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Oliver Holz (Eds.)

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Editorial
Internationalisation and Professionalisation in Teacher Education: Challenges and Perspectives

Susanne Linhofer, Heiko Haas-Vogl & Oliver Holz

Providing quality in Education is goal number four of the United Nations' seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It is described as fundamental in order to create a peaceful and prosperous world. Education provides knowledge and skills to people so that they can lead a healthy life, successfully find a job and are able to develop a tolerant attitude. Lately the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a global education crisis, as many education systems have been seriously affected by it and closing schools has caused devastating consequences. The UN estimates that 147 million children have missed more than half of their on-site classes. Furthermore girls, children with disadvantaged backgrounds, those living in remote areas, children with disabilities and from ethnic minorities have suffered most.

Ensuring free, equitable and quality education is one of the targets described by the United Nations. In order to reach this the UN demands that by 2030 the supply of qualified teachers should increase. According to the UN 83 million teachers were working in classrooms all over the world in 2020 (United Nations, 2022). International cooperation including developing countries is mentioned as another important requirement to meet these goals.

The Erasmus+ programme, the EU-programme in the field of education, training youth and sport also mentions high quality inclusive education to be fundamental for everyone to meaningfully participate in a democratic society. It supports the development of intercultural understanding and empowers people to be successful in the labour market. In an increasing globalised, diverse, digital and mobile society, European citizen need relevant knowledge, skills and competences to face these challenges and transitions. The EU recognizes the key roles of education institutions in this regard (European Commission, 2022).

Internationalisation is a principle anchored in the profile of universities worldwide and an integral part of the service areas of teaching, research, development and consulting. In accordance with the widely accepted definition by Jane Knight "Internationalisation of Higher Education" is understood as an inter-university, goal-oriented and intentional process which integrates international, intercultural and global perspectives, involves all students as well as staff members working at the university and contributes significantly

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to increasing the quality of teaching and research and can thus make a meaningful contribution to society (Knight, 2003).

The Erasmus+ programme has been a thriving engine for the internationalisation of higher education institutions within Europe and increasingly worldwide, as it offers possibilities to cooperate not only with programme countries (EU countries) but with institutions worldwide. The current Erasmus+ programme (2021–2027) attempts to make education systems more inclusive and accessible, greener and digitally fit. The programme pursues therefore three main objectives: Inclusion and Diversity, Digital Erasmus+ and Green Erasmus+. All actions within the Erasmus+ programme focus on ensuring equal opportunities for all participants disregarding age, diverse cultural, social or economic backgrounds. It places an emphasis on including people with fewer opportunities such as those with disabilities, educational difficulties, with a migrant background or living in more remote areas. Digital transformation is another priority to ensure an increased access to high quality digital programmes by supporting the development of digital tools and content as well as offering blended activities and formats. Participants improve their digital competences through a number of initiatives. Digital implementation of the programme, including the European Student Card Initiative is another priority until 2027. And finally, in accordance with the European Green Deal, participants are encouraged to use less-carbon transport as an alternative to flying by funding alternative ways of travelling. Erasmus+ strongly supports the building up of knowledge and understanding of sustainability and climate actions (European Commission, 2021).

There are three main action lines offering possibilities for international cooperation.

Key action 1, being the "flagship" activity line, offers individual mobility for learners and staff. Erasmus+ mobility has become one of the most successful programme parts since it started more than 30 years ago. A total of ten million students, learners, academic and administrative staff, researchers and lecturers are expected to participate in the current programme's mobility activities between 2021 and 2027. By experiencing a study, research or working period abroad participants gain soft skills to become more self-assured, achieve intercultural competences, become more flexible, learn languages, get insights into different learning and working environments and become part of international networks, strengthening their employability and active participation in society. Furthermore, mobility formats have become more flexible for students in higher education ranging from short term blended mobilities to full semesters abroad offering more opportunities also for participants with fewer opportunities, such as people with disabilities, from disadvantaged social backgrounds or first-generation students. This programme line is also open for participants from outside Europe (European Commission, 2021).

Key action 2 is the programme's cooperation activity among organisations and institutions and offers a wide range of possibilities. It supports the development of Partnerships for Cooperation, Partnerships for Excellence including Teacher Academies and Europe-

an Universities, Partnerships for Innovation, Capacity Building Projects and Non-Profit European sports events. Jean Monnet Actions offer possibilities of cooperation beyond universities and are open to schools and other educational institutions focusing on fostering knowledge and awareness of the European Union. Key action 2 targets to result in the development and transfer of innovative practices amongst players throughout Europe and attempts to have a positive direct or indirect impact of persons involved such as competence in foreign languages, digital competence, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, an understanding and open attitude towards cultural, gender, social, linguistic or ethnical diversity increasing their opportunities for professional development. Key action 2 intends to increase the quality of education and training by combining enforced excellence and attractiveness with increased opportunities for all.

Key Action 3 Support of Policy Development and Cooperation aims to modernise and reform education, training youth and sports and is implemented directly by the European Commission through specific calls managed by the European Education and Culture executive Agency (European Commission, 2022).

The University College of Teacher Education of Styria advocates and supports the initiatives of the European Commission to build a European Education Area and the associated vision of a Europe in which stays abroad for study and learning purposes are becoming the norm (European Commission, 2023). Furthermore, higher education qualifications shall be recognised throughout the whole EU. Speaking two languages in addition to the mother tongue should be common. In this vision of Europe everyone has access to quality education, irrespective of their social and economic background, and people are fully aware of their European identity, Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity.

According to the National Mobility and Internationalisation Strategy for Higher Education 2020–2030 (Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, 2020) international mobility leads to the acquisition of key competences that enable the young generation to think in a globally networked and innovative way. These are of crucial importance in order to be able to survive in European and global competition. The umbrella question formulated in the above-mentioned strategy "How can we achieve quality-assured international and intercultural competences for all?" functions as an important guiding question of the internationalisation efforts at the University of Teacher Education Styria. The need for internationally and interculturally competent teachers is increasing due to increased linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom, growing Euroscepticism and increasing globalisation of society. In addition, a change of perspective during a stay abroad leads to a change in attitude towards the openness of the above-mentioned diversity. Increasing the percentage of trainee teachers who have experienced mobility as part of their education is stated as an important goal. This should include future teachers of all subjects, not just those studying foreign languages.

Furthermore, teachers are central multipliers which was also stated in the Yerevan Communique in 2015 (European Higher Education Area (EHEA), 2015). This communiqué was adopted by 47 ministries of education, also by Austria stating that there is a strong wish to promote the mobility of teacher education students according to their important role in educating future generations of European citizens.

As described above, Erasmus+, as European mobility and education programme, has become a cornerstone of the internationalisation of European higher education over the last three decades. Networking and dissemination of results and products should ensure the sustainability of international cooperation.

Four contributions in this volume describe Erasmus+ projects, their aims, benefits and challenges as well as their impact. There is a strong focus on diversity, inclusive education and professional development.

Edvina Bešić and *Douglas C. McKnight* elaborate on the benefits and challenges of a School-University Partnerships (SUP) within the Scope of an Erasmus+ Project. Their project aims to develop effective strategies for improving classroom practice to include all children in lessons, especially those who are perceived as "hard to reach." A school-university partnership is implemented by universities from Austria, Denmark, England, Portugal and Spain supporting primary schools where teams of teachers work together with pupils by applying the Inclusive Teaching approach of teacher development. These schools act as facilitators to form networks with other schools.

Mihaela Brumen and *Erika Hvala* describe a qualitative study exploring how pre-school children, involved in the Erasmus+ project, perceive and cope with children from other countries by virtual interaction and communication via a platform. Their findings indicate that pre-school children are capable to develop intercultural awareness and positive social perceptions. The results enhance the implementation of virtual contacts through online platforms in early childhood education to contribute to better social interaction and understanding between different nations.

Monika Gigerl, Elisabeth Herunter and *Andrea Holzinger* present the results of an empirical study conducted as part of an international research project, the Erasmus+ project INARTdis. Their main research question is: What does a comprehensive and inclusive artistic education look like from the perspective of teachers and stakeholders (Sanahuja Gavaldà, 2019)? They elaborate on opportunities and barriers to social inclusion in the arts from the perspectives of teachers and museum staff.

Andrea Holzinger, Ursula Komposch, Gonda Pickl and *Martin Hochegger* established the Erasmus+ project cooperation "Education for children with Albinism in Tanzania" between the University College of Teacher Education Styria and the University of Moshi in Tanzania. Their project aims to develop a global understanding of inclusion by interna-

tional cooperation on various levels. The article elaborates on the situation of people with Albinism in Tanzania. Another important target of the project is to support professionalisation of teachers working in inclusive settings.

Cooperation and research in international teams as an integral part of the university in the 21st century are the foci of the article written by *Štefan Chudý, Jitka Plischke, Iva Koribská* and *Danping Peng.* Their article describes how international teams of lecturers and researchers work together and adapt to each other in an international context. In a survey the activities and phases of the collaboration are reflected with an emphasis on the sustainability of the international team and its activities.

Trinidad Hernández Recabarren and *Oliver Holz* present the results of research on inclusion, diversity and homosexuality, carried out in different European projects. They analyze students' and teachers' perspectives on LGBT topics using data from 2021 gathered through questionnaires issued in eight European countries. The contribution differs from earlier literature by including the effect of parental influences on students' perspectives, as well as by analyzing issues related to transgender individuals.

Vera Spangler and *Thilde Juul-Wiese* set their focus on geographical imaginaries of international student teachers influencing their choice of destination when studying or working abroad. Two sets of data combining incoming and outgoing student mobility to and from Denmark are compared and through the use of a mapping method student teachers' geographical imaginaries, enclosing their preferences and perceptions of different places are explored. They include a critical reflection on how internationalisation in higher education (re-)produces unequal, historically shaped perceptions and an uneven spread of mobilised knowledge.

Describing the process of "becoming" a feminist from a Polish perspective is described in the article of *Justyna Ratkowska-Pasikowska.* The analysis of women's auto narrations delivers answers to the question whether the process of "becoming" a feminist is primarily determined by the environment and through strong relations with the others.

Herbert Zoglowek takes a look back in history and draws the attention to the tradition of children's summer camps and discusses their possible significance for humanistic or general "bildung" and today's demands on education in an increasing globalised, digital and mobile society. He suggests that summer camps as places of learning outside school have received little academic attention so far. This gap will be addressed by interviewing former participants in Soviet and Russian summer camps regarding their experiences and 'bildung moments'.

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School-University Partnerships within the Scope of an Erasmus+ Project: Benefits and Challenges

Edvina Bešić[1] *& Douglas C. McKnight*[2]

Abstract

Our society is facing difficult challenges, including the increasing adoption of digital technologies throughout all aspects of daily life. In this rapidly changing context, moving teacher education away from its traditional location solely at the university to a more collaborative effort between schools and universities is crucial. One way of accomplishing this is through "School-University Partnerships" (SUPs).

The Erasmus+ project "Reaching the 'Hard to Reach': Inclusive Responses to Diversity through Child-Teacher Dialogue" (ReHaRe) established this kind of partnership during its three-year duration. The project aimed to develop effective strategies for improving classroom practice to include all children in lessons, particularly those who are perceived as "hard to reach." In order to achieve this goal, the Inclusive Inquiry, an approach to teacher development that involves trios of teachers cooperating with each other and their students to find ways of making their lessons inclusive, was used in primary schools. The project was implemented through a three-cycle action research process in five European Union countries (Austria, Denmark, England, Portugal, and Spain).

In each country, a local university closely collaborated with one primary school that took on the role of the 'hub'. These hub schools acted as the local facilitators for the project. Each created a local network of five additional primary schools along the project. This strategy was chosen to transcend traditional research/practice barriers, which should facilitate the design of effective, sustainable, and scalable educational interventions.

This chapter describes the ReHaRe project with a specific focus on the perceived benefits and challenges that emerged while creating a SUP and a school network within the scope of an Erasmus+ project in Austria.

Keywords

school-university partnerships, inclusive education, professional development, teacher education

1 Institute for Secondary Teacher Education, University College of Teacher Education Styria, Graz, Austria

2 Independent researcher, Graz, Austria

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1 Introduction

Our society is facing difficult challenges, including the continual impact of globalization on traditional economic structures and the increasing adoption of digital technologies throughout most aspects of life. The university, as an institution designed to serve the public good, can play a critical role in overcoming these challenges and must "organize its resources for increased responsiveness to, and engagement with, society's core challenges in the century ahead" (Wegner, 2008, p. 1). This connection between twenty-first-century dilemmas and the university's role in helping respond to them is perhaps nowhere more pronounced than in the field of education. Whether due to more diverse student bodies, quickly evolving technologies, or the interruption of education through health crises, teachers must be able to respond to a range of new challenges in order to be effective in their classrooms (Kennedy & Heineke, 2014, p. 226; OECD, 2021).

In this rapidly changing context, moving teacher education away from its traditional location solely at the university to a more collaborative and career-long effort between schools and universities is crucial (Burns et al., 2016, p. 92). One way of accomplishing this is through "School-University Partnerships" (SUPs). Broadly speaking, these are partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools with the "aim of facilitating teacher professional development as a means of promoting student achievement" (Bartholomew & Sandholtz, 2009, p. 163).

Practitioners and governments from around the world have increasingly advocated for the use of these SUPs, including in the United States (e.g., Carroll et al., 2001), the United Kingdom (e.g., Burns et al., 2016), Hong Kong (e.g., NG & Chan, 2012), and Norway (e.g., Smith, 2016). Scholars have noted the broad benefits of SUPs. Some point specifically to the benefits for the university partners, such as "increased relevance of educational research" in the school context (NG & Chan, 2012, p. 38). Others see wide-ranging benefits for the school partners, including increased professional development and improved teaching quality (Maheady et al., 2016, p. 34). Specifically, in the field of inclusive education, scholars stress that through SUPs, teachers are introduced to new and different teaching practices, challenged to reflect on their views of specific student groups (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013, p. 23), and can leverage outside resources and expertise (Ainscow, 2020, pp. 12, 14). According to Waitoller and Artiles (2013, p. 23), SUPs are one of the most promising approaches to developing school capacity in the field of inclusive education.

Although the benefits to SUPs are clear – and implementing them has been a priority of the European Council for almost a decade (Council of the European Union, 2014/C 183/05) – little research has been conducted analyzing the nature of these partnerships in the European context (Pesti et al., 2020, p. 24) and within the scope of Erasmus+ projects. To help close this lacuna in the field, our chapter describes the benefits and challeng-

es of one such recently concluded partnership. This partnership was established within an Erasmus+ project of the "Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices" key action and the "Strategic Partnerships for School Education" action type, both of which aim to improve learning experiences and share innovative practices.

2 The Project

"Reaching the 'Hard to Reach'" (ReHaRe) was a three-year Erasmus+ project (2017–2020). The project was implemented in five European Union countries (Austria, Denmark, England, Portugal, and Spain). The central purpose of the project was to develop effective strategies for including all children in lessons, particularly those who might be perceived as "hard to reach," such as migrants, refugees, students with disabilities, and others who might be marginalized for a multitude of other reasons.

Following the "umbrella model" to SUPs (Handler & Ravid, 2001), ReHaRe had several project teams collaborating within a set framework, with the University of Southampton acting as the facilitator of the project. Members of the project included university-based researchers and school-based teachers. ReHaRe involved active collaboration and dialogue between teachers, students, and colleagues from both schools and universities. In each country, a local university closely collaborated with one primary school that took on the role of the "hub" for that country. The hub schools were equal partners within the project, sharing responsibilities for completing the necessary tasks and achieving the intended outcomes. For their work, they had an allocated budget within the project.

Chosen because of their diverse student bodies, these hubs acted as local facilitators for the project and created a local network of five additional primary schools. This network was important, as research suggests that collaboration between schools can build the capacity of individual schools to respond better to student diversity (Ainscow, 2020). Throughout the project, a three-cycle collaborative action research approach was used to transcend the oft-observed "theory/practice" divide and design an effective, sustainable educational intervention.

During the first cycle of the project, the university researchers worked closely with the school principal and a teacher trio from the hub school in piloting and revising the "Inclusive Inquiry" (Messiou & Ainscow, 2020). The Inclusive Inquiry is a research-based approach that helps teachers develop inclusive responses to diversity by considering their students' perspectives on various issues. It is based on the lesson study (Lewis et al., 2006), in which teachers work in trios to design a lesson (known as "research lessons"), teach it while being observed, and then revise it in the light of colleagues' and students' feedback. What is distinctive about the approach is the way it considers students' views in designing and revising lessons. To effectively participate in this project, students were trained by their teachers to become "student researchers." In this role, they acquired a basic un-

derstanding of important research terms and methods that were then used to observe, collect, and analyze their fellow classmates' opinions after each lesson with the goal of assisting the process of lesson planning.

During the second cycle, the hubs actively promoted the Inclusive Inquiry in a network of primary schools in their area. The hubs facilitated the expansion of the project within these networks, each of which had six participating primary schools. The development of these school networks occurred in specific contexts that are important to mention. England and Portugal, for instance, have a history of school-to-school collaboration while school isolation is the norm in Austria, Denmark, and Spain. In the former pair of countries, the project networks were developed within existing school clusters, which made the network easier to sustain. In the latter set, since the networks were perceived as a temporary arrangement, these were more difficult to initiate and maintain.

For all five countries, though, the importance of the hub cannot be overstated. With their help as gatekeepers, a total of 30 schools in five countries participated in the project, with one participating teacher trio from each school. Each trio received specific training on the Inclusive Inquiry, which was organized by the hub with the support of the university researchers. In the final cycle, the Inclusive Inquiry was adopted more widely in the schools, and teachers beyond the original teacher trio used it.

