



Open Education for Young Europeans through History, Art and Cultural Learning

SURVEY REPORT

COUNTRY: SLOVENIA

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Report Contents:

1. Introduction (1 page max)

Introduction to the report; description of the aim of the report within the framework of the project.

2. National framework for integrating children of M/R background in primary education (1-2 pages max)

Briefly describe the national integration framework (policy and practice) for children with a M/R background in primary education (formal and non-formal). What organisations are active in providing formal/non formal learning and integration support to children with a M/R background? This may help interpret the survey findings.

3. Survey and focus groups methodology (1 page max)

Briefly describe how the survey was conducted, i.e. the period the survey took place, the stakeholder organisations that were contacted, issues faced (e.g. the COVID-19 restrictions applied in your country), the number of responses. Same for the focus groups.

4. Findings (10 pages max)

4.1 Online survey findings

Present the main findings following the online questionnaire structure.

4.2 Focus groups findings

Present the main findings based on the focus groups' discussion.

5. Conclusion (1-2 pages max)

Summarise the main findings and draw conclusions on the learning needs of educators and pupils as well as the role of other learning stakeholders (parents, schools, NGOs, cultural organisations offering learning courses etc.)

1. Introduction

The project OpenEye is funded by an ERASMUS+ programme and lead by Universitetet I Sorost Norge/Norway, with project partners in Greece (2), Italy and Slovenia (2).

Through the project we want to create a new, innovative methodology, new approaches to learning and addressing content through storytelling, including history, art and culture with a view to the inclusion and integration of children and adolescents in European society.

The project focuses on creating an open learning methodology based on History, Arts and Cultural Learning, as well as the necessary implementation tools that will enable teachers of primary education in Europe (formal and non-formal) to support their pupils in language learning and integration in their school and community, in nowadays multilingual and multicultural classrooms.

This National Report, which is based on the survey, is part of an international European project called OpenEYE (Open Education for Young Europeans through History, Art and Cultural Learning). Our aim is to explore the possibilities offered by history, culture and the arts in order to develop new methods and tools for teachers of primary education and social workers supporting the community integration of young immigrants and refugees.

The OpenEYE online survey was addressing teachers and support staff working with pupils of a migrant/refugee background from 6-12 years old. Total 168 stakeholders from Slovenia have answered the survey accordingly.

2. National framework for integrating children of M/R background in primary education

Statistical data on national level

At the beginning of 2018, 250.000 immigrants lived in Slovenia, which represents 12.1 percent of the total population. With such a share of immigrants, Slovenia ranks 16th among the Member States of the European Union. Slovenia is one of the four countries – together with Croatia, Sweden and the Netherlands – with the largest share of immigrants who are also citizens of these countries. 55 % of immigrants have Slovenian citizenship, and 94 % of those who immigrated to Slovenia before its independence. Immigration from other republics of the former Yugoslavia was considered internal migration at that time, so many immigrants from these areas were able to easily acquire Slovenian citizenship upon independence, the National Statistical Office wrote.

Modern immigrants to Slovenia came to Slovenia from 163 different countries as the data from December 2019 show: mostly from Asian countries (45), from 43 African countries and from all EU Member States (28). Bosnia and Herzegovina is the country of origin of 43 percent of modern immigrants in Slovenia.

The Ministry for Education, Science and Sport provided us with data on the number of pupils (primary school participants) enrolled in the 2019/2020 school year who were not born in Slovenia and do not have Slovenian citizenship. We learned there are 9.812 pupils with migrant background in Slovenian primary schools. Pupils are coming from at least 82 countries, the biggest number of immigrant pupils in Slovenia are still coming from the parts of former Republic of Yugoslavia. It follows the Eastern Europe and then the neighboring countries Italy, Croatia and Hungary.

