



PEER LEARNING ACTIVITY THE NETHERLANDS **SIRIUS 2020-2021**

20 and 21 May 2021

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Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
Common sharing between Slovenia and Risbo	4
Common sharing between France and Risbo	4
DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICES: GOALS & ACTIVITIES	6
Description	6
Programme PLA 2021	6
Schools and multilingualism: very rich reflections and practices	8
FINDINGS OF THE PLA	10
Overall findings	10
France partner	10
Slovenian Partner	11
CONCLUSIONS, REMARKS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT	12
France Partner	12
Slovenia Partner	12
TRANSNATIONAL ASPECT	14
Looking to context and forward	14
ANNEXES	15

DISCLAIMER

Because of COVID-19, Year 3 of SIRIUS activities with the PLA were changed. In Year 3, we were not able to do both PLAs and running a PLA in real life was also not possible. However, we managed to create a PLA online. Due to all restrictions and difficult situations, the PLA for the Netherlands was only with the two visiting partners (8 participants) and the host. For the dissemination of the project, this report and other information will be shared with the dissemination partners ERI, MPG, DBI, EPA, NEPC, UBESSU and SIRIUS. We hope that by sharing our information and findings of the PLA, we can further strengthen our community and network and build knowledge on the theme multilingualism in education for the European Commission's policy lines.

Risbo would like to thank everyone involved of their patience and hard work in creating and doing the PLA online.



SIRIUS 2.0. ACTIVITY PEER LEARNING

The proposed action SIRIUS 2.0 – Policy Network on Migrant Education (EAC/S28/2016) aims to promote cooperation between different stakeholders, supports inclusive policy development and implementation at different governance levels and facilitate the integration of children and young people with migration background in school education.

One of their activities entails Peer Learning Visits to promote transnational learning between various types of stakeholders, such as policymakers, practitioners, migrant-led education initiatives and organisations, e.g. in the process of identifying good practices and receiving multi-stakeholder international feedback, the Peer Learning Visits will consolidate good practice and stimulate further innovation both in the host and learning countries. The follow-up reports will include policy recommendations and descriptions of educational practices that will contribute to the content development of the EC's Toolkit for Schools and School Education Gateway. The results of the follow-up reports will also feed into the development of the annual SIRIUS Watch. Finally, the Peer Learning Visits will facilitate exchange and learning between partners and their policymakers and stakeholders. This process further consolidates the national partnerships within SIRIUS and its functioning as a sustainable and inclusive European network.

The Peer Learning Visits will be implemented based on the established SIRIUS Peer Review methodology. This methodology was applied in SIRIUS reviews during the EC funded period 2012-2014, and in one of the follow-up Erasmus + projects 'Professional capacity in dealing with diversity' (2014 –2017). In annex 1 the applied questionnaire of the methodology can be found. Partners' national reform priorities were identified through a partners' survey in January 2017 and then the good practices were selected based on SIRIUS' evidence base of studies since 2012.

OBJECTIVE OF A PLA

The Peer Learning Activities (PLAs) are SIRIUS' means to consolidate good practice and promote knowledge transfer within the network. PLAs shall be organized in such a way as to present the good practice from diverse perspectives of practitioners, policymakers and researchers. The visits shall ensure that the visiting teams have access to the implementing practitioners and to the beneficiaries of the practice, including on-site visits to schools, interviews with teachers, students, school leaders. The visiting teams (peer reviewers) shall also be composed of mixed teams made up of practitioners, policy makers and researchers.

PLAs' objective is, on the one hand, to inform host countries on how they might improve their practices further and provided recommendations to visiting countries on how to transfer the practice to their educational systems. The study visits will thus ensure the increased knowledge within SIRIUS on what works and why and, as such, strengthen the network.



