Sotiris Petropoulos, Roberta Ricucci, Alessia Rosa
[editors]

Pathways to inclusion
in different educational environments

Migrant children and LLL skills within and outside Europe

Pathways to inclusion
in different educational environments

Migrant children and LLL skills within and outside Europe

Edited by
Sotiris Petropoulos, Roberta Ricucci, Alessia Rosa

The publication of this volume was financed
by the European Union Call Reference
N°: H2020-SC6-MIGRATION-2018-2019-2020
Grant Agreement N° 101004807

Indice

Introduction

Pathways to inclusion in different educational environments. Migrant children and LLL skills within and outside Europe

Sotiris Petropoulos, Roberta Ricucci, Alessia Rosa

In 2015 Europe experienced an unprecedented flow of migrants and refugees through her borders. Though assessments of integration tools and practices have been the focus of academics and policy makers for decades, this new development has further enhanced the push for relevant explorations. How can one state or the European Union per se achieve the integration of "the Others", people with migratory background and in most occasions with experiences of different cultural and social contexts.

This edited volume encapsulates the enriched discourse developed throughout the implementation of "Key Inclusive Development Strategies for LifeLongLearning" (KIDS4ALLL) project funded through the Horizon Program (H2020-SC6-MIGRATION-2020)[1]. Based on the various activities implemented under KIDS4ALLL, significant data and knowledge have been generated, with this edited volume enclosing a significant part of the academic discussions of multifaceted dimensions and transformative potential initiated.

KIDS4ALLL focused on the complex tapestry of migration and education. In an era marked by unprecedented global mobility, the project dived in to address the integration challenges faced by migrant children within

---

1 *Grant-holding institution*: UniTo, Italy [Prof. Roberta Ricucci – PI; Sotiris Petropoulos – Deputy PI]. *Corsotium partners*: Belgium (SIRIUS Policy Network); Bulgaria (Foundation for Access to Rights); Germany (University of Jena); Greece (University of Peloponnese); Hungary (Tarki Social Research Institute); Israel (Levinsky College of Education); Italy (in addition to the University of Turin, University of Padua, INDIRE, Ars Media srl); Malta (Institute for Education); Norway (Oslo Metropolitan University); Spain (University of Barcelona and University of Girona); Turkey (Koç University).

the educational milieu, through the employment of the expertise and know-how of diverse stakeholders spanning academic institutions, civil society organizations, policymakers, and educators from across borders.

Central to the vision of KIDS4ALLL is the conviction that education is the cornerstone of social cohesion and individual empowerment. Guided by principles of equity and inclusion, KIDS4ALLL created a learning eco-system that transcends the boundaries of formal, non-formal, and informal education. At the cornerstone of the project's found lifelong learning competences grounded in knowledge acquisition, skills training, and attitude transfer.

KIDS4ALLL's learning method was envisaged to represent a paradigm shift in educational pedagogy – a departure from traditional models towards a more collaborative and co-creative approach. Drawing inspiration from contemporary educational theory and best practices, the method integrates three Key Inclusive Development Strategies (KIDS) towards Lifelong Learning (LLL). These strategies serve as guiding pillars, illuminating the path towards the holistic development of both learners and educators alike.

The first strategy focuses on fostering competences related to the eight (8) key areas of lifelong learning, aiming at nurturing the intellectual, emotional, and social growth of (migrant) children. By providing targeted support across various domains, KIDS4ALLL seeks to empower children to navigate the complexities of modern life with confidence and resilience.

Simultaneously, the second strategy is dedicated to enhancing the methodological competences of educators, recognizing their pivotal role as catalysts for change within the educational landscape. Through inclusive teaching practices and intercultural dialogue, educators are empowered to create inclusive learning environments that celebrate diversity and promote mutual understanding.

Integral to the KIDS4ALLL project is the concept of peer-to-peer learning through a buddy-system collaboration approach. By harnessing the power of peer interactions, the project seeked to create a supportive network where children can learn from one another's experiences and perspectives. This collaborative approach not only fosters academic growth but also promotes empathy, respect, and cultural appreciation among learners.
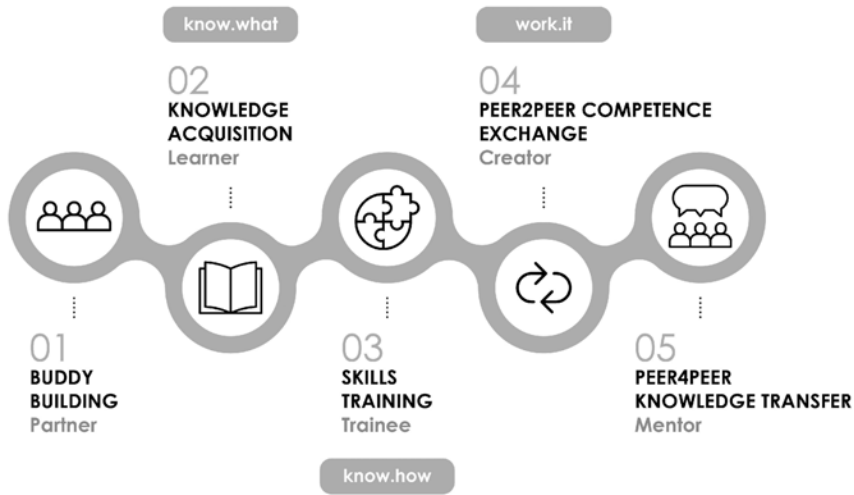
Figure 1: KIDS4ALLL learning method design

In more practical terms, KIDS4ALLL intervention was structured around an electronic platform that enclosed all produced materials and tools. At its core the platform is hosting a great series of Learning Units (LUs), more than 64 in fact, organized around the 8 Lifelong Learning Competences. These LUs are covering thematic educational units with a duration of 1-2 hours each, consisting of theoretical parts, areas inspiring interactions and problematizations, and, most importantly, requests of hands-on work from each buddy pair. KIDS4ALLL platform also includes a series of guides and inspirational videos for both students as well as educators. For enhancing accessibility all materials were translated in all partners' languages as well as other languages (covering needs of people with migratory background), while in response to the Ukrainian refugees flows the consortium opted for translating the materials also into Ukrainian.

At its essence, KIDS4ALLL embodies the transformative potential of education as a catalyst for social change and human flourishing. By creating inclusive learning communities where diversity is embraced and celebrated, its approach is set to lay the foundation for a more just and equitable society.

The integration of minors through educational activities stands as a focal point in numerous studies and projects. Given that engagement in learning environments is customary for most young individuals, directing attention

towards methods and practices facilitating integration processes within school environments bears significant benefits, particularly concerning broader universal application.

The overarching objective of KIDS4ALLL was work around a spectrum of educational challenges delineated in Eurydice data (2019). These challenges encompass aspects directly associated with the migratory process, such as adaptation to new environments, rules, and values, as well as factors intertwined with the socio-economic and political fabric of host countries, including policies. Additionally, they extend to issues concerning student participation in formal, non-formal, and informal educational contexts, such as language provision, learning support, and home/family-school co-operation.

Drawing upon a wealth of research highlighting the advantages of collaborative methods in education, such as buddy systems, and technology-enhanced environments, including gamification, KIDS4ALLL endeavored to create a learning tool embedded within the nexus of educational inclusion, competency assessment, and collaborative learning.

As UNESCO (2005, p. 12) underscores, children exhibit a positive response to diversity, viewing differences as opportunities for enriching learning. Council of Europe recommendations (2018) further accentuate the benefits of collaborative learning environments characterized by shared resources, enriching participants' skills through interactions and understanding of diverse perspectives. Likewise, the World Economic Forum (WEF-report: Schools of the Future, 2020) advocated for problem-based and collaborative learning as integral components of future schooling paradigms.

Research by Sapon-Shevin et al. (2002) emphasizes the positive impact of cooperative learning and inclusion, particularly the dimension of creativity within such approaches. The efficacy of buddy system approaches has been underscored as best practice in various global contexts, as evidenced by various studies (see for example Adams, 2016; Boyle et al., 2012). Indeed, recent studies have reaffirmed the positive effects of buddy system approaches on attendance, classroom interaction, and beyond, extending benefits even to youth with a history of criminal activity, thereby promoting societal integration (O'Donnell, 2008). Such positive effects are not diminished and in many cases can be further enhanced through the use of digital tools such as online discussion forums (Chiu & Hew, 2018) or gamification practices (Duță & Martínez-Rivera, 2015) as such introduction of new technologies in learning processes can facilitate collaborative learning while rendering education more engaging for young people.

In sum, the integration of buddy system approaches into educational processes has emerged as a recognized strategy for promoting collaborative learning, mutual support, and a sense of belonging within learning environments. The project has indeed used an assessment tool based on a counterfactual analysis to understand the effectiveness of the learning method. This was another added value of the project, even if it is recognized that the time required for significant attitude changes and habituation to new skills and behaviors in everyday life is longer than the duration of a single project. However, as a pilot project, the test phase after the evaluation phase could be a good starting point for further reflection and action, always bearing in mind the important network between all educational institutions.

The efficacy of such approaches hinges on effective teacher guidance, emphasis on teamwork skills, and careful structuring of peer interactions to maximize benefits for all participants. To that end, effective training of educators in management and coordination practices is imperative for the success of peer-to-peer systems, particularly in technology-based learning environments (Parsons et al., 2008; Meier, 2021).

The following chapters provide a deeper dive into some of the most important results that the project brought about, offering a rich tapestry of insights, experiences, and innovations generated through KIDS4ALLL. Each contribution offers a unique perspective and a valuable addition to the ongoing dialogue surrounding migrant education and social inclusion.

In Chapter 1 Michela Bongiorno, Caterina Mazza and Giulia Marroccoli focus on the role of soft skills and the transformative role of education in empowering inclusion. Based on the experience of KIDS4ALLL implementation in Italy they explore the importance of the educational context in relation to integration and most importantly the role of soft skills towards that end. In effect they highlight the importance of soft skills in building inclusive and resilient societies, particularly in the context of education. Moreover, they are emphasizing the importance of educators/teachers in understanding and fostering soft skills, alongside knowledge of students' backgrounds, thus offering guidance to educators for developing, observing, and reflecting on soft skills, ultimately enabling them to implement proactive strategies in education.

Chapter 2 emphasizes on the challenging effect of introducing peer learning approaches to traditional educational systems. Giulia Maria Cavaletto, Tanja Schroot and Martina Visentin pose three main research questions on to what extent and how adopting innovative teaching methods leads to changes in performance, development of skills, abilities and rela-

tionships within the classroom, how the social representation influences learning, relationships, skills and abilities and whether diversity among educational settings have a direct effect on the impact of teaching interventions and of inter-professional boundaries.

In their chapter, Michal Meishar, Janice Darmanin, Joanne-Rita Grima and Dolly Eliyahu-Levi, focus on the outcomes of collaboration between teachers and pedagogical experts. Their data are derived from the interaction between school teachers in Israel that had taken part in the pilot phase of KIDS4ALLL and pedagogical experts from the Institute for Education in Malta, while the analysis sheds light on teachers' needs and expectations of opportunities for professional development and, in more practical terms, the effect of Maltese pedagogical experts to the teacher training that took place in Israel as part of KIDS4ALLL implementation.

Chapter 4 moves to a different direction, focusing on the effect of KIDS4ALLL method over migrant students, their peers and educators. Through a cross-country analysis, Anikó Bernát and Luisa Conti assess changes noted in the fields of competence and skill improvement and agency as well as the effect of educational context particularities in terms of openness to innovative teaching methods, infrastructural settings, intangible barriers to integration/participation and the plethora of buddy-system versions applied.

Dolly Eliyahu-Levi, Michal Meishar, Lena de Botton and Roger Campdepadrós (Chapter 5) emphasize on the social integration component of KIDS4ALLL application through a comparative study in the classrooms of Spain and Israel. Having as a starting the base the premises of the pivotal role of education in addressing issues of inequality, alienation, and disparities, in their chapter they take note of the positive effects of emphasis on autonomous collaborative learning, mediation of social and cultural knowledge, and the development of dialogic competence. The chapter highlights the importance of the role of the educator in applying the KIDS4ALLL method while the potential effect of cultural sensitivity and the willingness to address emotional and taboo issues is brought about from the selected comparative approach among two different national contexts.

In their chapter, Martina Giorgi, Simona Rizzari, Tanja Schroot and Sotiris Petropoulos (Chapter 6) shed more light on the role of teachers and educators. They open the discussion on perceived effectiveness of collaborative learning schemes, highlighting the diversity of responses noted in the KIDS4ALLL pilot phase, the potentiality of new technologies to for-

ward competence training and organizational aspects of digital peer education learning schemes.

Chapter 7 directs its attention to the specialized case of integration processes of the newest refugee cycle in Europe, Ukrainian refugees. More specifically, the chapter offers a comparison of activities and results in Bulgaria and Norway with regard to Ukrainian refugees integration. Through their analysis, they highlight the need for solution-oriented approaches, depicting peer-to-peer and buddy system methods of learning, like those used in the KIDS4ALLL project, as very beneficial towards solving the practical problems which refugee children face when entering the classroom under specific conditions.

Marcello Cabria, Renzo Carriero and Alessia Rosa (Chapter 8) focus on the outcomes of the evaluation of KIDS4ALLL pilot and the challenges and opportunities revealed throughout the counterfactual evaluation tools applied. Delivering an evidence-based assessment was a crucial aspect of the project to provide tangible data on the effectiveness of diverse tools implemented across heterogeneous educational environments. For this purpose, and to strengthen the impact assessment, the project team implemented a counterfactual research design. The evaluation of the actions carried out involved two samples (intervention and control groups), with the aim of observing whether the methodologies applied during the KIDS4ALLL's activities have had an impact on its final targets. As a counterfactual-type evaluation imposes rigorous constraints on both the conducted intervention and the working criteria, an in-depth review of empirical limitations influencing observed outcomes, as presented in Chapter 8, provides a solid foundation for refining further analyses in similar contexts.

Chapter 9 highlights main results from the ethnographic research utilized in KIDS4ALLL. Alessia Rosa and Gabriella Taddeo focus on observational research and its capacity to support the understanding of relevant events and participants along with the constructs of interest. In their chapter they analyze the application of ethnographic research tools in combination with a follow-up questionnaire administered to the children involved in the pilot phase and reach to interesting feedback on the experience, conducted in the classroom and in associative contexts. Results presented, derived from a mix of outcomes of social network analysis, ethnographic observations, counterfactual analysis (where applied) and socio-emotional and citizenship competencies questionnaire assessment, highlight the potential importance of interventions such as the KIDS4ALLL approach.

Finally, Sara Mori, Jessica Niewint-Gori and Gabriella Taddeo focus on the use of new technologies and their effect on learning enhancement. Chapter 10 puts at its core IDeAL (Iterative Design for Active Learning) methodology and its benefits of providing a holistic approach combining principles of deep learning with development of transversal competences approaches. According to their analysis, IDeAL, empowered by new digital technologies, can lead to an iterative and cyclical learning process that emphasizes continuous improvement and a growth mindset.

I.
Empowering Inclusion: exploring soft skills and the transformative role of education

Michela Bongiorno, Caterina Mazza, Giulia Marroccoli*

Introduction

The KIDS4ALLL project focuses on addressing key challenges related to the integration of migrant children by exploring strategies and practical tools. This Horizon project grapples with the complexity of inclusion pathways of migrant children and children of migrants, emphasizing the need for a collective effort involving both newcomers and the host society. By acknowledging integration as a multifaceted process, the project underscores the importance of cooperation, exchange of experiences, and the development of essential soft skills, such as dialogic proficiency and the ability to effectively engage with others for promoting the public interest and ensuring sustainable development.

In this context, it advocates for a collaborative approach within society, wherein the education system and the broader educational community of each EU country play a pivotal role. The aim is to foster collaboration between non-migrant and migrant students, encompassing asylum seekers, refugees, and unaccompanied minors. The overarching goal is to strengthen socio-emotional and citizenship competencies among young people, emphasizing the collective responsibility of both the educational system and society at large in facilitating the integration process.

The OECD underlines that "skills such as co-operation, empathy, and tolerance are key for citizens and nations to achieve sustainable development goals and to effectively participate and contribute towards building democratic [and inclusive] institutions" (OECD, 2021, p. 11).

---

* To Michela Bongiorno are due the Introduction and §§ 6, 7. To Caterina Mazza are to be attributed §§ 4, 5 and 8. To Giulia Marroccoli §§ 1, 2 and 3.

Starting from these considerations, it is crucial to reflect on soft skills, especially in relation to citizenship competencies, on their meaning and definition. Throughout the analysis of literature and the main documents by international institutions, we try to define the frame of such a topic. A final focus on observation of competences is provided, in order to stress the role of this practice in supporting students in the process of soft skills acquisition and development.

The contents are organized in three main sections. The first section provides an overview of migratory phenomena, with a detailed analysis of how different migratory backgrounds can impact and shape various educational strategies aimed at fostering the consolidation of soft skills. Additionally, an in-depth analysis box of the Italian context is provided in order to facilitate the understanding of the subsequent book chapters focused on Italy. Building upon this analysis, the main section delves into the theme of inclusion processes and the role of soft skills within them, specifically in educational contexts, going through a definition of those skills. Furthermore, this section provides an overview of educational strategies that can support the enhancement of soft skills. In light of the insights from the first two sections, a focus is then placed on empirical observation as a crucial aspect of promoting inclusion. Observation serves as a potent tool to aid teachers and educators in crafting appropriate educational strategies, and it is also fundamental for monitoring the changes in students' development of soft skills.

1. A time of migrations

Population movements are undeniably among the most prominent features of contemporary societies. Whether it involves regions affected by outbound movements, transit passages, or incoming flows – often a combination of these situations – almost all countries worldwide are now impacted by migratory phenomena. The sharp increase in the numbers of forced migrants strongly illustrates the transformation occurring in recent decades: from fewer than 50 million forced migrants in 2012 to over 108 million in 2022, this figure has more than doubled in the span of ten years (UNHCR, 2022). But it is not solely the statistics on forced migration that outline this shift. The fact that migration is a structural feature in modern societies is also evident from the numbers of foreign residents in numerous countries across the globe.

We can consider these figures with respect to EU and OECD countries, many of which have historically been destinations for considerable migration flows: "These countries are home to a large and increasing number of immigrants, 54 and 141 million foreign-born, respectively, an increase of 20% each over the past decade" (OECD/European Commission, 2023, p. 12). Although the percentages of immigrants and foreign residents may vary greatly between countries, such populations «are growing across EU and OECD countries. Together with their descendants, they account for an increasing share of the total population of the host countries. In the EU, nearly one-quarter of the population aged 15 years and above have at least one foreign-born grandparent» (*ibid.*, p. 16).

Furthermore, examining the mode of entry into host countries reveals that the majority of migration occurs through regular channels. Annually in the EU, nearly 3 million people obtain residence permits, in contrast to roughly 330.000 irregular arrivals recorded in 2022 (*ibid.*). On the one hand, these statistics enable us to grasp the enduring demand for immigration from host countries – a persistent reality, despite recurring economic crises and prevalent rhetoric in many public debates that often oppose the arrival of foreign citizens. On the other, these data indicate a stabilizing trend in migration, particularly evident in the permits issued for family reunification, which significantly contribute to the overall count of regular permits.

It is precisely as the immigrant population settles, becoming a steady presence, that the theme of inclusion emerges with particular strength. In fact, the existence of foreign communities becoming a permanent segment of the host countries' populations draws continuous attention to the outcomes of inclusion processes. Therefore, it is crucial to monitor both the progress made on these pathways and the challenges that lie ahead. Overall, despite notable variations among countries and groups, it can be asserted that over the past decade the situation of numerous immigrant groups within EU and OECD countries has shown improvement across various areas (OECD/European Commission, 2023). Nonetheless, several obstacles still hinder the path toward full inclusion in host societies. These encompass disparities in employment rates, issues of over-qualification and access to labor market *tout court*, a heightened risk of living in poverty, challenges in securing adequate housing, and the pervasive perception of facing significant discrimination. These challenges vividly highlight the obstacles to achieving complete inclusion.

Directing attention to the consequences of inclusion processes becomes particularly vital when examining the circumstances of children and youth,

an aspect intricately linked to the stabilization of migration flows. This becomes especially pertinent when addressing such demographic segments, considering the inherent challenges associated with the migratory experience. Minors, whether they are immigrants themselves, reunited with parents who had previously immigrated, or born in host countries, encounter unique situations intertwined with the migration process – whether directly involving them or concerning their parents.

In general, and even more so for those originating from low-income countries or are forced migrants, migration entails the loss of various resources (De Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020). The diverse forms of capital possessed in the country of origin – such as professional skills – are frequently neither recognized nor easily transferable in the host country, resulting in a decline and loss of status. In addition, one must consider the concrete challenges faced during the initial period abroad, such as unfamiliarity of the new environment, potential hostility from the native population, the lack of knowledge of the local languages and ways of life, and so on. All this contributes to making the experience of migrants, or at least certain categories of them, particularly distinctive. With regard to children and young people, this set of circumstances directly influences the conditions in which they deal with inclusion processes too.

These groups are now significantly present in host countries: in the EU, nearly one in four young people aged 15 to 34 is either foreign-born or has foreign-born parents, where "the native-born account for 10%, of whom 4% have foreign-born parents and 6% one native – and one foreign-born parent. A further 3% are childhood arrivals, while 10% came as adults" (OECD/European Commission, 2023, p. 168). Youths (both native- and foreign-born) with at least one foreign-born parent account for 22 million people in the EU and 60 million in the OECD (*ibid.*). Considering the inherent challenges of the migration experience and the increasing number of minors directly impacted by these circumstances, the need to focus actions and research on supporting inclusion becomes undeniably clear.

2. Children of immigrants: a complex landscape

Defining children of immigrants is not a straightforward operation: we are referring to a diverse population that cannot be univocally categorized. If they have immigrant parents, their specific connection with migration can take different forms: from those who leave their country of origin and join

their parents during school, to those who have born in their parents' destination country or having arrived in early childhood – thus having only indirect knowledge of migration experience, to those who migrate themselves, for example being as unaccompanied foreign minors.

Thinking in generational terms, it is easy to differentiate between the first generation of immigrants and the subsequent generations composed of their children. However, limiting the distinction to just two generations – parents and children, or immigrants and native-born – can oversimplify and disregard the diversity within the children of immigrants' experience. Consequently, to better capture this complexity, classification has evolved further: leading theoretical approaches have proposed a classification based on the age of arrival in the host country, coupled with the child's place of birth.

Setting momentarily aside differences in terms of birthplace and actual migration experience, among the common threads that bind descendants of immigrants we can refer to the concept of "migrancy", whereas it has been argued that "increasing numbers of children are growing up within a social space that we call migrancy" (Seeberg & Gozdziak, 2016, p. 8). We can view this concept as "the socially constructed subjectivity of 'migrant' […], which is inscribed on certain bodies by the larger society in general and legislative practices in particular. […] Very often the inscribed subjectivity of migrancy is not only attributed to those who have migrated" but also to children of immigrants, children who have never moved away from their place of birth. "[M]igrancy has become as important a social category as those classics of the modern era: gender, social class, 'race' and nationality" (Näre, 2013, p. 605, cit. in Seeberg & Gozdziak, 2016, p. 8).

In this sense, a child growing up in 'migrancy' will frequently experience being primarily perceived as belonging to a category of 'migrants', in binary contrast to an often implicit category of 'natives'. When 'migrancy' becomes a primary identification, all other individual or group characteristics appear less significant, and practices that shape children of immigrants' experiences are mainly informed by others' understanding of them as migrants – or, if not migrants per se, at least associated with an otherness linked to the sphere of migration.

In addition to this, as previously mentioned, one must consider the potential challenges associated with being raised in a family that has endured a migration path. Primarily, unlike the majority of the population, immigrant parents have undergone socialization in a different country, thus possessing references distinct from the environment in which their children

grow up and live. Having parents socialized elsewhere certainly constitutes a peculiarity in children's experience. Moreover, the impact of migration on parents' living conditions can also systematically affect their children. Migrants differ from native groups in various aspects such as age, family structure, occupation, and schooling (De Haas, Castles & Miller, 2020). Their social timelines are frequently influenced by migration, impacting the age at which pivotal life events occur – ranging from marriage to childbirth, as well as the acquisition of formal and informal documentation that grant access to various rights (Eve & Perino, 2011). This is where one can tangibly observe the effects of migration on the subsequent generations: they often find themselves concentrated in particular neighborhoods, attending specific schools, and being more prevalent in less qualified professions. Also, social capital can be affected by this overall condition: if networks are built – also – from those in which parents are embedded, the possible, critical influence on the actual relational resources available is clear (*ibid.*).

Having pointed out the specificities pertaining to the different groups falling under the broad category of 'children of immigration', our contribution specifically focuses on one of the most significant areas in terms of inclusion: school and educational pathways.

3. The educational dimension: an essential spotlight

School systems and educational pathways play a fundamental role in shaping the life trajectories of children and young people. While this holds true in general, it becomes an even more relevant dimension concerning children of immigrants and young immigrants themselves. Indeed, it is widely recognized that education stands as one of the primary keys for descendants of immigrants to access pathways leading to upward mobility (Ricucci, 2021; Alba & Holdaway, 2013; Crul et al., 2012). Moreover, it can be argued that education serves as the prerequisite for ensuring equal opportunities and thus paving the way to integration and inclusion: school is a privileged place in which to achieve the essential resources for fostering successful paths. In this sense, the educational institution has long been considered among the areas in which integration and inclusion policies are substantiated, and as such, is the subject of special attention.

At the same time, however, children of immigrants often face greater challenges at school than their native-born peers: numerous studies testify

to often unequal results in their educational attainment levels and performance outcomes. This is partially due to the fact that, as highlighted above, their parents tend to have lower educational credentials than their native counterparts, occupy less qualified and lower-paid professional positions, and may generally provide less support for their children's school careers. Yet, one of the most significant factors contributing to explain such different outcomes is to be found in the functioning of school systems, wherein specific characteristics appear to facilitate, or hinder, the educational inclusion of children of immigrants.

Without claiming to be exhaustive, suffice it to mention some of the main influencing elements. Firstly, the age at which entry into compulsory schooling is envisaged: starting education at a later age makes it more difficult to learn the language. In the second place, when arriving in the host country having already completed years of schooling in the country of origin, school placement guidelines prove to be crucial. At the same time, the presence or absence of school support initiatives is relevant, both from a general point of view and with specific reference to second language learning. The number of classroom hours, determining exposure to the language being learned, significantly influences the educational success of children of immigrants. Limited classroom hours, potentially compensated by heavier homework loads, may further disadvantage them. Moreover, the selection mechanisms adopted within school systems play a crucial role: the age at which students choose their educational path significantly shapes their future trajectories. Earlier selection often increases the likelihood of vocational pathways, potentially reinforcing the segregation of foreign-origin students within specific educational tracks, to the detriment of more specialized profiles.

Focusing on the aspects of educational systems makes it possible to highlight how contextual factors interact with family background and individual characteristics, thus generating different effects that largely depend on the diverse configurations observed in specific contexts. As highlighted by Crul, Schneider, and Lelie (2012, p. 375) «the impact of individual and family-related factors often only becomes apparent in the interplay of specific conditions of the local and national integration contexts». This assertion holds especially true when considering school systems and their influence on the pathways of children from immigrant backgrounds.

Besides, the significance of the school dimension extends beyond mere performance and educational outcomes. It serves as a pivotal social arena for children of immigrants influencing their sense of belonging and inte-

gration into new local communities. This impact, however, can also be critical, as schools might become spaces where children experience profound feelings of not belonging. In this sense, they may also struggle to be included and to feel that they belong in school once they do have access. Once more, the crucial role of politics becomes evident: integration policies are not neutral; they actively shape targeting processes, delineating ingroups and outgroups and directing integration measures towards specific outgroups.

To sum up, various individual factors influence educational inclusion practices, including proficiency in the host country's language and mother tongue, age at arrival, types of migration experiences (or lack thereof), as well as physical and mental health. At the same time, interpersonal factors such as peer connections, family support, and broader social networks exert their influence too. Additionally, school-relevant factors encompass the learning environment, teacher-student interactions, school engagement, school-level assessment, extracurricular activities, and parental involvement within the school community.

In this complex landscape, the role played by key competences for lifelong learning and, more specifically, soft skills emerges. Later in the chapter, we will delve into the specific function of these skills (§ 4 and 5). For now, it is sufficient to highlight their relevance, considering the multifaceted needs and requirements of children of immigrants.

The European Council (2018, p. 1) reminds us of the first principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights: "everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that allow full participation in society and successful transitions in the labor market". Additionally, within the EU Sustainable Development Goals, target no. 4.7 emphasizes the necessity to "ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

While the principle of ensuring the right to quality and inclusive education, training, and lifelong learning for all is evident, the imperative to secure these rights, particularly for the most disadvantaged learners, becomes notably significant. Hence, adopting a lifelong learning approach and harnessing soft skills can serve as crucial additional resources, especially

for children of immigrants. Consider, for instance, how this approach encompasses the improvement of basic skills (literacy, STEM, digital, etc.), together with that of competences in the field of citizenship and cultural diversity, as well as interpersonal and communicative skills. At the same time, the lifelong learning approach supports and encourages active collaboration between different learning contexts (formal, informal, non-formal), while emphasizing the importance of experiences gained through culture, interpersonal networks, animation, volunteering. Bearing in mind what has been highlighted in the previous paragraphs about the complex needs of immigrants' children, as well as the variety of their experiences and starting points, it is easy to see how such an approach can support their inclusion pathways. Most importantly, it should not be forgotten that inclusive education tailored to meet the needs of children of immigrants would lead to broader advantages: establishing effective practices for these groups can ultimately pave the way for best practices benefiting all children.

Box 1.1 – The Italian migration context

Italy has a particularly enduring history with migration. Taking into account both outflows and inflows, population movements have played a pivotal role in Italian development. While the country mainly experienced outward movements for an extended period, between the 1970s and 1980s, the trend began to reverse: incoming flows started to develop significantly, now constituting a structural phenomenon in the Italian landscape. As a matter of fact, immigration appears recurrently already after the World War II, as Colucci (2018, p. 17) highlights "The Italian participation in the conflict, the passage of the Allies, the organization of the Resistance, the process of decolonization, and above all the exceptional movement of refugees, had generated […] conspicuous population movements and arrivals of foreigners on national territory". However, starting from the 1970s, a tangible increase in the foreign population became evident: between 1961 and 1971, the Italian census documented a doubling in the number of foreign residents.

To observe the real turning point of the foreign presence in Italy we will have to wait until the 1980s and, even more, the following decade. Without aiming to provide an exhaustive description of a long and complex period, it is enough to mention that Italy experienced three major migratory waves during the 20th century. The first wave witnessed the arrival of migrants from the African continent (pri-

marily Senegal, Eritrea, and Somalia), the Middle East, Asia (especially the Philippines), and South America. Subsequently, other nationalities became notable, with Chinese, Peruvians and Nigerians among the prominent groups. Then, starting in the early 1990s and continuing in subsequent decades, inflows from Eastern Europe began reaching the peninsula, with immigrants from Yugoslavia, Albania, and Romania that were emerging as the fastest growing foreign groups. This brief overview already reveals one of the most significant aspects of immigration in Italy: migratory polycentrism. It reflects a diverse plurality of origins without any single group quantitatively dominating the overall foreign presence (Colucci, 2018).

In the early 2000s the foreign presence in Italy has definitely established: the immigrant population was expanding at an average annual rate of nearly 14% – an extraordinary figure compared to the already substantial rate of the previous decade (approximately 5%) (Bonifazi, 2013). In this regard, the first decade of the 2000s marks a phase in which the immigrant presence approaches the dimensions already seen in long-established European countries of immigration, such as Great Britain, France and Germany (Livi Bacci, 2010).

Nowadays, we are observing a process of structural stabilization regarding immigration and the foreign presence. "Extension of length of stay, gender balance, family reunification, increased numbers of immigrants with children, and a heightened number of foreign origin students in schools are some of the characteristics outlining a deep-seated phenomenon. Immigrants have become undoubtedly part of the country's socio-economic fabric" (Marroccoli & Schroot, 2021, p. 43).

In addition to this overall scenario, one cannot overlook the emergence of the so-called "refugee crisis": between 2014 and 2015 a new phase has begun, primarily centered around the welcoming and management of asylum seekers (cf. §1). The public debate's focus on these arrivals has remained persistent. Matters such as managing the influx, and the subsequent welcoming, combating illegal immigration, and efforts to prevent departures at the source have fuelled intense political clashes among major Italian parties. Furthermore, the attention directed towards these categories of migrants is especially pertinent in the context of our contribution. Children and minors who arrive through these channels represent some of the most vulnerable groups.

That being said, the foreign population in Italy has now settled at around 5 million inhabitants, accounting for over 8% of the total

population, and coming from more than 190 countries, particularly East-Central Europe, North Africa, Latin-America and South-East Asia (IDOS, 2023). Aside from indicating a slightly higher percentage of female presence (51% based on provisional 2022 data), the foreign population remains younger than its native counterpart, with over 20% of the total population being minors (*ibid.*). And it is precisely this percentage of immigrant children, or minors of foreign origin, that occupies an increasingly prominent place in Italian school classrooms.

Although the presence of pupils with a migratory background has been decreasing for a few years now, «for the 2021/2022 school year, records indicate 872,360 foreign students enrolled in Italy out of a total of 8,261,011 students. Compared to the previous year, foreign student numbers showed a slight recovery, with a 0.8% increase (+6,972 students), contrasting the average decline of 1.2% (-102,280 students) among all enrolled students» (*ibid.*, p. 233). Therefore, the proportion of foreign students in the overall school population is higher than that within the resident population, approximately standing at 10.6%.

These statistics indicate both the numerical significance of the phenomenon and the clear stabilization of the foreign population in Italy – considerations that gain further relevance when considering the figure about young people of foreign origin born in the country (see table 1.1).

As the foreign presence in the country increases, Italian schools start to deal with the children of immigrants among their student population. From the very beginning, as early as the 1980s, the Italian school integration model was defined as "inclusive" (Ricucci, 2018). Two main elements characterize it: firstly, the inclusion of foreign pupils within regular classes, thus avoiding the establishment of differential classes; secondly, the intercultural perspective, present from the outset and "intended as a founding value of democracy and a means of combating racism and anti-Semitism" (*ibid.*, p. 115). Furthermore, the Italian model ensures the implementation of the right to education for all, irrespective of their residency status or citizenship. These elements are associated with the issuing of clear directives, which intend to guide the concrete practices implemented in schools.

School grade	Enrolled Students	%	Of which foreign	%	Of which born in Italy	%	% Of foreigners out of total	% Born in Italy over foreigners
Pre-school	1.319.456	16.0	154.426	17.7	128.293	21.8	11.7	83.1
Primary school	2.526.732	30.6	312.713	35.8	230.090	39.1	12.4	73.6
Lower secondary school	1.687.186	20.4	188.234	21.6	125.868	21.4	11.2	66.9
Upper secondary school	2.727.637	33.0	216.987	24.9	104.735	17.8	8.0	48.3
Total	**8.261.011**	**100.0**	**872.360**	**100.0**	**588.986**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**67.5**

Table 1.1 - Italy. Total and foreign students by school grade and birth
(school year 2021/2022)
Source: Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS

Consistent with insights from studies and research on the subject, ministerial directives have progressively aimed to enhance the tools supporting the acquisition of Italian language skills. At the same time, measures were implemented to counteract segregation in schools, introducing a 30% threshold for students without Italian citizenship. More generally, one of the most recent directives on the integration of foreign pupils addresses ten key issues, these include: (1) Reaffirm the right to immediate inclusion of newly arrived pupils. (2) Increase awareness on the importance of early childhood education. (3) Counteracting school delay. (4) Supporting the learning of Italian L2. (5) Enhancing linguistic diversity. (6) Preventing school segregation. (7) Involve families in their children's educational project.

This list outlines the principles that the Italian educational institution consistently strives for regarding the inclusion of foreign students. However, the enactment of national standards has not automatically translated into homogeneous practices across the peninsula. It was primarily the implementation of school autonomy that complicated the standardization of practices, whereas this autonomy grants schools extensive room for innovation and flexibility in shaping educational and teaching activities – including actions aimed at foreign students (Ricucci, 2018). There is thus an «increase in the heterogeneity of practices and a high degree of discretion, […] which

has not guaranteed all foreign pupils the same opportunities for inclusion, support, and guidance» (*ibid.*, p. 116).

In this sense, as evidenced by recent research (Santagati & Colussi, 2022), the overall situation of pupils with a migratory background (including both those born in the territory and those who arrive there later) continues to show some critical issues. These figures emphasize the importance of maintaining a strong focus on the educational trajectories of immigrant children.

_____

4. The relevance of soft skills for inclusion

Starting from the complexity of the diverse migration phenomenon highlighted into the previous paragraphs (§ 1 and 2), the KIDS4ALLL project tried to define strategies and practical instruments which could help to overcome integration challenges for migrant children and to build an inclusive and resilient society. In this perspective, the project moved from the fundamental idea that integration, as well as social inclusion, is a two-way process of adaptation of both the newcomer and the host society. In particular, the concept of inclusion that has been adopted within the project is related to a comprehensive approach which encompasses both relational aspects and physical, psychological, and occupational ones. In fact, some indicators chosen to attest the process of inclusion within the KIDS4ALLL project are well-being, full access to resources and activities, social participation, equal opportunities, acceptance, and recognition. In this regard, social inclusion could be supported and strengthened throughout education, as underlined by various studies (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2018a). Education can be conceived as «a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning» (UNESCO, 2005, p. 12).

However, various research on migrant children usually differentiates between those born in the country of immigration of their parents and those who came during the school period (Block et al., 2015; Pastoor, 2016). This differentiation, which is then related to diverse needs of children with different migratory backgrounds, could explain different outcomes within groups and between groups. As also underlined into the previous paragraph (§ 2), migrant children can't be treated as a homogeneous group. Instead, it is important to understand the diverse needs of migrant students and de-

velop an appropriate educational support, considering the different national, cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, including their educational experiences in both native country and host one (OECD, 2019, p. 22). Then, educational inclusion of migrant children can successfully take place if all (or at least most of) their needs are addressed.

Even if a unique or best model for supporting inclusion of migrant children in educational contexts does not exist, various research showed that schools identified as offering a *holistic model* were able to respond to the psychosocial and emotional needs of their students, and not only to their learning needs (Arnot & Pinson, 2005; Pugh, Every & Hattam, 2012). The educational holistic model is multidimensional and supports migrant students in learning the host country's language and developing their mother tongue, overcoming limited education, and understanding the new education system. Moreover, this model, which involves the whole educational setting, helps migrant children to strengthen their emotional and communication skills (OECD, 2019, p. 33). In addition, the holistic model allows teachers and educators to engage all students, both native and migrant, and to work together to build a shared and inclusive path of growth for all children. In this way the experiences that children have in educational contexts could be a stimulus to reproduce in society the dynamics of growth and shared construction of a democratic and resilient society.

In this perspective, to create an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable society, it is appropriate to enhance and develop soft skills, which are also the basis of citizenship and key competences for lifelong learning as defined by EU Commission in 2006 and then revised in 2018. The eight key competences are considered essential to get «a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion» (European Commission, 2019, p. 4). Moreover, the importance of soft skills has been recognized by several international bodies, including the Council of Europe and the OECD, as a critical factor in addressing the challenges of today's world and promoting an inclusive and democratic society (Council of Europe, 2018; OECD, 2018c).

It should be remembered that following the summit of European Heads of State or Government in Warsaw in 2005, the Council of Europe has sought to promote a democratic culture among the citizens of its member countries and to set common goals in education to citizenship. To this end, the Council has developed a Competence Model, which was unanimously welcomed at the Conference of Ministers of Education of European Countries held in Brussels in 2016. This model consists of 20 competences that

are considered pivotal in order to train young Europeans as aware, active and responsible citizens to ensure open, tolerant and multicultural democratic societies. These competences are divided into values, attitudes, skills and knowledge, and critical understanding, as represented in the butterfly diagram below.

– *Values* include the respect for human dignity and rights; cultural diversity; democracy; justice; equal; equality and legality;
– *Attitudes* refer to openness to diversity; respect for others; responsibility; tolerance;
– *Skills* are related to autonomous learning; critical and analytical thinking; empathy; flexibility; multilingual communication; cooperation and conflict resolution;
– *Knowledge and critical understanding* are proper to both the individual and the collective sphere.
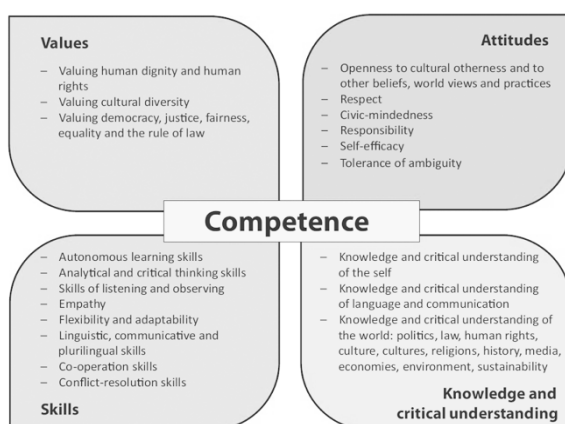
Figure 1: The 20 competences included in the CoE competence model
Source: Reference Framework Competence for Democratic Culture, Volume 1, p. 38

The OECD has also carried out interesting studies and research in this field. At the AFS 2020 Global Conference, held in Singapore on 21st and 22nd October 2020, the OECD published the results of the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) analysis on global competence.

The OECD has established a framework for strengthening and evaluating global competence, based on the belief that education systems play a

crucial role in helping young people understand others and the world where they live, and in contributing to society's inclusiveness and sustainability.

The acquisition of this competence is considered the way to face the challenges of the contemporary world, supporting the global development goals defined by the United Nations (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development), and to form responsible citizens, aware, respectful of diversity and ready to adapt to a changing labor market. Global competence is multidimensional and refers to the ability to examine issues at the local, global and intercultural levels; understand and appreciate different perspectives and worldviews of others; interact effectively and appropriately with other cultures; act collectively for well-being and sustainable development.

For the development of global competence, soft skills are again identified as key elements.

These skills are also considered by the World Economic Forum as the essential basis for enhancing lifelong learning competences essential to build a growing society for the 21st century. Then, besides fundamental literacies, it's decisive how students (native and migrant) approach complex challenges and changes (World Economic Forum, 2015).

Exhibit 2: Students require 16 skills for the 21st century
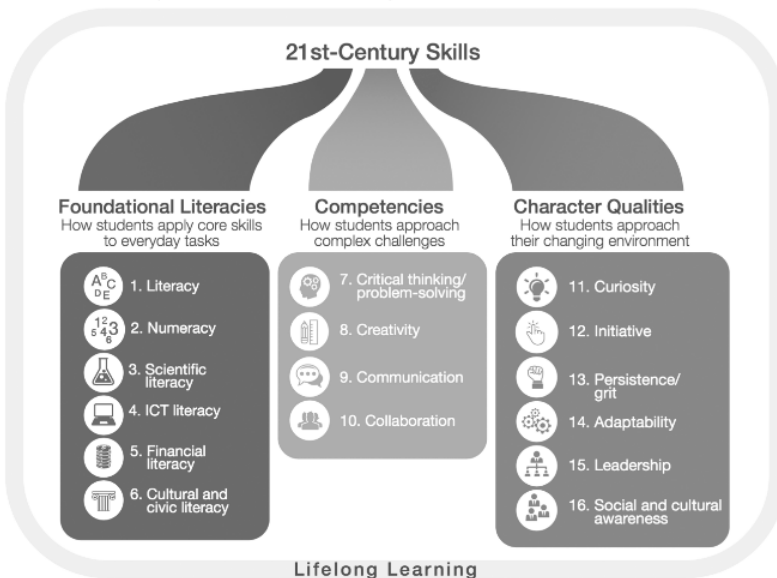
Figure 2: World Economic Forum skills model for the 21st century
Source: World Economic Forum (2015). New Vision for Education
Unlocking the Potential of Technology, p. 3

Beside the work of various international bodies, several academic studies have revealed that soft skills are a prerequisite that people must possess in the 21st century (Drigas & Mitsea, 2021; Mahasneh & Thabet, 2016). However, *a clear and unambiguous definition of what soft skills are, does not exist.* Some authors have underlined that in general, «soft skills refer to a wide range of intra- and inter-personal (socio-emotional) skills that guarantee personal, academic and professional success» (Drigas & Mitsea, 2021, p. 121). Others have argued that soft skills include «both personal characteristics (e.g. trust, discipline, self-management) and social competencies (e.g. teamwork, communication, emotional intelligence)» (Boerchi, Di Mauro & Sarli, 2020, p. 5).

Through the analysis of international literature and documents, it is also possible to identify three distinct dimensions that make up soft skills:

1. *Cognitive and meta-cognitive dimension* which includes critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking, the ability to explore new ideas, learning-to-learn and self-regulation;
2. *Social and emotional* area which involves empathy, self-efficacy, responsibility, the ability to take risks and collaboration;
3. *Practical and physical field* which includes using new information and communication technology devices.

One of the main relevant dimensions for building growth paths among students in a holistic educational context, as defined by the EU Commission, is strictly linked to socio-emotional skills. Not by chance, OECD has underlined this link, affirming that "social and emotional skills […] comprise a comprehensive set of skills essential for students to be able to succeed at school and fully participate in society as active citizens. […] The ability of citizens to adapt, be resourceful, respect and work well with others, and to take personal and collective responsibility is increasingly becoming the hallmark of a well-functioning society. Skills such as co-operation, empathy, and tolerance are key for citizens and nations to achieve sustainable development goals and to effectively participate and contribute towards building democratic institutions" (OECD, 2021, p. 11).

The soft skills are then transversal and, as argued by several scholars, they can be developed not only in formal learning contexts (such as school, training courses) but also in non-formal contexts (including work contexts or volunteering experiences) or informal ones (e.g. life experiences).

5. Possible paths to strengthen soft skills in educational contexts

How can teachers and educators support students and young people in developing soft skills and their various dimensions? How to involve all students in an educational setting?

Several authors have pointed out that to develop the ability to critically address issues and enhance soft skills, it is essential to start from the interests of students and from a shared problem on which to discuss and reason together (Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2019, pp. 100 and following; Imperio, 2020; Hussin et al., 2019; Unin & Bearing, 2016; Losito, 2021, p. 195). The critical approach to issues is a perspective that can be taught effectively if it is accepted by students as relevant to themselves and as corresponding to their needs. A common element among various analyses on such topic is precisely the importance of motivating and involving pupils in shared reflection, starting from issues that they perceive as relevant for themselves, and *building educational pathways based on active and collaborative learning among students* who feel part of a respectful educational relationship based on a good balance between freedom and structured activities. In particular, a recent project of the OECD – Center for Educational Research and Innovation (Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2019) has identified some essential aspects for the development of critical thinking, creativity and empathy: firstly, the teacher should take on a challenging role and the nature of the activity should be authentic and not artificial; secondly, the approach to the tasks to be carried out should be in group, including all the students in the class; the organization of time and space must be flexible; thirdly, the learning process, once the teaching activity has been completed, should be rethought by the students and the teacher through a path of metacognitive reflection. Finally, the OECD study emphasizes the importance, for each *collaborative learning* activity, of promoting a systemic approach to problem solving that allows students to analyze problems, proceeding in logical steps, and to find together new ideas and solutions.

Argumentative brainstorming is an additional tool that offers the opportunity to promote collaborative learning and critical discussion among students of the same class regarding a specific phenomenon, problem to be solved, or a question of common interest (Ayunda, Halim & Suhrawardi et al., 2021; Fredella & Bosio, 2021). It leads students to discuss with their peers and with the teacher starting from an event or issue. The teacher, posing a series of stimulating questions related to the chosen theme, encourages the reflection of the students and the collective comparison.

To participate in the discussion each student must share his/her knowledge, his/her values and his/her point of view, arguing and clarifying his/her thoughts with others. This activity leads each member of the class to listen to others, respecting their position, and to discover new aspects of the phenomenon under reflection or to acquire new knowledge about it, questioning claims not supported by valid arguments (Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2019, pp. 105-106). By brainstorming, pupils can ask new questions and adopt an open attitude towards each other and learn new things. The resulting discussion brings with it a learning process in relation to both knowledge and transversal skills (Ayunda Halim & Suhrawardi et al., 2021, p. 2).

Several studies have shown that argumentative brainstorming activities can have a positive impact on students in relation to their awareness of complex reality and their ability to develop language and synthesis. This didactic methodology also supports each student involved in strengthening their self-confidence and becoming more empathetic with others (Unin & Bearing, 2016). Having these skills can help young people relate positively with others and create an inclusive society that is open to new ideas. To achieve such outcomes of argumentative brainstorming, it is important for students to understand the significance of working in groups and actively participating in the discussion as a learning experience.

Beside brainstorming, *group work* built on a common student interest is also considered crucial to promoting critical thinking and peer cooperation (Veldman, Doolaard, Bosker & Snijders, 2020, pp. 1-13; Santos, Rocha, Cardoso & Lopes, 2020; Hussin, Harun & Shukor, 2019; Hoffman, 2003, pp. 5-17). Planning work around a shared interest and task, and not for example on cognitive level considerations based on pupils' age or school grade, is considered as functional to enhance the differences among students and the degree of heterogeneity of the group itself. When students with different abilities and cultural backgrounds work together, their learning process is maximized, as well as their sense of accountability for the activities they carry out and the autonomy in organizing their knowledge (Santos et al., 2020, p. 646). This is a crucial element especially for some specific learning contexts, like multi-age classes where the cognitive levels and socio-relational skills are diverse. Therefore, students know to appreciate differences and individual strengths thought as primary resources for collaborative learning. By working in groups, children share with others their specific competences which could be related, for instance, to socio-emotional skills (Hoffman, 2003, p. 49). To support cooperation among peers, *groups' work could be organized in a flexible way*, as well as the

time and space of learning (Hoffman, 2003; Mangione, 2021; S. Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2019). Flexibly plan activities from the entire class group to small groups led by the teacher or individual students, up to in-depth work in pairs, increases the autonomy and freedom of students in promoting collaborative learning. The experience of collaborative and flexible work of multi-age classes is particularly interesting to be able to effectively manage the educational contexts in which students with different migratory backgrounds are present. Such experiences, in fact, allow teachers and educators to identify paths to support students in knowing, understanding and helping each other through soft skills.

Another teaching methodology that could be suggested as a useful tool for strengthening of soft skills in educational contexts is *flipped for inclusion.* The latter supports "processes of co-construction of the self, as individual and collectivity, through the rediscovery of otherness. It invests in overturning logics, starting from macro-actions of analysis, communication, design and evaluation" (De Giuseppe & Corona, 2017, p. 132). The *flipped inclusion* method is focused on systemic procedures that act on the educational context as a whole and that involve all children, using educational tools that support a multidimensional education. As a result, teaching activities could aim at stimulating self-esteem, interaction and cooperation between students starting from the micro-society of the classroom.

The *flipped inclusion* activities are structured by identifying "a problem-situation and in a learning by problem, proceeding by breakdown of complicated problems into simpler subproblems, which encourage the activation of solutions relating to the difficulties emerged" (De Giuseppe & Corona, 2017, p. 135). This teaching methodology allows teachers and educators to involve all students in the class, enhancing differences and stimulating cooperative interdependence and proactive and prosocial changes that they can then reproduce in different contexts.

Lastly, to strengthen soft skills and trigger inclusive socio-relational dynamics we suggest the *buddy method* that has been used in the KIDS4ALLL project. Initially designed to enhance the social skills of students with learning disabilities, this method aims to support their inclusion, participation, and development of positive relationships within educational settings. In the early Nineties, some scholars analyzed the use of the peer buddy system and its impact on socialization and participation of students (Haring & Breen, 1992; Foster, 2011). The various experimentations showed that the interaction and socialization skills of students with disabilities have improved thanks to the work done in pairs between peers. These experiences

of peer training and collaboration have strengthened the real and perceived inclusion of students with disabilities and widespread among all the members of the class group a greater willingness to empathy and welcome.

Moreover, some researchers have emphasized the importance of creating an educational setting and an environment conducive to interaction and socialization in order to successfully use the buddy method (Carter & Hughes, 2005). The positive results in terms of social inclusion of the peer buddy system's use have then led to experimenting with this method even in areas other than disability or to address issues such as bullying (Tzani-Pepelasi, Ioannou & Synnott et al., 2019). Recently, the buddy scheme has been tested in the context of welcoming refugees to support them in building their new life in host countries (Stock, 2019). With reference to the KIDS4ALLL project, the buddy method has been adopted using a co-creation approach through which children carried out and created their learning contents concerning the eight EU Lifelong Learning competences. At the core of this approach, the buddy method played a relevant role in promoting a guided peer-to-peer collaboration between non-migrant and migrant students in formal, non-formal and informal educational contexts. Then, this method leads a pair of peers to work together performing co-creative activities, to trigger a fair dialogue and have interactions whereby cultural intelligence is recognized in all people. These interactions aim to transform previous levels of understanding and the socio-cultural context in pursuit of success for all members of the group. It encourages the creation of personal and social meaning. The fundamental principle is that equality and differences become mutually rewarding and compatible values. In the dialogic learning model, every child must have the opportunity to speak and to be heard, regardless of his/her position in the school and despite age, gender, level of education, or social class (Thalluri, O'Flaherty & Shepherd, 2014; Nilsson, 2019).

The next paragraph also provides practical guidance to teachers and educators on how to observe soft skills of students in different educational contexts.

6. Observation as a support to soft skills

In the complex process that led students to acquire softs kills, teachers and educators play a fundamental role. This centrality is recognized in the teacher's choice of teaching methodology, in the identification of the most

relevant issues, in the definition of one or more time horizons with which to carry out the activities. These choices need to aim at satisfying as far as possible the specificities of the individual students, the class and the dynamics. It is therefore essential that the teacher or educator considers observational practice as an integral and substantial element in order to make choices that can support the effective development of soft skills in students. The observation and the tools through which it is realized are also functional to detect and monitor the development of students' soft skills.

In this and subsequent paragraph we will therefore briefly address the subject of classroom observation and the tools that can be used to conduct this practice, with the dual objective of introducing the reader to the role that observation can have in supporting students in the acquisition of soft skills and contextualizing the observation tools used in the KIDS4ALLL Project and described in the following chapters of the present work.

In the observation processes eye and mind play a privileged role and as in a virtuous circle the greater the visual training is, the deeper will be the ability to recognize elements, factors and situations, from general to particular. The reading of a landscape, as well as an event or a person is strongly influenced by the lenses that each observer wears to realize it. These lenses are composed of countless elements, which is fundamental to know how to recognize and identify. In the observation it is therefore important to know how to change the point of view, to assume a more or less close position to a subject or an object allows to pick different and equally important elements in order to reach the representation of a complete picture. The observation as a teacher, as an educator, or as a professional, requires a specific posture that demands great awareness. The ability to observe is acquired through the use of operational techniques and basic knowledge. Observation is an intentional act, aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and the objective, accurate and complete description of a given event is considered relevant and significant with respect to particular interests (Trinchero, 2007).

The observation of competences can be conducted in different ways and through the use of different tools.

The previous paragraphs (§ 4 and 5) suggested the complexity of the concept of competence. Soft skills, in fact, encompass a wide range of dimensions which have been widely studied and barely related to a single reading.

The nature of soft skills recalls the need for a conscious posture in their observation. The observation as it will be described in this section is to be

intended as part of a process, the educational one. In fact, observation is a fundamental part of a wider course in relation to different aspects:

– observation allows the identification of the peculiarities of each student, a fundamental element to support cognitive and relational development;
– the development of methods and the application of didactic and organizational strategies aimed at the development of soft skills;
– the deep knowledge of the individual learner, for teachers and educators to be able to verify their own educational action in terms of effectiveness, such as group knowledge, to assess the environment and collective well-being.

Observation in this context is the vehicle that through a complex and articulated set of actions leads to the creation of inclusive environments. This is the reason to approach it as a privileged tool for a fair and inclusive educational planning.

Observation can be conducted both in direct and indirect mode. As the term itself suggests, direct observation is that which is achieved by means of an observer in the field, typically the teacher in the classroom or in the learning environment. Indirect observation is carried out by means of different instruments, such as video recordings.

Direct observation can in turn be conducted in different situations: it can be defined as natural observation when the same is carried out in contexts of greater spontaneity and therefore not necessarily related to the space of the classroom. This type of observation is well suited to the detection of soft skills because the moments of free interaction are a juncture in which it is possible to understand how what is learned is reflected in the behavior of the students, whether there is a continuum between the learned skills and the acted skills. In this specific case, the observer needs to remain as far apart as possible, not interfering in the dynamics that spontaneously were created among the students. The neutrality that the observer maintains in the field is the same with which one approaches the actual act of observation: in fact, if in all the kind of observations in general is necessary the abstention of the just judgment, in such specific context it is necessary a further level of attention in order to be able to pick those nuances and dynamics that are not typical of the classroom as context and therefore can be more easily left out by the observer.

Controlled direct observations are instead constructed by the teacher or educator by virtue of the individual or multiple skills that are the subject

of study. For instance, when the focus, meaning the subject of the observation, is to detect citizenship competence, the teacher is also responsible for defining the procedures and tools to be used and the timing of the whole process.

Direct observation in the field is subdivided into occasional observation (also defined as spontaneous or unstructured) and systemic observation. Spontaneous observation lends itself to capturing very specific aspects of experience and behavior and is generally used at different times of the school year. However, it is quite common that in the conduct of this experience many factors that may feed the distortion of what is observed come into play. It is the case of the influence of previous experiences, or as already mentioned above, the possibility of focusing attention where a particular episode is more significant for one's own personal experience, or even the personal interpretation of what happened.

On the opposite side lies the systemic observation that is characterized by being intentional and inserted within a wider path as mentioned above. This type of observation is distinguished from the daily practices of seeing (accidental) and watching (intentional) in which there are no precise methods or purposes (Trinchero, 2007). The characteristics that distinguish therefore the direct systemic observation are:

– intentionality and depth;
– objectivity;
– systematic;
– communication;
– repeatability.

Systemic observation is conducted with a specific aim. The definition of this objective (why is it observed? Who is it observed by? When? Where? How, with what tools?) guides teachers and educators in a well-structured process, to which it is necessary to approach with an awareness attitude as much as possible. This posture is partly favored by the presence of patterns and fixed structures, partly by the skills that the observer acquires through training and field experience. The final result of the observation passes first to the selection of the information to be observed and secondly to the description of the information.

Finally, three main types of observation can be counted.

The first is the inductive one, which provides objective, very detailed indications of the observed behaviors and which abstains as much as poss-

ible from interpretations. It is characterized by being a «non-participant» observation, conducted in the natural environment, in order to avoid the inhibition of the spontaneous conduct of the observed subject.

The second is the subjective one, in which the observer is a participant. In this case, therefore, the focus is mainly centered on relationships and dynamics, which therefore the observer is called to read even in the face of his own personal individuality.

Finally, the deductive observation that is characterized by being prolonged in time in order to grasp the reality and the deeper dynamics, attitudes and behaviors observed. At the school level deductive observation is widely used because of its collective dimension.

The following scheme summarizes the types of observation briefly illustrated above.
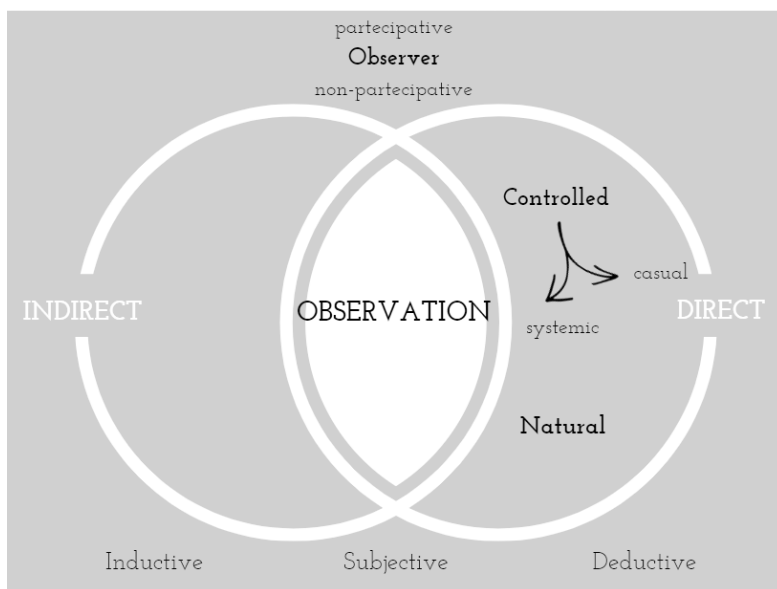
Figure 3: Types of Observation (form Trinchero, reworked version)

7. The observation tools

The observation is conducted through the use and support of tools. The following diagram provides a summary.
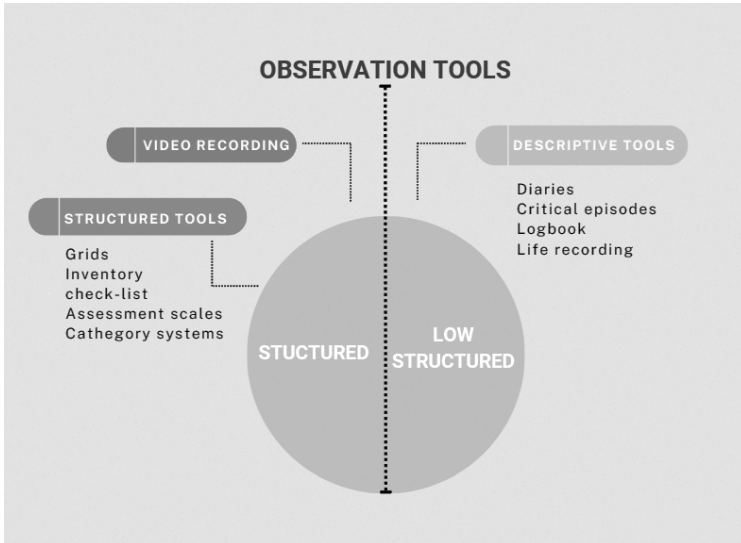
Figure 4: Observation tools (form Trinchero, reworked version)

In particular, the KIDS4ALLL project used structured tools such as grids (used in the ethnographic observation), check-lists (for the guidance of teachers and educators) and assessment scales (socio-emotional and citizenship skills questionnaire) alongside tools with a low degree of structuring and descriptive character.

The tools mentioned above will be recalled below in their prominent characters in order to facilitate the reading and understanding of the next chapters that will treat these tools and the main results (chapters 8-9).

The structured tools have several common elements such as the definition of the target audience, thus understanding the subject of observation, the object of observation and the level of depth to be observed, finally the identification of any elements that may affect the process.

Grids

The grid allows the observation of an individual in a context and provides a series of categories through which the observer reads the educational reality of the individual or group. In order to detect such constructs, a careful structuring process is necessary. The categories must be as clear as possible and without any possibility of misinterpretation in order to make their compilation more immediate. The grids can therefore concern both material and physical aspects, as well as spatial, behavioral and attitudinal.

Check-list

As the term itself suggests, the check-list is a set of elements previously defined that represents the observation guide for teachers or educators. In fact, through the use of these lists it is possible to identify in a targeted way the occurrence of an event and also, for example, its frequency over time in defined ranges.

If the observer is not the educator or the teacher, the check-lists can also refer to the type of attitude and posture of them, that turns to be the subject of the observation.

This tool allows a pretty simple data recording whose analysis can be carried out even without sophisticated tools, however, a careful planning of the list is necessary as the absence of one or more elements can lead to important loss of information.

Assessment scales

Similarly to the check-lists, the assessment scales detect the presence of a construct, to which is added the definition of the intensity of the occurrence or lack of the event.

Those scales are generally used for the detection of attitudes and behaviors that are observed on a measurement scale that may also concern the frequency with which an element occurs.

Their structure is beyond observation itself since evaluation is also required. Scales of assessment can return information in a fast and clear way, but on the other hand these tools incur the subjectivity of the observer's judgment.

A properly trained observer or a crossed-eyed observation, as a clear and structured process of observation can significantly reduce the risks of subjectivity.

Descriptive tools

Tools characterized by a lower degree of *a priori* structuring, generally allow an observation more marked on the relational dimension and the evolution of the subjects.

It is important to take into consideration environmental aspects such as the characteristics of the location of observation, duration or climate of the class or group.

Finally, it is necessary a reference to times and places. In fact, observation is a complex process that requires adequate preparation and awareness. The definition of its objectives can guide the observer in the choice of time, meaning the moment or moments in which it must be conducted. In the

same way and more generally, the observations conducted at the beginning or at the end of the year will be very different, as will be those carried out in context such as lectures or workshops. Space itself has a great influence, as a strictly structured place will allow a series of dynamics and physical interactions, very reduced compared to open and informal environments.

When observation is not spontaneous, within different times and contexts, observations can be arranged through the following steps:

1. Identification of the field of observation (behavior, events, reaction, situation, level of learning). In this first phase it is important to focus on the aspect to be observed by limiting the problem or the situation;
2. Choice of the most suitable observation method or model;
3. Choice of instruments and techniques calibrated on the models and especially on the objectives set;
4. Conduct of observation, choice of observer and management of moment and time;
5. Record of the data collected during the observation period in all ways that can guarantee its systematic nature, fidelity and objectivity;
6. Analysis, coding and interpretation of collected data to identify characteristics, variable elements and quantification of observed behavior.

The practice of observation plays a central role among the activities supporting the development of soft skills. First, as a specific element to detect the complex dynamics linked to the phenomenon of migration and inclusion: in fact, as emerged from the first pages of this chapter, these are extremely different and can hardly be fully understood without the use of specific techniques such as those mentioned above.

In the same way the construction of a shared and inclusive path presumes that the action of both the teacher and the educator develops vertically, through the treatment of the subject, as well as horizontally, with a broad-spectrum look, capable of embracing the entire essence of the students, both as single individuals, and as a group.

"For the migrant members, the role of the school as a public defense that allows to build social relationships and affiliations becomes increasingly fundamental" (Altin, 2022, p. 21) and the construction of such a defense can only take place from withinm through the perception of both expressed and unexpressed needs.

8. Final reflections

When promoting inclusion through education it is essential to acknowledge the necessity of considering the diverse backgrounds of students. This underscores the importance of starting from the needs of each individual student to ensure successful pathways of inclusion. Such considerations are particularly pertinent given the challenges that population movements pose to contemporary societies. Educational contexts are increasingly populated by diverse groups, each with unique backgrounds and specific needs that must be taken into account.

Despite the particularities of different national contexts and the specific approaches used to address these issues, it is possible to identify common traits that provide useful indications for building an inclusive and resilient society. Soft skills are considered one of these elements that can support the process of inclusion. Several international Institutions, including EU, OECD and World Economic Forum have recognized the pivotal role of such skills in understanding contemporary issues, addressing today's challenges and promoting a democratic society. Being empathetic, responsible, critical, creative, collaborative and capable of making decisions and taking risks are crucial elements of an informed citizenship that facilitates the construction of inclusive and welcoming relationships. It is therefore crucial, not only for individuals but for the whole society, to support students in acquiring and developing these skills. Such skills, along with the experiences students have in educational settings, can serve as a stimulus to replicate dynamics of growth and common construction in other contexts. Adopting a holistic approach that addresses the learning, psychosocial, and emotional needs of all students, both native and newcomer, enables the engagement of all children in proactive paths of growth.

In this perspective, in the educational field, the role of educators and teachers is fundamental in considering soft skills and having adequate knowledge of them, as well as being aware of students' diverse backgrounds. These aspects must be treated in parallel and with equal importance. Therefore, planning effective educational pathways is crucial, starting from the needs and diverse migratory experiences of students, as well as defining the training goals to be achieved and selecting appropriate educational tools to use. The proper implementation of such lines of action goes through observation, which can help teachers and educators in identifying and activating students' prior knowledge. Discovering students' personal frames and backgrounds is an important asset for conducting more effective educational actions. The

observation process should move from the definition of observation criteria to ensure the homogeneity of the results and to carry out activities that are functional to the ultimate objective, identifying strengths and weaknesses and ensuring more coherent and effective educational and inclusive actions. The description of observation tools is thus essential to support teachers and educators in focusing on specific aspects, depending on students' background and to monitor the effectiveness of the educational pathways. This contribution aims to provide guidance to educators and teachers regarding the development of soft skills by offering specific educational methods for observation, reflection, and the implementation of proactive strategies. Subsequent chapters will illustrate how these tools have been utilized and adapted in various contexts through the presentation of case studies conducted within the KIDS4ALLL project.

References

Alba R., & Holdaway J. (2013) (eds.). *The children of immigrants at school: a comparative look at integration in the United States and Western Europe*. New York University Press.

Altin R. (2022). Dispersi fuori classe: il background migratorio come inclusione differenziale a scuola. In R. Altin (Ed.), *Fuoriclasse. Migranti e figli di migranti (dis)persi nel sistema scolastico di un'area di frontiera*. Università degli studi di Trieste.

Arioli A. (2017). Cogliere l'invisibile. L'osservazione come pratica di inclusione. In A. Arioli, A. Ponzellini, G. Rota (Eds.), *Sedeva presso il pozzo. Sussidio per insegnanti di religione della scuola dell'infanzia* (pp. 13-45). Ancora.

Arnot M. & Pinson H. (2005). *The education of asylum-seeker and refugee children. A study of LEA and school values, policies and practices*. Research Consortium on the Education of Asylum-Seeker and Refugee Children. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from: https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/people/staff/arnot/AsylumReportFinal.pdf (last access: 28/11/2023).

Ayunda D.S., Halim H., & Suhrawardi I. et al. (2021). *The impact of brainstorming method on students' questioning and inductive thinking skills in static fluid*. AIP Conference Proceedings 2320, 020035, DOI:10.1063/5.0037652.

Bloch A., Chimienti M., Counilh A-L., Hirsch S., Tattolo G., Ossipow L., & Wihtol de Wenden C. (Eds.) (2015). *The children of refugees in Europe: aspirations, social and economic lives, identity and transnational linkages. Country reports-Working paper*. SNIS.

Boerchi D., Di Mauro M. & Sarli A. (2020). *Guidelines for the identification and assessment of migrants' soft skills*. Fondazione ISMU. Retrieved from:

https://www.ismu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Guidelines-migrants-soft-skills_Boerchi-et-al.pdf (last access: 15/12/2023).

Borjas G. J. (2006). Making It in America: Social Mobility in the Immigrant Population. *The Future of Children*, 16(2), 55-71.

Bonaiuti G., Calvani A. & Ranieri M., (2007). *Fondamenti di didattica. Teoria e pressi dei dispositivi formativi*. Carocci.

Bonifazi C. (2013). *L'Italia delle migrazioni*. il Mulino.

Calvani A., Marzani A., & Miranda A. (2021). Formazione degli insegnanti alla didattica efficace. Come orientare l'osservazione e il cambiamento delle pratiche in classe? *Formazione & Insegnamento*, 19(1 Tome II), 599-621. DOI: 10.7346/-fei-XIX-01-21_53.

Carter E.W., & Hughes C. (2005). Increasing Social Interaction Among Adolescents with Intellectual Disabilities and Their General Education Peers: Effective Interventions. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 30 (4), 179-193.

Ceccatelli C. & Di Battista T. (2011). The relationship between self-esteem and effective learning: a case study in the primary school. In De Wals S. & Meszaros K. (Eds.), *Handbook on Psychology of Self-Esteem* (pp. 357-370). Nova Science Publishers.

Colucci M. (2018). *Storia dell'immigrazione straniera in Italia. Dal 1945 ai nostri giorni*. Carocci.

Commissione europea/EACEA/Eurydice (2019). *Integrazione degli studenti provenienti da contesti migratori nelle scuole d'Europa: politiche e misure nazionali*. Rapporto Eurydice. Lussemburgo: Ufficio delle pubblicazioni dell'Unione europea.

Council of Europe (2018). *Reference Framework Competence for Democratic Culture. Context, concepts and model*. Volume 1. Retrieved from: https://rm.coe.-int/prems-008318-gbr-2508-reference-framework-of-competences-vol-1-8573-co/16807bc66c (last access: 16/12/2023).

Crul M., Schneider J., & Lelie F. (Eds.) (2012). *The European Second Generation Compared. Does the Integration Context Matter?* AAmsterdam University Press.

De Haas, Castles & Miller (2020). *The Age of Migration. International Population Movements in the Modern World*. The Guilford Press.