Keeping in mind the value of evaluation for SUPs (Maheady et al., 2016, pp. 35–36), we evaluated the impact of the Inclusive Inquiry with classroom observations of the research lessons, interviews with students and teachers, and questionnaires. These showed that the Inclusive Inquiry had a significant impact on teachers' thinking and practices, students' engagement in class, and the teacher-student relationship. This is in line with the findings of Messiou and Hope (2015), who have shown that considering students' views can help teachers become more sensitive towards their own beliefs, which can lead to a reflection process that initiates changes in their teaching practices.

There were also indications that the project shifted teachers' perspectives on student diversity, giving the project a longer-term impact in the school as well (Messiou, 2019, p. 11). Teachers in some schools stressed, for example, that the Inclusive Inquiry helped develop greater democratic tendencies in their schools due to its engagement with student voices. The dialogue with students and other teachers encouraged experimentation with new methods in lessons, making them more inclusive as well (for more results, see Bešić et al., forthcoming). Below, we describe the school network in Austria in more detail, specifically highlighting the role of the SUP in establishing and maintaining it.

2.1 The school network in Austria

The network consisted of five schools in Graz and one in a suburban area close to it. The hub school's principal suggested the schools and also served as a gatekeeper for the project. All six schools, none of which had collaborated before, have a significant number of students from disadvantaged and/or immigrant backgrounds. The university researchers helped the hub establish the networks at an early stage and sent all participating principals a letter outlining the project, responsibilities, and commitments.

The hub school had one designated teacher coordinating the necessary activities, ensuring that tasks were completed on time and in line with requirements. For the ReHaRe project, this was supposed to be a senior staff member because, as Florian and Beaton (2018, p. 873) note, these are experienced teachers with "practical wisdom" that can be leveraged throughout a project. In Austria, however, this role was taken on by a junior member, which had significant consequences on the successful implementation of the project (which we describe below).

This designated teacher collaborated with two other teachers, a principal, and university staff and led teacher training, which helped prepare the other schools in the network for the project activities. Three teachers from each school attended three training sessions (i.e., interschool in-service training, Andreitz & Müller, 2015). These were three hours long, and each teacher received teacher education credits for attendance from a university. In Austria, since teachers from compulsory schools must complete 15 hours of in-service training outside of class hours (§ 43; 2 SchUG - School Education Act), we chose this approach to motivate them to participate in the project and to compensate them for it.

2.2 Project benefits and challenges

Like most SUPs, significant challenges quickly emerged in ReHaRe. As scholars have noted elsewhere, successful SUPs require major time investments from all partners (Smith, 2016, p. 20; Bartholomew & Sandholtz, 2009, p. 156; Carroll et al., 2001, p. 52). Teachers, particularly those working in under-resourced schools (e.g., Edens & Gilsinan, 2005), often feel the responsibilities connected with a SUP simply add to their workload without consideration for their already stressed schedules. Unsurprisingly, one of the biggest complaints from teachers who participated in RaHaRe was a lack of time for it and the amount of work involved.

The evidence-based research approach conducted by the university researchers also proved to be problematic for the SUP. In most schools, the teacher trio perceived the university researchers as only "transactionally" involved, meaning that they felt the researchers simply came to their classrooms, conducted research, and did not provide feedback or instruction. While this criticism of "transactional partnerships" (Teitel, 2008, p. 76) is fair, it misconstrues the roles of the school and university in the Inclusive Inquiry. As Ainscow

(2020, p. 11) makes clear, it is the dialogue between teachers and their students about how to make lessons more inclusive – an exploration of differences that leads to creative experimentation – that is the central aspect of the Inclusive Inquiry. In effect, the role of the university researchers here was to, first, help teachers implement the project and, second, collect evidence. As Ainscow (2020) has stressed numerous times, this second step is critical to the success of inclusive education and cannot be overlooked.

In addition, overcoming a "behind closed doors mentality" – that is, the "tension that exists between working alongside colleagues [...] [students and university staff] while simultaneously working alone behind a closed door" – was challenging. This is in line with data from the OECD's TALIS study (2019), which showed that Austrian teachers are more likely to favor "simple exchanges" over in-depth forms of professional collaboration. With the Inclusive Inquiry approach, however, teachers are challenged to open their classroom and "rethink their lesson planning and facilitation" (Ainscow, 2020, p. 11). Hence, more collaboration between teachers and students is needed in order to effectively use the Inclusive Inquiry.

Finally, the last significant challenge related to leadership, specifically the way school leadership implemented the project. Effective leadership is critical for the success of a SUP, and individuals with decision-making authority must be involved throughout (Messiou et al., 2016, p. 59; Gardner, 2011, p. 80). In the case of four schools, it quickly became clear that instead of having a "hands-on" approach to the project, principals did not engage with the project after its initial introduction to their school, leaving teachers feeling isolated and having to fulfil the necessary obligations on their own. As noted in other SUP case studies, this style of management can leave "teachers feel[ing] that various reform efforts are always implemented at their expense" (Edens & Gilsinan, 2005, p. 135).

While these challenges to ReHaRe are important to keep in mind, several aspects of the project were also successful and could be replicated in future SUPs. All participants emphasized the need to have supportive principals who deem the project a priority not just for individual teachers, but for the whole school. Particularly in schools operating in "crisis mode" – where a "lack of time, inadequate funding and resources, staff turnover, changing priorities, and competing agendas" is the norm (Carroll et al., 2001, p. 53) – having active, effective principals is crucial to the success of a SUP. Considering that the Inclusive Inquiry requires teachers to observe colleagues' lessons, substitutes are needed, and these can only be organized through effective principal leadership.

In two schools, principals were able to successfully spread the Inclusive Inquiry through their entire school. These principals were highly engaged. In their recent literature review on SUPs in Australia, Green, Tindall-Ford, and Eady (2020) highlight the influence that a few key individuals can have on the outcome of a SUP, which we observed during ReHaRe as well. These principals had "make or break relationship functions" (Gardner, 2011, p. 80) in their schools. They used these to effectively organize the project and ensure

that Inclusive Inquiry had a central place in their school's development plan for the entire year.

Finally, just as Smith (2016, p. 20) observes in her study of SUPs in Norway and Messiou et al. (2016, p. 58) show in an Erasmus+ project, teachers also reiterated that trust and respect were crucial. For the Inclusive Inquiry to work, teachers had to collaborate well and remain patient. This required a learning environment of trust and mutual respect. Moreover, as part of the Inclusive Inquiry, teachers received feedback from their students, which is often a new concept to teachers. It was mentioned that those who managed to stay open to their students' voices and opinions benefited tremendously from them (Messiou, 2019). Here, it should be noted that changing roles in the classroom – that is, teachers perceiving students as partners in lesson planning and not just as passive consumers – is a process and not something that occurs immediately after the adoption of the Inclusive Inquiry. Likewise, establishing a SUP takes time and must be cultivated for it to have a long-lasting impact.

3 Conclusion: A Pathway to Success

From our experience working on the ReHaRe project in Austria, universities looking to start a SUP within the scope of an Erasmus+ funding opportunity should keep the following things in mind to improve the chances of the project being successful.

As explained above, one of the biggest challenges to ReHaRe was the type of relationship cultivated between the university and the schools, particularly between the researchers and the teachers. One way to think about this is through Teitel's "Partnership Continuum" (2008, pp. 76–77). While most partnerships initially aim for what the author calls "transformative partnerships," most get stuck in the "transactional" variety or ones where there is "little or no connection" between partners. These relationships then become "missed opportunities for mutual learning" and "can contribute to blame and distrust, as each sector tries to improve itself independently, and then, especially when accountability for outcomes ratchets up, possibly feel disappointment with its 'partner'" (Teitel, 2008, p. 77).

While collaboration always brings issues of power to the fore, mutual respect and equality between partners can help move partnerships from the latter end of Teitel's continuum to the former. A strategy to achieve this is through "co-construction," where both university-based researchers and school-based stakeholders have a role in creating, implementing, and evaluating project measures. Carroll et al. (2001, pp. 44–45) argue that universities should adopt several principals for this to be effective, including tailoring the project to the unique needs of the socio-cultural demands of the school, learning from the school community, treating school-based teachers as peers, discarding hierarchical ways of thinking, and being patient.

The co-construction of a SUP can help reduce the issues related to the oft-discussed "theory/praxis" divide (Harford & MacRuairc, 2008) in these types of projects. Certainly, project partners initially come to a SUP with different types of knowledge. University researchers arrive with "academic knowledge" while school-based teachers possess their "practitioner" counterpart (Zeichner, 2010). Since these different types of knowledge and institutional cultures often clash in SUPs (e.g., Burton & Greher, 2007), creating an effective "third space" (Bhabha, 1990) in which these sets of discourses and norms can productively interact with each other is crucial. In this hybrid space – not the university and not the school – the boundaries between all project participants can be blurred, producing new ways of learning in the process (Arhar et al., 2013, p. 220). In the two schools where the project went well, a friendly relationship between the principals and teachers and the university staff was established. Meetings, for instance, were organized in outside spaces (e.g., coffee houses), and both forms of knowledge were brought together to find solutions to common problems.

Admittedly, creating this type of environment within a SUP is challenging. It requires a significant change in thinking that moves away from individualized ways of working, teaching, and learning to more collaborative ones (Gardner, 2011, p. 65; Ainscow, 2020). To support this process, it is important to recognize the basic, logistical issues involved. Partners, for example, must agree on roles, responsibilities, scope, and goals before the project gets underway. Likewise, there should be agreement as to where partnership-related meetings and seminars will occur (Burns et al., 2016, p. 88).

Both financial resources and time commitments must be kept in mind as well. While the hub school was indeed provided funds for its participation in ReHaRe, the project did not set aside funds for the other network schools, which might have caused resentment amongst the others involved and a feeling of "what is in it for us" to develop. Although we ensured that teachers received education credits, more was needed. That is why it is crucial that SUPs have ample funding to ensure project partners can participate and are adequately compensated for doing so.

Regarding time, SUPs demand a large amount of it, often outside of or in addition to normal work obligations. For university researchers – who tend to be recognized for traditional research and not for SUP-style contributions to schools – finding motivation and extra time to commit to such projects is difficult to come by, which is why such work should also be rewarded by university departments and/or planned within the project budget. This was an issue in ReHaRe that has also been observed elsewhere (Edens & Gilsinan, 2005, p. 134). Similarly, the university side of the partnership should recognize the effort put in by teachers and school staff by, for example, distributing a newsletter, organizing social luncheons, and even creating a type of participation award for the school. In ReHaRe, we supported two of the schools that remained active in the project for its

entire duration to apply for and receive a prize that is highly regarded in the public-school system in Austria.

Effectively assessing and evaluating the SUP should also be a priority. Using evidence effectively has been shown to be a "stimulus for improvement" within schools (Ainscow, 2016, p. 13). As Maheady et al. (2016, p. 35) clearly state, "educational outcomes for children are more likely to improve if teachers use practices shown empirically to enhance pupil performance." Hence it is necessary to make sure that the involved schools understand the importance of evidence in such projects in order to overcome the feeling that universities are only "transactionally" involved in a project.

Finally, for SUPs to be successful, you also need committed partners from schools from two levels. As the "the lynchpin of the partnership" (Nettleton & Barnett, 2016, p. 27), ReHaRe showed that effective leadership from principals is needed. Likewise, a highly engaged teacher must act as the coordinator between the school-based teachers and university-based researchers. This person can take on the role of what scholars have called the "research champion" within the school (Burn et al., 2021, p. 617), that is, the person who is the main liaison between both worlds of the SUP. To best influence practices in the school, this person should ideally be a more senior teacher who is well respected and known throughout the building. In our case, the junior researcher, although highly engaged and competent, had trouble gaining respect from her colleagues within the school network, which complicated the project's successful implementation.

Of course, there is no magic formula for successful SUPs. In our Erasmus+ project, however, we have learned that if both sides are "open to learning about how they need to change in order to improve their own practices" (Clark, 1988, p. 79), they will recognize the comparative advantage that each side brings to the project. Ideally, "the outputs of each organization become the inputs of the other" (Clark, 1988, p. 49).

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International Social Interaction and Intercultural Perception of Pre-school Children in the Context of Four European Countries

Mihaela Brumen[1] *& Erika Hvala*[2]

Abstract

The paper presents pre-school children's learning about other cultural communities in their classrooms together with opportunities for 'virtual contact' through online platforms. An introduced qualitative study explores how pre-school children, involved in the Erasmus+ project, perceive and cope with children who speak another language and live in other countries. Using semi-structured interviews, 136 children (5–6 years old) from four European countries were interviewed. Participating children would invite a friend home who speaks a foreign language, would invite them to a birthday party, accept their invitation to a party, lend them a toy, or would be sad at anyone making fun of them. The results indicate that 5–6-year-olds reflect a fairly high degree of intercultural awareness and positive social perceptions. The children, regardless of the country, expressed their concern about not understanding the language or coming from a faraway country more often than any negative characteristics. Furthermore, the findings indicate that friendship relations have been beginning to develop between children in different countries due to the joint Erasmus+ activities. The findings should enhance 'virtual contacts' through online platforms in early childhood education and thus contribute to better social interaction and understanding between and among countries.

Keywords

pre-school children's perception, multilingual and intercultural interaction, Erasmus+ project

1 Department of Elementary Education, University of Maribor, Faculty of Education, Slovenia

2 Prežihov Voranc Bistrica Primary School, Kindergarten Unit Bistrica, Slovenia

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1 Introduction

The importance of intercultural education, enhancing social cohesion and interaction in a pluralist society, and developing human and social capital, through internationalisation at the national/sector/institutional levels of education (Knight, 2004), is becoming acknowledged as a basis for high quality learning, starting at pre-school.

Sikorskaya (2017), in her report on *Intercultural education policies across Europe as responses to cultural diversity* (2006–2016), points out that schools are the central place to nurture social skills and abilities in order to live together within a cultural diversity. Studies (Mistry et al., 2004; Reid & Lynn Kagan, 2015) show the positive impact of early childhood education and care on children's development (language, social and cognitive skills), especially for children at risk (e.g. lower socioeconomic status, disadvantaged groups). Considering this, McGuirk and Kehoe (2013, p. 12) point out that children develop moral principles of fairness and equality from an early age, while they also develop, even as young as 3 years of age, implicit and explicit prejudice toward others from different social groups (Keenan et al., 2016). Keenan, Connolly and Stevenson (2016) suggest that children who exclude others based on prejudicial views are more likely to become adults with similar embedded ideologies based on those biases and unfair stereotypes acquired during childhood. The potential negative impacts of children being a victim/target of prejudice and discrimination include low academic achievement, anxiety, decreased motivation to interact with peers, social exclusion, and low self-esteem (McGuirk & Kehoe, 2013, p. 14).

Therefore, programmes and initiatives that address positive attitudes to promote diversity and understanding have an appropriate place in the area of pre-schools and community activities to equip children with the knowledge and skills that will enable them to operate effectively within a globalised and culturally diverse world. They should provide them with the opportunity to learn about other cultural communities in their classrooms, together with opportunities for 'virtual contact' through online platforms (as suggested in the Erasmus+ project described below).

Sikorskaya (2017) adds that the scope of intercultural competences is much wider than formal education. Intercultural education should not be limited to schools and curricula. It should also concern all society (e.g. family, local community, media). This is manifested through the production of joint communications, guidelines and frameworks (e.g. *Education policies to foster tolerance in children/and young people in the EU,* 2016).

Foreign language education research has progressively shifted its focus to the intercultural aspects of learning (Alonso Belmonte & Fernández Agüero, 2015). As a result, an increased amount of research was published in the field, focusing mostly on secondary and higher education (Byram & Phipps, 2005); a great number of projects were launched

with the focus on intercultural teaching and learning (Lázár, 2015), and the practice of internationalisation in education was initiated (Doiz et al., 2013).

A review of literature shows that there is a lack of research about intercultural competence and education in the realm of foreign language learning and internationalisation in early childhood education. A few papers that do exist (Adriany, 2017; Róg, 2015; White, 2011) focus mainly on the inclusion of intercultural education in the early childhood national curricula, gender justice or programmes for teaching English as a foreign language in kindergartens. The present study should offer a new insight into the international, social interaction, foreign language and intercultural education of pre-school children and their educators, and may help shape 'virtual contact' societies and prepare very young learners for functioning in diverse conditions.

2 The Erasmus+ project

The European Commission supports language education and intercultural understanding through programmes such as Erasmus+, also in the pre-school setting. A two-year Erasmus+ project entitled *Developing Social Competences of Children with Early Childhood Language Learning* (No. 2017-1-SI01-KA219-035506_4) included pre-school institutions from Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy, and Slovenia. Its main objective was to promote multiculturalism, diversity, tolerance and acceptance with exposure to foreign languages and early childhood language learning.

The project enhanced the development of social skills and language interaction of pre-school children in an indirect way with their peers from the mentioned EU countries. In this way, children faced a linguistically, culturally, and geographically diverse world and were provided with the scaffolding for language learning at higher levels.