INTRODUCTION

For year 3 of the SIRIUS network activities, the Netherlands was the host for the Peer Learning Activity (PLA). This PLA's theme was multilingualism in education. While multilingualism and diversity have always been an integral part of Europe, they have also become important characteristics of many national education systems during the past two decades. Consequently, more and more young learners are growing up with several cultures and languages and may experience multiple transitions between different school systems and school languages. Raised in changing multilingual and multicultural environments, individuals may no longer identify themselves with one language and culture but rather with a range of languages and cultures acquired in different situations. In the context of these social transformations, multilingualism is becoming more a way of life than a problem to be solved. In the Netherlands, the primary educational board gave some advice to focus more on mother tongue language in schools. Consequently, and due to European attention to the topic, more and more schools are implementing multilingual school policies in an environment that for years have been focused on learning Dutch and neglect all other languages that are present.

The majority of school kids in the big cities in the Netherlands speak one or more languages other than Dutch. The study visit will focus on Amsterdam and the surrounding municipalities where sometimes over 10 different languages prevail in just one classroom. The PLA helped answer the question "How do we manage multilingualism in education?". The task of education stakeholders is to create school systems that bridge these various linguistic and cultural realities and support the mobility of the pupils across Europe. Schools need to provide an education that supports the development of learners' linguistic and cultural resources, while at the same time balancing these with social, cultural, and political demands. The challenge at hand is therefore to offer a multilingual schooling system that supports the inclusion of all pupils in which they can develop their full potential linguistically, cognitively, and emotionally.

Since this PLA was planned almost two years ago, we were all really looking forward to meeting with the Dutch and the French team *in situ*, however due to the pandemic situation the meeting took place online.

Common sharing between Slovenia and Risbo

Educational Research Institute (ERI) as part of Sirius network has applied for the SIRIUS Peer Learning Activity 2020-2021 in the Netherlands. Due to the situation in Slovenia, the Slovenian partner found the topic of multilingualism in migrant education to be very important and wanted to explore the Dutch context within the proposed activity.

The Slovenian team consisted of two researchers from ERI, Janja Žmavc (rhetoric, argumentation, language in education) and Sabina Autor (philosophy of education, social and political philosophy). They are a part of the Sirius project team and responsible for the Sirius activities carried out in Slovenia. For this PLA they invited Blanka Kovačec, who is a teacher of Slovene in elementary school Maks Durjava, Maribor and Alenka Trauner, who is also a teacher of Slovene in elementary school Livada, Ljubljana. They also invited Kristina Lovrinović, who is a social worker in NGO DRPD Novo mesto and is leading a support program with local schools for inclusion of migrant children and their families in education, learning Slovene language etc. All three colleagues have extensive experience in teaching students with migrant background, Alenka Trauner also works in a primary school that has a majority of students with migrant background and has developed its own approaches to inclusion.

Common sharing between France and Risbo

Nathalie Auger is a university professor at Montpellier 3 Paul Valéry, in charge of the Master of Training Teachers in French as a second language and in charge of the SIRIUS project for France since 2017.



France was immediately interested in the theme of this PLA because it is in line with the theme that they have chosen for SIRIUS France concerning the increase of the learning potential of students by setting up a “learning territory”, i.e., by creating a network between schools, associations and institutions that will allow the French partner to better meet the needs of young migrants and their families. Risbo has a great deal of expertise in the management of multilingual classes in research and the training of teachers and educational staff, which is a strong point in common with our concerns.

For this PLA organized by Risbo, Nathalie Auger contacted fellow teachers involved in research projects in France like SIRIUS and LISTIAC (Erasmus+) to participate in this program. She was able to contact three of her doctoral students (Nara de Melo, Anne-Laure Biales, Nathalie Pepiot) who have completed research on multilingualism in the kindergarten (1) and secondary (2) classroom. They are also teachers, two in a secondary school, one in kindergarten. Finally, she also invited another teacher and PhD colleague from the university for the primary school, Florence Guiraud, who is in charge of a class with NAM and has been participating in the SIRIUS project in France since its implementation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICES: GOALS & ACTIVITIES

Description

During this PLA focused on the context of Amsterdam and its surrounding municipalities, a multilingual setting that is also relevant to other large cities in the Netherlands. The partners heard from several experts about good practices around multilingualism, as well as virtually meet with schools who have integrated multilingualism into their educational program. With the different activities during this PLA, Risbo aimed to answer the following questions:

