

MECEC+

Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnerships for school education – MECEC+ Project

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National research report

Hungary/ELTE Budapest

Part I : Theoretical Aspects

Members of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) together with the Early childhood services in Józsefváros, Budapest (JEB) will present the data obtained from the questionnaire designed by the Florence team, after working together and reflecting with all the members of the MECEC+ project.

We would like to express our gratitude for being able to adapt the original questionnaire to our social, economic and cultural context.

Issues: How to enhance the general quality of ECEC through the redesign of a new curriculum and model on the theme of intercultural education. How can we strengthen the networking among higher education and institutions? How can we support the learning and knowledge transfer in the framework of intercultural context in ECEC? Good practices/guidelines in university-enterprise cooperation. To be prepared to work more collaboratively with young children and families. Innovative approaches in family – institution cooperation for ensuring equal opportunities at the entrance to education; the necessary skills to improve the inclusion of disadvantaged children; and the development of their skills

Approaches: To introduce a new pedagogical culture and educational concept by creating attractive learning environments and supporting social learning and cooperation between families and institutions in intercultural perspectives. To create an opportunity for collaboration between higher education and early childhood institutions in order to connect the higher education with the needs of the childcare institutions. To create an international common module of a course between universities in the field of inter/multicultural education/ECEC.

Theoretical background: Adults - and their children - holding a migrant and / or political refugee status, are the ones mostly at risk of social exclusion and marginalization today. The same applies to ethnic minorities such as the Roma, whose role in the research is central. Lastikka, A. L., & Lipponen, L. (2016)

Methodology MECEC+ Questionnaire: The survey was conducted by using a semi-structured questionnaire delivered to a sample of educators in all partner countries. As for Hungary, the questionnaire has been delivered online to the personnel working in early childhood education services run by the JEB (Early childhood services in Józsefváros, Budapest). Applied methods involved SPSS for data recording and analysis, descriptive statistics, cross-table analysis, Chi” probe, content analysis. The research methodology involves collecting large-scale observation data (N=97) based on a random sampling of in-service professionals’ beliefs and needs in everyday activities in the ECEC context.

The questionnaire was elaborated taking into account some of the shared reflections during the MECEC+ meetings as well as resulting from the coordinated work done by all the members of this same project (ELTE Budapest University, ARCA, Florence University, Early childhood services in Józsefváros, Budapest (JEB), Galileo, Encís and with the collaboration Manresa University (UVic-UCC).

Part II : Empirical Research (Fieldwork)

(analysis of multiple choice questions & open-ended questions)

Macro-areas

1) Educator – Constructing a professional profile (starting from personal data):

The MECEC+ project decided to present a questionnaire to obtain a better perspective about how to work with issues of diversity in nurseries. Also, to examine which needs ought to be covered in order to improve the educators’ knowledge about integration and diversity.

The aim of this questionnaire was:

- To gather data with the aim of progressing in this research project.
 - To know which are the real needs of the professional nursery teams (Including both educators and non-educators) in relation to cultural diversity
 - To know the degree of knowledge these nursery workers have in relation to interculturality.
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- ELTE University Budapest and JEB (Early childhood services in Józsefváros, Budapest made a teamwork to adapt some of the questions to our particular local context.
 - This questionnaire has 31 questions with different options and 4 open questions.
 - The questionnaire was sent in early September 2017, to the early childhood services in the 8th district in Budapest

- The questionnaire was sent online to nurseries through Kérdőívem.hu

We haven't received any representative reply about the reason of such a difference between questionnaires sent by us and questionnaires returned. But we reached this conclusion:

Due to the relative low degree of participation, we re-sent the questionnaires to the nurseries (three times in the 8th district).

Once some of the main questions have been analyzed, we would like to highlight the following aspects/answers that we felt we ought to discuss here:

Prejudices towards families OR within the nursery workers

Educators' training requests/needs on:

- Basic intercultural skills (but we have to explain in next turn what we understand in it)
- Communicative and social skills when relating to families & Transference Skills
- Community & Nursery spaces

In the question 10th:

“Do you think CIRRFs and their families are victims of prejudice?”

Even educators and nursery workers are subjects capable of having prejudices towards other cultures. There were many answers admitting the existence of prejudices. Thus the need of intercultural education was here clear.

In relation to the open question number 35th :

“What geographical or cultural origins do the families of your center have?”

