

Towards a joint action strategy for inclusive education policies for children with a migrant background¹

Since 2018 the Educational Research Institute has been a member of the SIRIUS international network. One of the main SIRIUS activities that all network members committed to was a series of National Round Tables (NRT)² under the set methodology that had to be followed through 4 years of round table activities. The NRT, in the first year (2018), aimed to identify problems and challenges within the existing national strategies concerning the gap between school policies and their implementation in the field of inclusive education for children with a migrant background. The main findings of the first NRT were that in Slovenia, there is a significant gap between solid documents³ and strategies in the field of inclusion of children with migrant backgrounds in education. Many project-supported or self-initiated good practices ensure stable and long-term implementation within the school network⁴. Good school practices, which substantially complement considerably solid systemic protocols for the inclusion of children with migrant background⁵, are mostly limited to the

¹ The present paper is a summary of the conclusions of the final national round table within the SIRIUS network, which was held on 8 October 2021 at the Educational Research Institute. As a result of four-year NRT activities, these starting points and their justifications in the field of inclusive education represent a solid basis for supplementing educational policies in the field of education of students with migrant background in Slovenia.

² In the period 2018–2021, we organized four national conferences at the Educational Research Institute: Multilingual Spaces in Inclusive Learning Environment (2018), New Multilingual Practices in Inclusive Learning Environment (2019), Practises that Successfully Implement New Strategies for inclusion of children with a migrant background, Integration and Develop Multilingual School Environments in Slovenia (2020 and 2021). All summaries of discussions together with a comparative report of the NRTs of all countries included in the SIRIUS network are available on the website of the Educational Research Institute: <https://www.pei.si/raziskovalna-dejavnost/projekti/sirius/nacionalni-in-regijski-strateski-posveti-sirius/>.

³ The foundations of the education policy for children with a migrant background in Slovenia were defined in the *Strategy for the Integration of Children, Students and Students of Migrants into the System of Education in the Republic of Slovenia* (Ministry of Education and Sport, 2007), followed by the *Guidelines for the Integration of Children of Immigrants in Kindergartens and Schools* (Institute of Education of the Republic of Slovenia, 2009, 2012). In 2017, the Ministry issued supplemented guidelines for involving children of applicants for international protection in the educational system. These documents set out frameworks for intercultural education and training in Slovenia that follow the principles of equality and respect for diversity, interculturalism, open curriculum and school autonomy, cooperation with parents, and access to education. The main elements of the inclusion of children with a migrant background into the Slovenian educational system are learning the Slovenian language (as the language of schooling) and mother languages and cultures, individual programs of activities, the two-year period of adaptation (learning, teaching, and assessment of knowledge), the creation of a peer help network, cooperation with parents and teacher education. Taken together, these elements should provide appropriate conditions for successful education and achievement of standards of knowledge and inclusion into society.

⁴ Systemic support is important in this context due to Slovenia's predominant public network of elementary and high schools. The percentage of private or private initiatives schools is extremely small, which according to some data are attended by less than one percent of schoolchildren.

⁵ They are enrolled immediately in the regular classes, with an additional Slovenian language course. In elementary school, no prior knowledge of individual subjects (in elementary schools, not in schools) is verified or assessed. The

duration of a project. Thus, when the project ends, and its funding stops, developed activities within the project often close. Alternatively, the possible implementation of additional activities and good practices, which complement the formal protocol for the inclusion of children with a migrant background and contribute to more successful inclusion in education and society in general, is left to the self-initiative and inventiveness of individual schools or teachers and NGOs. In the second year (2019), the aim was the presentation of key examples of good practice in the Slovenian schools and NGOs, which are active in formal and non-formal education and migrant inclusion. The collection of good practices was the base for identifying those examples of good practices that have proven vital to the permanent and successful inclusion of children with a migrant background. In the third year (2020), we presented and discussed some of them in more detail organized all meetings in the spirit of the promotion and strengthening the networking between different actors in the educational field, and identified critical points where the work strategies in the education of children with the migrant background still need further development.

The National Round Table in 2021⁶ was the fourth and the last of the four organized meetings. It had two aims, first, to strengthen future cooperation between various actors in the education of children with a migrant background based on the successful networking attempts during the last three SIRIUS discussions; and second, to combine the lessons and solutions learned over the previous three years. The expected outcome was to form the basis for a joint action strategy that would actively contribute to the existing and new inclusive education policies focused on ensuring equal opportunities for children with migrant backgrounds in education.

