



# FOCUS GROUP - REPORTING

Template for the Preliminary Report of the Focus Group



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Erasmus+ Programme  
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ERASMUS + Programme, Action 3  
Initiatives for policy innovation - Social inclusion through  
education, training and youth

**DISCLAIMER:** This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This report reflects only the views of the author/s, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

# INTRODUCTION

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2. TARGET GROUP
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**NORMAL FONT: IDEAS  
OF THE PARTICIPANTS  
OF THE FOCUS GROUP**

***ITALICS: EXPLANATORY  
COMMENTS***



# PARTICIPANTS

- The focus group was attended by 9 participants. The participants comprised several typological stakeholder lists:

## **I. Public pre-schools:**

- teachers: 3
- directors: 1

## **II. Private pre-schools:**

- teachers: 1
- management representatives: 1

## **III. Non-formal and interest-based learning institutions:**

- methodology workers and trainers in non-formal education: 1

## **IV. Academia**

- Ph.D. researchers and junior lecturers: 1

## **V. Municipality**

- department of education representatives: 1
- The participants represented institutions located in Prague and Central Bohemian Region.

# SESSION 1 – TARGET GROUPS

There is no one target group specific in a particular pre-school. Usually, there is a mixture of all this (in public system of the Czech Rep. the children attend the school in the place of the place of residence – key admission criteria)

1. **“Traditional” immigrant communities:** *Russian, Ukrainian, Vietnamese and other former Soviet Union countries (Kazakhstan, Mongolia) – gradually coming in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, increased after 2000s*
  2. **Newly emerging immigrant communities:** *asylum seekers and refugees from the Middle East and Africa (Syria, Turkey, Nigeria...) - especially after 2000s*
  3. **Roma community:** *local Roma community - not immigrants but independent cultural identity (re-immigration: many left for the U.K., Canada, some are now coming back)*
- *There is a difference between situation in Prague (multicultural, existing experience with social inclusion and integration, all target groups represented) and the other regions (few foreigners, less experience, mostly traditional foreign communities).*

# SESSION 2 – CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES 1.

## 1. SYSTEM AND LEGISLATION

- inflexible, complicated, time-consuming system of support
- bureaucracy connected with EU funding
- insufficient funding for pre-school responsibilities: a) preparation of the final pre-school grade children of foreign background for primary school b) lack of support for children with migrant background with learning disabilities/talents and gifts
- nearly impossible to get foreigners as teachers or assistants to pre-schools due to legal qualification requirements

## 2. COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

- insufficient communication between decision-makers and the schools
- parents x school = mismatch of expectations and reality

## 3. CULTURAL BARRIERS AND LOW AWARENESS

- low awareness of the overall migration issue
- adaptability (both from the side of locals and migrants)

## SESSION 2 – CHALLENGES/OBSTACLES 2.

### 4. NEGATIVE ATTITUDES IN PUBLIC

- xenophobia and racism among people
- negative social climate due to “migration crisis”

### 5. LANGUAGE BARRIER

- child x teacher x parents
- lack of support for language education of pre-school teachers
- fragmented (and not well known) ways of support for translations and interpreters

### 6. TEACHER-CENTRED PROBLEMS

- too many children per class (norm: 28, if less reduced funding)
- low social status of teachers (connected with low salaries)
- lack of willingness to do new things or teach in a different way
- lack of experience (both of teachers and their university educators)
- teacher-education does not reflect changes in needs

***OVERLAPPING OF ISSUES:*** No issue that would be impossible to categorize. Various ideas overlap or relate to several thematic clusters at the same time. Sometimes strong and weak points overlap.

## THE PERCEIVED STRONG POINTS as perceived by the participants

a) EXISTENCE OF A SYSTEM: it has some flaws but...

b) PRO-ACTIVE ATTITUDES

- of teachers/headmasters of some schools (individual)

- international schools (in Prague and big cities)

- trained and experienced teachers (teacher status requires 5 years of pre-school training at university minimum)

b) TEACHING PRACTICE

- available methodologies and materials

- multicultural education in education framework documents

- available means of further education of teachers (BUT efficiency, low impact courses)

c) COMMUNICATION PRACTICE WITH PARENTS

- good relations within the school community: teachers x parents (individual), support by schoolmates

- even though it has its flaws, the system guarantees free access to pre-school education for all who live here, it provides some support for the problem in question, equal treatment in admissions (children are admitted to school according to the territorial principle: each school covers a specific area)

