minutes presentation and 40 minutes Discussion)</i>
<b>15.30 – 16.30</b>	<b>The impact of school organization and environment on the performance of migrant students: Raising question from Cyprus</b>  <i>Possible speaker from Cyprus Ministry</i>  <i>(40 minutes presentation and 20 minutes Discussion)</i>

<b>18.00</b>	<b>Social Programme: Visit to a traditional village and dinner</b>
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***Tuesday 16 October 2012: Migration and education at school level***

<b>9.00 – 12.00</b>	<b>Visit to a school in the educational priority zone.</b> The participants will meet and interact with Ministry representatives, head teachers, teachers and pupils and will observe the work in the school and the classroom. A discussion will follow on issues about this specific school model in relation to the students' achievement.
<b>12.30 – 15.00</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>
<b>15.00 – 16.00</b>	<b>Teachers' professional development and migrant students</b>  <i>Possible speaker from an Academic from Cyprus</i>  <i>(40 minutes presentation and 20 minutes Discussion)</i>
<b>16.00 – 16.45</b>	<b>The impact of teaching methodology and school activities on the performance of migrant students: A basis for discussion, interaction and critical reflection on every day practices as experienced in the Cyprus context.</b>  <i>Possible speakers from Cyprus Ministry</i>  <i>(30 minutes presentation and 15 minutes Discussion)</i>
<b>16.45 – 17.30</b>	<b>Discussion on Preliminary Statements</b>
	<b>Free evening</b>

***Wednesday 17 October 2012***

<b>9.00-10.00</b>	<b>Presentation by European Commission on Migration and Education (to be confirmed)</b>  <i>(40 minutes presentation and 20 minutes Discussion)</i>
<b>10.00 – 12.00</b>	<b>EUNEC General Assembly meeting (only for members of the General Assembly)</b>