The round table discussed three main areas of migrant inclusion into education, which have proven to be important in the successful inclusion of children with a migrant background in education:

subject teachers do this informally, after a short period after the child has been included in the classes - they assess the knowledge in oral or written form to gain insight into the level of their knowledge in the subject (key concepts, minimum standards, knowledge amplitudes, etc., according to the curriculum for each class). Based on these insights the teacher who is responsible for this pupil decides about his/her individual learning plan in the class and supplementary classes (or plan IPA/INA).

⁶ The final National Round Table within the SIRIUS network was held on 8 October 2021 at the Educational Research Institute.

1. Multilingualism and plurilingualism for successful learning and inclusive teaching;
2. Strategies to encourage the active participation of parents with a migrant background in school;
3. The role of cultural mediators and school multipliers by the inclusion of migrants.

The starting points for guidelines and recommendations for policy development regarding the education of children with a migrant background have emerged from a lively and fruitful debate. In addition to a variety of good practices, projects, and initiatives from schools, teachers, and researchers, also positive systemic changes have been made in recent years, especially when it comes to teaching Slovenian as a second foreign language (i.e., a higher number of lessons and systematization of the teacher of Slovenian as a second language). Through the activities in the SIRIUS network (e.g. NRT's methodological framework), three main starting points were made. They were by no means the only possible choice. Still, they proved to be the ones that, together with the systemic support of existing activities and good practices in kindergartens and schools, we can significantly strengthen the field of inclusion of migrants in the long term:

- 1. Preparation and creation of multilingualism and multiculturalism-friendly school environment;**
- 2. Possibility of permanent employment for a “multiplier” in kindergartens and schools in the education of children with the migrant background;**
- 3. Development of systemic support for the inclusion of parents with a migrant background.**

1. Preparation and creation of multilingualism and multiculturalism-friendly school environment

Compared to multilingual practices in the past, modern multilingualism is a global phenomenon that is much more visible and diverse and is present in different parts of the world, social classes, professions, and socio-cultural activities. Furthermore, with the global technological development, multilingualism is no longer limited to oral and written forms of communication and language use. Its development is marked by a multimodal, sometimes even instant practice, daily taking place over

long distances and increasingly in the virtual environment. Definitions of multilingualism have also changed over time. In the past, it used to be seen as harming the cognitive and emotional development of the individual. Today, it is perceived in a strongly positive sense as an individual's continuous, dynamic ability to master two or more languages, the benefits of which are reserved for the individual and inclusive society.⁷

Multilingualism is also considered one of the main pillars of the shared European space. It emphasizes the importance of respecting the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe as a primarily diverse community and takes into account social conditions created by the intensive modern migration processes and mobility within the EU countries.

In official documents on education, European institutions encourage their members to develop multilingual and whole-school approaches, including languages of schooling, foreign languages, and the languages of the home environment of all pupils and their parents and the wider school and local community.⁸

The process of recognising the importance of developing an individual's multilingual ability in the school environment is most often centred around three approaches that should be constantly present in the learning process either as pedagogical approaches or communication practices: *multilingualism*

⁷ Cf. Wei, Li, Dewaele, Jean-Marc and Housen, Alex. "Introduction: Opportunities and challenges of bilingualism" In *Opportunities and Challenges of Bilingualism* edited by Li Wei, Jean-Marc Dewaele and Alex Housen, 1–12. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110852004.1>; Cenoz, Jasone. "Defining Multilingualism." *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 33 (2013): 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026719051300007X>; Aronin, Larissa, and Singleton, David. Multilingualism as a new linguistic dispensation. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 5 (2008): 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.2167/ijm072.0>.

⁸ Cf. Beacco Jean-Claude, and Byram Michael. *From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education: Guide for the development of language education policies in Europe*. Strasbourg, 2007. Beacco, Jean-Claude, Byram, Michael, Cavalli, Marisa, Coste, Daniel, Egli Cuenat, Mirjam, Goullier, Francis, and Panthieret, Johanna. *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2016. Coste, Daniel, Moore, Danièle, and Zarate, Geneviève. *Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence: with a Foreword and Complementary Bibliography*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2009. Council of Europe. *Council recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages* (2019/C 189/03). Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2019. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2019.189.01.0015.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2019:189:TOC; Council of Europe. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume*. Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2001, 2018, 2020. www.coe.int/lang-cefr; Council of Europe. *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2020. <https://rm.coe.int/prems-007021-rfcdc-competences-for-democratic-culture-and-the-importan/1680a217cc>