# SESSION 3 – SOLUTIONS/INTERVENTIONS 1

## EU level/central:

EU money from ESF (calls for proposals also for inclusion support) x difficult administration

*„Templated Projects for Schools“ (ESF subventions with simplified administration): schools can apply for money for specific activities including school assistants and training of teachers in inclusion and other measures*

## Central level:

**1. Systemic setting:** there are aspects of the educational which - the teachers believed - help inclusion although they have not been motivated primarily by the idea of inclusion:

- a) financial availability (*children 3-5 year - cca 400-1500 Czech crowns/15-57€ per month*), *children 5-6 – free of charge + (fee for food)*
- b) pre-schools have to accept children from catchment areas (*up to 28 children per class - depending on space and hygiene standards*)
- c) the Children from other countries have the same claim to education (*even short term residents, currently due to demography, in some areas, there is not enough pre-school capacity, the children are admitted following the 2 criteria – a) area of living b) age – older are preferred*)



# SESSION 3 – SOLUTIONS/INTERVENTIONS 2

## 2. Educational and Psychological Counselling

- support for children 3-22 years – without charge (Learning difficulties, Behavioural problems, Adaptation problems, help with work choice, working with talented children or learning difficulties) **BUT:** limits long waiting times, language barriers, problems with diagnostics learning or other problems (they do not want make diagnostics children from foreigner countries)

## 3. National Institute for Further Education (ministerial institute)

- offers the courses, seminar meetings, lectures and other activities connected to further education of pedagogical staff (Training courses for pre-school teachers ) (<http://nidv.cz/en/>)

*(the following two organizations are not part of establishment but the scope of their work is national)*

## 4. The Center for Integration of Foreigners (NGO)

- Social Counselling, Social Rehabilitation etc.

(<http://www.cicpraha.org/en>)

## 5. META, o.p.s. - Association for Opportunities of Young Migrants (NGO)

- mediation of communication between a client eventually his/her parents and school or other relevant institutions and organizations help with the enrolment at primary and secondary schools etc.

(<http://www.meta-ops.cz/en/services-for-foreigners>)

# SESSION 3 – SOLUTIONS/INTERVENTIONS 3

## Local level:

- **Municipality support:** money for books, school assistants (*individual according to the relations between the school and the “founder”, i.e. usually local or regional municipality*)
- **Cooperation with community centers of particular communities:** e.g. some Vietnamese community centers provide translators and interpreters for pre-school meetings with parents
- **Multicultural education:** part of pre-school curricula
- **Local activities:** organized by “national” actors

## SESSION 4 – ACTORS

- EU LEVEL
  - ministries (distributing the EU funds)
- CENTRAL LEVEL
  - Ministry of Education
  - NIDV/NUV
  - Faculties of Pedagogy
  - Institutions of pedagogical support: Education Counselling Centers
- LOCAL LEVEL
  - Municipality
  - School: teachers/directors
  - Parents
- DIFFICULTY TO ASSIGN PARTICULAR AREAS TO PARTICULAR ACTORS: WHO SHOULD DO WHAT..., WHO SHOULD BE THE ONE TAKING THE INITIATIVE...
- PARTICIPANTS ASSIGNED KEY ROLE TO EDUCATION OF TEACHERS: the actor=FACULTIES OF EDUCATION

## REMARKS AT THE END

- *SYSTEM: the participants believed that the Czech Republic has a long established system of education which has many flaws but still somehow works ( and which rather suffers than benefits from recent legislation)*
- *DUALITY OF IMPACT: the participants listed several aspects as both positive and negative, each measure has its pros and cons, we must identify goals and select the best measure available*
- *UNCLEAR GOALS: there appears to be no clear consensus on what the aim of inclusion is or should be (What do we want to achieve? - in specific terms) (the participants agreed that inclusion as a relation must be bi-polar: the system must provide support and the parents - and children – must want to integrate)*
- *AMBIVALENCE OF SUPPORT IMPACT: some support measures may result in decrease of motivation of parents to integrate (Why should I or my children learn Czech, if you speak English, Russian...?)*
- *OVERLAPPING OF LEVELS: the EU/central/local levels are connected, depend one on another*
- *UNCREAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES: it is not clear who should do what, the distribution of responsibilities differs according to each individual*
- *BIG DIFFERENCES AMONG AREAS: localities with decades of experience x localities where they never had anyone from abroad*
- *TEACHER-CENTERED VIEW: the participants agreed that the key to inclusion and to education of children with migrant background is the education of new teachers at university level*



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