The different answers obtained (about family origins) allowed us to consider that nursery

- Lack of personal knowledge of Cases of Success and of highly professional Recognition of immigrant population leads to idea of Diversity as poverty / conflict / exclusion→Lack of knowledge about other cultures' realities (lack of information)
- Confusion of understanding Interculturality/cultural diversity/competencies
- Categorical Confusion & implications: confusing two distinct categories or confusing the part for the whole or the whole for the part (Roma, and mixed married families)

In the 32th open question **“In your opinion, what do you think the terms "diversity" "intercultural", "intercultural education" and "inclusion" mean?”**

In the question 19th **“Do you think that your educational service promotes and implements specific projects aimed at promoting interculturality?”** (and question 24th) the need of intercultural educational need is clear.

- Lack of commitment on the part of Professionals
- Interest on improving their knowledge and skills concerning diversity and intercultural awareness
- Lack of training and low degree of knowledge about specific concepts addressed

2) Training – Qualifications:

In relation to the educators’ training needs very well shown

also the question 14th **“In your opinion, do you think that this pluralism creates problems of organization and management in relation to the care and education of children?”**

And there is also this concerned in the question 14.1th **“If so, which ones would be-according to your opinion, the most relevant issues from an intercultural point of view?”**

In the question 27th **“Regarding the documents or information sent to families from educational services: in your opinion, should they be translated into the language of the CIRRF families?”**

and question 28th **“Do you think there is a need for a linguistic and cultural mediation service?”**

- Need of a process of knowledge-transference or transference-skills from already existing successful services of communicative mediation
- Awareness about lack of communicative/linguistic skills
- Lack of awareness of Professional Resources or existing mechanisms to solve communicative issues.

The need for further intercultural training is also strengthened in relation to question 18th **“Do you consider it necessary to carry out some type of training or have some type of advice on intercultural practices that could help you to take more into account the needs of the CIRRF”**

and in question 18.1th **“If yes, in what area do you consider that you have more deficiencies?”**

After the completing the analysis of the questionnaire we detected the relevance of results and establish a set of recommendations for further changes in the early teacher training curses related to intercultural education.

3) Knowledge (awareness) of educational personnel about diversity:

In our 14th question we examined the knowledge of the professional about cultural diversity -

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

50% yes, but not sufficiently

38% yes

12% no

15th - In your opinion, does this pluralism create organisational and management problems with regard to care and education of children?

59,2 % not much (a little)

20,4 % yes, quite enough

20,4% not at all

0% yes, a lot

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

41 % language difficulties

25,3 % cultural difficulties

15,7 % integration difficulties

10,8% religious difficulties

6 % economic difficulties

4) Knowledge of educational personnel about immigrant, refugee and Roma families as service users:

In this part of the questioner we wanted to know more of the conditions of immigrant, refugee and Roma families as service users

About the needs and demands of immigrant, refugee and Roma families as service users

From the relationships among children of diverse origins and sociocultural backgrounds

12th - In your opinion, do CIRRF come willingly to the nursery?

(50 persons answered)

10 % quite enough

56 % yes, a lot

34 % not much (a little)

0% no

13th - How do you feel about a strong presence of CIRRF?

(More answers allowed) (70 persons answered)

42,9 % I feel involved humanly

37,1 % I feel involved professionally

8,6 % I feel good about it

2,9 % I feel inadequate (incompetent)

1,4 % it is indifferent to me

5,7 % I feel uncomfortable

5) Knowledge of educational personnel about interculturality in an intercultural society:

- Need of a better awareness of spaces external to the nursery. They know better the community and related life that would be especially relevant for migrant collectives without a solid supporting net.

- Need of better awareness of spaces internal to the nursery: managing better the spaces within the nursery to accept, welcome and shelter families in need of a warm emotional place for their process of adaptation and socialising or for the creation of solidarity networks.

However while nursery workers are aware of the need knowing better the surrounding neighbourhood and associative life, nevertheless knowing per se is not enough. A careful search for also good examples of success of associations managed by members of the migrant communities would be necessary to avoid an ethnocentric approach towards the immigrant population or other minority groups.