(enabling the learning of different languages of all participants in the learning process), *plurilingualism, plurilingual approaches* (developing the ability to use a vast repertoire of linguistic and cultural resources for the purpose of communication and interaction with interlocutors from different backgrounds and contexts by continuously enriching the repertoire); *translanguaging, translanguaging practices* (enabling the development and use of complex discursive practices in the pedagogical process, which serve as an aid to achieving standards of knowledge of both subject-specific and a high level of language skills, and include free use of the languages of all participants, thus promoting unproblematic communication in the school environment).

In the Slovenian education system, the school is still primarily understood as a monolingual space (of standard Slovenian). The idea of multilingualism is most often present only in foreign language teaching or as an element of enriching the subject matter, but not as part of everyday school life, which consists of speakers of various Slovenian dialects and many other languages. Furthermore, using different languages in teaching is often misinterpreted as a violation of Article 6 of the Basic School Act (ZOSn)⁹. The notions of the harmful effects of multilingualism on the first language/language of instruction are still ingrained in some school environments. However, multilingualism in Slovenia has become much more tangible than in the past.¹⁰ It has recently become one of the main reasons for the perceived greater linguistic diversity in Slovenian schools, primarily due to the professional attention towards the projects in connection to it. Yet, it is also perceived as an obstacle, a burden that the schools face, since it requires teachers and school management to have a different view of the participants in the pedagogical process. The lack of understanding about the bilingual/multilingual potential of speakers whose second language is Slovenian and the ongoing widespread general dislike of multilingual and multicultural perspectives in pedagogical approaches visible in the Slovenian school environment are also a reflection of the broader social and political

⁹ Article 6 (language of instruction) of ZOSn: “The language of instruction in primary school is Slovenian. The language of instruction in primary schools in the language of the national community is Italian, while in bilingual primary schools it is Slovenian and Hungarian. In primary schools in areas inhabited by members of the Slovenian nation and members of the Italian national community and defined as ethnically mixed areas, pupils in schools with Slovenian as the language of instruction are required to learn Italian, and pupils in schools with Italian as the language of instruction are required to learn Slovenian.” Available at: <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO448>.

¹⁰ JeŠt – Languages Matter (Slovenian consortium project of three Slovenian universities, National Education Institute Slovenia, two institutes, secondary, primary schools and kindergartens): <https://jeziki-stejejo.si/en/>. LISTIAC – Linguistically Sensitive Teaching (with the participation of Faculty of Education from University of Ljubljana and Ministry of Education from Slovenia; consortium leader in Sweden) – development of evaluation tools for language sensitivity in teaching (including non-language subjects). Available at: www.listiac.org/home.

context (e.g. parliamentary questions for the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports on the unlawfulness, unconstitutionality, inappropriateness of including foreign, socially less desirable languages, such as Albanian or Russian, in classes or the school environment where Slovenian is to be spoken and taught). This circumstance is also evident in the local community or the school context itself (e.g. the adverse reaction of the school staff and parents to the exposure to a multilingual perspective). In school settings with fewer migrants, the lack of direct experience with multilingualism may be a reason for misunderstanding.

Last but not least, in the absence of language-sensitive teaching, inadequate multilingual policy and general notions of multilingualism, which favour socially desirable languages and do not recognise the benefits of systematically developing an individual's first language, contribute to the negative perception of multilingualism and multiculturalism. An example of this is the promotion of learning only foreign languages, which are traditionally recognised as socially valuable and desirable (English, German, French). In contrast, the languages, which are primarily brought into the Slovenian school space by children with migrant background and Roma and are their mother tongue, are taught in minimal conditions or not at all.

When it comes to implementing the multilingual and plurilingual paradigm, it is, therefore, essential how we prepare the school environment and how we raise the awareness of its actors (both school staff and pupils and their parents), how we establish a non-threatening way of communicating with each other when addressing this sensitive area and how we adequately train the pedagogical and professional staff to develop a multilingual environment.¹¹

Under current legislation, schools can formally highlight and visibly implement their multilingual and multicultural perspective. Emphasis should be placed on support activities that enable this:

a) Direct involvement of all languages that are present in the school/kindergarten, in the annual work plan, vision, presentation of the school, and communication

¹¹ Successful whole-school approaches and models for developing a multilingual environment have been developed in recent years by the aforementioned JeŠt and LISTIAC projects of the European Social Fund, while the SIRIUS project with its consultations by different stakeholders has successfully placed multilingualism at the heart of discussions on the inclusion of children with migrant background in education.