- What do teachers need to know to understand multilingual classrooms and use the languages as a benefit for the whole class?
- How can multilingual materials help parent participation in school?
- What are the costs of creating a multilingual inclusive educational context in schools?
- Expectations are that the peers understand how multilingualism is understood in different contexts and what are the main challenges and opportunities involved in promoting multilingualism in schools. Further we want to look at what specific education policies and practices appear to be inclusive approaches promoting multilingualism and continuity of language learning.
- The peers can reflect and give recommendations to educational stakeholders to improve present policies and ensure that they are linguistically and culturally sensitive.

The overall objectives of the PLA:

- Identifying good practices in host country
- Receiving international feedback
- Stimulate further innovation
- Lessons learned by host country

Programme PLA 2021

Day 1: 20 May 2021

When	What	Who
Morning 09.30 tot 11.00	Seminar + interactive activities introducing multilingualism Zoom link for session: https://eur-nl.zoom.us/j/4404542736 Meeting ID: 440 454 2736	Rutu Foundation for multilingualism and inclusive education Laurinde Koster, MA - Risbo
Morning 11.15 tot 12.30	Interview and virtual tour of school with a language friendly school Zoom link for session: https://eur-nl.zoom.us/j/4404542736 Meeting ID: 440 454 2736	Optimist School in Hoofddorp
Lunch 12.30 – 13.30		
Afternoon 1 13.30 to 14.30	Talk with the DENISE School, a primary and secondary school in Amsterdam. This school is Language Friendly. Zoom link for session: https://eur-nl.zoom.us/j/4404542736 Meeting ID: 440 454 2736	DENISE School in Amsterdam
Afternoon 2	Reflection and lessons learned	Activity on Miro board



14.30 to 14.45	Looking forward to day 2 Zoom link for session: https://eur-nl.zoom.us/j/4404542736 Meeting ID: 440 454 2736	
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Day 2: 21 May 2021

When	What	Who
Morning 9.30 to 10.30	Interview with dr. Frederike Groothoff and showcase more good practices Zoom link for session: https://eur-nl.zoom.us/j/4404542736 Meeting ID: 440 454 2736	Dr. Frederike Groothoff, PhD in multilingualism and works with a network of schools
Morning 10.45 to 11.45	AVIOR Showcase Zoom link for session: https://eur-nl.zoom.us/j/4404542736 Meeting ID: 440 454 2736	Afke Weltevrede, Katja van der Schans and Laurinde Koster, Risbo
Morning 12.00 to 13.00	Webinar multilingualism and good practices Zoom link for session: https://eur-nl.zoom.us/j/4404542736 Meeting ID: 440 454 2736	Femke Danse, educational consultant and expert multilingualism. Works with ABC primary school in Amsterdam
Lunch 13.00 – 14.00		
14.00 to 15.00 Evaluation/reflection	Final questions, conclusions, evaluation. Zoom link for session: https://eur-nl.zoom.us/j/4404542736 Meeting ID: 440 454 2736	Activity on Miro board