National legislation

The Primary School Law is the basic law governing primary education. In some articles it tackles the foreign citizens or immigrants (the law uses both terms):

- Children who are foreign citizens or stateless persons and reside in the Republic of Slovenia have the right to compulsory primary education under the same conditions as citizens of the Republic of Slovenia.
- It requires the primary school to determine which class a compulsory school child will join when enrolling with foreign documents, on the basis of the submitted evidence of previous education, the child's age and taking into account his knowledge of the Slovenian language.
- Immigrant pupils in the first year of schooling in 6th or 9th grade can voluntarily take a national knowledge test.
- Immigrant pupils may be unrated from individual subjects in the first year of schooling in our country at the end of the school year and advance to the next grade (the only exception is the ninth grade (the final year of primary school), where all subjects must be positive at the end of the year).

The school is quite autonomous within the aforementioned provisions of the second and fourth indents. In the second indent, the law requires what the school must take into account when enrolling, but it makes its own decision. The fourth indent also mentions the possibility of promotion despite not being assessed, but the decision on promotion is made by the teachers' assembly.

Other provisions that the school must comply with in relation to immigrants are set out in the individual regulations.

The Rules on the Examination and Assessment of Knowledge give immigrant pupils from another country the right to adjust during the first two years of schooling in our country. The methods and deadlines for assessing knowledge, the number of assessments and more can be adapted to the pupil. Adjustments are decided by the teachers' assembly of each school.

Within the project "Challenges of intercultural coexistence", the publication "Proposal of the program of work with immigrant children for the field of preschool education, primary and secondary education" was created (August 2018). The amendment to the ***Rules on Norms and Standards for the Implementation of the Primary School Program***, which entered into force on 1 September 2020, is based on the mentioned document. With the amendment of the rules, the criteria for the allocation of Slovene language lessons for immigrant pupils from other countries are determined.

Until 1 September 2020, pupils who are in their first and second year of schooling were entitled to additional hours of Slovene, and the criteria for paying for hours of assistance of staff (extra work for teachers employed in the school) for foreign pupils were set by the Minister of Education and paid on the basis of realization. Assistance in learning Slovene took place in an uncoordinated manner (in different scopes, forms, with different content emphases, with different staff), depending on the readiness of each school and the conditions in which it operates.

From 1 September 2020, additional hours of Slovene are intended only for pupils enrolled in Slovene schools in the first year and a few hours for pupils who enrolled in a school in the Republic of Slovenia in the second assessment period of the previous school year (for pupils who are included in Slovenian schools the second year, the school at its own discretion proposes inclusion in other forms of assistance - supplementary classes, individual and group assistance and the development of an individual activity plan for each pupil).

A larger number of hours is dedicated to the implementation of assistance hours. By the end of October, each school sends a list of immigrant pupils to the Ministry of Education. Based on the number of pupils, a school is entitled to a certain number of hours, and the decision of an individual school is how it will form groups (heterogeneous, homogeneous).

If at least nine pupils are enrolled in the school for the first time, the school may systematize the post of a professional worker. For a smaller number of students (8 or less), additional Slovene language hours are financed on the basis of a decision of the Minister.

Also, from 1 September 2020, additional hours or initial Slovene lessons for immigrant pupils are implemented in accordance with the valid curriculum (until 1 September 2020, primary schools were more left to themselves in terms of content). With the curriculum it is also provided the knowledge of the performers; in the first and second educational period, the initial teaching of Slovene for immigrants is taught by class teachers or teachers of Slovene, and in the third educational period by teachers of Slovene.

National projects and different supporting documents

In Slovenia with co-financing of the Ministry for Education, Science and Sport and with European social fund free, intensive, expert seminars take place which bring new knowledge and skills for creation of more inclusive learning environment. For example, a project ***“We are only with others”*** in a period 2016-2021 offers different seminars for enhancing intercultural skills of teachers and educators.