Recognition of multilingual and multicultural everyday life in the school environment can be successfully reinforced in school with **visual messages in different spaces** (e.g. various inscriptions/records in the languages of all students and staff, which may include welcome, encouragement and addresses). It is also vital that a school with a multilingual and multicultural perspective also **formally has** concrete activities to develop a multilingual environment in its annual work plan and educational plan.¹²

b) Clear and active role of the school management in supporting the multilingual school perspective

The school management significantly contributes to shaping and supporting the multilingual perspective of the school with active and, above all, regular public communication with different groups. Communication is adapted to the type of audience and circumstances and always includes a clear idea of developing **a sensibility for multilingualism**. It is also based on research results that support the positive effects of integrating multilingualism in education and includes positive examples from the school environment. Its addressing strategy indicates the benefits of the school's support of the multilingual perspective (due to the positive impact on students' achievements and interpersonal relationships). It clearly states that a multilingual perspective does not compromise the school's compliance with the legislation (the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, the Organisation and Financing of Education Act, etc.). Some examples of such communication are regular interviews with different pupils (new pupils, class communities), addressing the school community, regular professional discussions with the teaching, counseling, and technical staff, and communication with parents, the school council, and the parent council.

The active role of the management in the multilingual school perspective is also manifested as (a) active support to those experimental forms and action research of the pedagogical practice carried out by the teachers at school that contains multilingual and multicultural approaches and facilitates mutual learning from staff, and as (b) support in providing opportunities for developing the first

¹² An example of good practice is the Livada elementary School, where the method of equipping school premises is an integral part of the comprehensive implementation of multilingual and multicultural perspective (<http://livada-lj.splet.arnes.si>).

language to those pupils whose language of instruction is different from their first language (i.e. helping to organise the teaching of first languages).

At the same time, the school should also provide **systemic and professional support** to develop a multilingual and multicultural environment successfully. The school/management needs this to systematically implement such a perspective regardless of whether the school has had previous experience with multilingualism and multiculturalism that would help establish its practice.

The preparation of **basic recommendations or guidelines for creating a supportive multilingual environment** could be one of the primary forms of systemic support. They could include the results of national projects that developed successful approaches and pedagogical practices (JeŠT, LISTIAC, SIMS, *Le z drugimi smo (Only with others we are)* project) and the possibility of formal inclusion with the schools that actively took part. Furthermore, we should search for systemic solutions for (a) the training and further training of the teaching staff (e.g. the KATIS system), which a “multilingual and multicultural school could carry out”, (b) the recruitment of specialist staff (multipliers, intercultural mediators), and (c) funding to direct the necessary activities (e.g. first language lessons).¹³

There is also a strong need for a systemic ensuring of a variety of relevant materials in the pupil’s first languages available in school libraries, including a sufficient amount of literature, different types of dictionaries (language or terminology dictionaries, field-specific or pictorial dictionaries, etc.) and textbooks in various languages.

2. The possibility of long-term employment of a “multiplier” in kindergartens and schools attended by children with a migrant background

Multipliers and their contribution to the education of children with a migrant background have already proved to be very successful. The suspension of a multiplier’s position in school or its partial

¹³ The publication of recommendations for working with immigrant pupils (*Priporočila za delo z učenci priseljenci*) that was created within the already mentioned LISTIAC project is similar to this idea. <https://jeziki-stejejo.si/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Priporocila-za-delo-z-ucenci-priseljenci.pdf>

implementation due to the end of the project's financing has been a significant step backward. However, some schools or kindergartens were able to provide funding and preserve this position.