Pre-school institutions participated in the project on several levels – country coordinators (using various electronic media, like e-Twinning, Skype video conferences, Facebook, and exchanging e-mails), foreign language teachers, early childhood educators, and children in the kindergartens involved. The e-Twinning environment, in the form of an online platform, allowed safe publishing of all the materials, photographs, and videos. Early childhood educators jointly planned their work, shared experiences, and exchanged good teaching practices. Cooperation was determined with monthly timesheets. One of the Italian early childhood educators stated at one of the interviews at the common meetings in Slovenia (see also Brumen & Hvala, 2018): *"Team teaching helps me in searching and finding new pedagogical methods in pre-school. I constantly reflect on my work. We use new resources, introduce innovations in our planning and lessons are based on the exchange of experience with other educators from the involved European countries."*

The following topics were introduced in the project: the shape, location and national symbols of the four countries, Christmas customs in Europe and in the countries involved, traditional children's stories, fairy tales, songs and food from the participating countries. Some topics were presented in children's English (as a foreign language) lessons, some in everyday kindergarten activities in the language of instruction. English lessons were introduced systematically and spontaneously through everyday pre-school activities, where children learned age-appropriate, simple, frequent English structures (e.g. songs, dances, role play). They were performed by teachers of English. Furthermore, at the video conferences, where children virtually met, saw and heard groups of children from other countries, some basic vocabulary and structures of the language of instruction (e.g. Bulgarian, Italian, Estonian, Slovenian) were introduced (e.g. greetings, numbers, giving thanks), and some activities (e.g. social games, songs, drama performances) in English were presented. It is important that this virtual cooperation was carried out on a concrete level so that each participant could feel the involvement and importance of international cooperation.

Early childhood educators noted that this kind of digital social networking, (foreign) language exposure and multiculturalism improved their pedagogical competences, changed their traditional teaching to a more global, international education, and their reflective thinking made reference to the processes of analysing and making judgments about what had occurred in their teaching.

The Erasmus+ projects' contents were also presented to children's parents and grandparents. At pre-school institutions, events and workshops, traditional customs and characteristics (e.g. songs, dances, puppet performances) from the involved countries were introduced. This kind of inter-generational cooperation increased overall knowledge about the involved countries.

The Erasmus+ project also fostered global sustainability issues and European collaboration, as noticed by one of the Bulgarian early childhood educators: "*This project brings greater social connections of all members in the kindergarten and of other project partners, and consequently, develops a real sense of belonging to Europe. It improves our multicultural understanding, develops an interest of the families about European countries, and brings great European cooperation.*"

The proposed project can be of interest to experts in early educational context. It can help them to build systematic and professional 'virtual' experience, and foster inclusive language and intercultural education in a pre-school setting.

3 Materials and Methods

This paper attempts to broaden our understanding of how preschool-aged children perceive, understand, and cope with children who speak another language and live in other countries, matching the principles of social inclusion, diversity, tolerance and multi-culturalism (European Commission, 2014).

Study questions

This qualitative study set itself the objective of exploring children's knowledge and perception of cultural diversity. The research questions of the present study, where the pre-school children were interviewed, were:

1. Do the pre-school children express a willingness to socialise with children speaking another language and living in another country?

2. What is the pre-school children's attitude to people who come from other countries?

The findings should contribute to 'internationalisation' in early childhood education and enhance 'virtual contacts' through online platforms, and thus contribute to better social interaction, understanding and appreciation between countries, cultures and nations.

Participants

The data was collected from a non-random sample of children (total n=136) from public pre-school institutions from Bulgaria (n=28), Estonia (n=15), Italy (n=78) and Slovenia (n=15), participating in the Erasmus+ project, aged 5–6. Children from all four countries, enrolled in public pre-schools, came from different socio-economic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The number of children included in the study is dispersed due to the total number of 5–6-year-old children involved in each pre-school institution, in each country. Four pre-school institutions in each country participated in the Erasmus+ project and all of the 5–6-year-olds per pre-school institution were interviewed.

Data Collection Procedure and Instrument

The data was collected via a semi-structured interview for children, constructed around the goal and questions of the study, developed by Brumen, Čagran and Fras-Berro (2014). The original semi-structured interview in the cited study consisted of nine closed and nine open-ended questions. The original study focused on multilingualism and interculturalism among pre-school children in Slovenia. However, for the purpose of this study, only six closed and open-ended questions, pertaining to children's perception of cultural diversity and willingness to socialise with children speaking another language, coming from another country, and belonging to no specific national group, were used.

The authors of this paper did not ask children about specific national groups but were interested in how they perceive an outside group child who speaks another language and comes from other countries in general.

At one of the common Erasmus+ project meetings, the authors met with the pre-school teachers from the four countries, who were involved in the project and to interview the children, and presented the objectives and purpose of the research. The interviewers were trained in advance in how to encourage children to interact, to prevent silence or potential embarrassment of the children, and to remain neutral, not to influence their answers in the data collection stage (for this reason, independent interviewers from the four countries were not involved). Then, the semi-structured interview was sent to the participants in all four countries involved, at the same time.

The pre-school educators interviewed each child who gave their own opinions. The semi-structured interview was used, asking questions which took into consideration the interests and verbalising abilities of the 5 to 6-year-old children. Some pre-school educators interviewed each child in their institution in the "computer" corner where they regularly kept a record of the answers on their computer (Brumen et al., 2014). Computers motivated children crucially. Other pre-school educators acted as journalists with a microphone and camera or scribed a letter to a child's pen-friend. No images of children were used. These data were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Children in the survey associated the children from other countries with their *own personal experiences*, e.g. meeting children in the Erasmus+ project, while on holiday, other children from their kindergarten, home or local playground. Children often project their ideas of proper behaviour onto the political scene, defining an unfamiliar role or describing an unfamiliar person in terms they have learned in their own lives (Hess & Torney, 2006, p. 2).

The authors collated the children's answers from the four countries involved in the project and looked for similarities and differences in what the children had expressed.

Ethical principles were communicated to all participants at the start of the research. The children, in agreement with their parents who had given their written consent, voluntarily participated in the research. All children between 5–6 years that were present the day that the interview took place and that were involved in the Erasmus' project were interviewed. Pre-school educators introduced the themes, kept the discussion focused on those themes, listened and encouraged but did not attempt to influence the children in their answers (Krueger, 1998). The instruments were adapted to the children's needs, abilities, age and culture. By means of a number of short role plays, the children were able to think about their prior experience regarding socialising with children from other national groups and to answer the questions from a trusted pre-school educator. Objectivity, reliability, validity and transparency of the data were considered (Social Research Association, 2003), in line with theory. One should emphasise that the children expressed their opinions completely independently, without any outside suggestions at the point of

the interview. Children's answers were then classified into individual areas or categories. Some children did not provide reasons for their "Yes" or "No" or "I don't know" answers.

The tables below present some illustrative answers received from the children.

Data-Processing Analysis

The authors used frequency distribution (f, f%). Due to a dispersed number of sub-samples (between 15 and 78) the non-parametric test χ^2-test (Chi-Square Tests) and statistical differences between the countries were not used. Answers to closed and open-ended questions were structured so that content-related responses were classified into the same category.

4 Findings

The aim of this study was to examine the preschool-aged children's perception and attitude towards cultural diversity and a willingness to socialise with children who speak another language. The findings reported here refer only to children who participated in the Erasmus+ programme.

Pre-school children's willingness to socialise with children speaking another language and coming from another country

The authors analysed the following questions (see Table 1):

1. Would a child invite another child (who comes from another country and whom they know) who speaks a foreign language to their home?

2. Would a child lend their toy to a child (who comes from another country and whom they know) who speaks a foreign language?

3. Would a child invite a child (who comes from another country and whom they know), who speaks a foreign language to their birthday party?

4. Would a child go to the birthday party of a child (who comes from another country and whom they know) who speaks a foreign language?

5. Would they feel sad if other kids made fun of a child who speaks a foreign language?

The samples in the four countries involved in the Erasmus+ project are as noted rather small and dispersed. This limits the use of proportions in results interpretation. The numbers and percentages of the sample are presented in Table 1. However, its description is integrated in the results text and reflects the pre-school children's voices regarding these issues.

Table 1: Number (f) and percentage (f%) of children in the indicators of willingness to socialise, with regard to the country participating in the Erasmus+ project

Indicator	Countries																							
	SLO						IT						BG						EST					
	Yes		No		I don't know		Yes		No		I don't know		Yes		No		I don't know		Yes		No		I don't know	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Q1 – Invitation home	13	86,6	1	6,7	1	6,7	65	83,3	12	15,4	1	1,3	25	89,3	2	7,1	1	3,6	15	100	0	0	0	0
Q 2 – Lending a toy	13	86,6	2	13,4	0	0	39	50	22	28,2	17	21,8	24	85,7	3	10,7	1	3,6	15	100	0	0	0	0
Q 3 – Invitation to a birthday party	13	86,6	2	13,4	0	0	57	73,1	19	24,3	2	2,6	25	89,3	2	7,1	1	3,6	15	100	0	0	0	0
Q 4 – Acceptance of invitation to a party	13	86,6	2	13,4	0	0	54	69,6	24	30,8	0	0	24	85,7	3	10,7	1	3,6	15	100	0	0	0	0
Q 5 – Sadness in making fun	11	73,3	4	26,7	0	0	69	88,5	6	7,7	3	3,8	28	100	0	0	0	0	14	93,3	1	6,7	0	0

Irrespective of the country involved in the Erasmus+ project, participating children in all four countries would invite a friend home who speaks a foreign language, would invite them to a birthday party, accept their invitation to a party, lend them a toy, or would be sad at anyone making fun of them (Table 1). Five-tosix-year-olds, therefore, reflect a fairly high degree of willingness to socialise with children who speak a foreign language.

The results show that the level of preparedness to socialise with a child who speaks a foreign language (FL) and comes from another country, is higher in Estonian and Bulgarian children. They answered all five questions most frequently with "Yes". They would invite the child who speaks an FL to their home and accept his invitation to a party more often. They would lend them their toy and sympathise with them in the event of teasing. Slovenian children most frequently answered "yes" to the first four questions, except for the last one. Italian children reflect a positive perception to socialise with children who speak a foreign language in all five questions. However, they are more reserved to a child who speaks another language. They were the most frequent to answer with a "no" or "I don't know".

Some children did not provide reasons for their "Yes" or "No" or "I don't know" answers. Some selective answers from children who did are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

The children in all four countries stated that they would invite a child home or lend them a toy (see Table 2) because of friendship (*e.g. I would invite the children from Slovenia, Bulgaria, Estonia and also from Portugal and Spain*), and, if it is connected with playful activities (*e.g. Yes, so we can play together; I will show him my room, lend toys, books and we will play together*). Some of them would invite this child to introduce their family to them (*Yes, we'd like to invite them and introduce to them my cousins and relatives*), to get to know their country (*Yes, because I would like to see their country*), or to get to know this individual (*Yes, to get to know each other better*). Some children stated that they would invite a child home or lend them a toy but expressed their concern about their parent's permission (*Yes, but if my mother allows it because you cannot talk to strangers*). Some of them also expressed concern about this person's feelings and emotions (*Yes, but he would be bored and would feel alone*).

Table 2: Children's perception of cultural diversity and their willingness to socialise with a child who speaks another language

Willingness to socialise	**Children's Answers**
Friendship	*I would invite the children from Slovenia, Bulgaria, Estonia and also from Portugal and Spain* (12 children from Italy, 2 from Slovenia); *I have a friend from Italy and I will invite him to my home to play together* (1 child from Bulgaria)
Playful activities	*Yes, so we can play together* (12 children from Italy, 5 from Slovenia, 1 from Bulgaria); *I have a friend from the Czech Republic and we play in the summer* (1 child from Bulgaria); *I will give him a toy but if he returns it to me.* (1 from Bulgaria)
Relatives	*Yes, we'd like to invite them and introduce to them my cousins and relatives* (4 children from Italy)
To get acquaintance	*Yes, to get to know each other better* (1 from Slovenia)
Country	*Yes, because I would like to see their country* (1 from Slovenia)
Parents	*Yes, but if my mother allows it because you cannot talk to strangers* (1 child from Estonia); *Yes, only if my parents would allow me to* (2 from Slovenia)
Empathy	*Yes, but he would be bored and would feel alone* (1 from Italy)
No Willingness to socialise	**Children's Answers**
Not understanding the language	*No, because I don't know his language* (4 children from Italy); *No, because he doesn't speak our language and he doesn't understand us* (1 from Italy)
Coming from a different country	*No, because he is not from our country, and we would not understand his language* (1 from Slovenia).
Parents	*No, because my mom would not allow me to* (1 from Slovenia)
Concern about the toys	*No, because he would make a mess with my toys in a room and he would think it is his birthday and that the birthday presents belong to him* (1 from Slovenia); *No, because the toys are mine* (1 from Bulgaria)

Five-to-six-year-olds, therefore, reflect a lot of positive perceptions, empathy and mutual understanding (*To get to know each other better)* to socialise with children who speak a foreign language. The children's answers coincide with the Proposal for key principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (European Commission, 2014) and the European Commission's proposal for a Council recommendation on High Quality Early Childhood Education and Care System (European Commission, 2018), which includes the role of play, relationships and interactions, respects the beliefs and needs of children and others, values acceptance of cultural identity and language, and strengthens social inclusion and embraces diversity.

However, some children, regardless of the country, were not willing to invite or accept an invitation or lend a toy to children from other countries. The main reasons were not understanding the language (*No, because he doesn't speak our language and he doesn't understand us*), coming from a different country (*No, because he is not from our country*); and the parents (*No, because my mom would not allow me to*). Some children expressed their concern about sharing their belongings (*No, because he might damage my toys; he would make a mess with my toys in my room*).

Some children, regardless of the country, would feel sad if other kids made fun of a child who speaks a FL because of bad behaviour (see Table 3) and express empathy with him (*e.g. I would tell them it is not nice and we would play together)* and offer help *(I will tell them that we have to help him and teach him to talk like us*), some would be sad or angry (*I will be very sad!; I will be angry!; He would also be sad);* and some would even protect this child *(I wouldn't be sad because I would protect him).* However, one child from Slovenia would not feel sad because of not knowing the person (*No, because I don't know him and I don't know his name*).

Table 3: Children's perception of cultural diversity and their feelings about making fun of outgroups

Feelings	**Children's answers**
Express empathy	*I would tell them it is not nice and we would play together* (4 from Slovenia); *I will tell them that we have to help him and teach him to talk like us* (1 from Bulgaria)
Sadness	*I will be very sad!* (2 from Bulgaria) *I will be angry!* (1 from Bulgaria); *He would also be sad* (1 from Italy)
Protect	*I wouldn't be sad because I would protect him* (1 from Estonia)
Not knowing the person	*No, because I don't know him, and I don't know his name (*1 from Slovenia)

The results indicate that the children expressed their positive social understanding, sympathy, feelings and thoughts towards out-group children.

Pre-school Children's Attitude towards People who Come from other Countries

With the purpose of examining how pre-school children perceive a child who speaks another language and comes from another country, the authors asked the children to describe this child. Some children, irrespective of the country, described the child (Table 4) with a positive manner (*good, nice, beautiful, tall, my friend*), used descriptive statements and noticed the language difference (*This child doesn't speak like me, he lives in a different,*

far city; He doesn't understand our language, he has to learn it). Some children even noticed some similarities (*This child is like me, he just comes from another country).*

Table 4: Pre-school children's attitude to people who come from other countries

Children's Description	Children's Answers
Positive manner	*This child is good, a good friend* (2 from Estonia); *This child is my friend and he comes from another country; he is nice, beautiful* (2 from Slovenia), *tall, good, even if he is a stranger he is not different from me; He plays like me and he eats different food* (10 from Italy)
Language	*This child doesn't speak like me, he lives in a different, far city; He doesn't understand our language, he has to learn it* (3 from Italy, 1 from Slovenia)
Similarity	*This child is like me, he just comes from another country* (3 from Bulgaria); *He looks like me and speaks Italian. I would play with him* (1 from Slovenia)

The results may indicate that participating children began to see their peers in other countries as their friends coming from another country. They also indicate that some children are aware of language differences and geographical spaces. Probably because they have been explained by the pre-school educators involved in the Erasmus+ project, and perceive them as similar but distant and from another country.

5 Discussion

This study yielded new insights regarding how preschool-aged children involved in the international, experiential cooperation of four EU countries perceive, understand, and cope with children who speak another language and live in other countries. It seems obvious that the Erasmus+ programme has some positive implications on the children's perception of their peers in other countries. The findings reflect a fairly high degree of positive perceptions, feelings and experiences of the children in terms of children's intercultural perception and willingness to socialise with children who speak another language. This can be reinforced by the observations that friendship relations have been beginning to develop between children in the 4 countries. 5–6-year-old children's responses, in all involved countries, perceived out-group children as positive and displayed positive feelings towards them (*This child is my friend and he comes from another country)*. The results indicate no intolerance among children, only some apprehension (*No, because I don't know him and I don't know his name*). The children, regardless of the country, expressed their concern about not understanding the language or coming from a faraway country more often than any negative characteristics. Although other findings (Aboud & Amato, 2001; Barret, 2007; Brumen et al., 2014; McGuirk & Kehoe, 2013) stated that 4-to-6-year-olds do not always describe and perceive out-group children in positive terms and hold ste-

reotypes of some national and state groups (e.g. *little wicked, not friendly; not clever and dirty because he is black, naughty, boring,* or *foreign*). These results could indicate that this kind of international cooperation, personal encounters and concrete experience through computer-mediated interaction, promoted friendship relations between children in different countries. Through personal contacts (e.g. Skype meetings introducing storytelling performances, songs, games, common "kindergarten sleepover"), without travelling abroad, pre-school educators offered an insight into the heritage, geography, values, attitudes and culture of the target nation to pre-school children, and teachers felt that they had been rewarded with more active, communicative and interested children. With the active involvement of individuals, such as the Erasmus+ project, the children might see the world from another person's perspective (Nelson, 2009), have the benefit of cognitively understanding the diversity of human languages and cultures, identify similarities and differences (Keenan et al., 2016), and develop underlying qualities such as meta-linguistic awareness and intercultural sensitivity, as well as their social, cognitive and affective self/identity (Barrett, 2007; Keenan et al., 2016). Byram (2008, p. 82) supports "experiential learning", where children are immersed in direct social experience, followed by reflection upon it, under the guidance of a (pre-school) educator. In the present study, a child might feel more positive and confident about some countries as a direct consequence of virtual interaction, concrete experience and getting to know a lot about the out-groups.