De Giuseppe T. & Corona F. (2017). La didattica flipped for inclusion. In P. Limone, & D. Parmigiani (Eds.), *Modelli pedagogici e pratiche didattiche per la formazione iniziale e in servizio degli insegnanti*. Progedit.

D'Odorico L. & Cassibba R. (2001). *Osservare per Educare.* Carocci.

Drigas A. & Mitsea E. (2021). Soft Skills & Metacognition as Inclusion Amplifiers in the 21st Century. *International Journal of Online Engineering*, 17(04), 121-132. DOI: 10.3991/ijoe.v17i04.20567.

Glick Schiller & Salazar (2012). Regimes of Mobility Across the Globe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 39(2), 1-18.

European Commission (2018). COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCU-

MENT Accompanying the document Proposal for a COUNCIL RECOM-MENDATION on Key Competences for LifeLong Learning {COM(2018) 24 final}, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:-52018SC0014&from=EN (last access: 30/11/2023).

European Commission (2019). *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning*, https://-op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en (last access: 15/11/2023).

European Council (2018). *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning*. Retrieved from: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01) (last access: 30/11-/2023).

Eve M., & Perino M. (2011). Seconde generazioni: quali categorie di analisi? *Mondi Migranti*, 2, 175-193.

Fangen K., Johansson T., & Hammarén N. (Eds.) (2012). *Young Migrants. Exclusion and Belonging in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Fibbi R., Wanner P., Topgül C., & Ugrina D. (2015). *The New Second Generation in Switzerland. Youth of Turkish and Former Yugoslav Descent in Zürich and Basel*. Amsterdam University Press.

Foster K. (2011). Using a peer buddy system to increase interaction between students with special needs and their peers. *Theses and Dissertations*, 257. Retrieved from: https://rdw.rowan.edu/etd/257 (last access: 22/01/2024).

Frasson D. (2011). *Allenare le competenze trasversali*. Franco Angeli.

Fredella C., & Bosio I. (2021). Cos'è la storia? Sviluppo del pensiero critico attraverso la metodologia dell'inquiry based learning. *Didattica della Storia - Journal of Research and Didactics of History*, 3(1), 95–113. DOI: 10.6092/issn.2704-8217/14041.

Groen S.K. (2017). Buddy Bench: A Strategy to Increase Social Inclusion for Students with Special Needs. *Culminating Projects in Teacher Development*, 25. Retrieved from: https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/ed_etds/25 (last access: 22/01/2024).

Haring T. G., & Breen C. G. (1992). A peer-mediated social network intervention to enhance the social integration of persons with moderate and severe disabilities. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 25(2), 319–333. DOI: 10.1901/jaba.1992.25-319.

Hoffman J. (2003). Multiage Teacher's Beliefs and Practices. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 18(01), 5-17. DOI:10.1080/02568540309595019.

Hussin W.N.T.W., Harun J., & Shukor N.A. (2019). Problem Based Learning to Enhance Students Critical Thinking Skill via Online Tools. *Asian Social Science*, 15(1). DOI: 10.5539/ass.v15n1p14.

IDOS (2023). *Dossier statistico immigrazione 2023*. Roma: Centro studi e ricerche IDOS.

Imperio A. (2020). Educare a pensare criticamente nella scuola primaria: risultati preliminari da uno studio empirico. *Formazione & Insegnamento*, XVIII(1). DOI: 10.7346/-fei-XVIII-01-20_52.

Livi Bacci M. (2010). *In cammino. Breve storia delle migrazioni*. il Mulino.

Losito B. (2021). Educazione civica e alla cittadinanza. Approcci curriculari e didattici e ambienti di apprendimento. *Scuola democratica*, speciale/2021, 189-201. DOI: 10.12828/100678.

Lucisano P., & Notti A. M. (2019). *Training actions and evaluation processes*. Atti del convegno internazionale SIRD. Pensa MultiMedia.

Mahasneh J. K., & Thabet W. (2016). Developing a Normative Soft Skills Taxonomy for Construction Education. *Journal of Civil Engineering and Architecture Research*, 3(5), 1468-1486.

Mangione G.R.J. (2021). Lavorare in pluriclasse: elementi chiave e teaching tips educative. In G. Cannella, G.R.J. Mangione, P.C. Rivoltella (Eds.), *A scuola nelle piccole scuole. Storia, metodi, didattiche*. Morcelliana Scholé.

Marroccoli G. & Schroot T. (2021). *Getting Lost. Migration and the (d)evaluation of human capital*. TAccademia University Press.

Meurs D., Pailhe A., & Simon P. (2006). Persistance des inégalités entre générations liées à l'immigration : l'accès à l'emploi des immigrés et de leurs descendants en France. *Population* (French Edition), 61(5/6), 763-801.

Niewint-Gori J. & Mori S. (2022). Osservare e valutare le competenze trasversali per valorizzare il successo formativo nella scuola. *Studi sulla Formazione*, 25, 93-102. DOI: 10.13128/ssf-13588.

Nilsson P. (2019). The Buddy Programme - Integration and Social Support for International Students. *Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education*, 11, 36-43. DOI:10.32674/jcihe.v11iWinter.1095.

OECD (2017). *Trends Shaping Education Spotlight 13: Citizens with a say*, https://www.oecd.org/education/ceri/Spotlight-13-Citizens-with-a-say.pdf

OECD (2018a). *Settling in 2018. Indicators for immigrant integration*. OECD Publishing, Paris/European Union, Brussels, https://doi.org/10.1787/-9789264307216-en

OECD (2018b). *The Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030. Position paper*, http://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20(26-11-2020).pdf

OECD (2018c). *Preparing Our Youth for an Inclusive and Sustainable World. The OECD PISA global competence framework*, https://www.oecd.org/-education/Global-competency-for-an-inclusive-world.pdf.

OECD (2019). *Refugee Education: Integration Models and Practices in OECD Countries*, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/a3251a00-en.pdf?expires=-1701432266&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=3833084F44DC16ED66D8F0AA5CB0E4CC

OECD (2021). *Beyond Academic Learning. First Results from the Survey of Social and Emotional Skills*. Paris: OECD Publishing, DOI: 10.1787/92a11084-en.

OECD/European Commission (2023). *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

Pastoor L. (2016). Rethinking refugee education: principles, policies and practice from a European perspective. *Annaul Review of Comparative and International Education*, 30, 107-116.

Poliandri D., Muzzioli P., Quadrelli I. & Romiti S. (2012). La Scheda di osservazione in classe: uno strumento per esplorare le opportunità di apprendimento. *Giornale Italiano della Ricerca Educativa*, 173-187. Retrieved from: https://ojs.pensamultimedia.it/index.php/sird/article/view/248 (last access: 11/11/2023).

Prati G., Cicognani E., & Albanesi C. (2017). Psychometric properties of a multidimensional scale of sense of community in schools. *Front. Psychol*, 8. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01466.

Pugh K., Every D. & Hattam R. (2012). Inclusive education for students with refugee experience: whole school reform in a South Australian primary school. *The Australian Educational Researcher,* 39(2), 125-141.

Ricchiardi P. & Emanuel F. (2018). Soft Skill Assessment in Higher Education. *ECPS Journal*, 18, 21-53.

Ricucci R. (2018). *Cittadini senza cittadinanza. Immigrati, seconde e altre generazioni: pratiche quotidiane tra inclusione ed estraneità. La questione dello «ius soli»*. Edizioni SEB 27.

Ricucci R. (2021). *Protagonisti di un paese plurale. Come sono diventati adulti i figli dell'immigrazione*. Edizioni SEB 27.

Rumbaut R. G. (1997). Assimilation and Its Discontents: Between Rhetoric and Reality. *The International Migration Review,* 31(4), 923-960.

Salerni N., & Cassibba R. (2023). *L'osservazione nei contesti educativi. Tecniche e strumenti*. Carocci.

Santagati M., & Colussi E. (eds.) (2022). *Alunni con background migratorio in Italia. Famiglia, scuola, società Rapporto nazionale*. Fondazione ISMU, https://www.ismu.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Alunni-con-background-migratorio_famiglia-scuola-societa_Report.pdf (last access: 14/11/2023).

Santos J., Rocha J., Cardoso A.P. & Lopes A. (2020). *Group Work Methodology in the Different Subject Areas of Primary Education from Teachers and Students' Perspective*. Proceeding of INTED2020 Conference, 2nd-4th March 2020, Valencia, Spain.

Seeberg M. L., & Goździak E. M. (Eds.) (2016). *Contested Childhoods: Growing up in Migrancy. Migration, Governance, Identities*. Springer.

Stock I. (2019). Buddy Schemes between Refugees and Volunteers in Germany: Transformative Potential in an Unequal Relationship? *Social Inclusion*, 7 (2), 128–138, DOI: 10.17645/si.v7i2.2041.

Thalluri J., O'Flaherty J.A. & Shepherd P.L. (2014). Classmate peer-coaching: «A Study Buddy Support scheme. *Journal of Peer Learning*, 7, 92-104.

Traverso A. (2016). *Metodologia della progettazione educativa. Competenze, strumenti e contesti.* Roma: Carocci.

Trinchero R. (2007). *Manuale di ricerca educativa.* Franco Angeli.

Tzani-Pepelasi C., Ioannou M., & Synnott J. et al. (2019). Peer Support at Schools: the Buddy Approach as a Prevention and Intervention Strategy for School Bullying. *Journal of Bullying Prevention* 1, 111-123. DOI: 10.1007/s-42380-019-00011-z.

UNESCO (2005). *Guidelines for Inclusion. Ensuring Access to Education for All.* Retrieved from: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000140224 (last access: 23/11/2023).

UNESCO (2006). *Unesco Guidelines on Intercultural Education.* Retrieved from: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000147878 (last access: 17/11/2023).

UNHCR (2023). *Global Trends Report 2022*, https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022 (last access: 14-11-2023).

Unin N., & Bearing P. (2016). Brainstorming as a Way to Approach Student-Centred Learning in the ESL Classroom. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 224, 605-612.

Veldman M.A., Doolaard S., Bosker R.J. & Snijders T.A.B. (2020). Young children working together. Cooperative learning effects on group work of children in Grade 1 of primary education. *Learning and Instruction*, 67, 1-13.

Vincent-Lancrin S., et al. (2019). Fostering Students' Creativity and Critical Thinking: What it Means in School. *Educational Research and Innovation.* Paris: OECD Publishing. DOI: 10.1787/62212c37-en.

World Economic Forum (2015). *New Vision for Education. Unlocking the Potential of Technology.* Retrieved from: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEFUSA_-NewVisionforEducation_Report2015.pdf (last access: 11/11/2023).

II.

It's the mix that counts
Contrasting educational poverty by associations experience in KIDS4ALLL Project

Giulia Maria Cavaletto, Tanja Schroot, Martina Visentin*

1. The context and the theoretical debate

> For many children, living in a poor family and in contexts
> without development opportunities means carrying the
> burden of serious discrimination compared to their peers
> from an early age, with consequences that can become ir-
> reparable over time. As in a vicious circle, educational pov-
> erty fuels economic poverty and vice versa.
> (Save the Children, 2014, p. 3)

Educational processes have been subject of reflection in academic debates
and in public policies, and among those who operate within the various
educational contexts, be they formal, informal or non-formal. The under-
lying idea of this interest and the educational polycentrism that represents
its practical declination is that education is everyone's business (Pourtois
& Desmet, 2015); and social interventions (including educational inter-
ventions) can be solely effective if they act at all levels of the social ecosystem
(Bronfenbrenner, 2004). This implies on the one hand a census of the re-
sources and actors in the educational process (that are changing in relation
to the contexts), and on the other hand a verification of their actual inter-
action and cooperation, as well as the characteristics of this interaction in
terms of duration, intensity and shared initiative. These social actors, who
hold different roles, capacities and responsibilities in the educational pro-
cess, compose an idea of *co-education*, that implies a form of educational

---

* The contribution is the result of reflections shared between the authors; in detail Mar-
tina Visentin wrote § 1; Tanja Schroot the § 2, and 2.2; Giulia Maria Cavaletto the §
2.1 and § 3. The conclusions were written jointly by Giulia Maria Cavaletto and Mar-
tina Visentin.

alliance with a shared objective (Pourtois & Desmet, 2015): the socio-psychological and cognitive development of the child. This complex scenario recognizes of course a prominent role for school as agency for secondary socialization but also as a place for skills training alongside the acquisition of knowledge, an aspect that will be explored further below. Alongside the school there are associations, voluntary organizations, training foundations and the family itself as actors of educational processes. These actors act on some occasions in a coordinated way; in others in a more diversified way; in particular, the associations constitute a now established partner of schools for the implementation of educational projects and interventions. The role of associations lies in particular in the area of skills development, extra-curricular activities, interventions in favor of inclusion and the adoption of methodological innovations in educational practices.

Returning now to the concept of the heterogeneity of contexts (from a social, cultural, regional point of view) it is indeed undeniable that they may present different educational opportunities for different reasons: along a continuum, numerous educational opportunities represented by a pluralism of actors (teachers, educators, third sector and religious organizations, etc.) may be opposed to situations where such opportunities are just very limited; even contexts with a high density of educational opportunities may witness their episodic, disordered and undirected utilization instead of being put in place in coordinated, planned situations that are clearly oriented towards an educational objective. The first mode is based on non-constant and low-impact experiences at school, the second one is on progressive sedimentation and the intensity of educational experiences (Maccarini & Cavaletto, 2021). Both action models are implemented within schools with the support of specialized associations.

It is therefore self-evident that a debate on contents, purposes and methods of education cannot ignore a broader and more transversal historical and socio-cultural contextualization. The background within which this debate takes shape is in fact represented by a "society characterized by globalization, complexity and volatility, risk, multiplication of possibilities for experience and action, social acceleration and strong performative pressure on human subjectivities. In very short, it is 'a challenging corporate context', not at all easily and univocally to be read" (Maccarini, 2022, p. 27). And in contexts with these characteristics, known for providing different opportunities, the concept of educational poverty is located. This concept, given its complexity, does not have a shared definition in current scientific literature, but one that broadly expresses its multidimensionality

was formulated by Save the Children in 2014 where it is described as "the deprivation by children and adolescents of the possibility of learning, experimenting, developing and allowing abilities, talents and aspirations to flourish freely" (Save the Children, 2014, p. 4). Accordingly, we experience educational poverty not solely with a deprivation of "cognitive" opportunities necessary to live in today's complex society, but also when other abilities, skills and character traits are lacking (considered equally important for the well-being of the person). Those are – with various terminologies-defined as skills –.

We will talk about them a little further on. Now it might be more relevant to better clarify the characteristics of educational poverty as formulated in the Save the Children report. The "educational poverty" phenomenon has been divided into four dimensions, which provide an important contribution to its analysis: i) "Learning to understand", referring to the development of fundamental cognitive skills for living in society; ii) "Learning to be", connected to the development of the emotional and psychological skills necessary to face everyday life (such as self-esteem, self-control, management of anxiety and stress); iii) "Learning to live together", which refers to the importance of bonds between people, underlining the significance of interpersonal relationships within the family and in friendships; iv) "Learning to know the world", linked to the importance of developing cultural habits such as visiting museums, going to concerts and shows, frequenting libraries, reading books. It emerges from these four aspects how educational poverty is influenced by numerous variables that move beyond the purely economic aspect: above all there are the socio-psychological and relational dimensions that – along the personal development and life course – impact on everyone's future and ultimately on educational and professional opportunities as well as social inclusion. However, as underlined by Giancola and Salmieri (2023, pp. 16-17), even though this conception of educational poverty offers an important contribution to the analysis of the phenomenon, it does not totally reflect the educational conditions of the population as a whole, since it focuses on "life stages and cognitive processes of early learning". Consequently, this work proposes to adopt the definition of educational poverty theorized by Allmendiger and Leibfried (2003), according to which the factors that mostly determine educational poverty reside in a level of education lower than upper secondary school and in a low level of basic skills. The resources useful for combating educational poverty, in the systemic and multi-actor perspective mentioned above, come from a set of opportunities, experiences, places, in

the name of the so-called "educational polycentrism" (Colombo & Censi, 2010) which takes shape in so-called hexagon of the educational system (Frabboni, 2000) of which school, family, local authorities, associations, the world of work, churches are part.

This approach appears to be more suitable for the following discourse, as it includes: situations of early abandonment of high school studies (and therefore a poor level of overall education), situations of completing high school but with a low level of basic skills and, finally, situations that present both at the same time, poor levels of education and reduced basic skills. Therefore, if we consider for the analysis on effects of educational poverty solely the level of education and neglect the acquisition of basic abilities and skill sets, we ignore an important aspect of the global development of the person, in which various socialization agencies and various actors in the area are involved. However, this is where the strictly cognitive dimension converges, which is linked to curricula and the dimension of skills, be they the so-called transversal skills, socio-emotional skills, or lifelong learning skills. Educational poverty therefore qualifies as a limitation of the individuals' capabilities. It presents itself as a cumulative risk factor, as its effects manifest in an increasingly evident way as one grows up and continues with educational paths, widening the gap compared to those who – due to familial, income, cultural and social background – were able to be protected from it (Shafik, 2021, p. 13). From here arises the imperative for public policies to act promptly, from the beginning of compulsory education cycles and with continuity in the different cycles.

Returning to the reflections on the constituent elements of education: if it consists of different components and depends on their harmonious articulation, it is essential to better qualify its recognized position related to skills. Among all those mentioned above, we will focus here on the social and emotional skills (from now on SES), as they are most implicated in the results that will be presented in the next sections. SES represent a way to study the integral training and the respective relationship with the world of a person. The relevance of SES in the educational field arises from the fact that a vast and interdisciplinary research panorama has illustrated the positive outcomes for people and for society: from academic performance to employment opportunities, from relative life outcomes to health, quality of life, psychological well-being up to combating risky behavior (Domitrovich et al., 2017; Durlak et al., 2011; Chernyshenko et al., 2018; Clarke et al., 2015; Weare & Nind, 2011; Yoshikawa et al., 2015; Belfield et al., 2015).

On the other hand, however, it should be noted that SES have been ig-

nored for a long time in the schooling and educational context at least in an explicit form, i.e. through specific programs dedicated to the development and consolidation of these skills (Pellai, 2016; Cavioni & Zanetti, 2015; Elias & Harrett, 2006; Digennaro, 2018). The need to train students on emotional skills has been attributed for a long time exclusively to the family. Meanwhile recent studies in the educational field have recognized that the school has a central role in both, the transmission and construction of a cognitive heritage of knowledge but also in the development of socioemotional skills (Corcoran, 2017a, 2017b; Corcoran et al., 2018; Greenberg et al., 2003), which is thus coherent with the previously mentioned educational polycentrism. Accordingly, on the one hand, research and literature have increasingly questioned the actions and practices to be implemented to work on emotional education (Pellai, 2016; Digennaro, 2018); and on the other hand, also the schools' attention to these aspects has increased and resulted in (varying degrees of) investment within the educational programmes and trainings. Like knowledge, skills are the object of specific learning, which is defined as "the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, to position themselves and achieve positive goals, to feel and demonstrate empathy for others, to establish and maintain positive relationships and to make responsible decisions" (Weissberg et al., 2015, p. 8).

Building on these premises we therefore adopt the definition of social emotional competences (SES) as "individual abilities that (a) manifest themselves in coherent models of thinking, feeling and behavior, (b) can be developed through formal and informal learning experiences and (c) influence important socio-economic outcomes throughout the life course" (John & De Fruyt, 2015, p. 6). In this work the reference model for the study of SES is constituted by the the Big Five paradigm drom the OECD, that represents a widely shared conceptual and empirical reference framework (Borkenau & Ostendorf, 1990; Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa Jr., 1987). The five domains into which it is divided (Task performance, Emotional regulation, Collaboration, Open-Mindedness, Involvement with others) have shown a high predictive value, referring to malleable and temporally consistent individual abilities (Chernyshenko, Kankaraš & Drasgow, 2018).

Applying these reflections to the Italian scenario, and in particular parts of the territory (which will be described in the paragraph dedicated to the research design), we can affirm that in these contexts (although not par-

ticularly fragile from an educational point of view) the schooling institutions are facing several difficulties in coping with this multitude of tasks (cognitive, educational, relational, normative, etc.) often resulting in disorientation and work overload. In this constant request for interventions, the school is often allied with other actors in educational polycentrism, in particular third sector associations specialized in interventions in the educational field and often equipped with greater flexibility of action and experience of innovation in the field. The pandemic and post-pandemic crisis (Scadigno & Morciano, 2023) confirmed the need of an educational system (precisely in its most extensive multi-actor sense), that is capable to support young people in developing the skills necessary to proactively build and redefine training transition paths and working processes which appear increasingly less linear, uncertain and subject to change. But it must also support and equip them with an increasingly rich and flexible set of skills in view of the challenges related to citizenship, social participation, inclusion and inequalities. The school experiences these transformations in a contradictory way and often without truly transformative outcomes. Educational processes in a radicalized and accelerated modernity (Bauman, 2017; Rosa, 2023) are characterized by at least two different aspects that coexist (Morciano, 2023).

The first concerns the growing primacy of learning over teaching, and therefore the progressive disconnection of education provided by formal educational institutions. This aspect tends to be more pervasive as one continues through the steps of formal education, through the education cycles.

This occurs within the framework of an increasingly pervasive logic of the market from which emerges the importance of knowing how to adapt creatively and proactively one's skills (as a teacher) to the socio-economic changes by favouring practical-applicative skills (know-how that replaces or at least runs in parallel with know-what). Another aspect concerns the growing importance of individual responsibility and the ability to intentionally build and reconstruct one's own life project and course. This must also face individual resistance towards definite educational and professional decisions that limit the possibility of change (Morciano, 2023, p. 50). And in particular this overload of tasks and respective expectations to combat educational poverty that are entrusted to the school formulate the need to consider these educational objectives through a polyphonic perspective of interaction and communication between a plurality of agencies and educational resources. The educational space therefore becomes, at least potentially, the place where a plurality of actors converge. The same integration between

education and formal, non-formal and informal learning, promoted for a long time but actually rather poorly implemented, aims at a progressive integration between schooling and non-schooling and should overcome the long-established phase of scattered experiments entrusted to the spontaneous initiative in the territories. It further envisages necessary synergies with social and socio-health services that intervene in situations of most acute vulnerability – exacerbated or caused by the impact of the pandemic and the predictable long-term negative effects on training paths – and on the school-work transition and young peoples' life trajectories.

Thus, the school as an institution finds itself overloaded, only partially prepared and often in a heterogeneous way based on contexts, internal organization and their ability to react to changes and in any case always challenged in its ability to adapt and innovate, while maintaining its original and essential vocation as physical and symbolic place for the acquisition of knowledge and shared social norms that are grounding the social system to which they belong (Gavosto, 2013; Piras, 2017; Consoli et al., 2019; Pinna & Pitzalis, 2020; Cogliati Dezza, 2021). Drawing on Bateson's notion of the "double bind" (Bateson, 1977), we can hence say that the school is constantly facing a stressful alternative of two extremes, each of which, if chosen, will penalize the opposite extreme. Translated into concrete terms, we can state that the school finds itself divided between the need to maintain its original curricular transmission vocation and the necessity to also incorporate skills and abilities into its educational practices, that are indispensable but very poorly standardized and difficult to evaluate. A similar dilemma arises when the school oscillates between the desire to establish itself as an authoritarian and capable institution even in the face of the pressure of social change, and its propensity to coordinate with other educational agencies with a surplus of coordination efforts and boundary definitions.

In this troubled and unfinished transformation of educational systems, a further point deserves reflection: in a scenario in which educational intervention moves by triangulating between actors, a crucial place is reserved for the student at the center of these actions and interventions. However, it would be misleading to consider children and adolescents as simple recipients of educational interventions promoted and implemented by adults. In fact, this contribution adopts the perspective of New Childhood Sociology (Corsaro & Eder, 1990; Alaanen, 2002; Qvrotrup, 2000) which recognizes the child as a competent social actor, equipped from the first years of life with social skills that are continuously re-elaborated and enriched. From this perspective, therefore, childhood ceases to be a life course phase

subordinate and preparatory to adulthood and acquires full recognition; indeed, childhood is theorized again (James, Jancks, & Prout, 1998) and abandons the traditional conception of socialization that attributes a rather passive role to children and an active part to adults in shaping and educating them. Instead, a vision based on infantile agency and on the ability of children to be producers of the reality to which they belong (Corsaro & Eder., 1990) is increasingly sustained. Although this perspective has weakened over the years, and currently the space for child protagonism has grown, as has the listening of adults towards non-adults (Cavaletto & Olagnero, 2013), in daily school practice the child's vision social actor is still adopted in a non-pervasive way.

Within this framework discussed, the reflection that will follow has the objective of highlighting how the actions of the KIDS4ALLL project can constitute a lever to reduce the risk of educational poverty and how they may create favorable conditions for the integration of knowledge and skills within the school by activating innovation in educational practices. This process takes place within the school, provided it is able to triangulate with other educational agencies, such as third sector associations, in an exchange of practices and perspectives. Indeed, the actions of the KIDS4ALLL project are predestined to combat educational poverty. That is thanks to the envisaged engagement and connection between different territorial resources which are intended for all students and not just for those who present themselves (due to ethnic origin, cultural level of the family of origin, economic conditions) vulnerable in the educational path and run the risk of falling behind or leaving the education circuit (Santagati and Colussi, 2021); the intervention actually acts on a systemic level and aims to activate dynamics of recognition and belonging for everyone through educational experiences.

2. Research design

The KIDS4ALLL project strives to foster the EU-defined 8 Key Competences for Lifelong Learning[1] with ad-hoc created learning contents available in digital and offline format (KIDS4ALLL platform vs. handbook) and ap-

---

1   The 8 Key competences for Lifelong Learning as defined by the EU-Commission in the 'Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Life Long Learning' available at: https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/key-competences.

plied through a collaborative learning scheme. This learning method aims to facilitate the recognition and valorization of existing competence sets from learners with heterogeneous socio-cultural backgrounds and consists of three complementary learning phases. These must be accomplished by learner couples, who have been arranged by the educator or teacher according to pre-established criteria such as demographic characteristics (e.g. ethnic background, age, gender) and features that inform on the competence background of the peers (such as language, prior education, learning difficulties). These characteristics of the project are of particular relevance as they constitute the most prominent elements for the presentation of the results: the choice of didactic methods and practices for teaching and learning; the relocation of students into the classroom, through direct interactions between peers and with adults. For these reasons it is necessary to briefly recall the structure of the intervention envisaged by the KIDS4ALLL project. The first and second learning phases (*know.what* and *know.how*) focus on the acquisition and cultivation of (theoretical and applied) knowledge through both, frontal and interactive learning in a peer-to-peer relationship, i.e. both learners are exposed at the same time to equal (online or offline) contents. Instead, the third phase (*work.it*) follows the 'learning-by-doing' approach to process the generated knowledge. For this purpose, it envisages the elaboration of own learning material by the learner couple and subsequently the presentation of the co-created contents to younger and unexperienced peers (peer for peer). This approach implies accordingly a role switching for each phase from learner to trainee to mentor and challenges traditional role patterns and the didactic organization in the socio-educational field.

2.1 *Study sample and research sites*

The data that informs the analysis of this research has been entirely collected in the frame of the KIDS4ALLL project, specifically through naturalistic observations in lower and upper secondary school classes (with a related diary of observations) and through focus groups and interviews with teachers, principals and representatives of School Offices in two regions: the city of Turin (situated in the north-west of Italy) and Padua with some municipalities in its hinterland (situated in the north-east of Italy). The schools were selected both on the basis of previous experience of collaboration with third sector associations, with which educational projects and in-

terventions had already been carried out, and on the basis of the composition of the students by ethnic and social origin. The selection of the associations was carried out through non representative reasoned choice sampling, based on previous experience of interventions in the educational field, with particular attention to skills and in contexts with a high ethnic and social mix. Consequently, the schools in which the interventions were carried out were also selected through a sampling of the same type, enriched however by quota sampling, in order to allow the presence of classes of different levels.

Overall, 23 naturalistic observations in the classroom were carried out in the two contexts during the KIDS4ALLL project activities; 4 focus groups with teachers and educators, 4 interviews with educators, 1 focus group with stakeholders from the two regions. The collection of information through these qualitative techniques took place during the Pilot 1 and Pilot 2 phases, between December 2022 and September 2023. In both contexts, lower and upper secondary schools were involved and the KIDS4ALLL activities were carried out with classroom support from educators belonging to third sector organizations with long experience in the educational field. The role of teachers who were present during the activities, was marginal in both contexts. Overall, around 90 students were involved during the Pilot 1 phase and around 150 in the Pilot 2 phase. In the Pilot 2 phase, also primary schools were involved for the work in this step.

In details, both research locations provide for a decent data comparability with regard to their educational infrastructure (Belmonte et al., 2017), the organization of teaching, after-school education activities as well as the socio-cultural composition (ISTAT, 2022) of the (student) population. Additionally, both regions offer a fertile research ground for the experimentation of collaborative techniques in educational contexts, since they have been actively promoting peer education in different disciplines in the last decades through increased funding of initiatives (Cavaletto & Visentin, 2024; Rapporto Rota, 2020, 2021, available at: https://www.rapporto-rota.it/). These have been focussing – especially for the collaboration among learners with heterogeneous socio-demographic backgrounds – on health and school education and made specific training available for stakeholders in different educational settings. Indeed, innovative approaches and related experiences of peer education in the named regions have been documented from different perspectives and tested in numerous projects (Beccaria et al., 2003; Borsero et al., 2021; DiMonaco et al., 2017; Kosic, 2018; Pellegrini, 2020; Zanon, 2020). This data observatory provided accordingly for an

excellent information base and inherent contextualization of both study contexts.

In detail, the city of Padua has a long tradition of 'volunteering', acknowledged in 2020 when it was granted the status of European capital of volunteering. According to the ISTAT Census of non-profit organizations in 2022, there are more than 6,000 such organizations operating in the social, educational, cultural, sporting spheres in Padua and its province. The "Padua Capital" report (https://www.padovaevcapital.it/wp-content/-uploads/2021/08/Report_datipdevc.pdf) describes expanding, coordinated activities between public and private organizations, the involvement of all social actors, and the adoption of sub-local initiatives in different city districts to respond to specific needs. Padua has therefore developed its social vocation and civic commitment over the years, and has done so in response to significant and constant migratory flows. In a first season, from 2001 to 2010, the number of foreign residents more than tripled. In 2001, foreign residents made up just over 6% of the population, but reached 14% in 2010, and 16.7% in 2021. According to MIUR 2019-2020 data published in September 2021, the proportion of foreign pupils in Italian schools (from primary to upper secondary school) averaged 14.1% (with peaks of over 15% in lower secondary schools) of the total number of students in Veneto as a whole, and in the city of Padua. There has recently been a drop in the numbers of pupils enrolled in primary school (due to a stabilization of the migratory pressure and an increasing alignment of the foreign women's reproductive behavior with that of the natives), a constant presence in lower secondary schools and the first two years of upper secondary school, and early dropout phenomena at the age of 16 (on completion of the cycle of compulsory education). The data also show that Veneto holds a national record, with more than 71% of its migrant students being second-generation, but these students continue to leave school earlier than their Italian peers.

Turin provides for a rich associative fabric and voluntary bodies, variously distributed between educational, social, recreational and employment support activities. The associations gravitate around large organizations with long experience and consolidated reputation (Sermig, Piazza dei Mestieri, Educatorio della Provvidenza, Asai, Gruppo Abele, just to name a few that are particularly active on education and the social inclusion of people with migratory background), but also to foundations (both of banking origin and community) that operate in the area with specific actions to combat educational dispersion and to support teacher training aiming to sustain

innovation in the educational field. Further to this, the region provides for good productive and economic conditions and an according population of medium-sized enterprises, some large companies and multinationals that play an active role in managing the school-to-work transition. Therefore, from an educational point of view, Turin is a city that represents an extremely varied panorama of actors converging on the topic of education. In 1986 Arnaldo Bagnasco wrote that "Turin's society is certainly an extraordinary deposit of cultural and material resources" (Bagnasco, 1986, p. 77), although not yet well structured and therefore less incisive than their full potential. Since then several networks have been built from which derives what was defined by Mayor Lorusso in 2021 as the "founding cultural value of the community" (https://www.facebook.com/stefanolorussotorino/videos /the-role-of-associationism-in torinowelfare-and-widespread-culture/445279706821398/). The origin of Turin's associations range from secular to religious, and is characterized by a strong aggregative capacity with different degrees of formalisation. There is also an extremely rich and diversified social capital that contributes to social cohesion and innovation (Camoletto, 2022).

In the educational sector, there are countless actions, cooperations and interventions carried out by associations and foundations, with and for schools of all levels; but also after and beyond school to support all those situations of socio-economic and cultural disadvantage, with a concentration of initiatives of this type in districts with a high ethnic mix, cultural gaps, lack of economic resources and high dependence on social services (typically the districts of Northern Turin, e.g. Falchera, Madonna di Campagna, Barriera di Milano; but also in the South of Turin, e.g Mirafiori). In primary school, the share of foreign students remains stable at 15.8% (Ires, 2023) but is overall actually increasing considering the general decline of Italian students; it drops to 14.3% in lower secondary school and presents very heterogeneous percentages in the upper secondary school. In fact, the attendance of the latter mentioned school level is strongly conditioned by social origin and by economic-cultural resources. Many schools in the area, in which multiple problems arise, have been collaborating with the local associations and are supported by non-institutional actors from the third sector with specialization in education.

2.2 *Methodological remarks and research questions*

The research results of this study are grounded in a bottom-up approach based on a qualitative data collection, which is confirmed by the choice of naturalistic observations and focus groups as leading research methods. The naturalistic observation in the classrooms had been primary chosen to circumvent ethical dilemmas that often occur with interviewing techniques, such as disparities in power and status between adults and children and the potential immaturity of youngsters to report their experiences in a "useful" form for research purposes (Morrow & Richards, 1996; Corbetta, 2003). Instead, the observational process enabled the researchers to immerse in the field and to describe it on micro, meso and macro level, i.e. from the individual learners' point of view, from the peer couple's perspective and from the created totality of peer juniors' (learners) and seniors' (mentors) perception. The data collection with this technique had been conducted with pre-defined overall dimensions that focused on the physical setting, didactic style, teacher/educator learning unit management, peer activities and the interaction patterns in the class. Instead, the focus groups were conducted with the same objective, i.e. to catch the micro, meso and macro perspective of actors involved in the educational scenario. Accordingly, educators/teachers (micro), school principals (institutional/meso) and local stakeholders (local/macro level) were interviewed with predisposed questions. Through these materials, attention was focused on the teaching and learning practices implemented by teachers and educators for competences in order to observe their broader impact on performance and relationships within the classroom. Thus, the overall research questions provided for three macro themes that guided the research:

– we are firstly wondering whether and how the adoption of different teaching methods and learning practices can influence performance, development of skills, abilities and relationships within the classroom (see section 3.1);
– we also aim to explore how the social representation (more or less shared and implemented by teachers within the school and class) with respect to the student, qualified as a social actor, influences learning, relationships, skills and abilities (3.2);
– finally, we aim to investigate the differences and convergences between diverse educational figures in the schooling context, which may not solely lead to implications for the effectiveness of the teaching intervention but also to re-definitions of inter-professional boundaries (3.3).

The data collection through focus groups facilitated also a three-level data collection and thus the identification of perceived challenges (micro level – instructors), potential benefits (meso – school principals) and suggestions for the overall context (macro – local stakeholders), as already described. A triangulation of investigators and methodologic approaches aimed to obtain a holistic perspective of the study concern and to enhance completeness and validity of data (Thurmond, 2001; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). It was supposed that the mix of the qualitative data-gathering techniques would capture the entire experience of the peer-education scheme in the tested educational scenarios that required a pluri-instrumental approach due to the diversity of study participants (students, teachers/educators, stakeholders). The choice of three investigators who collected, coded and analyzed the compound data, was made to decrease potential biases among the researchers and to benefit from expertise, the social network and past conducted fieldwork at the two research sites Padua and Turin.

Building on the conceptual framework and the considered research concern, data has been analysed through thematic areas. Those have partly emerged through grounded theory that established categories through the examination of the data, which had been gathered in a continuous interaction of observation and theoretical elaboration (Corbetta, 2003). On the other hand, especially for the preparation of the overall dimensions for the naturalistic observations, thematic areas derived from theoretical assumptions, which had been built on the key concepts that guided the research.

3. Results. Multiple learning

On the basis of the naturalistic observations made in the schools during the activities related to citizenship competences and cultural awareness, focus groups and interviews with teachers, educators, school principals and stakeholders, emerged some relevant elements for a reflection on educational policies:

1. a difference of contents and methods, in view of the same educational objectives, between the school as a formal context and the other training and educational experiences, also proposed by the same school but in addition to the curricular paths;

2. a different space of autonomy, creativity and responsibility reserved for students in the formal school context or in other learning settings;
3. a tension/competition/conflict between teachers and other professional figures linked to a critical situation regarding assessment systems which affects students and the acquisition of competences.

A common denominator of these elements is that within this project the idea of a complementarity between the formalized context of instruction and education (the school in the strict sense with its curricular contents) and other learning contexts, equally relevant and useful for equipping students with knowledge and skills, has taken shape. A complementarity, however, that was not always successful, for reasons that will be explained and commented on in the following pages. This complementarity took shape through the actions implemented, relating to the KIDS4ALLL project, by the educators of the associations, whose intervention was previously discussed with the teachers of the classes involved. Operatively, however, all KIDS4All interventions were carried out in both contexts observed only by educators from the associations during school hours. The teachers had been previously informed of the project and its contents, but, as will be highlighted later, they did not take an active part neither in the educational intervention and its methods nor in the use of the available resources.

Let us now proceed with the critical illustration of the results point by point.

3.1 *Learning content and methods*

For many years the school has been employing more innovative and interactive methods in its teaching and educational practices, alongside traditional methods (frontal lesson, laboratory, blackboard explanation, reading, etc.), which sometimes use tools (as in the case of the use of digital resources), and sometimes actual teaching and learning practices, as in the case of group work, educational trips, visits by external experts invited to the school to deepen parts of the programme. However, in spite of the (more or less systematic) adherence to such formulas, for the majority of teachers within the observed contexts the main objective remains to carry out of the curricular contents, sometimes with abrupt accelerations in order to reach the objective established by the Ministry for each discipline and year of study, in ways that evoke a Mertonian bureaucratic ritualism (Mer-

ton, 1952). The challenge that the KIDS4ALLL project has set concerned precisely the inclusion of less conventional methods, tools, practices and resources for the development of knowledge and skills. The observations, focus groups and interviews confirm this aspect, underlining some particularly relevant critical points: firstly, the figure of the teacher is considered on average resistant to innovation, unwilling to change his or her classroom style and scarcely creative in terms of methods and ability to adapt to the different needs of the students; to this adds also a resistance to training and updating, which leads to always and only moving within a comfort zone that proves to be anachronistic and didactically ineffective in the classroom. These aspects emerged both in the observation of innovative methods and practices by educators, and in the application of the typical Kids 4 All method, with a initial limited reactivity of the students, poorly socialized in this sense by their teachers.

There is thus a prevalence of standardisation in methods and contents, as well as the reiteration of an educational style regardless of contextual variables, primarily the "human material" composed of the students in that class. Similar arguments about teachers emerged, with respect to the innovative Kids method put into practice by educators, during the focus groups and interviews.

> *The teacher, then, is one of the crucial pieces; I think that receiving cues in terms of both content and methodology is very useful for teachers; they learn in turn, they experiment... even if it has to be said that there is an internal selection within the teaching staff, the minority is actually really committed and willing to continue training, reflecting and be receptive for suggestions.* (Focus group with stakeholders, former school principal and ministerial consultant)

> *Not all teachers are the same, and those unmotivated, unskilled teachers do not know how to do a good job; there are cases of heroic teachers, but there are also very absent teachers. So here we come back to the issue of teachers' skills, who often hardly have corresponding curricular competences. And then there is also a problem related to the use of technologies, of platforms, there is a huge gap also in terms of digital competences, of technological resources.* (Focus group with stakeholders, representatives of a third sector organization operating in the field of education at national level)

The educator's didactic style is a mix between traditional approaches and innovative ones: on one side contents and explanations, on the other suggestions, discussions, inspirations from the everyday life of students. The educator's knows how to mix serious and ironic moments. She also knows very well how to maintain discipline, but all the methods and strategies implemented in the classroom are very different from those of the teachers, as highlighted by the students. (Observation Diary notes, High school, Turin)

The data appears to be transversal in all the cycles and contexts observed, and indeed presents a cumulative trend, since teaching methods and contents are confirmed and reinforced from cycle to cycle, thus confirming in students and families the idea that learning can only be achieved under those conditions, with those methods, with those predefined scans, with those assessment systems. Obviously these critical elements do not mean a general and homogeneous levelling off because even in this research experience teachers, managers and schools have appeared sensitive and active with respect to a more flexible, modulable and adaptable idea of teaching and learning. However, both on the basis of the observations conducted and the informations obtained from focus and interviews, it seems that active involvement in innovative practices is limited on the part of teachers and largely delegated to external educators; consequently the intervention, although appreciated and effective, is limited in its effects by the lack of transferability to other moments of everyday school life. The exchange of educational practices then (between teachers and educators, between teachers of different cycles and disciplines) seems to be still only practiced to a limited extent.

The teacher should reclaim the role of educator and not just take care of a syllabus, even though we have been saying for years that syllabuses no longer exist [...] If the teacher is motivated and wants to educate then the classroom becomes a community, then that is the right context; if they are only focused on learning process then it is not. In my opinion, the role of the teacher should be a bit like that. (Focus group, pilot phase 1, Turin)

Actually, the project presents a self selective trend: where experimentations are applied, where innovations are implemented and new avenues are explored, there is a self-selection of teachers and students; therefore, paradoxically, those who already use innovative methods, those who are less an-

chored to standardization and welcome project proposals that go in this direction including them in their training courses on an ongoing basis:

> *You have to promote and disseminate these projects; not all colleagues are informed and involved, that's a big limitation, which has eventually a negative effect on the students; some have more opportunities than others from this point of view, if you can come into contact with less familiar methods and contents [...] So next to standardization maybe you need more flexibility and adaptation.* (Focus group with teachers, School manager, pilot phase 2, Padua)

> *The duration and continuity in the school make the difference; only very few benefit from spot interventions, actually those who already had the resources and capacity anyway; and working in this way requires effort and preparation of teachers, which not everyone has.* (Focus group with national stakeholders, School Office representative)

> *If I don't enough time I don't produce anything in the school; yes here is no full-time attendance, yes there is no support from family, but I have to build ways of filling the time, in school and after school, maybe at the beach, at the playground, at the soccer field [...], we have to build different ways of teaching that are not techniques.* (Focus group with National stakeholders, post pilot phase 2)

And to the local limits, confined to each schooling context, add also structural limits, those that can be traced back to educational policies: the process of transforming schools is not only slow but also deeply tied to procedures, standards, bureaucratic and formal aspects, which make schools far from being able to realize their potential.

> *Educational policies are slow, but in a useless, unreflective way; teachers do not receive training and support; the feedback from the institutions is not heard , or of little use, it is very formal, long speeches on paper but with no relation to the reality. There is no compulsory training, everyone chooses according to his or her affinities on digital competences, on other competences as well; then it must be said that the quality of these trainings is often very low and very far from what is actually needed.* (Focus group, school principal, post pilot phase 2, Padua)

The intervention implemented with the KIDS4ALLL project highlighted these critical issues, precisely because its method, implemented in

the two contexts observed by educators and sometimes in teams with some teachers who were already sensitive to the issue of competences (both LLL and social-emotional competences) and adequately trained, underlined the differences with common classroom practices. There were two elements that distinguished from the most common classroom practices: firstly, an innovative way of conveying content (the know-what, i.e. learning content) through multiple resources, from the platform to printed resources (books, articles, manuals, etc.), from the Internet (but used with caution and the critical capacity to assess the quality and reliability of information, thus deriving further learning from the traps of the Internet) to social networks; secondly, the introduction of know-how, i.e. that reflective phase of re-elaboration and creativity that is often not carried out in traditional schools or at most left to individual study at home, but with a disparity between students and in accordance with their ability to independently manage this phase, that is however essential for learning that is not only mnemonic but also reflective and critical.

> *Students are very displaced when faced with a task they have to carry out independently and without stringent indications from adults. They have little imagination; they don't even know how to draw inspiration from the tutorials that are still proposed by the educator.* (Observations Diary notes, High school, Turin)

Crucial in this process is therefore the teacher and the according team, in terms of the strategies deployed in the classroom and of their ability to 'get passionate' about their educational task. But equally crucial is the social representation, constructed within educational contexts, of the student, either as a social actor or as a *tabula rasa* on which to write notions, programmes and information consistent with the curricula. Both these aspects will be explored in more detail in the following paragraphs.

3.2 *The student as protagonist or supporting actor?*

The change is generally invoked as a panacea for all ills, even within the school, often inappropriately and without any foundation. The pressure to change, however, generates anxieties, fears, and resistance. We therefore move, when facing the change, along a continuum that ranges from curiosity and willingness to learn new things – as long as they are solid and appropriate to the school as an indispensable educational institution – to complete

and often a priori rejection. In the case of KIDS4ALLL, the proposal for change is evident, although it is not an institutionalized change, but only a temporary and limited one, as happens in experimental situations. In any case, the project proposal, realized by the educators of the partner associations, was incorporated into the school routine, with a focus on the impact it would have had on both teachers and students. Perhaps more than a real change, we should speak, as we said earlier, of an experiment which, if accepted and adopted by teachers and students, could trigger a change. Our data present a very complex scenario in this regard, with lights and shadows. There are several points of view on the experience proposed by the project KIDS4ALLL: that of the students (reported through ethnographic observations), that of the teachers reported to their students and to themselves, that of the educators and that of the stakeholders.

The students' point of view is overall positive: the experience was appreciated and welcomed enthusiastically and with a progressive activation of skills that went far beyond the cooperative capacity triggered by the buddy method.

> *As time passed, from one meeting to the next, we can observe an improvement in both, the interest and the proactivity and creativity of the children with respect to the experience. The level of attention, the creativity and the spirit of cooperation increases.* (Observations Diary Notes, upper secondary school, Padua, Pilot Phase 1)

> *The students are much more active, creative and interested than in previous encounters. Even those who were disturbing in the previous labs were participating in this one and came up with some brilliant ideas.* (Observations Diary Notes, lower secondary school, Padua, Pilot Phase 1)

> *The buddy couples continue, as in the previous meetings, to work very well together and to appreciate the educators' proposals; they exchange many impressions on the work to be done together, they co create… there is a very good valorization of each one's skills.* (Observations Diary Notes, Turin, upper secondary school, Pilot Phase 1)

Particularly effective in activating skills such as a sense of responsibility, the ability of self-assessment and self-efficacy was the moment of passing on the contents of the work-it area to the junior peers: this moment brought out the results of the work carried out in pilot phase 1 and the student experienced a completely new condition of learning, namely that of being a teacher of one's own peers.

Experienced students have the opportunity to take the active role of knowledge transmitters and to check the internalization of the newly acquired competence. In addition, they can show the learning materials that they have produced, on which they have spent time and energy, to their co-peers. The junior peers listen with attention and show interest in an experience different from those they are normally exposed to. (Observations Diary Notes, lower secondary school, Padua, Pilot 2)

It was then, that they realized they had to bring home a result, hence reactivity, improvisation, adaptability to the circumstances and achievement of the objective; even those who are not active in traditional lessons here felt engaged; personalities who were capable to respond to the smaller children emerged. (Focus group, educator, post pilot phase 2)

Both, the commitment and sense of responsibility in managing the role of teachers, but also the critical reflection regarding the contents and the most appropriate way to convey them are confirmed; not just a matter of form but of substance, the students/teachers discussed at length how to be effective and how they could motivate their junior colleagues. (Observations Diary Notes, Padova, pilot phase 2)

However, the novelty, in roles, in self-experimentation, in the acquisition of knowledge, is not always an element to be valued positively. A critical element that emerged in the discussions with teachers and stakeholders concerns the students' ability to focus on the assigned task; learning in a new way does indeed produce a benefit, but the suspicion is that this improvement is ephemeral, linked precisely to a "novelty" that breaks the routine and thus fuels an interest that would, however, struggle to be maintained if this method were to become the standard method within the school. Therefore, the problem of educational institutions has to do, in the opinion of teachers, school principals and stakeholders, with certain characteristics of the contemporary student generations: in general not very passionate, accustomed to a hit-and-run use of content as a consequence of the pervasive use of technologies, captured by teaching methods inspired more by entertainment than by commitment and dedication, little supported by parents who are themselves distracted by a multitude of stimuli and experiences.

One has to wonder however, how much this depends on novelty and how much on actual effectiveness; if they attended always lectures like this they might be bored anyway. (Focus group, National stakeholders)

> *Unfortunately, we also have the problem of attention deficit, so at best we can propose micro modules or activities of a few minutes. Online is different from presence, you cannot ask for the same duration. The students can't make it [...] In my opinion we need to favour the plurality of activities and methods because it helps them, given the attention deficit.* (Focus group, upper secondary school teacher, Turin, pilot phase 1)

Then the question needs to be posed in other terms: the responsibility of adults is certainly confirmed, their methods, their ability to nurture a passion for learning; there is also the debate on the role of the family and the transformation of the relationships between adults and non-adults and of the family's educational capacity; but on the other hand there is the issue of the representation that the adult world has of those who, not adults, learn to be adults, as children and adolescents. If on the one hand the vision of the school as a place where contents are transferred to those who have to learn them, according to a hydraulic logic from the full to the empty vase, is outdated, it is on the other hand undeniable that relations in the school, within the family and in all socialization contexts have radically changed. The perspective of the child as a social actor, as a subject endowed with agency, competent with respect to the choices and issues that concern him or her, is now fully in force; and consequently, the approach of the adult world is increasingly moving in the direction of listening to and encouraging this protagonism.

> *I appreciated that the focus is on children as primary actors; I can honestly say that my approach is school-centred and I believe that knowledge is the primary objective of schooling but I also think that within education and schooling there is a human dimension; a person learns only in a complete way if fully involved and fully engaged in all parts, not only in the cognitive one.* (Focus group, National stakeholders, post pilot phase 2)

> *The general impression was that there was a lot of enthusiasm, because of the workshop mode, the arrangement within the class, the collaboration, the relationship with the older students; they felt more than students, indeed they felt like actors in the project. The project was very interactive and not very scholastic in the most traditional sense.* (Focus group, Teacher, Padua, lower secondary school, post pilot phase 2)

Drawing on the existing data, we can not say whether this leading role of the students has positive effects on other dimensions and activities of the school; however, it is relevant to note that the change of perspective has triggered potentials that the teachers themselves would have not imagined.

3.3 *Teaching as practice: strategies for transformation?*

The teaching profession presents itself increasingly as very complex and requires an ability to interpret the professional role in a coherent way with rapid social and cultural changes. On the one hand, our data provided for an image of teachers who are bewildered when faced with less conventional methods and proposals for achieving didactic objectives; who are scarcely motivated to learn from these methods and experiences and to transfer them, after their own reworking, into their classroom practices. We are therefore mostly in the presence of immobile teachers, firmly anchored to a ritualism in content, obsessed with formal obligations with respect to ministerial programmes, not very curious and not very passionate. But on the other hand, we have found very innovative, competent educators, capable of activating an immediate communicative channel with students. Yet literature and field research tell us that the motivation of the classroom teacher and his or her curiosity are the foundation of a quality teaching and learning experience. Therefore, this point is crucial and needs further investigation.

Primarily, we observed a rather limited active participation of teachers in the KIDS4ALLL experience and its methods, tools and resources, that alternated with a lack of specific expertise in the methods, contents and aims of the project.[2]

> *The teacher was not a participant but only an observer, she worked in the organizational phase, also during the classroom activities carried out by the educators, where there was no interaction and no expression of interest. No other teachers appeared during the activities.* (Observations Diary Notes, upper secondary school, Padua, pilot phase 2)

> *It is interesting to note that at a certain point the teacher (of mathematics) intervenes with suggestions to the students, but is immediately stopped by the educator who notes the incorrectness of the teacher's indication for the realisation of the requested product. The episode shows great competence and mastery of the field by the educator but at the same time absolute distance by the teacher.* (Observations Diary Notes, upper secondary school, Turin, pilot phase 1)

2   The teaching team and the heads of the schools involved in the project were aligned with the contents, aims and methods of the KIDS4ALLL project through specific theoretical and methodological training and the presentation of the platform with the learning units and the Handbook.

> *The teacher did not present the topic in an engaging way and the tasks for the pairs were unclear. There was a clear disconnect between the class and the teacher [...] the teacher did not seem to have the slightest influence on the students and was unable to initiate and lead a meaningful discussion on any topic.* (Observations Diary Notes, upper secondary school, Turin, pilot phase 1)

This element was shared by all teachers, in all schools, of all levels, who were involved in the project. We can assume at this point that firstly, the teachers did not choose the project but underwent it without conviction; secondly, that the teachers joined the project with interest but then rather delegated the majority of activities towards the educators; thirdly, that the teachers activated the project but distanced themselves from the educators' modus operandi.

In fact, it emerged how adaptable the figure of the educator is to the variety of students in front of him/her, possessing many skills and strategies (less curricular certainly, but with a solid preparation on the contents of that educational intervention and with a repertoire of knowledge, including cutting edge technology). The educator has also a natural exposure to confrontation with colleagues and other professional figures, because he/she operates according to an interdisciplinary team logic. Finally, the educator has an ability to motivate students through variations in time management, in the scheduling of proposed activities, in remodelling them from one session to the next, taking care to adapt his or her style and training proposal to the students. It is therefore an educational approach that takes shape and is built together with the class.

> *The educator is mainly facilitator, his/her intervention is very limited, but clear and precise. She explains very carefully both the contents of the know-what area and the know-how section and stimulates the children to participate, intervene and express themselves.Creative methods are used. With this approach she immediately gains the attention of the students.* (Observations Diary Notes, Lower secondary school, Padua, Pilot phase 1)

> *The didactic style is always very engaging, informal and fun; even if operating professionally, the human and motivational component, the tailor-made intervention with respect to the students are prevalent; putting the student at the centre and calibrating the intervention according to the profiles of the students in the classroom supports the didactic and*

formative experience. (Observations Diary Notes, lower secondary school, Padua, Pilot phase 1)

The style adopted by the educator is always appreciated by the students; she is very creative, offers many ideas; she criticises, but in a nice and constructive way; she never refers to the students' abilities or incapacities but only to their experience/familiarity with certain tools (Canva; Power point; Adobe acrobat; specific programmes for graphics and drawing even at a professional level). She uses several elements inspired by everyday life (e.g. today we are working on logos, so the logos of some famous and well-known brands are shown to the students: Spotify; Mercedes; McDonalds; Glovo, etc.). (Observations Diary Notes, upper secondary school, Turin, Pilot phase 1)

There is one element that plays in favour of educators regardless of their qualities and competences: assessment. The topic of assessment constitutes one of the crucial nodes of the Italian school (Castoldi, 2012): assessment of what? Assessment of whom? Assessment in which ways? The questions on the topic could multiply and the debate on the subject is far from pacified. Assessment is disliked, feared, criticised, undermined in its foundations. Students are afraid of assessment but have no alternative or even a say in their cursus studiorum, teachers do not want to be evaluated. The KIDS4ALL project did not include evaluations, the educators limited themselves to providing ideas to the students, commenting constructively on their products and their creative ideas; however, evaluation has made its appearance in the form of self-evaluation. It was therefore the students themselves who evaluated themselves, both individually and as pairs or mini groups of buddies. Yet the students first feel a great need for evaluation, which within the KIDS4ALLL experience has been translated into a process of severe self-assessment, peer evaluation within their own dyad or mini group; assessment by junior peers and assessment by educators.

So let's see what the salient aspects of this assessment were and why it is so far removed from what students are routinely exposed to. The evaluation system within the school is configured, at least in theory, as measurement and attribution of value to facts, events, practices, conducts, with reference to the purposes that the educational institution intends to pursue (Domenici, 2003). Still in theory, evaluation aims at promoting reflective processes, activating the dimension of exchange, comparison, sharing and collaboration (Sambell et al., 2013; Swaffield, 2008). What is quite different is how students perceive assessment: in fact many authors (Boud & Fal-

chikov, 2007; Gibbs & Simpson, 2005), recalling Snyder's (1971) and Miller and Parlett's (1974) studies, emphasise how many aspects linked to the study course (satisfaction, quality of relationships, performance, etc.) are largely influenced by the way students perceive the idea of assessment that is implemented by their teachers.

In our experience in the field, the crucial difference between students' representations of their teachers and of their educators lies actually in the fact that evaluation by the teacher is perceived as a reward-punishment mechanism rather than an educational goal. This does not mean that the evaluation intervention implemented by an adult is such, but it is perceived as such by the students; it follows that an experience without evaluation improves performance and leads to the development of self-evaluation methods, even very severe ones.

> *The senior peers were mainly inspired by the style of the female educators, very little by that of their teachers, from whom they distanced themselves. There were numerous interventions aimed at reassuring the juniors. Encouragement and support were typical of the female educators, even when pointing out critical factors, and the students adopted the same style.* (Observations Diary Notes, lower secondary school, pilot phase 2)

Actually, the teachers themselves confirm this representation, emphasising that the 'real' evaluation is in their hands. The absence of assessment (without questioning the type of assessment and its quality) is indicated by the teachers as the benchmark by which to measure the students' positive project reception.

> *There is always the idea that activities of this type constitute an intermezzo, a lightening of the work load compared to traditional study, they are almost an entertainment: of course the children prefer them, as there is no assessment, there is no content to learn.* (Focus group, teachers and educators, post pilot phase 2)

Educators actually carry out an activity to which no institutional assessment is correlated: this element means that the social representation in the world of education and confirmed by the students' reactions qualifies them as more friendly and engaging professionals than teachers. This aspect might lead one to think that it is the absence of assessment that is the main reason for the greater effectiveness of educators in the classroom context: in reality, the collected data confirms that it is the students themselves who

solicit assessment, both from educators and from peers; the students also self-assess themselves quite severely (Farinelli, 2012). This data in particular is an interesting indicator: it is not a question of being assessed, but of receiving a motivated and motivating assessment, with less standardised formulas and more capable of capturing a plurality of aspects, cognitive and non-cognitive. An element of further reflection with respect to teachers' actions.

Conclusions

The centrality of the teaching figures, whether teacher or educator, emerges strongly in both contexts. The teacher is the key figure on which students' learning experiences, motivations and reflective abilities are constructed. The implementation of didactic methods, strategies, educational practices and teaching styles not only influences, according to the research findings, curricular learning, but also affects the development and consolidation of competences; basically, it can be hypothesised that the style of the teacher (and the team of teachers) in the classroom exerts an influence on disciplinary outcomes and ultimately on the human development of students. It follows that the teaching figure has high educational and training responsibilities. In Italy in this regard, a stagnation of educational policies has been observed for some time, which translates both into an absence of support for the teaching body in terms of compulsory and multidimensional training and updating on the various aspects and implications of the educational process; and into an absence of a critical and reflective vision of learning by the teachers, school principals and institutions. As Ciarini and Giancola (2016, p. 65) argue, the Italian case shows specific peculiarities that produce as effect what we have argued so far. The stagnation of educational policies is also the product of an interwining of processes of decentralisation and promotion of school autonomy, of permanent experimentation in local contexts, of competition between schools (a semi-market that does not so much concern competition between public and private but rather competition between individual educational institutions) and finally of the institutionalisation of national evaluation. Responsible for these shortcomings are, in the first place, a low level of funding dedicated to education, and inadequate support for teachers throughout their careers.

These elements give educational policies the urgency of interventions

aimed specifically at the teaching profession, which should however not be confused with professional training programmes and the acquisition of credits; instead, it is a question of reorienting the cardinal points of the profession, whose primary focus ceases to be evaluation for its own sake and instead yields to an idea of a school (made up of teachers, students, parents, educators, managers and experts) that is capable to stimulate and motivate. The centrality of the teacher emerges from this field experience: the quality of the individual teacher, understood as the complementarity of curricular knowledge relating to his or her teaching area, teaching methods, classroom teaching styles, personal skills, motivational skills and the the capability to engage students, can make all the difference in the students' performance and in their skills development. Moreover, from the individual teacher radiates a net of relationships with colleagues and the school management that, if adequately underpinned by a spirit of cooperation, can produce truly transformative outcomes in educational relations.

It is evident that only systemic interventions can produce results; and this is not only valid for the final recipients of education (i.e. the students) but for the entire school system. The continuity of educational experiences, within the same cycle and between cycles, is the essential requisite for combating educational poverty; isolated, episodic, occasional interventions do not allow methods, notions, stimuli to settle down and paradoxically have a rather distracting effect, beneficial neither for curricular learning nor for skills development.

In this regard, it emerged repeatedly from research conducted with educational staff in diverse phases of the KIDS4ALLL project, that teachers and educators have recognised the strong need to acquire and cultivate competence sets to update and further develop existing teaching modes, methodologies and also personal mindsets. In this regard, training formats that challenge existing mechanisms regarding roles, power mechanisms, responsibilities and delegations in the educational scenario should be increasingly developed to put standards into question that are not coherent neither with characteristics of the contemporary student population nor with the social morphology of the educational profession.

References

Alanen L. (2004). *L'infanzia come concetto generazionale. Per una sociologia dell'infanzia*. Franco Angeli.

Allmendinger J., & Leibfried S. (2003). Education and the welfare state: the four worlds of competence production. *Journal of European social policy*, 13(1), 63-81.

Bagnasco A. (1986). *Torino: un profilo sociologico*. Einaudi.

Bateson G. (1977). *Play and paradigm. Play. Anthropological perspectives.*

Bauman, Z. (2017). Tourists and vagabonds: Or, living in postmodern times. In *Identity and social change* (pp. 13-26). Routledge.

Beccaria F., Amici S., Bonello M., Maggiorotti P., & Tomaciello M. G. (2003). 'Listen to me, I have something to tell you': Young people, alcohol and drugs: Peer education. *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*, 20(1_suppl), 110-115.

Belfield C., Bowden A. B., Klapp A., Levin H., Shand R., & Zander S. (2015). The economic value of social and emotional learning. *Journal of Benefit-Cost Analysis*, 6(3), 508-544.

Belmonte A., Bove V., D'Inverno G., & Modica M. (2017). *School infrastructure spending and educational outcomes in northern italy.*

Borkenau P., & Ostendorf F. (1990). Comparing exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis: A study on the 5-factor model of personality. *Personality and Individual differences*, 11(5), 515-524.

Borsero M., Casi R., Pizzarelli C., & Tassoni S. (2022). La Casa di Carte: probabilità peer to peer dal secondo al primo grado. In *Apprendimento laboratoriale in Matematica e Fisica in presenza ea distanza*. Atti del X Convegno Nazionale di Didattica della Fisica e della Matematica DI. FI. MA. 2021. Torino, 11-12-13 ottobre 2021-online (pp. 99-106). Università degli Studi di Torino.

Bronfenbrenner U. (2005). *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development*. sage.

Camoletto S. (2022). *Il capitale sociale come risorsa per l'innovazione sociale locale e la sua sostenibilità.*

Cavaletto G., & Olagnero M. (2013). "Che cosa vuoi fare?". I discorsi tra genitori e figli sulle scelte della vita quotidiana. *MinoriGiustizia*, 3, 26-35.

Cavioni V., & Zanetti M. A. (2019). Social-emotional learning and students' transition from kindergarten to primary school in Italy. In *Early childhood development: Concepts, methodologies, tools, and applications* (pp. 528-547). IGI Global.

Chernyshenko O. S., Kankaraš M., & Drasgow F. (2018). *Social and emotional skills for student success and well-being: Conceptual framework for the OECD study on social and emotional skills.*

Clarke A. M., Morreale S., Field C. A., Hussein Y., & Barry M. M. (2015). *What works in enhancing social and emotional skills development during childhood and adolescence*. A review of the evidence on the effectiveness of school-based and out-of-school programmes in the UK. A report produced by the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Health Promotion Research, National University of Ireland Galway.

Cogliati Dezza V. (2021). Crisi ecologica e futuro negato. Disuguaglianze di cittadinanza. *Scuola democratica, Learning for Democracy*, speciale/2021, 107-119.

Colombo M., & Censi A. (2010). Il policentrismo formativo. In Associazione Italiana Sociologi, A. I. S. (eds.), *Mosaico Italiam*(pp. 141-146). Franco Angeli.

Consoli G., Szpunar G., & Sposetti P. (2019). Per una scuola efficace. Criticità della didattica per competenze e strategie di miglioramento. *Annali Online eella Didattica e della Formazione Docente*, pp. 32-49.

Corbetta P. (2003). *Social research: Theory, methods and techniques*. Sage.

Corcoran R. P. (2017, October). Preparing principals to improve student achievement. In *Child & Youth Care Forum* (Vol. 46, pp. 769-781). Springer US.

Corcoran R. P. (2018). Preparing teachers' to raise students' mathematics learning. *International Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*, 16(6), 1169-1185.

Corcoran R. P., Cheung A. C., Kim E., & Xie C. (2018). Effective universal school-based social and emotional learning programs for improving academic achievement: A systematic review and meta-analysis of 50 years of research. *Educational Research Review,* 25, 56-72.

Corsaro W. A., & Eder D. (1990). Children's peer cultures. *Annual review of sociology*, 16(1), 197-220.

Digennaro S. (2018). Corpi emotivi: riflessioni sull'educazione emotiva nella scuola. *Encyclopaideia*, 22(52), 13-23.

Digman J. M. (1990). Personality structure: Emergence of the five-factor model. *Annual review of psychology*, 41(1), 417-440.

Domenici, G. (2023). *Manuale della valutazione scolastica. Nuova ed. riv. e aggiornata*. GLF editori Laterza.

Domitrovich C. E., Durlak J. A., Staley K. C., & Weissberg R. P. (2017). Social emotional competence: An essential factor for promoting positive adjustment and reducing risk in school children. *Child development*, 88(2), 408-416.

Durlak J. A., Weissberg R. P., Dymnicki A. B., Taylor R. D., & Schellinger K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta analysis of school based universal interventions. *Child development*, 82(1), 405-432.

Elias M. J., & Arnold H. (Eds.). (2006). *The educator's guide to emotional intelligence and academic achievement: Social-emotional learning in the classroom*. Corwin Press.

Farinelli F. (2012). *Contro la valutazione*. MGuerini e Associati.

Frabboni F. (2000). Sistema formativo integrato. In L. Ruggiu (Ed.), *Dizionario critico dell'autonomia scolastica* (pp. 240-243). Carocci.

Gavosto A. (2013). Più autonomia ma senza segregazione. *Scuola democratica*, *Learning for Democracy*, 2, 521-526.

Goldberg L. R. (2013). An alternative "description of personality": The Big-Five factor structure. In *Personality and Personality Disorders* (pp. 34-47). Routledge.

Greenberg M. T., Weissberg R. P., O'Brien M. U., Zins J. E., Fredericks L., Resnik H., & Elias M. J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American psychologist*, 58(6-7), 466.

Hartmut, R (2022). *Risonanza e vita buona: educazione e capitalismo accelerato. Conversazioni con Nathanaël Wallenhorst*. Scholé

Hengst H., & Zeiher H. (Eds.). (2004). *Per una sociologia dell'infanzia* (Vol. 55). Milano: FrancoAngeli. ISTAT 2022, http://dati.istat.it

James A., Prout A., & Jenks C. (2002). *Teorizzare l'infanzia. Per una nuova sociologia dei bambini*. Donzelli.

John O. P., & DeFruyt F. (2015). *Education and social progress: Framework for the longitudinal study of social and emotional skills in cities* (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, EDU/CERI/CD (2015) 13).

Kosic M. (2018). Media Literacy and for the Net Generation. *International Journal of emotional education*, 10(1), 68-88.

Maccarini A. M., & Cavaletto G. M. (2021). Breve sintesi: insegnanti, stili educativi e competenze socio-emotive. In *L'educazione socio-emotiva. Character skills, attori e processi nella scuola primaria* (pp. 197-214). Bologna: Il Mulino.

McCrae R. R., & Costa P. T. (1987). Validation of the five-factor model of personality across instruments and observers. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 52(1), 81.

Merton R. K. (1952). *Reader in bureaucracy*. Free Press.

Miles M. B., Huberman A. M., & Saldaña J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. 3rd.

Morrow V., & Richards M. (1996). The ethics of social research with children: An overview 1. *Children & society*, 10(2), 90-105.

Parisi D. (2002). La scuola è migliorabile? *il Mulino, Rivista trimestrale di cultura e di politica* 2, 251-258.

Pellai A. (2018). *L'educazione emotiva*. Rizzoli.

Pellegrini G. (Ed.). (2020). *Voci di salute Quindici anni di peer education in Veneto: Esperienze, risultati e prospettive*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.

Pinna G., Pitzalis M. (2020). Tra scuola e lavoro. L'implementazione dell'Alternanza Scuola Lavoro tra diseguaglianze scolastiche e sociali. *Scuola democratica, Learning for Democracy*, 1, 17-35.

Piras M. (2017). Questa scuola non va. Cinquant'anni dopo don Milani. *il Mulino, Rivista trimestrale di cultura e di politica*, 5, 784-794.

Pourtois J. P., & Desmet H. (2015). *L'éducation émancipatrice: de la co-éducation école-famille à la cité de l'éducation*. Philippe Duval.

Qvortrup J. (2017). Macro-analysis of childhood. In *Research with children* (pp. 43-65). Routledge.

Santagati M., & Colussi E. (2021). *Alunni con background migratorio in Italia*. Generazioni competenti.

Thurmond V. A. (2001). The point of triangulation. *Journal of nursing scholarship*, 33(3), 253-258.

Vaismoradi M., Turunen H., & Bondas T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing & health sciences*, 15(3), 398- 405.

Weare K., & Nind M. (2011). Mental health promotion and problem prevention in schools: what does the evidence say? *Health promotion international*, 26(suppl_1), i29-i69.

Weissberg, R. P., Durlak, J. A., Domitrovich, C. E., & Gullotta, T. P. (2015). *Social and emotional learning: Past, present, and future*.

Yoshikawa H., Leyva D., Snow C. E., Treviño E., Barata M., Weiland C., ... & Arbour M. C. (2015). Experimental impacts of a teacher professional development program in Chile on preschool classroom quality and child outcomes. *Developmental psychology*, 51(3), 309.

Zanon V. (2020). *Ubuntu, io sono perché noi siamo: empowerment di gruppo per giovani nigeriane vittime di tratta*, 98-112.

III.

When teacher training experts meet to examine short professional training in the KIDS4ALLL project - Actions, Challenges, and Consequences

Michal Ganz-Meishar, Janice Darmanin,
Joanne Grima, Dolly Eliyahu-Levi

Introduction

The local and global routine life involves dealing with health, religious, political, and cultural crises characterized by uncertainty, tension, and fear among all the partners in the educational institutions: the management, the teachers, the students, the parents, and the community. The KIDS4ALLL project adapts pedagogical and educational activities to promote social justice, inclusion, and equality in culturally and socially heterogeneous classrooms. The goal is to enable every child to learn and explore equally. As we continue to understand through research how the brain develops and how learning occurs, the role of the teacher has become one where teachers are considered facilitators in shaping children's learning journey across diverse age groups. Mainly, the teachers must adapt the teaching-learning-assessment methods to children from minority groups from the social margins, minority language speakers, and those with lifestyles different from the dominant majority group in the society receiving immigration.

Professional training of educators is, without doubt, an essential part of the requirements expected by Ministries of Education in Israel, Malta, and the world (Biberman-Shalev et al., 2022; Darling-Hammond, 2017; Shkabarina et al., 2020). The focus is on improving teaching quality, promoting knowledge enrichment, strengthening pedagogical skills, and being a leader in the learning environment. Recognizing the significance of this transformative role, teacher education becomes a resource center for educators to navigate the complexities of contemporary education effectively. Vocational training opportunities are needed to adapt to the challenging realities

of life in the 21st century, which in schools include heterogeneous classrooms that are multilingual, multicultural, and multireligious. Hence, in parallel to a developing dynamic world, the teaching profession must continue to evolve. Kennedy (2016) emphasizes that if subject content is placed at the center of teachers' professional development, the impact on student learning is reduced. Therefore, the teachers in a culturally and socially heterogeneous class must be able to act as facilitators and guides to reveal to the students methodological strategies that integrate content in a broader way that is freed from the textbooks. We can demonstrate quality learning among the students through an adapted professional development in which the teachers will experience the connection between content and pedagogy. The main goal is to improve student learning, which can be achieved by connecting content and pedagogy – the "subject-didactic" framework (Desimone, 2011). As children encounter an ever-expanding array of information, educators must adapt to new teaching paradigms to foster meaningful learning experiences. This necessitates that teachers' ongoing professional development includes the acquisition of rich and diverse content and pedagogical knowledge that is responsive to their social and cultural context within heterogeneous classes (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009). Furthermore, this requires that teacher training programs provide a platform for educators to acquire the latest insights about methodologies and strategies, equipping them to engage effectively with their students, whilst giving them the opportunity to collaborate, share good practices, and converse within professional learning communities.