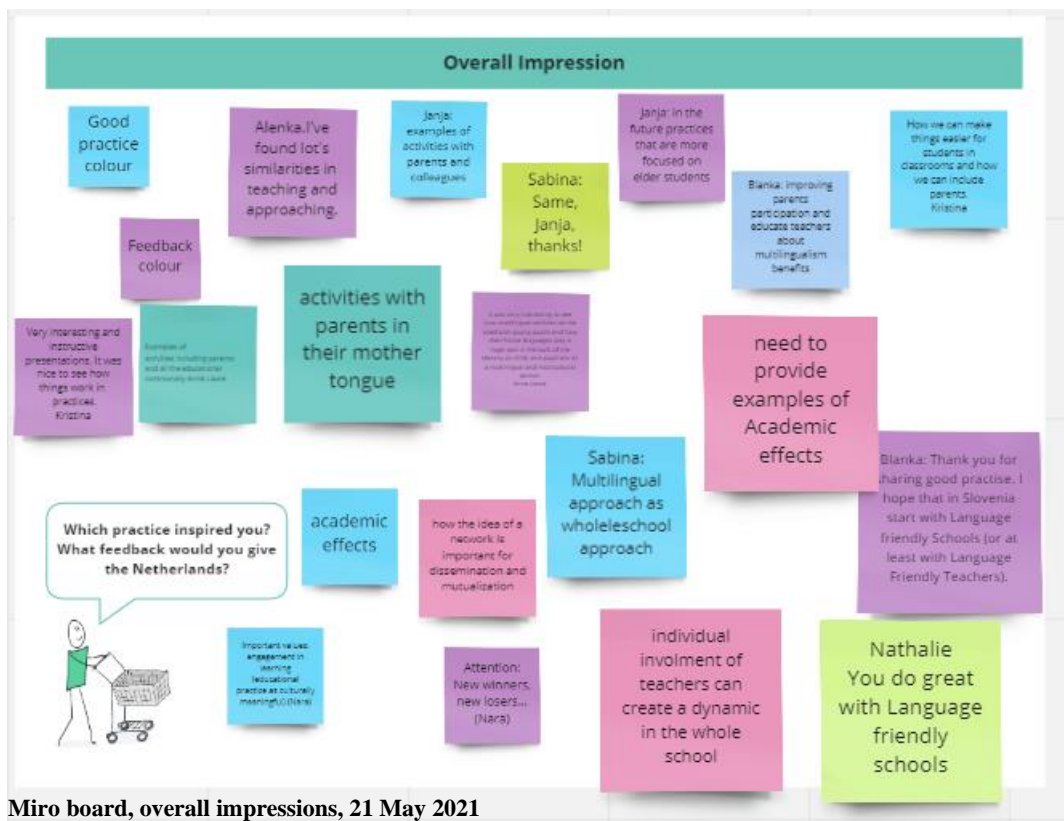
Schools and multilingualism: very rich reflections and practices

The general aim of the activities was to show us the complexity of multilingualism in the Netherlands and then the possible teaching actions in this context where many languages co-exist in schools.

To begin with, each partner had the opportunity to present themselves interactively online. To start and break the ice each partner had the opportunity to tell an anecdote related to their name, which showed the already existing diversity in our group (France + Slovenia). After a short professional presentation of each of the partners, they had the opportunity to listen to the presentation of Rutu foundation for multilingualism and inclusive education. This so-called language friend project is interesting because it allows a school to choose its language planning in order to take into account all languages as a resource for learning. A Language Friendly School (LFS) is a bottom-up holistic approach to boost multilingualism in schools. They are schools that have developed a language plan involving all members of the school: students, teachers, and staff. It is a plan that is adapted to the school's own needs and aims at creating an inclusive and language friendly learning environment for all students. The vision of the Language Friendly School is that children have access to a language friendly-learning environment where they feel accepted and valued for who they are. Further, that no child is punished for speaking his or her mother tongues in school by 2030, the deadline of the Sustainable Development Goals. Every school can become a Language Friendly School and currently there are 8 Language Friendly Schools worldwide.

During the PLA, we spoke to two Language Friendly Schools (in Hoofddorp and Amsterdam). Each school took a turn during the day to report on their plans for implementing a language friendly school plan: use of pupils' languages, valorization of this language heritage, inclusion of parents, multilingual posters, use of materials in various languages etc. These lively testimonies of principals and teachers involved in the project (many very convincing videos were shown) really helped to flesh out the Language Friendly initiative, which was first presented in a theoretical way in the morning. At the end of the first day's session, a Miro activity on an online dashboard made it possible to summarize the interests of its presentations for the Dutch context, and by rebound, on the French and Slovenian context.