Different research has suggested that modifying children's intercultural perception can work, but it is not an easy task (Cristol & Gimbert, 2006).

6 Conclusions

Systematic, planned, and cooperative pre-school instruction, in the sense of using international (Erasmus) projects and involving pre-school educators and children through socio-interactional (computer-mediated) learning and teaching, is a unique opportunity to broaden children's minds, enhance their perspective and belief, to gain an insight into different languages and cultures, and to promote friendship relations between children in different countries. Pre-school classrooms as social contexts shape fair intercultural behaviour, understanding, and construct the way of learning languages (Ellis, 2012) through talk, discussions, exchange of views and ideas. Perhaps the most significant contribution of this study to the literature on intercultural education, language learning and internalisation in the pre-school setting is the fact that it is possible to integrate 'virtual contact' authentic intercultural communication into the pre-school context and to lay the groundwork for children's future education towards multilingual and intercultural communication competence in adulthood. By such effective personal interaction through digitally mediated communication (Graham, 2019) with people from other (EU) countries, sharing of contents, collaborative presentations, structured activities/tasks, and relevant feedback, (pre-school) children can try to understand linguistic diversity, differences and

similarities among languages, people and cultures, although there is still a long way to go before acquisition processes and perceptions are fully resolved.

We acknowledge that the sample of our qualitative research was not fully representative because it represents only pre-school institutions and the children involved in the Erasmus+ project, and hence the results reveal trends and not generalisations. However, the study may point to some children's perceptions and understanding of out-groups. Thus, further studies should involve enlarging the sample, examining children's perceptions, beliefs and understanding of other nations and outside groups in different (EU) countries. It should also be noted that potential bias and social desirability challenges in children's answers to their pre-school teachers might influence the results. Clearly, it was better to have familiar actors (children's teachers rather than independent ones) interview such young children. However, the results might express pre-school children's positive perceptions because all actors were involved in the project.

In spite of these limitations, it is hoped that the data provided in this study may help to inform pre-school practitioners about guidelines for sensitising children to different languages and cultures, with direct (international), virtual experiential and interpersonal contacts, in order to develop individual social values, culture and norms already present in children, for their potential ethical behaviour into adulthood.

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Activities of an International Team – an Integral Part of the Modern University of the 21st Century in the Czech Republic

Štefan Chudý, Jitka Plischke, Iva Koribská & Danping Peng[1]

Abstract

The paper reflects the experience of an international team assembled in the Department of Education and Social Studies at the Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic. The team includes both European (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina) and non-European professionals (China, Indonesia). Teaching, project and publishing activities are realised within this team. The paper focuses on creating this international team and adapting individual members to the conditions of the university environment with regard to the specifics of Central Europe (education system, science system). The research team's activities are reflected as the results of a research survey in the given phases of the process with an emphasis on the sustainability of the international team and its activities.

Keywords

International team, intercultural education, academic staff, case study.

1 Institute of Education and Social Studies, Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc, Czech Republic

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1 Introduction

In terms of high employee turnover and technological developments in society with an emphasis on the market economy, Central European society is undergoing changes that are transforming it not only in the field of industry and services but also in the area of university education and personnel policy. The advent of Industry 4.0, the pandemic caused by Covid-19, and generally increasing diversity have pushed intercultural changes even further and streamlined the conditions for education, research, and changes in the university environment in preparing teaching staff. The third role of universities contributes to questions about the nature of the personnel policies of educational institutions focused on the adaptation, adjustment, and mobility of their staff. The mix of these changes affects the motivation or mobility of not only new applicants for positions in the field of university education, the offers to improve the quality of the educational environment and the creation of a stable environment for the personal growth of teaching staff and reflection of their activities.

The social perception of teaching staff in the university environment creates different ideas about relationships. The ambiguities portraying the current situation towards teaching staff and academics and their responsibilities in the field of education, teaching activities, and professional consultations, as well as their own research and other creative activities are perceived by society as myths and legends about a closed group of people. Reflection on the concepts of inter-culture and multi-culture, integration and implementation of international teams within a given region and university environment is also an essential part of this.

2 Defining the issue in the Czech context

The intensity of intercultural interactions in the Czech Republic is undoubtedly on the rise, both due to the increasing number of foreigners residing permanently or long-term in the Czech Republic and the growing number of Czechs who work or study abroad. According to the Czech Statistical Office, the number of permanently or long-term settled citizens in the country was 668,000 as of 30 June 2021, which is approximately 6.7 % of the country's population (in 1989, the figure was around 35,500; Cizinci, 2021a).

Foreigners make up a substantial part of the workforce in the Czech labour market (roughly 15 percent of employed persons in the Czech Republic, which is almost three times as many as ten years ago; in the same period, the number of Czech employees dropped by 63,000). In many sectors, foreigners accounted for a significant part of the workforce before the coronavirus epidemic (agriculture, forestry; accommodation, catering and hospitality; construction). Without their involvement, these industries would most likely not be able to function. Almost one-third of foreign employees in 2019 were Slovaks; nearly

one in four was Ukrainian. Seven percent of foreign workers came from Poland, another seven from Romania, six percent from Bulgaria, three percent from Russia, and two percent from Vietnam. While the number of employees from the EU is steadily increasing, foreigners from non-EU countries tend to respond to economic development – the numbers drop in a crisis and grow during a period of an economic upturn (Cizinci, 2021b; United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration, 2006).

In the environment of universities and other tertiary schools, the number of international students attending full-time programmes in the Czech Republic is also rising. In 2010, there were 7,000 such students, while in 2018, it was just under 45,000. Besides Slovakia, most of these students come from the countries of the former Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, Greece, Spain, and Asian countries (Cizinci, 2021a). During their studies in the Czech Republic, they may encounter various misunderstandings between each other and between students and Czech teachers, as well as in their communication with the administrative and technical-economic staff of the respective institution, in the use of study-related web portals and other information channels.

In the Czech context, people do not distinguish between the terms multiculturalism and interculturalism (or multicultural and intercultural education) in standard communication. But experts in these and related disciplines, including educational sciences, do not see them as synonymous. They attribute different meanings to both terms, and with them correspondingly different goals and the means to achieve them.

After 1989, the term "multikulturní výchova" started appearing in the Czech (or more accurately Czechoslovak) discourse, adapted from the English "multicultural education". Multicultural education focuses mainly on facts, general knowledge, and characteristics linked to the traditions, history, and inner workings of a specific culture or group of people. These are often defined in terms of their difference compared to our own culture, making the "us" and "them" dichotomy more pronounced.

Since the academic year of 2008/2009, multicultural education is mandatory for all pupils in primary and lower secondary education (first to ninth year. It is one of the "cross-sectional" themes defined in the binding document regulating the content of education, the Framework Education Programme for Primary Education. The contents and objectives of cross-sectional themes may be implemented in the related subjects, typically through traditional teaching forms and methods, or quite often through project education; Rámcový vzdělávací program pro základní vzdělávání, 2021).

The concept of Intercultural Education is based on a dialogical process of exchanging knowledge, experience, and values between individuals from different cultures, i. e., their interaction. The starting point is the position We – people. The general aim of intercultural education is to both understand one's cultural roots and to learn about – and eventually understand – other cultures, to respect the growing socio-cultural diversity

in society and to learn solidarity and tolerance (Tykvartová, 2007; Koťátková, 2009). If we achieve a level of reciprocity in which we can understand the other and accept them, there is no need to resort to defensive responses. Therefore, intercultural education needs different methods and forms to achieve its objectives, the most suitable of which seems to be interactive education and learning through experience that can influence individuals' personal and social development. An essential goal is to reduce or suppress the emergence and development of prejudices and stereotypes. These practices have not yet become commonplace in the Czech educational system, and the same applies to subjects that would provide sufficient opportunity for this kind of learning (e. g., drama education, ethical education, personal and social development; loosely based on Koťátková, 2009).

In summary, educational practice is somewhat lagging behind reality and the needs of "everyday life". The general level of open-mindedness in Czech society is extremely complicated and not yet sufficiently addressed by experts. It is, therefore, difficult to assess how appropriate the use of the term is for this specific situation. The term "multicultural education" is more widely used and appears in the curriculum; mainly because it has a long history, there is more literature written on the topic. We see the term "intercultural" as more complex and progressive and lately have seen an effort to spread it more widely in the expert community. Partly because of this ambiguity, we decided to describe for this text a team as "international" in order to reflect the diversity of the nationalities of its members regardless of other key factors, e. g., mother tongue, religion, etc., (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Indonesia).

It is important and necessary to explore the intercultural interactions of cultures, i. e., how cultures mix and influence each other, how members of individual cultures respond to other cultures, how they adapt, etc. Cultural distance may be perceived as a negative aspect of intercultural interaction but also as an opportunity for intercultural learning and personal growth for each individual.

3 From today's situation to the future

In the context of globalisation and building a common international education and research area, the university community in the Czech Republic is based on the basic documents of the EU and state policy. They are subsequently adapted to the needs of the given institution and its focus, with an emphasis on cooperation in the field of research and, currently, also on cooperation in education (double joint programmes, etc.) and on increasing the internationalisation and reputation of the institution. The development of human potential in the university environment is transformed with quantitative changes, an increase in the number of international students in all study programmes and degrees, i. e., bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees, a comprehensive educational offer and a qualitative contribution to their further employment in the Central European area

(e. g., processes of international accreditation in the AACSB system, MBA, MScT, MSA, etc.), interaction and dialogue between cultures, the principle of equal opportunities, labour market sustainability and social responsibility. This whole comprehensive process of change can be described as capacity building of university communities, without distinguishing their primary focus on research activities (research teams, groups, project teams, etc.) or education (hosting, long-term internships, programmes such as Fulbright, etc.). The university community is perceived as a long-term continuous development process involving all stakeholders. This includes ministries, local authorities, non-governmental organisations, experts, community members and others. Capacity building uses human, scientific, technological, organisational, institutional and resource potential in the cultural and international context of otherness. Capacity building of the university community aims at addressing issues related to education and methods of societal development, taking into account the potential limitations and needs of the people concerned in the context of individual, institutional and societal level, and at the level of professional training and further education. The whole process of building takes place on the given levels as follows:

- Individual level – creating conditions that enable individual participants to develop and extend their knowledge and skills. It also calls for creating conditions that enable individuals to engage in "a process of learning and adapting to social, cultural, and technological change".

- Institutional level – assistance to institutions. This should not involve the creation of new institutions, but rather the modernisation of existing institutions and supporting these in shaping sound educational policies, organisational structures, and effective methods of managing and controlling educational, research and management processes.

- Societal level – encouraging the creation of a more interactive "public administration" that learns equally from its actions and from the feedback it receives from society as a whole. Capacity building must be used to develop public administrators responsible for regional policy and development. There is also a growing importance of "opening up" the university to the general public through activities such as the popularisation of science (science days, public lectures, etc.).

The quality of academic staff or an academic team at a specific institution is one of the key factors influencing the quality of its activities, which in the case of faculties of education is the quality of education of future teachers. In order to have or acquire such people, two areas need to be addressed very carefully:

- When selecting a specific employee (team member), take into account not only their professional competence, but also personal characteristics, in particular, interest in and passion for the given position, motivation, loyalty, and commitment, willingness to further educate themselves and work with others;

- When selecting future students in doctoral programmes – who, during or after their studies, often become academic staff themselves – not only pay attention to all the above, but also train them for the requirements of this profession. The Czech environment traditionally emphasises the scientific, research and publication activities of doctoral students, while their professional competences as university teachers are usually not developed in any targeted, systematic and long-term manner. Postgraduate students are thus left to find out which methods work best through imitation, intuition, trial and error, or personal connections to an experienced colleague. If the doctoral student comes from a different environment, i. e., a different educational system, their situation becomes even more difficult (the prestige of the position and the somewhat related position of the teacher and their authority; typical communication style used between students and teachers; forms of student evaluation; independence in conceptual work; approaches to problem-solving; character of relationships with colleagues and other, e. g., administrative matters).

Building and directing a team in terms of individual work with its members is a difficult task for any leader/manager (Peng & Chudý, 2021).

Academic employees are generally unenthusiastic about further education programmes (both one-time events and long-term courses) provided by their institution, linked to their project responsibilities, or externally. Their efforts are focused on fulfilling the requirements for career advancement and substantially less on improving their teaching activities, language competencies, or soft skills. A possible solution seems to be to create functional teams, ideally interdisciplinary within one faculty or university, in which people would naturally share their knowledge and experience and become more engaged in the fulfilment of shared tasks that are seen as meaningful and useful – i. e., where learning is a long-term process of actively shaping one's knowledge, critically thinking about tasks, of informal communication, mutual feedback, etc.; the result is a community of professionals in which even highly specialised experts feel the need to learn with and from others.

In education literature, much of the above is often expressed with the term social climate (or more broadly school climate), which can be measured by standardised or validated instruments.

A newly formed team should certainly be enthusiastic and motivated to perform its tasks, but many pitfalls must be anticipated. If we formulate them as questions that the team should be able to answer satisfactorily, its members will feel a more urgent and obvious "pressure" to focus on them. Here are the questions that we consider important and relevant to our subject:

- What is expected of the team? – what is the goal/purpose of its existence?

- Is this a stable team working together for a long time, or a one-time/single-purpose team?
- Does the team interact (or regularly collaborate) with other teams? Which ones? For what purpose?
- How are the team's working meetings conducted? In-person or online? Who convenes them? How often do meetings take place? Regularly or as needed?
- What is the climate at meetings? Who leads them? How do team members prepare for them?
- What are the communication rules during meetings? Is there any agreement on the language of communication?
- How are misunderstandings or conflicts on the team handled and by whom?
- Are roles on the team clearly defined and fixed? How was the team leader selected?
- Who assigns tasks to the team? Who is responsible for meeting deadlines? Who evaluates task completion?
- How is a completed task presented? How is praise/reward distributed?
- Who is responsible for a failure to complete a task or the low quality of completion (individual, team leader, entire team)?
- How is continuous mutual feedback provided?

4 Case study (life story of the team)

The international team established at the Faculty of Education of UP Olomouc integrates graduates of doctoral study programmes into the structures of the faculty and individual departments. It was created to explore the integration and adaptability of graduates to the working conditions of academics and researchers in the university environment. The main objective of the research investigation is to analyse the current state of the issue, to describe the basic factors of individual processes and to propose measures to improve and streamline the process of leading the junior employees within the Faculty of Education of Palacký University in Olomouc.

The main objective was to carry out in-depth analyses of the state of affairs in the processes in question using sociological and psychological methods used in the field of human resources (from the perspective of human capital management), with a focus on the

adaptation, adjustment, mobility and stability of a junior academic employee in the environment of the above-mentioned faculty of education (Ševčíková, Plischke & Chudý, 2021). Methodologically, it is a mixed design of research, where quantitative design elements (used questionnaire methods – standardised, q-methodology and subsequent q-analysis – q-types, factor analysis) are combined with qualitative indicators (phenomenological analysis, narrative techniques, hermeneutic structure analysis). Data analysis will summarise the situation and help to propose measures to improve the situation. The initial analysis of the qualitative part of the research is the research conducted within the framework of the dissertation titled *The Identity Factor in the Professional Beliefs of Junior Academics* (Kropáč, 2020), which its author Jiří Kropáč, a graduate of the doctoral programme in pedagogy, defended in 2020 at the Faculty of Education of Palacký University in Olomouc.

The sub-objectives point out the possibilities and challenges of the future predictability of the development of specific activities and roles in the institution and the competencies of academic staff, their necessary (re)structuring of the dogmatic perception of changes in different areas of human interest, better profiling of academic staff for roles in the institution, and the elimination of the effects caused by psychological, personal and social changes in society or in the (re)organisation of the given institution internally.

4.1 Study design

We used semi-structured in-depth interviews with the co-researchers to determine their views of group dynamics and partnership during Ph.D. studies. The interview and data analysis process followed the deductive framework approach (Jůvová et al., 2015; Gale et al., 2016). The deductive framework approach collects and analyses data using a pre-defined model, theory or framework, and is not intended to produce generalisable results (Gale et al., 2013). Instead, the deductive framework approach enables researchers to systematically identify meaningful topics/patterns of a specific area of interest (Kropáč, 2020).

We asked sixteen broad questions aimed at determining the co-researchers' perspective on various aspects of group dynamics and team membership in the context of adaptability to the university environment, including questions concerning motivation, challenges, inclusion and interpersonal collaboration. In the interview, co-researchers also evaluated aspects of relationship dynamics and team interactions.

4.2 Co-researchers

The questionnaire part of the dissertation thesis involved seven informants who had started their doctoral studies or had completed their post-graduate studies and professional training programme and became academic staff in the last two years. The sample consisted of the recently appointed academic staff of the Faculty of Education at Palacký

University. The selection was partially deliberate due to the limitation of the length of professional training, normally four years, and the period after graduation of no more than two years. The nominal characteristics necessary for the selection of descriptive data were selected at random, i. e., without any preference for a specific age, study programme, gender, or graduation status.