The Ministry for Education, Science and Sport and ESF are supporting also a project ***“Challenges of intercultural coexistence”***, implemented from 2016-2021, which encourages creation and dissemination of quality and effective pedagogic approaches for inclusion of immigrant children. The Ministry within the project ***“Challenges of intercultural coexistence”*** also elaborated the already mentioned ***“Proposal for a program of work with immigrant children in the field of preschool education, primary and secondary school education”***. The proposal of the program for the inclusion of immigrant children in kindergarten, primary and secondary school is substantiated in inclusion as a guide and interculturality as a pedagogical-didactic principle. It is also based on system support, experience recognition, knowledge verification and evaluation mechanisms, individual action plans, mother tongue learning and intensive initial learning of Slovene. The emphasis is on education, training of teachers/ educators for development intercultural competences, which are crucial for teaching in culturally and linguistically heterogeneous groups and classes. The other document, ***“Guidelines for the integration of immigrant children in kindergartens and schools”***, was elaborated by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Education in 2012. The guidelines define measures in the field of education for the integration of immigrants and are the implementation of a strategy for the integration of children, pupils and students migrants in the system of education in the Republic of Slovenia (adopted in May 2007) as an integral part of the national strategy for the integration of immigrant children. They are intended for various educational institutions that implement pre-school education programs, primary school and secondary education and student dormitories in the Republic of Slovenia. Several other supporting documents were developed in the field of inclusion of immigrant children, for example ***“Intercultural Education Model”*** which was designed in order to go beyond focus only on individual aspects and to develop as holistic view as possible on the inclusion of immigrant children. The model actively involves various co-creators involved in the integration process: teachers, children and parents immigrants, other children and parents, local people, local organizations, pre-existing opportunities within the school system, legislation. The intercultural education model consists of seven areas: Interculturality as a pedagogical-didactic principle, System support, Teachers with developing intercultural ability, Development of awareness of a multicultural society in all subjects, Development of intercultural dialogue at school, Cooperation of the school with (parents) immigrants and Cooperation of the school with local community.

3. Survey and focus groups methodology

The OpenEYE online survey was addressing teachers and support staff working with pupils of a migrant/refugee background from 6-12 years old. The survey helped us explore the learning needs of educators who work with newly arrived pupils in need of extra support, and the potential offered by history, culture and arts to develop new methods and tools for supporting them. By “extra support”, in the framework of the OpenEYE project, we mean language learning support and cultural support for integration into the school community.

The online survey was active for completing for approximately one month with the majority of answers being gathered end of February and beginning of March 2020. The invitation was sent to relevant stakeholders on national level by Education Centre Geoss (for example Pedagogic institute, Scientific research centre of the Slovenian Academy of science and art, Ministry for education, science and sport, Association of head masters of primary schools in Slovenia, Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for vocational education, Ministry for internal affairs, Centre for Slovene as second foreign language, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for education, different faculties of the University of Maribor and Ljubljana, Institute for Slovenian emigration and migrations, Slovene Philanthropy, Peace institute, Institute for ethnic issues, British Council Slovenia etc.) and also by the primary school Litija who sent the links to online survey to all Slovenian primary school principals.

Total 168 stakeholders from Slovenia have answered the survey accordingly.

On 27th of January 2020 Education centre Geoss and Primary School of Litija organized a Focus group meeting in the premises of the Primary school of Litija as it is more familiar environment for the parents of pupils with an immigrant or refugee background. Staff from EC Geoss and Primary School of Litija took part in a focus group session together with teachers and facilitators of additional help which is offered to newly arrived students in their first two years since arrival. The aim of the focus group meeting was to identify the pupils' learning needs in terms of language learning and cultural support. 12 people – parents, social workers and teachers participated in structured and guided discussion.

4. Findings

4.1 Online survey findings

The first part of the survey was defining the profile of the participating stakeholders and the children they work with.

The vast majority (99%) is **engaging with pupils** in primary school education, only 1% replied that they engage in non-governmental organisation offering integration support.

Regarding the question of **formal primary education**, 86% replied they have primary pedagogical education, followed by category other (7%) and specialist training – English/foreign languages (6%).

Most of the respondents work with **pupils aged** from 9-12 (49%), followed by age group 6-9 (41%) and other age groups (35%, here very different age groups occurred, mostly older than 12).