Findings from the international teaching and learning survey conducted by OECD TALIS (2018) show that teachers feel that there is more to being a participant in various training opportunities to sufficiently promote the quality of teaching and professional collaboration between teachers. The teachers' experiences seem to show that they feel limited, focused more on interdependence, and less involved in the decision-making process and content creation within the educational sphere.

This study endeavors to shed light on the collaborative efforts between pedagogical experts from two distinct countries, Israel and Malta, who are also two of the partners involved in the Horizon 2020 international project KIDS4ALLL, aiming at strengthening and giving value to transcultural, interdisciplinary skill sets in a highly diversified learner population, that increasingly corroborates the actual necessity for lifelong learning. An essential part of this project was the pilot phase, which included teacher training in preparation for the delivery of technology-enhanced learning

experiences to students through the digital platform created as part of the project. Israel was one of the partnering countries within the KIDS4ALLL project which implemented this pilot phase within a particular educational context. On the other part the other partnering country, Malta, represented by its Institute for Education, and which did not participate in the pilot project, teamed up with Israel to analyse the data collected from participating practitioners following the teacher training held leading up to the implementation of the pilot project. The collaboration between experts from these countries sought to harness their collective knowledge and experiences to create a nuanced understanding of effective pedagogical strategies applicable in multicultural and multilingual education, an ideal backdrop for exploring innovative approaches to pedagogical training.

This study reflects teacher training from the perspective of two groups of professional experts in the field of education. Therefore, the setting for this small-scale research project included two different aspects which were brought together, namely Israel as experts who were partners in the experimental phase and the experts from Malta who served as pedagogical consultants. The study of the data acquired were analysed conjunctively, discussions were held between the representatives of the two countries and links were made between that which was carried out in practice and the research which is continuously being conducted by the Institute for Education to provide high quality training to educators in today's world. The goal was to bring together a pedagogical observation of teacher training experts from Israel and Malta about the actions, challenges, and consequences of teachers from Israel after a short, holistic, and focused training opportunity. This study revolved around the following research questions: (1) What are the pedagogical insights of Israeli and Maltese teacher training experts regarding teachers' needs and expectations of opportunities for professional development?; (2) What is the contribution of the pedagogical experts from Malta to the teacher training that took place in Israel as part of the experiment in the KIDS4ALLL project?

This chapter will present a theoretical background related to teacher training and professional development, and also how teacher training should gear towards the multicultural learning environment in which our schools are evolving in this globalised world we live in. Subsequently, we will explain the research methodology which was employed and delve into the findings, exploring their implications for the professional development of teachers and the advancement of teaching quality. This will be based on a case study including 7 educators: 5 teachers and two volunteer instructors

who participated in a short and holistic coded training within the KIDS4ALLL project pilot phase in Israel. Through the implementation of semi-structured interviews with these educators to acquire participant feedback and reflect on insights and implications from the perspective of pedagogical expertise from Israel and Malta. The concluding section of the article will elucidate the broader global implications for the training of educators.

1. Teacher training and professional development

'Teaching quality refers to strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn' (Darling-Hammond, 2012, p. 3). In turn, providing students with a meaningful learning experience determines their achievements in life (Hanushek, 2011; Mulford et al., 2004). Therefore, it is crucial that teacher training moves away from the idea of traditional workshops and rather focuses on opportunities for teachers to develop their practice to ensure that their pedagogy in the classroom environment reaps a positive effect on student achievement (Yoon et al., 2007; Bush, 1984). Research shows that there is a difference between professional development opportunities presented to teachers during a single event and that which is planned and implemented within a long-term design and that the latter provides for a greater chance of improvement in teachers' pedagogy (Craig, 2012). There is a broad consensus regarding the effect of the quality of the teacher's role and skills on student achievement (Boyd et al., 2009; Bacher-Hicks et al., 2014).

Both Israel and Malta consider professional development to be an intrinsic requirement for teachers from the moment they become professionals within the education system. Both countries believe that the teachers' personal and pedagogical development is essential to achieving their potential in the classroom as facilitators of their students' learning. Desimone and Garet (2015) explain that teacher training frameworks should focus not only on content and subject knowledge but also on collaboration, active learning, and duration. This consolidates the teachers' abilities, capabilities, and behaviors in managing lessons, teaching methods, and promoting educational achievements. In other words, it is essential for teachers to reflect on their profession and acquire pedagogical knowledge, strengthening their ability to analyze difficulties and personal challenges while actively implementing improved strategies in their teaching. When

the above comes into effect, teachers feel that they are more effective in their performance, the learning quality of their students will improve, and higher achievements will be reached (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Kennedy, 2016; Carmi & Tamir, 2020; Drury & Baer, 2011).

The Institute for Education is a Maltese further and higher education institution that was established in 2015 with the aim of creating and delivering qualifications including initial teacher training and continuous professional development. The majority of the course participants are already employed to provide service as teachers but lack the qualifications required by the Maltese Education Act to be considered as regular teachers. The courses are part-time and offered in a blended manner. This combination of work and study, provides an invaluable opportunity to the course participants to apply in class what is being learnt and discussed during the lectures and workshops as part of the course. Moreover, it also provides the possibility to reflect with a critical mindset upon the strategies being adopted and discuss them during the lecture with their peers and the lecturer. Since initial teacher training is one of the main *raisons d'être* of the Institute for Education, implementing the pedagogy that is being advocated with our course participants is considered as crucial. The Institute for Education prides itself with creating modules for course participants based on years of experience from its employees who are professional experts in the field of education that strive to find the most effective pedagogical revelations to provide a meaningful learning experience to students. Assessment for Learning is the underpinning pedagogy that is being referred to here.

Freire (1970, 1974) emphasized the fact that learning brings about 'conscientisation' which is an improvement of one's position and empowerment that comes through learning which is critical, rational and transformative (Serrano et al., 2017). In the education system, such an approach to learning needs to include the definition and role of assessment in the process of growth. In Malta, even though assessment for learning is an integral part of teaching and learning according to the National Curriculum Framework (2012), summative assessment is considered to be more reliable in the education system (Black & Wiliam, 2009). If learning is to transform into continuous progression and a pathway that reveals one's potential through scaffolding, dialogue and reflection, teachers need to be provided with an opportunity through which they can experience this. Assessment can be viewed as being revelatory bringing about perceived progress in their own competencies. In fact this links very well with the objectives of the KIDS4ALLL project which focuses on a lifelong learning approach that

recognizes that competencies needed by children and adolescents today are not only technical but encompass learning to learn as a competence in its own right. The role of summative assessment will then be to seal the evidence of this progression. Serrano et al. (2017) imply that authentic learning can be explored through assessment practices that are influenced by critical pedagogy and the development of students' social consciousness is enhanced while learning happens. During this process, teachers and students use dialogue to become 'co-investigators'. Since the aim is to finally impact student learning happening in any formal, informal and non-formal environment, the learning experience needs to model what prospective teachers will be doing in class. The fact that they experience the pedagogy they are expected to use when they become part of the education system, empowers them with the competencies required to implement the strategies tied to this pedagogy. Another added value is that at the Institute for Education, prospective teachers get the students' perspective of this pedagogy, being students themselves at that particular moment. Hence, they are in a position to criticise and dialogue with the lecturers about the benefits of such a pedagogy that amalgamates teaching, learning, and authentic assessment for growth and enhancement. They also have the opportunity to reflect and speak about the challenges and the array of different techniques that can be used to implement the strategies pertaining to assessment for learning. Freire (1970) was convinced that communication between teacher and student resulted in 'critical education'. This also links well to the experience of the participating practitioners during their teacher training before the implementation of the pilot project in Israel as discussions between participants and those providing the teacher training were an integral part of this training experience.

Assessment for Learning strategies adopted start with planning with the specific audience in mind. The lecturer in the context of the Institute for Education, or trainer in this case, is expected to know the course participants, who they are, and where they stand in their learning. This can be done through various techniques like dialogue, observations, discussions, and open-ended questions. In this manner, the lecturer becomes well-informed and can change or tweak the session according to the collected evidence. The lecturer continuously reflects on what is observed, and listens to the dialogue ensued. In fact, the findings will show that this was very much part of the successful training experience the Israeli practitioners had. These observations are very personalised since learning is the individual and systematic activation of particular brain zones resulting in learning and

cognitive-control architecture (Chein & Schneider, 2012). Thus, since these are personal biological changes, the feedback provided by the teacher on the evidence collected, has to be very personal according to the exhibited requirements.

The course participants' focus on learning is maintained through the sharing of the learning intention. Since they are considered as partners in this learning process, they are conversing about what is being learnt and how this is happening. The aims behind any tasks, questions and actions taken by the lecturer for part of the dialogue that empowers the prospective teacher. Lecturers also share or co-construct the success criteria with the course participants. Shared criteria provide the opportunity for personalised self-reflection on learning since one can understand what has been achieved and what could be the next step in a scaffolding process. These criteria can be used to lead the way to progression. Success criteria provide an invaluable opportunity for course participants to peer review and appraise each other's work (Black et al., 2004).

Another assessment for learning strategy adopted by the Institute for Education is the use of open-ended questions or tasks. If these are aligned to the learning intention and the success criteria, they provide the effective arena for the course participants to think, process, and speak about what they are understanding and how the concept is forming in their brains. Course participants that come from different backgrounds can understand concepts differently due to their various past experiences. When they speak and put their thoughts into words to explain their understanding, they would be providing important information to the lecturer who can then analyse whether any misconceptions are being formed. Throughout all the tasks, assessment is immersed in the learning process. It cannot be considered as the final task that reveals the unknown. Learning happens because assessment has revealed the need for an intervention. The dialogue that is created during the learning period allows the course participant to realise if the concepts being created make sense, or if more information is required or whether misconceptions are being formed. The lecturer and other peer course participants, on the other hand are at the receiving end and can intervene through further questioning to understand the logic behind the argument and reflect on their own concept formation. If what is being heard and interacted with does not make logical sense, the dialogue will begin to deconstruct what might have been a misconception to create a modified concept that reflects the correct version of it (Walker, 2012).

2. Teacher training geared towards the multicultural learning environment

The term 'multicultural' refers to a society that includes a variety of cultural groups or ethnicities. It does not relate to their interaction or behavior (Schriefer, 2016). Within the cross-cultural dialogue, the concept of interculturalism began to emerge as a more effective approach to social cohesion (Cantle, 2012; Council of Europe, 2008; Zapata-Barrero, 2016). Kymlicka (2016) states that "in both academic and public debates, one of the current fashions is to defend a (new, innovative, realistic) interculturalism against a (tired, discredited, naive) multiculturalism" (p. 158). Interculturalism appears to be more effective in fostering social cohesion in multicultural communities as it encourages dialogue and equality (Trento, 2013). Harney (2020, p. 4) refers to the Italian context and interculturalism in schools, "focusing mostly on culture and identity and emphasising mutual respect and dignity". This scenario requires the development of cultural intelligence on a much deeper level. It is a self-aware intelligence that is based on four factors: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral (Van Dyne et al., 2007; Earley & Ang, 2003; Şahin, 2011). Cultural intelligence could help teachers to perform effectively in culturally diverse conditions (Solomon, 2017). According to Livermore (2011), this is the variable that will determine whether or not you are a successful teacher leader in the classroom.

Therefore, it is essential that the above foundations for the development of a culturally responsive classroom teacher are reflected in teacher training programs offering the opportunity for professional development. A main factor that is crucial to any professional development program is promoting the practice of continuous critical reflexivity, to seek transformative change, in which all teachers and practitioners engage in self-reflective inquiry to improve the school community's dynamics. This may be done through an egalitarian dialogue (DTG) that includes referring to recent research and literature as a response to the educators' difficulties being elicited to plan the implementation of successful actions to be taken in the classroom as part of the teacher's pedagogy (Campos et al., 2015). This may include that which is described as "restorative justice pedagogy". This entails the avoidance of creating a learning environment that demands from the children from culturally and socially heterogeneous families the discipline of obedience, submission to the authority of the majority group, and unopposed acceptance of expressions of violence and racism. This may be developed through teaching training, whereby teachers can develop their cultural in-

telligence and explore how they can adapt their pedagogy to being sensitive to the student's previous experiences and present needs as part of minority groups in society (Danesh, 2011; Rivera et al., 2016; Chinn & Bennett, 2020; Lee & Walsh, 2017).

The equal dialogue between teachers and other stakeholders improves educational practices after agreeing on the most effective school methods (Flecha, 2015; Roca-Campos et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Oramas et al., 2020). Moreover, having this done in a cooperative environment, which includes collaborative discourse, promotes social solidarity, eradicating feelings of alienation and hostility, and implementing pedagogies that mobilize students' capital (Ratnam, 2020). Teacher training allows for the development of skills and empowerment, strengthening one's awareness of others, and formulating culturally responsive pedagogies that are sensitive to the needs of the students in class, giving their backgrounds, heritage, and previously acquired education the value they deserve. Above all, it assists teachers in understanding how a classroom can be a safe space for both students and their parents (del Olmo-Fernández et al., 2021).

The Institute for Education as a further and higher education institution also adopts the Universal Design for Learning as the underpinning pedagogy in relation to teaching in a multicultural context as that which is promoted in all initial teacher training courses. As pedagogical consultants within this small-scale research project, we believe that assisting practitioners to understand the relevance of adopting UDL within their pedagogy proves to both facilitate the goals they have for their students and the learning that occurs more effectively.

In fact, in view of a child-centred pedagogy, the Maltese National Policy Framework (MEDE, 2021) promotes an inclusive learning-friendly environment using a UDL (Meyer et al., 2014), which enhances accessibility and removes curricular, social, and physical barriers towards inclusion (p. 6). This national policy defines UDL as a framework to improve and optimise teaching and learning for everyone based on scientific insights into how humans learn. It equips the educator with an understanding of how learning occurs to ensure that all learners can access and experience meaningful, challenging learning opportunities by providing multiple means of engagement, recognition, as well as action and expression. Vanhear and Reid (2019) explain UDL as a framework that is guided by the neuroscience and psychology behind how learning occurs and which guides educators to best support ALL learners' needs (p. 1). The Universal Design for Learning Guidelines (CAST, 2018; see Figure 1), also referred to by Van-
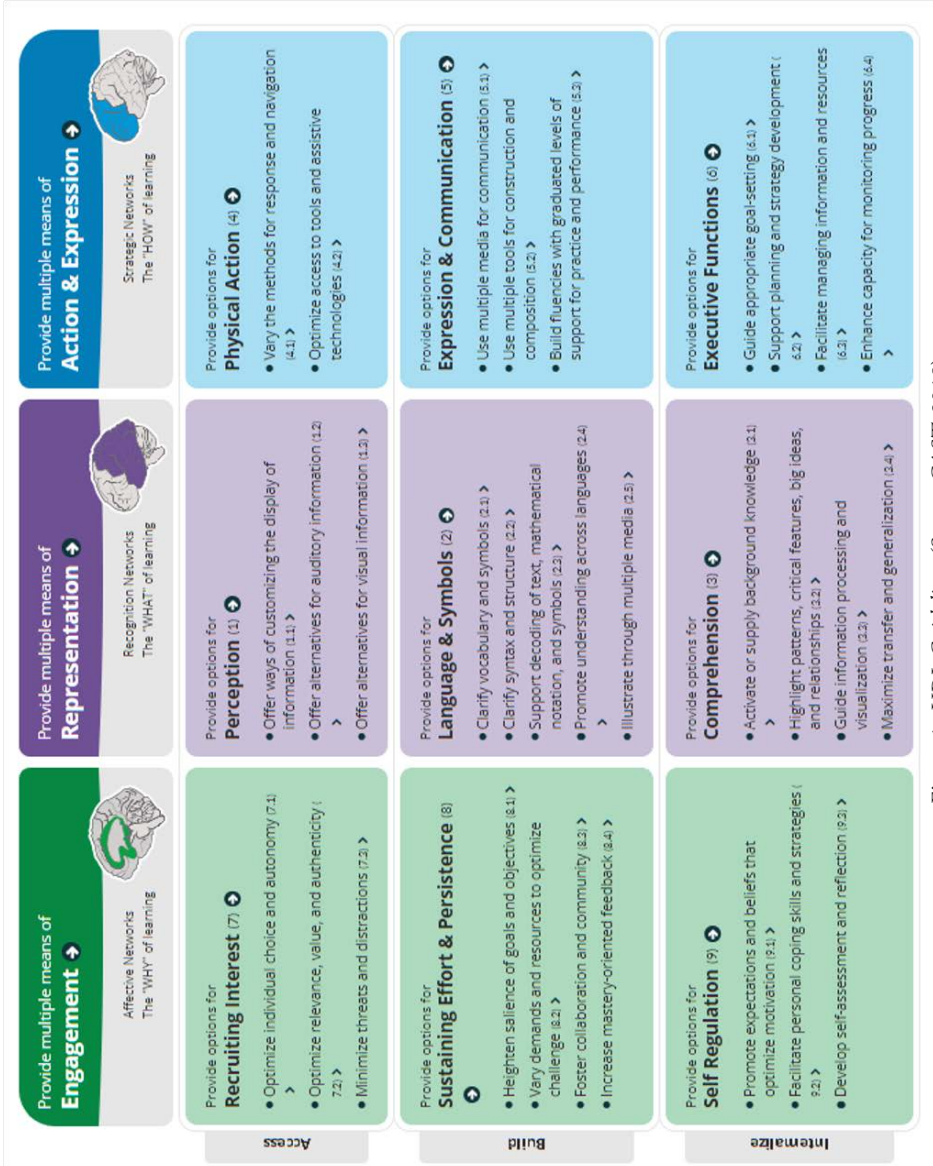
Figure 1. *UDL Guidelines (Source:* CAST, 2018)

hear and Reid (2019), suggests that any learning experience presented to a child should refer to the "why", "what" and "how" of learning, as they are linked to neural networks that work together to activate learning (p. 10). This implies that the educator should strive to seek alternative opportunities for the child to learn. Hence, an understanding of the UDL framework through professional development training opportunities in multicultural educational contexts may well provide such an opportunity, considering all the frameworks it incorporates.

3. Research Methodology and Foundations for the Teacher Training Experience

The KIDS4ALLL project seeks to meet the challenges of the absorption and integration of children from immigrant families in various destination countries in Europe and outside Europe and the world by developing eight key competences for lifelong learning. This chapter examines the short and holistic teacher training framework because it is adapted to any educational institution in formal or informal education, to the different ages of the students, to a diverse learning environment, and the other professional experiences of the educators.

In planning the project, working groups were established to implement its goals. In this research, two groups were established: Work Package Three focused on processing the created learning units to promote skills for lifelong learning in educational contexts both those which are formal and others which may be informal. Work Package Five oriented towards online and face-to-face teacher training to become acquainted with the project's goals and implementation. The training sessions implemented in this regard provided practitioners with developing strategies in three areas: the Know_what, the Know_how, and the Work_it, areas. This relates quite well with the UDL Framework mentioned above. The education context in which these were recommended to occur was through the application of a buddy system.

The teacher training also delved on training related to supporting and leading a collaborative dialogue of learning between members in the educational context. Teacher training was provided face-to-face in a school in Israel and remotely by use of online communication tools with the intention to promote key competencies for lifelong learning.

To mobilise teachers to cooperate, the central committee of the project created a collaborative shared file, which the participating teachers had access to and as part of the training process were required to introduce themselves. As part of this introductory exercise, participants were requested to describe an object which was significant to them. This was presented jointly during which everyone was given the time to present an object. This opportunity for an ice breaker also allowed the participants to discuss how this training opportunity connects to them. The intention of this exercise was also to provide encouragement and motivation.

In the KIDS4ALLL project, there were two learning groups: Target Group One (TG1), in which the students were trained on how to use the platform and the learning units, and Target Group Two (TG2), which includes educators in the different learning settings considered in this project, teachers, trainers in informal frameworks such as cultural organizations, or librarians who work with learners in relatively informal settings. All were expected to participate in short and holistic professional development training as educators and were required to undergo training to prepare them for the implementation of the pilot project.

As part of the training experience, the teachers presented their profiles in a collaborative presentation – including a portrait photo and a metaphorical symbol which they felt represented them. The teachers also explained their connection to the project. The Israeli researchers met face-to-face with the teacher teams in the three educational settings to get to know each other, create a sense of belonging and trust, and explain the teaching methodology employed in the project, the acts of accompanying and guiding, alongside the expectations of both teachers and students. At the conclusion of the activity, teachers completed a questionnaire to fine-tune and enhance the activities for both the pilot phase and online training.

The planned training for practitioners addressed as TG2 in the KIDS4ALLL project, who would be processing the learning units with children, was essentially given prominence within the project planning to be conducted before the commencement of the scheduled pilot phase. This training opportunity was crucial to create common ground between all participants and instill in them the principles related to the objectives of this project. Furthermore, the training sessions were also intended to provide participants with the tools, knowledge, and pedagogical actions required to implement the project effectively in the pilot countries.

Moreover, the training sessions were an excellent opportunity to create

a safe space whereby practitioners could share good practice and experiences with other practitioners coming from different countries and cultural backgrounds, weaving new relationships and strengthening their personal or institutional affiliations from the global aspect of KIDS4ALLL.

With regards to the researchers working on this research study, the Israeli partners had teachers from Israel participating in a series of short training sessions based on acquiring skills for lifelong learning as part of the KIDS4ALLL project. They will, therefore, be providing first-hand experience of the short professional training course they participate in, which will be presented in the next section of this chapter. On the other hand, the Maltese partners representing The Institute for Education who are also partly responsible for the dissemination of the project, were involved in discussions and consultations regarding the effective development of this project.

The participants

Seven teachers from Israel participated in the project: three teachers from an elementary school, two from a high school, and two practitioners who volunteer in a youth center.

These teachers had previous experiences of professional-pedagogical training in teaching, as required by the Ministry of Education in Israel. In fact, it is important to note that teacher training is a significant component of the professional development process in teaching in primary and high schools in Israel. They are usually carried out by professional experts in the field of education and occur outside regular school hours, some of which are provided within educational institutions, and others localized at specialized centers for professional development. They possess teaching experience ranging from over five years to 12 years, with ages spanning from 28 to 42. Additionally, the volunteers at the youth center, who are 18 years old, engage in a year of service before their mandatory enlistment in the army. The volunteers had experienced professional teacher training, however as part of their year of service volunteer training. Throughout the study, the participants were consistently and regularly accompanied by the two researchers from Israel. Meetings occurred biweekly, involving face-to-face interactions, phone calls, and remote Zoom sessions.

The research tools

The research data was collected from two sources:

(a) Reports produced by the two Israeli researchers involved in the project as part of that which was required from them during the pilot phase. These reports encompass an overview of the teacher training structure which was created for the purpose of delivering the intended learning units and an account of the project's progress. These reports also include a detailed narrative, clarification, and thoughtful consideration of the teachers' experiences post-training and throughout the implementation of the project in its dual phases (Ryan, 2013).

(b) In-depth semi-structured personal communication interviews lasting an hour were conducted with seven participants from Israel who took part in the project. This group included three elementary school teachers, two high school teachers, and two volunteers from the youth center. These interviews took place both at the conclusion of the training and at the conclusion of the project's second phase.

The interviews opened with the following opening statement rather than a question, allowing for the participant to disclose any information they felt relevant to their experience and also allowing the interview to take a narrative stance: 'Tell me what you remember from your focused and holistic professional training and various processes while participating in the project. Describe the personal, social, and pedagogical difficulties and challenges you must face during the training. Following this, the teachers were asked about their insights and strategies employed to deal with difficulties encountered during their teacher training and what they chose to adopt as part of their pedagogical processes in the classroom context.

Ethical considerations

The research adhered meticulously to ethical guidelines sanctioned by the European Union. This involved maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality of both respondents and data, refraining from posing offensive questions and offering teachers the autonomy to decide on their participation in the study. All names given to participants being referred to in the findings and discussions are pseudonyms. Data processing commenced only after the teachers had concluded the training and actively participated in the project. Teachers were duly informed that the data was retained for aca-

demic research, aiming to furnish a precise and practical response to diverse needs within a concise, targeted, and holistic teacher training framework.

4. Findings and discussion

The analysis of the data collected from the reports and based on the interviews was structured using the content analysis method and focused on the content that the teachers shared both in oral and written form (Giorgi, 2009). Such an analysis allows one to examine perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and actions firsthand and draw valid conclusions in a broader context (Zur & Eisikovits, 2015).

In the first stage, each researcher went through the texts collected from the documented reports and interview transcripts and divided them into categories and topics within the context of the teacher training process. After that, each reread each group's texts and identified salient themes that mark characteristics of pedagogical, social, and cultural processes in teacher training. To strengthen the reliability of the findings, a joint discussion was held between the four researchers, and reliability was established (87%) between them (Merriam, 2009). In the discussion, content segments were adapted to three central themes, relating to the short teacher training sessions provided to the participating practitioners, intended to provide pedagogical knowledge and skills related to the promotion of lifelong learning skills and competencies.

The research findings show three central issues in this teacher training:
(1) Uncertainty on how the implementation of the project will reap opportunities for involvement and self-learning;
(2) The shift from traditional training to guidance, accompaniment, and support;
(3) Strengthening a community of teachers for collaborative, multidisciplinary and multi-age learning.

Uncertainty on how the implementation of the project will reap opportunities for involvement and self-learning

'When we were presented with the project, I was scared. I only knew a few concepts in teaching, such as buddy learning and lifelong learning, and I did not refer to them in the classes. I gave work in pairs, but not in this format. When I watched the first video of 'The Project Design', I under-

estimated it because it felt like TikTok and not serious enough. The conversations with the researchers helped me realize there is something else here, and I need to change from what I learned and know. The videos are very high quality, the instructional voice is pleasant, and the colors and focus convince me. I liked that the kids also had instructional videos, and I was led to watch them. What helped me a lot in the process and that I did not give up is the possibility to watch training videos several times and decide what to watch and what not to watch, when and how' (Esther, elementary teacher).

The above excerpt from an interview concurs with Kennedy's (2016) assertion incorporating content as the focus of professional development assists the practitioner to acquire a better idea of how they can create meaningful experiences for their students which in turn effectively impacts their learning. Therefore, having the opportunity to also revisit instructional material within the structure of a short term training opportunity allowed for that which aligns with Craig's (2012) affirmation that long-term designs enhance the likelihood of improvement in teachers' pedagogy.

'Thanks to the close guidance from the researchers and giving answers to every question quickly and personally, I felt confident that there was someone who answered and knew how to strengthen my actions. Moreover, it did not answer whether it was right or wrong but helped me learn independently. The researcher's listening and her understanding that I needed models for teaching because I had not experienced such an approach before helped me a lot. The first lessons were conducted in pairs with the researcher, allowing me to look at the children and their motivation to learn and my conduct with the researcher, what she does differently from me. Like how to listen more to the students and get them to be more involved in the lesson and not be afraid" (Ruti, elementary teacher).

This account harmonizes perfectly with that which is sustained by Chein & Schneider (2012) that creating such a relationship with teacher trainees assists both the trainer, which for the purpose of this study and project were also the Israeli researchers, and the trainees, namely the participating practitioners, developing a personalised setting for their personal professional development.

'The training taught me how to get closer to the children and meet them in a different kind of learning. The emphasis was on actions that I could use in the meetings. I adopted a principle in the video about the training principles: "not watching for perfection, but involvement", and he encouraged me to do something different. The children do not like to write be-

cause it is like school, so after the conversation, I allowed them to record their conclusions and the things they wanted to say once on my phone and once on their phone. Then, they did the written task. The school does not have such an opportunity, but recording is an activity they always do when they send messages. That way, they were more involved. I liked that the training speaks differently from what I learned in school' (Gal, youth center volunteer).

This narrative aligns seamlessly with the position advocated by Serrano et al. (2017) and their take on how learning can be empowering when it is transformative whereby students are provided with authentic learning experiences as presented during delivery of these learning units and the exciting methods and tools used enticing students to indulge in dialogue and investigation with their teachers. Reflecting on the processes employed by practitioners when delivering the learning units designed within the project and the feedback provided by them on their perspective on how these learning units were being received and learnt, what could have developed a more meaningful and effective learning experience for the students would be the inclusion of assessment for learning practices within their pedagogy. As highlighted by the Institute for Education in their theoretical background presented above, utilising assessment for learning as the foundational pedagogical approach in both initial teacher training and ongoing professional development is crucial. The experiences shared and highlighted in this chapter also reinforce how essential it is to elicit success criteria which are shared during training sessions as would be done in the classroom context with students to induce the opportunity for peer review and appraisal of each other's work (Black et al., 2004). In fact following the pilot project and listening to the feedback from practitioners to Institute for Education provided the project partners with guidelines for practitioners on how to implement assessment for learning as explained in this paper.

The shift from traditional training to guidance, accompaniment, and support

'The attitude towards me and the importance of learning at school was new. My training is always after school. I had a substitute teacher here, so I did not teach in my class. We sat with the researchers in the room; there were refreshments on the table and coloured markers and papers. Gave me a pleasant feeling that I bring something new to the school and myself. The conversation was more personal and intimate; we talked about our dif-

ficulties, such as the fear that I might not find my place in the class. How will I conduct the lesson? There may be topics that the children know better than me. A sense of appreciation and security helped me to be there' (Galia, elementary school teacher).

This account detailing how the teacher in training had the opportunity to reflect on their personal concerns and doubts as classroom leaders and responsible for the delivery of learning units intended to develop the students own lifelong learning skills and competences resonates closely with the ethos of the Institute for Education explained in this article that the learning experienced during teacher training should model the experience the teachers will be having in the classroom context, empowering them as they develop their own competencies related to the implementation of different strategies.

"At first, I watched the first movie by myself, and then I felt that there were many resources there, and I was not used to it and needed to figure out what to do with it. I had to organize a different work environment at home. Suddenly the training is in my free time. Sometimes, I invited the teachers, those who are in the project and those who are not, to watch the video with me so they could also learn. It strengthened me that I share. The training supported me because there were moments of things that I do, and the video gave validity to that, such as using positive verbs to encourage, to share, to cause... and the emphasis in the videos on points for inspiration that I am an educational figure who can influence the children more strengthened me. From the video, I understood it is also worth reaching out to the community outside the school. So, I organized the parents' meeting presentation of all the children's learning products with my partner, and we also invited social activists from the community center near the school" (Ruti, an elementary teacher).

This shared experience of how collaboration in its various forms enhances teacher training supports what is described by Ratman (2020) as an opportunity to promote social solidarity and apply teaching methods that activate the student's capital, whilst providing an opportunity for the teacher trainees themselves to develop their own skills and competencies in this case namely related to culturally responsive pedagogies valuing students' backgrounds, heritage and prior education and as described by del Olmo-Fernández et al. (2021), a safe space for students, their parents and other stakeholders within a sense of community.

Strengthening a community of teachers for cooperative, multidisciplinary, and multi-age learning

"I have much experience teaching Hebrew in the studio at the school. The class is organic; all the students are immigrants, they speak the same language, and I let them work in pairs. The students usually choose who they will sit with and with whom they will work in pairs. When I watched the video 'Building Teams of Buddy', I realized that it is also essential to maintain a sequence in the relationship between the children; I had not done it before. I was comfortable when the children chose a pair from the class and worked, but here, I created 'out of nowhere' when we first introduced the local children to the immigrants and cast them into pairs – work pairs buddies. The video allowed me to think once more about my actions in the context of equality, solidarity, respect, and empathy. Until now, I felt I was providing a solution, and in this project, it was not enough; I had to change my teaching methods. I realized that I need to be even more attentive, make an effort in the social-emotional context, sit more with the couples, solve problems, and help them maintain contact outside the lesson. So, I changed the lesson's opening and initiated social activities to create a good and friendly atmosphere among the children. This insight was built during the training, and they allowed me to implement it even though it took time from the meeting" (Adi, High school teacher).

This narrative of experiences outlines a realization that this practitioner felt the need to adapt their pedagogy, taking into consideration the student's cultural background and current needs, especially within minority groups in society (Danesh, 2011; Rivera et al., 2016; Chinn & Bennett, 2020; Lee & Walsh, 2017); it is evidence of the development of cultural intelligence and how its development assists teachers to perform more effectively in multicultural contexts (Solomon, 2017).

"I am used to organizing training when an expert stands and explains to me in several meetings and with examples what to do in the lessons, but in the project, I learned at the same time together with the students. In the training, the teachers and the students were respected, and there was a partnership already in the training process before the implementation of the project. For example, the same introductory activity was done for us and the students. I felt good and did not fear for my status. Space and resources were available, and the children were receptive, more involved, and dynamic" (Esther, elementary teacher).

Finally, this excerpt from the account of a practitioner's experience within the teacher training sessions within the KIDS4ALL project also res-

onates well with related literature with regards to intercultural education and that which is explained by Trento (2013) as an effective path that paves the way towards social cohesion. Hence, the critical reflexivity provided within this teaching training program was essential for the professional development of practitioners in this specific area of the multicultural context they are teaching in.

Conclusion

This chapter seeks to understand how short professional development training opportunities taught online and face-to-face may be an effective, high-quality, and significant step for continuous learning throughout a teacher's career. The insights from this research study supported the formation of a teacher training framework, content, and style that are related to and modeled on the teachers' experiences in the educational environment they work. This study also intends to inform professional experts in the field of education and teacher training on how significantly adapted programs can be created to develop teaching-learning-evaluation methods necessary for children's success during their educational journey and their future. Moreover, this training may strengthen their visibility in teaching and their skills to express an opinion and influence the planning of pedagogy and education skills.

While the current study provides valuable insights into how teacher training opportunities are essential and may assist in the professional development of teachers if planned and implemented effectively, it is essential to acknowledge certain limitations inherent in its design and methodology. One limitation was that the seven participating practitioners are intrinsically highly motivated and stand out in their educational contexts as practitioners who are eager to invest in their professional development. Therefore, it may have been also interesting to have a wider range of practitioners who may have different personal experiences as practitioners. It may also be argued that the educators responded to the purpose of the study. These limitations, though not diminishing the significance of the findings, warrant careful consideration and acknowledgment to ensure a nuanced interpretation of the research outcomes. However, notwithstanding all this, even though the data emerged from a unique case study within a particular educational context, the study still offers insight into teacher training worldwide.

References

Alexander C., Fox J.L., & Gutierrez A. (2019). Conceptualising Teacher Professionalism. *Professionalism and Teacher Education*, 1–23. https://doi.org/-10.1007/978-981-13-7002-1_1

Athanases S. Z., Banes L. C., Wong J. W., & Martinez D. C. (2019). Exploring linguistic diversity from the inside out: Implications of self-reflexive inquiry for teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 70*(5), 581–596. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487118778838

Atnam T. (2020). Provocation to dialog in a third space: Helping teachers walk toward equity pedagogy. *Frontiers in Education, 5*. https://doi.org/10.3389/-feduc.2020.569018

Bacher-Hicks A., Kane T. J., & Staiger D. O. (2014). *Validating teacher effect estimates using changes in teacher assignments in Los Angeles* (No. w20657). National Bureau of Economic Research.

Bernacki M. L., Vosicka L., & Utz J. C. (2020). Can a brief, digital skill training intervention help undergraduates "learn to learn" and improve their STEM achievement? *Journal of Educational Psychology, 112*(4), 765.

Biberman-Shalev L., Broza O., & Patkin D. (2022). *Teacher Education in a Reality of a World Crisis: The Narrative of a Faculty of Education in a Teacher Education College*. World Scientific.

Black P., Harrison C., Lee C., Marshall B., & Wiliam D. (2004). Working Inside the Black Box: Assessment for Learning in the Classroom. *Phi Delta Kappan, 86*(1), 8–21.

Black P., & Wiliam D. (2009). Developing the theory of formative assessment. Educational Assessment, *Evaluation and Accountability, 1*(1), 5–31.

Boyd D., Grossman P., Ing M., Lankford H., Loeb S., & Wyckoff J. (2011). The influence of school administrators on teacher retention decisions. *American educational research journal,48*(2), 303-333.

Bush R. N. (1984). *Effective Staff Development*.

Campos E. R., Gómez A., & Burgués A. (2015). Luisa, transforming personal visions to ensure better education for all children. *Qualitative Inquiry, 21*(10), 843–850. http://doi. org/10.1177/1077800415614026

Cantle T. (2012). Interculturalism: *The new era of cohesion and diversity*. Macmillan.

Carmi T., & Tamir E. (2020). Three professional ideals: Where should teacher preparation go next? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 1-20.

Chein J. M., & Schneider W. (2012). The Brain's Learning and Control Architecture. Current Directions In Psychological Science: *A journal Of The American Psychological Society, 21* (2),78-84, https://doi.org/: 10.1177/096372141-1434977

Chinn S., & Bennett M. (2020). Introduction: Teaching for justice. *Radical Teacher, 116*, 1–5. https://doi.org/10.5195/rt.2020.757

Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers. (2008). *Living together as equals in dignity: White paper on intercultural dialogue*. Council of Europe. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf

Craig C. (2012). Professional development through a teacher-as-curriculum-maker lens. *Teacher learning that matters*, 100-112.

Creasy K. L. (2015). Defining Professionalism in Teacher Education Programs. *Journal of Education & Social Policy, 2*(2), 23-25.

Dahl K. K. B. (2020). Collaborating alone? Teachers' and pedagogues' unequal cross-professional collaboration and what it means for their professional learning in Danish schools. *Power and Education, 12*(3), 246–260. https://doi org.ezproxy.bgu.ac.il/10.1177/1757743820943226

Danesh H. B. (Ed.). (2011). *Education for Peace Reader* (Volume 4 of Education for peace integrative curriculum series). EFP Press.

Darling-Hammond L. (2010). Teacher Education and the American Future. *Journal of Teacher Education, 61*(1–2), 35–47. Doi.org/10.1177/0022487-109348024

Darling-Hammond L. (2017). *Empowered educators: how high-performing systems shape teaching quality around the world* (First edition). Jossey-Bass.

Deardorff D. K. (Ed.). (2009). *The SAGE handbook of intercultural competence*. Sage.

del Olmo-Fernández M. J. A., & Leiva-Olivencia J. J. (2021*).* Balancing the Initial Teacher Training in Intercultural Education in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia (Spain) in the Period 2000-2020. In *Handbook of Research on Promoting Social Justice for Immigrants and Refugees Through Active Citizenship and Intercultural Education* (pp. 249-267). IGI Global.

Desimone L. M. (2011). A primer on effective professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan, 92*(6), 68-71.

Desimone L. M., & Garet M. S. (2015). *Best practices in teacher's professional development in the United States.*

Dignath C. (2021). For unto everyone that hath shall be given teachers' competence profiles regarding the promotion of self-regulated learning moderate the effectiveness of short-term teacher training. *Metacognition and Learning, 16*(3), 555–594. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11409-021-09271-x

Drury D., & Baer J. (2011). *The American public-school teacher: Past, present, and future. Cambridge*. Harvard Education Press.

Earley P. C., & Ang S. (2003). *Cultural intelligence: Individual interactions across cultures*. Stanford University Press.

Hanushek E. A. (2011). The economic value of higher teacher quality. *Economics of Education review, 30*(3), 466-479.

Harney N. D. (2020). *Interculturalism, inequality and hospitality in Italy*. Ethnos.

Flecha R. (2015). *Successful Educational Actions for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe*; Metzler, J.B., Ed.; Springer: Cham, Switzerland.

Franco J., Ángeles S. L., Faulstich Orellana M., & Minkoff A. C. (2020). Preparing teachers to recognize and expand children's linguistic resources: Addressing language ideologies and practices. *Language Arts, 97*(6), 400–405.

Freire P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Freire P. (1974) Education: *The Practice of Freedom*. Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative.

Gaudelli W., & Ousley D. (2009). From clothing to skin: Identity work of student teachers in culminatingfield experiences. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(6), 931–939. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.02.017

Khachatryan E. (2015). Feedback on teaching from observations of teaching: What do administrators say and what do teachers think about it? *NASSP Bulletin, 99*(2) 164–188.

Kalz M. M., Kreijns K., & Punie Y. (2018). Who Is Taking MOOCs for Teachers' Professional Development on the Use of ICT? A Cross-Sectional Study from Spain. Technology, *Pedagogy and Education, 27*(5), 607–624. https://doi.org/-10.1080/1475939X.2018.1528997

Klette K., & Blikstad-Balas M. (2017). Observation manuals as lenses to classroom teaching: Pitfalls and possibilities. *European Educational Research Journal, 17*(1), 129–146. https://doi.org/10.11 77%2F1474904117703228

Kennedy M. (2016). Parsing the practice of teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 67*(1), 6–17.

Komba S. C., & Mwakabenga R. J. (2019). Teacher professional development in Tanzania: Challenges and opportunities. In H. Senol (Ed.), *Educational leadership. IntechOpen*. https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.90564

Kymlicka W. (2016). Defending diversity in an era of populism: Multiculturalism and interculturalism compared. In N. Meer, T. Modood & R. Zapata-Barrero (Eds.), *Multiculturalism and Interculturalism. Debating the Dividing Lines* (pp. 158–177). Edinburgh University Press.

Lee S. J., & Walsh D. (2017). Socially just, culturally sustaining pedagogy for diverse immigrant youth: Possibilities, challenges, and directions. In D. Paris & H. S. Alim (Eds.), *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world* (pp. 83–98). Teachers College Press.

Liu S., & Phelps G. (2019). *Does teacher learning last? Understanding how much teachers retain their knowledge after professional development*. Journal of Teacher Education. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487119886290

Livermore D. (2011). *The cultural intelligence difference*. AMACOM

Lopes J. B., & Cunha A. E. (2017). Self-directed professional development to improve effective teaching: Key points for a model. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 68*, 262–274. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.09.009

Lou N. M., & Noels K. A. (2020). Mindsets about language learning and support for immigrants' integration. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 79*, 46–57. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.08.003

Mayer D., & Mills M. (2021) Professionalism and teacher education in Australia and England. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 44*(1), 45–61.

Meyer A., Rose D. H., & Gordon D. (2014). *Universal design for learning: Theory and practice*. CAST. doi: 10.1080/02619768.2020.1832987

Ministry of Education and Employment. (2012). *A National Curriculum Framework for All 2012*. Ministry of Education and Employment. https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/resources/the-ncf/documents/ncf.pdf (accessed January 2024)

Mulford W., Silins H., & Leithwood K. (2004). Problem-based learning: A Vehicle for professional development of school leaders. *Educational Leadership for Organisational Learning and Improved Student Outcomes*, 25-34.

Ratnam, T. (2020). Provocation to Dialog in a Third Space: Helping Teachers Walk Toward Equity Pedagogy. *Front. Educ.* 5. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2020.569018.

Raziye S., Deniz A., & Deniz D. (2021). A New Framework for Teachers' Professional Development. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 101*, 103–305. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103305

Richter D., Kleinknecht M., & Groschner A. (2019). What motivates teachers to participate in professional development? An empirical investigation of motivational orientations and the uptake of formal learning opportunities. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 86*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102929. Article 102929

Rivera H., Lynch J., Li J.-T., & Obamehinti F. (2016). Infusing sociocultural perspectives into capacity building activities to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. *Canadian Psychology, 57*(4), 320–329. https://doi.org/-10.1037/cap0000076

Roca-Campos E., Renta-Davids A.I., Marhuenda-Fluixá F., Flecha R. (2021). Educational Impact Evaluation of Professional Development of In-Service Teachers: The Case of the Dialogic Pedagogical Gatherings at Valencia "On Giants' Shoulders." *Sustainability, 13*, 4275. https://doi.org/10.3390/-su13084275

Rodríguez-Oramas A., Zubiri H., Arostegui I., Serradell O., & Sanvicén-Torné P. (2020). Dialogue With Educators to Assess the Impact of Dialogic Teacher Training for a Zero Violence Climate in a Nursery School. *Qualitative Inquiry.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800420938883

Şahin, F. (2011). Effects of leader's cultural intelligence on subordinates' organizational citizenship behaviours and job satisfaction. *Defense Sci. J., 10*(2), 80–104.

Schriefer P. (2016). *What's the difference between multicultural, intercultural, and cross-cultural communication?* Spring Institute

Serrano M. M., O'Brien M., Roberts K., & Whyte D. (2017). Critical Pedagogy and assessment in higher education: The ideal of "authenticity" in learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 19*(1), 9–21. https://doi.org/-10.1177/1469787417723244

Shkabarina M., Melnychuk L., Koval V., & Stupnytska S. (2020). Formation of Future Educators' Professional Training for Introducing Social Experience by

Means of Innovative Technologies of Education to Senior Preschoolers. *Behavioral Sciences*, *10*(2), 42-. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs10020042

Solomon A. W. (2017). *Cultural intelligence and its role in the leadership style and leadership effectiveness domain*. University of South Africa.

Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers, (2005). *The Report*, 1–13.

Trento (Assessorato Istruzione e Sport della Provincia autonoma di Trento). (2013). *Oltre l'immigrazione. Commissione di Studio sull'educazione interculturale e alla cittadinanza* (CSEIC). Massimiliano Tarozzi (ed.).

Van Dyne L., Ang S., Koh C. K. S., Ng K. Y., Templer K. J., Tay C., & Chandrasekar N. A. (2007). Cultural intelligence: Its measurement and effects on cultural judgment and decision making, cultural adaptation and task performance. *Manage. Organ. Rev, 3*(3), 335–371.

Vanhear J., & Reid A. (2019). *Addressing learner variability through executive function as a preventive measure for early school leaving. Early leaving from education and training – The way forward*. MEDE.

Walker G. (2012). A cognitive approach to threshold concepts. *Higher Education, 65*(2), 247–263. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-012-9541-4

Yoon K. S., Duncan T., Lee S. W. Y., Scarloss B., & Shapley K. L. (2007). *Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement. issues & answers.* rel 2007-no. 033. Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest (NJ1).

Zapata-Barrero R. (2016). Exploring the foundations of the intercultural policy paradigm: A comprehensive approach. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power, 23*(2), 155-173.

Zur A., & Eisikovits R. (2015). Between the actual and the desirable: A methodology for the examination of students' lifeworld as it relates to their school environment. *Journal of Thought*, 49(1-2), 27-51.

IV.
Learning can be fun! An international study on innovative digital and participatory pedagogy across diverse educational settings

Luisa Conti, Anikó Bernát

Introduction

In the postdigital global society, the digital realm seamlessly intertwines with our analog lives, becoming an integral extension of our lifeworld. Negroponte's vision that "like air and drinking water, the digital will be noticed just by its absence and not its presence" (Negroponte 1998) has come true. This hyper-digitalization of our lifeworld has had a significant impact on the way we perceive and engage with learning. It promotes *lifewide* learning as well as *lifelong* learning. *Lifewide*, because digitality offers individuals with unprecedented opportunities to engage in learning experiences tailored to their interests and needs, transcending the limitations of formal education and fostering a culture of holistic growth. *Lifelong*, because it makes it easier to embrace continuous learning throughout one's life, adapting to change, and staying informed in a dynamic global environment (Conti, 2024, p. 20).

However, amidst this pervasive digitalization of society, a palpable digital divide persists, manifesting itself at both individual and institutional levels. As certain social groups grapple with exclusion and new forms of marginalization (Fang et al., 2019), also institutions themselves, such as schools, reflect varying degrees of digitalization; some are at the forefront of technological integration, while others lag behind, creating a divide in access and opportunities (ECA, 2023). The following two graphs illustrate these disparities, both in international comparison and within a single country (or even within a specific region, such as the German Bundesland NRW).

Schools where more than 67 % of students use a digital device at least once a week
Schools where between 33 % and 67 % of students use a digital device at least once a week
Schools where less than 33 % of students use a digital device at least once a week

Germany (NRW)	39 %	40 %	21 %
Greece	19 %	19 %	62 %
Croatia	30 %	40 %	30 %
Italy	36 %	38 %	26 %
Poland	30 %	30 %	40 %
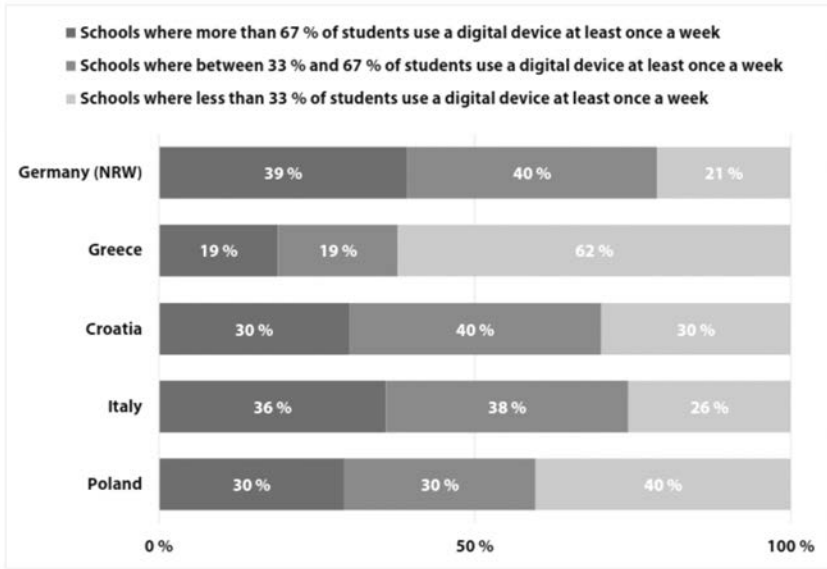
Figure 1: Share of students using a digital device for learning at school at least once a week, outside dedicated ICT lessons (ECA, 2023, p. 33)

1 Gbps or more   100 Mbps to less than 1 Gbps   30 Mbps to less than 100 Mbps
Less than 30 Mbps   No internet connection

Germany (NRW)	15 %	39 %	35 %	11 %
Greece	8 %	45 %	45 %	
Croatia	5 %	24 %	59 %	12 %
Italy	10 %	31 %	44 %	15 %
Poland	5 %	45 %	45 %	5 %
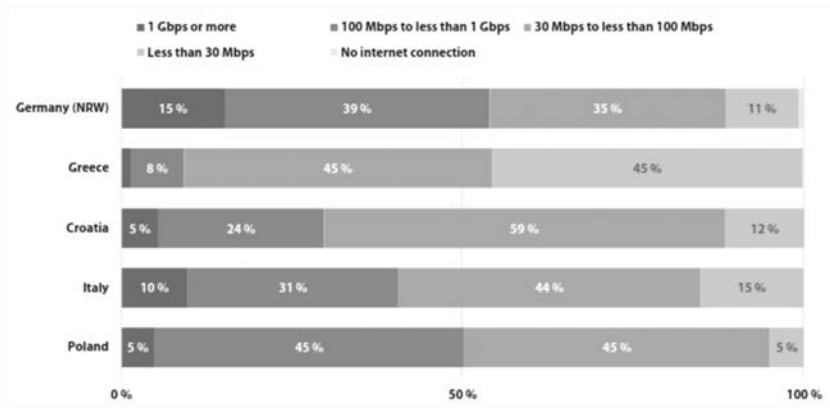
Figure 2: Download speed of internet connection at different schools (ECA, 2023, p. 38)

This gap further perpetuates the reproduction of marginalization, particularly evident in the differences observed in technologically advanced schools in affluent areas and their counterparts in the 'periphery' (OECD, 2022).

Despite the accelerated push spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, the

pace of digitalization in schools continues to progress at a generally slow rate. This is marked by a scarcity of essential infrastructure and digital literacy, hindering students and teachers from fully capitalizing on the extensive digital didactic resources already available (ECA, 2023; OECD, 2022). Despite these challenges, it becomes increasingly apparent that digitalization is not merely an option but an inevitable facet of the future of education, unfolding gradually and with disparities across regions and socioeconomic strata. Ensuring digital equity is hereby fundamental for ensuring equal opportunities to quality education and therefore to employment.

The KIDS4ALLL Horizon innovation project (2021-2024) aims to strengthen and improve digital and interdisciplinary skills in highly diverse educational environments while promoting social inclusion. The main tool for achieving this objective is an e-learning platform, which promotes the development of the eight key competences for lifelong learning (COM, 2018) through more than 100 learning units in 14 languages, targeting ISCED 2-3[1] students across Europe and beyond. The project also targets teachers and educators and provides them with digital training to enhance their competences towards inclusive and participatory teaching. The e-learning platform was piloted during 2022-2023 for 9 months in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings in eight countries (Germany, Greece, Italy, Israel, Hungary, Norway, Spain, Turkey).

This chapter offers an overview of the tools available in the KIDS4ALLL learning environment and explores their reception in different countries and educational contexts. The consortium partners' cross-national research enables the evaluation of the concept and its tools as well as a better understanding of the current state and challenges of the educational system in different countries. Additionally, it provides insight into the profiles of the main actors, including teachers, educators, and young people.

To achieve this, the chapter begins by outlining the pedagogical framework of the project and providing a brief description of its outputs. It then outlines the main findings of empirical research on the perception and use of the KIDS4ALLL tools. This research sheds light on their reception in different educational contexts, offering insights into these contexts and their key actors.

---

1   ISCED levels 2 and 3 correspond to secondary education. For a detailed description, see: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=International_-Standard_Classification_of_Education_(ISCED)&oldid=604925

1. Theoretical framework

Schools, as institutions, tend to perpetuate exclusion and inequalities (MacKenzie et al., 2022) and fall short in preparing individuals to effectively address the challenges posed to them, their communities, and their societies by phenomena such as climate change and digitalization. The official monitors of the progress of the fourth Sustainable Development Goal on quality education show themselves acknowledge the distance between the present and the goal set for in five year's time (UNESCO 2023). In an ideal scenario envisioned for 2030, the absence of discrimination in education stands as a paramount goal. This ambitious vision relies on the dedicated efforts of qualified teachers/educators actively championing sustainable development and global citizenship, embodying these principles in their daily actions (Giovannini & Riccaboni, 2021). While this goal may seem more utopian than a foreseeable reality, taking incremental steps towards utopia is crucial for implementing constructive changes.

Presently, a multilevel vulnerabilization is evident among a broad group of population, in particular migrants and minorities, particularly in marginalized areas characterized by fewer resources and lower school quality (Conti, 2023a; Hellgren & Bereményi, 2022). The challenges extend to the classroom, where prejudices, implicit biases, socio-economic constraints, and language barriers contribute to exclusionary dynamics. In these cases, there is a notable dearth of competencies, leading to a higher risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), contributing to early school dropouts (Pesquera Alonso et al., 2022). These processes are likely to be exacerbated by digital inequalities, as digital competence increasingly contributes to educational and later adult life achievement. This is particularly demonstrated by the case of distance learning with digital tools and skills during the COVID-19 epidemic (Schroot et al., 2024).

Addressing these complex issues is essential for promoting an inclusive and equitable education system. There is a growing consensus on the critical importance of thoroughly rethinking the meaning of education and the role of schools in a holistic way (UNESCO, 2016; Guattari, 2020), addressing "learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7). In the rapidly advancing 21st century, education faces the challenge of preparing individuals with the skills and competences necessary for an ever-changing world. Decades of research on the relevant knowledge and competencies that should be imparted in formal, non-formal and informal educational contexts are reflected in

UNESCO's call for "action-oriented, transformative pedagogy which supports self-directed learning, participation and collaboration, problem-orientation, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity and the linking of formal and informal learning" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7).

In the same vein, the European Union has outlined a framework of "8 Key Competences for Lifelong Learning"[2]. The 8 key competences encapsulate a set of skills that go beyond traditional academic knowledge and school curricula and emphasise the development of certain competences that are considered essential for success in the "onlife" era (Floridi, 2015). This framework serves as a comprehensive guide for educational systems to ensure that individuals are well-equipped for personal development, active citizenship, and employment. The 8 LLL competencies[1] include: the ability to communicate, both in one's first language(s) and in others; to understand the complexity of reality, to make informed choices, to participate actively in society and to interact effectively in different contexts; an awareness of social and civic principles; an appreciation of cultural diversity and the arts; quantitative, scientific and digital literacy; the ability to maintain physical and emotional balance and to learn as needed; and a proactive attitude connected with creativity and the ability to turn ideas into action.

By developing these competencies, learners are equipped with the necessary tools to succeed in a rapidly changing world where adaptability and a broad skill set are essential. Additionally, this transformative approach to education would promote the development of citizens who can positively impact the creation of a socially and ecologically sustainable society (Bamber, 2019). This paradigm shift sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of didactic strategies, peer-learning dynamics, and lifeworld pedagogy that can innovate formal, non-formal and informal education. The use of digitalization, which is highly conducive to lifelong and lifewide learning, seems to have a great potential.

In this context KIDS4ALLL learning environment has been conceived with the aim of exploiting this potential to create a transnational offer that can attract the so-called 'digital natives' as well as their teachers/educators. Specifically, KIDS4ALLL offers a hybrid concept, creating an e-learning platform which stimulates buddy-interaction locally as well as disseminating a buddy culture globally (Conti et al., 2024). However, this educational

---

2   The 8 key-competences are: 1 personal, social, learning-to-learn competences; 2 STEM; 3 multilingualism; 4 cultural awareness and expression; 5 citizenship; 6 Literacy; 7 entrepreneurship; 8 digital competences (COM, 2018).

programme can also be used offline, providing a handbook as an alternative to the digital platform, thereby accommodating students and schools with limited or no digital infrastructure.

KIDS4ALLL introduces for both target-groups, i.e. students and teachers/educators a three-phase learning method which "builds on 1) knowledge acquisition, 2) skill training and 3) competence transfer to connect different learners and to highlight the need for collaboration among them" (KIDS4ALLL Consortium, 2020, 8). This method links skills development with social inclusion through peer learning. Both target groups are encouraged to embark on the learning journey alongside a buddy. In this way, it also values students' agency (James, 2009; Oswell, 2013), giving them the opportunity to actively engage in learning processes through which they can claim their right to access and produce knowledge (Kumpulainen & Lipponen, 2012). In KIDS4ALLL, learners gain "epistemic status" (Heritage, 2012), being motivated to autonomously get access to domains of knowledge, while their "epistemic authority" (Heritage & Raymond, 2005) is acknowledged, getting stimulated to construct knowledge themselves.

A particular challenge highlighted in the literature on the buddy-system is the inadequate preparation of the students in terms of exercising their agency and their ability to take on the role of expert, moving from the role of learner to that of mentor (Conti et al., 2024, p. 159). By promoting creative and self-determined learning, KIDS4ALLL aims to foster the advancement of learners' capacity to act autonomously and responsibly through learning strategies that allow learners to shoulder responsibilities, to follow their own interests, to express their own opinions, to share their knowledge and to co-create their own content. In this regard, digital tools can be especially effective.

The KIDS4ALLL project is rooted in the dialogic approach, which promotes equality, equity, empathy and empowerment by encouraging open exchange, based on respect, appreciation and valorization of differences without hierarchies playing a role (Conti, 2023b). Dialogic learning develops in a relational way through active participation, fulfilling the right of all learners to access and produce knowledge (Kumpulainen & Lipponen, 2012). In order to promote a pedagogical shift towards dialogic learning in all educational settings and especially in schools, the KIDS4ALLL learning environment includes a special section for teachers/educators to deepen their understanding of inclusive and participatory education and to encourage them to explore innovative pedagogical

methods, also offering the handbook and the platform itself as ready-to-use learning tools.

The Buddy-system, promoted by KIDS4ALLL, is a special form of peer-learning, with a strong dialogic character: it describes a supportive partnership which is mutually beneficial, even if apparently one buddy is more in need of support than another. Thus "buddies engage in a balanced relationship that allows them to express their individuality and enhance their personal growth through meaningful interactions with one another" (Conti et al., 2023, p. 163). The Buddy-system can take various forms: there are "one-to-one, one-to-many, or many-to-many configurations, often coordinated by an experienced individual responsible for the initiative" (*idid.*). The buddy-team can form spontaneously around a common project or be the result of a facilitated process (*idid.*).

There is a growing recognition of the inherent advantages offered by peer-learning over conventional instructional methods. It has been recognized as a powerful tool for increasing learning motivation by promoting well-being through the satisfaction of the need of autonomy, competence, and social relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wessel, 2015). Thus, peer-learning concepts have proven to be effective measures to address both challenges related to learning and social relations faced by members of marginalized groups, including migrant students (Manzoni & Rolfe, 2019). As it contributes to the cultivation of friendship, socio-emotional skills, and improved acceptance of differences, it also benefits low-achieving students and those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Jordan & Le Métais, 1997). Peer-learning not only encourages the acceptance of differences but also nurtures a stronger sense of belonging, contributing to the development of more inclusive learning communities (Baloche & Brody, 2017).

The KIDS4ALLL learning method promotes the development of various key competences, including socio-emotional skills, not only through the learning units but also by encouraging peer-learning. It combines peer learning and active learning with lifeworld pedagogy, which recognises that learners bring a wealth of prior experience and knowledge that influences their understanding of new concepts and bridges the gap between educational content and their everyday lives. In KIDS4ALLL, learning is contextualised within the learners' lifeworld, taking into account their cultural, social and personal backgrounds. Learners are encouraged to explore, question, share, apply and reflect on knowledge in ways that are relevant to them, deepening their understanding and developing their skills. In this way, knowledge traditionally located in different disciplines is linked within

the broader context of life. This holistic approach promotes the development of skills that are directly applicable to real-life situations. The very use of digital tools promoted by the project is a key strategy through which KIDS4ALLL seeks to connect with students' everyday lives and bridge the gap between their present and future experiences. The initiative aims to give the chance to students to learn to use digital resources not only for entertainment, but also to pursue clear, purposeful projects they have in mind.

Lifeworld learning is consistent with a student-centred and constructivist approach to education. It encourages educators to be facilitators of learning processes, guiding students in making connections between academic content and their lifeworld experiences. This approach is particularly important in fostering a sense of relevance and therefore motivation, as it grounds education in the authentic contexts of the learners' lives. Facilitation, as opposed to frontal lessons, emerges as a pedagogical philosophy that places a premium on active learning, critical thinking, and the empowerment of students through increased agency. Scientific literature underscores the importance of this shift, highlighting that an environment where students are active participants in their learning journey is conducive to the development of key competences and agency (cfr. Baraldi et al., 2022).

Research on the teacher-student interaction pattern known as the Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) sequence shows that it tends to perpetuate hierarchical structures and limit children's opportunities to participate (Baraldi et al., 2022, p. 6). Studies of teacher-child interactions have highlighted strategies that can mitigate hierarchical forms of authority, such as scaffolding (Seedhouse, 2004; Sharpe, 2008) or re-utterings (O'Connor & Michael, 1996). However, Baraldi et al. (2022) argue for a more transformative approach that mitigates hierarchical structures while expanding children's agency and promoting dialogic learning: the *facilitation* of children's agency. This involves the appropriate use of a complex system of communication techniques (Farini & Scollan, 2022; Conti, 2020).

2. KIDS4ALLL diverse tools

The diverse backgrounds and needs of learners, combined with an accelerated and digitalised world, require non-standard, innovative, adaptive and inclusive pedagogical approaches and tools to meet the challenges of an ever-mobile life. KIDS4ALLL addresses this challenge in the form of a participatory pedagogy by developing and piloting a comprehensive digital

learning platform that will be available free of charge from April 2024. The KIDS4ALLL learning environment aims to be a useful tool for a wide population, but has been designed primarily for migrant and ethnic minority children, taking into account the language barriers that people on the move face at the beginning of their new life in a new country. Therefore, the e-learning platform can be used in fourteen languages (e.g. Arabic, Dari, Ukrainian) and has been designed to be as comprehensible as possible in numerous country and cultural contexts.

In order to meet the different needs and interests of students, teachers and educators, the KIDS4ALLL learning environment has been designed to be flexible. It offers a variety of tools that can be used by both students and teachers/educators. Firstly, the *buddy system*. It is introduced to inspire teachers/educators to incorporate it into their daily routine, both for their own personal development by entering into a collegial exchange with other professionals, and to increase the quality of their educational offer. Implementing the buddy-system means creating space for collaborative and cooperative learning processes, thereby strengthening relationships and reaping their benefits.

The second major type of tool available is the *set of learning units* developed by the international KIDS4ALLL team. These units can be used as a complete learning journey – starting with a warm-up, doing all the activities suggested and ending with a reflection – or single activities can be selected. In order to encourage independent work, the text in the units is directly addressed to the target group, although teachers/educators can moderate them themselves or use them as inspiration to create their own activities on the topic. The self-training modules for teachers and educators are intended to be an important resource for promoting innovation in their pedagogical practice. These modules can be used effectively in team training sessions, for example.

The third resource provided by KIDS4ALLL comprises a series of *video-tutorials*. Ten 2-3 minute videos have been produced for each target group. The tutorials for students guide them in creating content on a specific topic with their buddies. The tutorials for teachers/educators provide ideas on how to organise participatory projects efficiently and how to support buddy teams at different stages of their project creation.

The fourth type of tool is the *participatory archive*, which contains content uploaded by students themselves. This content can be the result of an autonomous content creation project designed and produced by the buddy teams supported by the video-tutorials, or the elaboration of a creative ac-

tivity proposed in a learning unit through which they have processed and practiced newly acquired knowledge and skills. This way, they can share their knowledge with peers around the world. Educators and teachers can share in the dedicated area of the platform their experience and reflections on the use of KIDS4ALLL online, inspiring others.

The fifth supports the previous tool as a *mobile application* and allows users to create digital postcards both online and offline. Students are asked at the end of the unit to create with their buddy a postcard: this helps them to reflect on what they have learned and, when uploaded, gives them a sense of being part of an international community. The postcards appear at the end of the learning unit.

In the following chapter we will highlight some of the key factors that have influenced the way the KIDS4ALLL learning environment has served its purposes in different communities and educational contexts. The data presented have been collected during the pilot phase through ethnographic observation and interviews with teachers, educators and further stakeholders during the pilot implemented in Hungary, Israel, Italy, Germany, Greece, Norway, Spain and Turkey from February to October 2023[3].

3. Cross-national research findings

3.1 *Implementing the activities*

3.1.1 Attitude

The implementation of an innovative pedagogy requires an educational environment that wants it and is also prepared for it, whether this refers to the professional or physical environment of the school, study hall, youth center or other formal, non-formal or informal educational settings. In terms of professional approach and ethos, an unconventional educational programme requires an educational environment and teachers/educators who are open to it and willing to invest resources in understanding and engaging with its implementation. This is challenging as teachers/educators often have established strategies and routines. They are typically motivated to adopt new tools only if they perceive that they will make their work

---

3   In order to read more about the qualitative methodology applied in the project, see chapter IX.

more efficient and successful, especially in addressing pressing challenges and problems.

Beyond individual attitudes, our observations indicate that the preparation of professionals and the system in which they operate are crucial. The Israeli stakeholder forum explicitly acknowledged that a significant number of teachers are not yet adequately prepared to change their teaching methods and adopt the principles of autonomous, constructivist learning, which support students in learning through research, dialogue, and feedback processes. The researchers in the Hungarian context chose to test the learning environment in non-formal settings, specifically in study halls, rather than schools. This decision was made due to the limited possibilities of using the platform in schools, which have a rigid system and centralised regulations and curricula. Non-conventional pedagogical methods and tools aren't usually welcomed in such an environment. Beside the attitude of the teachers, who are generally overworked and not properly trained to use innovative pedagogical tools but might be open to new methods, educational structures and policy might prevent the integration of innovative concepts and tools. On the contrary, after-school programmes are precisely the educational environment that relies on non-conventional pedagogy and innovative tools. This was also the case for the Hungarian pilot organisation, which already used digital tools in its daily activities, so the integration of the new platform was easy and seamless.

However, most pilot organisations in all regions were not familiar with such innovative tools. The adoption of these tools in formal contexts across all countries has proven to be challenging due to rigid structures and routines. It is noteworthy to observe how some schools have managed to incorporate innovation without fully integrating it into their regular activities. In Italy, a mixed strategy was employed in some pilot sites: the educational platform was formally tested in regular schools but used in sessions facilitated by external educators. Similarly, in Germany, a school social worker used KIDS4ALLL with a class during the time available to them. The pedagogical innovation was encapsulated in a space reserved for non-traditional school activities and assigned to professionals whose pedagogical approach and role aligned with the innovative KIDS4ALLL method.

KIDS4ALLL's pedagogical strategy is characterised by the central role of the digital platform. The attitudes of teachers, educators, and principals had a direct impact on the openness towards the platform. The decision to use the digital platform, as well as how and to what extent to use it, has been strongly influenced by their digital competence, experience, and gen-

eral attitude towards digital technology. The use of the platform varies in scope, form, and intensity, not only between institutions but also, in contexts where teachers are autonomous, between individual teachers. The availability of digital devices and internet access, as well as established norms regarding their use, also significantly impact the interest in and use of the e-learning platform.

3.1.2 Infrastructure

Hyperdigitalisation is clearly one of the key drivers that has shaped our lives in recent decades and will continue to do so in the decades to come. Even if digitalisation is slow to penetrate the educational environment, digital educational resources are becoming increasingly available, but are underutilised due to inadequate digital infrastructure and digital literacy levels, making it less attractive to use the rich digital educational resources already available (ECA, 2023; OECD, 2022). However, given the overwhelming trend towards digitalisation, it would be essential to find its appropriate place and role at system level in both formal and non-formal education.

Schools and other educational institutions, whether urban or rural, large or small, formal or informal, run by the state, the community or an NGO, are not all prepared to implement unconventional and digital educational programmes. Most obviously, technical resources could be a problem when using a digital platform in a peer-to-peer way, where at least one tablet or computer (or smartphone) per buddy team is required, along with a stable internet connection. In most of the pilot sites, this was not a problem, as the national coordinators of the project ensured that the selected pilot organisations were provided with the necessary technology to browse the platform and produce multimedia content, although its use was affected by the different internal rules and general digital infrastructure of the different organisations. In some pilot sites in Greece or Italy, the digital version of the educational programme was used less or not always in buddy teams but at a larger group or class level.

Another important factor to consider is the location of KIDS4ALLL activities. This includes the physical space arrangement and the atmosphere that can create a welcoming and suitable environment for implementing a free-flowing educational activity. Several pilot sites in the non-formal and informal education context have successfully met these expectations by incorporating child-friendly furnishings and decorations that promote peer-to-peer learning and leisure activities. Additionally, in some locations, such

as German youth centres or Hungarian study halls, snacks or meals were provided, which was particularly beneficial for disadvantaged children.

Fostering a creative atmosphere in which focused buddy teamwork could develop proved more challenging in public schools, where buildings house large numbers of people in relatively small spaces. These rooms often have furniture designed for traditional frontal teaching, which makes alternative organisation of space quite challenging. In addition, in some cases students were working in computer labs, a remnant of a time when digital technology activities were separate from regular classroom activities. These spaces are typically designed for individual and digital-only work and do not encourage the collaborative and creative processes required by KIDS4ALLL. In this programme, users receive stimulation online, but are encouraged to interact and collaborate with their buddy sitting next to them in person.

3.1.3 Invisible Barriers

School serves as a societal hub, providing an opportunity to foster intergroup connections by forming buddy-teams among individuals who typically do not interact due to factors such as gender bias or racism, despite sharing the same classroom. KIDS4ALLL has proven effective in creating new connections between individuals. However, in educational settings where children have autonomy over their activities and social interactions, or even the option to disengage entirely, establishing new connections has been more challenging. Explicit barriers against participating with peers perceived as belonging to an adversarial group have been observed. Nevertheless, when space was shared, a strategic implementation of activities indirectly facilitated reconciliation or collaboration between individuals.

Achieving inclusion in the wider society through interactions beyond the boundaries of one's own community and outside familiar shared spaces has proven to be a challenge. This challenge is evident not only in segregated areas, such as Roma settlements in Hungary or in Germany, but also in heterogeneous urban areas. Stepping out of one's comfort zone, such as participating in a KIDS4ALLL workshop organized in an unfamiliar youth center, might feel unsafe for stigmatized young people. Even in the most child-friendly environments, some children hesitated or chose not to participate due to subtle concerns associated with the fear of making negative experiences. Establishing trust in the environment and the educators, or providing someone who accompany them is paramount for participation.