Table 1: Nominal characteristics of informants

INFORMANT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
COMPLETED PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
AGE (AVERAGE)	>35	>35	>30	<30	<30	<30	>30
PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	NO
FORM OF STUDY	FULL-TIME	FULL-TIME	FULL-TIME	FULL-TIME	FULL-TIME	FULL-TIME	FULL-TIME
GENDER	FE-MALE	MALE	MALE	FE-MALE	FE-MALE	FE-MALE	FE-MALE

4.3 Conclusion of research and future steps

In the conditions of the Palacký University and the Faculty of Education, no similar model and methodology for supporting the professional learning of an academic employee (hereinafter referred to as an academic) in key processes such as situated learning or community learning has been developed, applied and empirically verified. This approach also requires innovation of the management system aimed at building the faculty as a learning organisation, engaging academics and motivating them in favour of the learning faculty, creating the conditions for the organisation to function. Possible barriers are visible in the limited content of institutional documents (accreditation files, etc.) or the specific focus of the faculty. However, by specifying the risks and barriers in question, we arrive at the basic elements and factors necessary to stimulate the levels of management, especially in the personal and organisational structure (active, reflective and critical (re)construction of the knowledge base of the academic, their interpersonal and organisational support from the faculty and the university). Given the above, with an emphasis on the fact that universities and faculties must currently cope with a variety of challenges related to reform and innovation requirements, especially by using their own resources, we consider the idea of supporting professional learning at the faculty to be highly topical.

We plan to address the issue of changing the concept of professional development of an academic, building faculty as learning communities, in three basic areas, especially on the theoretical level, on the level of empirical research, but above all on the level of application

directly to the educational environment of the faculty and in the framework of cooperation of faculties with each other in terms of defined goals:

- Preparation and discussion of strategic objectives for the development of academic staff in terms of promoting professional development – teaching excellence.
- Preparation and discussion of innovations for the development of academic staff in terms of research excellence.
- Preparation of analyses needed to make strategic decisions on issues of adaptation, adjustment, stability and mobility of early career academics.
- Collaboration in the analysis of the situation and creation of innovations of common courses and new DSP accreditations in coordination with the doctoral school of faculty.
- Promoting the quality of DSP students towards excellence in coordination with the doctoral school of the faculty.
- Development of the concept of sharing educational capacities of academic staff within the Bc. and Mgr. SP.
- Regular monitoring and assistance in evaluative aspects of the academic staff's work.
- Regular monitoring and analyses of teaching trends (online, etc.) and follow-up training and continuing education.
- Expanding the offer of "accredited" continuing education programmes based on our recommended methodology designed for the junior academic, discipline guarantor, study programme guarantor (Academic Educational Skills – Teaching Excellence Improvement, education module in cooperation between FE and FMD).
- Implementing education in modules: Academic Educational skills – Teaching Excellence Improvement
- Expanding the offer of "accredited" continuing education programmes based on our recommended methodology designed for the junior academic, discipline guarantor, guarantor of the study programme Academic Research Skills – Research Excellence Improvement in cooperation with doctoral school of faculty.
- Implementing the functional web platform AKADEMIK 21 as a space for the implementation of the proposed changes and as an "incubator" for future changes.
- Primarily to carry out lecturing, research and publishing activities in cooperation with departments and institutes at the FE of the PU and the PU.

- Cooperation in the creation and implementation of a system of practices and their methodological guidance – generally didactic basis.
- Linking the different levels of education in terms of the career growth of academic staff.

Table 2: Application model of academic staff training at the Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc

A-II Characteristics of module learning	
Name of study module	Academic Educational skills – Teaching Excellence Improvement
Type of study module	
Profile of study module	Module of educational skills in Ph.D. studies, lifelong learning
Form of study	Combination
Standard length of study	
Language	Czech, English
Academic title	no
Guarantor of study module	doc. Chudý
Focus on preparation for regulated profession	No
Focus on preparation of security experts in the Czech Republic	No
Approving authority	No
Fields of education and percentage share of individual fields in combined study programme	
It is a teaching education study module containing the following areas divided into some areas and optional lessons: Area 1) Quality Management of Study Programme (creation and implementation of the study program curriculum) Area 2) Quality Management of Study Subject (curriculum development of the study subject) Area 3) Effective Learning (realisation of study subject teaching) Area 4) Psychology of Learning and Instruction	
The aim of the study module	

The module of education of pedagogical (academic) staff will be structured into areas according to the needs of individual groups of academic staff (study programme guarantor, study subject guarantor, academic staff and DSP student in charge of teaching) and individual lessons, which will focus on the selected competence of the academic staff. Lessons can be chosen by academics or combined with each other according to their own individual needs.

Competences of the pedagogical (academic) staff member in charge of activities:
a) the guarantor of the study programme;
b) guarantor of the study subject;
c) the teacher of the study subject;
d) a doctoral student who, within the scope of their studies, implements educational activities within the scope of pedagogical activities.

Profile of the graduate

Competences:

Area 1) Quality Management of Study Programme – (creation and implementation of the study programme curriculum) – intended for guarantors of study programmes:

- Analysis of educational needs (analysis of valid legislation – Government Decree No. 274/2016, No. 275/2016, internal standards for accreditation of general medicine, and dentistry programmes).
- Rules for formulating a graduate profile by defining general and specific learning objectives.
- Determining the organisational structures of the creation and implementation of teaching – creating a curriculum, the effectiveness of organisational forms of teaching.
- Determination of verification of output competencies of teaching graduates (concept of state final exams).
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the study programme.

Area 2) Quality Management of Study Subject – (curriculum development of the study subject) – intended for guarantors of the study subject:

- Rules for formulating teaching goals with regard to general and specific goals of the study programme (graduate profile).
- Organisational forms of teaching – their effectiveness and the possibility of effective use.
- Determining the methods of verifying the output competencies of graduates.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the study subject.

Area 3) Realisation of study subject teaching – intended for all academic staff in charge of teaching activities

- The aim of the teaching unit.
- Presentation skills and use of information technology, effective learning, and virtual learning.
- Evaluation of teaching – the creation of didactic tests, oral examinations, evaluation of practical learning outcomes, and formative evaluation.
- Soft skills.
- Teaching group management.
- Self-reflective techniques in the work of an academic worker.
- Area 4) Psychology of Learning and Instruction – intended for all academic staff in charge of teaching activities:
- Learning process and its specifics and diagnostic possibilities.
- Motivation and its diagnosis.
- Developmental specifics of students and their diagnostics.
- Student with specific needs - diagnostics of needs.
- Self-management.

5 Conclusion

The intercultural environment in an organisation is created by the mutual interaction of employees from different cultural environments working with colleagues with a different mother tongue, religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds, and the corresponding behavioural patterns and communication styles. It is therefore necessary for the organisation's management to create working conditions that will be acceptable for all employees of the organisation. Understandably, not everyone will find it easy to identify with the system in place; there may be conflicts between the values of a particular person and the values set and required by the organisation. In such conflicts, it is important to communicate openly and seek compromises acceptable to both parties (cf. Pejková, 2012, p. 36).

In terms of the benefits of international teams, the first is the unique transfer of corporate culture and know-how from one country to another, another is undoubtedly the expansion of the horizons, knowledge, skills and experience of team members, their exposure to a more diverse and wider range of opinions, higher flexibility and usually also easier employment on the labour market. The participants significantly improve their soft skills and become more open-minded; they see the world in less black-and-white terms and obtain intercultural communication skills, which are crucial for multicultural teams.

Building a team of people from different cultures requires both money and time because it is a long-term process. The reasons include the need for language and cultural training, as it is necessary to work intensively on barriers arising from the personalities of team members and the resulting prejudices and negative attitudes that make communication difficult. It is necessary for members of a working group or team to respect differences (this applies to issues that are treated differently in various cultures – religion and family) and to accept the need to be open to other approaches.

Every institution that aims to build an international team must make the commitment to first carefully select its members and then work with them, systematically and in the long-term, support their education, develop the necessary soft skills (in particular intercultural communication) and organise tasks on the team in order to create a learning organisation. One possible model for implementing this education has been presented to the professional community for discussion in this text.

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INARTdis – Artistic education for all. Fostering social inclusion for all through artistic education, Erasmus+/ EACEA-project

Monika Gigerl, Elisabeth Herunter & Andrea Holzinger[1]

Abstract

The right of people with disabilities to participate in cultural life is ensured by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2007, Art. 30, § 1). Linked with this and going beyond mere passive participation is the right for people with disabilities "to develop and utilise their creative, artistic and intellectual potential" (CRPD, 2007, Art. 30, § 2). Access to cultural institutions should thus be analysed in the context of accessibility, that is, to what extent these can be used by all people without restriction and without outside help (Gerland, 2017, p. 7).

This contribution, "INARTdis – Artistic education for all", presents the results of an empirical survey conducted as part of an international research project. This project describes how artistic institutions can be made accessible to all people. The Erasmus+ project INARTdis explores the research question: What does a comprehensive and inclusive artistic education look like from the perspective of teachers and stakeholders (Sanahuja Gavaldà, 2019)? We report on opportunities and barriers to social inclusion in the arts from the perspectives of teachers and museum staff.

For the analysis of inclusive approaches to arts education, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Pedagogues from inside and outside of schools, as well as individuals from art and cultural institutions, participated in the study. To collect data, questionnaires (n=113), interviews (n=17), and three focus group discussions (n=21) were used. The results report on characteristics of inclusive arts education and identify factors that facilitate and inhibit the implementation of inclusive arts projects.

Keywords

Inclusive arts education, accessibility in museums, participation in art and art education

1 University College of Teacher Education Styria, Institute for Early Childhood and Primary Teacher Education, Graz, Austria

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1 The Arts and inclusion

The right of people with disabilities to participate in cultural life is ensured by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2007, Art. 30, § 1), which Austria ratified in 2008. In order to go beyond merely passive participation, people with disabilities should be able "to develop and utilise their creative, artistic and intellectual potential" (CRPD, 2007, Art. 30, § 2). Both the participatory and the actively creative aspects of cultural participation are thus clearly anchored in and regulated by law.

Art and cultural institutions are important places for educational encounters and informal recreational activities, meaning they are places that must grapple with cultural and self-determined participation. In this context – and against a backdrop of great heterogeneity in terms of affiliation, life situation and developmental conditions – museums and cultural institutions must provide an accessible, fully inclusive and self-determined education (Folta-Schoofs et al., 2017, p. 21).

According to Hinz (2002), for all people to successfully participate in art and cultural institutions, different external and internal aspects must be considered, all of which must be implemented organisationally, methodically and in terms of personnel. There are three essential conditions for success in this regard. First and foremost, barriers to creating general accessibility (both physical and communicative) must be overcome. Second, internal barriers must also be overcome, and a variety of different perceptual possibilities can open up. In this context, presenting information in plain language, ensuring the information is presented through various perception channels, and making it possible to actively engage with the exhibition objects are essential. Finally, a sense of belonging must be created through a broad representation of society's diversity. Showing this heterogeneity in an appreciative manner and having it reflected within the museum is the task – and thus a condition for success – of an inclusive methodology (Hinz, 2002).

Individual differences should also be taken into account without categorising and assigning people to a certain group (Folta-Schoofs et al., 2017, p. 17). The added value of such expanded accessibility to art and culture will be felt and experienced by all museum visitors who will benefit from the possibility of this larger field of experience (Maaß, 2007, p. 22). In this context, accessibility is not only used for structural design features but is also used to characterise the accessibility of information and other design-related areas of life (Auer, 2017, p. 37). Moreover, being able to have an independent experience at the museum – can it be done without assistance or only in special tours? – is important to consider when discussing participation (Gerland, 2017, p. 7).

1.1 Pedagogical processes in the arts as possibilities for inclusion

Art education can make a significant contribution to inclusion by focusing on and recognising the individual potential, resources, and development of learners during artistic, educational processes. These synergies, however, are still being overlooked and underused (Kaiser, 2020, p. 2). If these were considered more closely, art education would have the chance to stimulate the (further) development of individuals' self-motivation and self-competence while also supporting identity development (Kaiser, 2020, p. 3).

Approaches to inclusive art education must remove artistic activity from separating parallel structures that have been present in art education for a long time. "Outsider Art" or "Art brut" refer to such approaches that build on educational inequalities and artistic and aesthetic educational injustice. However, it is precisely there – where the parallel structures of support systems become a barrier to development and learning – that inclusive art education approaches will need emancipatory actions even more (Sindermann, 2018). This difference in the context of inclusive art education should not be seen as a stigmatising feature and basis of separation. Instead, it should be considered a starting point for individual and mutual learning and development (Seitz & Scheidt, 2012; Sonntag & Veber, 2014; cited in Kaiser 2020, p. 2).

Sindermann (2018) – following Engels' (2017, pp. 11–28) description of the challenges facing both artistically productive activities and receptive engagements with art – postulates four principles and requirements for inclusive art didactics, which relate to both the individual and society. The first two principles are focused on the individual: "inclusive art didactics enables subjectively meaningful aesthetic appropriation processes" (Sindermann, 2018), and it "is based on process-oriented art pedagogical diagnostics, reflection, and evaluation of the artistic learning process". Furthermore, inclusive art education's foundation is based on having an attitude that sees the potential of all learners. A focus on the community highlights the added value of learning in a heterogenous group (Sindermann, 2018). This view requires art education to undergo a change in its perspective. Moving away from a solely image-analytical-based focus – where creative skills and deficits are emphasised (Legler, 2009, p. 141, cited by Kaiser, 2020) – this new perspective focuses on artistic potential and each individual's unique perceptions and actions.

1.2 Art education in museums: Participation through active (co-)design

Art education in museums tries to combine the content of art and museum education. This is successful when art pedagogies are used to support the meta-level engagement with a piece of art during its creation. Museum education looks at art through an object, while art education views the "aesthetic object" as a means and possibility of communication (Hofmann, 2016, p. 8). Hofmann (2016, p. 9) uses the term "educational art communication" to describe the pedagogical process in museums. The concepts of art education – usually understood as purely (uni)directional communication – and art reception –

understood as the largely passive and silent viewing of art (work) – do not live up to this process.

2 Research project INARTdis

Below, we present our research project, "INARTdis – artistic education for all". Not only does the project describe how art and museum education can be used for social inclusion, but it is also an example of how this can be done. Ensuring cultural participation makes a significant contribution to improving educational opportunities and the development of identity. INARTdis thus contributes to UN Convention's (CRPD, 2007) implementation goals. The project is an international cooperation between six educational institutions from Austria, Germany, North Macedonia, Portugal and Spain (Sanahuja Gavaldà, 2019).

2.1 Project description

Since the end of 2020, this three-year EACEA project (nr. 621441-EPP-1-2020-1-ES-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN) – which is funded by Erasmus+ – has been led by Dr. Joseph Maria Sanahuja Gavaldà from the Free University of Barcelona (Sanahuja Gavaldà, 2019). This European partnership does not just promote the internationalisation of teaching and research, but it also contributes to the professional development of all groups involved (researchers, teachers, educators, and staff in cultural institutions). The University College of Teacher Education Styria's project team consists of experts from different fields, including inclusion, participation, human rights, and art and culture.

Each project partner cooperates with one or more partner institutions from the field of art and culture. In Graz, this is the Universalmuseum Joanneum, which is led by Angelika Vauti-Scheucher. Since 2016, she has been the head of the "Participation and Inclusion" department at the museum. This department, like the INARTdis project, promotes *inclusion* as a human right to social and cultural participation and sees *participation* as a model with which new approaches to art and culture can be developed in a dialogical process.

In the first joint work phase (January to August 2021) of the project, we surveyed teachers' and museum staff's views on the needs, possibilities and obstacles for the social inclusion of people with disabilities in the field of art and culture. This section focuses on the following research question: *What do teachers and stakeholders understand as a comprehensive, inclusive arts education*? Below, we address how museums could be made more easily accessible for people with disabilities and the perceived challenges of doing this.

2.2 Research methodology, data, and analysis instruments

The analysis of inclusive access to cultural institutions and arts education was conducted in the summer semester of 2021 in the eastern part of Austria with quantitative and qualitative methods in a mixed-method design (Kuckartz, 2014, p. 105). The first group surveyed were teachers from schools and pedagogues from outside of schools, along with employees and managers from the fields of art and culture. A second group – which will participate in the project at a later date – consists of people with disabilities and their caregivers. The instruments used for the first survey were questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. The questionnaire had 62 items: single-choice questions, scaling questions (from 1 = very negative to 10 = very positive), and open-ended questions. The final questionnaire was created after a pre-testing, multi-stage discussion process within the partnership had taken place. The interview guideline followed the same development process. Its final version took the qualitative results of the questionnaire into account.

Due to the pandemic, the surveys were conducted exclusively online. The online survey was sent out via the contact list of the University College and the Universalmuseum Joanneum, and 113 people responded. The majority of those who answered the questionnaire were women (78.35 %), most were between 51 and 60 years old (about 33 %). Most responses (50.4 %) came from employees in the field of arts and culture, followed by those from socio-educational enterprises (21.2 %). 14.2 % came from primary school teachers. The remaining participants were teachers from secondary schools and special schools, as well as those working in assisted living care. 48 people (47.5 %) had experience with inclusion in the arts. Only 18.6 % had completed further training in the field of "inclusion and art". Open-ended answers from questionnaires were mainly analysed descriptively and then categorised.

Interviews and focus group discussions were used in the qualitative survey. The 17 interviews were conducted online by master's students. The three focus group discussions with 21 participants were held as video conferences. During the selection of the interview partners and while creating the focus group discussions, emphasis was placed on the different professional backgrounds and experiences of the interviewees. Seven interviewees were active in school-based inclusion and five were active in inclusion outside the school context. Another five people were interviewed as representatives of the arts and culture sector. The three focus groups had diverse participants. In total, ten people spoke for the school-based field of inclusion, three people for inclusion outside the school context, and eight people for the cultural field. This allowed different professional perspectives to be present in the discussions. 45 % of the qualitative data came from people in the school-based professional field, 21 % from people outside of the school context, and 34 % from people in the field of art and culture.