To the question of the **percentage of newly arrived pupils in need of extra support** on average, the most frequent answer is up to 5% (56%), followed by 5-10% (25%) and 10-15% (10%) and 15-25% (9%), 2% work only with pupils who newly arrived and are in need of extra support.

Most respondents replied that they **hold their classes** on a weekday basis (Monday to Friday; 70%), fewer replied 3-5 days a week (15%) and 1-2 days a week (10%).

The most frequent **primary role in respondent's organization structure** is a teacher (85%), followed by combination of different roles (7%), other roles (7%), lead management (6%) and social worker (4%).

The respondents **work with pupils** most often as professional educators (salaried members of staff; 92%), both as staff and volunteer 7%, other types are less represented.

In the second part of the survey the stakeholders were asked whether they have any experiences in working in multilingual and multicultural classrooms.

For most respondents the **initial training** did not include a focus on teaching/supporting multilingual and multicultural classes (92%), only 8% answered yes on this question.

Similar, the majority didn't received **subsequent training** in teaching/supporting multilingual and multicultural classes (58%), to a little extent received 36% and to some extent 5%.

A vast majority of the respondents think that **working in a multilingual and multicultural class requires a different approach** to the one used for a class of Slovenian speaking pupils (97%).

Among those who replied »no«, they say: there is no need for it in sport subjects; a lot of need for individual communication which is very limited inside regular classes; because of equal inclusion; most of newly arrived pupils do not speak any Slovene word; there should be courses of Slovene language; problem of communication etc.

When it comes to rating the **importance of different issues in working with multilingual and multicultural classes**, respondents marked the following as issues of great importance:

- language difficulties of newly arrived pupils in need of extra support (91%),
- communication problems between the teacher and the pupils (71%),
- communication problems between the newly arrived pupils in need of extra support, and their fellow pupils (69%),
- communication problems between the teacher and the pupils' family (68%) and
- different levels of ability in the class (64%).

Rating of the **learning priorities for the integration of newly arrived pupils** in need of extra support to the school community show that respondents have the following priorities for the ones of great importance:

- acquiring competences in the Slovenian language (90%),
- developing verbal and non-verbal communication skills (80%),
- getting safely introduced into the host country's culture (78%).

Respondents rating the **importance of the factors in helping them teach/support a multilingual and multicultural class** show that they think that very important are:

- support from management (89%),
- support from pupils' parents/families (86%),
- availability of necessary resources (human and material; 75%).
- Also all other listed factors ranked very high in their importance, all above 61%.

Question on **adapting their teaching material and methods** to accommodate the multilingual and multicultural composition of the class had most answers as sometimes (38%), followed by often (37%) and rarely (17%). Never and very often had 5% answers each.

Among the **obstacles in adapting their teaching material and methods** to accommodate the multilingual and multicultural diversity in the class, the respondents marked as of great importance three of them, each with 50-51%:

- lack of support from the educational framework (policy, curriculum, management etc.),
- increase in workload,
- lack of time.

Also other obstacles (Lack of relevant learning methodologies/guidelines/resources, Lack of relevant skills) rank very high, none of them got below 41%. Among »other« respondents stated: lack of material-we work practically; unpaid extra work; only individual work with pupils.

Third part of the survey focused on use of one or more cultural expressions in their work with multilingual and multicultural classes (with “cultural expressions” we mean, for example, cultural heritage, art, music, literature, theater, dance and crafts).

Question on **experience in using cultural expressions** in respondents work with multilingual and multicultural classes and newly arrived pupils in need of extra support had 56% answers as »yes« and 44% as »no«.

Among those who **don't use cultural expressions** in their work with multilingual and multicultural classes, the following reasons play a huge role:

- I don't know enough about how to use cultural expressions (36%),
- I don't know enough about what is a cultural expression (32%) and
- I don't have enough time and resources in my organization to use such methods (20%), other reasons had lower percentage.

On question if they **would be interested in using cultural expressions** in their work in the future, 73% of respondents said “yes” and 27% “no”.