Although less visible, the timing of activities is just as important as the design of the physical environment. The time and day of the activity has affected the motivation and resources available to students to engage. For example, in a school in Germany, it was observed that scheduling KIDS4ALLL sessions on Fridays at 1 pm created an environment where less engaged students found it easier to abstain from activities and avoid active participation. In non-formal education settings, especially in afternoon schools such as Hungarian study halls, afternoon sessions are designed to take into account the mental fatigue of children arriving after a full day at school and to include playful and engaging tasks that exhausted children are both able and willing to participate in. While the KIDS4ALLL learning units and digital platform are generally suitable for this purpose, educators have often introduced movement games between the activities or presented the tasks themselves, avoiding the children sitting and reading the tasks.

Another invisible barrier arises from unexpected discrepancies in children's digital skills required for a specific task of the learning unit. While it's commonly assumed that the younger generation possesses digital skills, they often lack proficiency in those that are specifically useful in an educational context, such as using a computer or a writing program. The development of digital skills typically involves a combination of explicit training and implicit, self-directed learning-by-doing strategies. However, predicting individual learners' performance in a digital task can be challenging due to the varied nature of skill acquisition and the pace at which individuals learn.

3.1.4 Buddy-systems

A core element of the KIDS4ALLL pedagogical concept is to encourage collaboration between students through a peer-to-peer approach, achieved through a buddy-system facilitated by an e-learning platform or handbook. The aim of the peer-to-peer method is to enhance student agency by promoting a less teacher-centred and more self-explorative approach to learning. Buddy-teams are designed as learning pairs consisting of students with different backgrounds, such as migrant and native students, ethnic minority and majority students, and students with and without social or learning disadvantages. During the pilot, the composition of buddy-teams often differed from the expected combinations. However, the teams were successful in bringing together students who typically have little contact with each other, even if they matched well. Moreover, buddy-pairs were occasionally expanded to trios or larger groups, depending on the number of children participating, the preferences of the children or educators, or the nature of

the learning unit they were working on. In some cases, different buddy-teams worked all on different topics or went through the same unit simultaneously, either separately or by coordinating with each other. For instance, in a German youth centre, buddy teams cooked different dishes but collaborated on the name and concept of their imaginary restaurant. In some cases, such as the Hungarian pilot, older students (aged 15 and above) preferred to learn alone using the platform. Although the learning environment was designed for buddy teams, the platform is open to everyone and also allows for individual learning.

Furthermore, the designed methodology anticipated buddy pairs who work together on a long run, ideally throughout the 9-months long pilot phase. The long-term pairing was designed to observe how the members of the buddy teams shape each other over almost a school-year of working together by using the e-learning platform. However, field research proved that long-term joint work with identical buddy pairs, introduced by the development of common rules of collaboration, are not realistic expectations. It has been difficult to establish stable buddy pairs or teams especially in those more open settings with voluntary participation of the students, such as afternoon schools, study halls, youth centres or other non- or informal educational programs. This is particularly true in relation to the presence/sudden absence of migrant children who might move, be dislocated or be forcibly expelled, a phenomenon which affected in particular Greek pilot organisations. The fact that field experience in each country differed from this initial design allowed us to recognize the benefits of changing buddy more frequently. This enabled the students involved to connect with a wider range of individuals, gain insights from a greater diversity of perspectives and develop different skills related to teamwork. Additionally, it provided relief in situations where buddy-teams were not well-matched. Another consideration raised by some teachers is the concern that even good friends at the start may become bored or drift apart after several months of working together. Relationships between children can be unpredictable and they thrive on variety. That's why, in many pilot settings, buddy teams were deliberately not formed for the long term.

On the one hand, KIDS4ALLL aims to promote playful learning in a free and collaborative environment where buddies see themselves as equals and can benefit from their diversity. On the other hand, it aims to promote social inclusion by bringing together young people who may not normally interact with each other. This double objective is a key challenge for educators and teachers who have the task of initiating the formation of buddy

teams. The strategies they have developed during the pilot project are contextual adaptations of the following two opposite ones: forcing pairings or allowing children to choose their buddy freely. The first option, forcing children to work with a peer they do not like or have not chosen themselves, can be counterproductive as it can disrupt the friendly environment and reduce motivation, reinforcing negative feelings.

The second option would deny children the chance to expand their social circle, challenge their own biases, and learn more than they would with their usual peers. In pilot organizations across all regions, children clearly expressed their desire to form a buddy-team with acquainted peers, and in some cases, they even indicated who they did not want to be paired with. In Turkey, for example, children were paired with migrant mates who had low proficiency in Turkish. The children complained, creating a challenging situation for the teacher. However, the teacher was able to turn the situation into a positive one by providing support for the exchange. Educators and teachers face the challenge of developing their own strategies for creating diverse buddy-teams that do not undermine participants' motivation to engage, while encouraging them to open up to each other. This was found to be easier in settings where the children felt less free to withdraw, such as schools, as well as in non-formal and informal settings in Greece and Hungary. The responsible adults successfully led the pairing, often using strategies such as random team formation, accompanied by hidden tricks to ensure that buddy teams were heterogeneous (as in the study hall in Hungary) or to avoid pairing people in conflict together (as in the school in Germany). In pilot organisations which are organised as open spaces that young people can visit freely, buddy teams are formed based on who is present and interested in a particular activity.

3.2 *Strengthening Competences*

Beyond the buddy-system, the main instrument through which the project aims to disseminate an inclusive pedagogy able to improve key competences lifelong and lifewide is the set of learning units and video-tutorials. As mentioned in the introduction, the framework for the selection of the competences for the students was based on the work of the European Commission (COM, 2018). These cover both regular school curricula and extra-curricular competences and aim to equip children with core skill sets useful for coping with challenges in contemporary societies. Teachers and educa-

tors who participated in the pilot confirmed that KIDS4ALLL was successful in providing content that is useful, reflects real needs and appeals to the target group.

Moreover, this approach could address competences that are either not included in the curriculum or are insufficiently promoted. This is also reflected in the strong interest shown in such non-formal competences, such as entrepreneurship, cultural awareness, citizenship or digital literacy, which were particularly popular during the pilot project, especially but not solely in non-formal and informal learning settings. Teachers also acknowledged that the learning method stimulated the use of participatory pedagogy, which is otherwise not commonly used in schools in e.g. Israel, Italy and Turkey. The didactisation of the content has activated the students.

In addition to the specific learning units aimed at developing digital competence, the use of the digital platform itself as well as the use of digital tools to create own content reinforces it. Although younger generations are born in the digital world and are more receptive to its innovations than older generations, there are still some fundamental digital skills that most show not to have, such dealing with copyright materials or protecting their own digital data. This platform has therefore helped to compensate for basic digital deficiencies even for a target group that, regardless of accessibility and social disadvantages, are considered digital natives. By providing an e-learning platform, the projects have created a product that is in line with the times but couldn't fully satisfy the expectations of a generation that values multimedia material. As an Italian educator phrased it: "This is the language of the new generation" (translation by the authors). The integration of podcasts and other audio materials into the learning units has not been possible due to copyright issues and the multilingual nature of the platform. An exception was made for creative commons videos, granted they were brief and exceptionally relevant, usually accompanied by a written explanation in the other languages. In the case of KIDS4ALLL video tutorials, considerable effort was invested in providing voice-over narration in all 14 languages.

In the original version, which was modified following critical feedback from the first pilot phase, each unit was presented on a single long page. This caused students to feel overwhelmed by the volume of text and not realise that it was a sequence of small tasks. We could observe that this generation, particularly young people with lower levels of education but not only, tend to scroll through content, seemingly seeking visual stimulation, and are less inclined to read, perceiving it as arduous. In contemporary so-

ciety, video and audio communication have become prevalent, and reading is not a common leisure activity. Although students are required to engage with texts during school hours, it can be challenging to encourage them to do so outside of school. Reading can often feel like a task that creates an uncomfortable 'school-like' atmosphere for many. According to several German educators, the children they work with often reject anything that resembles traditional schooling.

To enhance the platform's appeal and make it less reminiscent of school materials, the start page has been redesigned. This was achieved by removing unnecessary words and creating a graphic organisation of contents. Additionally, a gamification element has been introduced in the form of a wheel that directs users to a randomly selected warm-up section of the learning unit, often in the form of a quiz. However, apart from the quizzes in the warm-up section of the units, the KIDS4ALLL e-learning platform deliberately restricts direct interaction with it, in order to encourage on-site collaboration. For some participants, grasping this hybrid concept and disconnecting from the screen to engage with each other, making eye contact, has proven to be a challenge.

The platform's linguistic diversity is a significant strength as it overcomes language barriers and allows learners who speak different languages to share a learning experience or use it as a translator, switching from one language to the other. The multilingual offer can also stimulate curiosity towards other languages and increase proficiency in foreign languages. However, the wording and phrasing of many of the learning units was found by teachers and educators to be too difficult for younger students as well as to those with any learning difficulties or who are from disadvantaged backgrounds. The German pilot organization faced a similar challenge when organising a workshop centered on the learning unit about hip-hop. Neither the concept of workshops nor the registration procedure was clear to Roma children, who had been selected as an important target audience of the workshop.

Therefore, the presence of competent educators is fundamental. They should be able to present activities in an understandable manner, support learners in grasping the content and completing tasks, and adapt learning units to the specific group of young people participating. A challenge observed in various contexts is maintaining concentration on tasks and the preference for movement over sitting. To address this, many non-formal and informal educational settings have introduced breaks where children engage in movement games. Some German pilot organizations opted to

use the learning units without the platform or handbook: educators selected the units they deemed most interesting for their young people and organized activities, embodying the texts themselves.

Competence development was also targeted at educators in the project, though it was not part of the pilot and was therefore not in focus of the exchange with the teachers/educators involved in it. Beyond the section of the e-learning platform dedicated to them, a series of online workshops and an in-person training have been held to prepare them. However, there were difficulties to find the appropriate time slots and not all teachers and educators were able to participate in these events. The video-tutorials and the learning units were available for them at any time, but most educators were often too busy and could not find the time to watch them, though some did reflect on the possibility to use the learning units and the videos for organising training inside their institution for its own staff. Educational consultants ('Fachberatung') emerged as an important target group in Germany for the project. They could utilize the prepared materials to enhance the quality of pedagogical work among the teachers in public schools who they are called to support. Participating teachers and educators, for example in Greece, recommended more handy solutions that meet the reality of a busy educator/teacher, such as short briefs for each learning units and ideas on how to support buddy-teams, e.g. to overcome the unavailability of resources to create posters, videos, etc.

3.3 *Promoting Agency*

Although the e-learning platform includes some learning units that directly aim to improve social skills, the activities in general favour the development of social competence by enhancing the ability to open to others and to get into a productive exchange with them. As an Italian educator recalled it, "One of my students said: 'Wow, I had a certain idea of this person, but then, working together with her, it turned out that she was actually completely different'" (translation by the authors). Collaborative work and shared objectives can foster supportive and inclusive group dynamics, ultimately building a sense of community.

The logic of the KIDS4ALLL learning platform is profoundly different from most formal school activities which stresses the hierarchy between the teacher and learners and often produce situations that suggest a reproduction of hierarchy among the students themselves. This scheme is challenged

by the KIDS4ALLL pedagogical concept and tools with the aim of creating an egalitarian, non-competitive, but stimulating learning environment in a friendly climate. This scheme leads to a new level of agency that the students can experience via the peer-*to*-peer and especially via the peer-*for*-peer work, which allows them more autonomy, responsibility, leadership which can make them the protagonists of their own learning process.

Peer-for-peer work refers to that advanced level activity in the second phase of the pilot, when senior students are creating educational content for younger peers. This scheme explicitly shifts the students to an educator role which allows a widely acknowledged agency, which most students barely experienced in their educational career. It involves new levels of responsibility and rights, and requires new levels of creativity and management skills. Senior students can therefore benefit much more from this activity than they would earn from their student position. Senior students enjoyed the peer-for-peer activity a lot, as it was stated in a very explicit way for example in an Italian non-formal educational setting, where they carefully prepared the educational material for younger peers for months and were happy with the new role. At the same time, this task requires a certain maturity and some facilitation from the teacher, as an example from Hungary demonstrates. Here, children aged 12-14 were put in a senior role and were expected to autonomously produce a simpler learning material similar to what they had seen on the e-learning platform, without any specification, neither of topic or method. This task proved to be unachievable for children of this age group, with learning and different social disadvantages: they had neither the idea nor the skills to create something for younger learners, so they needed more supportive facilitation to implement a low scale idea.

In general, the pilot project showed that the e-learning platform has the potential to be used autonomously by students, although they need to become familiar with its functionalities. The main challenge in many contexts seemed to be the use of a dialogical approach, which not all students are used to. Students had to learn to use the free space provided and to fill it with their own ideas, knowledge and interests. This was particularly challenging for those who were not used to working collaboratively, a method not commonly practised by most children and young people. Free work, discussion, independent research and creativity require skills that are not as prevalent in schools as they ideally should be, so time needs to be invested in familiarising students with the methodology and helping them to develop these skills. Participants from Turkey suggested the idea of producing

materials to support teachers in fostering creativity in their classrooms, which was also echoed by professionals from other countries, who stressed the importance of adequate support from the teacher/educator as a facilitator of the process.

The role of the facilitator proves to be crucial, with the data revealing three different styles observed in all different contexts. Firstly, there are those who lack genuine interest and are unable to motivate learners or support them to overcome challenges successfully. Secondly, there are facilitators who, although engaged, adopt an instructive attitude, thereby limiting the expression of students' agency and hindering the development of a creative collaboration with their peers. For instance,it was observed that the introduction of the option of choosing the learning unit increased the interest of the buddies in the subject. Conversely, a lack of interest in the topic resulted in buddy teams making little effort to work thoroughly on the content, which led to a lack of meaningful discussions and exchanges between team members. Finally, there are facilitators who are not only committed, but who deeply understand and identify with the KIDS4ALLL pedagogical approach and demonstrate the competence to implement it effectively. The latter group excels in building a trusting relationship with students, actively promoting the well-being of the group, observing social dynamics and intervening when necessary. They skillfully point out meaningful connections between students' interests and the learning units, and either allow students to choose the topics they wish to explore or motivate them to do the selected one. These facilitators provide support where needed – some students may need more guidance and feedback to ensure they are on the right track with their work – while giving others the freedom to organise and manage their work independently. This approach respects the autonomy of the buddy-teams, giving them the space to make decisions and collaborate effectively, while guaranteeing support when needed.

In informal educational settings, where children are free to participate in activities, the establishment of a trusting relationship with the educator was identified as particularly important, especially in scenarios involving uncertainty, e.g. working with peers who may be unfamiliar or engaging in a new type of activity. In such cases, the presence of an educator serves to create a relaxed atmosphere and to promote familiarity within and between the teams. It is important to note, however, that the presence of an educator can be a potential barrier in the beginning, until individuals have successfully established good contact with each other. While the educator plays a key role as an anchor, there's a delicate balance to be struck to avoid

overshadowing attention and decision-making processes. If one educator is perceived as the expert, there is a risk that the teams will lose their agency and become mere executors rather than real creators, even if they are technically producing something. In addition, the streamlined execution without much thought creates space for conversation. While this can be beneficial, the challenge is that teams are often made up of individuals who are not close to each other, making it difficult to create dialogue because it is not necessary and the topic is not set. In such a situation, the close presence of an educator could risk shifting the dialogue towards that person, if they don't use their power to stimulate interaction within the team. As a result, team spirit struggles to emerge and individuals within the group maintain a loose connection rather than forming a cohesive unit.

Some educators have observed a positive impact on the self-confidence of several young people involved in buddy work, noting increased participation and reduced shyness in collaborative activities with their peers. Some buddy pairs have successfully cultivated a productive working dynamic. However, different power structures have emerged within the buddy teams, influencing their overall collaboration. The observations in Germany and Hungary indicate that most pairs work effectively together, showing mutual interest and accepting each other's perspectives. However, there are cases where one student has a higher status or lacks enthusiasm for the learning unit or interest in the exchange with their buddy. In such cases, the dynamic is uneven, with some buddy teams demonstrating shared leadership and genuine collaboration, while others work alone or have dominant leaders dictating the course of action. The personal characteristics of the buddy team members, including traits such as shyness or extroversion, and loud or quiet tendencies, also play a significant role in shaping the presentation style. This dynamic reflects the unique personalities of the individuals, interwoven with the overall dynamic of the buddy team. Although not a universal behaviour, some participants, particularly males, have exhibited typical teenage behaviour, occasionally engaging in aggressive comparisons.

Conclusion

The envisioned transformation of education, advocating for equity, inclusion, quality, and relevance by international organizations like UNESCO, encounters substantial implementation challenges. Pedagogical approaches and tools which can address the challenges linked to the digital, social and

economic transformation and prepare for mastering lifelong and lifewide learning are given, though fundamental changes in formal education are needed. The difficulty lies in deviating from long-established norms deemed 'normal' within the formal education system for decades and implementing a radical change. The inherent rigidity of the formal education structure poses a central obstacle to the integration of new methodologies. In contrast, educators in non-formal and informal settings enjoy greater flexibility in designing pedagogical activities tailored to the specific needs of their contexts.

However, non-formal and informal educational settings, while offering unique opportunities, may not reach everyone due to various visible and invisible barriers hindering young people from connecting beyond their usual familiar groups. In this context, schools often bring diversity under one roof, offering a valuable opportunity for increasing social cohesion where citizens can learn to connect beyond prejudices and collaborate, especially in the face of uncertainty. However, segregated educational settings – be they formal, non-formal or informal contexts – do not provide this advantage, leading to long-term and intergenerational social exclusion and less chance of breaking the cycle of poverty. KIDS4ALLL's pedagogical approach and digital platform are designed to address such disparities and provide an inclusive educational platform for students from all backgrounds.

The KIDS4ALLL learning environment thus aims to be utilized both within and outside of school. The pilot phase demonstrates that its variety of tools provides the necessary flexibility to be useful in different contexts. Teachers, educators, and students can choose from different types of tools based on their needs and goals. However, empirical research underscores the pivotal role that teachers/educators play in the successful usage of the platform, particularly when students are unfamiliar with KIDS4ALLL or lack relevant competences. Educators' contribution is most significant when they are familiar with the platform, actively engaged, have trustworthy relationships with their learners, and possess the ability to support buddy-teams, fostering their agency. Furthermore, this educational approach and the associated e-learning platform allows teachers to move from a leadership to a facilitator role, enabling greater autonomy for learners. Another step in the process of autonomy is when senior students create content for their younger peers within the same platform and based on the same principles. This allows older students to take the role of the teacher, which they rarely experience in common education settings. This extended autonomy is one

of the most important hidden values that the KIDS4ALLL pedagogical approach can offer to its users.

The central driver of KIDS4ALLL is innovation, evident in its pedagogical approach, learning methods, emphasis on transversal competences, content and its didactization, and hybrid concept. This international study underscores the shared challenges encountered by schools in fostering innovation and other educational contexts in integrating leisure-time learning. Simultaneously, it underscores the imperative for change, revealing how the postdigital, globalised society not only demands citizens with a new set of competences but also actively shapes their interests, needs, and skills.

As digitalisation serves as the catalyst for social and economic transformation, the digital has been prioritised and placed at the core of the educational design developed by the KIDS4ALLL project. Through its digital platform, the project aims to bolster transversal competences, such as digital competence itself, which is promoted through interaction with the e-learning platform, content specifically designed to enhance digital skills, and encouragement to utilise digital tools for completing activities and creating content.

In summary, establishing a robust foundation of well-informed and actively engaged teachers and educators is pivotal for the success and effective implementation of transformative educational tools and methodologies. While KIDS4ALLL recognizes this imperative by providing a dedicated section for teachers/educators, additional insights can be gleaned through scientific research on its usage and effectiveness. Such research can contribute valuable perspectives for enhancing transformative educator and teacher training, further optimizing the impact and efficacy of educational initiatives like KIDS4ALLL.

References

Baloche L., & Brody C. M. (2017). Cooperative learning: Exploring challenges, crafting innovations. *Journal of Education for Teaching,* 43(3), 274–283. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2017.1319513

Bamber P. (ed.) (2019). *Teacher Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship: Critical Perspectives on Values, Curriculum and Assessment.* Routledge.

Baraldi C., Joslyn E., & Farini F. (2022). The SHARMED Project: The Conceptual Framework. In C. Baraldi, E. Joslyn, & F. Farini (Eds.), *Promoting Children's*

Rights in European Schools: Intercultural Dialogue and Facilitative Pedagogy (pp. 1-14). Bloomsbury.

COM (European Commission) (2018). *Proposal for a Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning*. Brussels: European Commission https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:-32018H0604(01)

Conti L. (2020). Webinare dialogisch moderieren: Partizipation aller fördern. *Intercultural Journal*, 19(33), 45-65. Retrieved from https://zs.thulb.uni-jena.de/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/jportal_derivate_00330726/IJ_2020_33 _045_065.pdf

Conti L. (2023a). Systematic Vulnerabilization of migrant students: How the dialogic approach can clear the way for a change. *Focus on International Migration*, 10, 11-29. https://ddd.uab.cat/pub/llibres/2023/274942/supmig-stuthrpanbey_a2023b.pdf

Conti L. (2023b). Dialogic intercultural competence: What it is and why teachers need it. In N. Palaiologou (Ed.), *Rethinking intercultural education in times of migration and displacement* (pp. 65-94). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Conti L. (2024). From Interculturality to Culturality. The Bridging Function of Postdigital Lifewide Learning. In L. Conti & F. Lenehan (eds.), *Lifewide Learning in Postdigital Societies. Shedding Light on Emerging Culturalities* (pp. 19-25). Bielefeld: transcript Verlag. https://www.transcript-publishing.com/-media/pdf/95/77/75/oa9783839468890.pdf

Conti L., Darmanin J., Fenech C. & Räthel K. (2024). Buddy-Culture Goes Viral! Meaning and Potentiality of the Buddy-Approach in and Outside Formal Educational Settings In L. Conti, Lenehan F. (Eds.), *Lifewide Learning in Postdigital Societies. Shedding Light on Emerging Culturalities* (pp. 148-170). Bielefeld: transcript Verlag. https://www.transcript-publishing.com/media/pdf/-95/77/75/oa9783839468890.pdf

Conti L. & Lenehan F. (Eds.) (2024). Lifewide Learning in Postdigital Societies. *Shedding Light on Emerging Culturalities* (pp. 19-25). Bielefeld: transcript Verlag. https://www.transcript-verlag.de/978-3-8376-6889-6/lifewide-learn-ing-in-postdigital-societies/?number=978-3-8394-6889-0

ECA (European Court of Auditors) (2023). *EU support for the digitalisation of schools. Significant investments, but a lack of strategic focus in the use of EU financing by member states*. https://www.eca.europa.eu/lists/ecadocuments/sr-2023-11/sr-2023-11_en.pdf

Fang Mei Lan, Canham S. L., Battersby L., Sixsmith J., Wada M., & Sixsmith A. (2019). Exploring Privilege in the Digital Divide: Implications for Theory, Policy, and Practice. *The Gerontologist*, 59, 1, e1–e15, https://doi.org/-10.1093/geront/gny037

Giovannini E. & Riccaboni A. (2021). *Agenda 2030: un viaggio attraverso gli Obiettivi di sviluppo sostenibile*. ASviS e Santa Chiara Lab, Roma. https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Pubblicazioni/Volume_Agenda2030_ASviS_S iena.pdf

Guattari F. (2020). *The Three Ecologies. In The Holistic Curriculum*, Athlone Press: London, UK; New Brunswick, NJ, USA; (pp. 27–69). https://monoskop.org/images/4/44/Guattari_Felix_The_Three_Ecologies.pdf

Hellgren Z. & Bereményi Báling àbel (2022). Introduction to the Special Issue: Far from Colorblind. Reflections on Racialization in Contemporary Europe. *Soc.Sci.*, 11 (1), 21. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11010021

Heritage, J. (2012). Epistemics in Action: Action Formation and Territories of Knowledge. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 45, 1, 1-29.

Heritage J. & Geoffrey Raymond (2005). The terms of agreement: Indexing Epistemic Authority and Subordination in Talk-in-Interaction. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 68, 1, 15-38.

James A. (2009). Agency. In J. Qvortrup, W. Corsaro & M.S. Honig (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Childhood Studies* (pp. 34-45). Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Jordan D., & Le Metais J. (1997). Emotional intelligence and student behaviour. *International Electronic Journal for Leadership in Learning*, 1(2), 1-9.

KIDS4ALLL Consortium. (2020b). Annex I, Part B. Grant Agreement NUMBER101004807.

Kumpulainen K., & Lipponen L. (2012). The dialogic construction of Agency in Classroom Communities. In M.B. Ligorio, & M. César (Eds.), *Interplays Between Dialogical Learning and Dialogical Self* (pp. 193-218). Information Age Publishing.

MacKenzie A., Chiang T.-H., Thurston A. (2022). New insights on the persistence and reproduction of educational inequality and injustice: Towards a synthesis of Nussbaum's capabilities approach and Bourdieu's theories. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 115. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2022.102032

Manzoni C., & Rolfe H. (2019). *How schools are integrating new migrant pupils and their families*. London: National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

Negroponte N. (1998). *Beyond Digital*. Wired, 6 December. https://web.media.mit.edu/~nicholas/Wired/WIRED6-12.html

O'Connor C. & Michaels S. (1996). Shifting participant frameworks: Orchestrating thinking practices in group discussion. In D. Hicks (ed.), *Discourse, Learning, and Schooling*, (pp. 63-103). Cambridge University Press.

OECD (2022). Do students have equitable access to digital learning in school? In *Mending the Education Divide Getting Strong Teachers to the Schools That Need Them Most*. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/d8a3978a-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/d8a3978a-en

Oswell D. (2013). *The agency of children. From family to global human rights*. Routledge.

Pesquera Alonso C., Iniesta Martínez A., Muñoz Sánchez P. (2022). Barriers That Keep Vulnerable People as NEETs. *Soc. Sci.,* 11, 253. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11060253

Ryan R. M., & Deci E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68-78.

Schroot T., Cavaletto G. M., & Ricucci R. (2024). Digital competences in the educational sphere: A case study from Italy. In L. Conti & F. Lenehan (Eds.), *Lifewide learning in postdigital societies: Shedding light on emerging culturalities* (pp. 213-232). Bielefeld: transcript Verlag. https://www.transcript-verlag.-de/978-3-8376-6889-6/lifewide-learning-in-postdigital-societies/?number=978-3-8394-6889-0

Seedhouse P. (2004). *The interactional architecture of the language classroom: A conversation analysis perspective*. Blackwell.

Sharpe T. (2008). How can teacher talk support learning? *Linguistics and Education*, 19, 132-48.

UNESCO (2016). *Futures of Education. The Initiative*. https://en.unesco.org/futuresofeducation/initiative

UNESCO (2017). *Education for sustainable development goals: Learning objectives*. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247444

UNESCO (2023): Monitoring SDG 4. https://www.unesco.org/gem-report/-en/monitoring-sdg4

Wessel A. (2015). Peer learning strategies in the classroom. *Journal on Best Teaching Practices*, 2(1), 14-16.

<div style="text-align:center">

V.

A bridge between educational activities that enable social integration of migrant children in Israel and Spain. The scientific evidence and the methodology behind the scenes

</div>

Lena de Botton, Roger Campdepadrós, Dolly Eliyahu-Levi, Michal Meishar

Introduction

Numerous societies worldwide, encompassing Israel and Spain, grapple with multiculturalism, national divisions, inequality, and the alienation of minority groups, often exacerbated by a lack of dialogue (Paul-Binyamin & Haj-Yehia, 2019; Arasaratnam, 2013). The repercussions of this polarization manifest prominently in pivotal spheres such as education, the labor market, healthcare, and residential areas. Migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees navigate a precarious existence within the majority group, dwelling in a context of perpetual uncertainty (Menjívar, 2006).

In the 2021/2022 school year, Spanish schools enrolled 10.7% of students as migrants (890,971 out of 8,252,826), while in Israel, approximately 1% of students are new immigrants, including 8,000 children from African asylum seeker families (22,000 out of 2,400,000).

This demographic reality poses multifaceted challenges for the children, their families, the educational framework, and the host society, revolving around language barriers, cultural tensions, social disparities, and academic achievement. For an educational setting, the challenge is to ensure the application of scientific evidence with a social impact that guarantees inclusion and equal opportunities for all. The challenge for the receiving society is achieving adequate social inclusion, integration, social unity, avoiding conflict, and everyday coexistence.

Educational studies (Pianta et al., 2008; Eliyahu-Levi & Gantz-Misher, 2021) underscore the pivotal role of educators in fostering positive relations with children from minority groups. Educators significantly influence their motivation, self-confidence, and learning success by mediating cultural knowledge, social skills, and literacy proficiency. Facilitating a multicultural

society, educators play a crucial role in promoting a sense of belonging among diverse cultural groups, fostering their adaptation to majority norms and values (Berhanu, 2006; Sisneros, 2008).

Within this context, the European H2020 project, KIDS4ALLL, has introduced developmental strategies aimed at creating a learning environment, a network of learning partners, and learning units aligned with lifelong learning principles. These efforts are geared towards fostering cohesive societies, reducing school failure, ensuring equal opportunities, and more.

However, scientific underpinnings for these learning units, environments, and methodologies pose challenges. To address these, we conducted two qualitative studies within the Israeli and Spanish paradigms, examining how educators and educational systems approach these challenges. The research explores the mediation activities of KIDS4ALLL in natural settings through the perspectives of children and educators, emphasizing their experiences.

Our study involved 50 Israeli and 75 Spanish children, along with 12 educators, participating in the KIDS4ALLL project's pilot phases. Data collection involved a mix of methods, including survey questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus groups with participants, all conducted with explicit consent.

The Israeli case reveals the authentic voices of seven educators: formal education, three teachers from an elementary school and two from a high school; informal, two volunteers at the youth center. All took part in activating two pilot phases of the KIDS4ALLL project. The data collection focused on the pedagogical actions of the educators, mediators of cultural knowledge content that is expressed in the study units based on principles of lifelong learning, mediators of social skills among students who studied in a dialogue-based peer teaching model, and mediators of language skills through explicit teaching processes and scaffolding (Dignath & Veenman, 2021).

The Spanish case approaches the effect of dialogic interactions on instrumental learning and emotions while focusing on analyzing the need to apply scientific evidence that encourages dialogic interactions and allows teachers, students, and families to adapt learning materials designed by KIDS4ALLL, such as the learning units, to their environment, their age group, the curriculum, and the methodology of the center. In the Spanish case, the interactions go beyond a peer-to-peer scheme by using interactive groups.

The research contributes to bringing the voices of children and educators

to the study after participating in the KIDS4ALLL mediation activities. This perspective allowed the analysis to approach how to move from the global to the local, and vice versa, and permitted how to tighten the adjustment of the training according to the eight key skills for lifelong learning in the project and other curricula. Furthermore, the research findings may tighten the connection between pedagogy, culture, social skills, and language. It is possible that indirectly, the educators promote socialization processes, acting as debaters in a multicultural educational environment.

This chapter encompasses a theoretical framework on multicultural education, dialogic learning, and teachers' mediation roles. The methodology section delineates the two case studies from Israel and Spain, followed by an analysis of each case, focusing on school contexts, challenges, and the impact of peer interactions. The chapter concludes with a discussion of results, offering insights and concluding remarks.

1. State of the art in multicultural education

Numerous studies indicate that migrant or minority students frequently do not achieve comparable academic scores or success as the average student (Orfield, 2001; Gibson & Hidalgo, 2009).

This reality poses numerous challenges for children, their families, formal and informal educational settings, and the host society. Often, diversity is erroneously perceived as hindering educational quality due to the perceived underperformance of migrant students (Suárez-Orozco, 2015). In contrast, evidence supports the notion that school diversity enhances interactions and cognitive development, providing opportunities, academic progress, and conflict prevention for all students (Thomas, 2001). Additionally, cultural diversity fosters positive identification with role models within one's own culture (Clough, 2017).

Authors contend that the challenges posed by this new reality are exacerbated by the evolving social order, which increasingly emphasizes dialogue in social interactions (Aubert et al., 2008; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Scholars within the scientific community concur that learning and cognitive development are intricately linked to the dialogic nature of society (Bruner, 1996; Wells, 1999; Flecha, 2022). Consequently, traditional teaching models, wherein the teacher is the sole interlocutor with students, need reevaluation. In contrast to conventional models, which may involve a mixed group with a single adult reference or homogeneous grouping with

one adult reference, alternative models advocate for classroom organization that promotes interactions, such as the "buddy method". In dialogic learning, classrooms are organized heterogeneously with multiple adults (Flecha, 2014). Educational studies (Pianta et al., 2008; Eliyahu-Levi & Gantz-Misher, 2021) underscore the pivotal role educators play in relationships with children from minority groups, significantly impacting their motivation, self-confidence, and learning success.

Mediating cultural knowledge, social skills, and literacy, educators strive to connect personally, expressing empathy and attentive listening. Scholars like Berhanu (2006) and Sisneros (2008) claim that the mediation process in heterogeneous classrooms fosters the strengthening of cultural identities, promoting a sense of belonging and identification with the majority, as part of the process of forming a multicultural society that gives a sense of space.

At times, educational practices are rooted in learning conceptions lacking empirical basis, leading to adverse effects on educational outcomes (Dekker et al., 2012). Some scholars analyze the impact on classroom organization and interactions, highlighting the prevalence of the Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) structure in international educational settings (Hargreaves, 2002; Alexander, 2004; Mercer, 2000). This structure often positions students as passive recipients of academic knowledge, akin to Freire's concept of banking education (1970). Questions arise regarding the potential impact of this structure on learning and how incorporating students' knowledge foundations could enhance motivation and engagement (García-Carrión, 2016).

Certain factors such as interaction and dialogue are revealed as key factors in learning trajectories and human development. Vygotsky (1978) emphasizes that higher mental functions are inherently social, intimately tied to societal contexts and language as a transformative tool. He adds that the heterogeneity of students who come from diverse social contexts can contribute to the development of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). In similar view, Mercer and Dawes (2014) points out that language is a vehicle for collective thinking. From an intersubjective standpoint, Bruner advocates for classrooms to become small communities where students collaborate, where students help each other and the teacher is no longer the only reference adult, challenging the traditional sole-teacher reference paradigm (Bruner, 1996).

Competitive learning contexts correlate to essential and negative thoughts. They impact students' well-being, academic performance, and the quality of their social relationships (Valls et al., 2022). Educational

spaces that encourage mutual aid contribute positively to learning and social cohesion. The results of the experiment designed and implemented by Tomasello, from psychology and neuroscience at Duke University, underscores the early emergence of cooperative attitudes in childhood, suggesting that such qualities define our humanity (Tomasello, 2009).

The scientific literature scrutinizes interactions' impact on cognitive development (Bruner, 1988; Rogoff, 1990; Hutchins, 1995; Mercer, 1995; Flecha, 1997; Wells, 2001). Scholars like Alexander (2001, 2008) explore ways to manage learning to maximize the potential of dialogue. Wells (1999) proposes Communities of Dialogical Inquiry to promote question-answer chains, while Valls and Kyriakides emphasize that coordinated interactions yield superior results (2013). Mercer (2017, 2000) stresses language as an instrument for interaction and collective thinking (points out that not all forms of communication between teachers and students have the same capacity to develop collective thinking), underscoring the need for certain conditions in interactions.

Firstly, the interaction must allow for exploratory speech where a critical and constructive dialogue occurs. This involves providing arguments and reaching agreements. This exploratory speech should reflect higher mental processes (Hargreaves, Moyles, Merry, Paterson, Pell & Esarte-Sarries, 2003) where children explain, ask, reason, and argue their agreement/disagreement. Mercer also proposes egalitarian dialogue based on claims of validity where everyone speaks and listens, the need to accelerate instrumental learning from solidarity and not competitiveness, and finally that learning makes sense because this generates motivation and involvement (Mercer, 2000).

Peer relationships play a fundamental role in learning and emotional well-being, sometimes surpassing the impact of family socio-economic status (Haanpää et al., 2019; Bierman et al., 2009). Positive relationships correlate with higher academic achievement and enhanced social skills (Bierman et al., 2009). Creating conditions that encourage positive peer interactions, such as claims of validity and small heterogeneous groupings, increases the possibilities for children to have positive peer interactions. As Khalfaoui et al. points out and referring to the interactive groups analyzed for the Spanish case, the help and solidarity interaction frequently emerge when children are working in Interactive Groups (2020, p. 2).

García-Carrion (2016) highlights the need to promote dialogue among the peer group as a basic tool for cognitive development. However, this must be an egalitarian dialogue, and the quality of these dialogues must be

guaranteed (2016). Equal dialogue allows them a much fairer and more equitable participation than in other traditional classroom formats (Howe & Abedin, 2013; Mercer & Littleton, 2007; Nystran, 2006; Resnick, Asterhan & Clarke, 2015). This is especially relevant for migrant students or certain cultural minorities due to the social and educational inequalities that they frequently have to face (Vandekerchove and Aarssen, 2019). In an interactive learning context, for these to be successful (promote empathy, solidarity, friendship, etc.), various authors point out the importance of a prior agreement between the participants of the rules that regulate interactions (Khalfaoui et al. 2020; Duque, Carbonell, de Botton, & Roca-Campos, 2021).

In conclusion, collaborative interactions among students enable the attainment of goals not achievable individually. However, the impact of interactions on cognitive development and emotional well-being varies. Organizing into small heterogeneous groups, providing support in interactions, and ensuring egalitarian and high-quality dialogue fosters an inclusive learning environment.

2. Methodology

The research is qualitative-interpretive and was conducted using a case study method, which allows mediation activities for learning the learning units written as part of the project to develop lifelong learning competencies through the buddy approach expressed in the KIDS4ALLL project. This section delves into its specific application of two partner countries, the Spanish and Israeli contexts analyzed.

We employed a case study and a qualitative methodology with a communicative orientation for Spanish and Israeli cases to foster an egalitarian and intersubjective dialogue between researchers and end-users (Gómez et al., 2011; Puigvert et al., 2012). This methodological approach has proven effective in capturing end-users' voices, particularly those from culturally diverse groups (Gómez et al., 2019).

The KIDS4ALLL project is based on the Learning Communities project, an internationally recognized transformation project based on dialogic learning and implementing Successful Educational Actions (SEAs) identified by the Included project (FP6). These SEAs have an enormous impact on improving kids' and families' lives. More than 1,000 educational centers developed this project, obtaining similar results (Gatt, Ojala, & Soler,

2011). Through this case study, it is possible to generalize from the local to the global and examine processes, actions, and behaviors in the studied case (Creswell et al., 2018; Yin, 2009).

3. Spanish case

In the Spanish scenario, our focus was on two primary public schools, both designated as Learning Communities (Gatt, Oajala, & Soler, 2011): Cascavell Primary Public School in Sant Adriá del Besos and Camí del Cros Primary Public School in Mataró, both situated in the province of Barcelona (Catalonia-Spain). Both institutions are located in neighborhoods characterized by high multiculturalism stemming from substantial immigration rates and concurrent social vulnerability, evidenced by elevated unemployment, participation in the informal economy, and dependency on social aid.

The ethnographies were conducted in schools situated in neighborhoods marked by pronounced multiculturalism resulting from substantial immigration rates, as per 2022 data: 22% in the Cerdanyola neighborhood (Mataró), and 22.3% in Besós-La Mina (Sant Adriá del Besos) (IDESCAT, n.d.). These areas also exhibit social vulnerability, evident in high unemployment, participation in the informal economy, and dependency on social aid rates. The student population observed mirrors this diversity. At Cascavell School in Besós-La Mina (Sant Adriá del Besos), students of Roma, Maghreb, Chinese, Pakistani, and Latin American origin constitute the majority, while non-immigrant white-Caucasian students form the minority. At Camí del Cros School in Cerdanyola (Mataró), half of the class comprises students from Maghreb, China, Pakistan, Latin American countries, while the other half represents the local ethnic majority. These students belong to families engaged in economic migration, having come to Spain to settle, work, and build their lives. Real estate dynamics lead to segregation, concentrating this immigration in working-class and socially vulnerable neighborhoods.

The data was collected through a series of techniques of observations and interviews between November 2022, to June 2023, focusing on ISCED 1 (Elementary school), and on 10-12 years old).

The three educational institutions were chosen to receive a general and comprehensive observation. In Cascavell Primary Public School, 4 observations were conducted in two groups of the 5th and 6th grade during the implementation of two successful educational action (SEA) like Interactive

Group and Dialogic Literary Gathering lessons, aligning with Personal, Social, Learning to Learn, and Literacy competences from KIDS4ALLL learning units. Also we engaged in a Discussion Group with 3 teachers.

Regarding Camí del Cros Primary Public School, we undertook 6 observations in two groups of the 5th grade during the implementation of two successful educational actions like Interactive Group, Dialogic Literary Gathering, and Dialogic Model of Conflict Resolution lessons, corresponding to Personal, Social, Learning to Learn, and Literacy competences. Also we conducted a Discussion Group with 4 teachers.

This meticulous approach, spanning various techniques and contexts, enables a comprehensive understanding of the educational landscape in the Spanish cases under investigation.

4. Israel case

The Israel educational settings participated in the pilot phase of the project KIDS4ALLL. Therefore, they must teach the Multilingualism and Literacy competencies for eight months. The data was collected through techniques of observations and interviews between November 2022 and June 2023, focusing on ISCED 2 and 3 (educational settings: two formal and one informal).

The Israel educational settings participated in the pilot phase of the project KIDS4ALLL. Therefore, they were required to teach the multicultural and literacy competencies for eight months. The three educational institutions were chosen to receive a general and comprehensive observation.

In "Ha-Galilee" Community Elementary School, Tel Aviv, the project KIDS4ALLL was performed. The school's population is diverse; many students are Jewish immigrants, children of refugee families, foreign workers, and more. The school administration and the teaching staff work to create bridges of culture while enhancing the literacy skills of the children and the families. The school staff works with professionalism and human warmth to strengthen and enrich the abilities of each student. The teachers have a high level of openness and trust, the ability to deal with conflicts, and an open atmosphere of cooperation, tolerance, and inclusion. All teachers have a teaching license and have five years or more of experience. One teacher has a master's degree in humanities. The school principal is involved in all activities. The teachers show cooperation and teach in the pilot classes.

In the "Hakfar Hayarok" Youth Village, Ramat Hasharon, all teachers

have a teaching license and have eight years or more of experience. They have over five years of experience teaching Hebrew as an additional language. All teachers have a master's degree in education. The school's management team and the pedagogical advisor are involved. The teachers show cooperation and teach in the pilot classes. "Hakfar Hayarok" Youth Village is an ethnically, religiously, and multiculturally diverse youth village numbering 2,500 children. Therefore, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim children, children born in Israel and immigrants, religious and secular children, and children from Arab societies meet for joint studies out of tolerance, inclusion, and partnership. The school promotes academic, social, and moral excellence. That is why they study core subjects, modern high-tech studies, and practical experience in various fields such as sustainability, agriculture, and more to strengthen the students' abilities, commitment, and responsibility to society, the country, and the world. The school is also a boarding school for students who immigrate to Israel before their parents and integrate as citizens.

At the Kadima "Kasirer" Shapira Youth Center, the tutors are volunteers at the youth center. They are after age 18, finished high school, and before military service. The manager and the pedagogical consultant have appropriate academic training and a bachelor's degree. The Youth Center was founded in 1999 and is in the heart of south Tel Aviv. It is in Israel's social and geographic periphery. The Youth Center is an informal, warm, supportive, and enriching educational framework for teenagers in grades 7-12, who come every day after school ends until late in the evening. The Youth Center provides a daily response – continuous and permanent, to promote equal opportunities and ensure that the graduates of the Youth Center will be able to integrate into Israeli society.

Observations were done in each educational setting: four observations were conducted in groups of 5-6th graders at 'Ha-Galilee' Community Elementary School, Tel Aviv. This formal educational learning context tests Digital and Citizenship competencies in an ISCED 2 group of over 20 students. Regarding 'Hakfar Hayarok' Youth Village, Ramat Hasharon, four observations were conducted in groups of 9-10th graders. It is a formal educational learning context that tests Digital and Citizenship competencies in an ISCED 3 group of over 20 students. Four observations were conducted in the Kadima "Kasirer" Shapira Youth Center in groups of 9-11th graders. This is a non-formal educational learning context, testing Digital and Citizenship competencies in an ISCED 2 group of over 20 students.

In both cases, the names of participants are all anonymous to protect

personal data. It is important to highlight that the objective of the chapter is to identify the obstacles to improve them and to identify the elements that are favoring interactions in multicultural contexts with the purpose of identifying the transferability of these aspects.

5. Case study analysis

Israel

From an Israeli perspective, the analysis of the research findings reveals the pedagogical actions in the KISD4ALLL learning space where the children experienced cooperative, autonomous, and dialogic learning. The three main themes extracted from the data are (1) pedagogical mediation for autonomous collaborative learning, (2) mediation of social and cultural knowledge, and (3) mediating dialogical competence.

Pedagogical mediation for autonomous collaborative learning

The teachers and students that shared with us that participating in KIDS4ALLL gave them an experience of an autonomous, different, new, unfamiliar learning space. This space is essentially different from the traditional face-to-face teaching in the classrooms because the students determine the learning style and pace and are required to take personal responsibility. The teachers testify to the deepening of personal responsibility and increasing the motivation of the students:

> *Theoretically, dividing into pairs and autonomous collaborative learning is amazing, but it is very complex in practice. The children don't always want to work with each other, think, and try, so I had to direct their hearts first. The children are used to studying in a plenary session where I teach most of the time, so I had to mediate the idea of Buddies and self-learning for them. This was the first time that the students were really required to take responsibility for their learning. They had a choice to sit down to learn to read and progress or to do nothing and give up.* (E. Elementary school teacher)

> *At first, the children were stressed; some did not try and call me every moment, but I explained, encouraged, and mediated the task. Autonomy*

is freedom, and it can harm or increase curiosity and promote learning skills that are also important for the children's future. (A. High School teacher)

Teacher E. testifies that traditionality characterizes the learning routine in the classroom, whose primary purpose is acquiring and enriching knowledge. There is a gap between the theoretical aspect of autonomous collaborative learning and its practical application in education. Theoretically, she agrees that the changing reality requires a different way of teaching that includes self-management and personal responsibility for learning, curiosity, initiative, creativity, and teamwork. From a critical point of view, her words, "I had to direct their hearts first", testify that she did not dare to change, innovate, and manage learning that provides a relevant attitude to the unique and changing needs and allows them to take responsibility for their thoughts, feelings, and their learning process. Teacher E. may prefer to teach traditionally because she does not have the appropriate pedagogical skills and knowledge or because her teaching materials are not adapted to collaborative learning. The learning units of KISD4ALLL were an excellent opportunity to experience because they were organized, structured, suitable for students, and varied. Studies (Mynard & Stevenson, 2017; Benson, 2011; Wagner, 2008) prove that learner autonomy is active learning and develops the learner's ability to take responsibility for learning. An autonomous learner will make informed choices that require a high level of awareness and control of learning processes, achieved through reflective processes through which students acquire the skills necessary to become lifelong learners.

Teacher A. reveals that collaborative-autonomous learning could not have been implemented without support, encouragement, and mediation: "At first, the children were stressed; some did not try and call me every moment, but I explained, encouraged, and mediated the task". Mediation encourages the students, strengthens their sense of ability, and enables a gradual adaptation process to work with buddy. Pruitt-Britton (Pruitt-Britton et al., 2022) points out that the basis of collaborative learning is cultivating a protected learning environment in which the learner feels welcomed, valued, and empowered. This is directly related to the educator's encouragement, mediation, and support and includes asking questions, proposing solutions, producing a product and self-feedback, and giving explanations, recommendations, and reminders. Bandura (1995) described the relationship between the perception of self-efficacy and expectations

for results that express the perception of the future. According to him, people who believe they can be partners in creating the changes they desire see the continuity between their actions and the results in the future. Therefore, they have a more substantial commitment to shaping their future. The higher the self-efficacy, the more positive the perception of the future (Shell & Husman, 2001).

The children's reports also found evidence of the initial experience in autonomous cooperative learning:

> *We played to get to know each other, there was noise and a mess we walked around the class, there were notes everywhere, we wrote and talked a lot about ourselves, and it was new. I liked the lessons of the KIDS because I worked with my friend, we laughed and looked for information that did not belong to the lesson. We learned from ourselves and not from a textbook. In the answers to the questions, we could decide together what was right and what didn't suit us, and we argued loudly, and the teacher didn't get angry so that it would be quiet.* (M. student, elementary school)

> *When we learned about migration, Mom helped me write about escaping from Eritrea. How did they come to Israel because of the difficulties without knowing Hebrew, in search of work they left their grandmother. When we wrote the postcard, we suddenly learned from my story and now I can say that it moved me and I remember everything.* (J. Elementary school student)

It seems that the implementation of autonomous collaborative learning is considered complex and sometimes leads to disorder and dissatisfaction because of the difficulties of adaptation. For collaborative learning and knowledge building to be successful, supporting and strengthening the students' abilities and learning skills is necessary: "We learned from ourselves and not from a textbook". According to Bereiter & Scardamalia (2014), collaborative learning requires teachers to devote much effort and encourage the students to have levels of responsibility and build knowledge using technology that can help with the many possibilities for representing and communicating digital content beyond asynchronous written communication.

Moreover, the personal-emotional dialogue between the colleagues, expressed in the quote, "We wrote and talked a lot about ourselves, and it was new", created a safe and tolerant environment that allowed him to share in the family trip to Israel the difficulties and personal messages he suffered

at home. The repeated use of "I" or "we" emphasizes the responsibility and actions in the learning process and establishes friendship and trust between peers. This linguistic choice of the children may reflect the change that they are now at the center of the learning process, the subjects of the learning units are closely related to their history and heritage, to the fact that home experiences are now part of the class lesson and not reflected in the joint products.

The education system expects teachers to bear the educational responsibility while achieving equality and providing the students with the academic and personal-emotional knowledge necessary to function in society. However, the findings prove that the teachers in Israel are required to face the challenge of promoting the ability to learn in a culturally, socially, and religiously diverse classroom. The reason may be that the classrooms in Israel are large, crowded, and diverse, and the teachers cannot recognize each student's uniqueness, adjust the teaching materials, and introduce the home culture in the class. Studies (Candyce et al., 2013; Meunier, 2020; Vandermaas-Peeler et al., 2021) indicate that positive experiences in which there is also room for personal and creative expression improve self-understanding regarding their abilities and skills, strengthen the sense of belonging to the institution. Education and student involvement catalyze personal growth to dare to succeed.

Mediation of social and cultural knowledge

Buddy's approach presented a social and cultural pedagogical challenge, mediating controversial socio-cultural issues.

> *The learning units were on topics not part of the Ministry of Education curriculum. They provoked dialogue and discussion on emotional and taboo issues: diversity, migration, integration, racism, exclusion, or politics. Usually, teachers avoid engaging in them, even though the school is the proper arena to expose the students to controversial issues. KIDS was an excellent opportunity for me to examine the class's diversity and mediate socio-cultural issues. I felt that I was trying to connect two worlds: the personal, which is emotional, and the collective, which is democratic and humanistic, while listening to authentic voices and respectful interpretation of the children.* (L. elementary school teacher).

L. reveals difficulty in having an open dialogue on complex issues from a socio-cultural or political point of view. Teachers avoid discussions of controversial issues or political-national tensions and conflicts despite their many contributions out of ignorance, low self-efficacy, lack of knowledge on the subject, little support from the school, fear of offending one of the students, or embarrassment. In Israel, the messages from the Ministry of Education often contradict the research consensus regarding optimal pedagogy in maintaining the educational discourse on controversial issues; we are raising a generation that prefers to reduce their political participation and civic involvement (Erlich-Ron & Gindi, 2015). Moreover, L. testifies that it is necessary to mediate the new knowledge to the students, to connect the different worlds that the students encounter: the home, the school, the neighborhood, the community, and the Israeli society. She enabled a respectful and equal dialogue while also emphasizing personal skills such as self-awareness, listening, empathy, and the cultivation of democratic values.

The KIDS4ALLL units allowed teachers to expose students from minority groups of migrants and asylum seekers to issues of universal importance while recognizing the cultural richness and creating interest and curiosity to learn about what is happening in other cultures. Enriching knowledge through dialogue and discussions on socio-cultural issues is a means of learning that enables the exploration of a subject from a variety of points of view, developing skills such as listening, presenting opinions, conveying messages, using works and logical arguments – all of these will allow them in the future to make effective adjustments in the way they interpret a situation, reacting to it or acting on it. It is further argued that educational settings that manage dialogue and discussion on sensitive or controversial issues allow their students to deal with complex social reality in an enabling space under the guidance of a responsible adult and strengthen education for democracy, tolerance, and awareness of differences.

Researchers claim (Abu Asaba, 2015; Hess & McAvoy, 2014; Eliyahu-Levi & Ganz-Meishar, 2021; Sisneros, 2008; Zembylas, 2011) that the school is considered a multicultural meeting place that invites a meeting with the others. One of the educator's primary roles is to present the home culture and allow the exposure of personal feelings to cultivate attitudes of tolerance while overcoming the emotions of threat and fear from members of other cultures and reducing stereotypes, expressions of hatred, and racism towards others.

From the children's learning outcomes, learning about the importance of the benefits of social and cultural mediation through the buddy approach is possible. They shared personal knowledge, family stories, and the accepted home tradition. They expressed a significant process of tolerance, empathy, and respect for others in words and pictures. The children wrote in one of the "multiculturalism" products: "It is recommended to think twice before we respond to someone". They may have already met in other learning events related to socio-cultural values. However, producing personal insight into a joint learning product with a friend from another culture is more significant because it was created from cooperative learning, personal interest, and curiosity.

Two high school students shared in an interview about learning about personal and emotional issues considered social taboos, for example, the social and cultural place of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. D. said:

> "*This is the first time we have studied together and authentically about the issue of refugees. Most teachers in most classes avoid touching the subject. It is important to have more meetings, and we will also be more active*". J. added: *I would like to go deeper into the subject to be more socially active in my community. I can take responsibility, help, and influence the younger generation.*

The education system is required to develop a higher capacity for intercultural competence and strengthen capacities of human social and cultural sensitivity in teaching in schools. Studies (Lee & Walsh, 2017; Lou & Noels, 2020; Rivera, Lynch, Li & Obamehinti, 2016; McAuliffe & Khadria, 2020) teach that high cultural competence is required to help immigrant students integrate into schools and learn equitably and fairly. On the part of the partners, through the accessibility of the language, the creation of mediating actions, and the assistance of social activists, the provision of a social and cultural response by leaders among the immigrant community, mental support, and more. At the same time, about adapted pedagogy, the culture of experience and learning in the buddy approach emphasized the importance of creating a safe, open, and collaborative space for learning and producing content and insights in a personal, real, and authentic context.

Mediation of dialogic competence

The education teams shared in the interviews that dialogic competence is a significant component of learning within the KIDS4ALLL project and the buddy approach to teaching at school. This is what volunteer C. shared with us:

> *At the beginning of the project, it took a lot of work for the students to understand the assignment, what to do with the joint sitting, the content of the texts, and how they were required to talk to each other and listen. And I need support and meditation while considering their literate and cultural background. For an effective dialogue to be possible, I had to create pairs with a common denominator between them, feel each other, and recognize each one's contribution. This is a developing, dynamic process that continues throughout the year. Not all buddies could create effective dialogues, and there were many difficulties.* (C. volunteer at the youth center)

The volunteer said, "At the beginning of the project, it was difficult for the students...". His words reflected the ways of teaching-learning at school that reinforce the traditional discourse when the teacher leads the discussion, and the children answer with concise answers. The school discourse is focused on the teacher and the strong students with dialogic literacy skills. The meeting within the framework of informal education overwhelmed the difficulty, and the volunteer understood that the schools refrain from promoting the ability of the student to strengthen dialogic competence, which is absent in the lessons.

The teacher, T., emphasized that the buddy teaching approach required her to change the teaching methods. She recognizes the importance of having a meaningful dialogue and creating an adapted study environment to express different opinions and discover abilities of listening and producing common messages:

> *I was not required to ask questions about content knowledge. I learned about myself by listening to them a lot. I was tolerant, giving time to answer and conducting an organized discussion when all voices were heard. The children appreciated me because they saw that I was helping, supporting, and trying so that they would be able to talk and produce a joint product.* (T. elementary school teacher)

The teacher's words, "*I was not required to ask questions about content knowledge*". highlight the differences between traditional teaching, which focuses on transferring knowledge from the teacher's knowledge, and the teaching approach buddy stands out. There is a gap between the teaching theory and the practical teaching in the class. Teachers believe dialogic competence in the lessons is essential, especially in culturally and socially heterogeneous classroom teaching. However, the teachers must have the skills to promote a learning environment centered on dialogue, expression of opinion, and listening. She testifies that she needed a change in her teaching methods to help the children formulate the content, choose the words, deal with conflicts, and write the messages while showing tolerance and respect for each other.

The buddy teaching approach challenged the teachers to formulate new pedagogical actions they were not used to before. Promoting dialogic competence is based on explicit teaching processes in broad contexts. It requires the teacher to be significantly more present than others in the dialogue between the children. Teachers are required to be aware of the challenges of having a dialogue with conflict or tension on social and cultural backgrounds and to examine adapted pedagogical actions to create common issues, a solid basis for having a meaningful dialogue and producing an educational product (Dignath & Veenman, 2021; Paul-Binyamin & Haj-Yehia, 2019).

6. Spain

The two themes extracted from the observations are (1) the management of cultural diversity in class, and (2) the impact of peer and dialogic interaction on the learning process.

Challenges: Organization and management of the cultural diversity in class

These schools encounter challenges related to receiving recently arrived foreign students unfamiliar with both Spanish and Catalan. During the initial weeks or months, comprehending class instructions and content proves challenging for them, potentially leading to feelings of exclusion. The challenge is retaining them in regular classes for language acquisition without additional resources, as opposed to segregating them into immigrant-wel-

coming classes, where local language learning is slow, and the risk of labeling is high. Similar challenges extend to the parents and relatives of students, who often lack familiarity with the language and the institution. They attend meetings where the school delivers information without understanding it or keeping track of the meeting. Another challenge involves managing cultural and religious diversity, addressing how children face or react to these different realities and worldviews, aiming to prevent xenophobic and racist attitudes. The overarching challenge is transforming this diversity, often perceived as a problem and a source of conflict (Campdepadros et al., 2020), into an asset for students' learning processes and for the school.

To address these challenges, schools implement successful educational actions (Flecha, 2015) such as interactive groups, dialogic literary gatherings, and a dialogic model of conflict resolution, where dialogic learning plays a pivotal role within the framework of a Learning Community project (Gatt et al., 2011).

Implementing interactive groups involves dividing 25 students into four groups of 5 to 6 students. Groups are heterogeneous in terms of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, abilities, and capacities. Each group is led by an adult responsible for facilitating collaboration, recalling students' groups to help each other, and solving assignments together, rather than resolving doubts individually. These interactive groups create welcoming spaces due to their diverse composition, encompassing various cultures, ethnicities, abilities, and capacities.

Organizing the classroom and students into interactive groups is a significant asset that makes a difference, in coexistence and academic achievement, compared to cooperative groups. We highlight the importance of having an adult volunteer who supervises and dynamizes each group. Cooperative groups without adult supervision tend to be more dispersed, may fail to finish assignments, or misunderstand the collaborative process. For example, copying assignments without understanding or engaging in dishonest practices.

At the dialogic literary gathering, corresponding to the learning unit "Books & Talks", students sit in a circle at the library, which is very appropriate for such a kind of arrangement. The teacher's role is to ensure each student has completed the assigned reading and task. This involves reading agreed chapters or pages, selecting a sentence, and reflecting on it. The teacher then takes turns allowing students to intervene, which leaves room for replies or comments from other students. The teacher can also pose questions to the class to initiate debates on specific questions or issues, such

as "What is a friend? What do you expect from a friend?". For example, a Pakistani student answers, "Sharing feelings and helping each other". Similarly, any student can launch a question or reflection, encouraging classmates to express their opinions or viewpoints. At Camí del Cros linking with some of the *Odyssey* readings a student said: "I want to pose a question to my classmates: What would you rather be poor but having family and friends, or being rich but being alone". Nearly all the class expresses that they would rather be poor and have a family because it provides happiness and love, company and comprehension, and because altogether united they can succeed. *Discussing the Odyssey*, many anecdotes come out about emigration, about having part of the family in Morocco, about the longing and sadness that this generates. The teacher moderates debates and dynamizes the gathering.

A dialogic literary gathering of a book spans as many sessions as the book has chapters or pages agreed upon by the teacher and students, using works of Universal Literature. The schools that participated in the KIDS4ALLL's pilot, during the observation's weeks, were reading Don Quixote, the *Odyssey*, and *Frankenstein*.

The didactics rely on a dialogical style of teaching. In addition to explaining, teachers engage in dialogues with students, contrasting arguments. Teachers encourage student participation both in the class and within interactive groups where they help each other. This involves systematically promoting the buddy system, peer-to-peer, and group working. Working in interactive groups not only includes the peer-to-peer or buddy method but goes beyond, because all the benefits and goodness of the dyadic interaction are not restricted to a pair of students but they occur between all the group's members. A clue for this to happen is the presence and intervention of a volunteer that supervises and dinamises each interactive group. His role is not to solve the problems or answer the questions, he must not have the knowledge or expertise about the matter, but he has to encourage students' participation, engagement in solving the exercise together, or helping each other. At the end of the session, there are often evaluative moments of the work done within the interactive group.

Thus, the class achieves two important goals:

– Accelerated learning by multiplying interactions focused on learning, which entails a notable contrast regarding a 25 or 30 students' classroom setting where an only teacher can attend to only one or two students at a time. At the interactive groups this capacity multiplies by four or five

because there is an adult-volunteer per group helping that no one left behind, but even more because each student or classmate can attend, solve or help another's classmate's doubts or questions. The adult support in each little group helps students to help each other, ensuring equal dialogue and respect between participants.

– Reduced conflict and improved coexistence. Since more students feel attended and supervised by adults, more conflicts are addressed promptly. Some of these adults are students' family (a father, mother, auntie, grandfather, cousin…) which enhances social control, because who tells them to behave properly is not someone that remains in the school but is someone that afterwards they meet at home or at the neighborhood, or that will tell automatically after class to their parents if they did not behaved properly. The chances to have dialogues and argumentation increase, so the chances to convince or influence children to behave properly, based on understanding arguments rather than mere fear of authority.

Most teaching is formal, aligning with planned class organization and functioning. The formal nature extends to interactive groups, their dynamization, and supervision by volunteers, even when a classmate explains to another. These interactions, moments, and interventions should not be considered informal but formal, responding to planned decisions by the faculty to implement successful educational actions.

Impact of peer interactions & dialogic interactions for the learning process and for the coexistence

In interactive groups, a shared leadership model is emphasized, even when a student speaks to explain what has been developed within the group. This representative or spokesperson is chosen or elected by all group members. The presentation of the activity is typically equally shared among group members. There is no aggressive comparison between buddies but rather an assertive one, treating all students equally and with high respect. High expectations are set for all students, with a belief in each one's ability to complete exercises successfully. Dynamics and functioning aim to achieve the engagement and involvement of all students. When groups share results in interactive group sessions, support from other groups is common. If a group encounters difficulties, others attempt to help with advice or suggestions, explaining how they resolved similar issues.

A teacher from Camí del Cros shared insights with us, highlighting a case where a student arrived just a year ago. However, the noteworthy approach of integrating her into interactive groups from the outset, rather than opting for segregation in "welcoming classrooms", has proven remarkably effective. Within a mere year, she has not only grasped the intricacies of Catalan but has also progressed to the point of near fluency.

The key for these outstanding academic achievements is on the promotion of peer interactions oriented to learning. This fosters the support, advice and help that students give to each other, and it applies both to interactive groups and to dialogic literary gatherings. At DLG we also observed students helping each other when someone encounters difficulties or lacks the precise words. For example, at Camí del Cros School, a Moroccan boy, newly arrived in Spain that year, faced considerable difficulty in expressing himself in Catalan. Undeterred, he diligently prepared his speech, delivering it with evident effort. The noteworthy aspect of this scenario lies in the supportive atmosphere; not a single person laughed. Importantly, a fellow student seated beside him, also of Moroccan origin but born in Spain and proficient in both languages, stepped in to assist him in making his intervention. This instance underscores the inclusive dynamics fostered within the school community, promoting collaboration and support among students with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

During dialogic literary gatherings, half of the class participates regularly and frequently, maintaining a respectful atmosphere with minimal interruptions. Occasionally, a student launches reflections and questions to the class. For instance, during *Ulysses* reading a student-initiated debates on topics such as the feasibility of remaining three days on the water without sustenance or choosing between being poor with family and friends or rich but alone. These discussions extend to readings such as *Frankenstein* sparking debates on friendship and ethical considerations. The teacher contributes by exploring emotions associated with migration or the loss of a relative.

Within interactive groups and dialogic literary gatherings, equal importance is given to academic achievement and values. Each individual in the group must complete exercises, emphasizing the significance of students helping each other to understand and undertake tasks, fostering values such as solidarity during assignment completion. Thus they work and assimilate values as solidarity while doing the assignment and solving exercises.

Teachers may refer to cultural or geographical features and identities if relevant for educational purposes. When working on and debating about

cultural differences, students may be asked to explain certain features of their cultures. An illustrative instance during the *Frankenstein* dialogic literary gathering at Cascavell school involved the emergence of the topic of death. The teacher, recognizing its cultural significance, sought active participation, particularly from students belonging to the Roma culture, who hold profound sentiments on the matter. Engaging María and José directly, the teacher inquired, "For example, for Roma, death is a very important and deeply felt issue. María, José, what do you think about death, how do you live it?". José, providing valuable insights, shared with the class the profound pain experienced upon the loss of a family member. He elucidated on the customs and traditions observed by his family during such moments, offering a window into the Roma cultural perspective on death. This exchange not only enriched the discussion with diverse viewpoints but also fostered a deeper understanding of the cultural nuances surrounding this profound aspect of human existence. This is approached positively to raise awareness, foster understanding of each other's cultures and traditions, and increase respect and acceptance.

The teacher subsequently broaches the subject of migration, encouraging students with immigrant backgrounds to contribute their insights and experiences. A student of immigrant origin expressed, "The journey is melancholic because you leave your country and arrive in a place, you're unfamiliar with". In contrast, another student from Pakistan conveyed a positive sentiment, stating, "I like the journey because you explore a new place, which is beautiful". Subsequently, a Spanish Roma student resonated with these sentiments, sharing, "When I left home, I felt a sense of unfamiliarity because I didn't know anyone, and I had to forge new connections. It was a poignant experience, leaving behind my friends here".

This serves as a highly illustrative and recurrent example of the transformative interactions occurring within a dialogic literary gathering, transcending social exclusions and barriers. Despite the Roma student not being classified as an immigrant, he identifies closely with the narrative and acknowledges experiencing very similar feelings and situations as his immigrant classmates.

At the other school Camí del Cros similar reflections linked to the migration journey arise while debating the *Odyssey*. Among the Moroccan students there are many anecdotes about migration, about having part of the family in Morocco, about the longing and sadness that this generates.

7. Discussion

Commonalities and distinctions between the Israeli and the Spanish cases

In this section, we will underscore both the commonalities and distinctions between the two pilots outlined and examined in the preceding sections – namely, the Israeli and Spanish cases. We will commence by examining the shared features and subsequently delving into the points of divergence.

Commonalities

Concerning mediation for autonomous collaborative learning, a parallel can be drawn in the Israeli context where teachers extend support, encouragement, and mediation to facilitate collaborative and independent student work. This closely mirrors the role of the adult overseeing and dynamizing interactive groups, promoting student assistance to each other rather than the resolution of individual queries. Each group is guided by an adult tasked with facilitating collaboration, rallying students to aid each other, and collectively addressing assignments, rather than tackling doubts in isolation.

Israeli and Spanish educators express a commitment to finding pedagogical alternatives out of the need to respond to students in a multi-diversity class appropriately. The educators were not surprised even when the meeting with KIDS4ALLL revealed doubts and questions about how the educator is required to assist and mediate the study units in a diverse class. The educators enabled autonomous, dialogic collaborative learning in which each peer could channel their enthusiasm, learn according to their own pace and needs, and simultaneously feel that they belonged to the whole class – all of this increased motivation and self-efficacy.

Due to the dialogic interactions in both cases, personal transformation occurs: in the Israeli school, the shift is evident in their newfound centrality within the learning process, the integration of home experiences into class lessons, rather than being confined to collective outcomes. In the Spanish school, a Roma student similarly transforms by sharing his migratory experience after listening to two immigrant testimonies.

The choice to establish connections among the diverse spheres with which students engage (such as home, school, neighborhood, community, and society at large) is a shared aspect in both educational experiences.

To foster an understanding of the diverse cultures within the classroom,

encompassing both native and migrant cultures, presenting them as valuable assets and opportunities for the learning process. This can be achieved by enriching knowledge through dialogue and discussions focused on sociocultural issues. The students showed a higher motivation for learning when they were required to study topics relevant to their lives that are usually not presented in the textbooks or teaching materials of the teachers.

Educational environments that facilitate dialogue and discussion on sensitive or contentious topics empower students to engage with the complexities of social reality. They were able to share and present topics that are socially taboo and avoid discussing them in classes, such as the topic of immigration to the destination country.

In both instances, the teacher introduces cultural elements, such as grief, migration, and friendship, while encouraging students to express their emotions. This approach fosters empathy, a deeper understanding of others, and promotes attitudes of tolerance, simultaneously diminishing emotions like fear and the sense of threat. Consequently, it contributes to the reduction of stereotypes, prejudices, and racism. This phenomenon is notably evident in the Spanish case, where immigrant students share their feelings of both sorrow and excitement related to migration. Native students, in turn, recognize similar emotions associated with internal trips, family experiences, or vacations. In the Israeli case, the emphasis is on the involvement of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, leading to a common learning product. This collaboration is particularly noteworthy as it stems from collaborative learning, personal interest, and curiosity. The students felt they were mentors for their buddy, establishing trust and their strengths. The feeling of mutual guarantee and friendship caused the children to develop a commitment and a desire to help each other. The emphasis on the individual and its importance to the whole led to more effective, accurate, and differentiated teaching. In this way, learning becomes meaningful, and the flexible learning spaces allow each pair of colleagues to find their place in the learning process.

The buddy approach in Israel emphasizes the significance of establishing a safe, open, and collaborative environment for learning and creating content and insights in a personal and authentic context. Throughout the process, the students' confidence in themselves, their abilities, and what they have to offer their buddies grew. The students learned to share personal stories, clarify positions, and maintain common thinking – all calmed the concerns and anxiety of the pedagogical change and made room for new, softer, and more observant positions. This bears a striking resemblance to

the dialogic approach implemented within the interactive groups and the dialogic literary gathering. These settings also serve as secure, open, and collaborative spaces where differences in gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, as well as skills and abilities, are not only respected but acknowledged as assets contributing to the learning process.

Dialogic competence is pivotal and shared in both the analyzed cases and experiences, encompassing the buddy approach and the successful educational actions within the learning community. The children in their teenage had to deal with disagreements, tensions, and a lack of communication that made collaborative learning difficult. The teachers were required to discover skills of guidance and instruction and not just traditional face-to-face teaching. It was also necessary to invest time and resources to succeed and activate the friends' approach and for the children to believe in it and its goals.

In both the Israeli and Spanish cases, a hallmark of the dialogic method was not merely offering answers but also possessing the ability to pose questions that prompted students' critical thinking and reflections.

Distinctions

One distinction is that, while autonomous collaborative learning was a recent introduction in Israeli schools, Spanish schools had already been implementing successful educational actions of collaborative learning, supervised by an adult, for 3-4 years.

A significant distinction lies in the fact that, in interactive groups and dialogic literary gatherings, not everything is solely entrusted to the students' hands and decisions. An adult, either a teacher or a volunteer, oversees the completion of tasks and exercises, primarily fostering and ensuring learning-oriented interactions among the students. This involves encouraging discussions about the exercises or the subject matter, promoting mutual assistance, thereby achieving not only high academic performance but also fostering values such as solidarity. In contrast, when there is a lack of such supervision and everything, including the learning style and pace, is exclusively left to the students' responsibility, the outcome is that they may sometimes fail to complete the work or collaborate, opting for individual efforts. It appears that not all aspects can be solely entrusted to the students' will; some form of guidance and supervision is essential to attain specific educational objectives.