The second day allowed the partners to go deeper into the reflections with a first intervention of Dr. Frederike Groothoff on showcase on good practices. Dr. Frederike Groothoff is PhD in multilingualism and works with a network of schools. She explained well the reluctance of some teachers to multilingual practices and showed that representations are still tenacious concerning the fear of using, of valuing the languages of the pupils in class. Afke Weltevrede, Katja van der Schans and Laurinde Koster, from Risbo, then explained the AVIOR project. The class materials translated into the children's languages for several subjects were interesting. The way in which the parents were considered as helpers for the translations is also a very good dynamic for the schools involved. Finally, Femke Danse, educational consultant and expert multilingualism who works with ABC primary school in Amsterdam explained interesting, good practicing to valorize multilingualism (multilingual files in different languages). The session ended with an activity on the Miro board where all partners were able to explain how they felt after the two days and what they learned from it.



Miro board, overall impressions, 21 May 2021



FINDINGS OF THE PLA

Overall findings

The partners got acquainted in detail with the educational system of the Netherlands and with the colorful range of activities carried out by the schools that have adopted the LFS model. The partners were able to compare different educational systems and reflect on practices in each country. They also indicated one important similarity between French, Slovenian and Dutch education, which is the persistent monolingual educational paradigm that remains a large part of teaching despite the EU plurilingual agenda.

France partner

A big difference with France is that the Netherlands seems to have a strong unity of identity in each school. Teachers, pupils and parents seem to feel that they are part of the schools, which is not the case in France. Indeed, in France, schools are managed by directors who do not always set up school projects but rather projects concerning a few teachers. The projects presented at Risbo therefore show that developing a school unit is very important for the development of these approaches.

In the same vein, many of the schools that presented their projects emphasized the fact that the actions implemented serve the values of their school. Once again, the scale of the school is important in the Netherlands and favors the projects implemented. Values of optimism or fairness can only strengthen the implementation of multilingualism activities. In France, the scale is quite different, and it is at the national level that the values of inclusion and equity are conveyed. Thus, there is a loss of these values when it comes to implementing pedagogical practices in the classroom, which are not always relayed by the schools.

Another discovery is that some pupils can have lessons and exams in their family languages. This gives them a bonus. This scheme does not exist in France and should be transferred to our context as it greatly enhances the value of the pupils' languages.

On AVIOR:

The AVIOR project aimed at improving the basic numeracy and literacy skills of migrant children and thereby reducing the achievement gap between native and non-native pupils in Europe. There is a gap of adapted materials for migrant students in Europe. Fill this gap is one of AVIOR's project goal. Design multilingual materials for those students is an important step that helps to attain equity between pupils with different linguistic and cultural background. Multilingual diversified material in school (literature, maths, games, audio...) can reduce the performance gap between children with a migrant background and children with a non-migrant background.

There must be consider the problem with copywrite. A selection of open-source material is needed.

On parental involvement

The different educational activities and teaching material that were shown to the partners were particularly interesting. Adapting activities to migrants while offering a common curriculum to all is a goal to be achieved.

The partner would like to highlight the different activities that required the involvement of parents. (In France the involvement and use of parents is still not widespread). The link with the families is particularly important for these linguistic but also emotional contributions. Meetings between parents and teachers allow a better knowledge of each other. School and family are no longer considered as two separate worlds but as partners in the development of the child. Here again, this aspect contributes to an inclusive school policy, by providing the idea of an exchange of knowledge.



Slovenia Partner

For Slovenian Team the key findings of the meeting can be summarized in nine points:

- We must be aware that the learning of a language is not something that is happening without effort.
- The need to unconditionally accept and cherish equally all the languages of the students in the school.
- The problem of "banning" the use of the mother language in school, if it is not the language of schooling, can be dealt with successfully.
- The possibilities of using different languages to improve learning.
- The importance of recognizing the interconnectedness of multilingualism in education and inclusion of parents.
- The overall importance of art school subjects for inclusion of students with migrant background.
- The importance of being aware that every teacher is also a language teacher.
- The importance of continuing support in their learning of the language of schooling until they end the school.
- The advantages of LFS schools: greater self-confidence of children, better communication (student-student, student-teacher, teacher-parent), less exclusion, improving cognitive and social competencies and improving parental involvement.



CONCLUSIONS, REMARKS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

This chapter will be split up in the conclusion of our two partners: France and Slovenia.