6) Activities aimed at fostering intercultural programmes promoted and organised by educational services:

In our 29th questions related to the topic:

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

4% no

30% yes, sometimes

52% yes, often

14% often

29/1th question - According to your experience, to what extent do CIRRF parents attend meetings organised by childhood services and schools? (Select one answer per row)

Always Usually Rarely Never

Meetings 22,00% 64,00% 10,00% 4,00%

Parties & festivities 10,00% 44,00% 43,00% 4,00%

30th In your opinion, what are the reasons why parents do not attend or attend such events only rarely?

40% they would like to, but their work prevents them from participating

40% they do not understand the language well

18% they do not consider it important to participate

22% they feel uncomfortable in the presence of other parents

4% parental involvement in this kind of events is not a common practice in the respective countries of origin

2% they feel uncomfortable in the presence of educators

Overall answer is 50.

This report reveals a fairly strong separation between the local and the international children mostly Roma, and its families. It offers an examination of the evolution of the policy towards immigrant children and aimed at fostering interactions. It offers observations on what is being done, what kinds of principles and strategies seem to be important and suggests some future directions for research. Due to the result of the questionnaire we are now more convinced how urgent to be able to pedagogically explain to nurseries and workers that intercultural education ought to be applied *independently* of whether there are problems or not *and independently* of whether there are foreign families/children or not.

There can be no ignoring the situation of the Roma, which differs from that of migrants. Usually not well-integrated, they remain nomadic in others. In most cases initiatives face problems, due not only to lifestyles, cultural traditions and patterns of knowledge-transmission which are partly at odds with normal institutional practice, but also to the social ostracism which Roma suffer, and the fact that many institutions treat their children as if they were handicapped or backward. In spite of national, and above all international, campaigns aimed at improving their condition, e.g. by providing schooling for their children, they are generally rejected and excluded.

7) Gender:

As for the 33th question related to the gender issues:

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

90% no, never

8 % yes, but in very few cases

2% yes, in several cases

The overall answer was 50.

It seems that changes in societal acceptance and reproductive healthcare have also facilitated the increase in the number of children with a same sex family. Based on families with children are more racially and ethnically diverse than those headed by heterosexual couples. Thus, the compilation of data shows that changing identity of who is attending nurseries and how families in the community are comprised.

Part III : Conclusions

Main findings or discussions: Identification of the theoretical framework of the intercultural early childhood education. The expected results are an innovation and modernization of higher education institution training, more suited to the needs of early childhood institutions and the modern society, and a tool for inclusion and skills development of children at risk of social exclusion.

Here we would like to present some of the general general conclusions and reflections due to the results obtained and the group discussions we've had:

Final conclusions and reflections:

One of the major research findings was a need for strengthening cooperation between parents, professionals practicing and teacher trainers the activities implied in the course of the research and a growth in trust, which enhanced children's ability to cope with challenging situations they face in the changing life context.

- The professionals don't have enough competences to include and work at an intercultural level in its everyday situations.
- Lack of visions by the educative teams to deal with intercultural situations and a diversity of families and children.
- Lack of knowledge transfer between the different organisations, entities, associative world, schools... and need to approach and know better the territory and services of the community to discover successful experiences lead by/for immigrant population/intercultural issues

- Lack of time/Lack of commitment due to issues of proximity or private everyday life of educative team members
- Tendency to consider immigrant families with low economic and social position
- Difficulties on educators obtaining tools and abilities to deal with CIRRF families.

Ideas for improving the current situation:

- To create internal spaces for the educative teams to better allow working-group discussions, reflection and practical activities and to be aware of the different realities
- Specific global training in universities and other teaching institutions dealing with Early Childhood Education studies.

Methodology Final additional or global observations and reflections

- To improve the revision methodology process of the different tools used for the analysis
- To include in future research questionnaires (or similar) the region, area or cities of the subjects studies, to allow a better comprehension of its social, economic and cultural ecosystem
- To consider also a more qualitative type of questionnaire/interviews so to allow a more circumscribed analysis in terms of subjective ideas and personal experiences through in-depth interviews of educators, semantic analysis, pre-post interviews accompanying a specific intercultural training.
- In some cases, if future questionnaires are sent, maybe some more specific topics can be chosen for a more in-depth analysis and comprehension as well as providing Shorter questionnaires to facilitate more responses when sent.

Teacher training is crucial to doing all this. In particular, it is desirable to identify the most strategic or accessible points of contact between teachers of different subjects, as well as points of professional early childhood professionals interest, which can be used as a focus for interdisciplinary transfers and complementarities.

→ Recommendations