Those who already have experience in using cultural expressions were asked to indicate **which cultural expressions they have used** in their work with newly arrived pupils in need of extra support. The highest percentage have:

- storytelling (68%),
- music (66%),
- cultural heritage (62%),
- literature (58%).

Other expressions have less than 25% answers (theater, art, photography and design, crafts).

Rating the statements of **ways of learning through cultural expressions** that can help the newly arrived pupils in need of extra support shows that the highest percentage of “a great deal” rating stands for the following:

- encourage them to be active in classes (67%),
- ease their integration into the school community (62%),
- make learning a new language easier (62%),
- help them to develop an understanding of the culture of their new country (62%).

Also all other options have high percentage of answers, all above 45%.

Question about how do respondents think that **cultural expressions can help the Slovenian speaking pupils in a multicultural/diverse class** has the highest percentage as "a great deal" rating for the following statements:

- help them to develop an understanding of different cultures and intercultural awareness (61%),
- help them to connect with their fellow pupils (58%),
- help them to discover cultural similarities (54%)

On question if they think that the **use of cultural expressions in learning can have a negative impact** on teaching/supporting a multilingual/multicultural class, 86% of respondents replied »no« and 14% »yes«. Those who answered yes, listed the following explanations and suggestions: it can lead to repressed emotions and prejudices, immigrant pupils involve too much their culture in thinking and inclusion in the system, in one way we give them a blow, some do not even try to speak Slovene as they think we understand them in some way, negative approach of some immigrants, rejection of work, inflexibility, it is important to have good preparing of the class if there is negative mood.

On question **to what extent could cultural expressions be used to support newly arrived pupils** in need of extra support in their learning and development, the respondents rated the highest as "a great deal":

- mental well-being (61%),
- language learning (58%),
- basic skills training (42%).

Rating of different options that respondents would **find helpful in order to implement or better employ cultural expressions** in their work as an educator, showed as »Very helpful« the following ones:

- inspirational material (good examples, role models) with 70%,
- basic teaching modules that I can easily modify (57%),
- a training course I can attend in person (55%),
- support from the management of my organization (55%),
- ready-made modules with step-by-step instructions (54%) and
- hands-on training (51%).

4.2 Focus groups findings

The Focus Group with parents, social workers and parents gave us insight into different experiences and views of involved teachers and parents.

The discussion was led by Milica Bučar, school psychologist with the support of Sandra Katić and Blanka Erjavec.

The conclusions of this meeting state how the results of the OpenEYE project can help to improve the skills and competences of the target groups, leading to a more effective and smooth integration of these students in the school community and a lifelong learning environment.

The first question was about the duration of their staying in Slovenia, what class is their child in and how close is Slovenian language to them?

Parents invited and chosen for the focus group have been in Slovenia approximately for one year, two fathers a little longer but their families joined them in last year. Parents coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina understand Slovene but don't speak it, while a mother coming from Russia is »forced« to speak Slovene otherwise other members of the focus group could not understand her. As our teachers and other staff is familiar with other South-Slavic languages communication was possible. The parents from Kosovo and Albania were also invited to the group but they did not want to participate.

When we asked parents how do children find Slovenian language, how is there understanding of the language?

All parents said that teachers praise children and their progress in understanding Slovene very much. Also the children are very satisfied at school. Parents praise also the teachers and their effort. A girl from Russia attended a 5-month Slovene language course before coming to Slovenia. At home they all speak their mother tongue. All parents at the same time admit that their children already now better understand and speak Slovene as they do and they also often correct them at pronunciation of words.

Participants think that it is easier understanding and cooperation with pupils and parents who come from Slavic countries. There are bigger difficulties with pupils who come from Kosovo.

Parents think that younger children are less burdened with knowledge of language. They hang out through game and they enjoy a company of peers regardless the country they come from. More the child is open and sociable, less problems they have with making connections.