France Partner

In conclusion, it can be said that this PLA was very fruitful for the colleagues coming from France both because there are many commonalities between the Netherlands and France and therefore many possible transfers in terms of activity. However, we saw some limitations concerning the differences in scale which sometimes make it difficult to promote certain practices on the scale of an entire institution.

As far as the remarks about the activities in the Netherlands are concerned, we can say that colleagues are extremely active, well aware of international research on the subject and very willing to work with teachers and schools in order to propose effective and efficient bottom-up approaches.

Questions that are also common with France remain to be addressed, such as what can be done to convince teachers to use multilingualism as a resource in the classroom. Other questions concern the fact that a school can be language friendly. Is this enough to develop fine scaffolding practices and pedagogies adapted to the needs of the pupils? It should be more explored in the French partner's opinion.

A final set of questions concerns the possibility of taking examinations in the home language. This is quite different from being able to take exams in the subject content normally taught in the language of schooling. It would be very exciting to be able to move forward in the future reflecting on ongoing projects such as binog-escape or Combat+ (see annex).

The social dimension of multilingual education

Schools' actors recognise that an inclusive approach is always a work in progress. There is no recipe as far as each classroom is a unique combination of unique individuals. Consider individual skills and experiences as learning resources means not having the full control of the process. We must be careful about presenting multilingualism as a talent and plurilingual children as having a sort of superpower. In this approach monolingual children are the new losers. A Language friendly school can respond to inclusive perspective and values.

The presence of linguistic and cultural diversity can bring some historical tensions. That's the case for example for Palestinians and Jewish children or Turkish and Armenian children. Education can then be an important gear to transform the future rather than reproducing the past. Who can education restore subjects, human dignity and help to create a culture of peace? The danger of intercultural activities, as punctual, cosmetic (Auger). We can see more and more often teachers that do the language flower in their classes room Is it enough to set up some intercultural activities or language awareness activities to produce social change? It is important for that issue to think about the concept of relation. Some pedagogical tools can help to create dialogue within students and promote the rupture with the past and create a new future.

Slovenia Partner

Learning is not a process which happens randomly. From the teacher's side it must be well organized and planned. That is the common point which we have recognized with the presented schools of the Netherlands. The lessons in some of Slovenian schools are carried out in a similar way, especially schools that are a part of the projects "The Challenges of Intercultural Coexistence" and "Languages Matter" where multilingual approaches to the classroom are being developed. In Slovenia students with migrant backgrounds are enrolled in schools



where they attend the first two years lessons in Slovene for foreign speaking and where they can use their mother tongue in the process of learning Slovene. These classes run parallel to the usual lessons that are carried out in the language of schooling, which is the Slovene. When that process is completed the pupils/students are supposed to be integrated in the school system and from that point they attend only lessons in Slovene. There are some possibilities for students to learn some of the mother tongues within the school system, but regular lessons usually don't include multilingual perspective and teachers rarely see bi-/multilingual students as an asset. Petra van der Geest, from the Denise school of Amsterdam has explained to us that in their school there is a possibility for students/pupils to choose their own mother tongue as one of the subjects for their final exam. This possibility does not exist in Slovenia but is an excellent way for the pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and get recognition in their strong area.

Another valuable point in the PLA was the involvement of parents in the process of the integration. They must not be excluded; a way has to be found how to reach and activate them to become an important factor in learning the language of schooling. They are the important link between the mother tongue and the new language, they are the first motivators of their children. We saw an example of parents who were invited to participate in the class by reading stories in their native languages. There was a nice example of how the pupils during a biology lesson did not know the names of body organs in their mother tongue and the teacher advised the pupils to ask their parents at home. This is important to show the pupils the importance and value of their own language as well as making them visible, active in the classroom.

More examples of practices with older migrant students and their parents would especially benefit the Slovenian team, since we lack those.



TRANSNATIONAL ASPECT

Looking to context and forward

The meeting was inspiring and encouraging in the presentation of the multilingual aspect of inclusion of students with migrant backgrounds.

The common point of all the presented material was the benefit and advantage of multilingual approach and this was accented by all the presenters of the meeting.

