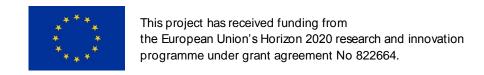
# INTEGRATION OF MIGRANT CHILDREN IN SLOVENIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

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# Migrant Children and Communities in a Transforming Europe

- Sample of 16 primary and secondary schools in Slovenia
- The selection criterion was cultural diversity of the region/shcool.
- 7 schools were selected (3 primary and 4 secondary) for in-depth research
- 38 interviews and 14 focus groups, with five observational with participation.
- 7 schools: minimum 15 observation days with participation in formal (lessons) and informal situations (lunch, school trip, play in the yard, etc.).



#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- How do teachers and others working within the school community in primary and secondary schools approach
  the inclusion of immigrant children?
- How do they understand / accept migration, cultural diversity and integration?
- How do they promote intercultural coexistence?
- How do they organize everyday school life taking into account cultural diversity?
- How does cultural diversity affect their work and everyday school life?
- What are the challenges and problems of the existing system of integration of immigrant children?
- What are the untapped opportunities to improve the system of integration of immigrant children?
- To what extent is there a child-centered approach to the education and integration of immigrant children?



#### Perception of migration in schools

- Migration is seen as a fact and challenge.
- Migration is rarely is understood primarily as positive feature.
- Negative attitudes towards migrates have been also observed.
- Recent years there have been changes for the better in the direction of greater sensitivity to cultural diversity.



#### Awareness of cultural diversity in schools

- The level of intercultural awareness in Slovenian schools varies.
- In multicultural areas, there are some representatives of school communities who are aware of the needs and challenges arising from cultural diversity.
- There are schools that pay little or no attention to cultural diversity and inclusion



### Perception of integration in schools

- School staff generally reject the concept of assimilation and rely on the concepts of inclusion, integration and adaptation
- Prevailing belief that immigrant students "must adapt" to the new cultural environment
- Only occasionally teachers highlight integration as two-way process.
- Integrations is mostly seen as way of becoming a part of society,
   take over the cultural values and rules of Slovenian society.



# Implementing integration measures in schools

- The integration of immigrant children is seen almost exclusively as a process of learning the Slovenian language.
- The result of the existing system is that the actual success of integration depends on individuals and their efforts.
- Cooperation with the families of immigrant children: a big difference between primary and secondary schools.
- Parents of local children: occasional reservations, including a negative response;
- Few see integration as a comprehensive process in which local children and parents as well as the local community should be actively involved.
- Nothing about evaluation and self-assessment of the success of the integration process.

# Practicing cultural diversity in schools

- Cultural diversity affects organization of school life in many different ways
- Primary school teachers largely prepare additional teaching materials, translations, dictionaries,
   mini-projects, address cultural diversity in the classroom. Depending on the individual teacher.
- Teachers miss topics of cultural diversity in existing teaching materials.
- It is difficult to adequately address the needs of an immigrant child (overburdened teachers, oversized classes, students with various special needs, no additional help, no knowledge, no materials...).
- Most do not perceive intercultural intolerance and conflicts stemming from ethnicity. There are no handling protocols.



# **Concluding remarks**

- Lack of awareness that integration is a two-way process
- The responsibility for (successful) integration rests largely with the child (and his family).
- Lack of more holistic approach (social, psychological, cultural aspects).
- Strategies / recommendations should be binding.
- Stable funding and sustainability of programs / interventions.
- Build teachers knowledge and capacity education related to the inclusion of immigrant children.
- Employment of person with appropriate competencies in charge of the integration of immigrant children.
- A more individualized approach to the immigrant child.
- Sensitization of local children and local community.