One father expressed a feeling that some Slovene children behave different to strangers, they look down on them. He also admits that his child is introverted, that is why the father has a feeling that classmates sometimes ignore him.

One of the parents exposed that some Slovene parents hardly accept strangers. He suggests more informal meetings between parents, for example workshops, creative tea parties. Also the teachers need such meetings with foreign parents so they can learn foreign children habits, customs. So they can more easy forward gained knowledge to other pupils.

The teachers agreed that before arrival of a foreign pupil it is key to prepare a class on arrival of a new classmate and they do help newly arrived students to feel more accepted. How much – it depends on teacher itself as there are no special mandatory proces nor guidelines. A teacher should make pupils aware of helping a foreign pupil and that they should not mock at him. They talk about how it would be if they had to move. They think about how is to be in someone elses' shoes. One of the teachers before arrival of a foreigner gathers pupils around her and start to talk in English so they experience a feeling how it is if you don't understand. So they feel distress when they imagine how a foreign child feels.

During a lesson teachers take every opportunity to include discussion about diversity, about accepting. They present different cultures of pupils, their customs, traditional food, children bring different objects from home, make presentations of their countries or books in their language. Pupils like that very much, it makes them proud. Other pupils accept this nice, there is no mocking.

The participants believe that intolerance of an individual originates from a family and education, therefore the teachers suggest to encourage discussion on mutual respect also at parental meetings. It is a problem that not enough parents attend parental meetings, especially not the ones who should listen to this more often.

The parents would want more help when arriving in a new country. They are left to themselves, they face bureaucracy and they need help at this.

The teachers also exposed the importance of communication with parents of foreign pupils. It is easier with parents who originate from Slavic speaking countries and much more difficult with parents coming from Albania. It is commendable that these parents bring an interpreter with them.

One of the teachers warned at external appearance of the school which should be kind as well – to all of us. Why flags only at visit of foreign partners? Why not hang flags of all our pupils? In the school there could be signs in foreign languages, greetings, kind thoughts. Also a child who would read a greeting in his language would feel more welcome.

About including the culture of pupils with migrant background in the school environment to make it more multilingual and multicultural opinions were different. At the subject level school already includes cultural elements within the optional subject ethnology, similar culture is included in lessons of mother tongue (for example storytelling). Teachers include elements of culture in lesson as much as it is possible. Teachers otherwise think that a curriculum can give you width or can limit you. It all depends on individual teacher and his priorities. A teacher is more or less autonomous at his work.

One of the mothers thinks that her task at home is to teach her child their own culture while at school he should learn language and culture of Slovenia.

The meeting was ended with a thought that it would be good to meet after every transnational meeting so that we share experiences of partners from other countries with parents. We were united in thinking that it is right to be critical and that we talk about it, as only in this way we can go over eventual disagreements and differences between us.

The conclusions of this meeting states how the results of the OpenEYE project can help to improve the skills and competences of the target groups, leading to a more effective and smooth integration of these students in the school community and a lifelong learning environment.

5. Conclusion

The implemented online survey shows that teachers who participated in the survey in majority did not receive initial education and training on teaching and support in multilingual and multicultural classes and more than half did not receive additional education and training. Almost all of respondents believe that working in multilingual and multicultural classes requires different approaches. When working in such classes, they find the most important area to be understanding language and communication. Most respondents consider it most important that immigrant pupils acquire skills in the field of Slovene language, communication and getting safely introduced into the hosts country's culture, while the acquisition of digital skills and knowledge of foreign languages is not considered important, although they are among the key competencies for lifelong learning (European Reference Framework).

Research also shows that teachers need very high level of support when it comes to implementing different approaches and methodologies. 89% of them rates support from management of the school as most important factor. Above 61% ranked also that important factor is being trained on relevant learning methodologies, but still it's

among the last reasons. It's to be seen that Slovenian teachers value and need more the support from management, the support from pupils families, available resources and learning material than additional education or training.