The idea of LFS could be presented and promoted in Slovenian schools. Further, the Language Friendly Schools label exists in 4 countries worldwide. Applying this label in different contexts is a desirable. For that it's necessary to consider the political moment of a specific context. A national political agenda gives important paths about the place that multilingualism has in school and by which way and in which timing they can progress.

As we have seen in the discussions, the monolingual approach is characteristic for schools in all participating countries (Netherland, France, Slovenia) and is often linked to unfounded fear of losing their own language and identity. There are some projects of joint collaboration (Listiac: SLO and FR), however it could be beneficial to all three countries to find the way for some further cooperation in joint tripartite projects. Of course, this also accounts for our (SIRIUS) members who wants to explore multilingualism in their schools more thoroughly.

The Risbo researchers have shown, as have researchers in France on this issue, that many projects have been carried out in recent years (see annex, Comparing our Languages, Maledive, Romtels). Fifty years ago, research was essentially theoretical, but over the last 15 years we have seen a flourishing of very useful practical projects. It would therefore be interesting to continue working with Risbo colleagues. Slovenia, which was also invited to this conference, showed that it also shared the same issues: a country which sees itself as very monolingual despite the presence of different languages, with the difficulty of using the pupils' languages as a resource.

It would therefore be interesting to propose, within the framework of Sirius, joint projects between Slovenia, France and the Netherlands for example. Finally, France is already working with Slovenia on a LISTIAC project (linguistically sensitive teaching, Erasmus+, see annex) which takes up a number of elements seen during this PLA. There is no doubt that it will be necessary to further strengthen the links and work with these different partners in the near future.



ANNEXES

Partner Slovenia:

<https://lezdrugimismo.si/>

<http://www.medkulturnost.si/en/>

<https://www.jeziki-stejejo.si/en/>

https://www.sodobna-pedagogika.net/clanki/04-2020_tudi-mama-se-vam-zahvaljuje-in-vas-pozdravlja-pedagoski-proces-z-otroki-priseljencev-med-epidemijo-covida-19/

Partner France:

(Mentioned during the PLA)

AUGER, N. (FORTHCOMING), “Examining the Nature and Potential of Plurilingual Language Education: Toward a Seven-step Plurilingual Language Education Framework” in *Plurilingual Handbook in Language Education*, edited by Drs. Enrica Piccardo (OISE/University of Toronto), Aline Germain-Rutherford (University of Ottawa) and Geoff Lawrence (York University), Routledge.

AUGER N. (2017), “Developing competence for French as a foreign language within a plurilingual paradigm”, in Coffey S., Wingate U. (dir), *New Directions in Foreign Language Education Research.*, Routledge (Taylor and Francis), 151-164.

Although the CEFR has been influential in promoting a plurilingual paradigm as a framework for language education, the field of teaching French as a foreign language has yet to adopt these epistemological and practical orientations. The objective is to understand to what point a plurilingual and pluricultural design for language teaching in Europe, including French as a Foreign Language, could emerge as the prevailing conceptual paradigm even if, as we will address in the second part of this chapter, there has been very little practical implementation within the FFL classroom.

AUGER, N. (2014), “Exploring the use of migrant languages to support learning in mainstream classrooms in France” in *Managing Diversity in Education*, LEUNG, C. LITTLE D. & P. Van Avermaet P. (dirs.), Bristol (UK), Multilingual matters, pp. 223-242.

<https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/cz/pub/latest/news/translanguaging-improvedresult.htm>

Current projects and partnerships

- (2020-2022), plurilingual students and sciences, CRSH (Canada-France), <https://escapeprojects.ca/about/>
- LISTIAC (Linguistically Sensitive Teachers in All Classrooms), leader in France (2018-2021), <http://listiac.org/>
- SIRIUS 2.0 - Policy Network on Migrant Education; European (2017-2020), <https://siriusfrance.jimdofree.com/>

For more information on Language friendly schools:

Languagefriendlyschool.org

For more information about AVIOR:

<https://avior.risbo.org/>