The first topic of the interview guide centred on the specific characteristics of inclusive art projects, explicitly asking about perceived facilitating factors and barriers to the implementation of inclusive art projects. The guiding question for the focus groups also related to the definition of an inclusive art project ("*What do you understand by an inclusive art project*?"). Conversations were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

In order to create deductive and inductive categories, all conversations were analysed with qualitative content analysis according to Mayring (2014, p. 104) with MAXQDA. The main categories were derived deductively from the interview guidelines. Subcategories were created through inductive analysis. In order to ensure intersubjectivity during the categorisation process, two people (for the most part) were involved in each case and categorised the transcripts independently of each other (Mayring, 2014, p. 108).

3 Results: The concept of inclusive arts education

The results presented below are from questionnaire sections and from interview or focus group data. First, results about the general characteristics of inclusion in arts education are given. Then, results about perceived facilitating factors and barriers to the implementation of inclusive art projects are presented.

3.1 Characteristics of inclusive art projects

From the interviewees' perspective, inclusion means that everyone can participate in social life and education and the needs of all people are taken into account. This means questioning and changing existing systems as well as adapting them to the needs of individuals. Inclusion thus means being able to participate in society, having mutual respect, equal footing in interactions, and the opportunity to experience self-efficacy and accessibility at all levels. A person with a disability must have the same opportunities as a person without a disability. Individuals must be able to shape their own lives and to decide what type of assistance they need.

People with disabilities must also be present in politics and in the media (e. g., as newscasters, in advertising or in social media). This would show that disability is normal. This requires inclusion to be considered a norm from the very beginning, starting in pre-school and school. According to the interviewees, people with disabilities are becoming increasingly visible not only in the economic sector but also outside of it, including in museums. It would be ideal if inclusion, participation and disability were no longer topics to be addressed separately. A museum visit for people with disabilities should be as self-evident as it is for parents with children.

In art, disability should not play a role. The person who created the artwork should be in the foreground, not the disability. People associate Van Gogh and Beethoven, for exam-

ple, with their artwork and not with the disability they had. Art should then be at the forefront of the public inclusion debate as well. The contemporary art world is very open about this. The debate about inclusion challenges the utilitarian principle. It also raises questions about how lives can best be lived in dignity.

Inclusive art projects distinguish themselves as being accessible to all participants. Barrier-free accessibility to cultural institutions must be budgeted for. Educational activities must be multimodal and easily accessible. Everyone should be able to interact with the art in a self-determined and independent way. This is based on a broad concept of inclusion and emphasises the added value of inclusive design for all. Art, more than any other field, allows for absolute equality and equal rights. In this context, professionals work with professionals. Art speaks for itself. It should not matter who created the artwork. Art defines itself and, at the same time, is defined by the observer.

The goal of art is to make the best of people's diversity and create a diverse world from it. It is about including all people in social life, understanding each other, and enhancing mutual exchange and learning. To achieve this, people cannot live segregated from one another. Inclusion thus must start very early in the educational system and in childcare facilities. There is no alternative to inclusion in schools. An inclusive art project is inclusive from its conception to its reception. It is based on active co-creation and co-determination. Anyone who might be interested in the project must have the opportunity to participate in the museum as well. In this sense, art projects have an educational mission for society.

3.2 Characteristics that facilitate inclusive art projects

According to responses from the questionnaire, several aspects can help facilitate the implementation of inclusive art projects. Because multiple responses were given, 193 statements were analysed. These can be found in the diagram below (see figure 1).

49 answers referred to the characteristics of the art project itself. The way the project is implemented determines whether inclusion can reach a satisfactory level. Factors that lead to success include forming small groups, keeping events short, adapting them to the participants, and implementing projects that encourage creativity, free experimentation, and curiosity.

43 responses mentioned the availability of materials and infrastructure, while 24 responses emphasised the importance of having enough people (human resources) available for support. Moreover, a multidisciplinary, motivated team – working in fair working conditions – should be available from the start of an art project onwards. 19 answers indicated that people must be ready to recognise and appreciate diversity. Likewise, 19 other responses highlighted the importance of economic or financial resources.

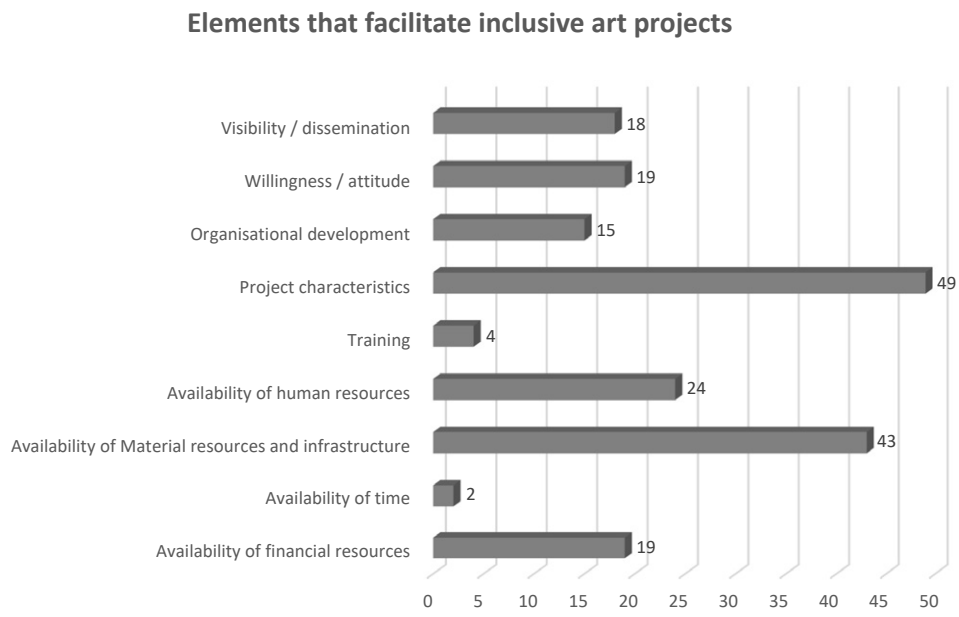

Figure 1: Characteristics that facilitate inclusive art projects (n=193)

The graph also shows that 18 responses referred to the visibility and public dissemination of inclusive art projects. Here, respondents noted that it is necessary to plan how the project will be advertised and how it will be disseminated in (social) media to various target groups. 15 responses mentioned the organisational development of the cultural institution relating to internal and external communication. The remaining answers brought up the importance of preparatory training for the people involved as well as providing sufficient time for projects.

Responding to individual needs is also essential. From the school perspective, school principals' support and parents' acceptance are both important. Labelling, attributing and comparing performance all hinder inclusion. The interviewees described the inclusion of people with disabilities as a win-win situation for all involved. It not only leads to goal-oriented measures for those affected, but it also increases awareness and a deeper understanding of all people's needs.

The museum itself must be the driving force behind including people with disabilities as experts. This includes raising awareness about participation among all who work at the museum – from the cleaning staff and those at the visitor centre to the technical staff, the art educators, and management. In project development, the internal perspective of artists and the needs of the groups for whom a programme is being developed must be coordinated from the outset. Art exhibitions, for example, should not only be designed from an aesthetic point of view. They must also consider the different needs of visitors.

Accessibility (in its spatial sense) and possibilities for adaptation are important to mention here. Cultural participation must be possible for everyone regardless of age, life stage or developmental prerequisites. Curators must make this possible.

The website must also be designed to be accessible. It must contain as much information as possible so that it is clear whether an exhibition is accessible or not. An individual should not have to contact the museum for this information. The museum, as a space for art, can also mediate between the public and the groups that have so far been less visible. For participation to become part of the museum's self-image, this group must first be made visible. The focus here should be on making different needs visible and acknowledging the equal value of each individual's needs. The time needed for this process should be taken into account during the project's design stage.

Everyone can experience what art has to offer if the artwork itself appeals to several different senses. Curators, for example, should clarify from the outset which artworks blind people can touch. Regularly scheduled tours and tours for specific target groups need to operate within the concept of *universal design for all*. Since most people enjoy using several senses, having a multisensory exhibition is beneficial. All visitors benefit from "hands-on" stories. Other key features are being able to adapt structures to various needs: seating in the exhibition rooms, guidance systems, induction loops, differentiated audio guides, display case designs (e. g., art objects visible for wheelchair users, tactile models, panoramic models), text design (e. g., plain language, font size, text-background contrast, lighting for texts, text placed at a legible height for wheelchair users). To do this, museums need a person who focuses on these adaptations and can offer advice on this process. Moreover, museums also need art educators who can lead guided tours for specific target groups and find solutions to individual issues that arise. Ideally, every museum should have an office for inclusion and participation in which people with disabilities could work and bring their perspectives to the foreground, visible to all who visit. The interviewees also mentioned other strategies that have been successful, including tandem tours and target group-specific programmes with specially trained cultural educators or free admission for personal assistants.

In addition, specific technical measures are needed for individual target groups. For people with a cochlear implant, for instance, a fixed or mobile induction system should be standard in museums. This would let deaf people participate in museums. Ideally, what individual target groups need should be articulated by the affected people themselves.

Regarding artistic or creative processes, the interviewees emphasised that everyone could learn and express themselves creatively. Art creates a space to experience oneself as independent, bearing in mind that not everyone has to participate in the same way. Through art, individuals can shape and change their surroundings, which is a basic human need. Beforehand, though, several things need to be considered, including how the end goal can

be achieved or the final product made, which sensory channels need to be addressed and which technical aids need to be used.

Part of every creative process is making mistakes and being able to restart the process. The resource is the creative act itself. It is a constant give and take, where the artist gives something to the audience and gets something in return. Joint products, in particular, have an inclusive effect when each individual can contribute in their own way. During art projects, the motivation to participate is particularly high. Artistic activities promote identity and self-confidence.

From the outset, it is critical the process is designed to be autonomous. All on one's own, it must be possible to sketch, choose the material and the tools to use, and decide how much time is needed for all of it. What is needed is a culture that brings people together who want to experiment with one another and one that creates a space where everyone can be themselves. This requires acceptance, tolerance, openness, appreciation, and a rejection of performance comparisons and evaluation. It is also important to be able to go public with the objects.

When it comes to the goals of inclusive art, according to the participants, a distinction must be made between product-oriented and process-oriented projects ("*participatory art means art that only happens in interaction with the audience*"). While these differ in their focus on the result, they both have the potential to initiate discussion and promote inclusion. Openness to various outcomes is also mentioned in this context. Art(work) can be the result, but it does not have to be. The overarching goal must be to evoke positive emotions in the participants. What each person takes away from an art project is different. "*Art always opens up a broad spectrum [...] and it is always so open that different people can take away very different things*."

To summarise this section, inclusive art projects can and should spark interest in art, and they should also be open to all who wish to participate.

3.3 Perceived barriers to inclusive art projects

This section now presents respondents' opinions regarding aspects that can hinder the development of inclusive art projects. In 288 individual responses to the questionnaire (multiple answers), numerous obstacles were mentioned that prevent art and culture from being fully accessible and participatory for all people.

As can be seen in the graphic below (figure 2), most statements (98) referred to missing infrastructure. Here, participants pointed to architectural barriers (both natural and artificial), limited accessibility and a lack of suitable spaces as issues that can affect the positive development of an art project.

57 statements referred to barriers related to the concept of inclusion and associated prejudices towards it. Various reasons were given, including a lack of awareness regarding how to interact with people with disabilities and limited awareness regarding their needs. They also pointed to fear, prejudice, ignorance, an absence of information, segregation, and a lack of inclusive thinking as factors that can hinder the development of inclusive art projects.

A number of 33 responses alluded to the organisational practices of cultural institutions, citing a lack of prioritisation and ambiguities in management. Particular issues are vague policies, ambiguity in internal and external communication or during project planning, and an inability or unwillingness to make programmes more flexible.

29 responses pointed out that a lack of human resources can also hinder the development of inclusive art projects. In particular, participants emphasised the lack of specialised and trained personnel, both in the field of special education and in the arts.

Additional 27 statements connected inaccessibility to issues of funding (limited investment, lack of economic support), which was partly reflected in the high cost of cultural activities. 16 responses referred to a lack of time also being a problem.

The remaining responses highlighted the lack of material resources, especially inclusive didactic ones. Respondents also noted that social barriers are a relevant limitation (e. g.,

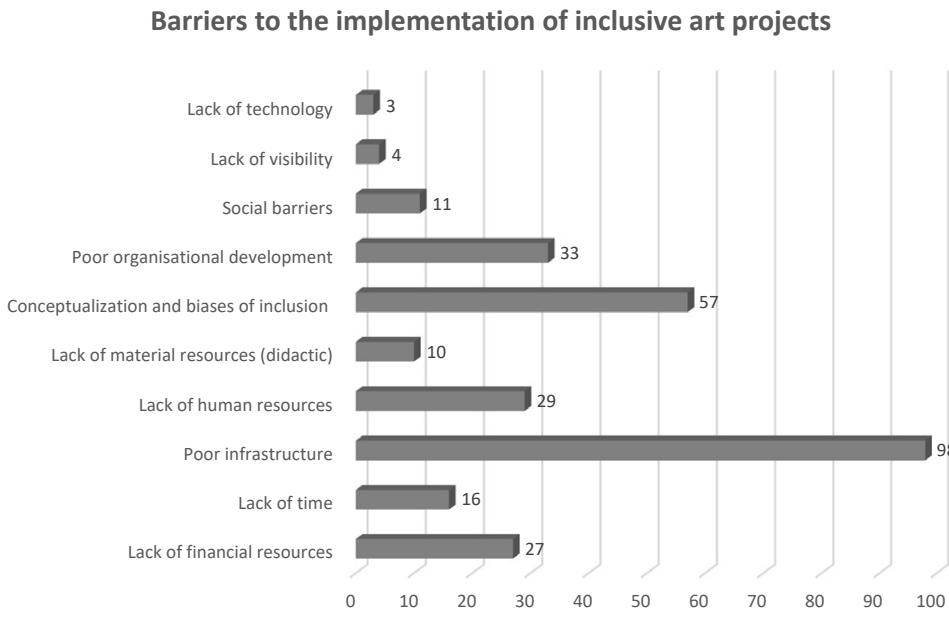

Figure 2: Perceived barriers to inclusive art projects (n=288)

lack of information about benefits, limited interest from the public, closed-off nature of the art world, and difficulty in understanding art).

According to the qualitative analysis of the interviews, those who want to participate should not fail because of barriers. Accessibility is a human right and not a matter of goodwill. In Austria, this has yet to be fully implemented. Museums, even if they are trying to find ways to mitigate barriers, are still spaces that exclude. For accessibility to be achieved, people must be made aware of these barriers. Then, they can help remove them.

Space itself can be a barrier, for example, due to the size of the room or the furniture. According to the interviewees, barriers are mostly spatial in nature. To reduce these barriers, an employee from the visitor centre should go through the space with a wheelchair to point out these issues. In historic buildings, however, it is not always possible to create accessibility spaces due to spatial conditions and/or the requirements of the government.

Furthermore, art itself can be a barrier (e. g., video productions with rapid cuts that can trigger cerebral seizure disorders). Attention needs to be given to these hazards. Therefore, a focus solely on structural accessibility falls short. The language used can also be a barrier to mutual understanding. While the language in the cultural sector tends to be elaborate and complex, written and spoken texts should be easily understandable. Raising awareness here is needed.

Budgetary constraints are also obstacles. In order to break down financial barriers, the museum lobby should be free of charge. The museum must lose the aura of elitism. In addition, in the school context, financial constraints can impede art projects, particularly for children with migrant backgrounds. Time is another barrier: School schedules (classes based on subjects), care and support staff schedules, and different working speeds can all hinder inclusive arts teaching.

3.4 Summary

The mixed-methods approach and the inclusion of different professional groups' perspectives provided a broad, detailed picture of the project's research question of what inclusive arts education is. The twofold focus – on the accessibility of museums for people with disabilities and on the inclusive design of art education programmes – broadens the field.

The results show that the respondents also understand inclusive art education to be a medium for public outreach for inclusion. Other characteristics of inclusive art education include accessibility for all, flexible and adaptable settings, different methodologies, the creative implementation of these with free choice of materials, sufficient time and personnel resources, and possibilities to scaffold (Hinz, 2002). Participants, however, did not mention that in addition to raising awareness in cultural institutions regarding accessibility, further efforts are needed to convince people with disabilities that cultural spaces are open to them. According to Folta-Schoofs et al. (2017, p. 98), people with disabilities,

along with various representative groups and care institutions, must first be convinced these spaces are accessible.

Nevertheless, the interviewees mentioned numerous contributions that art can make to identity development. Art can be used to promote personal and social competences, public recognition of it can increase self-esteem, and it offers a broader range of possibilities for identification (Hinz, 2002). Factors that facilitate inclusive art education include project designs, material resources, suitable infrastructure, and the availability of support personnel and personal assistants. Participants, however, mentioned more barriers to inclusive art education, which range from unsuitable infrastructures and prejudices in cultural institutions to a lack of financial and/or human resources. These findings align with other studies (Folta-Schoofs et al., 2017, p. 19).

3.5 Limitations

By using mixed methods, it was possible to not only look at the frequencies of given answers but, with the qualitative interview data, also to evaluate and extend the initial findings (Kuckartz, 2014, p. 57). The results, however, should not be considered representative. Questionnaire participants were chosen at random, and their biographies do not reflect the demographic reality of their occupations.

Moreover, participants for both the guided interviews and the focus groups were chosen according to their experience and knowledge in the researched field. This resulted in minimal points of disagreement between them. The results are therefore not transferable to other contexts.

The data analyses were carried out in the context of the questions and categories formulated for the overall project, which is a limitation in itself. In addition, the next step in the project – to present the perspectives of people with disabilities and their assistants – has not yet taken place. As of now, these perspectives are absent in this chapter.