From 2016 to 2021, the *Izzivi medkulturnega sobivanja* project (*Challenges of Intercultural Coexistence*)¹⁴ carried out several activities concerning the inclusion of pupils with a migrant background in education. A multiplier's formal position¹⁵ in schools or kindergartens was one of its outcomes. Professionals in the role of multipliers carried out direct activities with children with a migrant background and their parents. They provided training for professional staff in kindergartens and primary and secondary schools with content and activities that contribute to the successful inclusion of children with a migrant background.¹⁶ However, when the project ended, so did the funding for multipliers. The continuity and promotion of this thriving practice were mainly stopped or left to the enthusiasm and financial capacity of individual schools or kindergartens. The schools involved in the project noted: "Although the position of a professional for teaching Slovenian as a second/foreign language was systemized this year, it will be difficult for the professional also to assume the role of a multiplier; this position was certainly the driving force and the main link for carrying out the activities at the level of the institution, between institutions and in the wider local environment."¹⁷

We should point out that 15 schools and more than 50 schools and kindergartens took part in The Challenges of Intercultural Coexistence project (SIMS), a significant number in the Slovenian context. Nevertheless, this is still a tiny proportion of educational institutions in Slovenia,¹⁸ so this type of organisation should be encouraged. It would ensure the same level of support in integrating children with a migrant background in every school and kindergarten.¹⁹

¹⁴ <http://www.medkulturnost.si/>.

¹⁵ A detailed description of the multiplier's tasks is available at <http://www.medkulturnost.si/en/program/#3a9480a9ff21d397c> in section: *Training professionals, professional development of teachers working on the project, and other accompanying professional activities*.

¹⁶ For intercultural coexistence in kindergartens, schools and local environments (*Za medkulturno sobivanje v vrtcih, šolah in lokalnih okoljih*). The final publication of The Challenges of Intercultural Coexistence project, page 5.

¹⁷ For intercultural coexistence in kindergartens, schools and local environments (*Za medkulturno sobivanje v vrtcih, šolah in lokalnih okoljih*). The final publication of The Challenges of Intercultural Coexistence project, page 79.

¹⁸ There is around 1,000 public and private kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in Slovenia (<https://paka3.mss.edus.si/registriweb/default.aspx>).

¹⁹ The most appropriate solution for the presented proposal should be explored and introduced to the extent possible. It should also be considered whether the multiplier should be employed based on the quota of migrant pupils or as a part of a team of professionals (psychologists, social workers or pedagogues). According to Article 43 of the Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of the primary school program, at least 9 pupils are required for the systemisation of 0,25% of the professional's position.

In the past, national round tables and meetings within the SIRIUS²⁰ network pointed out that one obstacle, in particular, prevents inclusion. The problem is that the professional or the teacher (e.g. a teacher of Slovenian language) who directly participated in integrating children with a migrant background was often perceived as “the only person at the school responsible for those children”. Such practices can significantly negatively impact children’s educational performance, and multipliers or recently systemised teachers of Slovenian as a second language could face a similar situation. Therefore, it would be reasonable that teachers and education professionals would receive regular in-service training on intercultural competencies and raising awareness about migrations, together with a systematisation of a new professional or pedagogical position in education. For example, this was successfully carried out in the context of seminars organised within the *Le z drugimi smo* project and the affiliate project of the *Izzivi medkulturnega sobivanja*²¹ project.

3. Development of systemic support for the inclusion of parents with a migrant background

Parents are essential in the educational process, along with the pupils and teachers. Their role is even more significant when integrating children with migrant background into education. Educational policies and systemic solutions in this area should, therefore, not consider the involvement of parents in the education of children with a migrant background separately but as an integral part of the same process.

- a) **Setting up the strategy and systemic support (recommendations, guidelines and projects) and intentional and strategic networking of kindergartens and schools with local NGOs to ensure comprehensive support in integrating children with migrant background in education.**

²⁰ SIRIUS – Policy Network on Migrant Education, <https://www.pei.si/raziskovalna-dejavnost/projekti/sirius/>.

²¹ The “Only with others we are” project was held from 2016 to 2021 by the Slovenian Migration Institute at the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) and Educational Research Institute. Five seminars on five different topics were carried out with the aim to, among others, develop intercultural competencies and sensitisation regarding migration (How to live diversity: the inclusion of migrants, Slovenian language and intercultural dialogue (*Živeti raznolikost: vključevanje priseljencev, slovenščina in medkulturni dialog*); Challenges of modern society and school (*Izzivi sodobne družbe in šola*); Intercultural relations and integration (*Medkulturni odnosi in integracija*); Zero tolerance towards violence: challenges and issues (*Ničelna toleranca do nasilja: izzivi in problemi*); Respectful communication and conflict resolution (*Spoštljiva komunikacija in reševanje konfliktov*). The seminars addressed selected topics from conceptual and theoretical designs to the presentation and implementation of successful practices backed by experts, researchers and teachers across the entire education vertical as well as by NGO workers (<https://lezdrugimismo.si/>).