In Israel, school officials, such as the management team and experts in pedagogy, were required to participate in the activity to assist teachers in classroom teaching. Most of the time, teachers feel uncomfortable when there is noise in the lessons, but in the project's lessons, there were some changes, and the children spoke, debated, and shared. It is indicated that there is a gap between the theory and its importance regarding cooperative learning and its practical application in classrooms when two friends who do not know each other are required to work together. The children were required to change their study habits, and the teachers were also required to be accompanied and supported by experts from the project.

In the Israeli educational system, certain emotional and taboo issues, including diversity, migration, integration, racism, exclusion, or politics, are topics that teachers tend to avoid discussing. In contrast, in the Spanish case, these subjects are commonly addressed during sessions on the dialogical model of conflict resolution. Therefore, when implementing KIDS4ALLL learning units and methods, it posed a novel and challenging experience in Israel, where these topics were less familiar and triggered several challenges. In Spanish schools, on the other hand, they were more accustomed to dealing with such content; for example, in one of the observations up to two sessions of the dialogic model of conflict resolution were devoted to discussing empathy, difference acceptance and solidarity.

A notable distinction lies in the familiarity with the dialogic method. While the method was common and well-known in the Spanish schools under analysis, it was a novelty in the Israeli ones. Consequently, significant effort was required in Israel for students to comprehend the method and assignments, whereas in the Spanish case, both teachers and students were already accustomed to it. In the observed Spanish classrooms, the dynamics were notably smooth, with students engaging in discussions about tasks and exercises at a voice volume that did not disrupt the rest of the class.

Another notable distinction lies in the emphasis placed on pairs in the Israeli case compared to the stress on interactive groups composed of 4 to 6 students in the Spanish case. As previously elucidated, within the interactive groups, the foundation of interactions is the buddy or peer-to-peer method. However, it is not confined to a specific and fixed pair of students but can occur among any of the potential pairs within a group of 4 to 6 students. For instance, with 5 students (A, B, C, D, E), interactions may occur between AB, AC, AD, AE, BC, BD, BE, and so forth, or even between a single student and the rest of the group.

Israeli teachers had to transition from their conventional role of deliver-

ing content, information, and answers to adopting the new dialogic approach, which involves posing questions to the students. In contrast, this characteristic was inherent in the already established Spanish dialogic approach, where teachers can present questions to the class to initiate debates on specific topics. Additionally, any student has the liberty to introduce a question or reflection to the class, thereby encouraging classmates to articulate their opinions or viewpoints and potentially sparking a debate.

Interactive groups distinguish themselves from cooperative groups. Cooperative groups without supervision often exhibit a higher likelihood of dispersion, failure to complete assignments, or a misunderstanding of the collaborative process.

The introduction of volunteers into the classroom, assigned to each interactive group, establishes a 1:5 adult-student ratio, which far from the traditional 1:30 adult-student ratio, and even contrasts with the 1:15 adult-student ratio that may occur when forming 30 students into 15 buddy pairs.

Conclusions

The scientific exploration of educational practices in Israel and Spain, as part of the KIDS4ALLL project, provides valuable insights into fostering social inclusion for migrant and minority students. The introduction establishes the broader societal challenges faced by multicultural communities, emphasizing the pivotal role of education in addressing issues of inequality, alienation, and disparities. The KIDS4ALLL project emerges as a proactive response, grounded in lifelong learning principles, aiming to create cohesive societies and equal opportunities for all.

The analysis of the Israeli perspective reveals transformative pedagogical actions, emphasizing autonomous collaborative learning, mediation of social and cultural knowledge, and the development of dialogic competence. The shift towards learner autonomy and the integration of socio-cultural topics within the curriculum mark significant strides, with teachers acting as crucial mediators in guiding students through this novel learning environment. The buddy teaching approach emerges as a catalyst for meaningful dialogue and underscores the importance of fostering lifelong learning skills.

Examining the Spanish context sheds light on schools grappling with cultural diversity and social vulnerability. Successful educational actions,

such as interactive groups and dialogic literary gatherings, stand out as effective strategies for managing challenges related to language barriers, social disparities, and fostering an inclusive learning environment. Peer interactions, shared leadership, and a positive approach to cultural differences supervised by either a teacher or a volunteer contribute to the development of a school community that embraces diversity, promotes understanding and achieves academic success for all the students.

In dissecting the educational practices aimed at fostering social inclusion for migrant and minority students in Israel and Spain, a nuanced understanding of both commonalities and distinctions emerges. The shared features across both cases reveal the centrality of mediation for autonomous collaborative learning, underlining the role of educators in providing support and encouragement for collaborative and independent student work. The dialogic interactions in both settings lead to profound personal transformations, illustrating the integration of home experiences into the learning process.

Also, collaborative learning requires the teachers to devote a lot of effort and be a facilitator and guide. They should encourage students to accept levels of responsibility and build knowledge not through a page and a notebook but by using technology. The students learn to maintain an emotional personal dialogue, to talk about themselves, to show tolerance, and to listen. Establishing connections among diverse spheres, fostering an understanding of different cultures, and creating open and collaborative environments are shared aspirations in both educational contexts.

The parallel emphasis on dialogic competence in the Israeli and Spanish cases highlights a pivotal aspect – educators not only provide answers but also pose questions that stimulate critical thinking and reflections among students. This approach transcends mere knowledge transfer, fostering a deeper engagement with the subject matter. The collaborative spaces, whether through the buddy approach in Israel or the interactive and dialogic approach in Spain, serve as secure environments where differences are not only respected but acknowledged as assets contributing to the learning process.

However, distinctions surface as well, offering valuable insights into the unique challenges and strategies in each educational setting. Notably, the temporal aspect stands out, with autonomous collaborative learning being a recent introduction in Israeli schools compared to the already established successful educational actions in the analyzed Spanish schools which implement the learning communities project. The role of supervision is

another distinguishing factor – Spanish schools involve adult oversight to ensure learning-oriented interactions and promote values such as solidarity, while Israeli schools exhibit a greater reliance on individual responsibility, sometimes leading to challenges in completing collaborative work.

Cultural sensitivity and the willingness to address emotional and taboo issues also differ, with Israeli teachers tending to avoid certain topics that are openly discussed in Spanish schools. The familiarity with the dialogic method varies, requiring significant effort for comprehension in Israeli schools but being a familiar and smooth dynamic in Spanish classrooms. The emphasis on pairs in Israel, as opposed to stress on interactive groups in Spain, showcases diverse approaches to collaborative learning. The introduction of volunteers further distinguishes the two contexts, significantly altering the adult-student ratio.

In essence, this comparative exploration unravels the intricacies of educational practices, offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers. By recognizing both the shared principles and distinct challenges, stakeholders can tailor interventions that address the unique needs of migrant and minority students, fostering not only academic growth but also social integration and understanding in multicultural educational environments.

In conclusion, this scientific article emphasizes that cooperative interactions between students and innovative pedagogical approaches serve as a bridge to achieve educational goals that may be unattainable through individual efforts. The KIDS4ALLL project, through its qualitative studies comparing educational institutions in different countries, provides a blueprint for creating inclusive learning environments, recognizing the variety of cultural backgrounds, and fostering a sense of belonging among immigrant and minority students. This comparative study helps to adjust the project's implementation in the future. With these insights disseminated, educators and policymakers can use these educational practices to promote academic achievement, social integration, and the well-being of students in multicultural societies.

References

Abu Asaba H. (2015). Arab education and multiculturalism. In H. Arar & E. Keinan (Eds.), *Identity, narrative, and multiculturalism in Arab education in Israel* (pp. 117-138). Pardes.

Alexander R.J. (2001). *Culture and pedagogy: International comparisons in primary education*. Blackwell.

Arasaratnam L.A. (2013). A review of articles on multiculturalism in 35 years of IJIR. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 37*(6), 676–685. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.09.006

Aubert A., Flecha A., Garcia C., Flecha R., & Racionero S. (2008). *Aprendizaje Dialógico en la Sociedad de la Información*. Hipatia.

Bandura A. (1995). On rectifying, conceptual ecumenism. In J. E. Maddux (Ed.), *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control* (pp. 347-375). Plenum.

Benson P. (2011). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning* (2nd ed.). Pearson.

Bereiter C., & Scardamalia M. (2014). Knowledge building and knowledge creation: One concept, two hills to climb. In *Knowledge creation in education* (pp. 35-52). Springer Singapore.

Bierman K., Torres M., Domitrovich C., Welsh J., & Scott D. (2009). Behavioral and cognitive readiness for school: Cross-domain association for children attending head start. *Social Development, 18*, 305-323.

Bruner J. (1996). *The culture of education*. Harvard University Press.

Campdepadrós-Cullell R., Molina-Roldán S., Ramis-Salas M., & de Botton L. (2020). The Vic Model: From school redistribution to xenophobic voting. *Political Geography, 83*, 102254. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102254

Candyce R., Stevens D.D., & West E (2013). 'I'm in a Professional School! Why Are You Making Me Do This?' A Cross-Disciplinary Study of the Use of Creative Classroom Projects on Student Learning. *College teaching*, *61*(2), 51-59.

Clough I. (2017). The informal faces of the (neo)ghetto: state confinement, formalization and Multidimensional informalities in Italy's Roma Camps. *International Sociology, 32*(4), 545-562.

Creswell J. W., Poth C. N., & Hall M. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (Fourth edition). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.

Dekker S., Lee N.C., Howard-Jones P., & Jolles J. (2012). Neuromyths in education: prevalence and predictors of misconceptions among teachers. *Frontiers in Psychology*.

Dignath C., & Veenman M.V. (2021). The role of direct strategy instruction and indirect activation of self-regulated learning – Evidence from classroom observation studies. *Educational Psychology Review, 33*(2), 489-533. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648- 020-09534-0

Duque E., Carbonell S., de Botton L., & Roca-Campos E. (2021). Creating Learning Environments Free of Violence in Special Education Through the Dialogic Model of Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts. *Frontiers in Psychology, 12*, 662831. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.662831

Eliyahu-Levi D., & Ganz-Meishar M. (2021). K (student): «I need to think about new ways to bring their home and culture into the class.» Preservice

Teachers Develop a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. *Pedagogy, Culture, and Society*. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2021.1933577

Eliyahu-Levi D. & Ganz-Meishar M. (2021). The human side of teaching authentic experiences shapes culturally relevant pedagogy. *Hem-daat, 14*, 1-24.

Erlich-Ron R., & Gindi S. (2015). Teachers' willingness to discuss controversial issues: Does the topic of the discussion have an effect? *Hem-daat, 15*, 1-27.

Flecha, R. (2015). *Successful Educational Actions for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-11176-6

Flecha R. (2022). *The Dialogic Society. The sociology scientists and citizens like and use*. Hipatia press. https://hipatiapress.com/index/en/2022/12/04/the-dialogic-society-2/

Flecha R., & Soler M. (2013). Turning difficulties into possibilities: engaging Roma families and students in school through dialogic learning. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 43*(4), 451-465.

Freire P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Penguin.

Gatt S., Ojala M., & Soler M. (2011). Promoting social inclusion counting with everyone: Learning Communities and INCLUD ED. *International Studies on Sociology of Education, 21*(1), 33-47. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/-10.1080/09620214.2011.543851

Gibson M.A., & Hidalgo N.D. (2009). Bridges to success in high school for migrant youth. *Teachers College Record, 111*(3), 683-711.

Gómez A., Puigvert L., & Flecha R. (2011). Critical Communicative Methodology: Informing Real Social Transformation through Research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 17*, 235-245.

Gómez A., Padrós M., Ríos O., Mara L.C., & Pukepuke T. (2019). Reaching Social Impact through Communicative Methodology. Researching With Rather Than on Vulnerable Populations: The Roma Case. *Frontiers in Education, 4*(9).

Haanpää L., Kuula M., & Hakovirta, M. (2019). Social relationships, child poverty and children's life satisfaction. *Social Science, 8*.

Hess D.E., & McAvoy P. (2014). *The Political Classroom: Evidence and Ethics in Democratic Education (1st ed.)*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/-9781315738871

Lee S. J., & Walsh D. (2017). Socially just, culturally sustaining pedagogy for diverse immigrant youth: Possibilities, challenges, and directions. In D. Paris & H. S. Alim (Eds.), *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world* (pp. 83-98). Teachers College Press.

Lincoln Y. S., Lynham S. A., & Guba E. G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences revisited. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., Chapter 6). Sage.

Lou N. M., & Noels K. A. (2020). Mindsets about language learning and support for immigrants' integration. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *79*, 46–57. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.08.003

McAuliffe M., & Khadria B. (2020). *World migration report 2020*. IOM UN MIGRATION, International Organization for Migration.

Menjívar C. (2006). Liminal Legality: Salvadoran and Guatemalan Immigrants' Lives in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology, 111*(4), 999-1037. https://doi.org/10.1086/499509

Merce N., & Dawes L. (2014). The study of talk between teachers and students, from the 1970s until the 2010s. *Oxford Review of Education, 40*(4).

Mercer N. (2000). *Words and minds: how we Use language to think together*. Routledge.

Mercer N., Hargreaves L., & García-Carrión R. (2016). *Aprendizaje e interacciones en el aula*. Hipatia Press.

Meunier B. (2020). Engaging Students and Academics in Creating a New Model for Research Libraries: A Reflective Case Study on the UCL Student Centre. *The New Review of Academic Librarianship, 26*(2-4), 261-274.

Mynard J. & Stevenson R. (2017). Promoting learner autonomy and self-directed learning: The evolution of a SALC curriculum. *Studies in Self-Access Learning Journal, 8*(2), 169-182.

Orfield G. (2001). *Schools more separate: consequences of a decade of resegregation*. The Civil right project, Harvard university.

Paul-Binyamin I., & Haj-Yehia K. (2019). Multicultural education in teacher education: Shared experience and awareness of power relations as a prerequisite for conflictual identities dialogue in Israel. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 85*, 249-259.

Pianta R.C., Belsky J., Vandergrift N., Houts R., & Morrison F.J. (2008). Classroom effects on children's achievement trajectories in elementary school. *American Educational Research Journal, 45*(2), 365-397.

Portes A., & Rumbaut R. (2001). *Legacies. The story of the immigrant second generation*. University of California Press.

Pruitt-Britton T., Wilhelm A. G., & Wilson J. (2022). Nurturing students through social interactions. *Phi Delta Kappan, 103*(5), 18-23.

Puigvert L., Christou M., & Holford J. (2012). Critical Communicative Methodology: Including vulnerable voices in research through dialogue. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 42*, 513-526.

Rivera H., Lynch J., Li J.-T., & Obamehinti F. (2016). Infusing sociocultural perspectives into capacity building activities to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers. *Canadian Psychology, 57*(4), 320-329.

Shell D. F., & Husman J. (2001). The multivariate dimensionality of personal control and future time perspective beliefs in achievement and self-regulation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 26*, 481-506.

Sisneros J. (2008). *Critical Multicultural Social Work*. Lyceum Books.

Suárez-Orozco M. (2015). Las tres caras de Herodes: Éxodo de Criaturas, migraciones catastróficas y vida en sombras. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research, 5*(1), 1-27.

Tomasello M. (2009). *Why we cooperate*. MIT press.

Thomas S. (2001). Dimensions of Secondary school effectiveness: comparative analyses across regions. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 12*, 285-322.

Valls R., & Kyriakides L. (2013). The power of interactive groups: how diversity of adults volunteering in classroom groups can promote inclusion and success for children of vulnerable minority ethnic population. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 43*(1), 17- 33.

Valls R., Serradell O., Campdepadrós R., & de Botton L. (2022). Qualitative Methodology Innovation That Promotes Educational Success of Children of Immigrant Families in Disadvantaged Contexts. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 21*. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221078735

Vandermaas-Peeler M., Choplin O., Doehler K., Sturgill A., Namaste N., & Buckmaster M. (2021). The 'Authentic' Me: New Understandings of Self and the World as a Result of Global Learning Experiences. *Teaching and Learning Inquiry, 9*(2), 1-18.

Vandekerchove A., & Aarssen J. (2019). High time to put the invisible children of vulnerable minority ethnic populations. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 43*, 17-33.

Vygotsky L. (1978). *Mind in society development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

Wagner T. (2008). *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need, and What We Can Do about It*. Basic Books.

Wells G. (1999). *Dialogic inquiry: towards a socio-cultural practice and theory of education*. Cambridge University Press.

Yin R.K. (2009). Case study research: design and methods. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Zembylas M. (2011). Toleration and coexistence in conflicting societies: some tensions and implications for education. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 19*(3), 385-402. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2011.600699.

VI.
Inclusion of migrant students through the actions of KIDS4ALLL.
Views of teachers and educators participating in the pilot phase[*]

Sotiris Petropoulos, Tanja Schroot, Martina Giorgi, Simona Rizzari

Introduction

Integration of minors through educational activities has been found at the core of many studies and projects. As participation in learning environments is the norm for most young people, focusing on methods and practices that can facilitate integration processes within the school environment offers significant benefits.

As UNESCO (2005, p. 12) highlights, children tend to respond positively to diversity and of being exposed to differences from others, understanding them as opportunities for enriching learning. Council of Europe recommendations (2018) in their own turn highlight the benefits of collaborative learning environments underpinned by a sharing resources principle towards enriching participants skills through interactions and mutual understanding of various perspectives and contexts. Similarly, among the 8 key directions of the World Economic Forum (WEF-report: Schools of the Future, 2020) on the future of schooling, problem-based and collaborative learning is included. In practice this should include project- and problem-based content delivery as well as the requirement of peer collaboration.

Sapon-Shevin et al. (2002) focused on cooperative learning and inclusion, citing the positive effects of the dimension of creativity within such approaches. Buddy system approaches was highlighted as a best practice in many cases across the world. Adams (2016) completed a thorough study

---

[*] This article is the result of the joint work of the authors. In particular, Sotiris Petropoulos wrote the first paragraph. Tanja Schroot wrote the second one. Martina Giorgi wrote the third. Simona Rizzari wrote the fourth and the fifth.

of the use of the buddy system in schools in Malaysia directed to enhancing the integration of children with special educational needs within the schooling environment and found a positive correlation. The same conclusion was reached by Boyle et al. (2012) when focusing on the addition of peer-support policies directed to teaching staff.

Likewise, research has proven the positive impact on social and academic achievements of students with disabilities through the implementation of buddy system approaches (Alqahtani, 2015). This is consistent with Cross & Walker-Knight's (1997) conclusion that children with disabilities must be not merely mainstreamed, but must be included educationally, physically, and socially in the educational environment and to that end a feeling of belonging and of acceptance and support from his/her peers is of fundamental importance.

The effects of peer support and buddy systems have also been thoroughly studied in relation to the issue of bullying (see for example Bush, 2003; Cowie & Smith, 2010; Thompson et al., 2010; Tzani-Pepelasi et al., 2019). Several studies have highlighted the positive impact of such practices on children's school experience and well-being. In effect these studies noted the correlation between such practices and bullying prevention. An in-depth meta-study (Coleman et al., 2017) highlighted the positive effects on the promotion of a sense of friendship, increased safety, sense of belonging and protection. Similarly, buddies reported increased sense of responsibility as well as of satisfaction and pride – the two last ones mainly noted by the supporter rather than the supported.

Coleman et al. (2017) studied the results of different applications of the buddy system like one-to-one, in groups, in situ and online to come to the conclusion that stronger evidence of positive impact is found in one-to-one settings. In addition, their meta-analysis highlighted the fact that girls are more prone to participate and benefit from peer-to-peer programs with the exception of on-line projects to which boys are more open.

For buddy system practices to work effectively it is required that such programs are well run, with a clear focus and benefiting of strong leadership by a coordinator. These result in increased trust to the program and thus increased participation and more in-depth/active participation. Likewise, a lack of trust towards peer supporters from the part of the supported students can significantly affect the impact of such programs as students tend to disengage very quickly (among the pupil population), and low take-up can also lead to peer supporters becoming disengaged (Coleman et al., 2017).

Interestingly, many more recent studies tend to confirm the results of a study by Reynolds (1977) on the positive effect of buddy system approaches towards attendance in schools. Not only do they enhance participation and attendance within the school/classroom but they also lead to increased interaction during class and beyond, thus in turn offering further benefits to participating students.

The use of Buddy system approaches has even provided positive impact on youngsters that have a record of criminal activity, with those taking part in such programs showing significantly less probability to commit new offences. One of the major reasons cited towards this result is the feeling of inclusion and the very societal integration that is achieved through being connected in a structured manner with one's peers (O'Donnell, 2008).

Regarding other factors that affect the impact of buddy system approaches, Chiu and Hew (2018) focused on peer learning and performance in MOOC asynchronous online discussion fora. Assessing the ability of discussion/commenting style features of traditional asynchronous online discussions they took note of the value they provide in learning and performance through the facilitation of dialogue. Furthermore, they highlighted as factors that decrease the effects of such features the weaker instructor-learner ties and the fact that forum participation usually is of voluntary nature. Such results can also be transferred to in situ peer learning practices.

Overall, the world has passed from online aspects of education being something new and innovative to being the norm. The use of electronic platforms within the schooling system is growing with an emphasis also given to the interactions between educators and students. In other words, educators are required to be present within a schooling system that applies new technologies and electronic based platforms, though the type of presence differs from the typical teaching position of traditional schooling (Chandra & Palvia, 2021). In addition, the introduction of new technologies in the learning process is allowing teachers to apply more easily collaborative types of learning while also rendering learning a bit more fun – especially if the new technology also employs (some aspects of) gamification (Duţă & Martínez-Rivera, 2015; see also for example the study of Simões et al., 2013 on the use of social gamification in schools in Portugal).

All studies presented above have been citing the positive effects of introducing a buddy system approach to an educational process. Such educational technique has come to be a recognized educational strategy, enclosing different ways of connecting peers, i.e. students, for working col-

laboratively, providing mutual support and fostering a sense of connection within the learning environment. Results include enhanced academic performance (see for example Johnson et al., 2007) – including results in tests as well as retention rates and depth of in class participation, reinforced social development and increased sense of inclusivity – for both members of each pair as well in general in the class level.

Core challenges for a peer learning system to be as effective as possible include escaping cases of unequal partnerships and personality conflicts. Moreover, as already briefly discussed, buddy system approaches require for effective teacher guidance. According to Smith (1996) for such a learning approach to work, it needs to include the elements of positive interdependence, face-to-face promoted interaction, individual accountability/personal responsibility, teamwork skills and group processing. For all these requirements, the role of the educator is of fundamental importance.

In other words, a buddy system is not just about putting students into pairs or offering some activities within the classroom that ask for some collaborative activity. Think about teamwork skills: according to PISA 2023 results there is a positive correlation between level of teamwork skills and performance while a recent OECD study (2021) found that although collaboration activities are embedded in curricula across the world, it is not done to the same extent, leading to different levels of teamwork skills across different schooling environments, not to stress such differences on the individual level. The graph below provides a general overview of the level of embedment of collaboration learning activities in curricula across the world and across learning areas.

As highlighted by Smith (1996) teamwork skills are much required within a peer learning environment as students require of the needed leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills. As many students may have never worked cooperatively before, educators are expected to introduce and emphasize teamwork skills through assigning differentiated roles to each group member. This requirement is reinforced by Gajderowicz et al. (2023) study in which the different understanding of what a peer learning environment by students is noted. Some students for example see working in groups as a parallel process to core education practices as they tend to put much emphasis on equity on tasks distribution and appreciation of individual contributions (Cera Guy et al., 2019). Others tend to understand work in groups as a way to decrease required effort because of the division of tasks that group work entails. According to Gajderowicz et al. this leads to two distinct types of buddy/group

Distribution of content items in the mapped curricula targeting cooperation/
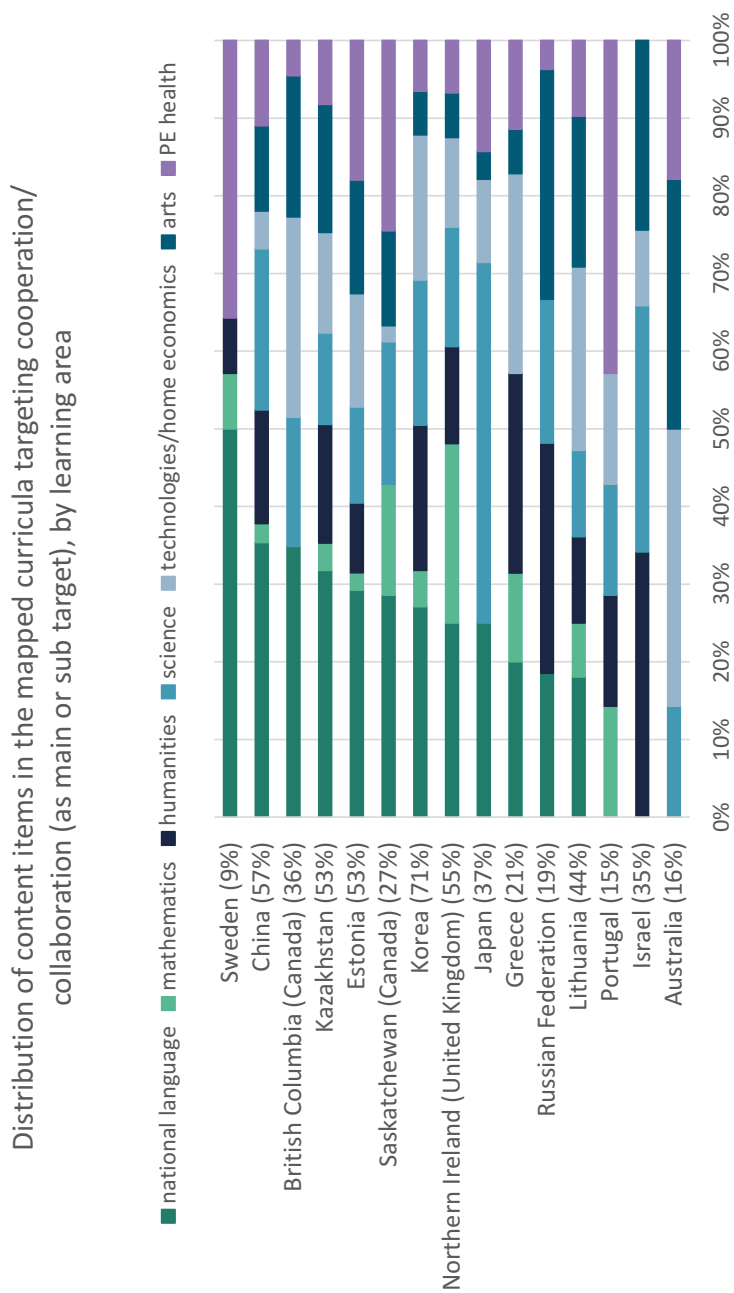collaboration (as main or sub target), by learning area

Figure 1. OECD, 2021

systems: those of (a) collaborative learning, in which emphasis is knowledge creation and enhanced responsibility for working together, and those of (b) cooperative learning, in which students work together on clearly assigned collective tasks. Research tends to highlight that collaborative learning offers better results than cooperative learning, though both require for a structured approach by the teacher (Davidson & Major, 2014).

Coleman et al. (2017, p. 7) highlight the importance of the programme being well run, with a clear focus, strong leadership by a coordinator and support throughout the school, including from senior school management while also citing supervision and support provided to peers as crucial. Much of these responsibilities fall into the hands of educators leading such activities, though they also need to be supported by their establishment's senior management (e.g. the school principal). Houlston and Smith (2009) highlighted the positive contribution of schooling senior management actively supporting and checking on peer-to-peer collaboration schemes.

More interestingly, several studies find the importance of the coordinator/educator to be more than significant. James (2011) notes the different aspects of the role of the educator, all leading to the level of acceptance of the buddy system within the classroom, while Slater-Simmons (2014) identifies educators/coordinators time availability (for example to explain, support and monitor the peer learning activity) as crucial to the success of a buddy system.

Furthermore, there is evidence that how the group/pair is formed is directly linked with the level of benefits generated. For example, if there are already too many connections with the two buddies, part of the benefits of a buddy system are dissolved while if there is no connecting parameter it may lead to overall underperformance (Thompson et al., 2012). This task usually falls under the educators' role.

In addition, based on all above points raised, a significant part of existing literature highlights how important for such systems to flourish is effective training of educators in the fields of management and coordination practices and of course how peer-to-peer systems tend to work (Parsons et al., 2008). This aspect is even more important for platform based learning environments as technology platforms themselves cannot prepare teachers to succeed at this work, even when they are optimally designed and structured, with contextual support being required (Meier, 2021).

The inclusion of children with a migrant background represents for educational institutions (formal, non-formal and informal) one of the most significant challenges and requires a joint effort of the latter to identify con-

crete solutions capable of responding to their specific learning needs, both cognitively and, even earlier, linguistically, socio-emotional and relational.

Studies in the literature have shown, in this regard, the value of collaborative and cooperative methodologies – and specifically of the buddy system (pairs of students who collaborate and help each other in carrying out the activities) – for the inclusion and improvement of academic achievement, the prevention of bullying and school dropout. In addition, recent studies have highlighted the role of learning support offered by new technologies and electronic based platforms for learning, also in order to make the latter more enjoyable and allow easier application of cooperative learning patterns.

1. Research design

The present research sought to analyse firstly, the subjectively perceived efficiency of mixing cooperative-dialogic learning methods and digital learning tools to foster positive outcomes on firstly, educational level for the transmission of competences to both, students and educational staff, and secondly for socio-didactic inclusion of students in the classrooms and beyond (cfr. section 4.1). It therefore questioned in particular if social cohesion and the integration of children – with and without migratory background – in educational contexts and reciprocal competence transfer may be fostered through teacher/educator-steered peer techniques, such as targeted peer coupling and (dialogic) interaction. On this account it also interrogated how educators and teachers are welcoming and adapting collaborative learning schemes that provide for peer-to-peer training on the one hand and for the knowledge transmission between peers of different age level and educational background on the other hand.

Secondly it was investigated how new technologies may represent an accepted and appreciated alternative provider of learning resources for educational staff. This becomes especially important considering educational contexts that are highly heterogeneous with regard to socio-economic, cultural, cognitive and migratory background of its users (cfr. section 4.2).

On this account, the third aspect that has been studied was the logistic and didactic organization of the working processes with the proposed peer learning method and digital contents to carve out the potential of collaborative learning schemes in accordance with their design and implementation by the educational staff (cfr. section 4.3).

To this end, the present research sought to analyse the opinions and perceptions from practitioners working in a total of 7 different national EU and non-European contexts (Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Spain, Turkey) that distinguish themselves on different levels, especially with regard to their socio-economic and political background, their educational systems and their student population and composition.

This research concern provided for three macro themes, which have been investigated with data provided by the KIDS4ALLL project, and will be briefly illustrated.

Firstly, the perceived efficacy of collaborative learning schemes that provide for targeted peer-coupling by teachers or educators according to pre-defined criteria. Particular attention was set on recognition of the benefits of role-switching from peer learner to trainee to mentor towards socio-educational inclusion by the practitioners.

KIDS4ALLL adopts a holistic approach to educational integration. Emphasis is thus not exclusively on educational needs but also on the child's socio-emotional and structural needs (Pinson & Arnot, 2007). The "whole-child" approach is beneficial to teaching and learning processes as it promotes the transversal competences of children that are considered crucial for educational participation, such as collaboration, teamwork and problem solving (Eurydice, 2019). Accordingly, peer collaboration among children in various educational settings shall consider the complexity of children's needs and respond "positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 12).

The potentiality of new technologies to forward competence training of hard and soft skills has been identified as a second central theme and questioned accordingly if the e-learning platform has been experienced as beneficiary to this end.

Considering the increasingly fast and immediate communication in society through a variety of digital instruments, the importance of oral communication and dialogue must be highlighted. To this purpose the KIDS4ALLL learning method promotes the combination of dialogue and digital co-work. The KIDS4ALLL learning method points to the production and sharing of content produced by the buddy pairs for the competence transfer process that occurs on 2 levels through:
– the peer2peer collaboration among the buddies along the learning path;
– the peer4peer learning process, where co-generated contents are at the disposal of younger peers (e.g. ISCED 2 and 3 produce learning material for ISCED 1) and adults. Their own production of learning contents

allows children to express their own point of view through the languages and cultural codes of their generation, overcoming the adult-centric vision of the themes.

The third macro theme focused on the actual organisation of digital peer education learning schemes from a didactic and logistic point of view, that questioned the availability of digital infrastructure, the adaptability of learning contents into pre-defined learning activities and delegations or assumptions of additional tasks within the learning process.

1.1 *Study sample*

The data that informs the analysis of this research has been collected in the frame of the project 'Key Inclusive Development Strategies for Lifelong Learning – KIDS4ALLL' (2021-2024)[1], financed by the European Commission within the HORIZON research and innovation funding programme established to stimulate EU-wide action towards the inclusion of migrant children in the educational context and beyond.

The KIDS4ALLL project strives to foster the EU-defined 8 Key Competences for Lifelong Learning[2] with ad-hoc created learning contents available in digital and offline format (KIDS4ALLL platform vs. handbook) and applied through a collaborative learning scheme. This learning method to be tested over the project lifetime aims to facilitate the recognition and valorisation of existing competence sets from learners with heterogeneous socio-cultural backgrounds and consists of three complementary learning phases. These must be accomplished by learner couples, who have been arranged by the educator or teacher according to pre-established criteria such as demographic characteristics (e.g. ethnic background, age, gender) and features that inform on the competence background of the peers (such as language, prior education, learning difficulties).

The first and second learning phase focus on the acquisition and cultivation of (theoretical and applied) knowledge through both, frontal and interactive learning in a peer-to-peer relationship, i.e. both learners are exposed at the same time to equal (online or offline) contents.

---

1   For further information on the project objectives and outputs please refer to provided information and preliminary publications available on www.kids4alll.eu.
2   Cfr. the 8 key competences for Lifelong Learning as defined by the EU-Commission in the "Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Life Long Learning" available at: https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/improving-quality/key-competences.

Instead, the third phase follows the 'learning-by-doing' approach to process the generated knowledge. For this purpose it envisages the elaboration of own learning material by the learner couple and subsequently the presentation of the co-created contents to younger and unexperienced peers (peer for peer).

This approach implies a role-switching for each phase from learner to trainee to mentor and challenges traditional role patterns and the didactic organisation in the socio-educational field. Students may accordingly convey concepts in their own language and in their own codes, enriching them with socio-cultural experiences.

This learning method has been experimented in two testing stages in a total of 8 European and non-European local contexts[3] reaching an estimated total of 1000 students. Pilot phase 1, conducted from 2022-2023, had a duration of six months and was thoroughly assessed through a SWOT analysis elaborated from feedback of the local practitioners. Upon this, the project team proceeded with an optimisation of learning contents and instruments that provided for the upgraded form tested in the subsequent 3-months pilot phase 2 (2023).

Four focus groups in Italy, Hungary, Spain and a series of interviews in Norway, Germany, Greece and Turkey with teachers and educators were conducted across the 7 target countries of the project. Participants were recruited by researchers among those who had taken part in the pilot phases, based on their free availability. The number of focus group participants ranged from 3-5, with between 1-3 moderators per group.

Instead, the 7 partner countries have been selected for the provision of data due to their heterogeneous migration patterns and roles in the European migration scenario as sending, transit or receiving countries. This also implies that some of them are characterized by high levels of mobility and/or temporariness (e.g. in Italy, Greece, Spain, Hungary and Turkey) and others by more permanent or long-term residence and less mobility (e.g. Germany and Norway). This is essential for the conceptualization, presentation and proposal of learning activities and tools to students with and without migratory background who are being accompanied in highly heterogeneous educational settings that differ on socio-political, cultural and economic level with their counter organizations in other national con-

---

3   The pilot contexts comprised 14 schools (all cycles) in Israel, Italy, Spain and Turkey and 20 non-formal contexts (associations, after-school programs) in Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel and Norway.

texts. Indeed, this research aimed to ensure the inclusion of a broad range of educational system types, both formal and non-formal, even though a different organization of the activities was required (Table 1). The choice to engage different learning contexts stems from the overall project goal of testing a learning model that could be pedagogically transversal. Thus, schools as formal educational settings represent in all participating partner countries the rather traditional learning settings. Associations on the other hand (NGO, civil society organizations) have been representing both, the informal and non-formal educational contexts and provided a variety of sites and modes in which education and training are pursued.

Country	Number & type of participants	Educational context	Data collection modality
Italy	5 Educators	Non-formal	Focus group
Hungary	Educators	Non-Formal	Focus group
Norway	5 Teachers	Formal	Interviews
Germany	4 Educators and Social workers	Formal and non-formal	Interviews
Greece	6 Teachers and Educators	Formal and non-formal	Interviews
Turkey	Teachers	Formal	Interviews
Spain	8 Teachers	Formal	2 Focus groups

Table 1. Participant characteristics per focus group and interviews

1.2 *Methodological research design*

The research design of this study is grounded in a bottom-up approach based on a qualitative data collection, which is confirmed by the choice of focus groups and semi-structured interviews as leading research methods.

To obtain a more holistic perspective of the study concern and to enhance completeness and validity of data (Thurmond, 2001; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) the research team decided for a triangulation of investigators and methodologic approaches. The mix of the data-gathering techniques has been thought to capture the entire experience from two different perspectives of the actors involved in the tested educational scenario. Focus groups and interviews took place between October 2022 and September 2023 and were conducted by experienced researchers who acted as moderators and gave additional information concerning the project if required.

They had an average duration of 60 minutes and were recorded and transcribed with the consent of all participants after being informed about anonymity and ethical issues. Both focus groups and interviews were provided with a set of open-ended guiding questions arranged into 6 core topics.

The data collection through focus groups and single interviews facilitated the identification of experiences, observations and perceptions from the instructors in the tested field.

Finally, the choice of three investigators who collected, coded and analysed the compound data, was made to decrease potential biases among the researchers and to benefit from expertise, the social network and past conducted fieldwork.

2. Results

2.1 *Germany*

In the German context, activities with the buddy method provided students with the opportunity to get to know their peers with intercultural backgrounds better rather than interacting regularly with their classmates. All the educators, in fact, agreed that the primary value of the buddy method lies in making students who normally do not collaborate together work together, take advantage of each other's experiences and knowledge and obtain the access to topics and perspectives with which they were unfamiliar. According to them, this process is essential to teach students that each person's differences, rather than being a limitation, are transformed into opportunities for mutual enrichment in terms of intercultural exchange.

From the focus groups, it emerged that for both formal and non-formal learning contexts it was noted that expert educators showed a greater ability to involve students and manage the activities of the entire learning process. Teachers observed an improvement on the relationships between students during school meetings. In the youth center, however, since the project was not continuously carried out, it was more difficult to observe a clear improvement in the relationships between students. Here, it was noted that the challenge was precisely to gain the initial trust of the participants to allow them to move out of their safe relationships with the people they felt most comfortable with. It was reported by teachers that students were surprised to learn from students they had not had the chance to connect with before.

Teachers provided positive feedback during the focus groups on the development of socio-emotional and relational skills in students. Some educators acknowledged that the KIDS4ALLL proposals enhanced the social dynamics of the group and enabled students to comprehend each other's viewpoints. It was also made clear that it is the individual's responsibility whether their skills have been improved or not, but it was a great opportunity for students to be taken out of their usual school environment, where performance and results were the determining factors. The group's dynamic made them feel valued and heard which enabled them to take responsibility for each other's well-being. Considering how teachers and educators without much effort can integrate certain educational methods and content is essential to enhance their use. Reflection on the development of students' socio-emotional skills revealed some critical aspects. In particular, some educators expressed doubts about the difficulty of measuring a real impact of the KIDS4ALLL proposals on promoting students' social-emotional skills, because students worked on the activities for a limited period. It would probably be more evident to notice improvements in the development of this type of skills if the students carried out the project activities for a longer period, even in an annual program.

Regarding the way of combining new technologies with the buddy method thanks to the KIDS4ALLL platform, the educators expressed positive interest, believing it was important to be able to use it continuously. Many of them have declared their intention to use the platform again in the future, adapting its use and content according to the age levels of the students. Older students are believed by educators to be capable of using the platform independently, accessing and navigating it with ease. Even in this case, however, it could make it easier for students to carry out the activities over a longer period to become increasingly familiar with the functions of the platform themselves. While younger students need a reference adult as a mediator for navigation. Furthermore, for this target group, the contents could be more attractive if there were more interactive parts: for example by inserting gamification tools just like the new home page of the platform.

To work efficiently with their students, educators must be aware of the platform's features. Finally, educators believe that the contents of KIDS4ALLL could be of great help for classes with a large number of students with migrant backgrounds also in collaboration with the group of parents of the classes. Their belief is that they will be utilized more in this context in the future.

Educators believe that the platform's contents are useful for promoting discussions and reflections on current issues. In particular, they gave the example of the LU "Digital footprint", which falls within digital competence, considered relevant to help students acquire greater awareness and avoid "certain online dangers". Other learning activities (LUs) were useful during the International Week against Racism as a greater opportunity for reflection, strengthening discussions against discrimination, and understanding cultural differences.

In general, educators consider the initial 'warm-up' phase foreseen by each LU to be useful and effective in facilitating groups of friends to start dialogue and discussion on the topic. The interviewees reported as a critical element on the part of the students at a graphic level that it would have been more motivated for them, if by clicking on the "end" button of each LU some pop-ups or graphic feedback appeared. Educators believe that these modes of interaction could better encourage students to continue with subsequent LUs.

The platform has been a fantastic tool for educators in gathering ideas for content to offer to students.

2.2 *Greece*

Greek teachers and educators believed that the value of the buddy method is that it allows students to get to know each other better and more, by combining their knowledge. Students were able to learn by playing, by making the activities more fun and easier to follow thanks to this approach. Some teachers and educators focused on this point, saying that very often among buddies they tried to support each other by trying together to find solutions to some doubts, rather than immediately asking the teacher and educator for clarification.

As regards the criteria for creating couples of students, most teachers and educators stated that they created the pairs themselves, leaving less autonomy of choice for the students to prevent them from pairing up with classmates they already knew, thus failing one of the principles of the method.

In general, during the carrying out of the project activities, teachers and educators observed positive changes in the relationship between students, as demonstrated also by friendship actions undertaken by students during other lessons and breaks. In this regard, some teachers and educators re-

ported seeing students playing together and that in some cases they remained in the classroom during the break to finalize postcards or group work. They also noticed that the students, who remained more isolated before carrying out the project activities, slowly began to be more in the company of their classmates carrying out the project activities. On this aspect, other teachers and educators reported having seen students discussing and comparing with each other the results obtained by the different teams following the carrying out of the project activities.

The focus groups gave positive feedback on the development of socioemotional and relational skills among students. The teachers and educators explained that they have a previous and particularly solid background regarding the promotion of activities for the development of socio-emotional and relational skills among students, thanks to specific training obtained through participation in courses and workshops. This could have prompted teachers and educators to pay more attention to the development of this type of skill in students.

According to some of them, the KIDS4ALLL proposals provide new ideas to implement in daily teaching practices.

Regarding how to combine new technologies with the buddy method thanks to the KIDS4ALLL platform, educators have shown positive interest, explaining how this type of educational approach can serve to break the monotony of the usual teaching methods. Most teachers and educators find the platform to be easily accessible and usable, and they plan to use it again in the future. Some of them underlined the importance of being able to add more languages, especially for students with a migrant background.

In general, they would recommend the use of the platform to a colleague, advising on the need to adapt the contents also based on the needs of the class and advising them to carry out the first activity sessions with an expert colleague, for greater effectiveness of the contents.

As regards the organizational aspect of the LUs, the teachers and educators declared that they mainly carried out the activities in the classroom, in some cases in the computer laboratory and, only in one case, in the courtyard (LU on music) with a frequency of one once every two weeks, dividing the LU into two meetings.

Teachers and educators believed that the structure of the LU and its contents were useful for student learning and education. Some only provided suggestions on the use of the contents, considering it useful to include further suggestions also through short videos or podcasts, since students appreciate this type of format for the use of the learning contents.

Furthermore, some teachers and educators considered it possible to transfer the contents proposed by the project to other teaching activities, considering them useful for providing greater completeness of the teaching contents.

2.3 *Hungary*

The participants in the focus group in Hungary considered the buddy method positive, specifying that its effectiveness depended above all on the case in which there was greater continuity with the project activities. In some non-formal contexts, there was no continuity with the project activities due to organizational and management issues within some associations.

In general, the participants declared that the relationships between the students were positive even before carrying out the project activities, even if some contents actually forced them to reflect differently than they were used to. The chance to exchange so many ideas on new topics was a positive surprise for them.

The buddies' construction differed from meeting to meeting in Hungarian context. The teachers and educators, in fact, stated that the students are used to often changing their partners during teaching activities and would probably have had more resistance to carrying out the project activities if they had been forced to work with the same partner all the time. It is likely that they saw it as an imposition. Thus, educators tried to adapt to students' needs, forming pairs in a way consistent with children's preferences and at the same time trying to create buddy pairs with different motivation and academic results.

In general, the participants in the focus groups observed that the cultural origin of their classmates was not important for the students, indeed there was the opportunity to reflect together on some stereotypes coming from the adult world regarding some cultures.

From the focus groups, it emerged that in general teachers and educators, especially in non-formal learning contexts, try to create informal learning environments to put students at ease, placing great emphasis on the development of social-emotional and relational skills among students, rather than focusing on their academic progress. The majority of teachers and educators believe that the tools proposed by the KIDS4ALLL project were therefore aligned with their actions and above all educators were able to apply them effectively in their usual professional practice.

Regarding how to combine new technologies with the buddy method, educators have shown positive interest in using the KIDS4ALLL platform. In particular, they discovered that the platform is a great source of ideas and that it can be useful in different educational contexts to develop emotional and social skills, language skills, community and to reflect on current issues. Most of them agreed that the topics were more engaging for students if they were adapted to their learning needs.

Regarding the organizational aspect of the LU, the teachers and educators stated that they mainly carried out the activities during after-school programs in welcoming spaces.

Precisely because the activities took place in the afternoon during the school period, in this context, the educators declared that after a whole day of work, the students often appeared tired. According to them, they could have been more involved if they had submitted the activities during the summer period, in the morning. In any case, the students seemed to enjoy carrying out some LUs in particular, mentioning those related to designing their own restaurant and putting together a menu; learn the languages of classmates with a migratory background; discover fake news; the origin of your family; learn about different learning styles; learn to use nonviolent communication.

Some educators expressed that they had the need to adapt some activities for a target audience of younger students, inserting more information details or insights into some terms to facilitate their understanding of the text. They also noticed that some students needed more support than others did, especially in the discussion phase, as if they needed continuous stimulation from educators to express their ideas or reflection on a particular topic.

2.4 *Italy*

Italian teachers and educators considered the use of the buddy method positive, reporting some added benefits in their opinion of using this method in teaching activities with students. In particular, they believed that working in pairs of buddies rather than in groups could have provided students with the opportunity to take on a different point of view on an ongoing basis. Furthermore, they believed that working in buddy pairs stimulated community building and cohesion in the learning environment and had a positive effect on relationships. Additionally, the recreational-educational

activities encouraged independent learning and the use of teaching tools, and were useful for teaching students how to manage their time effectively.

Regarding the creation of buddy pairs, different approaches have been taken. In non-formal learning contexts, triads were created rather than pairs due to the discontinuous presence of students, but also to ensure a more relaxed environment during KIDS4ALLL buddy work.

In the non-formal learning context, especially in the lifelong learning center, the age range was used as a criterion, given that it was quite broad. Other criteria also taken into consideration in formal learning contexts are the cultural/social-political background and language spoken by the students.

Therefore, regarding the development of socio-emotional and relational skills between students thanks to the project, teachers and educators expressed positive feedback, reporting that a positive climate was often created between students in the classroom. The inclusion processes were facilitated by the KIDS4ALLL proposals compared to the usual teaching practice, as it was noted. According to participants, this was especially true for students with disabilities, learning difficulties, and specific learning disorders. The impact of the KIDS4ALLL proposals on the relationship between students seems to be linked to the structure of the LU, as perceived by teachers and educators. Above all, the work-it part, according to their point of view, seems to have stimulated the students to discuss their own ideas and experiences. This happened, for example, in the course on cyberbullying at the LU, where students discussed their own experiences. Their involvement was very strong.

Furthermore, teachers and educators noticed that while the students were engaged in the project activities, they demonstrated their desire to experiment and use digital tools; they had fun and were able to highlight their qualities and skills. The work on the project was also often perceived as very useful for educators and teachers to get an idea of the students and their learning methods and to evaluate any difficulties.

Regarding the way of combining new technologies with the buddy method thanks to the KIDS4ALLL platform, teachers and educators have expressed positive feedback, also regarding its further use in the future. Also, in terms of accessibility and usability, they felt that the platform was well structured, clear, and very rich in useful and interesting material.

From an organizational perspective, teachers and educators were able to identify some key factors. In both formal and non-formal learning contexts, educators highlighted the importance of knowing the objectives and expected results of LU and the role of the teacher in defining linguistic terms

and clear description was highlighted as fundamental in this sense of tasks. On the other hand, a critical point highlighted by educators in non-formal lifelong learning contexts was the fact that students worked with their personal mobile phones since they did not have any other technological tool provided by the association at their disposal.

2.5 *Norway*

According to Norwegian teachers and educators, the buddy method helped establish positive relationships between students, which in turn created a positive learning environment. In particular, it was interesting for them to note that the impact of the KIDS4ALLL proposals on the development of socio-emotional skills and inclusion processes was perceived differently depending on the context. In fact, teachers and educators have organized activities and created pairs in different ways, depending on the students' learning needs. Many were unfamiliar with working in pairs or groups, while others had already engaged in similar activities in groups. In most cases, teachers and educators created the buddy pairs, and this was considered an excellent approach to encourage inclusion in all classes in the school and to allow students to learn to collaborate, develop social skills and have more acceptance and respect for everyone.

The younger teachers grouped students with different linguistic backgrounds to ensure that students with migrant backgrounds could improve their level of understanding of Norwegian language. However, sometimes students found it difficult to compare and thus tended to work more independently.

The more experienced teachers, however, organized the buddy pairs in such a way that they spoke the same language and, thus, felt safe and at ease in a new learning environment.

Regarding the combination of new technologies with the buddy method, teachers and educators have expressed positive feedback regarding the KIDS4ALLL platform. In general, they appreciated the interactive activities proposed by the platform, which, according to them, encouraged collaboration, creativity, and participation of students. It is possible that this is the reason why the students have to know each other better. Furthermore, the majority of teachers and educators said they appreciated the work.it area, which provides a space for other students from other schools or countries to look and learn. In the future, teachers would like to incor-

porate the contents of different skills in their teaching activities. In the future, teachers would like to include different skill contents in their teaching activities.

In addition, in terms of accessibility and usability, interviewees believe that the platform is useful for schools that increasingly find themselves finding ways to include students with migrant backgrounds. To facilitate this process, some teachers have recommended translating the contents into some of the most common languages spoken by foreign students, to further facilitate their understanding of the activities. Despite this, it must also be said that the teachers recognized the fact that the foreign students present in the classes in most cases spoke four languages and this facilitated moments of exchange and enrichment for students. In reality, they had a good time reading the content in the languages they knew and assisted each other in understanding the content in multiple languages. This could be a useful resource for teachers in a multicultural classroom with newly arrived migrant children.

2.6 *Spain*

Spanish teachers and educators have employed the buddy method with interactive groups for older students, which stresses the importance of students working together and supporting one another. The interactive groups had one difference, which was that instead of working in pairs, students worked in groups of 5 or 6 members. The buddy method was utilized by primary school students in cooperative groups that were larger. The composition of the groups in both contexts was heterogeneous in terms of cultural and linguistic differences, as well as other variables such as academic performance. The impact of the KIDS4ALLL proposals on the development of social-emotional skills and inclusion processes was positive: according to the participants, in fact, working in interactive groups allowed the students to feel like a team, supporting each other and sharing their ideas with the others. In fact, within the interactive groups a dialogic mode of interaction was created, that is, it was not simply a question of cooperative groups, but of an egalitarian dialogue mediated by the support of an adult.

As for the primary school students, the teachers noticed that when the students began to discuss the content of the texts they read they participated a lot and tried to report what they read while also integrating their own ex-

perience. Sometimes there was a "contagion effect", that is, when a student told a story about his life, everyone else in the class wanted to talk about similar events that had happened to them too. Students worked more independently in cooperative groups.

According to the teachers, the most effective organizational way was interactive groups, and the application of cooperative groups, with larger numbers of students, occurred only in the absence of sufficient volunteers who would not be able to support more than two groups of students. The presence of an adult meant that the groups worked harder and the adult could identify and resolve difficulties more quickly. In cooperative groups, however, even if the children were asked to work with other classmates, they usually ended up carrying out the activity alone and then at most comparing the result with each other.

Regarding the way in which new technologies can be combined with the buddy method thanks to the KIDS4ALLL platform, teachers generally expressed positive feedback. However, they specified that in their context, students were not allowed to access the platform independently and, in this sense, it made it more difficult for them to have control over the contents.

The fundamental element for teachers in order to create a calm and positive climate among students is undoubtedly not to carry out any evaluation activities of the work produced by students for this type of activity. It is possible for students to feel pressure and lose sight of the main goal, which is to develop positive relationships with their peers. Furthermore, teachers highlighted the importance of adapting activities to the experience of their students and adopting methodological strategies to ensure that everyone achieves the learning objectives established in the ministerial curriculum. The two school directors underlined the need to involve families more so that they can participate as volunteers in the project activities. The inclusion of foreign students and their parents in the school community would be enhanced with parental involvement.

2.7 *Turkey*

Turkish teachers stated that the buddy method had a significant positive impact on their students' learning. In fact, they noticed that thanks to this method the element of fun was added to the classroom, thus facilitating interaction between students, which allowed them to show their potential effects. Furthermore, teachers noticed that the buddy method improved

the social interaction of even the most reserved/shy students, encouraging them to interact without fear of judgment from their classmates. Some teachers also added that in their opinion, this type of method also promotes the ability to solve problems independently, creativity, and the ability to analyze and synthesize information.

The teachers created the buddy pairs before the first LU, and subsequently the established buddy pairs remained. When creating them, the teachers also met the needs of the students. It was important for them that the students felt comfortable. Buddy pairs were created by teachers in primary school based on the language spoken. Local children were able to assist children with migrant backgrounds in improving their understanding of the Turkish language. In high school, student pairs were made taking into account their academic performance as a measure to motivate, help, and improve those who had lower academic performance. In fact, according to teachers, the value of the buddy method lies in the fact that the learning process with peers is more motivating for students and helps them support lifelong learning. In this context, the teachers observed that, while the students who did not know each other at the beginning were shyer, they slowly began to work with a group consciousness and produced ideas or products. As the activities progressed, their relationship, which was initially distant, began to become more intimate. In general, teachers observed positive changes in the relationship between students in all school cycles, such as greater socialization and a more positive and communicative atmosphere in the classroom. Especially at the high school level, shy students have acquired greater social skills, improving exchanges with their peers. For primary school children, it was also observed that after the pilot phase, they started playing together outside of the classroom.

Regarding the way in which new technologies can be combined with the buddy method thanks to the KIDS4ALLL platform, teachers generally expressed positive feedback. The technologies and platform encouraged collaborative work, allowing students to share ideas and learn together, as noted by them. However, middle school teachers were hesitant to imagine its full integration into the curriculum due to the traditional organization of classroom structures in Turkey. However, they could see the potential for its utilization in after-school extracurricular activities.

Additionally, primary school teachers reported that some LU content was challenging younger students to comprehend. Therefore, for this case, the teachers thought they could take the activities from the LUs and implement them into their teaching methods.

In terms of accessibility and usability of the platform, teachers at all school levels initially had trouble. Although it was not very practical during the first few weeks, they eventually became accustomed to the platform and its authentication process. However, it was difficult for primary school teachers to get children to access the platform on their own. For some high school teachers, it was quite difficult to upload the products. They found this part not very intuitive at first. However, the teachers liked that this section was required to include the photo, they agreed on the importance of photographs to build communication bridges with students from other schools in Turkey or abroad and to motivate students to participate.

Teachers expressed a strong desire to keep using the platform in the future. It was acknowledged that the digital platform has valuable features that can make lessons more engaging and significantly reduce teachers' workloads, particularly in culturally diverse classrooms.

3. Discussion

The focus groups and interviews conducted highlight some interesting issues in relation to the three macro themes considered in the research, while revealing similarities and differences within the countries examined.

3.1 *Perceived effectiveness of collaborative learning schemes*

As for the first macro theme, the perceived effectiveness of collaborative learning schemes proposed in the project, specifically the buddy method, it is important to keep in mind that the inclusion was assumed within the project in a multidimensional perspective and was therefore related not only to relational aspects (Davidson et al., 2001), but also to physical, psychological, social and occupational ones. The inclusion indicators therefore encompassed, among others: well-being, full access to resources and activities, social participation, acceptance and recognition, commitment and motivation in performing the assigned tasks.

An important aspect to consider is that the expertise of teachers and educators with peer learning before the KIDS4ALLL experience varied in the different countries and even within the same country, with variations between one school level and another. In Italy and Norway all teachers had previous experiences of students working collaboratively, in pairs or in

groups. In Greece, half of them had never worked with the buddy method. In Turkey, no secondary school teacher except one had experience with the method, while most primary school teachers had used it in the past.

The different degree of mastery and previous experience of teachers and educators has influenced the way they welcomed the method and the perception of its impact on the development of socio-emotional skills and the processes of inclusion. In Italy and Turkey, teachers and educators believed that the method provided valuable suggestions to include students, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities, to reduce stereotypes about others and promote creativity. For respondents from Hungary and Greece, instead, no new suggestions emerged to support the development of socio-emotional skills and inclusion processes; teachers acquired skills in this area through past training and experience on the field. According to German respondents, although the method allowed students to work with classmates whom they would otherwise never have worked with, the development of socio-emotional skills ultimately depends on individuals. In Norway, the impact of the project on inclusion processes and the development of socio-emotional skills was perceived differently by teachers depending on the context in which they worked. One interviewee appreciated the buddy method very much and declared he/she wanted to continue using it with the class even after the pilot phase. Another one said that, indeed, his/her students were already used to collaborating and improving their social skills.

In most countries, the positive impact of the buddy method on students has been seen mainly at the relational level, as it has allowed greater interactions between students (even among those who normally would never have worked together), and at the cognitive level, because it allowed them to benefit from the knowledge of other students. Moreover, according to respondents, the method stimulated autonomous learning and time management and made the activities more fun and easier to follow, all positive indicators of the inclusion process. The German respondents said that while the buddy method was positive in theory, it was not entirely successful in the German context, mainly because of the lack of continuity between student couples, an aspect that was also highlighted by the Hungarian respondents.

The formative criteria for the constitution of couples differed in relation to national contexts and to the choices of individual educators. In some countries (e.g. Italy and Greece) couples were created by teachers and educators, and gender, cultural and linguistic background and performance criteria prevailed (e.g. Turkey); in others (e.g. Germany) couples were set up

randomly or according to the common interests of students; in other countries (for example, Hungary) couples were redefined during each meeting, depending on the number of students participating and their preferences. In the Turkish context, the choices of the children were respected without forcing collaboration, so that they were comfortable working together with classmates; moreover, teachers believed that the coupling of migrant and non-migrant students led the latter to internalize their status as foreigners. Finally, in the Norwegian context, the criterion of choice was linguistic diversity or, conversely, commonality of language, even in this case in relation to the lesser or greater experience of teachers. Spain is the only case where project activities were conducted in interactive groups due to the young age of primary school students. Interactive groups use the buddy method, because they are based on the fact that students work together and help each other; the only difference is that children are not grouped in pairs, but in groups of 5 or 6 students, with the help of teachers who foster interaction and ensure an equal dialogue between students.

3.2 *Potentiality of new technologies to forward competence training*

With regard to the second macro theme, the potential of new technologies to transmit training skills of hard and soft skills, the KIDS4ALLL platform has been recognized as useful by most teachers and educators and has been suggested for reuse in the future. It has been particularly appreciated as a source of ideas (Hungary) and a tool that encourages creativity (Turkey), promotes the development of socio-emotional, linguistic and citizenship skills (Hungary) and can be beneficial for the implementation of intercultural projects (Norway, Germany, Turkey). All this, however, under certain conditions.

As several respondents pointed out, in order to use the platform effectively, educators and students must have a close connection with each other and both familiarize themselves with it, as well as they need to regularly use it and have access to content in multiple languages. According to Italian and German teachers and educators, the platform is currently better suited for formal contexts, by virtue of its structured contents. For the Turkish respondents, conversely, integrating the platform fully into the curriculum is a challenge because it lacks specific content related to different disciplines and some content is difficult for primary school students; on the other hand, its content could be used in after-school activities.

As for the accessibility and usability of the platform, the wealth of material and the possibility of sharing content among students is highly valued by most respondents. However, it is common opinion that the process of logging in and uploading student content has proved to be challenging for teachers and educators. Providing guided instructions using screenshots of the different steps could simplify the process.

The photo application was not used or highly appreciated in all the contexts analyzed, mainly because it required personal data and had no features that appealed to students.

3.3 *Organization of digital peer education learning schemes*

The third macro theme, the organisation of digital peer education learning schemes from a didactic and logistic point of view, presented some critical elements and showed significant differences between the educational formal and non-formal contexts.

Based on what the respondents said, in almost all countries, the organization of project activities varied depending on the individual institution, the educational context and the learning units addressed. Generally, the learning units were carried out in 1-2 meetings depending on the greater or lesser complexity of their contents.

As regards the locations and digital infrastructure, in formal contexts the activities were mainly held in the classroom or, alternatively, in the computer room (only in one case they were held in the library and in another case in the courtyard). In non-formal contexts, they took place in more open and less structured spaces that allowed greater freedom of movement and interaction between children and young adults.

In some formal contexts, such as Norway, the activities of the project seemed to be more engaging for students than those carried out in ordinary classes. On the other hand, a critical point, reported by respondents in Italy and Turkey, was the fact that, in some schools, computers were old and no other digital devices (e.g. tablets) were available. As a result, students had to use their smartphones to carry out activities. In both formal and non-formal contexts, teachers and educators highlighted the difficulty of planning activities according to the needs and commitments of students, and implementing the buddy method consistently, given the frequent changes in participants during meetings.

With regard to the structure and content of the learning units, in most

countries teachers and educators considered them useful for developing students' skills. In Italy and Hungary, the correlation between the structure of the learning units and the development of the cognitive, socio-emotional and technical skills of the students was highlighted, with greater value attributed to the phase of co-creation of content (work.it area). The Norwegian teachers, instead, stressed the benefits of multilingual content availability. In Turkey, the development of socio-emotional skills (especially for primary school children) and the creation of a sense of belonging for migrant students were underlined.

The interviews and the focus groups allowed to grasp some improvement margins in the effectiveness of the project. As already mentioned, shortening some text sections can also help in not-optimal time and space settings. Similarly, it might be very useful to provide more specific instructions for carrying out the learning units. This would reduce the need for explanations from teachers and educators and give buddies more autonomy in completing activities. Finally, adapting the content of the learning units to the age and interests of the participants could increase their comprehension and motivation.

4. Overall conclusions

The proposals of KIDS4ALLL project prefigure themselves as innovative actions that, if effectively implemented and systematized, can contribute to the pursuit of quality learning and inclusion objectives, through combined proposals of methodologies of cooperative learning and digital learning tools aimed at the creation of shared learning content. In line with the current research, the project, in fact, relies on a constructivist vision of learning that puts learners at the center of the process, encouraging the agency and dialogue with their peers and at the same time, consider new information technologies as potential resources for learning and co-creation of content by students.

Teachers and educators were the first to be invested with the burden of testing the project proposals, through the use of the learning platform created specifically by the project partners for the development of the 8 European key competences for lifelong learning. This research, therefore, aimed to explore how the educators and teachers who participated in the project pilot phase have accepted these proposals and adapted them to the contexts in which they operate. The aim of the research was also to test teachers'

perception on the possible use of new technologies as a learning resource within learning contexts characterized by high heterogeneity.

The results of focus groups and interviews attest that teachers and educators have positively assessed KIDS4ALLL's learning environment for the development of inclusive methodologies. The buddy method was perceived as a formative practice that improved students' interpersonal and cognitive skills and increased their ability to learn independently. In addition, the inclusion of students with a migrant background has been facilitated by supporting technologies that have enabled students to be more involved, motivated and creative and have improved their access to content in a variety of languages. The platform has been considered as a tool for teachers and educators to gather ideas, conduct activities in the classroom or develop intercultural projects.

Although the study highlights the now-established awareness among teachers and educators of the importance of promoting active learning methodologies and exploiting the learning potential of new technologies, focus groups and interviews also revealed the difficulty in effectively implementing project proposals, for several reasons.

Respondents recognized the validity of the buddy method, however from their answers it emerged that the buddy method has not always been applied consistently because of the difficulties in planning the project's activities in order to match the availability of teachers and educators with the needs and commitments of children and young people, and their frequent turnover. Another awareness that has emerged for the sake of the effectiveness of the buddy method concerns the appropriate coupling of students. It should, in fact, be such as to allow, on the one hand, the establishment of pairs that are functional to learning and able to support each other, on the other hand, to meet the need of students to learn in a positive context, feeling at ease with their peers.

On the organizational level, focus groups and interviews revealed the presence of some constraints that sometimes made it difficult to carry out activities, linked to the following factors: spaces not always welcoming and suitable for couples to work independently and share their work (e.g. arrangement of desks in rows or fixed benches); time restrictions and the absence of adequate equipment and infrastructure (sometimes computers/tablets were missing or not updated out date, the internet network did not work properly).

Given all the constraints of context related to space, time and learning needs, it has arisen that shortening some texts and narrowing the age range to which LUs are intended can help overcome some problems and maxi-

mize the impact of KIDS4ALLL. All this in order to make students more motivated and able to approach LUs independently.

Finally, the impact of the KIDS4ALLL proposals on the development of socio-emotional skills and inclusive processes is linked to the level of competence of teachers and educators in the management of the buddy method and cooperative learning, and in facilitating learning. Teachers and educators are first of all responsible for creating a positive learning environment in the classroom. In addition, without adequate mediation of teachers and educators, students may have difficulty working together independently and managing conflicts. An effective implementation of the project proposals in the future requires, therefore, adequate training and support of teachers, both in terms of new digital technologies and in the field of teaching methodologies, for the successful management of dialogue and cooperation activities between students.

Ultimately, the results of the focus groups and interviews, although not to be reported as statistically significant, express the competent and informed point of view of teachers and educators and help to better understand their training needs and those of the students. Consequently, the research work presented here constitutes an important starting point to a further investigation, perhaps extended to a larger sample of participants, aimed at promoting a process of optimization of the project proposals and an easier integration of the latter in school curricula and in non-formal and informal contexts.

References

Adams D. (2016). The effectiveness of the buddy support system in special education in Malaysia. In International Conference on Teacher Learning and Development (ICTLD). *Conference proceeding* (pp. 1-23).

Alqahtani R. (2015). High school peer buddy program: Impact on social and academic achievement for students with disabilities. *European Journal of Educational Sciences*, 2(1), 1-16.

Boyle C., Topping K., Jindal-Snape D. & Norwich B. (2012). The importance of peer-support for teaching staff when including children with special educational needs. *School Psychology International*, 33(2), 167-184.

Bush G. (2003). *School Buddy System: The Practice of Collaboration*. American Library Association.

CeraGuy J. N., Williams J. M. & Shore B. M. (2019). High-and otherwise-achieving students' expectations of classroom group work: An exploratory empirical study. *Roeper Review*, 41(3), 166-184.

Chandra S. & Palvia S. (2021). Online education next wave: Peer to peer learning. *Journal of Information Technology Case and Application Research*, 23(3), 157-172.

Chiu T. K. & Hew T. K. (2018). Factors influencing peer learning and performance in MOOC asynchronous online discussion forum. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 34(4).

Coleman N., Sykes W. & Groom C. (2017). *Peer support and children and young people's mental health. Independent Social Research*. Department of Education.

Cowie H. & Smith P. (2010). Peer support as a means of improving school safety and reducing bullying and violence. In B. Doll, W. Pfohl, & J. Yoon (Eds.), *Handbook of Youth Prevention Science* (pp 177-193). Routledge.

Davidson N. & Major C. H. (2014). Boundary crossings: Cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and problem-based learning. *Journal on excellence in college teaching*, 25.

Dolan P., Brady B., O Regan C., Canavan J., Russell D. & Forkan C. (2011). Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Ireland: Evaluation Study. Report 3: Summary Report. UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre on behalf of Foróige.

Duţă N. & Martínez-Rivera O. (2015). Between theory and practice: the importance of ICT in Higher Education as a tool for collaborative learning. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 180, 1466-1473.

European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2019). Integrating Students from Migrant Backgrounds into Schools in Europe: National Policies and Measures. Eurydice Report. Publications Office of the European Union.

Gajderowicz T., Jakubowski M., Wrona S. & Alkhadim G. (2023). Is students' teamwork a dreamwork? A new DCE-based multidimensional approach to preferences towards group work. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), 1-13.

Hammersley M., & Atkinson P. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in practice* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Houlston C., & Smith P. K. (2009). The impact of a peer counseling scheme in an all girl secondary school. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 29, 325-344.

James A. (2011). *The use and impact of peer support schemes in schools in the UK, and a comparison with use in Japan and South Korea*. Doctoral dissertation, Goldsmiths, University of London.

Johnson D. W., Johnson R. T., & Smith K. (2007). The state of cooperative learning in postsecondary and professional settings. *Educational psychology review*, 19, 15-29.

Meier E. B. (2021). Designing and using digital platforms for 21st century learning. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 69(1), 217-220.

Muñoz-Martínez Y., Monge-López C., & Torrego Seijo J. C. (2020). Teacher education in cooperative learning and its influence on inclusive education. *Improving Schools*, 23(3), 277-290.

O'Donnell C. R., Lydgate T., & Fo W. S. (1979). The buddy system: Review and follow-up. *Child Behavior Therapy,* 1(2), 161-169.

OECD (2021). *Embedding Values and Attitudes in Curriculum, Shaping a Better Future.* Retrieved from: https://www.oecd.org/education/embedding-values-and-attitudes-in-curriculum-aee2adcd-en.htm

Parsons C., Maras P., Knowles C., Bradshaw V., Hollingworth K., & Monteiro H. (2008). *Formalised peer mentoring pilot evaluation.* Retrieved from: http://www. education. gov. uk/publications/eorderingdownload/dcsf-rr033-r.pdf

Pinson H., & Arnot M. (2007). Sociology of Education and the Wasteland of Refugee Education Research. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28(3), 399-407.

PISA (2022). *Results* (Volume I), The State of Learning and Equity in Education. Retrieved from: https://www2.oecd.org/publications/pisa-2022-results-volume-i-53f23881-en.htm.

Reynolds C. (1977). Buddy System Improves Attendance. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 11(4), 305-306.

Sapon-Shevin M., Ayres B., & Duncan J. (2002). *Cooperative learning and inclusion, Creativity and collaborative learning: A practical guide to empowering students, teachers and families*, red. JS Thousand, RA Villa, AI Nevin, Paul Brookes, Baltimore.

Simões J., Redondo R. D. & Vilas A. F. (2013). A social gamification framework for a K-6 learning platform. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(2), 345-353.

Slater-Simmons E. (2014). *West Sussex Schools Peer Support programme: Peer Support in primary and secondary schools in West Sussex.* Retrieved from http://www.mandbf.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/West-Sussex-Peer-Support-programme_Annual-Report-2013-14.pdf

Smith K. A. (1996). Cooperative learning: Making "groupwork" work. *New directions for teaching and learning*, 71-82.

Thompson C., Russell-Mayhew S., & Saraceni R. (2012). Evaluating the effects of a peer-support model: Reducing negative body esteem and disordered eating attitudes and behaviours in grade eight girls. *Eating disorders*, 20(2), 113-126.

Thompson F., Robinson S. & Smith P. (2011). *Cyberbullying in the UK: an evaluation of some intervention procedures.*

Thurmond V. (2001). The Point of Triangulation. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 33(3), 253-258.

Tzani-Pepelasi C., Ioannou M., Synnott J., & McDonnell D. (2019). Peer support at schools: The buddy approach as a prevention and intervention strategy for school bullying. *International journal of bullying prevention*, 1, 111-123.

UNESCO (2005). *Guidelines for Inclusion.* Ensuring Access to Education for All. Retrieved from: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/sites/default/files/Guidelines_for_Inclusion_UNESCO_2006.pdf.

WEF report: Schools of the Future Defining New Models of Education for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Retrieved from: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Schools_of_the_Future_ Report_2019.pdf

VII.

