



ETUCE-EFEE Joint Practical Guidelines on how to promote effective integration of migrant and refugee learners in the education and socio-economic environment of the host countries through joint social partner initiatives at national, regional and local level

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Introduction

With increasing migration, mobility refugees and asylum seekers arriving at the European shores and land borders seeking shelter and protection from wars, persecutions or natural disasters, ETUCE and EFEE acknowledge the new challenges our education and training systems, and education personnel within, are confronted with. The increasing diversity of our societies calls for greater emphasis to be placed on promoting inclusion and common values in schools and education institutions to combat all forms of intolerance, social exclusion and xenophobia. Furthermore it requests learning pathways that cater for the different needs, abilities and capacities of the diverse group of learners in order to make sure that learners reach their full potential and unlock their talents. This poses new demands on both the management of education and training institutions as well as on teachers, trainers, school leaders, and education support personnel working in education and training institutions. Recognising the need for joint social partner initiatives in this field, the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) developed Joint Practical Guidelines on how to promote effective integration of migrant and refugee learners in the education and socio-economic environment of the host countries in the framework of their joint project “*European Sectoral Social Partners promoting effective integration of migrants and refugees in education*” VS/2017/0368. The project was carried out in 2017-2019 in light of the joint work programme of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE), and takes into account the joint work conducted in the course of the ESSDE Committee meetings.

The Joint Practical Guidelines build on the project activities, including research¹, online survey amongst ETUCE and EFEE member organisations and social partners' interviews in three countries (namely Belgium - Flanders, Serbia and Spain) and two interactive Training Seminars in Denmark and Cyprus and the Final Conference organised in Brussels. During these events, the social partners in education actively contributed to identify priorities and highlighted the need to build synergies with a broader variety of partners to meet newly arrived migrant and refugee learners' needs and to promote effective inclusion. Therefore, their discussions focused on three areas, which require concerted actions from a broad range of actors.

Firstly, general education policies, which contribute to creating a safe school environment that improves the educational outcomes for all and reduces gaps among learners of different socio-economic background, while fostering inclusion and social cohesion. Such policies feature within curricula, and target teachers, trainers, school leaders and other education support personnel, pupils, education trade unions, education employers, among others. Secondly, education policies targeting migrants and refugees to address the specific needs of the migrant learners' population in its entirety (language skills, socio-emotional competences, etc.). Thirdly, with a view to favour the integration in the socio-economic context of the host countries, a set of policies addressing the community and social environment.

Aim

The guidelines are aimed in the first instance at education employers and education trade unions in Europe and their affiliates to be addressed at three levels: European, national and local level for specific actions. They aim to assist the social partners in education and their affiliated members in developing concrete approaches and actions to increase awareness among the relevant stakeholders about the importance of developing strategies for effective integration of migrant and refugee learners in the education and socio-economic environment of the host countries through joint social partner initiatives. Essentially, these guidelines seek to help education authorities, education employers and education trade unions and their members to promote effective integration by adopting a human rights and child-centred approach, with the ultimate goal to ensure access to quality education to all and equal access to opportunities in their future lives.

Rather than providing a one-size-fits-all approach, this set of guidelines should be understood as a tool to be assessed against and adjusted to the national, regional and local settings.

Definitions

In light of the research report's findings and consistent with the joint work conducted, the key concept and group addressed by these Joint Guidelines, is that of *newly arrived migrant and refugee children*² (or newly arrived students when strictly speaking about education). The report clarifies that the concept includes migrants, as refugee children are, by definition migrants, and non-refugee migrant students often share the same challenges at schools as

¹ Bunar, N. 'Promoting effective integration of migrants and refugees in education. Experiences from Spain, Serbia and Belgium', ETUCE and EFEE, 2019. <https://bit.ly/2pbcJ9B>

² Or short *newly arrived children*.

their refugee peers (Rutter 2006, quoted in Bunar, 2019). By explicitly using *refugee*, the Joint Guidelines follow the research report highlighting the particularly dire situation of refugee children in the education and in the asylum systems across Europe, as well as their transmigration experiences.

Practical Guidelines

Regarding **general education policy**, we emphasise the need for the social partners in education:

At European level to:

- Jointly advocate for strengthening the EU and national level coordination of the response to migration challenges;
- Promote the creation of a positive narrative to diversity and inclusion, and perceive diversity as an added value against any form of racism and xenophobia.