A bit more than one third of teachers sometimes and the same percentage often adapt their teaching material to accommodate the multilingual and multicultural composition in their classes. When it comes to obstacles in adapting their teaching materials and methods they rank very high the factors as lack of support and time, too much workload, after these they rank lack of methodologies/ guidelines/ resources and lack of skills.

A little more than half of respondents has experience in using cultural expression in multilingual and multicultural classes. Teachers who are not using cultural expressions in their classes claim the reason is lack of knowledge what cultural expressions are and how to use them (68%). The next question focused on their interest in using cultural expressions in future where 73% of respondents said yes which is a positive perspective.

Respondents who are already using or they already have the experience of use of cultural expressions in their class mostly (more than half of them) use storytelling, music, cultural heritage and literature.

Teachers think that ways of learning through cultural expressions can help newly arrived pupils to encourage them to be active in classes (67%) and to integrate in school community (62%) but not at helping them to express difficult emotions which is one of the aims and means of OpenEye activities also. This result does not match with following answers of the teachers which shows that 61% of teachers think that cultural expressions can help newly arrived pupils in mental well-being – even more than they think it can help them in learning the new language (58%).

14% of teachers think that use of cultural expressions can have a negative impact on teaching/ supporting a multilingual and multicultural class. As following explanations they state the concern of repressed emotions and prejudices, immigrant pupils can involve too much of their culture in thinking and their inclusion in the system, this can give them a blow, the lack of motivation to learn Slovene language as they think we can somehow understand them, negative approach of some immigrant pupils, rejecting of work, inflexibility etc.

Teachers would appreciate most to receive inspirational material (good examples, role models) with 70% and in second place there are basic teaching modules that can easily modify (57%), followed by training course that they can attend in person and support from the management. Teachers less or not at all prefer an online training course nor a mentor programme. On question what else can help them to (better) use cultural expressions in their work as an educator, the respondents named: immigrants should attend first one year of training Slovene language which would make it easier for all, personal general open-minded view, more time for preparation, possibility to work in a smaller group and time for evaluation with a mentor/supervisor.

All in all, from the implemented survey we see that cultural expressions can be very useful in classess with newly arrived pupils who need extra support in many ways and that teachers already use them to some extent, also in very innovative ways, or are open to use them in the future if they are trained how to use them and if they have support, resources and time.

Kindergartens or schools need to be developed as communities of parents, children, educators / teachers. Also in designing intercultural environment we should not be limited to the relationship between pupils and teachers, but should set up the educational process holistically. For the effective integration of an immigrant child into the environment It is crucial to establish a partnership between the education institution staff and family and involve parents in creating a safe space for their child. Parents are first and the most important educators or teachers of their children, but they can also be a resource for educators / teachers with many experiences, practices and skills. Professionals are expected to be open to acquiring new competencies to deal with challenges in establishing a multicultural environment. They need to be aware of the importance of involving parents in education of children. For good cooperation between kindergarten or school and parents of immigrant children it would be necessary to include competencies of communication with adults, that is parents, in education and professional development of professionals, as communication between adults is different from communication between adult and child. Communication with parents should not be limited to providing information, but it must be two-way.

Kindergarten and school are among the most important meeting places for local and immigrant parents. In such way they provide a framework and space for cooperation between the two groups. They can encourage participation of local parents in a supportive environment for immigrant families according to the “parents to parents” principle. Kindergarten or school as meeting spaces can also fulfill their social mission and become a space of mutual enrichment and common growth in intercultural coexistence.

During the implementation of the SIMS program (SIMS - Facing the challenges of intercultural coexistence), the educational institutions show the need for:

- elaborated process of integrating immigrant children along the entire vertical, from kindergarten to high school;
- a professional who, with the support of the professional team, would systematically guide the process of integration of immigrant children, pupils and students;
- systematic orientation of teaching Slovene as a second language;
- prepare an individual action plan for the immigrant child;
- connecting with local stakeholders who can act as a support network in terms of inclusive communities;
- cooperation with employers who employ parents of immigrant children or have immigrant students on work practice;
- professional training of professionals and staff development.