Face the challenges together: peer to peer learning among Ukrainian children in Bulgaria and Norway as a way of facing the challenges of new migration situation together

Valeria Ilareva, Maren Folkvord Svendsen, OlgaKolot, Tina Mathisen
Kalina Slavova, Justyna Bell, Viktoria Stakhova-Senik, Hanna Velykova

Introduction

This chapter looks at the practical challenges that refugee children from Ukraine face towards their inclusion in schools in Bulgaria and Norway. It is written in collaborative partnership by teams from a civil society organisation in Bulgaria that provides direct legal aid and information to refugees (the Foundation for Access to Rights - FAR) and an academic institution in Norway (the Oslo Metropolitan University). The practical challenges reported in Norway are based upon empirical data from teacher interviews or the observation notes of academic researchers. The source of reference for the content on Bulgaria is the practical insight from the process of direct assistance by FAR to Ukrainian refugees. Three of the authors from Bulgaria are refugees from Ukraine themselves, some of them being parents to pupils.

The main purpose of this chapter is to raise awareness about the importance of working together in order to support refugee children in their inclusion. It proposes a solution-oriented approach, applying inter alia the lenses of peer-to-peer and buddy system methods of learning. Cooperative learning and platforms based on the buddy method such as the KIDS4ALLL platform have the potential to battle the practical problems which refugee children face when entering the classroom.

According to recent Eurydice data (2019) there are three main categories of educational challenges that migrant children are facing upon their arrival in the host context: challenges directly linked to the migratory process, i.e. adaption to the new environment, rules and values, etc.; challenges linked to the socio-economic and political context of the host country, i.e. policies; and challenges linked to learner participation in the formal, non-formal

and informal educational contexts, i.e. missing language provision, insufficient learning and socio-emotional support, lacking home-school cooperation, unsatisfactory trained educators (KIDS4ALLL, 2021, pp. 4-5).

The military aggression of the Russian Federation in Ukraine since early 2022 has been posing new challenges on many systems in democratic Europe including peace, security and providing sufficient protection and care to hundreds of thousands of refugees from conflict zones. Most of all, the ongoing war in Ukraine threatens the lives and futures of 7.5 million children – terrified, in shock and in desperate need of safety. Millions of people have been forced to emigrate, 80% of them women and children (UNICEF, 2022). Many families are being separated from their loved ones. Taking the time to analyse how exactly the national systems work, how the rights of Ukrainian children are guaranteed and what the reality is, is thus an important stepping stone to reaching a solution for all the practical challenges in education we will be discussing in the following pages.

Following the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, all children arriving in the EU should be able to exercise their rights without discrimination, including receiving the necessary psychological support, health care and access to education. Particular attention should be paid to unaccompanied children. It is important that they are registered immediately on arrival; they should be given full and safe support, ensuring that a representative from child protection services is present as soon as possible. Family tracing should be a priority.

This chapter focuses specifically on the experiences of the Ukrainian children post the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

1. The Ukrainian refugees in two national contexts

In Bulgaria, unprecedented in numbers for our time, the entry of foreign nationals was met by a wave of solidarity, including humanitarian and logistical assistance and accommodation options. Volunteers bore the brunt of the situation, even in the words of government officials. In the first weeks, the priorities in caring for the refugees were the collection and provision of food and basic necessities and initial accommodation. The first days of the Ukrainian crisis in Bulgaria have been days of empathy – humanitarian aid was being organised at full steam across the country. Volunteers travelled to the Romanian border or straight to Ukraine itself to deliver supplies, and on the way back provided transport for at least one family fleeing.

Regulatory changes have been adopted quite quickly, starting from the introduction of the common European decision on the granting of temporary protection with the right to reside and work for Ukrainians, to direct solutions to problems such as the exchange of money and perhaps the most important in the winter months – accommodation. Here again, volunteerism led the way – along the Black sea coast, where many of the refugees went, owners of hotels that were not open in winter decided to open them to accommodate those in need. The state decided to follow this initiative. Thus, most of the Ukrainians who entered and stayed in Bulgaria, which at peak times exceeded 120 thousand people, ended up staying in hotels on the Black Sea coast.

In response to the emergency situation caused by the massive displacement of civilians due to the hostilities on the territory of Ukraine, on the basis of Article 2(2) of the Asylum and Refugees Act and Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022, temporary protection was introduced in Bulgaria. On 10 March 2022, by Decision No 145 of the Council of Ministers, a Programme for the use of humanitarian assistance for persons seeking temporary protection in the Republic of Bulgaria as a result of the hostilities in Ukraine was adopted and approved, which aimed at providing humanitarian assistance for shelter and food to persons granted temporary protection in the Republic of Bulgaria from Ukraine displaced after 24 February 2022. Subsequently, this Programme has been supplemented and amended by Decisions of the Council of Ministers several times. The main changes concerned the amount of money that was determined per hotel, per refugee, and what that amount should include (with and without food), for which the Foundation for Access to Rights was litigating. The main obstacle to the integration process of the persons who were included in the humanitarian program was the risk of being relocated at the end of the Program.

Currently, there are over 5,500 Ukrainian refugees accommodated in hotels and state bases in Bulgaria (Bulgaria for Ukraine, Website homepage 2024). It is hoped that soon a new Programme for Humanitarian Support and Integration of Refugees from Ukraine with Temporary Protection will be adopted by the Council of Ministers. The programme is at the final stage and is being prepared by the National Operational Staff. It envisages that Ukrainian citizens who are proven to be vulnerable will continue to benefit from the possibility of free accommodation in state and hotel facilities, possibly until the end of the temporary protection status, which has been extended for another year – until March 2025.

In Norway, there has been a unified system of registration of asylum applications at the National Arrivals Centre at Råde, since late 2020. The large influx of the Ukrainians in February 2022 following the Russian invasion of Ukraine led to many adjustments to streamline the application process. On 11 March 2022, Norway followed the decision of the EU Council to trigger the Temporary Protection Directive granting a temporary collective protection to Ukrainians. Norway has a long experience receiving refugees, however the Ukrainian case differed in several aspects.

According to a study conducted among Ukrainian refugees between May and July 2022, 65% of the Ukrainian refugees had reported that they had some kind of pre-existing network in Norway prior to arriving (Harnes et al., 2022, p. 13). Since many Ukrainians were residing with their contacts across Norway, in March 2022 new registration centres in police districts across Norway were opened in other parts of Norway. As many Ukrainians expressed belonging to pre-existing networks, many of them were allowed to reside in private accommodation outside of the reception centres during their registration and application process.

2. The Ukrainian children in two educational systems

In Bulgaria, the right to education of all children (both Bulgarian and foreign) is guaranteed by the Constitution, but it is also an obligation for all children under 16 years of age[1]. Although temporary protection was not included in the ordinances related to education of foreigners in Bulgaria, the instructions published by the Ministry of Education for the enrollment of children who are holders of temporary protection in kindergartens and schools essentially covered the same requirements[2]. However, some specific aspects of the Ukrainian refugee crisis and the temporary protection regime collided with the available legislation regulating the refugees' basic rights, leading to hindrances for the effective exercise of the right to education.

At the beginning of each school year the child's general practitioner (GP) has to send an update to the school's medical professional about the state of vaccination of the child. This has been a twofold obstacle for Ukrainian children enrolling in Bulgarian schools. On the one hand, some families

---

1 Art. 53, paras. 1-2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria.
2 Ministry of Education. Children and students who have received protection. Available in Bulgarian at: https://web.mon.bg/bg/100681.

could not manage to sign up to a GP[3]. On the other hand, there were not enough vaccines to accommodate the massive need for them at the beginning of the school year. Thus many families had to resort to either searching for documents back home or hoping that there would be enough vaccines for all.

This atmosphere of uncertainty was reinforced by the difficulties related to the administrative process of enrolling itself. The initial question asked by many parents was "Are there enough places in schools for our children?". The answer was definitely "no" as the enrollment was implemented above the approved state enrolment plan.

As previously noted, compulsory education in Bulgaria extends from the school year when a child turns 7 until they reach the age of 16. The Bulgarian educational system is structured into two main stages: primary education, encompassing classes I to VII, and the secondary stage of education, covering classes VIII to XII. The enrollment process is implemented through the Regional Directorate of Education with the assistance of a parent, guardian or custodian. Children are required to possess an ID number, which is assigned upon receiving a temporary protection card. There are two ways to be enrolled in a Bulgarian school. The procedure varies depending on whether the child has a document for a completed grade, level or degree of education or other proof of previous education.

If the child does not have documents from Ukraine as proof of previous education, he/she is enrolled in school without recognition of proof of previous education. In this scenario parents or legal representatives of children submit the enrollment application and within 7 days the Regional Directorate of Education refers the child to a school according to the child's place of residence and the parents' wishes. After that, in 7 days again, the school director appoints by order a committee to interview and refer the child to a particular school level. The committee interviews the child and draws up a report with a proposal for the class in which the child should continue his/her education. The protocol and the interview card are submitted to the Coordination Team, which has been established in each school for the admission of foreign children. The Coordinating team prepares a report to the Director, who issues an instruction to the teachers to provide additional

---

3   Patient's portal. Presented The report of the Joint Needs Assessment Mission of the Bulgarian Health System in the Context of the Crisis in Ukraine, 23.03.2023; available in Bulgarian at: https://www.portalnapacienta.bg/home/caus s/world-health-organization/представиха-доклад-от-съвместната-ми/.

training as needed and informs the parent. Finally, in 3 days, the Director issues an Order for the admission of the child. This procedure has been manageable by refugees, thus 2250 children had been signed up to Bulgarian schools[4]. It's worth mentioning however that the number of enrolled children in primary schools is bigger than that of children in secondary and higher education, as Ukrainian students graduate 2 years earlier compared to Bulgarian and many families preferred that their children finish their education in the Ukrainian system online.

Children from 1st to 4th grade are enrolled in school by age without validation of acquired competencies, i.e., without taking entrance exams. The difficulties come in the process of validating competences, which is relevant to the pupils from 5th to 10th grade. If the latter do not have any documents from Ukraine to prove the obtaining of the previous educational level, they should validate their previously acquired competencies for a completed class or stage of education by the end of the school year in which they were enrolled. They are entitled to be enrolled in the higher grade upon successful completion of the grade in which they were enrolled during the relevant academic year and to transfer up to 3 subjects for validation from the previous grade or stage of education until the completion of the relevant stage of education, either lower secondary or the stage they are currently enrolled in.

The above described validation process has raised one of the main concerns in practice. Parents have been very concerned about the validation process and feared that their child would not have enough time to master the language. That is why they preferred to stay in Ukrainian school (online) rather than to overcome all the formalities of validation.

Pupils from the high stage of education, i.e. pupils from 11th-12th school grade, found themselves in another situation. Due to the economical challenges faced by refugees, older pupils prefer to start to work rather than to continue their studies. In our practice we have seen cases where children from Ukraine were working while studying in Ukrainian schools online. Another factor is that in Ukraine the high school finishes in the 11th year, which is one year less than in Bulgaria.

The second procedure for enrolling in Bulgarian schools concerns the

---

4   Darik News. МОН разкри колко украински деца посещават български училища и детски градини. 16.01.2023, available in Bulgarian at: https://dariknews.bg/novini/bylgariia/mon-razkri-kolko-ukrainski-deca-poseshtavat-bylgarski-uchilishta-i-detski-gradini-2336278

cases when the child has proof of previous education – this proof of completed grade, level or degree of education firstly needs to be recognized for compliance with the school education in Bulgaria. It should be noted that Bulgarian schools have accepted the photo of documents of obtained education. If the child has documents of previous education and should be enrolled in years I-XI, the pupil's parents or representatives submit the application to the school director and within 10 days, the director issues an order of recognition and enrollment at the school or refusal of recognition. The recognized year, the subjects studied and the grades equated to the Bulgarian grades shall be entered in the order. In this case the pupils do not take equivalency exams. As to the years VII-XII, the enrolment is by application to a committee of experts at the Regional Department of Education. Within one month from the submission of the documents, a decision on recognition or refusal of recognition is taken. A certificate is issued stating the grades recognised and the equivalence exams to be taken. The time limit for taking the equivalence exams shall be no later than the end of the academic year in question and, if there are less than three months to complete the school year, no later than the end of the following school year. The equivalence exams shall be taken at the school.

There is a possibility for pupils from VII-XII grades to evade the equivalence exams by repeating the last recognized year and many children are enrolled in this way. At the same time, they prefer to continue their studies in Ukraine in parallel, due to the fact that the school education there lasts for 11 years. This is one year less than the Bulgarian one and allows them to get their secondary education earlier.

Regardless of whether they graduate at 18 or 19 years of age, Ukrainian refugees have hindered access to Bulgarian universities, similarly to persons holding international protection. They are treated as third country nationals, for whom the university fees are very high and hardly affordable.

In Norway, all children have equal rights to education. Also, asylum seeking children both have the right and duty to attend school, if it is likely that the child is to stay in Norway for more than three months. Municipalities must provide training to learners as quickly as possible, normally within one month. Due to the relatively large number of refugee children arriving to Norway from Ukraine, the government has however adopted temporary changes to this rule, temporarily extending the deadline to three months after arrival. The reason for this is to give the schools some leeway to mobilise resources, obtain space for new learners and recruit trained staff. In a survey conducted by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and

Training 83 percent of the municipalities reported that they had an education offer in place within the first four weeks after arrival, while 14 percent reported that it was in place within 12 weeks.

Three percent did not know how long it took before the Ukrainian learners were enrolled in school[5].

The decision of how to organize the training for newly arrived learners lies with local municipalities and the schools themselves. School owners (i.e., the municipalities) can organize introductory training in different ways. The most common is to place newly arrived learners in mainstream classrooms (direct immersion) providing extra Norwegian language training on an hourly basis. Some choose to have introductory schools, where all newly arrived learners in the municipality are placed. Others again, choose to create separate introductory classes in the local school, where the focus is on learning the Norwegian language but also providing subject teaching in a basic language. This implies large differences in the educational introduction depending on size of the municipality, the number and background of newly arrived learners and minority language speaking learners, economic resources, and access to teachers with the right qualifications (Lødding et al., 2022).

Learners with a first language other than Norwegian have the right to adapted language training until they have sufficient skills in the Norwegian language to follow the ordinary education in school. The Education Act (§ 2-8) allows the organization of all or parts of the training in separate groups, classes, or schools for up to two years. Normally both parents and learners must consent to such placement outside the mainstream classroom. However, in the case of the Ukrainian learners this is also a rule that has been temporarily changed to give the municipalities the right to organize the training in a way that is compatible with the resources they have in hand. In some municipalities learners from Ukraine are placed in separate introduction classes with other Ukrainian learners only. This has been done in both primary, lower, and upper secondary school.

If necessary, minority language learners also have the right to bilingual subject training and/or first language training (The Education Act § 2-8). However, in practice, this right is often interpreted differently by different school leaders. Some interpret this in a strict sense where only those who

---

5   https://www.udir.no/tall-og-forskning/finn-forskning/rapporter/2023/rapport-uke-10-barnehage—og-grunnskoletilbudet-til-nyankomne-barn-og-unge-fra-ukraina/vurdering-av-grunnskoletilbudet/

have a documented learning disability are provided with such training, while other schools, often schools who have a large proportion of minority language speaking learners, try to provide first language training also for other learners who can benefit from it. In general, first language teaching has a weak position in Norwegian schools, despite the documented benefits that this is shown to have for minority speaking learners both academically and in relation to learners' identity processes (Cummins, 2017; Ryen et al., 2005).

In relation to the recent arrival of Ukrainian children, schools reported that their greatest challenge has been to recruit personnel with the right competences, particularly language competence as well as second language teaching competence. They also reported difficulties in finding translators to take part in meetings with learners and parents[6]. In an interview-based study conducted in March 2023 by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training with school owners and school leaders in three municipalities, school leaders reported that they at that point experienced capacity challenges regardless of organizational model. Municipalities who normally enrolled all newly arrived learners in an introductory school now needed to place newly arrived learners also in mainstream classes in their local schools. Municipalities who initially had placed newly arrived learners in mainstream classes experienced that the classes were becoming too big and needed to organize additional classes for incoming Ukrainian learners[7].

In a recent study with children in refugee families settled in Norwegian municipalities (Mathisen et al., 2023), the children from Ukraine generally described their welcoming at school as good and that they were happy with their school situation. Most reported having friends in their introduction class but were often socially and pedagogically separated from the rest of the school. Very few reported having Norwegian friends in school or in the neighbourhood. The children in the study wished for more meeting places and activities in the schools where learners from introduction classes could meet with other learners in a natural way. Even though many of the Ukrainian learners reported that they thought that the learning level in the Nor-

---

6 https://www.udir.no/tall-og-forskning/finn-forskning/rapporter/2023/rapport-uke-10-barnehage—og-grunnskoletilbudet-til-nyankomne-barn-og-unge-fra-ukraina/vurdering-av-grunnskoletilbudet/

7 https://www.udir.no/tall-og-forskning/finn-forskning/rapporter/2023/opplaringstilbudet-til-barn-og-unge-fra-ukraina-dybdeintervjuer/5.-grunnskoletilbudet/organisering-av-grunnskoletilbudet-i-kommunen/

wegian school was easier and behind in relation to the Ukrainian schools, very few reported that they followed the Ukrainian curriculum online. The few that did, explained that this was because they and their families had a strong urge to return to Ukraine once the war was over. Those who did not said that it would be too much for them to follow both the Norwegian and the Ukrainian school simultaneously.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2022, p. 10) has developed recommendations on a broad range of issues revolving the inclusion of newly arrived learners targeting school owners on municipal and county level. These are among other guidelines regarding cooperation between home and school, cooperation between introductory class and ordinary class, choice of curriculum and mapping of the learners' competences. In addition, the general recommendation regarding facilitation of flexible solutions for each learner as well as a safe and good school environment revolves around all learners at all levels.

The school owner has a duty to map the newly arrived learners' skills in the Norwegian language before they are given special language training or are placed in an introductory class (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2022). The mapping should be conducted at several stages of the learners training to be able to decide when the learners' skills are sufficient enough to follow the ordinary educational track. The directorate has provided guidelines on how to conduct the mappings, however, it is up to each school leader to decide if they want to follow these guidelines or develop their own routines (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021).

3. Practical problems in schools in Bulgaria

The following section is based on the theoretical works of O.B. Stolyarenko[8] and G.V. Borozdyna[9], and on the practical experience of the authors of the chapter.

---

8   Stolyarenko, O.B. (2012), *Personality psychology. Study guide*, p. 280
9   Бороздіна, Г. В. (2013) Психологія і етика ділового спілкування. https://stud.com.ua/7213/etika_ta_estetika/psihologiya_i_etika_dilovogo_spilkuvannya; also Borozdyna, G. B. (2000), *Psychology of bBusiness Communication*, INFRA M., p. 224.

3.1 *Administrative issues*

For refugee children from Ukraine the new school year is also the beginning of another uncertain school year, as more than half of children from preschool to high school age are not enrolled in the national education system. Preschool and secondary school-age children are the most likely to miss out on education. Language barriers, difficult access to school and an overburdened education system are among the reasons for low enrolment rates.

The administrative obstacles that refugees face are several. Among them we can point out the following:

- Collecting and submitting the necessary documents for school enrolment

Not all children are able to provide proof of previous education which is required by the law in Bulgaria. Quite a few people come from the occupied territories in Ukraine where it is not possible to get even copies of the documents. As elaborated above, without proof it is possible to enrol in school, but by repeating the last school year. In Bulgaria school education lasts for 12 years, while in Ukraine 11. We also have to keep in mind that the education systems in Ukraine and Bulgaria differ in structure, programs and requirements.

Proof documents are in Ukrainian and a translation into Bulgarian should be provided. Refugees do not always have the ability to pay for this translation, as well as provide legalisation, which is done by the Ukrainian Consulate.

- A lack of clear information about the recognition process

If parents and children are not informed about the recognition process, this may lead to unnecessary delays in starting the school year or joining the education system. This delayed start might have an impact on children's academic success. Failure to understand the recognition process and lack of clarity about the future can lead to stress and psychological difficulties for both parents and children. This stress can have a negative impact on their adaptation and success in the new educational environment.

Effective communication and the provision of clear and accessible information by schools, local authorities and support organisations are key to overcoming these problems. Information sharing and cooperation between all parties involved is a key element for the successful inclusion of Ukrainian refugee children into the education system of their new country.

3.2 *Language barrier*

One of the difficulties for Ukrainian refugee children in Bulgaria is the language barrier. Although it is provided under Art. 8 of the Ordinance 3/2017 on the conditions and procedures for reception and training of persons seeking or granted international protection, additional training in Bulgarian as a foreign language is not always feasible after refugee children are enrolled in school. In most cases children are sent to school without language training and face misunderstanding by classmates, teachers and the environment. The result is that pupils with a high level of knowledge fall into the category of underachievers.

To learn successfully, children need to understand the language in which the lessons are taught, and have the skills to write, read and speak. If these aspects are not present, there is no desire to learn. Parents' intention to go back to Ukraine results in children continuing their education in Ukrainian online schools, and not finding it necessary to learn the language as the child is not attending a Bulgarian school. The language barrier affects children's integration outside of educational institutions, thus hindering communication and social inclusion. It affects later stages of development. In the period of adolescence, due to the lack of language skills, there may be a psychological reluctance to assimilate into the environment. Parents of younger children, on the contrary, observe that their children quickly integrate into a foreign language environment. Schools attended by children of Ukrainian refugees are prone to social tensions. One of the tasks of state education programmes and local authorities is to ensure full social integration of children and young people so that they are not perceived as foreign.

Language barriers are a major obstacle to children's acceptance in society, while at the same time school is an opportunity to communicate, make friends and get help from teachers.

3.3 *Community isolation*

Community isolation can be a significant problem for the adaptation of Ukrainian refugee children in Bulgaria. This type of isolation can manifest itself on several levels and have different impacts on children and their families:

3.4 *Language barrier and communication*

Language difficulties can contribute to children's isolation in school and society. Communication difficulties with teachers and peers can lead to feelings of exclusion and alienation.

3.5 *Cultural differences*

Lack of understanding and acceptance of cultural differences can exacerbate the isolation of Ukrainian refugee children. Specific customs, traditions and aspirations may differ and create difficulties for integration into the new environment.

3.6 *Lack of a social network*

Families of refugee children can often have difficulty establishing a social network in their new community. Lack of friends and support can worsen the adaptation process.

3.7 *Fear and xenophobia*

Sometimes, fear of the unknown and prejudice by other students and society can lead to the isolation of Ukrainian children. This can manifest itself in a form of exclusion and discrimination.

3.8 *Lack of information and resources*

If refugee families do not receive enough information and resources for integration, this can make it difficult for them to integrate into the community. Lack of access to education and social services can undermine attempts to adapt.

3.9 *Bullying*

Bullying is psychological harassment that intimidates, humiliates and causes fear in the victim. Bullying of Ukrainian children is not uncommon, both by children and adults. There are conflicts on ethnic grounds or on the basis of appearance, including on the basis of the war with Russia, insults for not knowing the language or not understanding the local culture.

Discrimination against children on ethnic grounds is an issue of great concern. There is cyber-bullying, harassment and intimidation using digital technologies: social networks, gaming platforms, mobile phones. For example, peer groups are set up at school, where a child from Ukraine is selected to be bullied, the group is called "Angry Ukrainian" and messages are sent that demean the dignity of the victim. Internet harassment is carried out by displaying and sending rude messages online, posting personal information in the public domain in order to harm or defame the victim. Victims of online bullying can lose self-esteem, which can lead to complex mental health problems.

Ukrainian children perceive bullying acutely and painfully, it is preceded by vulnerability stemming from various factors – change of residence, moving from a country where there is war. Bullying is very dangerous as it escalates into physical aggression and discrimination. Often the child experiencing bullying does not want to attend school or class. Against this background, children may experience depression and suicidal thoughts.

It is necessary to hold meetings with the parents of refugee children to inform them about the types of bullying their children may encounter or have already encountered, the stages of solving the problem, the organizations they can turn to and the contacts for support (legal, psychological, helplines for children, parents), to organize meetings with the police. In cases of bullying of children in schools, parents should not intervene in the conflict and deal with the perpetrators themselves, as this could lead to criminal liability. Parents of refugee children from Ukraine need to be informed as much as possible so that the situation does not worsen and a proper solution to the problem is found.

The attitudes of some political parties in Bulgaria stir society and unfortunately the final recipients are children. Active interaction of the school with parents and students is an important task as a preventive measure against such situations.

3.10 *Psychological barriers*

The war forced many people to leave their home country and move abroad. Having left abroad is not as reassuring as it might seem. People are safe, but parents, including children, face other problems: linguistic, economic, depressive psychological state, feeling of rejection by the new environment. Refugee children from Ukraine are forced to feel fear, to lose their loved ones, to leave their homes and environment and to adapt quickly to new conditions. Furthermore, many refugee children displaced from Ukraine have witnessed the invasion of their country, some no longer even have a home to return to and are in a state of limbo.

There are children who have faced psychological trauma and are in a severe psychological state. Such children and adolescents are depressive and experience feelings of being "out of place", feelings of fear or shame. These negative attitudes interfere with integration, adaptation, successful learning and communication.

There are not enough child specialists in Bulgaria to work with war trauma. Childrens' childhood has been taken away, they have witnessed or participated in terrible events (death, shelling, bomb shelters, etc.) It is important to apply a comprehensive approach to children affected by the war, to provide support and protection, to help them overcome psychological barriers together with parents, educational institutions, various organisations and child psychologists.

4. The practical problems in schools in Norway

In the Norwegian case, we report issues/problems identified through teacher interviews, supplemented by the analysis of researchers' ethnographic notes from observations in three introduction classes across two different lower secondary schools. There were fifteen learners in each class, and five teachers involved in the study.

During testing of the KIDS4ALLL-platform, ethnographical observations in classroom were carried out by 2-3 researchers in each session, resulting in fifteen sessions in total (five in each class), two hours per session. The three introductory classes we have studied consist of a diverse group of newly arrived children at the age between 12 and 16. There were 45 youths in total, 15 in each class. The youths come from countries all around the world and many of them had arrived in Norway between 2-6 months

at the time of the field work, during testing the platform of Pilot 1 (October-November 2022) and Pilot 2 (April-May 2023).

At the end of observations of each class, we conducted individual interviews with each teacher. Together, we conducted interviews with five teachers and each interview lasted about one hour. We used an interview guide and audio recorded each time, upon receiving written consent of the teachers. The interviews were transcribed into Norwegian. The interviewed teachers had represented a very diverse set of experiences and competences in working with newly arrived migrant children:

- Teacher 1 has been a teacher for several years prior to the interview but had no previous experience in being a contact teacher in an introductory class and at the time of the interview she had only been in this position for four months.
- Teacher 2 has been a teacher for a long time but only had experience in being a teacher in majority classes. At the time of the interview, she has only started working as a teacher in the introduction class.
- Teacher 3 has had a long experience of being a teacher for newly arrived learners in an introductory class. She also has intercultural competence/education and Norwegian as a second language.
- Teacher 4 also had a long experience of being a teacher for a diverse group of newly arrived learners and was educated in intercultural competence and Norwegian as a second language.
- Teacher 5 has long experience of being a teacher, but she has just recently started being a teacher of specific subjects, mathematics, and natural science, in introductory classes.

The two Norwegian case studies: School A and School B

The two schools chosen as case studies for this research present quite contrasting experiences and challenges in the reception of the newly arrived migrant children. School A is located in an affluent, middle-class, white area in the western part of Oslo, whereas School B was in the eastern part of Oslo, located in the area with a diverse population including many groups with migration background. This meant that the school B had a long experience organising the reception of the newly arrived migrant children and the teachers there had established an extensive collaboration with the support services meeting the needs of the pupils. Research shows that newly arrived learners prefer schools with a great diversity of ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds, because it is easier for them to find

own sense of belonging in such environment (Lynnebakke et al., 2020, p. 11). The 'school B' has chosen to follow the cooperative learning model (CL-model) as a strategy to help the newly arrived pupils to adapt to the new school system and make the transition to a regular class easier. The CL-model is a tool for making friendships and a good class environment. Thus, every class at the school is organised so that the pupils are always sitting and working in groups of three or four in the classrooms.

The school A had very little prior experience of organising an introduction class for newly arrived learners and the teacher chosen for this task had also no previous training of how to work with newly arrived children. The transition strategy chosen in school A, was to organise visits in mainstream classes linked to a chosen subject.

The Norwegian Centre for Research Data reviewed and recommended our application for ethical approval in May 2022. We collected consent for the learners' participation in our study in a written consent-form from the youths themselves and from their parents (or those in charge). Some of the learners were under the age of 16, therefore we also had to get consent from their parents. In addition, the teachers also gave us their consent to participate in classroom-observations and interviews.

The educators' perspectives on day to day challenges

Introductory classes contain a diverse group of pupils, when it comes to backgrounds, culture, language, experiences and individual challenges. Some of them have refugee backgrounds, others came to Norway as children of work migrants. Several of them are in contact with the child welfare services. The challenges are many. To succeed in being a teacher in an introductory class you are dependent on a support system and the right tools and resources, both socially and educationally. Other teachers also spoke about the challenges related to the fact that the learners in the introductory classes come with a large baggage of difficult experiences and often continue to have a hard situation at home:

> The challenge is to have enough time for everyone. Because there are many who are struggling with a lot of stuff. So, working in an introductory class […] you have to be aware of everything, the whole student, and help them with everything, really […] so much more than the usual things, and it's like this for all teachers, but to a much greater extent in this type of class, I think. (Teacher 3, School B)

Thus, the practical help that reaches beyond the school situation becomes a large part of the teacher-learner relationship. Close collaborations with support institutions such as school psychologists, public health nurses, police, child welfare service, etc. is of great importance for the teachers. The support system around the introductory classes varies greatly between the schools based on the school experience and the level of collaboration they have established with the different services.

At school A, the teacher stated that she was not trained to be a teacher of an introductory class and lacked necessary competences. Nor has she gotten any courses or support of how to educate newly arrived pupils in Norwegian as a second language, and to cope with difficulties when it comes to diversity of the youths and possible refugee backgrounds with traumas or psychological difficulties. She felt very alone with the responsibility of this class.

> *It's nothing, we haven't gotten any courses, and nothing about things like trauma and stuff. For example, I have a pupil who comes from Syria now, I don't know what he… he's a great pupil, but I have no idea what he's gone through.*

The teacher was under a large pressure to follow the curriculum in her work with her pupils, and she had to make sure that the pupils progressed in learning Norwegian. At the same time, she was preoccupied with the wellbeing of the learners. She repeatedly emphasised mental health as an important aspect of work in this type of class. Simultaneously, she felt that she was not in a position to report issues related to the pupils, mental health, the school leaders. Such reports are built for recording pupil's learning-level and are not adjusted to include the other aspects of their lives. Despite the stress she felt about following the curriculum and grading the pupils, the teacher tried to develop a better social and emotional environment in the classroom, by organizing small excursions, like going to museums or arranging dinner together after school hours.

The teacher in school A was not aware of any available support system for the class. Moreover, she was not informed whether there was a school psychologist she could reach out to. All in all, the teacher expressed a general lack of support and resources set aside to help her in working in this class. She was well aware of her inability and lack of competences in providing any emotional support to the pupils.

On the contrary, the teachers at school B have established a good net-

work of support around the class and they know who to ask and where to seek help for various problems the pupils face.

> *In the introduction class, we have an extra close collaboration with everyone from district psychologists, HKS [Health Center for Gender and Sexuality], to Queer World [an organisation working with the rights of the LGBTIQ+ people with a minority background], to the police, child protection, everything.... yes, so when we have this experience, that's when my job doesn't get so heavy, because then I know how to navigate and where – we make our own plans for, it's kind of like, "No, we can't send that learner there because then it'll be like that, etc.», we're kind of designing a separate plan for everybody then. This is built up through experience then. There is a limit to what you can be trained in, you have to build experience. Yes, I feel like we have that support. That network and support around the class. So the learners who are well looked after.*
> (Teacher 4, School B)

The teachers at school B also have a close collaboration with "Språksenteret" (The Language Center for Intensive Norwegian Language Education), where they are also regularly offered courses strengthening their competences in teaching in a class with such a great diversity of languages, cultures, etc. and on how to deal with pupils who struggle with traumas and difficult experiences. This support and frameworks around the introductory classes at this school have taken place in recent years. The teacher (4) at school B, who has most experience with being a teacher of newly arrived pupils and been there for many years, says that in the beginning she had to figure everything out herself and she even found courses she asked the management if she could attend. But today, this school is one of the few in Norway with so much experience when it comes to organizing and dealing with pupils in introductory classes. The teachers at school B also have the competence and education for teaching newly arrived pupils with Norwegian as a second language, and intercultural pedagogics.

Teacher 1 at school A also says that it is difficult to navigate in all the information and the possible support in this field, especially when she does not have the right educational background. Teacher 1 expresses that she felt left to her own, with no support from the school leaders, in addition to not having any other teachers at that school to collaborate with or discuss things with. This class was in a way, not an integral part of the school as a whole and not entirely equal to the ordinary classes at the school, making her position in-between. The importance of collaboration and experience

sharing between teachers seems to be enormous, and all of teachers we interviewed also emphasises this for the teachers of introductory classes to succeed.

As mentioned earlier school A practiced visits to mainstream classes to make the transition for the newly arrived children to a regular class easier. The learners have the chance to hospitalize in most of the subjects, but often it is depended on the learner to master a certain level in Norwegian. It could also be an opportunity for pupils who had particularly good grades in a subject, and therefore got the opportunity to follow "an ordinary class" of this subject. The subject "food and health" was an opportunity to join although the learner did not speak Norwegian at any level.

> During recess, they [the learners in the introductory class] are very much to themselves. Visits to mainstream classes have helped with that […] this has helped a little with it, but the learners in the introductory class are together there also. So, it's… There are quite a lot of groupings. The classroom is also physically a little by itself, from the other regular classes.
> (Teacher 1, school A)

These visits can be chaotic for the teachers, never knowing who and when the different learners were going to the other classes. Some of the learners had visits to a mainstream class as a regular arrangement linked to the given subjects, which they were following each week, others tried it out randomly. This strategy can lead the learners from the introductory class feeling inferior in a mainstream class during these sessions, only on the basis that they do not know Norwegian "good enough". The learners then, are categorized or identified only based on their Norwegian. In comparison, through collaborative learning and peer-to-peer learning method, the diversity of different languages of newly arrived learners are being used as a resource in the classroom.

In school B, they did not have the same stress and pressure to follow the curriculum as the teacher at School A. The teachers here had several sessions in the school hours where the only goal was to develop the pupils' social and emotional competence, using the collaborate learning-model, where they got to know each other better, building an understanding and respect for each other. Learning Norwegian in this school became a latent goal rather than the main – or only goal. At school B it was the social and emotional factors, and the pupils' well-being that permeated the school lessons and the organizations of their everyday school life:

> *And we also often use that kind of social structures or tasks that they are given just for them to collaborate, either in the group or the whole class – where it's all about the social really. That they get to know each other, respect each other and understand each other. […] We work very hard to make them feel safe. Create good relationships with everyone. It needs to be in place first – it's the most important thing that they feel safe and well. The curriculum is secondary, but of course there is a mix.* (Teacher 3, School B)

Peer-to-peer learning

Peer-to-peer and buddy system methods have been effective means of addressing and overcoming some of the challenges faced by the newly arrived migrant children. They help to promote friendship and socio-emotional skills (Jordan & Le Métais, 1997), better acceptance of differences and can foster a greater sense of belonging and a more inclusive learning community (Baloche & Brody, 2017). Peer collaboration among children in various educational settings shall consider the complexity of children's needs and respond "positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 12).

In the Norwegian classroom observations of three different introductory classes, where we were testing the KIDS4ALLL-platform, the learners were going to work within a "buddy-system". Buddy-system means that the learners are working together in pairs or in larger groups. During these sessions we could see the benefits of "the buddy system", as a tool and a strategy for newly arrived children in the process of integrating them in a new school system in a foreign country (KIDS4ALLL, 2021, p. 7).

As described earlier, in the class at school A, the pupils were sitting two and two together in the classroom. Their work and class-sessions weren't always designed for the pupils to work together. The teacher said that often the learners wanted to work alone, and sometimes she allowed them to do so. The learners weren't used to collaborate with each other, and during the classrooms-observations, it was sometimes difficult to get them to cooperate with each other, although we tried to encourage them.

The learners in the class at school A were very skilled at translating the content of the platform using different programs on their mobile and PCs. Some of them were very solution-oriented in the translation between different languages, and they figured out how to understand both each other and the tasks on the platform. In their work on the platform, learning about

multilingual competence, the pupils were really interested and engaged, and they asked each other about words and phrases in different languages: "how do you say this in Somali?". The pupils possess a lot of knowledge and competence from different languages and cultures from countries all around the world. Thus, their different knowledge became something that could make them talk across buddy teams, discuss tasks together and learn from each other. We observed that group work and cooperation between pupils can create a good dynamic in the class. During the sessions the pupils walked between buddy teams, drew inspiration from each other and saw other ways to solve the tasks, and they could ask each other how they did this and that task. But as mentioned, several of the pupils in this class started to work individually. It was not the same "cooperating framework" around this class like in the classes at school B.

During the observations, we felt the open atmosphere in the classrooms at school B. Because the room was organized so that the pupils were sitting in groups of three or four, it created a more "free and open" space. Inviting the pupils to talk to each other, discussing their work and figuring out how to solve the task together. They were always collaborating with each other in the work of the learning platform – two and two, or the whole group of three or four. Several pupils in "mottak 1" do not speak Norwegian well – only a few words. The pupils talk to each other in their own language with google translate and some speak English with each other. There were two brand new pupils, they had only been in the class for about two weeks. The two boys came from different countries and spoke different languages. But they worked very well together, always creating a joint work. They helped each other to understand the tasks. One of them is pretty good at English, so he understands more than his "buddy" and helps him better understand. They used "Google translate" and body language to communicate with each other.

> I think that the fact that they are sitting so close together and that they have to get used to the fact that they have to cooperate with most people, means that they will get to know each other better, which will also lead to them understanding each other better. They're from all over the world and they're being stowed into a room, and they're kind of have to get to know each other and try to have a good time. And we find that when they get used to collaborating both educationally and socially, then ... Of course, there are some that don't fit together so well, but I definitely think that it helps to have a better class environment. (Teacher 3, School B)

Friendships among the pupils are the most important for them to feel belongingness and a sense of community in school, but also in their life outside school, in their leisure time and in their neighbourhood. Everything the teachers in school B do in their work with their learners is well thought through, like one of the teachers says (4): "[…] I think a lot about friendship, because the most important thing for them when they come here is to make a friend, that's more important than learning ABC, sort of."

Another teacher from school B says:

> […] When we have new learners at the start of the school year […], we have quick meetings with the learners and parents, kind of like starter conversations, find out what the learners like, yes, get to know them simply, and get them to join leisure activities. We spend a lot of time on that. […] with those [learners] who are brand new, we try to connect them with a learner who has been here longer, maybe who knows the same language, has the same interest, or something – some kind of connection. And there may also be learners who we know have switched to a mainstream class. They're then given the responsibility to kind of like "oh yes, he likes football, he lives in the same place as you, can you take him to training?", for example, and things like that. And we experience that, it creates bonds between the learners, and that they quickly get to know other learners and other Norwegian youths. That is a very important part of it. (Teacher 3)

The need of pairing the learners with others living in the same area in order to extend the interactions to outside of school activities has been a recurring theme throughout the interviews with the teachers. The buddy system is recognised as a valuable and effective contribution to the children s wellbeing. The Norwegian Psychological Association (NPF) made a statement in 2017, based on a research report published by the Norwegian national youth council (LNU) LiS Sluttrapport versjon 2 (lnu.no), that buddy arrangement can play a key role in supporting pupils' learning of life skills and their social and psychological wellbeing (Gir innhold til livsmestringsfaget – Aktuelt – Aktuelt – Foreningen – Norsk Psykologforening [psykologforeningen.no]).

The new learners get to know other youths who have been in the school for longer and it can also be learners that have started in a mainstream class, and thus gain helpers in the school environment, which contributes to the feeling of safety. Teacher 5 at school B gave us an example of how this can play out in practice:

> *Now, someone told me that they [the learners] have started some football stuff once or twice a week, it was an initiative they've started even. So, I think that's the most important thing to make them want to talk to each other. […] being able to communicate because they are friends is a very good motivation to learn Norwegian...* (Teacher 5)

During our fieldwork in the two different schools, we got different feedbacks on the KIDS4ALLL-learning platform, depending on the teachers' experiences of being a teacher in a diverse class. All the teachers we talked to, were supportive and positive to the collaboration method used when working on the platform. If the platform were helpful for them or not, variated between the teachers. Teacher 1 at school A, with less experience, was glad to use the platform as a new learning resource that she could use in her class. The teachers at school B already had a lot of learning resources available and were familiar with similar content in other online resources for multicultural classes. Teacher 4 had some comments on the KIDS4ALLL-platform, and some comments for resources like this in general; what they should include to be of any help for them in the classroom:

> *[…] So, it isn't that universal that I would want it to be, because I always strive for universal resources and platforms […]. Honestly, I don't know if I would have used it the way it is now. But we are well acquainted with working with multicultural work, so getting an assignment about food from different parts of the world, here, is in a way something we have been working on all along. […] There's a lot, there's a kind of abundance of a lot of resources or learning resources, but it doesn't quite hit. Because there are many resources with access to five languages, but then it doesn't help the rest, because if one falls outside then it doesn't help.*

The teachers in the introductory classes need universal tools. The learning resources should be in all languages, because like the teacher 4 is saying, if one of the learners' falls outside and does not understand anyone of the available languages, then it is not helpful for them.

5. Methodological recommendations

Addressing the challenges for the educational inclusion of Ukrainian refugee children in Bulgaria requires a complex and multidimensional ap-

proach. Below we share some methodological recommendations that in our experience we have seen to help in managing these challenges.

– Build a support infrastructure. Community support centres or services can be established where refugee children's families can receive information, advice and counselling. These centres can provide assistance with administrative procedures, education and social integration.

– Establish integration programmes in schools. Specialised integration programmes can be developed in schools, including language support, cultural diversity training and social programmes for students.

– Teacher and staff training. Training can be provided to teachers and administrative staff on the needs and challenges of refugee students. This includes understanding cultural differences, methods for dealing with language barriers, and support for psychosocial adjustment.

– Psychological and social support. Psychological and social services can be organised for refugee children and their families. Group sessions, individual counselling and social programmes can help address difficulties and support integration.

– Community outreach. Activate local community participation and organisations in initiatives to create linkages and support. Sharing cultural experiences, gathering events and volunteering can create closer communities.

– Language programs. Intensive language programs should be organised for students and their families. This could include language courses, learning materials and practice sessions.

– Cooperation with NGOs. Work with NGOs that have expertise in refugee support can provide resources, expertise and social integration programmes.

– Information campaign. Conduct information campaigns targeting the community and local residents to raise awareness about refugee children and their integration. Educational events, presentations and public discussions can help create a more tolerant community.

– Mentoring programs. Mentoring programs can be built where experienced students or community members can work with newly arrived students and their families. These types of programs can provide one-on-one support and encouragement.

– Collaborate with employers. Work collaboratively with employers to provide internship and practicum opportunities for refugee students. This can not only facilitate their integration into society, but also prepare them for future professional opportunities.

– Evaluation and adaptation of educational methods. Periodic evaluation of educational methods and programmes to ensure that they meet the specific needs of refugee children. Curricula and teaching methods should be adapted where necessary.

– Cooperation with Ukrainian educational institutions. Cooperation with Ukrainian educational institutions should be established to facilitate the recognition of educational documents and to assist students in their academic and professional integration.

– Support from local authorities. Local authorities should be approached for active support and participation in integration programmes. The commitment of local authorities is essential for the successful integration of refugee children into society.

– Research and evaluation. Conduct regular research and evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures taken. This allows changes in the strategy depending on needs and actual results.

For greater success in the integration of Ukrainian refugee children into the Bulgarian community, it is important to foster wide-ranging cooperation between schools, the community, local authorities, NGOs and refugee children's families.

Cooperative learning and platforms based on the buddy system such as the KIDS4ALLL platform have the potential to battle the practical problems which foreign children, including Ukrainians, face when entering the Bulgarian classroom.

With regard to language barriers, the key to overcoming them is to motivate children and young people arriving in a new country to learn the language without stress and to overcome internal prejudices and negative psychological factors. The platform of the KIDS4ALLL project covers the age group from 10 to 19 years old, taking into account that integration into the language environment is not particularly easy and age specificities make communication difficult.

With the help of the texts, game tasks, tests presented on the site, and especially the "Multilingual" competence activities, one can brush up on their knowledge, broaden their horizons about foreign languages, communication, and the culture of communication of a new country. The possibility to work alone or in pairs, online or offline, with the help of teachers, volunteers or parents, increases the incentive to learn the language. Interesting methods and discoveries are the first steps in overcoming the language barrier, for those taking their new steps.

The platform serves as a useful and comprehensible information re-

source for children and young people, as well as for teachers, parents, educational institutions, as a stimulus for creativity in working with children and as a resource for overcoming shyness and insecurity. These tasks can be implemented as additional lessons or in a synthesis of optional language learning in educational institutions, as well as additional activities by local organisations, volunteers, learning opportunities outside educational institutions or at home. This inspires further learning of a previously unknown language and encourages full communication, interaction and language learning.

To overcome community isolation, it is important to take a number of targeted actions. In the first place, the provision of specialised language and cultural programmes can help improve communication and understanding between children. Secondly, introducing educational programmes that promote understanding and acceptance of cultural differences can create a more tolerant and inclusive environment. Thirdly, organising social events and programmes that bring children and families together can encourage the creation of social networks and friendships. Fourthly, providing psychological support for both children and their families can help in dealing with stress and alienation.

All these measures should be implemented jointly by educational institutions, local authorities, NGOs and the community to create a more welcoming and supportive environment for Ukrainian refugee children.

With regard to counteracting bullying, the main task is prevention. It is important to define the boundaries between what is normal, what is a joke and what is bullying. It is important to form negative attitudes towards bullying among children and young people.

The KIDS4ALLL platform provides materials (videos, tests, texts) to inform students about cyberbullying, how to recognise whether they are a victim or bystander and how to act in different cases. The Internet provides children and young people with a huge amount of information, but at the same time, without certain knowledge, it is possible to become a victim online.

The platform also provides information that opinions about the same situation can be different. It teaches the skill of negotiation, which is important in resolving conflict situations. The skills of cooperation and persuasion, working in pairs or as a team, giving feedback and making suggestions are a positive factor in the education of children and young people, as well as a basis for the work of teachers, parents and volunteers.

When dealing with psychological barriers, it should be borne in mind

that miscommunication, low self-esteem, insecurity and internal anxiety are some of the things children and adolescents face when they arrive in another country. Emotional and behavioural barriers hinder children's development and their inclusion into society.

The KIDS4ALLL platform offers to children different materials to overcome psychological barriers: how to discover their potential, strengthen their self-esteem and confidence and become emotionally stable. This process of overcoming psychological barriers can be supported with the help of parents, classmates, teachers, a supportive environment and skills to control emotions.

Maintaining physical and mental health, nutrition, sports, spiritual development, expanding their knowledge of different cultures, creative or technical abilities are recommended on the website in the form of videos, quizzes and materials. Children who have difficulty making friends can, with the help of the website and teachers or volunteers, participate in teamwork and interaction with other children.

Conclusion

In this chapter we shared our empirical insight into the barriers faced by Ukrainian refugees in their educational inclusion in host societies. Regardless of the country, educational integration is not only a matter of the educational system itself, but also has many other factors influencing it both externally (such as administrative hindrances) and internally (relationships between students and with teachers).

Awareness of these challenges allows the development of a holistic set of respective measures to overcome them. These measures include cooperative learning and the buddy system, developed in the KIDS4ALLL project. They could be a tool for teachers in an introductory class to facilitate and promote friendships among the learners, thus also foster a good school environment. Buddy systems in schools can have numerous benefits, such as promoting a better acceptance of differences, and fostering an expansion of communicative interaction with peers. By working in buddy pairs, the learners will get to know each other better, and therefore the buddy-system can promote friendships, a greater sense of belonging and a more inclusive school environment (Hughes & Carter, 2008; Quill, 1990). The buddy-system is also shown to be more effective, supportive, fun and motivating for the learners in their learning, in that the learners help and learn from

each other. "In most cases, peer relationships [between newly arrived learners] provide a lot of support, empathy and advice because the situations are quite similar" (KIDS4ALLL, 2021, p. 7). These strategies for implementing a more holistic approach into the classroom should be implemented jointly by educational institutions, local authorities, NGOs and the community to create a more welcoming and supportive environment for Ukrainian refugee children.

References

Baloche L., & Brody C. M. (2017). Cooperative learning: exploring challenges, crafting innovations. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 43(3), 274-283.

Cummins J. (2017). *Flerspråkiga elever: effektiv undervisning i en utmanandetid.* Natur & Kultur.

Lov om grunnskolen og den vidaregåande opplæringa (opplæringslova), Kunnskapsdepartementet (1998). https://lovdata.no/pro/NL/lov/1998-07-17-61

Hernes V., Deineko O., Handå Myhre M., Liodden T., & Staver A.B. (2022). Ukrainian refugees – experiences from the first phase in Norway, NIBR report 2022:11.

Jordan D. W., Le Métais J. (1997). Social skilling through cooperative learning. *Educational Research*, 39(1), 3-21.

Lødding B., Kindt M. T., Randen G. T., Lynnebakke B., Vennerød-Diesen F. F., Vika K. S. & Grøgaard J. B. (2022). *Norskinnlæring, faglig utvikling og nye venner – er det mulig på samme tid? Delrapport fra prosjektet Forskning på opplæringstilbud til nyankomne elever* (Rapport 2022:26). Nordisk institutt for studier av innovasjon, forskning og utdanning (NIFU). https://nifu.brage.-unit.no/nifu-xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/3043817/ NIFUrapport2022-26.pdf?sequence=1

Mathisen T., Seeberg M.L., & og Skiple A. (2023). *Barn og unge i familier med fluktbakgrunn. Erfaringer med inkludering og tilhørighet*. NOVA-Rapport nr 12/23.

Ryen E., Wold A. H. & Pastoor L. (2005). "Det er egen tolkning, ikke direkte regler". Kasusstudier av minoritetsspråklige elevers morsmålsopplæring og bruk av morsmål ved tre grunnskoler. *NOA. Norsk som andrespråk*, 21, 39-66.

Stolyarenko O.B. (2012). Personality psychology. Study guide, p. 280; Столяренко О. Б. Психология на личността. Учебно помагало - К.: Център за образователна литература, 280.

Borozdyna G. B. (2000). *Psychology of business communication*, INFRA M., p. 224; Бороздина Г. В. Психология на бизнес комуникацията: Г.В. Бороздина.: ИНФРА-М, 224.

Utdanningsdirektoratet (2021). *Kartleggingsverktøy i grunnleggende norsk*.

Ilareva V., Folkvord Svendsen M., Kolot O., Mathisen T., Slavova K., Bell J., Stakhova-Senik V., Velykova H.

https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/fagspesifikk-stotte/kart-leggingsverktoy-i-grunnleggende-norsk/

Utdanningsdirektoratet (2022). Innføringstilbud til nyankomne minoritetsspråk-lige elever. Veiledning. Sist endret 04.04.2022. https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/minoritetsspraklige-og-flyktninger/minoritetsspraklige/innforingstil-bud-til-nyankomne-minoritetsspraklige-elever/

Ministry of Education. Children and students who have received protection. https://web.mon.bg/bg/100681.

Patient's portal (2023). Presented The Report Of The Joint Needs Assessment Mission Of The Bulgarian Health System In The Context Of The Crisis In Ukraine. https://www.portalnapacienta.bg/home/caus s/world-health-organ-ization/представиха-доклад-от-съвместната-ми/

Освіта (2012). Психологічні бар'єри у спілкуванні: поняття, типи та шляхи подолання. Реферат. https://osvita.ua/vnz/reports/psychology/29182/
іна, Г. В. (2013) Психологія і етика ділового спілкування. https://stud.-com.ua/7213/etika_ta_estetika/psihologiya_i_etika_dilovogo_spilkuvannya

Bulgaria for Ukraine. Home page: Statistics. https://ukraine.gov.bg/bg/

Asylum and Refugees Act of Bulgaria

Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria

Pre-school and School Act of Bulgaria

Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/382 of 4 March 2022 establishing the existence of a mass influx of displaced persons from Ukraine within the meaning of Article 5 of Directive 2001/55/EC, and having the effect of intro-ducing temporary protection

Decision No. 145 of the 10 March 2022 for approval of a program for humani-tarian aid for persons seeking asylum in the Republic of Bulgaria as a result of the armed activities in Ukraine

Decision No. 317 of 20.05.2022. on the adoption of a humanitarian assistance programme for displaced persons from Ukraine granted temporary protection in the Republic of Bulgaria, amended by Decision No. 535, 665, 856, 909, 963 and 1038 of 2022. and No. 141, 212, 323, 454 and 660 of 2023.

VIII.
Challenges and opportunities of counterfactual evaluation in a school setting: lessons learned

Marcello Cabria, Renzo Carriero, Alessia Rosa

Introduction

This chapter aims at illustrating and discussing the results of the evaluation activity concerning the field application of the KIDS4ALLL method. To provide tangible data on the effectiveness of diverse tools implemented across heterogeneous educational environments, delivering an evidence-based assessment was a pivotal part of the project. For this purpose, and to strengthen the impact assessment, the project team implemented a counterfactual research design. The evaluation of the actions carried out involved two samples (intervention and control groups), with the aim of observing whether the methodologies applied during the KIDS4ALLL's activities have had an impact on its final targets. The primary goal was to compare the treated and control samples, assessing any differences between the two groups. This involved specifically measuring whether adolescents from the treated sample showed variations in pre-selected dimensions compared to those who didn't participate in the project activities.

Accordingly, the assessment focused on measuring changes in three key dimensions of the project: socio-emotional competences, active citizenship competence, and perception of inclusion. The evaluation took place in two phases – pre-test at the project's outset and post-test upon completion – utilizing the same sample of young people involved in the project. Additionally, this phase aimed to refine an assessment tool based on competences tests previously experimented within existing literature.

The counterfactual analysis was conducted in a few middle and secondary schools in Turin,[1] a choice closely aligned with the evaluation design

---

1 A similar approach is adopted also in Israel, but such experience is not described in this contribution.

requirements. The formal educational context provided better control over all involved variables and enhanced results comparability. In contrast, informal settings, such as voluntary associations, presented higher heterogeneity, with respect to both the timing of the activities and the targets of the experiment, considering age and personal characteristics of the youth involved in the program.

The chapter begins by examining the objectives and challenges associated with employing a counterfactual analysis design within school contexts, like the ones considered. The subsequent section provides a detailed account of our specific assessment process, encompassing school selection, sample construction, and evaluation design. Following this, we conduct a comprehensive presentation of the results, also discussing a multivariate analysis to highlight causal connections leading to outcomes and to grasp their implications. Notably, the conclusion of our work revealed substantial changes in the measured competence levels among the student sample, prompting a thorough discussion later in this chapter. This discussion entails a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses associated with our work. As a counterfactual-type evaluation imposes rigorous constraints on both the conducted intervention and the working criteria, an in-depth review of empirical limitations influencing observed outcomes will provide a solid foundation for refining further analyses in similar contexts. To wrap up, the chapter provides insights for future interventions, drawing from the experiences gained throughout the project.

1. Monitoring and impact evaluation in school contexts

When we speak of evaluation of an intervention like an educational initiative, we may think of very different activities implying the assessment of the achieved results, the implementation process or both. Achieved results can be measured by means of empirical indicators regarding the beneficiaries of the initiative, using "objective" data such as some kind of measurable performance/characteristic, or beneficiaries' subjective assessments of the initiative in which they were involved (e.g., a satisfaction survey). The implementation process can be evaluated by reviewing and analysing step-by-step all the activities that were envisaged and how they actually unfolded. To perform assessment activities, we can figure out different tools such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, focus groups, data analyses and so on. However, a crucial distinction in this field concerns the overarching

goal of evaluation rather than its tools. On the one hand, the goal of evaluation can be *monitoring*, i.e. identifying the aims and objectives of the intervention, selecting the empirical indicators to be used to observe progress against the objectives, and setting the target to be achieved through the intervention. On the other hand, the goal of evaluation can be conceived of as an assessment of the *effect* of an intervention on its beneficiaries. Underlying this conception is the idea that what we observe *after* the intervention is not necessarily its result or consequence. When the goal of evaluation is to assess the *causal effects* of an intervention, we speak of *impact evaluation* (Khandker et al., 2010).

Both evaluation goals, monitoring and impact assessment, are important, legitimate, and worth pursuing. They are also complementary to some extent, as monitoring activities regarding outcomes and process implementation may help us explain why an intervention actually did or did not produce the expected effects that we measure by means of impact evaluation. Yet, impact evaluation poses specific challenges that make it an extremely risky business, especially in a formal educational context like school. In general terms, if we want to claim that an intervention had an effect on a given outcome, we need to rule out that other concomitant confounding factors may have generated such effect. In other words, our claim requires to make a robust causal inference which implies answering the following question: what would have been the outcome measured on the participants, had they not participated in the intervention? To answer this question, we need to identify what it is called the *counterfactual*: an outcome that we cannot directly observe on the *same individuals* that were exposed to the intervention, as one cannot *at the same time* be exposed and not exposed to the intervention.

Here comes the main challenge of impact (or counterfactual) evaluation, that is how to identify a proper counterfactual.

How to deal with this issue? Under the right circumstances, it is possible to *create*, rather than look for, a counterfactual, by means of randomization. A group of subjects is randomly selected from the target population and assigned to the intervention (i.e., invited to participate or enrolled in a program); another randomly selected group, from the same population, is assigned to the so-called "control" condition and is not exposed to the intervention or enrolled in a program. Outcomes are measured on both groups, before and after the intervention. Given that subjects in the two groups are randomly selected, *if the sample size is large enough*, the differences before the intervention will be very small and random, i.e. non-sys-

tematic. For this reason, the control group can be legitimately considered a proper counterfactual: it represents how the participants, as a group, would look like, had they not participated in the intervention. The average difference in outcomes between the two groups, measured *after* the intervention, represents the net effect (or impact) of the intervention itself.[2]

The kind of impact evaluation just described looks very like a classical social-psychological experiment, but unlike the latter, it is carried out in the field rather than in the lab. This implies a few complications that limit the applicability and challenge the validity of the method, especially in a school setting. Let's briefly review the main challenges.

First of all, in a school setting, children are embedded in classrooms and hence it is not usually possible to select a few of them at random and exclude the others from participating in the program, because that would disrupt the normal functioning of the classroom group. Thus, the intervention or (henceforth) the treatment is administered at classroom level, meaning that classrooms, not individuals, are randomly assigned to treatment or control. This is not a problem *per se*, but makes impact evaluation more burdensome in organizational terms. Indeed, when treatment assignment is made at classroom rather than individual level, this creates clustering of individuals within the treated and control groups. To properly account of clustering and to preserve the statistical power of the analysis (i.e. the capacity of detecting statistically significant differences between groups) a much larger sample size is required compared to the situation where individuals rather than classrooms are randomized. Even if in principle this is not a serious threat, it is clear that with limited resources impact evaluation drains much of the available financial and human resources and make the whole evaluation process much more onerous.

In the second place, random selection of classrooms may be difficult to accept by teachers and principals. Using this device a few pupils will be excluded from a potentially beneficial educational intervention, just for the sake of assessing whether it is really effective. While this may be appealing and worthwhile from a scientist's viewpoint, it is much less so from the teacher's or principal's perspective. Moreover, teachers and principals may be legitimately convinced that only specific classrooms need or can benefit

---

2   It is worth underlying that this way of assessing the impact of an intervention concerns *group differences*, not individual ones. What we measure is an *average effect* because for any single individual it is not possible to find a proper counterfactual, unless some usually unrealistic assumption is made.

from a certain educational intervention, which would suggest avoiding random selection. Therefore, staff's resistances can only be won by providing control (excluded) classrooms with the same opportunity of benefitting from the initiative, but at a later time, when the impact evaluation task is accomplished (see Ballarino et al., 2022 for an example). Again, this makes impaction evaluation quite onerous.

Another issue concerns one of the assumptions on which the correct identification of an intervention's causal effect relies, that is the independence and (physical) separation between subjects assigned to treatment and subjects assigned to control. This is necessary to avoid reciprocal influences that alter subjects' assigned status and consequent outcome.[3] In a setting like a school, where pupils have opportunities to interact not only within but also between classrooms, this assumption is less likely (though not impossible) to be met (see Barone et al., 2021 for an example).

Finally, all interventions that take place in the field are exposed to vulnerabilities due to unforeseen events (e.g., changes in teaching staff, classroom's participation in other competing initiatives, classroom's drop out from the initiative, etc.) that might alter or even disrupt the correct way of bringing about the experimentation.

2. Impact evaluation in the KIDS4ALLL project

After shortly reviewing the main issues concerning the application of impact evaluation, it should be clear that impact or counterfactual evaluation imposes strong and stricter requirements compared to other types of evaluation because the overarching goal is different and more ambitious. However, while the ambition of assessing whether an intervention actually produced (or induced) a change in its beneficiaries is certainly justified by the necessity of wisely invest our limited resources, such an ambition may be easily frustrated if impact evaluation is applied under circumstances that stretch its feasibility beyond the limits. In the next paragraphs, we describe how we addressed these issues in order to best apply the impact assessment given the actual constraints.

---

3   This assumption is known as SUTVA (Stable Unit Treatment Values Assumption) in the econometrics literature (Rubin, 1980).

2.1 *Target selection and sample size definition*

The recruitment and enrolment of participating schools and classes followed a few criteria established ex-ante. Firstly, we were interested in schools having a substantial number of students with migratory background[4]. This criterion was crucial for assessing and improving students' perceived levels of inclusion, especially those with this specific characteristic.

A second focal point was the selection of classes within institutes. In lower secondary schools (covering a 3-year time period), priority was given to second-grade classes (12-year-old students), to avoid a sample consisting of students who were too young. At the same time, they had to be of a different age from students in the upper secondary schools involved: this approach facilitated the evaluation of the method impact on clearly defined age groups. For secondary school, our interest was in students from the first two years (14-15 years old), as they were best suited for the proposed teaching materials and activities.

Geographic distribution in urban areas constituted another selection criterion, as the idea was to encompass both central and peripheral (or semi-peripheral) districts. This strategy aimed to mitigate the social stratification inherent to different areas, thus preventing excessive social homogeneity within the sample.

Furthermore, again to increase social heterogeneity, the intervention aimed to incorporate different school tracks (vocational, technical, lyceum), covering the whole spectrum of educational paths available in Italy.

Given these required features, the actual selection had to adapt ultimately to the availability of teachers and school principals willing to participate in the experiment.

The number of selected schools was also functional to enrol enough students to ensure a reasonable level of statistical power. As mentioned above, in a school setting, children are embedded in classrooms and it is not usually possible to select a few of them at random and exclude the others from participating in the program, because that would disrupt the normal functioning of the classroom group. To properly account of clustering and to preserve the statistical power of the analysis, a much larger sample size is required compared to the situation where individuals rather than classrooms are randomized. This circumstance increases the minimum number of ob-

---

4   Under this category we include students born in another country or those born in
    Italy with at least one parent born abroad.

servations required to detect a given effect size. In our case, we fixed a minimum effect size of 0.2 standard deviations of the outcome measures, i.e. a small effect[5]. Using PowerUp tool[6], we calculated that 30 classrooms and about 600 pupils were necessary. To concentrate organizational efforts on a smaller number of treated classes, we decided to randomly allocate one class to the treated group and two classes to the control group in each school. However, we could not reach exactly the desired sample size because we were able to enrol only eight schools rather than ten, equally split between lower and upper secondary levels (see Table 1). Nevertheless, the final sample can be considered still fairly satisfactory.

Lower secondary schools
– 5 institutes (including 2 "comprehensives" and 1 "parificata"[7])
– 11 second grade classes
– 3 first grade classes

Upper secondary schools
– 5 institutes (2 lyceums; 2 vocational; 1 technical)
– 14 classes (8 second grade classes; 3 first grade; 3 third grade)

Table 1. The sample in brief

2.2 *The Socio-emotional and citizenship competences questionnaire*

Overall the KIDS4ALLL Project has used many different tools to detect the outcome of the intervention itself. The tools were both qualitative and quantitative, to gather as complete a scenario as possible. In fact, as happens in any humanistic investigation it is difficult to isolate other variables which may influence the intended construct. For this reason, quantitative survey tools have been combined with qualitative tools aiming to investigate the reading and interpretation of teachers and students with respect to the educational path carried out.

5 According to Cohen (1988), effect size is the difference between means of the treated and control groups, divided by the standard deviation of the data. An effect size of 0.2 is small, while 0.5 is medium, and 0.8 or bigger is large.
6 https://www.causalevaluation.org/power-analysis.html
7 "Comprehensive" schools include primary and lower secondary classes. "Parificata" is a private school that provides officially recognized education.

In the following paragraph we illustrate the Socio-emotional and citizenship competences questionnaire in order to clarify the whole administration process and the main results.[8]

The questionnaire has been administered at the beginning and at the end of the activities with students and it has been developed through the integration of several survey instruments, that will be shortly described in their theoretical underpinnings.

The chosen measurement tool has been developed according to the following criteria:

– simplicity and clarity of items;
– the overall length of the tool;
– the appropriateness of items to the students' age;
– the ease and wide administration of the questionnaire by different professionals;
– the time, i.e. the possibility of administering the test quickly;
– the adequacy of the questionnaire to be run in different locations and contexts;
– the possibility of administering the test both in its online version and paper version.

In the first part of the questionnaire, profiling questions were included in order to get to know the respondent group.

Several evaluation tools were used in the definition of the questionnaire. The following rating scales have been identified and briefly described.

General Self-Efficacy (GSE)

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) was created to assess the general sense of perceived self-efficacy, with the aim of predicting the ability to cope with everyday difficulties and adaptation after experiencing stressful life events of all kinds. The German version of this scale was originally developed by Jerusalem and Schwarzer in 1981, first as a 20-item version and later as a reduced 10-item version (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1985; 1989;1992; De Caroli & Sagone, 2014).

---

8   Besides the Socio-emotional and citizenship competences questionnaire the main tools of the evaluation toolkit consist of an Ethnographic observation, whose structure and results are treated in the following chapter; a Final self-assessment questionnaire for students; Teachers and educators check-list; Social Network Analysis; Teachers, educators and stakeholders interviews.

Sense of Community in the School (SOC)

The school, where pupils spend most part of their day, can be regarded as a primary physical and social context for young people and refers to the sense of belonging to the school as a community, the perception of an emotional bond with other students and the feeling that personal needs are met through such belonging.

Regarding belonging, McMillan and Chavis (1986) point out that "belonging has boundaries; this means that there are people who belong and people who do not belong. Boundaries provide members with the emotional security needed to expose needs and feelings and to develop intimacy".

The School Sense of Community (SOC) Scale was developed to measure students' sense of school as a community. This is our empirical measure for what we called "perception of inclusion" above. Such measure covers the dimensions of belonging, emotional connection and opportunity.

Many researchers have used the concept of sense of community to describe the psychological aspects of physical and social contexts that satisfy the need for belonging (Fisher et al., 2002). Sense of community was defined by McMillan and Chavis (1986) as "the feeling of belonging by members, the feeling that members are important to each other and to the group, and a sense of sharing".

Multidimensional test of self-esteem (TMA)

The questionnaire investigates the self-esteem level of the observed subjects.

The responses are grouped and coded to provide scores and standard deviations, which describe the level of self-esteem, compared to the peer average, in several areas.

In particular, the theoretical model on which this instrument is based defines six dimensions of self-esteem that identify the six rating scales: interpersonal relationships, environmental control competence, emotionality, school success, family life, and bodily experience.

The questionnaire consists of 150 questions divided into 6 scales, however it is important to notice that individual survey scales can be used.

In coherence with the starting criteria 2 scales (50 items in total) were chosen for the TMA: interpersonal and emotional.

The Multidimensional test of self-esteem marks out those elements:

– Global self-esteem assessment.
– Evaluation of individual areas explored.
– Administration to individuals or groups.
– Measure easily comparable with other tests.
– Interpersonal and intrapersonal interpretation.

TMA scoring is very simple but must follow a specific procedure.

The scale has both positive and negative items, so different scoring procedures are required for the two types of items (Bracken, 2003).

Career Adaptation Scale (CAAS)

The Career Adapt-Abilities Scale – Italian form consists of four scales made by 6-items, which measure concern, control, curiosity and confidence as psychosocial resources for managing occupational transitions, developmental tasks and work trauma. The Italian form of the 24-item CAAS is identical to the international 2.0 form. The estimation of the internal consistency of the four subscales and the total scores is good. Concurrent validity tests were collected on perceived internal and external barriers, breadth of interests and quality of life. Correlations were as expected and showed that adaptability was negatively related to perceived barriers and positively related to breadth of interests and quality of life. As expected, the analysis of variance showed that adolescents with greater adaptability perceived fewer barriers, expressed a wider range of interests and reported a higher quality of life. Throughout the work we used only the confidence subscale; in the text we refer to such dimension by the term *adaptability*.

PISA 2018

PISA 2018 defines and assesses Global Competence in a multidimensional way, recognizing students' socio-emotional skills and attitudes as key indicators of global competence, in addition to their cognitive reasoning on global and intercultural issues. As the test focuses only on the cognitive knowledge and skills students need to address global and intercultural issues, the student questionnaire collects information on students' skills (both cognitive and socio-emotional) and their attitudes towards global and intercultural issues. The PISA 2018 assessment uses the following definition of global competence: "Global competence is the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective

interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being". (PISA 2018 Global Competence Framework, 2018).

This definition outlines four target dimensions of global competence that people need to apply successfully in their everyday life: 1. the capacity to examine issues and situations of local, global and cultural significance; 2. the capacity to understand and appreciate different perspectives and world views; 3. the ability to establish positive interactions with people of different national, ethnic, religious, social or cultural backgrounds or gender; and 4. the capacity and disposition to take constructive action toward sustainable development and collective well-being In the dimensions 2, 3 and 4 a number of functional items were chosen for the survey of interest in the project, in order to specifically detect and measure the level of active citizenship competence.

2.3 *Survey tools and teachers' role in the intervention*

The data collection for the impact evaluation was based on a questionnaire administered before and after that the intervention was carried out. The questionnaire was built in the form of an online survey hosted by the Lime-Survey platform. The students participated either by using the digital equipment provided by the school or their personal devices (notebook, tablet or smartphones). Supplementary devices were made available, if necessary, in order to avoid digital divide as well as any technical problem during the survey administration.

The questionnaire was composed by 3 main sections.
– The first one aimed at collecting socio-demographic data on respondents and their families: migratory background, household composition, economic and social status. The purpose of this part was to collect information on the students' learning environment when they are not at school, as well as on the cultural resources they can rely on.
– The second part constituted the core section of the survey: several item sets focused on socio-emotional skills have been administered to the interviewees. The selected tools are mainly of psycho-pedagogical inspiration and already validated by the literature, oriented to measure the level of some key dimensions: general self-efficacy, multidimensional self-esteem (two sub-scales), sense of community in school, and adapt-ability (see previous section).

– The third and last section was devoted to measure students' self-evaluation of one of the lifelong learning key competences: active citizenship.

The questionnaires were slightly different between the two rounds: the socio-demographic section was included only in the first round, while in the second one a specific part was devoted to collect students' feedback on the performed activity, i.e. their experience with the KIDS4ALLL online platform and the buddy learning method (see Table 2).

In each round, we asked teachers to highlight relevant issues about the questionnaire administration. Moreover, overall feedback was collected from the researchers who were attending each questionnaire administration.

In order to maintain maximum comparability between different schools and classes, during the experimental phase teachers were asked to meet two basic requirements: working with students on two competences, active citizenship and digital competence, for at least 15 hours for each competence. The decision to expand the number of treated competences, as well as the hours devoted to the work, was left to the discretion of the teachers on a voluntary basis. Teachers could extend the suggested standard intervention, but only after its completion within the classes. In addition, teachers had the liberty to adapt the schedule of the activities to align with their school calendar. Indeed, a degree of flexibility was necessary to tailor the activities to the wide heterogeneity of settings (two school levels; students spanning different ages engaged in distinct curricular paths, etc.). These elements led to a margin of adaptation of the work carried out, within a common framework.