At national level to:

- Develop national inclusion strategies;
- Guarantee a legal framework that ensures access to quality education to all;
- Develop curricula in consultation with education trade unions and education employer organisations to promote inclusion³, diversity and intercultural dialogue in schools and society;
- Address segregation from an early age. Herewith quality early childhood plays an important role;
- Include a component focused on multicultural aspects in education in the initial teacher training and in continuous professional development courses;
- Increase the attractiveness of the teaching and school leader profession and rewarding teachers' and school leaders' work for inclusion;
- Ensure adequate investment in education to cater for the needs of a diverse society.

At local level to:

- Develop a classroom environment that is intended to be a learning community for teachers and develops their continuous and collective learning processes;
- Address the social and emotional needs of pupils;
- Develop a code of professional ethics that includes aspects of diversity.

Regarding **policies for the inclusion of migrants and refugees**, we emphasise the need for the social partners in education:

At European level to:

- Raise awareness on and further promote tools such as the Council of Europe initiative 'European Qualification Passport for Refugees' for all education sectors

³ Inclusion: As defined by UNESCO, where diversity is a richness.

for the recognition of skills and competences acquired in different (national) educational systems, which is recognised in the whole EU;

- Advocate for enhancing intergovernmental cooperation to ensure that home countries can provide information that receiving countries can use when tailoring pedagogical approaches;
- Especially address the challenges of education of unaccompanied refugee children.

At national level to:

- Provide continuous professional development and initial teacher training for managing multicultural classes and pedagogy for second language acquisition;
- Promote the prevention of classroom segregation and fast-track inclusion in mainstream education;
- Approach educational needs individually, starting from the assessment, recognition of previously acquired competencies by teachers who received specific training for this purpose;
- Promote flexible learning pathways for adults matching their specific needs, also taking into account the different age-cohorts;
- Ensure that adults with a migrant background have access to lifelong learning opportunities, including host country language acquisition;
- Provide evidence and research to highlight that quality, structured instruction in mother tongue does not affect second language acquisition;
- Promote the use of first language (mother tongue) as a vehicle for understanding, communication and learning;
- Provide access to the teaching profession to migrant and refugee teachers and deploying their professional expertise for the benefit of migrant and refugee children/learners, the school and the educational community;
- Support schools with students from disadvantaged backgrounds with adequate financial support and human resources.

At local level to:

- Engage and/or strengthening the role of appropriately trained and qualified support personnel and language assistants to establish and maintain effective links between children and families on one side, and schools on the other side;
- Take into account the needs of the migrant and refugee children in the classroom, which requires a certain degree of curricular space, flexibility to adapt organisational structures, and professional autonomy for teachers and school leaders;
- Acknowledge, recognise and value previous experience of formal and non-formal learning and individual competencies;
- Develop initial individual assessment plans for newcomers that value their previous experience, with a view towards developing individual learning plans for an inclusive environment;
- Provide additional support to migrant and refugee children to avoid early school leaving.

Regarding **social-community policies**, we emphasise the need for the social partners in education:

At European level to:

- Promote an holistic, integrated and well-structured approach to migration and integration among all relevant Commissioners and Directorate-Generals as well as among national governments and Council formations.

At national level to:

- Promote the development of a strong national strategy, commitment and close cooperation at and between all levels (national, regional, and local) including all relevant policy fields, such as home affairs and integration, education and training, employment and social affairs, housing and health care;
- Recognise and incorporating the view of social partners and of other relevant stakeholders into policies aimed at reducing the potential for school segregation according to the area of residence of migrants and refugees;
- Develop anti-racist and anti-xenophobic campaigns and policies to reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour;
- Provide information to the receiving communities about migrants and refugees to create a transparent process that eases the community's concerns.

At local level to:

- Support cooperation between the school community and parents. Strong family-school connections as regards in and out of schools activities contribute to address challenges related to the socio-economic status and lead to improved attainment, more engagement, less disruptive behaviours and more positive behaviours;
- Cooperate and liaise with statutory services, parents and families as valuable partners in promoting mutual understanding, respect for diverse opinions and intercultural dialogue as regards newly arrived migrant and refugee learners' inclusion;
- Enhance the understanding of each other's work frame of reference between specialised staff (social workers, translators, psychologists) and teachers, trainers and school leaders and other education personnel in schools to cater for children's socio-emotional and practical needs;
- Approach the needs of the child in a holistic manner. Herewith interagency cooperation between stakeholders in the community is key, including local organisations and NGOs aiming for inclusive communities, e.g. through the provision and access to afterschool activities, non-formal education, legal advice and support, etc.

Moreover, the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education commit to jointly monitor and follow up on the implementation of the joint practical guidelines with a joint implementation

assessment and report to be presented at the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education meeting in 2021.

These Joint Practical Guidelines have been adopted by the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE) Plenary meeting on 2 December 2019.

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