# *OpenEYE Learning Needs Survey

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

Demetris Mylonas & Tony Burner

PRISMA

University of South-Eastern Norway

# * National framework of integrating children of M/R background in primary education

* **Main findings:**

  * Different levels of autonomy in schools:

    * Italy and Slovenia: schools are free to develop their own way of working with pupils with a M/R background

    * Norway: the municipality selects the model to adopt

    * Greece: schools follow a central strategy for integrating pupils with a M/R background to education.

  * Competences in the language of the host country is the main criterion for integrating to the mainstream primary education, in all countries.

  * Organisations of the civil society and public educational / cultural institutions are active in the field, assisting with complementary language courses and psychosocial support.

# * OpenEYE online survey - educators

* 255 respondents on the online survey

# * Open EYE Online Survey Findings
# Profile

* Most participants are teachers in formal primary education (in Italy and Greece most participants are from NGOs and cultural organisations).
* Participants from Norway work in classes with a majority of pupils with M/R background – in other countries, the % is low.

# Open EYE Online Survey Findings
## Experience in multicultural classes

* **Training in managing multicultural classes**
  * The majority of participants in Slovenia, Italy and Greece did not receive initial training on the subject – in Norway, the majority has.
  * The majority in all countries have received little or no subsequent training.
* **Educators agree that working with a multicultural class requires a different approach to the one used for a class of native-only pupils**
* **Most important problems in working with a multicultural class:**
  * Language difficulties of the pupils with a migrant/refugee background
  * Communication problems
* **Learning priorities:**
  * Developing teamwork skills and verbal/non-verbal communication skills.
  * Acquiring competences in the native language of the host country and getting safely introduced into the culture of the host country.

# * Open EYE Online Survey Findings
# Experience in multicultural classes

* **The majority of Greek and Norwegian participants stated they have to adapt their learning material and methods often or very often in multicultural classes – smaller percentages of Slovenian and Italian participants.**

* **Main constraints in adapting their teaching material and methods:**
    * Lack of relevant learning methodologies, guidelines and resources
    * Lack of support from the educational system / school
    * Lack of time

# * Open EYE Online Survey Findings
## Experience in using cultural expressions

* Most participants stated they **have experience in using cultural expressions** in multicultural classes

* Educators who do not have such experience attributed this to:
  * Lack of knowledge of what cultural expressions are and how to use them in a learning environment
  * Lack of time and resources in their organization to use such methods

* In their vast majority they declare a **strong interest** in cultural expressions and think they are **relevant to their work**

# * Open EYE Online Survey Findings
## Experience in using cultural expressions

* The cultural expressions mostly used by participants with pupils of a M/R background are:

    * Art, photography and design (GR, IT)

    * Music (NO, GR, SL)

    * Theater (GR)

    * Storytelling (SL, IT)

    * Cultural heritage (SL, IT)

    * Literature (NO)

    * Films (NO)

# * Open EYE Online Survey Findings
## Potential in using cultural expressions

* **Learning through cultural expressions can help the pupils of M/R background:**
    * Develop their self-esteem,
    * Discover cultural similarities
    * Express difficult emotions,
    * Be more active in class
    * Increase their feeling of happiness and wellbeing
    * Integrate in the school community
    * Making learning a new language easier

# * Open EYE Online Survey Findings
# Potential in using cultural expressions

* **Learning through cultural expressions can help the native pupils:**
  * Develop intercultural awareness
  * Connect with their fellow pupils on a deeper level
  * Discover cultural similarities
  * Increase their motivation to engage in school activities and be active in class

# * Open EYE Online Survey Findings
## Potential in using cultural expressions

* **Cultural expressions in a multicultural class can have negative impacts - importance of a culturally sensitive approach on behalf of the teacher:**

  * Laughing at/making fun of cultural expressions from a foreign country
  * Caution on possible "sensitive" or "taboo" subjects.

# * Open EYE Focus groups with parents

6 focus group meetings with 50 participants in total

# Open EYE Focus Groups Findings
## Integration problems

* Although there is no language barrier or integration issues for the Albanian pupils (they perform well at school), many children deny their Albanian origin and heritage, in an effort to "fit in".

* Although the refugee children learn to read and write, in fact many times they do not know the meaning of words

* Many pupils have no school experience from their countries of origin. There are pupils with illiterate parents, or pupils who have experienced traumas.

* Reports of xenophobic or racist behaviours by parents of native pupils, or by native pupils themselves.

# * Open EYE Focus Groups Findings
## Learning priorities

* Greece: the learning priorities are dictated by the families' plans to settle down to a different EU destination.

    * English is a top priority because it is an internationally spoken language (language learning focus is on the Greek language),

    * Digital skills because it is a useful skillset anywhere nowadays.

* Norway: the first priority is security, making pupils feel safe and creating a good school environment for the pupils, focusing on <u>what they bring</u> rather than on what they lack.

* Slovenia and Italy: Top priority is developing competences in the language of the host country.

# * Open EYE Focus Groups Findings
## Potential

* All parents, teachers and stakeholders recognise a great potential in using cultural expressions:

    * It would help all pupils get in touch with their home heritage and culture
    * History and mythology offer a great opportunity to introduce the pupils to international, universal values
    * Teachers also believe that the parents would be interested in taking part in such a project, although some may not be able to (lack of time).

# Open EYE Focus Groups Findings
## The role of parents and teachers

* Although the participating parents were very positive in contributing to such a school project, by <u>introducing their children to elements of their culture</u>, they worry that their children may be affected by the war and the situation in their home country, and this would have an impact in their cultural expressions.

* Moreover, reaching out to the parents <u>may not prove so easy</u> - it is crucial for the teachers / school to create and maintain a connection with the parents and convince them to work together as a team.

* The participating teachers and school leaders were very positive in implementing an OpenEYE project at school, with guidance from a learning methodology and learning activities to implement it.

*Thank you