This short summary about the teachers' role shows that an intervention like the one experimented in the KIDS4ALLL project heavily relies on teachers' commitment, as they are in charge of delivering the proposed educational program. This poses the issue the intervention's *uniformity* across classes and schools. Therefore, in addition to the general problems of impact evaluation in school contexts (see section 2), the KIDS4ALLL intervention had to face this specific challenge threatening its overall effectiveness.

Timing of the evaluation activities
– Beginning of November 2022:
  • Start of the activities
  • First round of data collection (pre).

– April-May 2023:
  • End of the first pilot phase
  • Second round of data collection (post)
  • Final self-assessment questionnaire.

– Both rounds: administration notes.

Table 2. Activities' timetable

3. Evaluation findings

In an evaluation setting with outcome measurements taken both pre- and post-intervention, data lend themselves to a double reading. On the one hand, it is possible to look at what happened in the treated and control groups separately. This reading allows to gauge variations in outcomes across time, by examining differences between the two measurements on the same group. On the other hand, we can compare such differences between treated and control group. In this way, by computing the difference-in-differences, we assess the effect of the intervention net of confounding factors that may have affected both groups during the observation period. In addition, the random composition of the treated and control groups ensures that differences in outcomes cannot be attributed to prior differences between groups. We apply this double reading to the data presented in Table 3.

	Sense of community (scale 1-5)	Active citizenship (scale 1-5)	Emotional self-esteem (scale 25-100)	Interpersonal self-esteem (scale 25-100)	General self-efficacy (scale 1-4)	Adapt-ability (scale 1-5)
Treated group: difference post-pre	-0.14*	-0.06 ns	-1.00 ns	1.05 ns	-0.05 ns	-0.06 ns
Control group: difference post-pre	-0.19 ***	0.04 ns	-2.13 ***	-1.30*	0.01 ns	0.02 ns
Treated-control group difference	0.05 ns	-0.10 ns	1.13 ns	2.35 **	-0.06 ns	-0.08 ns

*: p-value<0.05. **: p-value<0.01. ***: p-value<0.001. ns: not significant

Table 3. Pre-post mean differences between outcome measures among control and treated groups

Looking at the treated group, we see that there was a significant drop in the level of sense of community from pre- to post-intervention, while for the other outcomes the variations were not statistically significant. Thus, if we judged simply from these observations, we should (wrongly) conclude that the intervention negatively affected sense of community while leaving the other socio-emotional skills unchanged. But if we also take the variations in the control group into account, we come to a different conclusion. The sense of community indeed decreased also in the control group, about to the same extent. Thus, the mean difference between treated and control subjects becomes almost null and not significant. Conversely, interpersonal self-esteem significantly declined in the control group while it increased in the treatment group (albeit not significantly).

The result is that interpersonal self-esteem is the only outcome that was positively and significantly impacted by the treatment. The magnitude of the effect is 2.35 points, which amounts to 0.23 standard deviations (SD) of the outcome, i.e. a small but non-negligible effect size. The other outcomes were not significantly affected.

It is worth emphasizing that if we limited ourselves to observe change in only one (treated) group, any variation would have been assumed as a direct result of the experimental activities, while we know that many other confounding factors might play a role. To stress the advantage of the counterfactual evaluation, it is important to consider that if we had not employed a control group, a simple pre-post comparison would have been

highly misleading. Conversely, with two randomly sampled groups, we had the possibility to control for confounding factors unrelated to the intervention itself.

However, regarding the positive effect of the intervention on interpersonal self-esteem, we must acknowledge that we also found a *pre-treatment* statistical difference between control and treated groups. This imbalance is not due to a failed randomization, but it stemmed from sample attrition between the pre- and post-intervention measurements. Thus, restricting the analysis to usable cases (i.e., those who filled in *both* questionnaires), the two groups are not strictly comparable any longer. To account for this imbalance, it is necessary to turn to regression analysis where treated and control groups can be compared net of their pre-intervention outcome levels.

For each outcome, we estimated two regression models. The first model includes the dummy variable indicating treatment assignment and the pre-intervention (t0) level of the dependent variable. This allows to control for possible imbalances in pre-intervention levels across treated and control groups and, at the same time, allows to estimate the treatment effect more precisely (i.e. with a lower standard error), as pre- and post-intervention levels are highly correlated. In the second model, we added socio-demographic variables (gender, age, migratory background) as additional (pre-treatment) control variables.

Regression results (Table 4) confirm that the intervention has affected positively and significantly (at 10% level) interpersonal self-esteem, proving the positive response of this socio-emotional dimension to the experimental activity. In contrast, it is noteworthy that general self-efficacy and perceived adapt-ability were negatively and significantly (at 5% and 10% level respectively) impacted by the intervention. Although this finding may seem counterintuitive and even opposite to the goals of intervention, we believe there can be a more positive interpretation. Indeed, the negative effect could suggest that the mutual confrontation and the work in pairs required by the buddy method led students to put themselves into question. Even if this may have triggered feelings of inadequacy, leading to decreased levels of self-efficacy and perceived adapt-ability, nonetheless it witnesses the existence of an inner process arisen from the intervention, which would need a longer time to be properly assimilated by the pupils. Anyway, such negative impacts are very small (about one tenth of SD) and thus practically negligible. In this regard it is important to note that, in line with international guidelines, the processes of acquisition and development of appropriate

skills and competences could be favoured by an holistic and co-ordinated approach, also equipping education institutions and their staff with the adequate knowledge and tools, to facilitate young people's learning and socio-emotional growth (OECD, 2018; OECD, 2022).

In Models 2, reported in Table 4, we add socio-demographic variables to the regressions: the estimates of the treatment effects did not change. Gender turns to be associated with emotional and interpersonal self-esteem, as well as with general self-efficacy and adapt-ability, with females showing lower levels on all these outcomes. Age is positively correlated with active citizenship competence, indicating that older students are more responsive in this domain. Conversely, younger students perceive more sense of community compared to older ones. Students with migratory background do not significantly differ from the others on any outcome. The empirical finding is inherently significant as it highlights how the sense of community, as perceived by students within their classrooms, transcends cultural differences and family's geographical origins. These findings serve as concrete evidence that, in students' perceptions, shared growth trajectories can pave the way for broader paths of inclusion.

	Sense of community						*Active citizenship*				
	Model 1			Model 2				Model 1			Model 2	
	B	SE		B	SE			B	SE		B	SE
Treated	0.02	0.10		0.02	0.10		Treated	-0.07	0.05		-0.06	0.05
Sense of C._t0	0.53	0.07	***	0.52	0.08	***	Citizen_t0	0.51	0.05	***	0.51	0.05	***
Female				0.00	0.05		Female				-0.03	0.08
Age				-0.03	0.01	*	Age				0.07	0.02	*
Migratory background				-0.06	0.05		Migratory background				-0.10	0.05
Constant	1.76	0.33	**	2.33	0.43	**	Constant	1.49	0.13	***	0.52	0.35
Rsq	0.26			0.27			Rsq	0.24			0.27	
N	372			368			N	356			353	

	Emotional self-esteem						*Interpersonal self-esteem*				
	Model 1			Model 2				Model 1			Model 2	
	B	SE		B	SE			B	SE		B	SE
Treated	0.90	0.88		0.83	1.06		Treated	1.49	0.73	+	1.41	0.69	+
Emotion_t0	0.82	0.04	***	0.78	0.04	***	Interpersonal_t0	0.73	0.05	***	0.72	0.04	***
Female				-3.17	1.01	*	Female				-2.78	0.48	***
Age				0.21	0.26		Age				0.14	0.33
Migratory background				0.31	1.08		Migratory background				0.49	0.82
Constant	10.12	2.68	**	11.41	7.07		Constant	19.36	3.60	**	18.91	5.26	**
Rsq	0.65			0.66			Rsq	0.52			0.54	
N	312			309			N	308			307	

	General self-efficacy						*Adapt-ability*				
	Model 1			Model 2				Model 1			Model 2	
	B	SE		B	SE			B	SE		B	SE
Treated	-0.07	0.03	*	-0.07	0.03	*	Treated	-0.09	0.04	+	-0.09	0.04	+
Self-efficacy_t0	0.61	0.07	***	0.58	0.07	***	Adapt-ability_t0	0.63	0.04	***	0.61	0.04	***
Female				-0.11	0.05	*	Female				-0.10	0.04	*
Age				0.00	0.01		Age				-0.01	0.02
Migratory background				-0.07	0.07		Migratory background				-0.05	0.07
Constant	1.14	0.19	***	1.23	0.20	***	Constant	1.31	0.15	***	1.55	0.31	**
Rsq	0.36			0.37			Rsq	0.38			0.39	
N	369			365			N	368			365	

+: p-value<0.10. *: p-value<0.05. **: p-value<0.01. ***: p-value<0.001.

+: p-value<0.10. *: p-value<0.05. **: p-value<0.01. ***: p-value<0.001.

Table 4. Regression results

4. Why counterfactual evaluation did not detect positive effects?

Counterfactual evaluation is primarily conceived of to find out whether an intervention had an effect, not to discover why. For the latter goal, other means are necessary, such as interviews with participants and stakeholders and ethnographical observations in the sites where the intervention takes place. Nonetheless, it is possible to advance a few educated guesses, also based on the experience gained during fieldwork, about the reasons why we were not able to detect statistically significant and meaningful impacts of our intervention.

In the first place, we cannot exclude that the low sample size played a role. The theoretical sample size established ex-ante, based on statistical power calculations, should allow to detect an effect of at least 0.2 standard deviations, while our actual effect sizes were all below 0.11, except for interpersonal self-esteem (0.23), the only one found to be significant. However, we were not able to reach the theoretical sample size of about 600 pupils due to an unexpected low schools' availability which was a consequence of the pandemic. It should be borne in mind that the intervention was implemented during the post-covid period when all schools were overburdened by numerous projects and initiatives. This circumstance induced a few schools to withdraw their previous availability; in other schools the teaching staff in charge of attending at the practical implementation of our project was reduced.

In the second place, one kind of reasons for ineffectiveness concerns the specificities of the proposed learning method. The buddy method is thought to foster sense of community, socio-emotional and citizenship skills because of its collaborative nature, regardless of the specific learning content to which it is applied. In other words, it should influence expected outcomes by strengthening the social relationships it creates and by developing the social-emotional skills needed to maintain those relationships. Given this hypothetical mechanism, it is quite clear that the effectiveness depends on the availability of sufficient time for the social relationships established by the buddy method to develop and thus produce the expected benefits. As a result, it is possible that our trial lasted too short to produce tangible effects. Moreover, the buddy method was applied in the teaching of citizenship and digital competences because these competences were sufficiently transversal to all disciplines and could be taught by all teachers, regardless their disciplinary background. This was functional to maximize the chance to recruit teachers willing to participate and to experiment with

the buddy method with two different teaching contents. However, if the content and the time devoted to teaching with the buddy method had been entirely focused on citizenship skills, perhaps the measurable impact of the intervention would have been bigger, at least on the specific outcome relating to citizenship skills. In other words, applying the buddy method on two different topics may have softened an already soft intervention. Finally, the buddy method is a form of collaborative learning and collaborative learning was not completely new to the students at our target schools. Teachers told us, before the intervention took place, that at times they use group work strategies. Given that we could not prevent control group students from using collaborative learning strategies, it is possible that another reason for non-effectiveness was the fact that the control group was not really "untreated" in that sense.

In the third place, another kind of reasons for ineffectiveness regards the ways the intervention was implemented. The effectiveness of an intervention based on a teaching method implies a certain degree of commitment both on the part of the recipients (the students) and of those who implement the method (the teachers). Regarding the former, all we could measure was the so-called "intention to treat", that is the impact of the intervention on all subjects, also those who passively attended the classes, since we had no tool to measure students' degree of commitment in the proposed activities. Even if we had it, eliminating uncooperative students from the analyses would have biased the measurement of the impact. Regarding the teachers, notwithstanding the guidelines we provided, we could not guarantee that the way they implemented the buddy method was the same in each treated class. This may have generated heterogeneity in the use of the buddy method which decrease its effectiveness. On the other hand, a uniform implementation of the educational intervention would have required a top-down approach, i.e. an intervention carried out by staff external to the educational institution, but this did not correspond to the spirit of the project. The intention was in fact to leverage teachers' professionalism and to stimulate them to experiment actively and creatively with the material we had made available to them. As a counterpart, it was inevitable to allow a certain degree of heterogeneity in the application of the intervention between schools.

5. Advice for future applications of the KIDS4ALLL methodology

On the basis of the collected data and the pedagogical literature on the subject, we shall try to identify some suggestions for future applications. First, the KIDS4ALLL project as underlined in the previous paragraph was carried out mainly within the citizenship lessons. Over the last few years there has been a renewed interest in citizenship issues and in particular its relation to young student (Lawy & Biesta, 2006). This has been allied to an educational discourse where the emphasis has been upon questions concerning education to citizenship as a school subject rather a cross-curricular disciplinary perspective (Brett, 2022). If education to citizenship were the object of attention of all the disciplines perhaps it would be possible to strengthen the proposed contents and to maximize the relapse. Moreover, to build educational proposals able to better integrate themselves within the different educational contexts, one possible option is to have co-planning sessions of the didactic contents. Co-design in education is 'a highly-facilitated, team-based process in which teachers, researchers, and developers work together in defined roles to design an educational innovation, realise the design in one or more prototypes, and evaluate each prototype's significance for addressing a concrete educational need' (Roschelle et al., 2006, p. 606).

For what concern the "buddy method" an interdisciplinary employment could be functional. The possibility of using the buddy method in different disciplines, and not only in the KIDS4ALLL project, would perhaps be functional to strengthen the bound between students and be more effective. Students would perhaps perceive the methodological proposal not as impromptu. In addition, they could have experimented the buddy method even within paths with traditional methodologies. A further aspect that deserves to be considered regarding the impact of the project is the technological equipment of the schools. Technology can assist learning institutions in facilitating both, personalisation and institutional flexibility (Redecker et al., 2010).

In the future, the process of school involvement might include a phase of technological equipment test. In fact, beyond knowing the number of devices it becomes important to understand the real operational level and functionality. Often schools' technological equipment is slow and obsolete. For this reason, it would be appropriate to consider also the presence of IT technicians able to update technological systems. In the case of KIDS4ALLL, no initial monitoring of the technological equipment in the schools was carried out and it was therefore not possible to understand its role in the success of the project.

Finally, an age-old training question: How long does it really take to learn a new skill? Some experts have attempted to answer the question. The scientific literature on the topic does not have a univocal answer. It is a common opinion that any repeated educational practice for longer can be better acquired both in terms of knowledge and skills.

Although we were aware of the need for longer periods for acquiring such complex skills, we nevertheless considered it important to test the method through both quantitative and qualitative tools (described in the following chapter).

Since there is no consensus on the timing of the development of skills, we believe that any opportunity to increase knowledge on the subject should be exploited.

References

Ballarino G., Filippin A., Abbiati G., Argentin G., Barone C., & Schizzerotto A. (2022). The effects of an information campaign beyond university enrolment: A large-scale field experiment on the choices of high school students. *Economics of Education Review*, *91*, 102308. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2022.-102308

Barone C., Fougère D., & Pin C. (2021). Social Origins, Shared Book Reading, and Language Skills in Early Childhood: Evidence from an Information Experiment. *European Sociological Review*, 37, 1, 18-31. https://doi.org/10.10-93/esr/jcaa036

Bracken A. B. (2003). *Test TMA - Valutazione multidimensionale dell'autostima*. Erikson.

Brett P. (2022). Twenty Reasons Why Cross-Curricular Citizenship Education Might Struggle to Take Flight in Secondary Schools: An Autoethnographic Review. *Curriculum and Teaching*, *37*(1), 5-29. https://doi.org/10.7459/-ct/37.1.02

Cohen J. (1988). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*. New York, NY: Routledge Academic

De Caroli M.E., & Sagone E. (2014). Generalized Self-efficacy and Well-being in Adolescents with High vs. *Low Scholastic Self-efficacy, Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 141, 867-874, ISSN 1877-0428, https://doi.org/10.10-16/j.sbspro.2014.05.152

Ford A. (2015). Oxford University Peer Support Programme: Addressing the wellbeing of students. In M. Henning, C. Krageloh, & G. Wong-Toi (Eds.), *Student motivation and quality of life in higher education* (pp. 167-174). Routledge.

Frischmann R.M. (2013). *Skills-based approach to developing a career.* Frischmann, Trafford Publishing.

Jerusalem M., & Schwarzer R. (1992). Self-efficacy as a resource factor in stress appraisal processes. In R. Schwarzer (Ed.), *Self-efficacy: Thought control of action* (pp. 195-213). Hemisphere Publishing Corp

Jerusalem M., & Schwarzer R. (1989). Anxiety and self-concept as antecedents of stress and coping: A longitudinal study with German and Turkish adolescents. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *10*(7), 785-792.

Khandker S.R., Koolwal G.B., & Samad H.A. (2010). *Handbook on impact evaluation: quantitative methods and practices*. Washington D.C., The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.

Lawy R., & Biesta G. (2006). Citizenship-as-Practice: The Educational Implications of an Inclusive and Relational Understanding of Citizenship. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, *54*(1), 34-50. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3699294

McMillan D. W., & Chavis D. M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology, 14*(1), 6–23. https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6629(198601)14:1<6::AID-JCOP2290140103>3.0.CO;2-I

OECD (2022). *Recommendation of the council on creating better opportunities for young people.* https://www.oecd.org/mcm/Recommendation-on-Creating-Better-Opportunities-for-Young-People.pdf

OECD (2018). *Education 2030: The Future of Education and Skills.* Position paper. https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/contact/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20(05.04.2018).pdf

Redecker C., Leis M.J., Leendertse M., Gijsbers G.W., Punie Y., Kirschner P.A., Stoyanov S., & Hoogveld B. (2010). *The future of learning: New ways to learn new skills for future jobs - results from an online expert consultation.*

Roschelle J., Penuel W. R., & Shechtman N. (2006). Co-design of Innovations with Teachers: Definition and Dynamics. In *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Learning Sciences* (pp. 606-612). International Society of the Learning Sciences.

Rubin D.B. (1980). Comment on: "Randomization analysis of experimental data in the fisher randomization test" by D. Basu. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 75, 591–593.

Schwarzer R. & Jerusalem M. (1995). Generalised self-efficacy scale. In J. Weinman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston, *Measures in health psychology: A user portfolio. Causal and control beliefs* (pp. 35-37). NFER-NELSON.

Wardak D., Wilson S. & Zeivots S. (2023). Co-design as a Networked Approach to Designing Educational Futures. *Postdigit Sci Educ*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-023-00425-5.

IX.
Doing ethnography at school: challenges and opportunities

Alessia Rosa, Gabriella Taddeo[*]

Introduction

The term 'ethnography' emerged in the late nineteenth century from Greek roots meaning writing about nations or cultures. Ethnography as a research approach aims to 'describe the lives of people other than ourselves, with an accuracy and sensitivity honed by detailed observation and prolonged first-hand experience' (Ingold, 2008, p. 69).

Malinowski's influential work in the Trobriand Islands set a standard for ethnography in anthropology (1922). His prolonged fieldwork and deep understanding of the local language enabled him to produce a comprehensive account that captured the nuances of daily life and achieved what he called emic validity – a connection with the perspectives and meanings of those he observed.

Whereas classical ethnography deals with foreign and different cultures, ethnography in school contexts works with very close and familiar situations, contexts and roles. The difference between school ethnography and general ethnography lies in familiarity. School ethnography doesn't provide an exotic and unknown context, but rather a familiar and domestic world, involving researchers who experienced the setting as children (Woods, 2005). Thus, in contrast to traditional ethnography, it aims to make the familiar strange, to make habitual actions visible, recognising that our familiarity with certain settings can obscure their complexity, requiring a conscious effort to see them anew (Erickson, 1984; Yon, 2003). Ethnographic studies of familiar places such as classrooms aim to uncover hidden practices

---

by scrutinising routine activities and understanding the social organisation, power dynamics and cultural meanings embedded within them. This involves identifying the perspectives of meaning that underpin everyday behaviour, including beliefs, values and basic assumptions about knowledge and learning.

Classroom studies conducted in the early years, where teacher-student interactions take place throughout the day across a range of subjects and settings, are more in line with the intimacy and commonality found in small communities. In higher education, however, where subjects are taught separately and students move between classes, the resemblance to small community life diminishes, calling into question the suitability of such environments for ethnographic study (Erickson, 1984).

Overall, the essence of ethnography lies in its comprehensive, holistic approach, which aims to understand and portray the intricacies of daily life and social structures in different settings, whether familiar or exotic, in order to gain insight into their underlying meanings and social dynamics. Ethnographic approaches, according to their original interpretations, were supposed to involve long-term analysis, the possibility of holistically covering all aspects of the daily lives of the subjects under study, in order to capture nuances and daily variations, and thus achieve the most comprehensive and three-dimensional view of the phenomenon.

However, as several scholars point out, ethnography is also often used as a productive outside anthropological analysis and in more circumscribed research contexts. For example, in design planning, health care, commercial research or action research, where the aim is not just to observe but to change the reference context. In these cases, shorter and more operational techniques have been developed, such as rapid assessment procedures (Scrimshaw & Hurtado 1987).

In these cases, there are operational and economic constraints that lead to the development of short forms of ethnography, as highlighted by Pink and Morgan (2013).

Approaches to rapid ethnography focus on the importance of immersion, empathic engagement and an ongoing dialogue between ethnographic, analytical and theoretical perspectives. Several aspects distinguish rapid ethnography from traditional, long-term ethnography. Sara Pink (2012) outlines some of these features:

1. The intensity of the research encounter: rapid ethnography seeks immediate involvement and engagement with the researched environment.

Ethnographers aim to immerse themselves in the heart of the action from the outset, involving participants in the project with a clearly stated intention. Through this collaboration, the intensity of the research encounter becomes a crucial element of learning and empathy within the confines of short-term research.

2. A focus on detail: in contrast to the breadth of long-term ethnographic studies, short-term ethnography encourages researchers to make connections between participants' experiences and their own. By using past experiences to understand the principles behind participants' aspirations, researchers build bridges between their world and that of the people they study.

3. The Ethnographic-Theoretical Dialogue: in long-term ethnography, dialogue with theoretical frameworks may occur sporadically, often at the end of fieldwork or during specific review phases. In contrast, rapid ethnography demands a sharper focus, requiring rapid responses to research questions and the interweaving of data collection and analysis within a tighter timeframe.

In essence, rapid ethnography is not a shortcut but a methodologically significant approach in its own right. It emphasises the immersion of researchers in the research context from the outset, the meticulous attention to detail, the dynamic dialogue between ethnography and theory, and the continuous re-engagement with the collected material. These features set it apart from the traditional long-term ethnographic approach and align it more closely with contexts that require rapid, intensive research engagements, such as design, action research or commercial settings.

1. Tools used in short ethnography

In our research, the adoption of a short ethnographic approach was useful to fit the analysis around the timescales of the Kids4alll classroom experiments, so it was necessary to focus the observations during the 6 sessions that took place in each classroom to deal with the buddy method.

It was decided to plan the ethnographic sessions in 3 different phases of work in each educational context.

A first round of short ethnography was activated at the very beginning of the project to observe how the groups were formed, what the climate and expectations of the work were, what the pedagogical approach of the teachers and educators involved was.

A second meeting was scheduled in each context, approximately in the middle of the experiment, in order to observe how the young people had organised themselves in the buddy method, their dynamics and reactions, the socio-emotional attitudes carried out by individuals and in pairs.

A final observation session was planned at the end of the experiment to capture any differences and movements in the subjects and their relationships, as well as how the buddies performed their individual and social competences in relation to the whole class, at the moment of presenting and sharing each final buddy's work.

As mentioned above, short ethnography requires a more structured method, a more defined preliminary theoretical approach (with the definition of hypotheses and areas of investigation) and, finally, a denser interplay between observation, analysis and theory than traditional ethnography. For these reasons, an ethnographic observation guide was prepared and shared with all the researchers involved in the study in the different countries. This guide, which will be described in more detail in the next section, was used to identify the main elements of the research, as well as some hypotheses about the areas in which the buddy method might have had a greater impact: in particular, the grid asked to pay attention to aspects of interaction between teachers and pupils, between pupils in buddy pairs, and finally between pupils in the whole class group.

In addition, a short questionnaire was prepared and administered to the children at the end of the work in order to test what had been observed. The purpose of this instrument was to complete the ethnographic analysis by providing not only the point of view of the researchers involved in the observation, but also that of the children themselves, who were the subjects of the experiment.

Therefore, in the following sections, the observation guide and the questionnaire used as instruments of the short ethnography in this research will be described in more detail. Then some of the main findings from the observations and questionnaires will be reported.

Through these data it will be possible to outline some elements of interest in understanding how ethnography can be used in the classroom and what the possibilities, but also the limitations, of such an approach might be.

1.1 *The observation guide*

Observational research is functional when it achieves its goals by capturing relevant events and participants along with the constructs of interest. The observation guides and grids are two tools that assist the observer in achieving these goals and generally facilitate the process of ethnographic data collection. Similar to the outlines that interviewers and facilitators use to guide the flow of their in-depth interviews and group discussions, the observation guide serves two important purposes: first, to remind the observer of key observation points and related themes of interest; and second, to serve as a prompt for a reflection exercise in which the observer can reflect on his or her own relationship to what is being observed and his or her own contribution at a given moment (e.g. how the physical context conditions his or her observations). An observation guide is an important tool regardless of the role of the observer, but it becomes even more important when the observers are diverse and operating in different cultural contexts. The grid is similar to the guide and helps the observer to remember the main events and themes. However, unlike the guide, the observation grid is a kind of spreadsheet or log that allows the observer to record observed events in relation to the constructs of interest (and to record their own reflections on them). Like the guide, the observation grid not only ensures that the key themes and constructs are captured, but also encourages the observer to reflect on each aspect of their observations and to identify the ways in which the observer influences (or is influenced by) the recorded observations (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). This section briefly describes the key dimensions that the researchers observed in the classrooms and informal educational contexts where the KIDS4ALLL pilot activities took place.

The dimensions used in the 'observation guide' are:

– The organisation of space. Space is an important educational mediator. Malaguzzi called it the third educator (Edwards et al., 1993). The possibility for teachers to modify spaces to best suit different activities is important. At the same time, the possibility for students to act and move within them allows them to have more immersive and engaging experiences. For this reason, the dimension "The organisation of space" is articulated in three observation focuses. The primary role of the teacher or students in organising the space (teacher-directed/student-organised). The formal or informal organisation of the space in order to understand the extent to which the space uniquely supports teaching practices or

multiple visions of reality. Finally, the sense of welcome in the organisation of spaces is considered because this aspect can support the well-being of the class group (Maxwell, 2000).

– Teaching method. A central aspect of the success of any educational proposal is the pedagogical style of the teacher or educator. There is no single correct approach, but each situation can benefit from a specific pedagogical stance (Opdenakker, & Damme, 2006). Observations of teaching methods can be carried out with varying levels of formality with the aim of sharing ideas, obtaining feedback, facilitating teacher reflection and generally improving teaching practice (Fletcher, 2018). These observation indicators focus on the specific teaching strategies and techniques that a teacher uses to help students understand a concept, acquire a skill, or learn about a topic. More specifically, researchers observed the strategies and techniques that teachers and educators used with the class, as well as observing the teaching strategies or techniques that teachers and educators used with individuals or small groups.

– Management of learning units by teachers and educators. The KIDS4ALLL project proposes a set of pedagogical contents but leaves a maximum of organisational freedom in terms of classroom organisation. This choice is based on the desire to make the content easier to integrate into the practices commonly used by the teachers involved. However, it was important to take this indicator into account during the observations in order to understand how the project was actually implemented in the different schools (temporal organisation; operational organisational indicators).

– Related to this last aspect is the "activities of the buddies in the learning unit". The aim here is to understand how the relational dynamics within the groups and between the buddies were maintained.

– The last dimension relates to classroom interaction during the implementation phases and concerns the observation of the dynamics that develop in the classroom during the production phase of the KIDS4ALLL course.

The dimensions, briefly described, were organized around some functional "observation focuses" to support the work of the observer by circumscribing areas of interest related to the peculiarities of the KIDS4ALLL project.

DIMENSIONS TO BE OBSERVED	OBSERVATION FOCUSES			
Organization of space	default by the teacher/organized by the students	formal/informal spaces	welcoming/not welcoming spaces	
Teaching method	formal/informal	teacher/educator offers support and enhancement of the work of buddies/ strictly evaluative attitude	during the interactions the teacher/ educator often refers to the cultural and geographical differences of the children/ the teacher/educator does not recall the differences of geographical and cultural origin of the children in his activities	
Teacher/educator learning unit management	temporal organization of the activity (e.g. compact in one lesson, distributed also for activities at home, distributed over several lessons etc.)	the teacher/educator gives operational organizational indications/autonomy of the children in the organization	the teacher/educator follows the students during the activity with feedback and indications/is available for any requests but does not intervene directly	
Buddies activities in the learning unit	children involved in the activity/passive	while working on the LU shared leadership/ self-centred leadership (in this case, note whose is the leadership, with attention to the intercultural aspects)	in the presentation to the class (if any) of the final product of the LU, there is a shared leadership-/autocentric leadership (in that case, note who is the leadership, with attention to intercultural aspects)	the comparison between the boys of the couple buddies is aggressive/assertive
Interaction of the class within the final products during the activity closure	listening skills (interest) of presentations of other groups/lack of interest	support from other groups/competitiveness with other groups	content-based and independent assessments/social strategies	

Figure 1. General grid of investigated dimensions presents the aspects
considered in relation to each dimension

For each of the observed dimensions, an observation sheet was created (see Figure 2), which made it possible to obtain:

1) an evaluation of the different dimensions observed using a semantic differential system. The Semantic Differential (SD) is a measurement scale

designed to observe and measure objects and events by using a set of bi-
polar scales, specifically Ethnographic semantics is the description of sem-
antic characteristics that are culturally revealing (Colbyet et al., 1966)
2) descriptive notes justifying the scoring of each dimension.

While the ethnographic observation grid and the material collection
grid were used to collect and systematise the observations made during the
individual work sessions with the pupils, the synthesis grid was used by
each partner to support the final systematisation of all the observations
made over time.

Physical setting	Pre-organized by the teacher/educator	………………………	Managed by the students
	Formal spaces	………………………	Informal spaces
	Welcoming spaces	………………………	Not welcoming spaces
	Notes (description of what was observed) ………………………………		
	Observer's interpretations ………………………………………		
	Third-party interpretations ………………………………………		
Didactic Style	Informal	………………………	Formal
	Support attitude and enhancement of the buddies' work	………………………	Strictly evaluative attitude of the buddies' work
	During the interactions the teacher/educator often refers to the cultural and geographical differences of the students	………………………	During the interactions the teacher/educator never refers to the cultural and geographical differences of the students
	Notes (description of what was observed) ………………………………		
	Observer's interpretations ………………………………………		
	Third-party interpretations ………………………………………		

Teacher/educator learning unit management	Each LU is realized in a single meeting	....	Each LU is declined within several meetings
	The teacher/educator provides timely organizational indications	....	The teacher/educator leaves full autonomy of the children in the organization
	During the activity the teacher/educator offers information and feedback on work in progress	....	The teacher is available for any requests but does not intervene directly
	Notes (description of what was observed)		
	Observer's interpretations		
	Third-party interpretations		
Buddies activities on the learning unit	Shared leadership	....	Self-centered leadership
	Presentation equally shared between the elaborated buddy to the class	....	Presentation to the class by only one of the buddy
	Aggressive comparison between the buddyget involved and participate during the activity	....	Assertive comparison between the buddy Not involved during the activity
	Notes (description of what was observed)		
	Observer's interpretations		
	Third-party interpretations		

Interaction of the class within the final products during the activity closure	Listening (interest) to presentations by other groups	…………………	Lack of interest in the presentations of the other groups
	Support from other groups	…………………	Competitiveness in regard to other group
	Evaluations of products made by other buddies based on social strategies	…………………	Content-based evaluations and independence of products made by other buddies
	Notes (description of what was observed) ………………………………		
	Observer's interpretations ………………………………………		
	Third-party interpretations ………………………………………		

Figure 2. Observation sheet

The ethnographic analysis was therefore based on direct observation by the researcher, using the markers presented, and the possible deepening of some of the aspects indicated through informal interaction with the participants. The observations took place at different stages of the KIDS4ALLL project, while students and teachers were working on the project's training materials, called learning units.

The number of observations was set in three different sessions, the first at the beginning of the activities, the second in the middle and the last at the end of the pilot phase. The ethnographic analysis was completed by examining the artefacts produced by the participating students during the activity. The researchers collected all the artefacts produced by the student groups during the work.it phase of the activities in digital form and assigned each product to the pair of creators of the buddies. This made it possible to cross-reference the different data collected. The observation was carried out in such a way as to minimise the invasiveness of the dynamics of the class and the individual groups, as well as the role of the teacher. For this reason, the observation was not videotaped, but the observed contexts and interactions between peers and teachers could have been photographed. This activity is part of the informed consent that both the participating children and their parents/guardians were asked for beforehand: thus, in

this case too, the observation activities, the dimensions studied and the methods were explained to the participants beforehand, either orally or through a written document that accompanied the informed consent.

This aspect is not merely formal or bureaucratic, but enhances the ethnographic research by sharing and explaining its specificities. Nevertheless, the teachers used a special nickname to identify the couples when collecting the materials and uploading them to the work.it area of the platform, in order to increase the protection of the students' privacy. Finally, when, as in the case of the KIDS4ALLL project, ethnographic observation is carried out by different subjects, it is important to organise an initial training. The delivery of the final tools to the different partners was accompanied by 3 online training sessions, which served to further share methods and approaches in using the respective tools. This ensured consistency between the different maps collected.

1.2 *The student questionnaire*

Some interesting feedback on the experiences made in the classroom and in the associative contexts comes from the information gathered in the follow-up questionnaire administered to the children involved in the pilot phase.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain some point-in-time information from the children, to be complemented by the social network analysis, the ethnographic observations collected during the pilots by the researchers involved in the ethnographic analysis and, limited to the countries where the counterfactual analysis was carried out, also by the results of the questionnaire on socio-emotional and civic competences (before and after the intervention).

In this way, it was possible to activate a triangulation of data and points of view, capable of returning, in a more articulated and multi-perspective way, not only a picture of the processes activated during the Buddies' work, but also a self-assessment by the children of its meaning and value, in relation to the main dimensions experienced and studied in the project.

Specifically, the questionnaire was designed to collect data relating to:

– the evaluation of the buddy method in relation to existing and known practices in the educational dynamics of the children;
– the subjects' self-perception of the usefulness of the method in devel-

oping the main socio-emotional skills, the strengthening of which was the objective of the KIDS4ALLL experiment;
– self-perception of the co-creation of content (the second key point of the buddy method) as a useful pedagogical factor;
– self-perception of satisfaction with the educational material provided by the KIDS4ALLL learning kit;
– self-perceived satisfaction with the KIDS4ALLL interactive platform, its usefulness and ease of use.

Some items were specifically designed to measure the extent to which children felt included in their groups, both inside and outside the classroom or club, after working with the buddy method.

The questionnaire was developed in English and then translated by each partner into their own language. The translations were uploaded to the LimeSurvey platform so that the questionnaires could be administered to children in different contexts. In some cases, where the schools and/or associations did not have suitable IT tools, the administration took place in paper form.

The questionnaire was administered to the participating young people at the end of the pilot activities in May-June 2023.

2. The results of the ethnographic observation

The educational contexts of schools are saturated with cultural particularities, social rituals and locally specific linguistic expressions that provide rich data points for ethnographic research and for understanding the impact of a complex educational proposal such as KIDS4ALLL. The aim of the ethnographic analysis was to observe the dynamics of participation, interaction and exchange within the classes and associations involved in the KIDS4ALLL project. The main purpose of the ethnographic analysis was to integrate the data and analyses from the monitoring (described in the chapter) with qualitative elements capable of providing a picture of the different socio-cultural contexts in which the process took place. To this end, ethnographic observation activities were planned with both schools and associations.

In the KIDS4ALLL project, partners from ten different countries took part in the ethnographic analysis. In total, 46.6% of the institutions belong to a formal context, while the remaining 53.3% represent a non-formal context.

Coordinating project partner	National context	Pilot institutions	Learning contexts
UNITO	Italy	Rete CPIA	Non-formal
		Il Nostro Pianeta	
		Asai	
		IC Alberti Salgari Middle School	Formal
		SMS Calamandrei Middle School	
		IC Salvemini Middle School	
		Michele RUA Middle School	
		Giordano Bruno High School	
		IIS Ferraris High School	
		IP Giolitti High School	
OSLOMET	Norway	Sammen, Frelsesar-meen Grønland	Non-formal
		Save the Children Norway	
TARKI	Hungary	Motiváció ass.	Non-formal
KU	Turkey	Hatemo lu School	Formal
		Hatemo lu Middle School	
		Istinye High School	
		International Blue Crescent Foundation	Non-formal
UOP	Greece	Arsis ass.	Non-formal
UNIJENA	Germany	Klex	Non-formal
		JMD	
		Westside	
		IGS	
UNIPD	Italy	Popoli insieme	Non-formal
		Cooperativa sociale orizzonti	
		Amici dei Popoli	

		Jewish-Arab High School	Formal
LEVINSKY	Israel	Multicultural School	
		Youth village	Non-formal
CREA (UB, UdG)	Spain	Camí del Cross Public Primary School	Formal
		Cascavell Public primary School	

Figure 3. KIDS4ALLL project partners that took part in the Ethnographic research

The ethnographic observations collected are presented in this section according to the dimensions considered in the 'Observation Guide'.

A first interesting aspect noted during the ethnographic observations draws attention to the organisation of physical spaces in schools. A first interesting aspect noted during the ethnographic observations recalls a focus on the organisation of physical spaces in schools.

In almost all the countries considered, teachers have limited possibilities to change the teaching space, as classrooms and laboratories are pre-organised and arranged in rows in front of the teacher's desk. According to some observers (e.g. Italy), this organisation, although effective for traditional frontal teaching, was not suitable for carrying out the pilot activities because it led to a reduction in discussion, cooperation and dialogue between pairs.

In some contexts (e.g. Italy, Germany) the activities took place in multimedia classrooms, with stationary computers, and pupils were not able to arrange themselves in a way that would facilitate comparison. The exceptions were the primary schools in Turkey, where activities took place in informal settings such as the library or the garden, and the interactive groups in Spain. In non-formal contexts (e.g. in Germany), children felt more comfortable because they were able to move around and interact freely, and this was an important strength. Although in this case there is a potential critical point of being more easily distracted, particularly due to increased noise levels. These reflections on structural constraints led the teachers to more general reflections on the importance of teaching and learning spaces. Recent studies (Barrett et al., 2019; Cutillas et al., 2023) have demonstrated the importance of well-designed facilities for student achievement. How does architectural space affect ability? How does the built environment affect the way teachers and students interact in what might be called a collective learning environment? These are some of the key questions suggested

by observation. Academic research on these topics is extensive and can provide some answers to these questions. In addition, it is important to raise awareness of pedagogical realities, even if effective answers are not always found by the school system. Teachers have drawn attention to some of the physical elements that influence learning. The observational activity prompted teachers and researchers to reflect on the ways in which classrooms and schools can be viewed as collectives, using complexity science theory as a theoretical framework. Ultimately, complexity science models could be extended to include the actual physical spaces as important 'agents' in influencing a non-linear and dynamic system, and to draw implications for school design based on the principles of complexity.

In the contexts observed, different teaching styles were identified, as the KIDS4ALLL teaching proposals were easy to use regardless of the teaching style. This element is an indicator of the wide usability of the teaching proposals developed in the project.

In most countries (e.g. Italy, Germany, Israel, Spain, Hungary) the researchers observed a common friendly style and supportive attitude of teachers and educators. This presupposed the creation of a comfortable environment conducive to learning and student engagement.

This was particularly evident in non-formal contexts where educators played the role of facilitators of learning and developed close relationships with children and young learners.

The buddy method was not always sufficiently integrated into the educational provision and in some cases the pathway could benefit from the use of more integrated methods.

Regarding the cultural differences of the participants during the activities, the only countries where teachers referred to the specific cultural differences of the participants were Norway and Spain, perhaps it could be useful to extend this approach in order to promote inclusion (Jan Inge Jönhill, 2011).

With regard to the indicator "Teacher/educator management of learning units", the individual LU (Learning Unit) was usually carried out in one session in both formal and informal settings.

The positive relational climate, the comparison and the request for in-depth analysis by the pupils made it difficult to contain the time, following the indications of the KIDS4ALLL project (e.g. Italy, Germany).

The free allocation of time within the KIDS4ALLL project has resulted in students taking more responsibility for learning the content outside of class, maximising the efficiency of class time to allow for more focused and

meaningful discussion of the content, and allowing more time for inter-action and discussion. Teachers and lecturers involved in the KIDS4ALLL project find that their students are more active and interested than in a tra-ditional lecture.

In all contexts, the management of LUs took on a different physiognomy depending on the teaching style of the teachers. In Italy, for example, half of the teachers left the students in full control of the activities and gave little feedback while they worked, while the other half exercised more con-trol. In Norway, all teachers gave feedback to their pupils as they worked. The comments provided important guidance for structuring the LU.

LUs with a lot of text made content comprehension particularly difficult, as pointed out by observers from Norway and Hungary. The choice to pro-vide different types of LUs responds to the need to provide a wider variety of learning material to suit the wide range of existing contexts. Conversely, the presence of content relevant to the age group of the participants led to a higher level of participation (e.g. high school in Turkey). As the age group covered by the project is large, teachers have chosen some content over others in order to better support the motivation of their pupils. This aspect is an indicator of the teachers' and educators' in-depth knowledge of their pupils. At the same time, it shows how the materials developed within the KIDS4ALLL project are functional to support the processes of individual-isation in schools. For example, in some of the Greek secondary schools, teachers sometimes chose to leave out certain aspects of the LUs because they were considered more appropriate for the target group of younger pu-pils, as it also happened in some of the Italian contexts. We can say that the open pedagogical organisation of the KIDS4ALLL project is useful and functional for a wide applicability. The penultimate area considered is «Buddies activities on the learning unit». The buddies strategy aims to pro-mote student-student interaction and helps to support social learning through a competition where skills are shared. Some research highlights (Arum & Roksa, 2011) that student-student interaction can distract from, rather than contribute to, achievement. Other studies emphasise teamwork (Curran et al., 2010). Trinchero emphasises the importance of organising these activities with attention in order for them to be effective (Calvani & Trinchero, 2019). This was confirmed by the observations made in the KIDS4ALLL project. In fact, the KIDS4ALLL observations showed that interaction can contribute to learning when the learning activity is well structured and collaborative. Buddy interaction was found to be closely re-lated to the different national contexts, the age of the participants, the habit

of working in groups and the formal or non-formal context of the activities.

In Norwegian schools, buddies almost always worked together and the buddy method was perceived positively by teachers. In the Italian and Hungarian school contexts, the buddy method was affected by less continuity. This required pupils to be more adaptable to new relationships, as buddy pairs were reshuffled at different times depending on the effective presence of pupils.

Based on the observations made, it seemed that friendly relationships were established between the buddies in all countries, but there were different levels of interaction from one country to another.

There was an overall absence of aggressive confrontation between pairs, which is a very important starting point for adopting strategies to enable and develop shared leadership and assertive confrontation in the buddy teams.

Finally, in the contexts where the final discussion took place (last area considered), the pupils showed a great interest in the work of the other pairs, especially when it related to content that they found interesting (e.g. Norway, Israel). Another important emerging evidence relates to the fact that in those spaces where teachers and educators created an informal setting without any evaluation of the final product, the students felt more relaxed and freer to express their creativity; they showed great curiosity about the work of others (this happened especially in the Israeli context).

In addition to the feedback that was formally collected on several occasions, the teachers pointed out that there was reflection after the end of the project.

Beyond the data collected and summarised here, ethnographic observation was a valuable tool for reflection for both researchers and teachers, providing feedback analysis rather than pre-packaged solutions. The KIDS4ALLL project was designed to allow for a great deal of freedom in teaching, and the data collected through ethnographic observation took this into account. In this way, the different contexts, formal and informal, and countries involved were able to reject the teaching proposals in their realities. The project activities were organised in different ways by the pilot institutions and differed even from one teacher/educator to another within the same institution. Given this diversity, the possibility of comparing the ethnographic observations collected is a valuable source of information.

3. The results of the student questionnaire

As mentioned above, short ethnography can comprise several tools aimed at collecting information and data on specific aspects of the analysed paths. In this context, it seemed useful to administer a short follow-up questionnaire to the students involved in order to obtain feedback on their perception of the pathway and some precise data on their enjoyment of the pathway.

National context	Coordinating project partner	Pilot institutions	Learning contexts
Greeke	UoP	Arsis ass.	Non-formal
Hungary	Tarki	Motivació	Non-formal
Israel	Levinsky	Jewish-Arab High School	Formal
		Multicultural Primary School	
Italy	UniTo	Adult education national school (CPIA) of Fossano	Non-formal
		Il Nostro Pianeta	
		Asai	
		IC Alberti Salgari Middle School	Formal
		SMS Calamandrei Middle School	
		IC Salvemini Middle School	
		Michele RUA Middle School	
		Giordano Bruno High School	
		IIS Ferraris High School	
		IP Giolitti High School	
	UniPd	Popoli insieme	Non-formal
		Cooperativa sociale Orizzonti	
		Amici dei popoli	
Turkey	KU	Hatemo lu Primary School	Formal
		Hatemo lu Middle School	
		Istinye High School	

Figure 4. National contexts and pilot institutions

The data collected from the student questionnaire came from 5 participating countries – Italy, Turkey, Israel, Hungary and Greece – and information was collected from 299 respondents (see Figure 4 for an overview of the specific contexts involved in each country and graphs 1, 2, 3, for the distribution of the sample by country, age and gender).

The majority of respondents to the questionnaire come from associative settings: only 27% of children (82 respondents) come from schools. The majority come from lower secondary schools (55%), 33% from upper secondary schools and a minority of cases (9%) from primary schools.
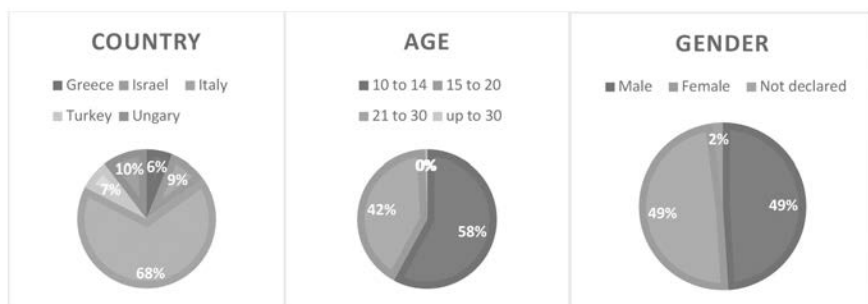
Graphs 1, 2, 3. Distribution of the sample by Country, age and gender (299 cases)

Most of the young people involved in the pilot reported that they had worked on learning units aimed at improving digital literacy (49.5%). The second most chosen competence, according to the children, was cultural awareness (24%). Given the freedom given to teachers and educators to work on competences that are more relevant to them than the key competences.

It is interesting to note that the first competence considered was the digital one, also in order to identify a common starting point for all the actors involved in the use of the KIDS4ALLL platform and the subsequent educational and teaching proposals. Thus, an attempt was made to define a common access base for all members.

Cultural awareness and citizenship are the second competences considered. The latter are in fact the ones most emphasised in the project that the teachers have joined.

The data collected show that the buddy method, understood as co-creation work in pairs, was not totally unknown to the pupils: in fact, 40% of the respondents claimed to have worked in this mode very often, even be-

fore the project. In fact, it is possible that the students did not fully understand the difference between the buddy method and the peer method. Furthermore, a good portion of the children (45% of the respondents) claim to have also already collaborated with their buddy before forming the buddy pair of the KIDS4ALLL Project.

However, the Buddy pairs were largely managed and organised by the educators: 82% of the pairs were formed in a top-down manner, according to the educators' criteria.

The aim of the activity was also to create a long-term collaboration, so that the buddies in each pair would continue to build and strengthen their bond throughout the project. This was almost always possible, although 17 per cent of respondents said they changed their buddy as the activities progressed. The various organisational variables that characterise educational contexts, both formal and informal, do not, as these data show, allow for the construction of overly rigid experiments, but must take into account, especially in such diverse contexts, the many trajectories, diversities and organisational contingencies that can occur. It should also take into account children's ability to work in the changing and fluid situations that characterise everyday life.

Most of the students rated the experience of working with the buddy method as positive (27%) and very positive (18%). In addition to the closed questions, the children were also asked a number of open-ended questions that allowed them to summarise some aspects of their experience and to elaborate on their answers. In particular, the questions were aimed at identifying the positive and negative aspects of the buddy method according to the stakeholders.

The interviewees were allowed to give their answers in open-ended fields: the answers were then recorded by the researchers in the main categories.

For example, some of the most common reasons given by those who rated the experience as positive were:

– get to know and understand each other better;
– make new friends;
– learning to work with people you don't know;
– to compare and exchange ideas;
– find more ideas;
– to communicate better;
– learn how to resolve conflicts;

- help each other with our difficulties;
- work faster and more efficiently;
- to make work less boring.

When analysing the open-ended answers given by the 19% of respondents who instead rated the experience negatively, these motivations were the most common:

- because I like doing it my way;
- I concentrate better;
- I can organise myself better;
- I don't like working with people I don't like;
- I feel better on my own.

Some specific variables related to the sense of inclusion and socio-emotional skills are considered below.

Specifically, in relation to the sense of inclusion, a specific question asked the children how much working in this mode had helped them to feel 'accepted'.

The results show that:

- 53% of the respondents found these activities very helpful in developing a sense of inclusion (the sum of much and very much);
- 52% are very or extremely satisfied with the support they received to feel more confident in their own abilities;
- 48% are very or extremely satisfied with carrying out activities and pursuing goals;
- 49% are very or extremely satisfied with their ability to improve their concentration;
- 49% were satisfied with feeling more useful and responsible in their work;
- 53% felt that the activities helped to a great or very great extent to make them more interested in the activities;
- 45% agreed a lot or very much with the idea that the buddy method helps people get out of their comfort zone and explore new ideas;
- 50% found the method useful in improving cooperation skills.

In relation to how working in pairs helped to improve skills:
- 50% said that it helped them to challenge and compare their own ideas with those of others;

– 53% said that it seemed to improve their confidence in their own skills;
– 47% the ability to express and share ideas;
– 44% said that the method helped them to better identify their own point of view and values.

In general, the same positive opinions concern the usefulness of the method for improving entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills (46%), for managing the exploration of new ideas (46%) and, above all, for developing them (52%).

There is also a decidedly positive opinion on the usefulness of the method for learning to activate others (48%), to deal with uncertainties and doubts, to take risks (45%) and finally to find and move through information (47%).

The positive perception of the buddy method in terms of the co-creation of content, which is thus linked to the tradition of pedagogical activism, shows the same positive characteristics in the children's judgement as the participatory and collaborative aspects of the method: 81% of respondents consider the co-creation of content as a positive aspect to be replicated.

Conclusion

From the analysis of the educational processes developed in the KIDS4ALLL pathway, some interesting observations can be made.

On the one hand, there is the world of those who successfully and enthusiastically experience school and the informal educational contexts of the associations, including the innovation they experience in them. For this part of the sample, which according to the questionnaire represents about half of the young people, there is a general satisfaction both with the activities and with their own individual role and path within them. Reflecting, however, on the other half of the sample, the one that found it hard or difficult, is equally important.

Even from the ethnographic observations, this dichotomy seems to manifest itself above all in the attitude of the teachers: if about half of the teachers and educators seem to experience the experiments and interventions proposed from the outside with distance and a certain indifference, another half or so of the educators are passionately committed to making every moment of work with the children an opportunity for growth, confrontation and relationships.

It is interesting to note, however, that it is not possible to know the deep motivations, feelings and opinions of those directly involved from the inside, but only to observe them through a variety of instruments.

When, as in this case, a self-analysis tool such as the student questionnaire is combined with external observation, it seems too schematic to be able to provide in-depth information on the motivations for the success or failure of a certain educational and, more generally, social dynamic.

It would perhaps be interesting to try to combine these methods of analysis, traditionally used in short ethnographies and, more generally, in forms of action research, with methods of self-ethnography, which in this way make it possible to complement the external gaze of the researchers with an internal gaze of the students and teachers, allowing the actors in the school world to be the protagonists of the gaze and, through it, to activate an in-depth reflection on what they are experiencing and, more generally, on their own path of identity within the contexts (Coffey, 1999; Reed-Danahai, 2021).

Teachers' accounts of classroom life have often been written from a holistic ethnographic perspective. An early example is Kohl's (1968) *Thirty-Six Children*, and a more recent example is Cynthia Ballenger's account of literacy teaching in a bilingual classroom (Ballenger, 1999). Frank (1999) has published a guide to teachers' research in their own classrooms entitled Ethnographic Eyes. Hammersley (1990) is a good general resource on classroom ethnography, illustrating ethnographic studies of classrooms and discussing methods for carrying them out.

As Girod (2008) points out, several strands of scholarship have recently emerged that draw on ethnography and ethnographic analysis in teacher education. In particular, the following themes have been supported by the use of ethnographic methods: (a) preparing teachers in diverse settings to be more effective foreign language teachers and multicultural educators (Allen, 2000); (b) critical pedagogy and post-structuralist approaches to critiquing school systems and socio-political contexts of schooling (Gordon, 2000); (c) the study of multiple forms of literacy in educational settings using ethnography and sociolinguistics (Frank & Uy, 2004); and (d) general applications of ethnography to inform the development of general educational practice (Christensen, 1996; Flake, 1992; Masami & Arani, 2006).

Much less widely used and experimented with at the pedagogical level is the use of auto-ethnography by students as a form of reflection and counter-narrative in relation to what has been observed and often, in some forms, ideologised by the adult world of teachers and researchers.

We believe, therefore, that a useful addition could come from an experi-

ment in the use of auto-ethnographic diaries on the part of students, who would be able to return a narrative and reflection from within on the themes of their own growth and experience.

This type of perspective could be fruitfully integrated with that collected through more standardised tools such as questionnaires, although some scholars have also defined the limitations of this, some of the problems encountered in collecting and interpreting data through self-report diaries. These include the perceptions of teachers and learners and their ability to articulate these perceptions, highlighting the need to make key assumptions explicit before appropriate conclusions can be drawn from the data (Graham, 2008).

A second point for attention and reflection on the findings is whether and how time-limited and punctual instruments such as those described can capture even micro-changes, minimal shifts in trajectories and competences that occur, often unintentionally, over a long period of time.

Certainly, in this sense, it would be necessary to recover the approaches and tools of traditional ethnography, which follows people over long months, if not, often, years.

A number of studies, such as that of Gordon and Lahelma (2021), have attempted to analyse the change and dynamics of a school context through a long-term lens, demonstrating both the potential and the difficulty of moving ethnographic observation from the level of a contextualised gaze in space and time to the broader level of a life course.

Long-term analysis and, speculatively, long-term interventions, rather than one place and one time, may well be more meaningful in defining effective educational action.

In conclusion, the use of short ethnographic methods in the classroom has some specific advantages in contexts such as intervention research such as Kids4all, which needs to monitor and analyse the impact of specific, targeted educational interventions in a variety of contexts. They have the advantage of a certain cost effectiveness of the research and its consequent sustainability in projects that require the comparison of very different intercultural contexts, constrained by many different boundary conditions, linked to the organisational trajectories of the educational contexts and the biographical trajectories of the subjects involved.

However, they seem to be able to capture the macro-structures of the functioning of the processes without being able to enter into the specificities of the meanings that the different actors give to them: for this reason, the use of self-ethnographic tools, perhaps over time, by both teachers and students, would be useful.

As far as the KIDS4ALLL project is concerned, the ethnographic analy-

sis has been an important analytical tool, because it has allowed researchers from different countries to compare themselves on the basis of reworkings and a common focus of observation.

When working in educational contexts, and especially in schools, there is a risk of taking some elements for granted as belonging to one's own cultural background.

In addition, the data collected was supplemented by data collected through quantitative instruments (presented in the previous chapter).

Although there are several possible developments and uses of ethnographic tools in the KIDS4ALLL project, it was another useful tool for building a common vision.

References

Allen L. Q. (2000). Culture and the ethnographic interview in foreign language teacher development. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33(1), 51–57.

Arum R., & Roksa J. (2011). *Academically adrift: Limited learning on college campuses*. The University of Chicago Press.

Ballenger C. (1999). *Teaching Other People's Children: Literacy and Learning in a Bilingual Classroom*. Teachers College Press.

Barrett P., Treves A., Shmis T., Ambasz D., & Ustinova M. (2019). *The impact of school infrastructure on learning. A synthesis of the evidence.* Internacional Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank.

Bentley M. E., Pelto G. H., Straus W. L., Schumann D. A., Adegbola C., De La Pena E., Oni G. A., Brown K. H. & Huffman S. L. (1988). Rapid Ethnographic Assessment: Applications in a Diarrhea Management Program. *Social Science and Medicine*, 27(1), 107-116.

Calvani A., & Trinchero R. (2019). *Dieci falsi miti e dieci regole per insegnare bene*. Carocci.

Christensen L. M. (1996, November). *Preservice teachers as researchers: Using ethnographic tools to interpret practice.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Montgomery, AL.

Coffey A. (1999). The ethnographic self: Fieldwork and the representation of identity. *The Ethnographic Self*, 1-192.

Colby B. N. (1966). Ethnographic semantics. *Current Anthropology*, 7, 3-32

Cutillas M., Lagumbay D.G., Ancajas V.M., Besinga A.O., Alo B.A.A., & Ibale, E.D. et al. (2023). Enhancing student learning through classroom design exploring the influence of environment on academic performance. *World Journal on Education and Humanities research*, 3(4), 27-37.

Curran V.R., Sharpe D., Flynn K., Button P. (2010). A longitudinal study of the

effect of an interprofessional education curriculum on student satisfaction and attitudes towards interprofessional teamwork and education. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 24 (1), 41-52.

Edwards C., Gandini L., & Forman G. (1993). *The hundred languages of children: the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education*. Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Erickson F. (1984). What makes school ethnography 'ethnographic'? *Anthropology & education quarterly*, 15(1), 51-66.

Flake C. L. (1992). Ethnography for teacher education: An innovative elementary school social science program in South Carolina. *Social Studies*, 83, 253-257.

Fletcher-Wood H. (2018). *Responsive teaching: cognitive science and formative assessment in practice*. Routledge.

Frank C. R., & Uy F. L. (2004). Ethnography for teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 55, 269-283.

Girod M. (2008). Deepening understanding of the teaching and learning context through ethnographic analysis. *Teacher Educator,* 43(3), 216-237.

Gordon T., & Lahelma E. (2003). From ethnography to life history: tracing transitions of school students. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 6(3).

Graham Hall (2008). An ethnographic diary study. *ELT Journal,* 62, 2, 113-122, https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccm088

Hammersley M. (1990). *Classroom Ethnography: Empirical and Methodological Essays*. OISE Press.

Ingold T. (2008) 'Anthropology is not Ethnography'. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, volume 154.

Jönhill J. I. (2011). Inclusion and Exclusion-A Guiding Distinction to the Understanding of Issues of Cultural Background. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 29(4), 387–401. https://doi.org/10.1002/sres.1140

Kohl H. (1968). *36 Children*. New American Library.

Malinowski B. (1922). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific.* E.P. Dutton.

Masami M., & Arani M. R. S. (2006). Ethnography for teachers' professional development: Japanese approach of investigation on classroom activities. *Comparative Education in Teacher Training*, 4, 116-125.

Maxwell L.E. (2000). A Safe and Welcoming School: What Students, Teachers, And Parents Think. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, 17 (4), 271-282.

Opdenakker M.-C., & Van Damme J. (2006). Teacher characteristics and teaching styles as effectiveness enhancing factors of classroom practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(1), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.07.008

Pink S. & Morgan J. (2013). Short Term Ethnography: Intense Routes to Knowing. *Symbolic Interaction*, 36, 351-361, https://doi.org/10.1002/symb.66.

Pink S. (2012). *Situating Everyday Life: practices and places*. Sage.

Reed-Danahay D. (Ed.). (2021). *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social*. Routledge.

Roller M. R., & Lavrakas P. J. (2015). *Applied Qualitative Research Design*. Guilford Publications.

Scrimshaw S. C. M., & E. Hurtado (1987). *Rapid Assessment Procedures for Nutrition and Primary Health Care: Anthropological Approaches to Improving Programme Effectiveness*. Tokyo: The United Nations University

Woods P. (2005). *Inside schools: Ethnography in schools*. Routledge.

Yon D. A. (2003). Highlights and overview of the history of educational ethnography. *Annual review of anthropology*, 32(1), 411-429.

X.
Teaching strategies and new technologies for learning enhancement

*Jessica Niewint-Gori, Gabriella Taddeo, Sara Mori**

Introduction

In education, the integration of innovative teaching strategies and new technologies is one approach to improving the learning experience. This chapter explores the IDeAL (Iterative Design for Active Learning) methodology, which emphasises a holistic approach that combines the principles of deep learning with the development of transversal skills. This chapter introduces the IDeAL methodology, which emphasises a holistic approach that combines the principles of deep learning with the development of transversal competences. Crucial to this approach is the ability to accompany the use of technology in the classroom and to develop the potential of artificial intelligence. The text highlights the importance of collaborative platforms, AI-driven tools and digital resources in creating more personalised and engaging learning experiences. By integrating these technologies, educators can address individual learning needs, provide adaptive learning pathways and real-time feedback, fostering a more inclusive and effective educational environment. IDeAL can accompany the use of AI in the classroom: the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in education offers unprecedented opportunities for personalisation, automating administrative tasks and providing insights into student performance and learning habits. This will enable educators to tailor their teaching to the individual needs of each student, promoting a more learner-centred approach to education. Rapid technological development requires a balanced integration of traditional pedagogy and technological advances to create dynamic, student-centred learning environments. IDeAL, along with the integrated use of technology

---

* To Jessica Niewint are due paragraphs 2, 3 and 4; To Sara Mori are to be attributed the introduction, §§ 1 and 5.1. To Gabriella Taddeo the §§ 5.2.

and evidence-based practices, is an approach to promoting a student-centred approach to learning. By fostering an environment that values creativity, collaboration and critical thinking, students are equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century with confidence and competence. The combination of deep learning strategies, the IDeAL methodology and modern technology provides an integrated approach to student-centred education. It aims not only to prepare students academically, but also to equip them with the skills and mindset required for lifelong learning and success in the 21st century.

In the first section, the theoretical principles underlying IDeAL are explained; in the second section, the issue of new technologies and some frameworks that can be used to better understand the support that the use of technology can offer when accompanied by methodologies such as IDeAL are explored; then, in the third section, the issue of artificial intelligence and the skills that teachers need to integrate this type of tool in the development of students' transversal skills are introduced; in the fourth section, examples of the use of new technologies and artificial intelligence in the different phases of IDeAL are given.

1. Deep learning and effective teaching

The 'new pedagogies' (Fullan & Gallagher, 2017; Fullan et al., 2018) are powerful models of teaching and learning, enabled and accelerated by increasingly pervasive digital tools and resources, which are emerging in learning environments that measure and support deep learning at all levels of the education system. Deep learning is more natural to the human condition because it connects more clearly to our fundamental motivations: to engage directly and deeply in learning and to do things that really make a difference in our lives and in the world. In the best examples, teachers and students work together to make learning irresistibly engaging and imbued with real life problem-solving. New pedagogies require students not only to create new knowledge, but also to connect it to the world, using the power of digital tools to do important things beyond school. The goals of deep learning are for students to acquire the skills and dispositions that will prepare them to be creative, connected and collaborative lifelong problem solvers and healthy, holistic human beings who not only contribute to the common good, but also create it in today's knowledge-based, creative and interdependent world (Fullan & Langworthy, 2013; Barber & Don-

nelly et al., 2012). The use of methodologies that leave less room for improvisation can save resources, as well as improve learning outcomes, where this term means «a change on the cognitive, affective and motivational, relational, self-efficacy and empowerment levels» (Calvani et al., 2018, p. 137) This can also help to outline a didactic expertise (Calvani et al., 2021) capable of enhancing those practices that succeed in improving the educational success of students compared to what could be done in similar contexts, but with different methods. In the sphere of autonomy, Presidential Decree No 275/1999 specifies in Article 4, paragraph 2, that «school institutions shall regulate the timing of teaching and the performance of individual disciplines and activities in a way that is most appropriate to the type of studies and the pace of learning of the students».

From the experiences conducted over the years by INDIRE researchers, the need arose to define a methodology capable of accompanying both the use of new technologies in the classroom for the creation of objects with the 3D printer (Mori et al., 2018; Mori & Niewint, 2019) and the creation of real and virtual artefacts understood as objects intentionally conceived, designed and realised to achieve one or more purposes (Manzini, 1990; Rizzo, 2000). The intention is not to propose rigid protocols, but sufficiently structured activities that, starting from research in *Instructional Design*, consider the results of systematic reviews, meta-analyses (Hatttie, 2009; Hattie, 2012) and the studies conducted in the field of Instructional Design.

EBE (Evidence-Based Education) (Calvani & Trinchero, 2019; Bell, 2020; Marzano & Calvani, 2020); it is also intended not to overlook the contribution of cognitive sciences, 'educational neurosciences', which investigate brain capacities relevant to didactics (Geake, 2009; Rivoltella, 2012), and 'affective neurosciences', which aim to approach the extent to which the mind is influenced by an interdependence between body and brain (Immordino-Yang, & Damasio, 2007).

For this reason, the IDeAL method, an acronym for the words "Iterative Design for Active Learning", has been developed to define and structure the design phases of artefacts in a more detailed manner (Niewint et al., 2019). The steps that guide teachers through the design process using cards and grids are inspired by the results of evidence-based studies on the most effective and engaging instructional actions to achieve learning objectives (Reigeluth, 1999; Hattie, 2012; Hattie, 2017; Hattie, 2023; Calvani et al., 2018). In this case, IDeAL presents itself as a useful methodology to develop certain transversal competences of students such as collaboration,

communication, learning to learn, and the ability to learn, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, considered central in most competence frameworks for the 21st century (Voogt, N.P. Roblin, 2012; OCSE, 2018).

1.1 *The IDeAL method (Iterative Design for Active Learning) as an opportunity to improve teaching effectiveness*

IDeAL was created by declining in more detail the 'Think Make Improve' model for design-based learning (Martinez & Stager, 2016) and Design Thinking (Razzouk & Shute, 2021) with the contribution of the tools proposed by 'Didactics by Scenarios' within the INDIRE Educational Vanguards network[1]. The methodology has a twofold purpose: on the one hand, to provide the teacher with indications for scanning and calibrating the workload in consideration of the needs of the class; on the other hand, to develop transversal skills in students, such as creativity, communication, collaboration and problem solving, through the activation of cognitive processes in support of meaningful learning (Trinchero, 2018).

Overall, IDeAL consists of nine phases: an introductory phase, a concluding phase and seven central phases. As it is characterised by an iterative and cyclical approach aimed at continuous improvement, the intermediate design steps can be repeated until an ideal final solution is reached. For each step, a script was constructed and described by means of cards describing the roles of the teacher and the students, the period and the expected results. Annexes are also provided that draw on Indire's research on how to «make learning visible», developed within Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The IDeAL methodology with the sheets and annexes is publicly available on the INDIRE website[2].

Considering the practical recommendations for guiding teachers to effective teaching (Calvani et al., 2018) derived from EBE (Evidence-Based Education) each phase of the IDeAL methodology emphasises specific aspects of the teaching-learning process.

The table below (Table 1) summarises the nine phases that characterise the IDeAL methodology, each of which is described in more detail in the forms made available to teachers. For each of them, the actions considered

---

1   http://innovazione.indire.it/avanguardieeducative/didattica-scenari.
2   See for the Fact Sheets http://ideal.indire.it/schede.pdf and the Annexes http://ideal.indire.it/allegati.pdf.

effective in promoting a good teaching-learning process are listed, from which IDeAL draws its inspiration in trying to follow the recommendations derived from EBE.

Phase	Description	Directions for effective teaching
1.Instructional Meeting	The teacher presents the pupils with an outline of a project to be carried out, which is in line with the curricular themes, linking it to previous themes and illustrating the aims of the work, how it is to be carried out and the learning objectives envisaged. Students are given time to become familiar with what has been said, to reflect and to ask questions.	Making objectives clear and conveying confidence in their attainment, creating a challenging climate (Calvani et al., 2021) Activating pre-knowledge (Hattie, 2023). (Pellegrini & Vivanet, 2018). Breaking down and adjusting the complexity of the task according to the learner's expertise (Gagne, 1990). Directing the learner's attention and decreasing the extraneous cognitive load (Clark et al, 2006).
2.1.Define	Students propose initial ideas/solutions to the presented project/problem. They are then divided into pairs or groups of up to three students.	Creating small groups to foster cognitive interaction between members, Peer tutoring; Small group learning (Hattie, 2012; 2023).
2.2.Conceive 2.3.Design	Each group starts to draw on the map different possible solutions, prototypes and objects that might be useful to achieve the group's common goal. This process is supported by experimentation sheets. Each group is asked to come up with an internally shared prototype.	Developing mental imagination and self-explanation (metacognition) (Gagne, 1990; Zimmerman, 2001).
3.Realise	The teacher supervises the working groups in the activity of realising the product from the designed prototype, encouraging, and guiding the discussion if necessary. The students realise the designed product using materials or technological tools.	Fostering a gradual transition from dimensions to active practice. (Cognitive Load Theory) (Schnotz, & Kürschner, 2007).
4.1. Verification	Within each group, the students compare the product with the prototype, through active confrontation, also among themselves, changing and modifying.	Use feedback and enhance self-efficacy (Hattie, 2012; 2023). Positive peer relationships (Hattie, 2012; 2023).

4.2.Illustrate 4.3. Analyse	Each group presents their product to the class, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the designs and explaining the decision-making process in choosing the final prototype. This process is accompanied by support sheets and can be the premise for starting a new design cycle (step 2.1).	Enhancing the storage of relevant ideas and processes (Gagné, 1990; Hattie, 2012; 2023). Promoting the idea of error as a possibility for continuous improvement. (Clark et al., 2006).
5. Meeting and Conclusion	This stands out as the only individual moment aimed at individual reflection on opinions, beliefs and how these have changed since the learning experience.	Strengthening awareness and metacognition, highlighting relevant processes (Cornoldi & De Beni, 2020; Baliram, &. Ellis, 2019).

Table 1. IDeAL methodology steps and effective processes for EBE research

We take up the question also expounded by Marzano and Calvani (2020, p. 127) "in a field as complex as education, how can teachers be helped in their concrete decisions by pointing out reliable principles, models or procedures?".

IDeAL tries to answer the question by configuring itself as an intervention aimed at improving the students' competences by following the indications coming from research in Evidence-Based Education, enhancing small group work, metacognitive strategies and the students' project capability. The teachers involved in the experimentation collaborated on the objective in a process of continuous reflection and improvement of the practices implemented. The structuring of the methodology also considers the inseparable relationship between cognitive, emotional and social aspects in education and the tendency to go beyond teaching models that do not take all these factors into account; the proposed model emphasises the importance of relationships, the attitudes of teachers and pupils and the classroom climate at teaching times.

IDeAL promotes a teaching practice that values the fact that cognition, emotion, body and mind act together in students of all ages, from childhood to adulthood (Immordino-Yang, 2016). "The principle of active engagement states that it is essential that the student is motivated and engaged in learning … pleasure and autonomy, an explicit pedagogy supported by stimulating material" (Dehaene, 2019, p. 225). Curiosity, therefore, becomes crucial in order to keep alive the desire to discover and to improve, intercepting stimuli that are neither too familiar, in order not to arouse interest, nor too complex, in order to be considered distant. The work carried

out with the teachers by IDEAL and the materials proposed take these variables into account, both in the training of the teachers themselves and in the protocol proposed for the class group, in order to accompany the learning process, observe it, document it and create new opportunities for reflection.