3.6 Next steps

The next goal of the project is to analyse access to cultural institutions and artistic education for people with disabilities from their own perspectives. The survey will be conducted from the perspective of people with disabilities and their assistants in accordance with the Strategic Framework for the Implementation of the CRPD (2007). The status of the research project is available at: www.inartdis.eu.

The final phase of the project will focus on designing, implementing and evaluating the training courses in the museums. Training materials for professionals will also be created. The results will be presented to the public in exhibitions, workshops and documentaries. When the project is over, a guide for creating inclusive art and museum spaces will be made available for museums and schools.

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Teachers' and pupils' perspectives on homosexuality and LGBT: A comparative analysis across European countries

Trinidad Hernández Recabarren & Oliver Holz[1]

Abstract

This article aims to analyze students' and teachers' perspectives on LGBT topics using data from 2021 gathered through questionnaires issued in eight European countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, Poland, Hungary, and Greece. This article differs from earlier literature by including the effect of parental influences on students' perspectives, as well as by analyzing issues related to transgender individuals. For this purpose, ordinal linear regression and a mediation analysis are used. Furthermore, by taking data collected in 2017, this paper examines to what extent cross-country differences prevail and how the situation has changed over time. On the one hand, the results for 2021 suggest significant differences between countries, with the Eastern European countries such as Hungary and Poland, tending to be less inclusive and accepting towards LGBT communities than Western European countries, such as Belgium or Germany. The results indicate that parental acceptance plays a significant role in shaping these views. On the other hand, the comparative analysis points out that, although Eastern European countries are currently lagging behind, their attitudes have become more open over time. The latter stands in contrast to many of the Western European nations studied, which are regressing in terms of equal treatment of homosexuals and transgender people.

Keywords

Erasmus, comparative study, homosexuality, pupil level, secondary education, teacher level

1 Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium

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1 Introduction

Last year, the European commission launched the new Erasmus+ programme from 2021 to 2027.

This programme continues with initiatives and actions of the earlier umbrella programmes Socrates and Socrates II (1996–1999 and 2000–2006); Lifelong Learning (2007–2013) and Erasmus+ (2014–2020). In more than 25 years of strategic cooperation, the European Commission funded a lot of projects in the field of education, to make the European dimension in education visible and touchable for all generations, but especially for children and young people across the European continent.

Beside digital transformation, sustainability, the environment and the fight against climate change, participation in democratic life, common values and civic engagement, inclusion became an important pillar in European projects and became one of the priorities of the European Union. "European Union [...] programmes should provide opportunities that are accessible for all. However, some people cannot benefit equally from these opportunities because they face various barriers. Inclusion of people facing access barriers or having fewer opportunities in education, training and youth work is a key objective of several policy initiatives" (European Commission, 2021, p. 6).

Therefore the Erasmus+ programme "seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion, diversity and fairness across all its actions" and asks potential applicants to design their projects and activities with an inclusive approach to make "them accessible to a diverse range of participants" (European Commission, 2022, p. 7).

In this article we address inclusion by presenting and discussing the results of different studies from strategic partnerships running between 2011 and 2014 (Education and Gender – 'EDGE'), between 2016 and 2019 (Homo'poly) and between 2020 and 2023 (All Inc!). EDGE was a multilateral Comenius project (within the Lifelong Learning programme) that started in autumn 2011 and finished at the end of 2014. With this project the partner institutions designed a curriculum for gender-sensitive education, which easily can be integrated in teacher training institutions across Europe. The core pillars of the curriculum are gender & identity; gender & sexuality, gender & interculturality and gender & lifestyle. In this project 12 institutions from 12 countries across Europe collaborated (Holz & Shelton, 2013).

From 2016 to 2019, most of the partner institutions from the EDGE project took part in the strategic partnership "Homo'poly". Homo'poly aimed to contribute towards a better understanding of homosexuality in secondary and tertiary education. Taking a cross-sectoral approach, the project was active in Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, Hungary, Poland and Turkey, working closely with a participating university and secondary school in each. Homo'poly targeted students and lecturers at teach-

ing colleges and universities, teachers in secondary education, and students at secondary schools.

The project aimed to help establish an intercultural dialogue on gender equality, with the aim of strengthening acceptance and a better understanding of homosexuality. Each of the participating countries had its own set of approaches towards gender-specific education and upbringing, as well as distinct attitudes towards tolerance, diversity, and homosexuality. By offering and integrating their traditions and experiences, the partner countries shaped a diverse set of products and activities. That way the partners developed a set of resources, a learning platform, teaching modules for higher education and didactical materials for secondary schools (De Witte et al., 2018).

In 2020 the partners started with a new LGBT+ project called All Inc! Building LGBT+ friendly schools across Europe. All Inc! promotes inclusive education by bringing together pupils, (trainee) teachers and the wider school community to build LGBT+ friendly schools. De project is active in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. In each country, a university and secondary school will partner with pupils to co-create visions for LGBT+ friendly schools and supporting "tools for schools". A virtual "human library" will be built to share LGBT+ stories with the wider school community, and with young people across Europe (De Witte et al., 2022).

In all these projects a questionnaire was distributed to pupils and teachers in all participating countries. Based on the fact that many of the asked questions are the same in both questionnaires, a comparison of the results from (2012,) 2017 and from 2022 will be part of this analysis. The following chapters will introduce the approach, findings and conclusions of these studies.

Over the past few decades, the world has witnessed a large increase in advocacy and debate around the issue of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights (Michelson, 2019). As of 2022, marriage between homosexuals has been legalized in 30 countries, mostly in Europe and America, with the latest country to join being Switzerland as of July 2022. Of the countries that support same-sex marriage, 56 % are in Europe. In addition, 13 other European nations have legalized civil unions or other forms of more limited recognition for same-sex couples (Statista, 2021).

Various research papers agree that attitudes towards homosexuality are improving over time (Altmeyer, 2001; Andersen & Fetner, 2008; Halman & Van Ingen, 2015; Smith, Son & Kim, 2014). In a report conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2013, LGBT adults claim to feel more accepted by society now than in the past (Pew Research Center, 2013). Nevertheless, without denying the progress made so far, homonegativity remains a problem in Western societies (De Witte, Iterbeke, & Holz, 2019). Despite all the laws introduced in recent years granting family rights to homosexuals, negative attitudes towards

them prevail among different groups of society, even in countries that have fully legalized same-sex unions (Dotti Sani & Quaranta, 2022). Several papers address discrimination against homosexuals and how individual characteristics shape views and attitudes toward homosexuality. Overall, the evidence suggests that age (Treas, 2002), gender (De Witte, Iterbeke, & Holz, 2019), religion (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009; Jäckle & Wenzelburger, 2015; Sherkat, et al., 2011), education (Irwin & Thompson, 1978; Kolozsli, 2010; Ohlander, Batalova & Treas, 2005), moral values (Scheepers, Te Grotenhuis & Van Der Slik, 2002), country (Geunis & Holz, 2020; Mazrekaj, De Witte & Cabus, 2020) and others factors affect individuals' perspectives regarding these issues.

While the vast majority of the literature has focused on homosexuality, limited research has been done regarding transgender issues. In particular, insufficient attention has been paid to understanding how trans people come to experience marginalization and how it differs from that experienced by homosexuals in different countries and educational frameworks. Therefore, this study adds to the existing literature by not only examining the situation of homosexual individuals in schools, but also that of transgender and how this varies across different European nations. Additionally, this paper explores how attitudes are changing over time and what influence parents have on their children's attitudes toward LGBT communities.

Most European countries today grant transgender people the right to change their first name, and the majority of them also offer the possibility to change birth certificates recognizing the new gender status (European Commission, 2020). In addition, many European countries recognize the right of transgender persons to marry according to their post-operative sex (European Parliament, 2010). Some nations have gone further and allowed the right to marry to be gender-blind. However, trans people are still among the most marginalized groups in today's society (Bauer et al., 2009). Most of the work done consistently indicates that trans people experience difficulties in their daily lives (Bradford et al., 2013; Haas et al., 2010; Kenagy, 2005). For instance, transgender people face extensive discrimination in health care, employment and housing (Stotzer, 2009). Other types of discrimination have been studied based on the race, color and ethnicity of the transgender person (Erich et al., 2010). A Survey of LGBT Americans (Pew Research Center, 2013) reports that when it comes to community approval, gay and bisexual people feel that there is a high level of social acceptance of them. However, 80 % of transgender respondents state there is little or no support and tolerance for their group. The degree of harassment faced by transgender people in society has a significant impact with suicide rates for transgender individuals varying between 30 % and 50 % depending on the nation (Virupaksha, Muralidhar & Ramakrishna, 2016).

In addition to the relatively large body of literature focusing on LGBT individuals in a general setting, there exists a much smaller body of literature that concentrates on examining this issue particularly in an educational context. Evidence suggests that sexual

minority youths (SMYs) continue to suffer from multiple levels of discrimination and marginalization within the school system (Kosciw, Diaz & Greytak, 2008). The 2011 National School Climate Survey (Kosciw et al., 2012) shows that many LGBT students would rather avoid attending classes or miss entire days of school than face a hostile school climate. A reason for this is, for instance, the fact that homosexual students are more often excluded among younger students. This is due to the latter being less willing to remain friends and attend school with gay and lesbian peers than students in higher grades (Hoover & Fischbein, 1999; Horn, 2006; Poteat, Espelage & Koenig, 2009). Also, male students appear to be more reluctant to remain friends with homosexual peers than girls, for fear of being perceived as homosexual by other heterosexual male peers (Korobov & Bamberg, 2004; Poteat, 2007). The situation of transgender people is similar. In fact, transgender youth may not necessarily benefit from interventions aimed to support Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) youth (McGuire et al., 2010). Indeed, harassment toward them has been reported to be at higher levels than the one targeting other sexual minorities. This does not only include peers but also school staff (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006; Kosciw et al., 2005; Kosciw et al., 2005). The investigation of Sausa (2005) provides evidence that transgender students suffer harassment by teachers, such as being trained to "act like their birth gender" and being blamed for the harassment because their behavior is labeled by teachers as "not normal". Further research supports these results with complaints from transgender pupils about gestures (Grossman & D'Augelli, 2006) and being mocked by the teachers at school (Grossman et al., 2009). On the same note, in a study of bullying in schools in the United Kingdom, 30 % of lesbian and gay pupils stated that adults were at fault for homophobic events in their schools. While 60 % felt that there was no adult with whom to discuss their homosexuality (Hunt & Nelson, 2007).

Another major influence in most young people's lives, apart from school, is their parents. A small body of literature covers the effects of parents on their children's perspective regarding LGBT topics. For example, evidence shows that families that have a strong emphasis on traditional values are less likely to be accepting of sexual minorities than non-traditional families (Newman & Muzzonigro, 1993). Nevertheless, the literature on family support is sparse even when research has shown that LGBT adults (Cochran, Sullivan & Mays, 2003; D'Augelli, 2002; Hatzenbuehler, 2009) and youth homosexuals (Lebson, 2002; Russell & Joyner, 2001) are at greater risk of having their physical and emotional health compromised. Nayak and Kehily (1997) attempt to explain why young boys have stronger tendencies to engage in homophobic behaviors. Their findings indicate that strict adherence to the traditional male gender role is associated with strong homophobic tendencies resulting in the fear or rejection of homosexual individuals. A number of studies have associated these traditional stereotypes and prejudices (Whitley, 2001; Witt, 1997) as attitudes and behaviors that are often first learned at home and are later reinforced by the youth's peers, school experience, and media viewing. The strongest influence on the development of gender roles appearing to be the family environment

(Witt, 1997). Related studies support these findings, and have provided evidence that if parents are not accepting of sexual minorities, or consider gender variations as "deviant," it is very difficult for their children not to internalize these value systems during their development (Kaufman, 2008).

Using data from a survey conducted in 2021, this study aims to fill the gaps identified in the literature on the situation of homosexuals and transgender people in different countries, all within an educational framework. In addition, exploiting data collected in 2017, this paper attempts to explain how opinions regarding these issues have changed over time. Finally, this paper seeks to understand how parents influence their children's views on LGBT issues. For the latter, mediation analysis is conducted using Hofstede's six cultural dimensions (Hofstede, Jonker & Verwaart, 2008). These dimensions are used to distinguish the different countries considered in the present paper, and help to compare the cultural differences between them. Therefore, this paper will open the door to future research in this field, by contributing to the examination of the following research questions: *(1) To what extent do differences prevail between European countries in the teachers' and pupils' perspectives on homosexuality and transgender as of 2021?, (2) How do the perspectives across countries regarding homosexuality change over time?* Thereafter, the final question that will be investigated using OLS and the mediation analysis is: *(3) Does parental acceptance of homosexuality influence pupils' perceptions of LGBT issues?* It can be said that the contribution of this paper to the existing body of academic research in the context of LGBT issues in education will be threefold.

The remainder of the paper unfolds as follows, first a closer look will be taken at the current social and political standing of LGBT communities in the different nations of study. Hereafter, the data collection and methodology will be elaborated upon. Finally, the results of both the OLS as well as the mediation analysis will be portrayed and discussed.

2 Setting and institutional framework

Since this study will take into consideration eight different European countries, this section will take a closer look at their respective current opinion and political environment surrounding the LGBT community. Although steps have been taken in many European countries to adequately include these minorities, significant national differences remain not only in terms of legislation, but also in terms of their position within society.

The Netherlands has been known for defending the rights of LGBT people since 1946. It is therefore not surprising that the Netherlands is one of the most progressive countries in this regard (ILGA-Europe, 2022). The Dutch government invests significantly in research, policies and projects aimed to combat discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (COC Nederland, 2014). From the implementation of anti-discrimination laws in employment in 1994, to the legalization of marriage in

2001, as well as the creation of anti-discrimination laws covering sexual characteristics in 2019 (Equaldex, 2021), The Netherlands has continuously demonstrated its commitment to the pursuit of equality for LGBT people. In 2019, a survey by Pew Research Center reveals that 92 % of Dutch citizens agree with homosexuality being accepted by society (Pew Research Center, 2019). However, although the Netherlands is known for its liberal and accepting culture, some research calls this into question. Some studies indicate that the Dutch are less progressive than the pro-gay cultural identity with which they are generally associated (Buijs, Hekma & Duyvendak, 2011; Keuzenkamp, 2010; Keuzenkamp et al., 2006; Van der Klein et al., 2009). On the same line, in the educational context, a study conducted by the Dutch social and cultural planning office in 2020 reports that lesbians, gays and bisexuals experienced an increase in discrimination in schools from 13 % in 2013, to 25 % in 2018 (Planbureau, 2020).

Belgium is considered a fairly liberal nation when it comes to LGBT concerns and views. Same-sex couples obtained the right to get married in 2003 as well as the right to adopt children in 2006 (Passani & Debicki, 2016). As a matter of fact, Belgium was ranked number two in terms of protection of LGBT rights by ILGA-Europe in 2021 (ILGA-Europe, 2022). Moreover, Belgium is known for the diversity of its government, as several members are openly part of the LGBT community. For example, one of the ministers of education at the regional level who identifies as gay (Di Rupo), and the current national minister of the Civil Service who identifies as a transgender woman (Petra De Sutter). In the educational context, sexual education in Belgium is endorsed by law, however, the responsibility for its implementation lies in the hands of the regional administrations. Nevertheless, the legal equalities and perceived tolerance within the population do not imply that LGB people are fully embraced in Belgian society. Schools in the Flanders region of Belgium remain highly heteronormative (Cox et al., 2010; Dewaele et al., 2009; Pellerinaux, 2003), and homophobic behaviors are still very prevalent among Belgian teenagers, despite the numerous legal reforms that have been carried out to fight discrimination towards homosexuals (Hooghe, 2011).

Germany was one of the last countries in Western Europe to legalize gay marriage in 2017 despite the fact that 88 % of German respondents were partially or fully in favor of same-sex marriage months before the bill was passed by the senate (Küpper et al., 2017). Since then, on May 2020, Germany became the second nation in Europe after Malta to introduce a national ban on conversion therapy for minors. Nevertheless, homonegativity remains a problem in German society. The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) reported that 44 % of LGBT respondents in Germany were victims of discrimination during 2019 due to their sexual identity or orientation, higher than the EU average of 42 %. Furthermore, in relation to the educational context, a 2017 national study conducted by the German Parliament revealed that suicide attempts by LGBT youths in Germany was still six times higher than for heterosexual youths (Deutscher Bundestag, 2017). Könne (2018) indicates that the acceptance of homosexuality in the educational system

in Germany is largely influenced by regional governments, with Christian conservative lead regions being more likely to use wording such as "abnormal behavior" to describe homosexuality in schools. More left-leaning governments, such as the social democrats, would in turn use a more neutral phraseology such as "sexual minority" in their educational program. Nowadays, homosexuality is still not part of regular school material in Germany in many places, however, views in the population have shifted and 75 % of all citizens are in favor of teaching pupils about sexual diversity, while only 6 % oppose this notion (Könne, 2018).

In recent years, Spain has experienced major changes in the field of gender and sexual rights of LGBT individuals. Many of them as a result of legislative developments, such as the introduction of same-sex marriage legalization in 2005 (Enguix, 2017). One of the country's latest advances in LGBT rights is the expansion of free in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatment for LGBT individuals approved in 2021. Nonetheless, traces of discrimination are still latent in certain regions and among certain groups of society (Calvo & Trujillo, 2011). Regarding sexual education in Spain, a study conducted by Martínez, Vicario-Molina, González and Ilabaca in 2014 indicate that teachers show favourable views towards sex education, but that 43.3 % are not formed on this subject, while 48.6 % do not teach it at school (Martínez et al., 2014). Other research indicates that the greatest barriers to the implementation of sex education in the school curriculum in Spain are: the failure to incorporate sex education as a transversal subject, the insufficient monitoring, lack of commitment to the matter in many schools, and finally, the lack of appropriate preparation of teachers on these issues (Martínez et al., 2012).