Based on the presented good practices and the findings of past meetings within the SIRIUS network,²² there are some thriving activities resulting from the networking of schools with the local environment and NGOs.²³ The Daily Centre of the Association for Developing Voluntary Work Novo Mesto (*Društvo za razvijanje prostovoljnega dela Novo mesto*, DPRD) is one of the good practices.²⁴ In addition to the programs for children organized in close cooperation with local schools attended by the same children, the Centre also carries out programs for adults and parents. It carries out different programs for children with a migrant background and adults with the help of cultural mediators²⁵ (individual activities and group activities, Slovenian courses, etc.),²⁶ who used to be the participants in the first place. This practice points to the significant role of a supportive environment that has enabled children and their parents with a migrant background to take an essential and active part in society. Successful inclusion often helps overcome stereotypical approaches to migrants as just passive users.

b) Establishment of working groups within parent councils to support the inclusion of parents and children with a migrant background

“Parent councils”²⁷ also play an essential role in kindergartens and schools as they contribute to the quality of life at school. They can significantly participate in the inclusion of migrant parents and

²² SIRIUS – Policy Network on Migrant Education, <https://www.pei.si/raziskovalna-dejavnost/projekti/sirius/>.

²³ Schools or kindergartens can support each other by networking with other schools and kindergartens in their local environment. One example of good practice is the Maks Durjava Maribor Elementary School, which cooperates with primary and secondary schools and kindergartens in the local environment, bringing together children with migrant background from different institutions (learning Slovenian as a foreign language, professional assistance that multipliers offer to teachers, non-formal education activities during school holidays, etc.). More available here: https://www.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SIRIUS_NRT2020_FrisLozej.pdf). But they can also establish mutual cooperation with cultural associations, such as with the Institute for African Studies within the “Only with others we are” project.

²⁴ <http://www.drustvospm.si/drustvo-za-razvijanje-prostovoljnega-dela-novo-mesto>.

²⁵ The role of the cultural mediator is to translate in sense of mediate between the culture of the children and parents with a migrant background and the cultural environment in which they live. The cultural mediator not only translate but also checks the understanding and improves the understanding of this information in various cases by sharing the information. [example of good practice at the DPRD Novo Mesto \(Primer dobre prakse DPRD Novo mesto\): https://www.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/dobra_praksa_NM.pdf](https://www.pei.si/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/dobra_praksa_NM.pdf)

²⁶ In their work, the Centre organises individual activities (learning support for children, learning of Slovenian language; informing and counselling, advocacy, and group activities are also provided). As part of group activities, adults can learn the Slovenian language, or participate in activities for improving their competitiveness in the labour market, acquiring new knowledge and skills, raising social capital, expand of social networks, and promoting intercultural dialogue.

²⁷ Schools in Slovenia are based on the tripartite/triangle relation principle: Teacher-student-parents. Regarding this principle and together with the strengthening of the democratic element in the schools, every school also has a “parents’

children into education and, consequently, the wider local environment or society. In many schools, parent councils often establish and set up working groups²⁸ together with the school management and deal specifically with the selected issues or topics (e.g. textbooks, quality monitoring, extracurricular activities, monitoring and implementation of the curriculum, etc.).

Therefore, parent councils should consider establishing working groups **responsible for the inclusion of parents and equal opportunities, ensuring their cooperation with the school** (e.g. a working group for multiculturalism and multilingualism).

c) Workshops and education for parents on intercultural competencies and sensitization to migration topics

In the past, round tables organized within the SIRIUS network often highlighted that one obstacle in the inclusion of children with a migrant background and parents, as observed by schools and kindergartens, is that parents are reluctant to organize joint intercultural activities, or some even disapprove of or have a prejudice against migrants. Since schools and kindergartens often organize further education for parents (e.g. on upbringing, health, addictions, etc.), they could also provide workshops and education on interculturalism and migration.

By actively involving a parent council and cooperating closely with the local environment, practices that go beyond the work of teachers would not only enrich and upgrade the inclusion of children with a migrant background and their parents. A comprehensive approach would also ensure their faster and better inclusion in education, and consequently, migrants would become essential members of the community and broader society.

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council” (from every class one representative), who has an essential role in the school community, proposes, gives an opinion, also decides about some everyday school decisions.

²⁸ Article 66 of the Organisation and Financing of Education Act. Available at: <http://pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO445>.