2. Technologies in the classroom

Deep learning strategies, rooted in the principles of critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills promoted by the IDeAL methodology promote a deeper understanding and long-lasting retention of knowledge. Technology, in this context, acts as a catalyst, enhancing and improving the learning process. From collaborative platforms that encourage teamwork and communication to AI-driven tools that provide personalized learning experiences, technology broadens the horizons of what can be achieved in an educational setting. It allows for a more tailored approach to learning, catering to individual student needs and learning styles, and providing real-time feedback and support. The use of technology in this integrated approach is not just a means to an end; it is also a critical skill that students must master as part of their education. In a world where technology is ever-present, understanding and using these tools is essential for success in both academic and professional spheres.

The term 'technology' is overly broad, ranging from the projector to the digital whiteboard and from the typewriter to the tablet and all can influence learning in negative and positive ways. Technology is neither good nor bad. The use of technology itself, such as mobile phones and tablets, television, and computers can lead to student distraction because they often lead to multitasking activities or a punctual calling of attention (e.g. through banners, pop-up windows) and highlight how easy it is to distract the student from learning. But it is also true that tools such as digital flashcards and online quizzes can help to consolidate learned content or presentations and interactive programmes succeed in conveying content over multiple perceptual channels. Therefore, it is not the mere use of technology that will turn the lesson into an extraordinary success, it is the teacher himself who is the key figure in deciding to use technological tools or not. Fundamental is the teacher's basic understanding of how the use of technology in teaching influences student attention and learning. For example, having students write down their notes during a presentation with pen and

paper instead of using an electronic device such as a mobile phone or computer can be effective in preventing the potential distraction of digital technology. In the past years, the idea that everyone has his or her own learning style and that going against that style promotes learning has been widely debunked. There is no such thing as a visual or verbal style of learner. However, presenting information both visually and verbally helps all students. Technology in the classroom can certainly help with dual coding: receiving information visually and verbally. Websites, blogs, and news articles can be excellent resources for examining visual and verbal material. However, in everyday teaching practice there is often still difficulty in integrating technology into education in a meaningful way and the desired results in transforming the learning experience are not always seen. Educational researchers and experts have found that many educational technologies lack impact. For example, Professor Larry Cuban of Stanford University, who has expressed scepticism about digital educational technologies in publications spanning a decade and a half, such as his book *Oversold and Underused: Computers in the Classroom*. He notes that teachers are still doing the same things they have always done in their classrooms but using only more expensive digital devices.

However, we must recognise that today we could communicate quickly with people all over the world, to learn anytime and anywhere, to create content, to reach out to others and to collaborate easily. We can access all human knowledge through small devices that we carry with us. Today's lecturers and teachers have a power that was unimaginable just a few years ago. To deny the importance of digital technologies in education is to make ourselves irrelevant to the digital transformations that are redefining the world around us. The solution is to understand how best to use these digital technologies. Instead of banning them or keeping students away from them, educators and parents should determine how students should use them and for what purpose. Our thoughtful intentionality can positively influence student learning. If the main criticism of technology integration is that schools will continue to see limited impacts until they change, then the solution is to rethink learning, teaching, and schooling, not to ignore or ban the potential of technologies or the technologies themselves. Although many schools have advanced technologies, they rarely use them effectively, leaving efforts and expectations of results unfulfilled. Technology is often used in a replicative manner, i.e. doing the same things that teachers did in analogue classrooms only with more expensive tools. Until schools can transform their use of technology, they will not be able to meet the de-

mands and concerns of parents, communities, and external critics. To do so, teachers in particular need more resources to move towards a more transformative use of technology in education, where students and teachers can take advantage of digital tools to do things they could not do before.

2.1 *The TPACK Model and Methodologies*

The use of technology today presents an extraordinary opportunity to apply an effective approach to promote the development of personalisation from a constructionist perspective (i.e. with the construction of tangible and shareable artefacts) and thus can also meet the needs of teachers who are looking for effective tools to promote personalisation.

The TPACK[3] (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) model, devised by Punya and Koehler (2006), emphasises the need for the integration of pedagogical strategies, technology-aware use, and deep content knowledge to support meaningful learning. This integration must first take place in the competence of the teacher. The TPACK model can be a lens for re-reading all the innovative teaching experiences that teachers plan, experiment and perfect every day to create a stimulating learning environment that is personalised and inclusive. The use of technologies in education amplifies the possibilities of self-expression, flexible use of the tool in different learning contexts, adaptation to different abilities and differentiation of the implementation and expressive modes (kinaesthetic, visual, spatial, auditory, tactile).

The TPACK model also highlights the importance of the learning methodologies used. Learner-centred methodologies such as, for example, IBL (Inquiry-Based Learning), PBL (Problem/Project-Based Learning) or DBL (Design-Based Learning) support learners' potential by promoting active, engaging, and personalised learning, developing transversal skills, and encouraging collaboration and communication. These methodologies encourage students to ask questions, identify problems and find innovative solutions. In this way, students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for academic and professional success. The activities promote active learning, as students are directly involved in researching, analysing, and creating solutions. These approaches can make

3   http://tpack.org

learning more interesting and meaningful, while at the same time increasing student motivation. The approaches often encourage teamwork and communication between students, as they often work together to solve problems or carry out projects. This collaboration helps develop interpersonal and communication skills, which are fundamental for teamwork and professional relationships. The methodologies presented allow educators to adapt activities and projects to the specific needs and interests of students. In this way, students can explore topics that interest them most and develop their skills more effectively. In addition to the promotion of soft skills, the link between theory and practice is important to emphasise. Methodologies such as PBL, IBL or DBL enable students to apply theoretical concepts learned in the classroom to real, contextualised situations. This link between theory and practice helps to reinforce understanding and make learning more relevant and applicable to the real world.

2.2 *Methodologies and Technologies*

In the evolving landscape of education, student-centred methodologies have emerged as vital frameworks for integrating technology in learning environments. These approaches, including IDeAL[4], Inquiry-Based Education (IBE), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PBL), Challenged Based Learning (CBL), Design Thinking, Blended Learning, Flipped Classrooms, and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), emphasize active student engagement, problem-solving, and real-world applications. They not only foster a deeper understanding of subject matter but also seamlessly incorporate technology into the educational process.

The significance of these methodologies in the context of technology use lies in their ability to transform traditional, teacher-centric classrooms into dynamic, interactive spaces where technology acts as a facilitator rather than just a tool. In these settings, students are encouraged to explore, experiment, and engage with digital resources, thus developing essential 21st-century skills such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving. This shift towards student-centred learning, supported by technological advancements, prepares students to navigate and con-

---

4   https://www.indire.it/en/progetto/ideal-a-methodology-for-the-development-of-soft-skills/

tribute effectively to an increasingly digital world. These methodologies, therefore, play a crucial role in modernizing education and equipping learners with the competencies needed for both academic and real-world success.

In IDeAL, the design activity becomes the fulcrum of the teaching-learning process: the student is personally involved in devising, realising and evaluating possible solutions to a situation/problem; in this process the student activates prior knowledge (disciplinary and non-disciplinary) and at the same time develops new knowledge, also – and above all – by confronting his/her own mistakes. The learning objectives are defined considering transversal competences and processes typical of cognitive activation, leaving the teacher the possibility of identifying others, even disciplinary ones; this is because the project task assigned to the class may go beyond disciplinary boundaries and require the use of prior and interdisciplinary knowledge. The teacher is assigned the role of facilitator and guide; the student works both in small groups and with the entire class, but never as an individual: he or she is always the element of a working group in which decisions, responsibilities and processes are shared. Technology assumes a supporting role: it is not an indispensable tool, but a useful and versatile one, necessary because it facilitates the manipulation of ideas and sharing between groups and the class group (Niewint et al., 2019).

Inquiry-Based Education (IBE) (Savery, 2006) is a method that follows John Dewey's principle of initiating education with curiosity. It engages students in the entire scientific research process, from asking questions to sharing results, thus making teaching practical and effective for understanding scientific research. Teachers in IBE play dual roles of facilitator and instructor, balancing between guidance and student independence.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) (Newman, 2003), first used in medical education, is a student-centred, multidisciplinary method focusing on developing real-world problem-solving skills. In PBL, students collaboratively work on open-ended questions without predetermined solutions, fostering their ability to apply knowledge from various disciplines and work productively with others. PBL also involves collaborative problem-solving but is more structured than problem-based learning. Projects are defined from the start, and teachers have a more active role in guiding students through the complexities of the project, such as building a rocket or a space habitat.

Challenged Based Learning (CBL) (Johnson et al., 2009) aims to develop solutions to societal problems, starting with a broad issue and nar-

rowing down to a specific challenge. Technology is a crucial component in CBL, integrated into every phase of the learning process. The final product in CBL is determined during the learning process, with a focus on data collection and sharing using ICT. Design Thinking[5] in education mirrors the processes of design and prototype production. It helps students develop skills to identify societal problems and needs, encouraging entrepreneurship. Students go through a cycle of empathy, defining problems, ideation, prototyping, and testing, creating a prototype solution. Blended Learning and Flipped Classroom strategies[6] combine online, and in-class instruction maximize classroom time for deeper engagement and learning.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an approach that integrates foreign language learning with thematic content across all school subjects. It enables the use of a foreign language as a teaching medium in non-linguistic subjects, enhancing both language skills and subject matter understanding. Supported by the European Commission, CLIL is particularly effective in task-based pedagogies and offers unique benefits in science education, providing authentic learning contexts and supporting both cognitive skills and language learning.

2.3 *Programmes and technologies*

The use of technology in education has become an important aspect in teaching and learning. This section explores the role and impact of some digital tools and how to use technology in learning activities and for assessment, offering strategies to ensure that all students benefit from these digital advancements. However, the use of such technologies is not without its challenges, so the following text will provide insights and practical approaches to effectively integrate technology in education.

One of the tools used to produce IdeAL products by students are presentations. Presentation tools such as PowerPoint are a more established and well-known technology, and one could even say that it is a more widely used form of technology in the classroom. The strength of presentation tools such as PowerPoint, Prezi or other similar tools is certainly their ease of use. Both teachers and students are familiar with these tools and feel comfortable creating and sharing presentations. Teachers can easily edit and

---

5   https://dschool.stanford.edu/
6   https://innovazione.indire.it/avanguardieeducative/flipped-classroom

update old slides, which helps keep lessons as up to date as possible. Students can e.g. request copies of presentations to take notes for revision. These tools can be particularly useful for promoting dual coding, as it is an effortless way to present text and images. On the other hand, however, it can also be quite easy to abuse presentation tools and force students to multitask. Presenting slides while giving students time to read and then take notes forces them to switch from reading to writing and to pay attention to the lecturer explaining. To alleviate this moment of multitasking, it would be more advisable to give students a moment to read and process what is on the screen before starting with the explanation.

The delivery of creating a representation of key information as evidence of the content learned, using different digital applications could be differentiated in the following way, for example: See Appendix 1 for an example.

The exercise of identifying the current situation of access to technology in the classroom can also be useful in analysing how this may affect differentiation ability. Although technology is increasingly part of the school environment, not all teachers have the option of always having a device available for every student. But limited access to iPad/Chromebook carts, computer labs and even smartphones for students does not mean limited ability to differentiate with technology.

There are two general scenarios in which most teachers find themselves in relation to available technology:

– Teacher and student have a personal device, either their own or provided by the school.
– Lab/Career: Students have access to a computer cart or computer lab.

Some questions can be used to better understand what the situation is in this regard (see Appendix 2).

3. Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming many sectors, and education is certainly no exception. Integrating AI into education and teaching the conscious use of this technology means being a builder of an important competence for future citizens. AI has the potential to amplify the learning experience of students as well as to provide teachers with additional tools to develop tailor-made teaching plans. At the same time, as technology ad-

vances increasingly in everyone's life, education also needs new skills for both teachers and students. It becomes essential, for example, to develop a digital literacy that emphasises the understanding of AI also in a dimension of data analysis and utilisation. Three areas can be distinguished in education:

Ed for AI

How to engage with AI in a confident, critical, and safe way, without necessarily requiring a specific background in mathematics or programming .

Requires broader teacher and learner competencies to provide the necessary knowledge and attitudes.

Ed with AI	**Ed about AI**
How AI can enhance the teaching and learning process.	Focuses on the fundamentals of AI as technology.
Requires knowledge of how the methods and technologies used can best work together in a defined context to enhance the teaching and learning of specific content	Requires knowledge of processes like programming or machine learning as a key to preparing students for the labor market
	Often discussed as a topic in a renewed curriculum

Niewint-Gori (2023)

Education for AI: How to interact with AI confidently, critically, and safely, without necessarily requiring specific training in usually involved subject areas such as mathematics or programming. It requires broader skills to provide the necessary knowledge and attitudes.

Education with AI: How AI can improve the teaching and learning process. It requires an understanding of how the methods and technologies used can best work together in each context to enhance the teaching and learning process.

AI education: Focuses on the fundamentals of AI as a technology. It requires knowledge of processes such as, for example, programming or machine learning. It assumes a programmer's point of view, also with the aim of preparing students for the labour market. It is often discussed especially for the second cycle of education as a discipline in a renewed curriculum.

In educational AI use, developing AI literacy is key. This includes understanding opaque algorithms in search engines and social media and being aware of biases and 'echo chambers'. The European EC's 2022 Ethical

Guidelines on AI in education differentiate AI tools for teaching from those aiding student support. AI's significant role is in personalized learning, adapting content and pace to individual needs, fostering student autonomy, engagement, and motivation. AI also enhances the learning process by providing impactful feedback, a critical factor in student success. Applications like learning dashboards enhance student awareness and self-regulation. They offer visual cues for progress monitoring and encourage strategic adjustments in learning. These tools also motivate learners by giving them control over their learning journey. Moreover, teachers gain valuable insights from these analytics, aiding them in supporting students needing extra help.

AI has the potential to revolutionize teaching methodologies by automating some tasks like grading or simple feedback, thus freeing up valuable time for educators to engage in more impactful teaching activities. This automation extends to facilitating innovative pedagogical approaches that would be difficult to implement manually, such as collaborative inquiry through game-based learning. AI's applications in education are diverse. It is not just about administrative ease; AI's potential stretches to generating lesson plans, supporting simulation-based learning, and providing real-time feedback rooted in expert pedagogical knowledge. Post-lesson, AI tools can compile comprehensive reports, aiding teachers in staying abreast of the latest developments in their field. For students, AI presents an opportunity for personalized learning experiences, creating a conducive environment for skill development and boosting confidence through constructive feedback. AI's influence is also evident in the evaluation process. By analysing written work, offering feedback on verbal responses, and tailoring learning materials through adaptive systems, AI enhances the educational process. These systems increase student engagement through gamification, promoting interactive and collaborative learning environments. Furthermore, AI's role in automating grading, detecting plagiarism, and evaluating assessments is pivotal in identifying learning gaps and assessing the effectiveness of teaching methods. Still, the use of AI in education is not without its challenges and ethical concerns and while AI's capacity to personalize education and streamline efficiency is acknowledged, there are inherent risks that need to be addressed. For instance, AI-generated texts might lack diversity and authenticity. AI models often favour quick responses, potentially overlooking the depth and pedagogical depth of the learning process.

Potential areas to apply AI in students' learning (EDEH AI Squad, 2023):

- Analysing written work: AI can evaluate written assignments, such as essays, by checking for grammar, spelling, punctuation, and even assessing coherence and structure. This helps students improve their writing skills and saves time for educators who would otherwise need to review each assignment manually.
- Natural language processing: AI can interpret natural language, the way humans use language to express thoughts, ideas, and emotions. This ability can be harnessed to provide feedback on spoken responses, presentations, or other verbal communications. This can be particularly helpful for language learning or public speaking practice.
- Adaptive learning systems: AI can track students' performance over time, adjusting feedback and learning materials to continually challenge and support their growth. This enables a more dynamic and responsive learning experience that evolves with the student. It thus enables teachers to support the progress of many learners operating at different levels and could be part of a universal design for learning strategy.
- Gamification: AI can be integrated into educational games, providing instant feedback and encouragement, promoting engagement, and making learning more enjoyable.
- Peer review support: AI can facilitate peer review processes by helping students provide constructive feedback to their peers, guiding them through the evaluation process, and offering suggestions for improvement.
- Data analysis and insights: AI can process large data quickly, identifying patterns and trends that can inform feedback strategies. This could help educators understand which approaches are most effective and identify areas where additional support may be needed.
- Consistency: AI systems should be able to provide consistent feedback based on pre-defined criteria, eliminating the potential for human bias or variability in evaluation to ensure that all students receive fair and unbiased feedback.
- Assessment: AI is making an impact on educational assessment with applications such as automated grading, plagiarism detection, predictive analytics, assessment analytics, and item analysis. Automated grading saves teachers' time and ensures consistent and objective assessment. Plagiarism detection holds students accountable for their work by identifying instances of plagiarism. Predictive analytics uses AI to forecast student performance based on their past assessments and coursework. Assessment analytics analyses data from summative assessments to evalu-

ate students' learning progress and identify knowledge gaps. Item analysis examines the effectiveness of individual assessment questions. These AI-driven approaches aim to enhance the reliability, fairness, and informativeness of assessments, transforming the way student learning and performance are evaluated.

AI's integration into educational institutions extends beyond teaching. It encompasses a range of operational tasks, including marketing, curriculum design, and resource management. AI systems streamline assessment processes, facilitate student record management, optimize scheduling, and assist in test preparations. They also play a pivotal role in learning analytics, offering insights into student performance and educational outcomes. Personalization is another significant application of AI within institutions. By aiding in lesson planning, learning management, and adaptive learning systems, AI offers personalized educational experiences. Beyond the classroom, AI supports tutoring and provides guidance in selecting courses, majors, and career paths. Its ability to generate personalized learning content through recommendation systems caters to individual student needs. AI's predictive analytics are instrumental in identifying students at risk of dropping out, enabling timely intervention. Furthermore, AI-driven software systems enhance teaching quality and training processes. However, it's crucial to balance these technological advancements with considerations of student autonomy and privacy. In terms of inclusion, AI can facilitate smoother communication between parents and teachers. Automation of administrative tasks and the use of chatbots and virtual assistants alleviate the administrative burden, allowing educators to focus more on teaching. AI also contributes to the efficient management of school facilities, including staff scheduling, professional development, transportation, maintenance, finance, and cybersecurity, thereby ensuring a safe and secure educational environment.

The societal aspect of AI in education revolves around the principles of inclusion and equity, advocating equal access to educational opportunities for all. True educational equity is achieved when teaching styles accommodate individual learning needs and reflect students' diverse backgrounds. Inclusive education is vital for empowering marginalized students to overcome barriers and succeed.

Policies promoting inclusion and equity, like those outlined by UNESCO (2017), are essential. These policies should focus not only on access but also on fairness and valuing diversity. AI's ability to tailor learning

experiences and provide individualized support can significantly enhance educational equity. UNESCO's mandate for a student-centred approach aligns with these principles. AI's potential to identify and rectify biases in educational materials and assessments is critical in developing fair and unbiased learning opportunities. However, the challenge stays in addressing the digital divide, exemplified by the 'Matthew Effect,' where unequal access to technology could deepen existing social inequalities. While AI offers transformative prospects for educational institutions, it needs a careful, balanced approach. Ensuring fair access and keeping a focus on ethical considerations are paramount in using AI to enhance both institutional effectiveness and societal equity in education.

Commission's DigComp 2.2 framework[7] enhances citizens' digital competences, including interactions with AI systems. It covers AI system functionalities, working mechanisms, ethical challenges, distinguishing AI from human interactions, understanding AI's role in content creation, and the implications of AI on privacy, data use, and societal issues. This framework aids in informed and responsible AI use and digital content creation.

The ethical use of AI and data in education, emphasized by the European Commission's Ethical Guidelines (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d81a0d54-5348-11ed-92ed-01aa75ed71a1/language-en) and the European Digital Competence Framework for Educators (DigCompEdu), highlights the need for educators to be digitally skilled and ethically aware. This involves understanding AI systems, data governance, and the impact of AI on teaching and learning, including potential biases and privacy concerns. Teachers must be informed about AI-related regulations, like the GDPR and the European AI Act, and integrate AI responsibly in educational settings. Tools like SELFIE FOR TEACHERS[8], and UNESCO's[9] guidelines support educators in developing AI competencies, focusing on both technological and human aspects of AI in education.

The Council of Europe's document about Artificial intelligence and education[10] emphasizes the necessity for everyone to have adequate AI literacy,

---

7   https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC128415
8   https://education.ec.europa.eu/selfie-for-teachers
9   https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-supports-definition-and-development-ai-competencies-teachers
10 https://rm.coe.int/artificial-intelligence-and-education-a-critical-view-through-the-lens/1680a886bd

encompassing knowledge, skills, and values about AI's creation, implementation, and use. It underlines the importance of understanding both technological and human impacts of AI, including effects on mental abilities, privacy, and independence. The AI4K12 Five Big Ideas for AI education project[11] offer guidance for teachers to effectively educate students about AI, stressing the need for clear demonstrations and encouraging students to engage with AI tools for a deeper understanding.

An interesting use of artificial intelligence is in the creation of assessment tools: IDeAL proposes useful moments for the development of metacognition, but this can also be accompanied using tests for knowledge or skills (see appendix 3).

The use of online quizzes and polls in the classroom can not only be an easy way to use remedial practice in the classroom, but can also provide real-time feedback on student performance and perceptions, can be used as an activity instead of a formal assessment, and, because students can be given the opportunity to see the results, these quizzes can be interactive and engaging. However, since students need their laptops or phones to use these tools, introducing them into the classroom can invite multitasking and distraction during class. Students can easily switch to social media while taking quizzes and it can be difficult to refocus them on the lesson. It is important to pay attention to how and when you use these tools and pay attention to how students use their devices during class. That said, the use of digital technologies has the potential to make students' formative assessment more varied and an integral part of everyday teaching practice. Digital technologies allow data on student performance to be collected and returned in an easily usable way, but with the introduction of artificial intelligence they can also be integrated into the creation of learning content, such as quizzes to be used to gather immediate feedback on the content learned. Applications such as ChatGPT can be used to generate prompts for open-ended questions that align with the learning content, for example, creating quick written quizzes that test students' understanding. Enter a prompt such as: "Generate a three-question open-ended quiz on the concept of the water cycle for a sixth-grade science class". The content created can be used as a quiz, but you can also use the generated prompts to reflect on whether all the key concepts have been covered or if any content is missing or should be removed.

11 https://www.raspberrypi.org/blog/ai-education-ai4k12-big-ideas-ai-thinking/

The potential of the use of artificial intelligence in this case is not the generation of the quiz itself but that the teacher can regenerate different content quickly, either on the same topic or on different topics on which the pupils can also reflect as group work.

Concluding, Artificial intelligence (AI) has promising potential in education, if implemented responsibly to safeguard the rights of students. It is essential to maintain controls, transparency, and human oversight to mitigate risks. AI must complement and not replace pedagogical practices, with algorithms designed for understandable and interpretable results. Transparent, or 'Explainable AI', becomes crucial, especially in assessment, to understand the decisions made by the system. Despite automation, human supervision remains essential, educators must have the final say in meaningful decisions. It is crucial that AI respects students' privacy, complying with privacy regulations and protecting sensitive information. Algorithmic biases that can affect the fairness of the system and impact stakeholders in education must also be combated. If the system produces errors, there must be mechanisms to correct them. AI systems must be monitored and evaluated regularly to ensure accuracy, fairness, and effectiveness.

4. The distinct phases of IDeAL and the possibility of using technological tools in groups

Each example is carefully chosen to highlight various aspects of this integrative approach. They highlight not only the successes but also the challenges and learning opportunities encountered along the way. By examining these cases, educators and students alike can gain a deeper understanding of the practical applications and implications of combining deep learning strategies with the IDeAL methodology, all within the framework of current technological advancements.

Furthermore, the reflections accompanying each example offer a critical analysis and thoughtful consideration of the outcomes. These reflections are crucial for understanding the broader impact of these practices on students' learning experiences, teachers' instructional methods, and the educational system. They encourage readers to think critically about how these strategies can be adapted and implemented in their own educational contexts.

This section, therefore, is not just a showcase of what has been done; it's a springboard for inspiration and innovation in education. It invites

educators, administrators, and learners to contemplate, adapt, and adopt these examples in ways that resonate with their unique educational environments and challenges.

I. Instructional Meeting

Imagine a classroom buzzing with activity as students embark on a research project. They are scattered around the room, some browsing the internet on their tablets, others flipping through books, and a few watching documentary clips on a large screen. Their task is to gather information on a specific topic, pooling resources from diverse mediums to create a comprehensive understanding. During this brainstorming session, the students are allowed to use a variety of tools to record and collect their findings. For digital content, they use collaborative document editors like Google Docs, where they can simultaneously contribute notes, links, and summaries. This live document serves as a dynamic repository of their collective research. For insights from books or physical materials, students take photos or scan pages using their smartphones, uploading these images to the shared document. They also use audio recording apps to capture key discussions or thoughts, which are later transcribed and added to their collective notes. To make the brainstorming process visible to everyone an interactive whiteboard could be used. Students use this to display their findings, engage in group discussions, and visually map out their ideas. The smartboard software integrates with their shared documents, allowing for a seamless transfer of information from their individual devices to the communal display.

As the students gather and compile information, AI technology can play a significant role in enhancing their research. An AI-powered research assistant tool is integrated into their collaborative platform. This tool uses natural language processing to analyse their notes and suggests additional relevant articles, books, and multimedia content. It helps identify patterns and connections between different pieces of information that might not be immediately obvious. For example, if the students are researching climate change, the AI tool might suggest articles on related topics like renewable energy or ecological conservation, broadening their perspective.

For presenting information in an engaging and age-appropriate manner, interactive presentation tools like Microsoft PowerPoint, Canvas or Prezi can be used. They enable educators and students to create dynamic and visually appealing presentations that can capture and retain the interest of students. To further enhance the learning process, discussion platforms such as online forums or chat tools, including Slack and Microsoft Teams, are

invaluable. These platforms facilitate active participation, encouraging questions and discussions among students, thereby fostering a collaborative learning environment.

In terms of capturing student reflections, audio or video recording tools are extremely useful. They provide a means for students to express their thoughts and reflections, which can be reviewed and assessed later. This not only helps in keeping a record of student progress but also in understanding their perspectives more deeply.

II. Define, Ideate, Design

In the activities of stage 2 students will work in smaller groups. For example, each group opens a collaborative document on Google Docs, where they begin transcribing the problem statements and potential solutions they have brainstormed. This digital space becomes a collector of ideas, where each student's input is visible and editable by all group members. To organize their thoughts and objectives, the groups utilize project management tools like Trello. These platforms allow them to create tasks, assign responsibilities, and set deadlines, ensuring that every member is on the same page and contributing effectively. The visual nature of these tools, with their boards and cards, helps in clearly delineating the steps they need to take to reach their goals. As ideas begin to take shape, the groups turn to virtual whiteboards like Miro or Microsoft Whiteboard. These digital canvases become the playground for their creativity. Here, they can visually group their reflections, draw connections between different ideas, and create a structured outline of their project. The virtual whiteboard serves not only as a brainstorming tool but also as a living document that evolves with their project.

The Ideate stage (2.2) sees each group delving deeper into the creative process. Using digital drawing or content creation tools students begin to bring their ideas to life. These tools allow for precision and flexibility in designing prototypes, enabling the students to explore various design aspects without the limitations of physical materials. As the designs take form, the students use worksheet sharing platforms like Google Drive or Dropbox to share their sketches and prototypes. This collaborative environment allows for real-time feedback and iteration. Group members can comment on each other's designs, suggest improvements, and collectively refine their prototypes.

In the Design stage (2.3), the groups solidify their prototypes, turning ideas into viable project plans. This phase is characterized by intense col-

laboration and critical thinking, as each group strives to create a feasible and innovative solution to their defined problem. The classroom is abuzz with discussions and debates, often facilitated through online forums or platforms like Discourse or Kialo. These platforms provide a structured environment for confronting different viewpoints, allowing students to challenge each other's ideas constructively and reach a consensus on the best approach. Meanwhile, the project management software continues to be an essential tool. It helps the groups track their progress, manage the details of their projects, and ensure that they are adhering to the defined timelines and objectives. Through these phases, the students not only learn to collaborate and think critically but also gain hands-on experience in using a variety of digital tools to enhance their problem-solving and creative skills. This integrated approach, combining technology with traditional learning methods, prepares them for the challenges of the modern world, where digital literacy and collaborative skills are paramount.

III. Make, Realize

This is the phase were ideas and designs will be transformed into something tangible and/or concrete. Collaboration remains a key component in this phase. Groups frequently convene to discuss the progress of their realization of the product, troubleshoot issues, and make decisions on any necessary modifications. For remote collaboration or consultation with external experts, video conferencing tools like Zoom or Teams are employed. These tools allow the students to share their progress with others outside the classroom, seek advice, and even display their work in real-time. Overall, the Realize phase is a blend of technology, collaboration, and hands-on learning. This phase is not just about creating a physical product; it is about understanding the process of turning ideas into reality, the importance of precision in design, and the power of collaborative effort in achieving a common goal.

IV. Verify (4.1), Illustrate (4.2), and Analyse (4.3)

In the Verify (4.1) phase, the classroom evolves into a space of critical evaluation and reflection. Students, now equipped with their first products, engage in meticulous comparison with their initial designs. This phase is crucial for understanding the practicalities of transforming a design into a concrete product and learning from the discrepancies between the concept and the real-world outcome. Groups use digital forms or surveys, tools like Google Forms, to collect structured feedback from their peers and teachers.

These forms are designed to focus on specific aspects of the prototype, such as design fidelity, functionality, and aesthetic appeal. This process of external feedback is invaluable, providing fresh perspectives and highlighting areas for improvement that the creators might have overlooked. Simultaneously, students document their projects and could create detailed reports comparing their initial designs with the outcomes of the created product. This documentation process not only serves as a record of their journey from conception to realization but also helps them in articulating the challenges faced and lessons learned during the process.

In the Illustrate phase (4.2), the classroom turns into a stage for presentation and sharing. Each group prepares to present their project to the class, using presentation software like Microsoft PowerPoint, Canvas or Prezi. These tools allow them to create engaging and informative presentations that highlight the strengths and weaknesses of their projects. They incorporate images, data, and even videos to provide a comprehensive overview of their work. As groups present, their peers and teachers use video recording tools to capture these presentations. This not only creates a resource for future reference but also allows students to review their presentation skills and the feedback received. The recorded videos become a crucial part of the learning archive, serving as reflective tools for the students to assess and improve their communication and presentation abilities.

With tools like Word Wall or Menti that students can collect directly feedback from their peers and use the information for the following step, the Analyse phase (4.3). Now data and feedback converge to offer insights and learning opportunities. Students employ data analysis tools such as Excel or Google Sheets to sift through the feedback collected in the Verify phase. They analyse responses, identify common themes, and pinpoint areas of strength and weakness in their projects. This analytical process is pivotal in transforming qualitative feedback into quantifiable insights, allowing students to objectively assess the success of their projects. Group decision-making tools like Lucid Meetings, Magic Minutes, Agreedo or GroupMap come into play as students reflect on the feedback and analysis results. The students engage in discussions, weighing the pros and cons, and collaboratively decide on the next steps for their projects – be it revisions, improvements, or new directions. Throughout these phases, the classroom is a dynamic environment of learning, where technology not only aids in the creation and realization of ideas but also in the critical evaluation and presentation of those ideas. The use of various technological tools fosters a holistic educational experience, nurturing skills in creation, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication.

V. Concluding Meeting

The work cycle is concluded by an activity of introspective individual reflection. This phase is centred around personal growth and understanding the impact of the activity on each student's thoughts and beliefs. Students can use digital journaling tools like Penzu or Day One, creating private spaces for personal reflection. These platforms offer a serene environment for students to document their thoughts, feelings, and learnings from the project. They write about their experiences, the challenges they faced, the successes they enjoyed, and how their perspectives have evolved over the course of the project. This process of journaling not only aids in cementing their learnings but also provides a window into their personal growth.

In parallel, feedback and evaluation tools such as Google Forms or SurveyMonkey are employed to gather students' reflections on the entire learning experience. These surveys are carefully crafted to probe various aspects of the project – from teamwork and problem-solving to the effectiveness of the technologies used. The feedback collected serves as a valuable resource for both the students and the teacher, offering insights into the efficacy of the teaching methods and the impact on students' learning. Additionally, feedback and reflection tools, which may include apps with guided reflection prompts, are utilized to facilitate deeper introspection. These tools guide students through a series of questions and prompts, helping them to analyse their learning journey more methodically and derive meaningful conclusions.

The concluding phase, therefore, is not just a wrap-up session but a critical component of the learning process. It emphasizes the importance of reflection and self-assessment, allowing students to internalize their learnings and recognize their personal and academic growth. By various digital tools, this phase enriches the students' educational experience, equipping them with skills and insights that extend far beyond the classroom.

5. Conclusion

5.1 *IDeAL to support group work and the use of new technologies and AI in the classroom*

The integration of deep learning, the IDeAL methodology, technology such as AI, is a pathway, a holistic learning experience. This approach fosters not just the acquisition of knowledge, but also the development of critical

thinking, problem-solving abilities, and a lifelong love for learning. Technology also ad such as AI, in this context, emerges not merely as a tool, but as a vital component that enriches and personalizes the learning journey, making it more adaptable to the needs of diverse learners. However, this evolution in educational practices also brings to light the challenges of implementation and the need for constant innovation. It emphasizes the importance of training educators in these new methodologies, ensuring equitable access to technology, and continuously evaluating and adapting strategies to meet the needs of their students.

Technology has a transformative role of integrated educational strategies, methodologies, and technologies in shaping modern education. The IDeAL method (Iterative Design for Active Learning) and various other student-centred approaches, such as Inquiry-Based Education, Problem-Based Learning, and Project-Based Learning, underscore the importance of active, engaging, and personalized learning experiences. These methodologies foster critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, which are essential in the 21st century. The integration of technology in education, as discussed, is not merely about the use of digital tools but about their strategic application to enhance learning experiences. Technologies such as AI, digital whiteboards, and online collaborative platforms provide opportunities for personalized learning and help in developing digital literacy, a key competency in today's world. Additionally, models that guide the integration of digital technologies in education are making aware for a balance between technological know-how, pedagogical strategies, and content knowledge. And helps educators in creating effective, inclusive, and stimulating learning environments. The role of AI in education, especially in personalization, assessment, and feedback, is particularly noteworthy. AI has the potential to revolutionize teaching methodologies and student engagement, offering personalized learning paths and insightful analytics.

Deep learning approaches in education are fundamentally oriented towards fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This method transcends traditional rote memorization techniques, encouraging students to deeply engage with and understand the material. A key feature of deep learning is its connection to real-life applications, which makes education more relevant and engaging. It helps students see the practical applications of their knowledge, thereby enhancing their motivation and interest. Importantly, these approaches align with intrinsic motivations, fostering a genuine interest in learning and a desire for deep engagement with the sub-

ject matter. Collaborative learning environments are also emphasized, where teamwork and discussions are integral, promoting the development of communication skills and the ability to work effectively in teams. Simultaneously, the integration of technology in learning has become increasingly important in modern education. Technology enables the creation of personalized learning experiences, and facilitates access to a wide array of resources, from interactive content to global communication platforms, significantly broadening the scope and accessibility of learning materials. Interactive technologies such as gamification and virtual reality enhance active engagement and immersion in the learning process.

The IDeAL (Iterative Design for Active Learning) methodology offers an approach to learning, focusing on an iterative and cyclical process that emphasizes continuous improvement and a growth mindset. Central to IDeAL is the development of transversal skills like creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving, preparing students for both academic and professional success. This methodology integrates technology not merely as a content delivery tool but as a critical component of the learning process. Emphasizing active engagement and student autonomy, IDeAL encourages learners to take ownership of their learning.

Deep learning approaches, the strategic use of technology, and the IDeAL methodology represent an integrated approach to education.

5.2 *IDeAL in the KIDS4ALLL project*

IDeAL is one of the methodologies proposed within the KIDS4ALLL project. For some time now, it has been emphasised that the active involvement of teachers, not only as 'executors' of educational proposals and innovations, but as direct 'co-designers' of them, is crucial to the success of educational interventions. Activities imposed on school contexts from above, by experts or institutions, can have little impact and, in any case, find little room for sustainability in the long term: in fact, from the moment the intervention ends, the lack of involvement of teachers often leads to a rapid return to the status quo and to the educational routines that existed before the experiment (Tirocchi et al., 2022). It is therefore necessary to accompany didactic experimental interventions with pupils with appropriate training, involvement and didactic co-design operations with teachers, who are the only ones really able to contextualize an educational operation within the specific cultural, social, psychological and relational dynamics of each pupil

and of the class. Over the years, various interventions and national training programs in Italy have been focused on digital skills or on the pedagogical in-depth study of specific disciplinary skills (Pettenati, 2022). In fact, teaching does not end with didactic-disciplinary mastery and organizational skills, but is also underpinned by communicative, socio-emotional, meta-cognitive, and reflexive skills that teachers must be able to master in their teaching processes and pass on to their students. IDeAL represents a combination of teaching methods and techniques that were the subject of training for the Italian teachers and educators skills to support the buddy methods and a methodology in pairs and not only in groups as suggested by the KIDS4ALLL project.

Appendix 1

Topic: Weathering and erosion

Students will show an understanding of the differences between weathering and erosion and will be able to provide examples of each.

Preparation:

Students will choose two non-fiction texts on weathering and erosion from the test set to read at their leisure and take an assessment quiz. Using a set of VR-headsets, students will explore Bryce Canyon using one of National Geographic's 360° videos. Show students examples of erosion and atmospheric degradation in the canyon.

Grading differentiated according to students' delivery choices:

Group 1	Use presentation software to explain the differences between weathering and erosion. Example apps: Power Point, Google Slides, Prezi Cognitive processes in Bloom's taxonomy: Remembering, Understanding
Group 2	Create an infographic with examples of diverse types of weathering and erosion, providing data for each. Example apps: Easel, Visme, Canva Cognitive processes in Bloom's taxonomy: Apply, Analyse
Group 3	Students will create a 360° interactive photo showing examples of weathering and erosion in their community. Example app: Thinklink Cognitive processes in Bloom's taxonomy: Apply, Create

Appendix 2: How to prepare for the use of new technologies in the classroom (preparation for IDeAL)

Before starting with the use of one's own device or smartphone, it may be useful to survey the class (also involving parents) at the beginning of the class, with questions such as:

- Who has unlimited data?
- Would you be willing to share your phone with others in the class?
- Does your family have any old smartphones to donate to the class?

The goal must be to create a safe and socially inclusive digital working environment. The last thing to do when integrating technology is to make a student feel inferior because he or she does not have a smartphone. Not owning a smartphone is perfectly fine, because most classroom activities do not require one, but when it is necessary to use one, the classroom should be understood as a learning community that ensures the participation of all members. When using smartphones or other devices in the classroom, it is also necessary to think carefully about how groups are created, expectations and procedures, and adapt lessons to students' digital access, especially if a device is not available for each student. For example, allow students to sketch ideas on large sheets of poster paper, which the class will then turn into a digital creation representing their collective thinking. The advantage of this solution is that only one device is needed and that, while groups share their sketches on paper, students can listen to each other's thinking and organisation. One can also think of creating a technology workstation: one can design a set of activities with applications such as Padlet or Kahoot based on a workstation where one table can hold the devices for all the students.

Beyond the choice of apps, there are expectations and procedures that need to be addressed in a classroom with devices:

- When should the device be used?
- How will your class put it away or remove it? What are the procedures to be followed in these scenarios? How will students be instructed?
- How will students share devices with their classmates?

For example, smartphones are an academic tool in the classroom, and it is the teacher who will tell students when to use the devices. If they are not

used, they will be returned. But even with just one device, technology can be used in the classroom. With the Plickers application for example, after asking the whole class one or more questions, students hold up a piece of paper like a QR code and the teacher scans the room with a smartphone. Plickers displays the students' answers on a summary screen. Students do not need a device to use this app; therefore, it is particularly useful for primary or non-device moments. When using the trolley with devices or the lab, it should be considered that time is limited. It is therefore important that students can access activities and other materials quickly and efficiently. When using technology in the classroom, there is nothing worse than when things go wrong, even worse when time is limited. To reduce problems… an immediate solution would be to eliminate as many applications that need to be installed on the device as possible and use web-based applications.

Appendix 3: Tools for creating quizzes and attention points

There are multiple examples of the use of technology in the practice of information and knowledge retrieval in education: from the creation of digital flashcards such as Quizlet (https://quizlet.com/it), to websites and apps that allow the use of quizzes and interactive surveys in the classroom, such as Socrative[12] or Poll Everywhere[13]. Online quizzes can be an excellent tool to help students practise remedial skills.

An important note: since students might use a different device each time, they visit the lab or take a trolley, it is particularly important to minimise access problems to maximise learning time. If possible, avoid applications that have many barriers that students must overcome to use them, such as creating accounts and logging in with usernames and passwords or updating computer software and/or downloading files. It should also be added that laptops are becoming smaller and lighter and tablets increasingly powerful; therefore, they are becoming more popular in the classroom because it is easier for students to bring them into the classroom. Mobile phones are also increasingly pervasive in many aspects of our lives. These small, handy devices rarely leave the owner's side and are often distracting in the classroom. Technologies allow students to access an infinity of re-

---

12 https://www.socrative.com
13 https://www.polleverywhere.com

sources, from programmes, apps or even searching the Internet. Laptops, tablets, and mobile phones give access to unlimited information, mountains of social media, games, videos, texts, news flashes, and much, much more. Used correctly, they can help students engage with the material, generate new examples, apply what they have learnt and use retrieval. But they are also a tool for distraction: for both the student with the device and the students around them. The presence of these devices makes it easy for students to be tented to multi-task: check Twitter, write notes and listen to the teacher. In other words, these devices encourage multitasking, which could have a negative impact on the learning outcomes and/or the quality time of attention dedicated on the content

References

Baliram N., & Ellis A.K (2019). The impact of metacognitive practice and teacher feedback on academic achievement in mathematics. *School Science and Mathematics*, 119, 2.

Bell M (2020). *The Fundamentals of Teaching, A Five-Step Model to Put the Research Evidence into Practice.* Routledge.

Calvani A. (2021). *Tecnologie per l'inclusione. Quando e come avvalersene* (cur.). Carocci.

Fullan M., Quinn J., & McEachen J. (2017). *Deep learning: Engage the world change the world*. Corwin Press.

Calvani A., Trinchero R., & Vivanet G. (2018) New horizons of scientific research in education. Linking research and educational decision-making: the S.ApI.E. Manifesto. *Educational Cultural and Psychological Studies (ECPS) Journal*, 18, 311-339

Calvani A., Marzano A., & Miranda (2021). Teacher training in effective ditatics. How to guide observation and change in classroom practices? In Training & Teaching. *International Journal of Education and Training Sciences*, 19(1), 599-621.

Calvani A., & Trinchero R. (2019). *Dieci falsi miti e dieci regole per insegnare bene*. Carocci.

Clark R.C., Nguyen F., Sweller J. (2006). *Efficiency in learning: Evidence Based guidelines to manage cognitive load*. Pfeiffer Wiley.

Cornoldi C., De Beni R., & Gruppo M. T. (2020). *Imparare a studiare: strategie, stili cognitivi, metacognizione e atteggiamenti nello studio*. Erickson.

Donnelly K., Barber M., & Rizvi S. (2012). *Oceans of innovation: The Atlantic, the Pacific, global leadership and the future of education*. Penguin UK.

European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Ethical guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and data in

teaching and learning for educators, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/153756

Fullan M., & Langworthy M. (2013). *Towards a new end: New pedagogies for deep learning*. Retrieved to Towards a New End: New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (michaelfullan.ca).

Fullan M., Quinn J., & McEachen J. (2018). *Deep learning: Engage the world change the world*. Corwin Press.

Geake J.C (2009). *The brain at School: Educational Neuroscience in the Classroom*. Maidenhead, McGraw Hill

Hattie J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Routledge.

Hattie J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: maximising impact on learning*. Routledge.

Hattie J. (2017). *250+ Influences on student achievement*, available at https://visible-learning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/VLPLUS-252-Influences- Hattie-ranking-DEC-2017.pd, 2017, last consultation 20/11/2023.

Hattie J. (2023). *Visible learning: The sequel: A synthesis of over 2,100 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. Taylor & Francis.

Immordino-Yang M. H (2016). *Emotion, Learning and the Brain. Exploring the Edu- cational Implications of Affective Neuroscience*. WW Norton & Co.

Manzini E. (1990) *Artefacts. Verso una nuova ecologia dell'ambiente artificiale*. Domus Academy.

Martinez S.L. & Stager G. (2016). *Invent to learn: Making, tinkering and engineering in the classroom*. Torrance, Constructing modern knowledge press.

Marzano A. & Calvani (2020). Evidence Based Education and Effective Teaching: How to Integrate Methodological and Technological Knowledge in Teacher Education. *Educational, Cultural and Psychological Studies*, 22, 125-143.

Mori S., Niewint J., & Beni C. (2018). Cognitive enhancement and 3d printer in kindergarten: an exploratory study. *ICERI 2018 Proceedings*», 2388-2392.

Mori S., & Niewint J. (2019). Cognitive processes and the 3D printer in pre-school: promoting development to enhance learning. *Qwerty: Journal of Technology, Culture and Education: Digital Fabrication: 3D Printing in Pre-School Education*, 14, 1, 16-33.

Mura A., Bullegas D., & Mallus A. (2023). Professionalità docente e competenze socio-emotive: traiettorie teorico-operative per la formazione degli insegnanti. *Annali online della Didattica e della Formazione Docente*, 15(26), 258-271.

Niewint J., Mori S., Naldini M., Benassi A., & Guasti L. (2019). IDeAL: A method for constructing artefacts and promoting transversal skills in the classroom. *Form@re*, 19, 1, 117-132.

Pellegrini M., & Vivanet G. (2018). *Synthesis of research in education. Theoretical and methodological foundations*. Carocci.

Pettenati M. C. (Ed.). *Paese formazione. Sguardo d'insieme e viste particolari da esperienze nazionali di formazione degli insegnanti*. Carocci.

Reigeluth C.M. (1999). *Instructional-design theories and models: A new paradigm of instructional design*, Vol. 2. Mahwah, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Rivoltella P. C. (2012). *Neurodidactics. Teaching the learning brain*. Raffaello Cortina.

Razzouk R., & Shute V. (2021). What is design thinking and why is it important? *Review of Educational Research,* 82(3), 330-348.

Rizzo A. (2000). The nature of artefacts and their design. *Sistemi Intelligenti*, 12 (3), 437-52.

Schnotz W., & Kürschner C. (2007). Reconsideration of cognitive load theory. *Educational Psychology Review*, 19, 469-508.

Sutton R. E., & Wheatley K. F. (2003). Teachers' emotions and teaching: A review of the literature and directions for future research. *Educational Psychology Review*, 15(4), 327-358.

Tirocchi S., Taddeo G., & Albano E. (2022). Innovation Paths in Italian Schools: From Cl@ssi 2.0 to 4.0 Technologies. In J. Bishop (Ed.), *Cases on Technologies in Education: From Classroom 2.0 to Society 5.0* (pp. 205-212). Igi Global.

Trinchero R. (2018). Formative assessment for cognitive activation. Ideas for an effective use of technology for learning in the classroom. *Italian Journal of Educa- tional Technology*, 26 (3), 40-55.

UNESCO (2017). *A Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education.* UNESCO, 2017 https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000248254.locale=en

Voogt J., & Roblin N.P. (2012). A comparative analysis of international frameworks for 21st century competencies: Implications for national curriculum policies. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 44 (3), 299-321.

Zimmerman B.J. (2001). Theories of self-regulated learning and academic achievement: Overview and analysis. In B. J. Zimmerman & D. H. Schunk (Eds.), *Self-regulated learning and academic achievement: Theoretical perspectives.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Conclusion

From school to the society: a complex pathway to train the future human capital

Sotiris Petropoulos, Roberta Ricucci, Alessia Rosa
(editors)

The *KIDS4ALLL – Key Inclusive Development Strategies for LifeLong Learning* project fits in the field of migration studies and intertwines, mainly, with the specific perspectives of pedagogy, sociology, educational science and anthropology. The starting point is school integration, which is understood not only as formal education, but also – and not only secondarily – as education that is learned in informal and non-formal environments. These are key areas for observing the relationships between demographics, human capital and socio-economic-cultural dynamics in the generations of the youngest in the broad framework of international human mobility. And it refers to all young people: there is no inclusion without the involvement of society as a whole, in this case including peers without a migration background. But not only that. To be effective, any process of inclusion (including in schools) must take into account the different environments in which the migrants children live, as well as those who are part of these environments.

Family, first and foremost. Parents or guardians are people who accompany the integration process, sometimes even condition it (e.g. if there is a strong intra-ethnic orientation): in any case, they are actors who need to be involved in the process of learning and strengthening knowledge and skills of their children in order to better support them in the host societies. Migration processes usually involve challenges in inter-generational relations among families. Integration in a host society can have a collateral effect on parent-child relations. Indeed, children can interiorize social and cultural values in contrast to what their parents believe or how they behave. Among these cultural challenges, language plays an important role. Even in earlier migration experiences the focus was devoted to investigating to what extent both first and second generations shared the host country language, while underscoring the parental role played by children in coping with the parents' limited language proficiency. Another issue emerges from

recent mobility experience: family interactions depend not only on whether they have an extended common vocabulary, but also whether they are proficient in new social media and their language. Children of immigrants belong to the millennial generation and breathe – at school, in their free time, with their peers – technologies all the time (using computers and iPads at school; surfing the Internet and chatting online, and posting photos). Moving beyond the question of whether or not young individuals are highly skilled in using these technologies, the new technologies are reshaping emotional ties between parents/children. This is typically occurring transculturally and transnationally in families at this time. The focus on immigrant families provides an opportunity to study how being closer and faster in touch than other migrants can hamper cultural distances and define intercultural misunderstanding, especially as far as emotions, feelings and expressions of difficulties are concerned (Ricucci, 2021). Three factors could shape emotional distance in peer relationships. The first is alienation which derives from an unresolved generational conflict, accompanied by a multifaceted cultural conflict, depending on the migration framework. The second is solitude and loneliness: whether, recently arrived, reunited since a long time or born in the country where they attend school, young individuals often find themselves in the absence of supportive figures and parents too, who are heavily engaged in full-time work outside the home. The last feeling is frustration deriving from latent process of discrimination and stereotyping (Crul et al., 2017).

Then there are teachers at each level of educational path. It is important to stress that all teachers should be mentioned and involved in inclusion programmes and initiatives and not just those who deal with foreign or newly arrived pupils. Promoting school inclusion is successful when all teaching staff (and school principals too) recognize that they are faced with new pedagogical challenges and the need to update and/or innovate teaching methods, to accompany newly arrived students into the new context of life and to teach them to be active citizens, as well as to train national pupils to understand cultural challenges and the effects of living in a global world (EC, 2017). This seems self-evident, as in the case of arrivals from Ukraine, but is to be understood as a common trait dealing with migrations which each country, and local context, experiences.

Then there are the out-of-school actors: volunteers, educators, animators, employees of associations, libraries and inclusion projects run by non-profit organizations. A large, diverse, and heterogeneous group of young people and adults who are active in the areas of initial reception, intercul-

turality, support for underage migrants and families and the integration of marginalized and vulnerable groups. They often have skills and expertise acquired through their education, combined with evidence-based knowledge drawn from the experiences of those who – in non-institutional settings – deal with the struggles of integration. They often well know, from their own daily working experiences, problems, difficulties and sometimes even discrimination experienced by minors and adults with a migrant background. It is the advantage of the informal, often combined with the presence of educators, volunteers and staff from the same background as the migrants, that enables a relationship of trust, which is the first step towards an effective "educational contract" (Koehler & Schneider, 2019).

Like many other projects, KIDS4ALLL has shown the added value of the link between the formal educational areas (compulsory schools, VET, training courses led by local/regional institutional programmes) and the informal and non-formal educational environments (e.g. associations, winter/summer camps, sports activities). The importance of continuity between these worlds (and the world of the family) is crucial to finding an effective path to school enrolment, educational success and social inclusion, also thanks to the development of specific skills like the 8 LLL competencies are.

And then, of course, there are the real protagonists: the children. Foreign and foreign-born children, adolescents and young people are a significant group and a relevant issue in the European scenario and beyond. Hardened over time, sometimes difficult to trace because the migratory paths of their parents have left no traces, either in the form of dual citizenship or in the form of particular and visible somatic and/or phenotypic characteristics, children of immigrants are a heterogeneous universe that is difficult to define. In fact, there are individuals who have had a diverse experience of migration (directly, such as the 1.5 or 1.25 generations) or indirectly (such as the second-born in the strict sense or the 1.75 who left too young to remember anything about the country in which they were born). Or they are minors who have left alone (so-called unaccompanied minors) or those who have arrived because of forced migration, those who live in refugee camps and those who live in host communities supported by guardians (OECD/EC 2023).

Key challenges, lessons and learning for further educational initiatives

The challenge that the different partners of KIDS4ALLL have set themselves is significant: to develop and test an educational method that simultaneously combines the development of LLL skills with attention to the integration of migrant children. Objectives that, as the different chapters have shown, cannot be achieved without the involvement of the internal educational environment: teachers, educators, volunteers, social workers and parents. A three-year journey that took place in a local geographical context characterized by profound social, economic and cultural changes within and outside Europe. This demanding challenge was compounded by the progression of the Covid 19 pandemic and its impact on the organizational level to safely carry out the activities. In 2021 and in the subsequent years, the changed conditions of the scenario required additional efforts in the design, implementation and adaptation of management methods; on the one hand to comply with health and safety regulations and requirements and on the other hand to pursue the project objectives. The world after pandemic also had numerous implications for the implementation, management and monitoring of the initiative's numerous structures, maintaining the path from knowledge acquisition to skills training and content creation. In this framework, it is interesting to highlight three elements that are viewed fundamental to be considered in further actions devoted to work together on the 3Ss: skills, social and societal inclusion, schooling combined with a transversal approach educational approach spanning from primary to secondary upper school level. As it has been above-mentioned, three advices should be stressed at the formal end of the KIDS4ALLL project for further developments:

– The various activities should be read and designed from the perspective of building communities of practices and competences capable of promoting processes of social cohesion and empowerment in a perspective of inclusion and valorization of the many diversities found in every sphere of life. This in turn enables important paths of updating and continuous learning, as the perspective of LLL requires;
– It must be avoided that project activities, although of high quality, remain limited to the educational network. In other words, the KIDS4ALLL initiative can become a well-known and recognized tool in terms of the method and approach to teaching the 8 LLL skills in different socio-cultural contexts. The flexibility of the defined and tested

tools, as well as the possibility that they can be adapted to heterogeneous (in terms of nationalities, languages, social classes, family backgrounds) educational environments and managed by adults with non-exclusive didactic experiences, is an important asset for a transferability approach and for further developments and updates;

– The key trait of flexibility goes hand-in-hand with the issue of training: it is not necessary to be a teacher to manage KIDS4ALLL learning method and to properly enhance migrant children's inclusion and educational success, but it is necessary to be trained. Indeed, no pedagogical action should be improvised: knowledge, skills and the correspondence between the messages conveyed and the behaviors performed are the basic ingredients for the success (at least on the supply side) of any activity that accompanies the growth of children and adolescents. Hence the need for confrontation and the approach of policy learning and policy transfer.

Taking into account the innovative features of the project and the effective capacity it has shown in tackling complex and sometimes unexpected challenges, KIDS4ALLL has helped to paint a very clear picture of some structural difficulties in the actions of both public and third sector bodies. Furthermore, considering the social integration of migrant children, the role of schools and the various educational institutions (families, if available; peer group, ethnic, religious, intercultural club environment, sports or leisure organizations) is of great importance. However, as all the chapters in the book have well shown, addition to the educational school policies and ongoing practices as well as the habits in associations and informal learning environments, the following factors should be mentioned in order to planning similar initiatives or transferred the same ideas: the importance of networks in each local context among all the actors involved and which could contribute to foster socio-cultural integration of children (both migrant and nationals) and, behind them, of their parents; the social mechanisms which work in each country and in each societal domain in order to better know how to cope with cultural habits; and the discrimination processes that affect certain backgrounds such as skin color, religion or origin. Finally, an important intervening variable is the immigration policy, which is country-based, and the experience that the country itself has gained in supporting migrant children, without forgetting the influence of the local context and the dynamics that are triggered in the everyday and ordinary management of diversity (OECD, 2018). In other words: if we

want to promote educational integration as a springboard for inclusion, we need to turn our gaze to cities and their policies, schools, neighborhoods, and intra-family relationships.

References

Crul M., Keskiner E., Schneider J., & Lelie F. (Eds.) (2017). The multiplier effect. How the accumulation of cultural and social capital explains steep upward mobility of children of low educated immigrants. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 40(2), 321-338.

European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. (2017). *Preparing teachers for diversity – The role of initial teacher education – Final report*. Publications Office. https://data.europa.eu/doi/-10.2766/637002

Koehler C., & Schneider J. (2019). Young refugees in education: the particular challenges of school systems in Europe. *CMS 7*. https://doi.org/10.1186/-s40878-019-0129-3.

OECD (2018). Policies and practices to support the resilience of students with an immigrant background. In *Resilience of Students with an Immigrant Background: Factors that Shape Well-being*. Paris. https://doi.org/10.1787/-9789264292093-12-en.

OECD/European Commission. (2023). *Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/1d5020a6-en.

Ricucci R. (2021). I can express My Feelings with Just a Tweet". Language, Emotion, and the Digital Divide among Immigrant Families in Italy. In M. J. Borges, S. Cancian, & L. Reeder (Eds.), *Emotional Landscapes: Emotions, Gender, and Migration* (pp. 238-257). University of Illinois Press.

The Authors

Justyna Katarzyna Bell

Justyna Bell, PhD, is a sociologist specializing in migration studies. She currently works as a senior researcher at the Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), Oslo Metropolitan University. Her current research projects study inclusion of vulnerable groups on the European labour markets and migrant involvement in welfare services. She is a member of the Nordic Migrant Expert Forum for the Nordic Council of Ministries and leads the Norwegian Network for Migration Research.

Anikó Bernát

Anikó Bernát, PhD in Sociology, is a senior researcher at TÁRKI Social Research Institute in Budapest. She focuses her research interest on the social inclusion of vulnerable groups, including ethnic and migrant minorities as well as on civil sector, volunteerism, solidarity movements and collaborative economy in the context of migration.

Michela Bongiorno

Michela Bongiorno, PhD student in Learning Sciences and Digital Technologies at the University of Turin. She is focusing on research topics related to ecological education and environmental sustainability. She is also currently Urban planner and Research collaborator at Indire, where she is engaged in activities related to the use of technologies aimed at a divergent thinking.

Marcello Cabria

Marcello Cabria is research fellow at the University of Turin, he holds a Ph.D. in Social and Political Change. His research interests include local government and governance, local development, territorial dimension of social phenomena, social research methodology. Recently, he has been working on processes of social inclusion and cultural change.

Roger Campdepadrós

Associate professor of Sociology at the Department of Business, University of Girona. Member the Community of Research on Excellence for All (CREA). He has researched and published on gender, education, multiculturalism, international migrations, interreligious dialogue, and social inclusion: 13 articles in indexed journals, 3 international projects and 7 R+D+I Spanish National Plan's projects. He has research stays at the universities of Toulouse, Michigan-Ann Arbor, Beijing, Turin and Malaga.

Renzo Carriero

Renzo Carriero is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Turin and Affiliate of the Collegio Carlo Alberto in Turin. His research interests include welfare state and redistribution attitudes, family, gender and social inequalities, cultural transmission and change, comparative social research, social research methodology.

Giulia Maria Cavaletto

Giulia Maria Cavaletto is a PHD in Comparative Social Research and professor of Sociology of Education and Theories of Cultural Consumption. Her research interests focus on inequalities in educational opportunities, school-work transition, innovation in teaching, development of social and emotional skills. She's Member of the OECD research group for Italy on the socio-emotional skills of fifteen-year-olds and social and emotional learning programs.

Luisa Conti

Luisa Conti is based at the University of Jena, where she researches in the fields of Intercultural Communication and Intercultural Education. She has been PI in various projects at the intersection of digitalization, communication, and education, funded by the EU Commission and the German Federal Ministry. Her focus is on the factors and dynamics which foster or hinder social cohesion, with digitality being a central aspect of her field of research.

Janice Darmanin

Janice Darmanin is the Manager Research Analyst within the Institute for Education in Malta. Through her research and experience she supports educators in their professional development at all levels within the educational sector in Malta and students as they conduct research as part of their studies. She holds a Master Degree in Applied Educational Leadership with the Institute of Education, during which her research focused on specialising in educational leadership, parental engagement and intercultural education. For the past year she has been researching in the area of neurocognitive learning. Her research in these various areas have produced a number of journal articles which have been published in the Malta Journal of Education and the International

Journal of Childhood Education. She is also a visiting lecturer, professional development expert, practicum visitor and dissertation supervisor engaged with the Institution for Education, Malta.

Lena De Botton
She is a professor at the Department of Sociology of the University of Barcelona. Doctor for EHESS - Paris under the direction of M. Wieviorka. She has participated in various European projects H2020 as' SOLIDUS, Solidarity in European societies. Empowerment, Social Justice and Empowerment' (2014-2018), as well as the' INCLUD-ED Framework Program, Strategies for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe from Education '(2006-2011) or R & D, such as' TRATA: Trajectories of life that is moving away or approaching trafficking networks for the purpose of sexual exploitation' (2013-2015) among others. There are also several publications in various journals indexed on Participation of cultural minorities in educational centers, prevention of violence from childhood, on successful educational actions among other lines. She is a member of the Advisory Council of Religious Diversity of the Generalitat of Catalonia and has participated in several international congresses on the extension of successful educational activities, dialogical feminism (especially addressing Muslim women) and the management of cultural diversity and religious - info.

Dolly Eliyahu-Levi
Prof. Eliyahu-Levi, Head of the Hebrew language department at the Levinsky-Wingate Academic College. She is researching migration processes and social integration in Israel and worldwide, exposing applied practices to reduce linguistic, social, cultural, and national gaps. Her research focuses on multiculturalism and multilingual issues, developing intercultural competence and intelligence, and designing learning-teaching processes based on culture-relevant pedagogy. Prof. Eliyahu-Levi teaches courses on discourse analysis, rhetorical discourse practice, cultural-socio-resilience of minority communities, and second language teaching in formal and informal education.

Maren Svendsen Folkvord
Maren Svendsen Folkvord is a sociologist (University of Oslo). She is currently working as a researcher at the Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), Oslo Metropolitan University. Folkvord's research interests includes children and youths, digital communication, digital tools in education, body and emotions, gender, exclusion, inclusion, friendship and community.

Martina Giorgi
Martina Giorgi, PhD candidate in Learning Sciences and Digital Technologies at "Sapienza" University of Rome. She is focusing in research topics related to

what values motivate students to make choices about their future and what role digital technologies can have in this process. She took part in the KIDS4ALLL project as INDIRE research fellow. She is also career counselor and she involve middle and high school students in career education programs for the development of career management skills.

Joanne-Rita Grima

Joanne Grima is the CEO of the Institute for Education (IfE), Malta with the main focus being initial teacher training and continuous professional development. Joanne started her career as a teacher and then as an education officer specialising in assessment for learning. She has spearheaded the development of the Core Curriculum Programme as an alternative learning and assessment programme tailored for students with academic difficulaties in compulsory education.

Lihong Huang

Lihong Huang is a research professor at the Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), Oslo Metropolitan University. She has been a project manager a few large research projects focusing on school education. Currently, she is the coordinator of a RIA project funded by Horizon Europe called STRIDE - Strategies for Achieving Equity and Inclusion in Education, Training and Learning in Democratic Europe (2024-2027). Advice given by Lihong Huang has been a great help in Chapter 7.

Valeria Ilareva

Lawyer Valeria Ilareva, PhD, is the founder and the chairperson of the Foundation for Access to Rights – FAR in Bulgaria and its head lawyer in strategic litigation before national, European and international courts. As a practicing lawyer, she also has first-hand practical insight into the plight of refugee children. Having a PhD in International Law and International Migration and Social Integration, she is often a lead trainer in the trainings organized by FAR in refugee and immigration law.

Olga Kolot

Olga Kolot, PhD, Candidate of Philological Sciences. Expert on the hotline of the Foundation for Access to Rights FAR, Director of the Bulgarian Sunday School in Ukraine, teacher, researcher at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. As a practising teacher and expert on the refugee hotline, she deals with issues of social integration, education and comprehensive assistance and support for refugees and migrants in Bulgaria.

Giulia Marroccoli

Giulia Marroccoli is research fellow at the University of Turin, she holds a Ph.D. in Sociology and her thesis analysed upward social mobility among im-

migrant descendants in Turin (Italy) and Lyon (France). Her main research interests include: social inclusion processes of immigrant descendants; inter-ethnic relations; international migration; social stratification and inequalities.

Tina Mathisen

Tina Mathisen, PhD, is a Human Geographer specialized in migration studies with a particular interest in children and belonging. She currently works as a senior researcher at the Norwegian Social Research (NOVA) at Oslo Metropolitan University. Her current research focuses on the inclusion of children in families with a refugee background in Norwegian municipalities. She also has experience from an international research project analyzing the social and economic impacts of migration to rural areas in Europe.

Caterina Mazza

Caterina Mazza, Ph. D. in Political Science and IR. She participated at several national and international projects about different topics, including human rights especially related to immigration issues, and to the educational system. She currently works as Research Collaborator at INDIRE in supporting schools to improve educational provision in order to develop critical thinking skills of students (ISCED 1, 2, 3); in identifying the digital training needs of Italian teachers and students and educational paths to address the educational emergency in an inclusive and collaborative perspective.

Michal Ganz-Meishar

Ganz-Meishar, PhD, is a lecturer and pedagogical instructor at the Levinsky Wingate Academic Center. She coordinates the program "Hebrew as an additional language." An expert in the fields of knowledge: education, pedagogy, literature, and Hebrew in teaching and research. Her educational research promotes collaboration and communication between the education system and immigrant parents from minority groups, methods of teaching Hebrew as an additional language, and multimodal literature. Dr. Ganz-Meishar researches education in broad, holistic social, cultural, and global contexts.

Sara Mori

Sara Mori has a PhD in Evaluation of Educational Systems and Processes; she is graduated in Psychologist and she is a cognitive-behavioral psychotherapist. She was subject expert in Test Theory and Techniques. She has been working at INDIRE and she has been collaborating with IUL as a lecturer and researcher. Her main research interests concern the assessment and development of trans-versal competences and the development of students' motivation and well-being.

Jessica Niewint-Gori

Jessica Niewint-Gori main research focus is the role of technologies in the process of personalisation in education. How can technolgies used to improve the process of learning and teaching and how can technolgies applied in a sustainable way for the learner and teacher to personalise approaches and outcomes in education.

Sotiris Petropoulos

Sotiris Petropoulos is Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the University of the Peloponnese. He received his PhD from the Department of Geography, Harokopio University of Athens (Greece) while he holds an MA in International Political Economy from Warwick University (UK). He has taught at the University of the Aegean, of Central Greece and of Piraeus while he has participated in numerous research programs. In addition he has acted as Senior Consultant on International Donors Programs at Ernst & Young. His research interests, among others, focus on migration, civil society organizations and global governance.

Roberta Ricucci

Roberta Ricucci is Professor of Sociology of Islam and Sociology of Migration at the University of Turin. She focuses her research on youth, education and religious pluralism in the framework of migratory processes, publishing internationally on how local societies, human mobilities and intercultural dynamics intertwine. These studies are united by her abiding interest in improving public awareness of sociological findings, as is certified by her selection as an expert in migration studies by the UN. She has coordinated as PI the entire KIDS4ALLL project.

Simona Rizzari

Simona Rizzari, PhD in Educational Sciences at the University of Rome "Tor Vergata" and at the University of Granada, has been a research fellow and a fixed term researcher at the University of Catania from 2019 to 2022. She took part in the KIDS4ALLL project as INDIRE research fellow. Her research interests include adult education and lifelong learning, with a particular focus on the model of work-based learning and the quality of teaching and learning in higher education.

Alessia Rosa

Alessia Rosa is Senior Researcher at INDIRE (National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research). She hold a PhD in Education Sciences. She focuses her research on childhood education, creativity and Personalized learning In Indire she is directly involved in several projects related to teacher training (induction and Continuous Professional Development) and school technology innovation.

Tanja Schroot

Tanja Schroot holds a Ph.D. in Sociology and works currently as post-doc researcher at the University of Turin and as Senior Lecturer at the University of Aosta. Her particular research interests and several publications are located in the field of (intercultural) education and competence building in the context of European mobility.

Viktoriia Stakhova-Senik

Viktoriia Stakhova-Senik is a Philologist, Teacher of Russian language and literature, modern Greek language, State University of Humanities Ukraine. She worked as a school teacher, a journalist, but most of her life was spent in advertising at radio stations in Ukraine. Fleeing the devastated city of Mariupol, from May 2022 to December 2023 she worked as an information expert at the Foundation for Access to Rights – FAR, helping Ukrainian refugees in Bulgaria.

Kalina Slavova

Kalina Slavova is a LLM student at Sofia University, Bulgaria. Her interests in the area of Human Rights and Refugee Law have motivated her to participate in a number of research projects relating to rights of refugee children at the border, in the host country and safeguards relating to detention and return.

Gabriella Taddeo

Gabriella Taddeo is a researcher in Sociology of Cultural Processes at the University of Turin. Her research interests are in digital cultures and practices of formal and informal digital skills training.

Hanna Velykova

Hanna Velykova holds MA in EU Law and Human Rights from Sofia University, Université de Lorraine and Strasbourg University. She took part in a different project, related to the rights of refugees and migrants. Her interests aslo coverd digital empowerment of refugees.

Martina Visentin

Martina Visentin is Associate Professor at the University of Padua. She teaches Introduction to Sociology and Social Policies (Faculty of Political Science) and her research interests focus on social innovation in local welfare; social policies; social acceleration and higher education.

The volume "Pathways to Inclusion in Different Educational Environments. Migrant Children and LLL Skills within and Outside Europe" illustrates the main steps of the KIDS4ALLL project. KIDS4ALLL project has been granted in the frame of the Horizon2020 Work Program SC6 entitled 'Europe in a Changing world – inclusive, innovative and reflective societies' and with particular reference to topic 5 focused on integration challenges of migrant children in educational contexts. It aims to support school inclusion and to strengthen and valorise transcultural and interdisciplinary skill sets in a highly diversified learner population, which increasingly corroborates the actual necessity for lifelong learning. In order to pursue these important objectives, the KIDS4ALLL project developed and tested learning method based on the buddy principles. Indeed, the developed learning method draws on knowledge acquisition skills training and attitude transfer to convey lifelong learning competencies as a whole within a collaborative and co-creative learning process. As a response to the educational needs of children, in particular of migrant children, and of educators as pathfinders for continuous lifelong and life-wide learning, the project is grounded on three Key Inclusive Development Strategies (KIDS) towards LifeLongLearning (LLL), which represent the specific objectives of the project: knowledge acquisition, skill training and competence transfer. Thanks to various activities (comparative research, training with teachers, practitioners, educators, volunteers, learning unit production and data analysis, both qualitative and quantitative), the project testes its learning method in various EU and non-EU countries and discussed it finding among the numerous project partners and with several scholars and stakeholders from from a total of 17 EU and non-European countries that span over 3 continents
The book presents the international experiences carried out in the involved countries and its main impacts in the various educational contexts (formal, informal and non-formal), stressing how the lifelong learning approach could foster societal inclusion.

SOTIRIS PETROPOULOS is Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the University of the Peloponnese. He received his PhD from the Department of Geography, Harokopio University of Athens (Greece) while he holds an MA in International Political Economy from Warwick University (UK). He has taught at the University of the Aegean, of Central Greece and of Piraeus while he has participated in numerous research programs. In addition he has acted as Senior Consultant on International Donors Programs at Ernst & Young. His research interests, among others, focus on migration, civil society organizations and global governance..

ROBERTA RICUCCI is Professor of Sociology of Islam and Sociology of Migration at the University of Turin. She focuses her research on youth, education and religious pluralism in the framework of migratory processes, publishing internationally on how local societies, human mobilities and intercultural dynamics intertwine. These studies are united by her abiding interest in improving public awareness of sociological findings, as is certified by her selection as an expert in migration studies by the UN. She has coordinated as PI the entire KIDS4ALLL project..

ALESSIA ROSA is Senior Researcher at INDIRE (National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Educational Research). She hold a PhD in Education Sciences. She focuses her research on childhood education, creativity and Personalized learning In Indire she is directly involved in several projects related to teacher training (induction and Continuous Professional Development) and school technology innovation.