While the United Kingdom has made legislative strides towards a more inclusive environment for LGBT individuals with acts such as the Civil Partnership Act in 2004 and the Equality Act in 2010, there are still considerable hurdles in the acceptance of homo- and bisexual individuals by wider society. The 2018 British Social Attitudes Survey shows that only 68 % of respondents believe that same-sex relationships were "not wrong at all" and just about 49 % of participants considered prejudice against transgender people to be "always wrong" (National Center for Social Research, 2018). Especially in the context of schools, a large amount of LGBT youth still experience significant amounts of bullying and homo- and transphobia. A study conducted by Stonewall (2017) found that nearly half of LGBT students had experienced bullying ranging from verbal abuse (42 %) to being isolated (24 %), and even death threats or sexual assault (4 %). This behavior differs depending on regions, with pupils in the South-East of England experiencing the lowest amount of harassment (36 % experience bullying at school) and the Midlands (51 %) and Wales (54 %) the highest (Stonewall, 2017).

Regarding Greece, in 2009 surveys conducted across Europe indicated that Greek public opinion was the most negative among all European countries with respect to same-sex couple rights. Sexual orientation seemed to be the most prevalent reason for discrimi-

nation in the country (Pavlou, 2009). However, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights in Greece have evolved significantly in recent years, establishing itself as one of the most liberal countries in Southern Europe. Some of the laws that have been passed since 2009 have been: the prohibition of hate speech based on sexual orientation/gender identity and sexual characteristics in 2014 , legal/recognized same-sex civil unions since 2015, sex education in schools covering sexual orientation and gender identity in 2017, and the inclusion of gender-neutral names on birth certificates in 2018 among others (Equaldex, 2021). Nevertheless, according to the report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on Greece (ECRI, 2015), discrimination against homosexuals in schools remains an issue. A survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014) shows that 25 % of respondents felt discriminated by school personnel on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Further research shows that the four predictors of attitudes toward homosexuals at the educational level in Greece are gender, religiosity, political inclination, and socialization with a non-heterosexual (Papadaki, 2016).

In Hungary, homosexual activity was decriminalized in 1961 and same-sex couples have been allowed to register partnerships since 2009. Nevertheless, a survey by Pew Research Center shows that in 2019, only 49 % of respondents agree with the statement "Should society accept homosexuality?" (Pew Research Center, 2019). In the last two years, laws regarding LGBT topics have been tightened in Hungary. On 2020 the Hungarian parliament filed a bill to modify the definition of sex, to match the sex at birth, making it impossible for transgender individuals to change their legal gender (Equaldex, 2021). Further, in June 2021, a new law regarding LGBT censorchip came into force prohibiting the sharing of content about homosexuality or gender reassignment to children under the age of 18 whether in school education programs, films or advertisements. In addition, changes to the Hungarian Constitution altered the definition of family, thereby excluding transgender and other LGBT people, by defining the basis of the family as "the mother is a woman and the father is a man" (France24, 2021).

Whilst many of the countries mentioned above have taken steps to improve the legal and social standing of homosexuals and transgender, Poland has been somewhat stagnant when it comes to their inclusion, while still potraying high levels of homophobia (Mole et al., 2021). Several authors point towards the new government instrumentalizing LGBTQ communities to push forth national pride and identity by otherising and stigmatizing homosexuals and transgender people (Mole et al., 2021; Törnquist-Plewa & Malmgren, 2007). Attacks on gay parades and general aversion towards the LGBTQ community highlight this aversion amongst the population (Mole et al., 2021). In the educational system, it has been difficult to quantify the exact amount and types of problems LGBTQ students face in Poland's schools, as a report by Kampania Przeciwko Homofobii (2012) explains. The authors argue that this is due to the fact that many teachers did not want to acknowledge the existence of homosexual students and therefore, also failed to identify

when violence or bullying occurred because of a student's sexual orientation. However, the report also indicates that few of the students surveyed answered that they would be willing to openly proclaim themselves as homosexuals (12.6 %). Meanwhile, 44 % stated that they only told their closest friends about their sexual orientation, implying that there is still significant pressure from the outside on LGBT pupils to hide their sexual orientation. The reason for this becomes clear when looking at individual examples as examined by Gawlicz and Starnawski (2013), who encountered sentiments such as homosexuality being a disease when asking students about their teacher opinion on the subject.

From the results it becomes salient that there is a large divide between Eastern and Western European countries, as portrayed by the question whether LGBT should have the same rights as heterosexual people. While in the western European nations close 90 % agree with this sentiment, in Poland and Hungary only under half of the participants favored equal rights. Similar numbers can be observed in the two following questions, with same sex marriages seeming to be the most controversial as it has the overall lowest agreement. Furthermore, Poland and Hungary are also below the average European Union acceptance scores for all three questions by a significant margin. In column 4 it is further possible to observe how with time the stance towards homosexual marriage has changed. All countries except Hungary have increased in acceptance towards same sex marriage, with Poland and Germany experiencing the most significant rise. These results are not surprising considering the history of the countries with respect to LGBT issues, and the way homosexuals and transgender people are treated in each of these respective nations.

3 Data collection and descriptive statistics

For this study, data was collected through surveys conducted in eight European countries. Each country had a questionnaire in its own language. There were two different forms, one addressing teachers and another directed to students within each school that was surveyed. The 2021 survey resulted in 3272 pupil respondents and 449 teacher respondents. While this yields a large enough sample for the pupil population to conduct reliable regression analysis, the number of teachers in any given nation can be considered low, especially in Belgium and Hungary were less than 30 teacher's answers were recorded. Therefore, for this last group, the power of the regressions may be weak.

The questionnaire in the above-mentioned year is combined with a wave of surveys conducted in a similar manner in 2017, in which more teachers were questioned, resulting in a more representative sample. Similar information was collected in both waves, which allows to conduct an intertemporal analysis. For this purpose, the results were limited to questions that were asked identically in both surveys. Whereas for the 2021 analysis only, the questionnaire included new questions on transgender issues. Thus, allowing for expanded knowledge and research in this area.

4 Methodology

In order to examine the initially stated research questions concerning the national and temporal differences as well as the parents influence, a two parted analysis was conducted. In the first part, the results obtained from the 2021 surveys for students and teachers are examined. In the second part, taking into account a survey conducted in 2017 allows for a close inspection on how the perspectives have changed over time for students and teachers for all questions that are identical between the two years.

4.1 Student and pupil level analysis

4.1.1 Pupil's Analysis

For the student analysis of 2021, eight model specifications are developed. The resulting eight dependent variables serve as indicators on the general sentiments of pupils towards LGBT individuals. Model one called "*Equality Homo"* measures the extent to which respondents think homosexuals should be treated equal to heterosexuals in society and consists of 5 different questions; *"Homosexuality is natural", "People should perceive homosexuality as equal to heterosexuality", "Homosexual people should have the same rights as heterosexuals", "Homosexuals should have the right to get married"* and "*Homosexuals should have the right to adopt children"*. Models two *("Comfohomo")* and three *("Comfohete")* aim to understand how comfortable students are with observing homosexual and heterosexual behavior in public. Hence, it is comprised of the questions; "*I don't have any problem at all if 2 boys/girls are kissing/holding hands in public"* and *"I don't have any problem at all with a women/men kissing/holding hand in public"*. Model four *("EqualityTrans")* measures the attitudes towards transgender people. This model examines questions to evaluate the extent to which students agree with societal acceptance of transgender individuals. Therefore, four questions are taken into account; *"Transgender individuals should be allowed to be who they are", "Transgender individuals should have the same rights as heterosexuals"*, *"Transgender individuals should have the right to get married"* and *"Transgender individuals should have the right to adopt children"*. Model five *("Aboutsex")* is the mean score of the questions *"I received reliable sex education at school"*, *"I think it is important to learn about sex at school"*, *"I can talk openly about sex and relationships with my parents"*, "*I know a lot about different kinds of relationships between girls and boys"*, "*I agree with the statement that most teenagers are sexually active*", and *"Trust between partners is important",* and has as its objective to study how open students are regarding sex topics. Models six *("ComoOutasHomo")* and seven *("ComoOutasTrans")* measure how scared students are to come out as homosexual or transgender respectively. Finally, Model eight *("SpeakFree")* measures how worried students would be to speak freely about sexuality. In order to study each model, linear regressions are run to estimate the relationship between several independent variables and the respective model serving as the dependent variable.

These eight models serve as dependent variables measuring participant's attitude towards LGBT topics with the independent variables being kept the same through all eight regressions. Consistent with previous literature pointing to the fact that individual characteristics play a fundamental role in views and opinions about homosexuality (De Witte, Iterbeke & Holz, 2019; Donaldson et al., 2017; Steffens & Wagner, 2004; Van den Akker et al., 2013), the independent variables gender, country, location, sexuality, age group, and parental acceptance are added to each of the regressions. These variables are considered most suitable for this analysis as they provide a large amount of information regarding an individual's potential predisposition towards LGBT communities by covering upbringing and cultural background, trough the variables region, country and parental acceptance. Gender and sexuality have been shown to impact opinions on LGBT individuals by research such as De Witte, Iterbeke and Holz (2019). Age group will further aid in understanding how students in different age cohorts view homosexuals and transgender as their exposure to the topic might increase with the years. In addition, standard errors are clustered by country and a "neutral" question is added about the degree of openness of the individual. The former captures peer effects, while the latter captures individual heterogeneity. As a "neutral" question on openness, the question "I think it is important to learn about homosexuality at school" is used. The importance of the neutral question stems from the fact that it also serves to control for acquiescence bias (De Witte, Iterbeke & Holz, 2019). That is, the propensity of respondents to agree with the research statements, without the action being a true reflection of their own position (Watson, 1992). These biases may compromise comparisons of attitudes between population groups (Baron-Epel et al., 2010) and therefore, the relevance of controlling especially given the age of this group. This gives rise to the following formulation:

Where β_0 indicates the constant and β_{1-7} the coefficients of the respective independent variable. Finally, ε_i constitutes the standard errors, which are clustered on a country level.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1\, gender_i + \beta_2\, country_i + \beta_3\, location_i + \beta_4 sexuality_i + \beta_5 age_i + \beta_6 parents_i + \beta_7 control_i + \varepsilon_i$$

4.1.2 Teacher's Analysis

In a similar fashion, the teacher analysis of the 2021 sample is conducted. Once again, eight different models are created. The resulting eight dependent variables serve as indicators of teachers' general feelings toward LGBT subjects. Models one *("Equality Homo")* and two *("ComfoHomo")* are the same as for the pupil's analysis. As mentioned in the last section, the former measures to which respondents think homosexuals should be treated equal to heterosexuals, while the latter measures how comfortable individuals feel with heterosexual affection in public. Model three *("Inclusion")* seeks to explain to which degree teachers' welcome homosexuality in their classrooms and at school. The mean for model three is composed by 5 questions: *" If one of my students were gay/lesbian, I would support him/her"* , "*If there were gay/lesbian students in my class, I would use different approaches*" , "*If there were gay/lesbian students in my class, I would use different examples during class*", "*If one of my colleagues were gay/lesbian, I would support him/her*" and "*If one of my colleagues were gay/lesbian, I would try to convince my other colleagues at school that this is not an issue*." Furthermore, Model four *("Privacy")* aims to assess the extent to which teachers share information about a student's/colleague's sexuality. For this, the mean score of the questions: *"If one of my students were gay/lesbian, I would inform the director of the school", "If one of my students were gay/lesbian, I would inform his/her parents*", "*If one of my colleagues were gay/lesbian, I would inform the director of the school*", "*If one of my colleagues were gay/lesbian, I would inform my colleagues of the school*", "*If one of my colleagues were gay/lesbian, I would tell students*", and finally, "*If one of my colleagues were gay/lesbian, I would avoid any contact with him/her*." Furthermore, Model five *("Improvement")* explores if teachers perceived any changes regarding homosexuality in the last years, by including the questions; *"In my opinion, the general atmosphere towards homosexuality in my country is improving"* and *"In my opinion, the law has been improving towards homosexuality during the last 10 years"*. Model six *("Trans positive")* measures the attitudes of teachers towards transgender. For this, the mean score of *"Transgender people should be allowed to be who they are", "Transgender people should have the right to adopt children", "I would have no problem with my best friend coming out as transgender"* are taken into account. Finally, Model 7 *("Trans negative")* studies if teachers believe that transgender is an illness, while Model 8 *("Bullying")* studies if teachers would intervene in case of bullying by considering the question *"If there is bullying against gay/lesbian pupils I wouldn't interfere"*. The independent variables are once again not changed throughout the eight regressions, while the dependent variables consist of the aforementioned models. The independent variables are once again: gender, country, level of education, type of school, location, sexuality and age group. A similar reasoning as applied to students also applies for the same variables when looking at teachers. However, age might play a more significant role in this subsample, as generational differences in attitude are expected to be large. In addition, given the age group, an acquiescence bias is not generally expected. However, to ensure that the responses accurately reflect the teacher's opinion in trans-

gender issues, given that transgender seems to be less accepted by society (Eurobarometer, 2019a), the neutral question "Homosexuality is a natural thing" is added to models (6) and (7). In addition, standard errors are clustered by country for all models. The linear regression is set as:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1\, gender_i + \beta_2\, country_i + \beta_3\, location_i + \beta_4 sexuality_i + \beta_5 age_i + \beta_6 schooltype_i + \beta_7 location_i + \beta_8 control_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Where β_0 indicates the constant and β_0 shows the coefficients of the respective independent variable. Finally, ε_i once more constitutes the standard errors, which are clustered on a country level.

4.2 Intertemporal Analysis

Further, the intertemporal analysis will be conducted in order to answer the second research question on how the perspectives on LGBT have changed over time in the different nations. For the intertemporal analysis, the only models to consider are those that remained the same, thus containing the exact identical questions between 2017 and 2021 questionaries. This implies that in the case of the intertemporal analysis for students it is possible to use only models one, two, four and five. While in the case of teachers, only models one to five can be compared. The models for students and teachers are still the same as those described in Part I respectively, with the difference being that a dummy variable "year" is added to all regressions to measure year fixed effects. In addition, an interaction variable for the year and country effect is explored, enabling a further examination of how sentiments have changed throughout time in the different countries. The results' standard errors are clustered by country. Once more, an OLS regression is used, described by the formula below for pupils and teachers:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \sum \beta_i X_i + DummyYear_{\text{i}} * Country_{\text{i}} + \varepsilon_i$$

Where β_0 indicates the constant and β_i are the respective coefficient for the teachers and students and X_i denotes the models for both teachers and students. Further, $DummyYear_{\text{i}} * Country_{\text{i}}$ contains the interaction between the Year dummy and the country variable. Finally, once more constitutes the standard errors, which are clustered on a country level.

5 Results

5.1 Pupil level analysis

First, we examine the perspective on homosexuality in the 2021 pupil level analysis. Table 4a (see Appendix) shows that for the first 4 models, girls have a significant positive coefficient. Ceteris paribus if in the regression the gender is changed from boy to girl, i. e., for model (1), an increase of 0.271 would be observed on the final score of homosexual's equality. This implies that girls in our sample are in greater agreement with equal rights for homosexuals and transgender, and are more comfortable observing affection between heterosexual and homosexual individuals in public.

Furthermore, the variable country indicates that Belgian respondents have a higher degree of tolerance regarding homosexual rights (Model 1) but the case is not the same for transexual rights (Model 4). In this aspect, respondents in Spain, Germany, The Netherlands and Poland portray more positive attitudes than respondents in Belgium. Further, Greece has a significant negative coefficient for all four models, and the UK for the first three models, showing less tolerance on the part of these two countries regarding LGBT issues. In terms of sexuality, homosexuals and bisexuals agree more strongly with equal rights for homosexuals than heterosexuals, and, at the same time, are more comfortable observing the affection of same-sex couples. Individuals who do not know their sexuality show higher scores in all 4 dimensions when compared to heterosexuals. Finally, it is observed that when the variable "My parents would accept me if I were homosexual" is included in the model, the higher parental agreement leads to a significantly higher level of agreement and tolerance on the part of the students regarding LGBT issues for all four models.

Table 4b also contains 4 different models. The first column measures the level of openness and knowledge with respect to sexual topics. Columns 2 and 3 measure students' fear of coming out as homosexual and transgender respectively, and column 4 indicates how concerned they are about speaking freely when it comes to their sexuality.

No significant differences were found between girls and boys across models 5 to 8. Nevertheless, the differences between countries are surprising. Respondent students in all countries (included in each model respectively) are less concerned about coming out as gay or transgender, and speak freely about their sexuality than in Belgium, which was used as the base. Concerning sexuality, people who do not know or prefer not to mention their sexuality have significantly lower scores in knowledge and interest of sexual topics when compared to heterosexuals. In addition, students under the age of 15 are significantly less likely to come out as transgender and to speak freely about these issues than those older than 15. Lastly, it is noted that when the variable "My parents would accept me if I were homosexual" is included in the models, greater parental agreement implies greater knowl-

edge of sex and openness to these issues, less concern about disclosing their sexuality, and greater freedom to talk about sex. This is observed in the coefficients of the variable high parental acceptance, in which it can be observed that ceteris paribus i. e., for model (7), when passing from no parental acceptance to the highest parental acceptance described by level 6, the final score in afraid to "come out as a transgender" is reduced by 0.947.

5.2 Teachers level analysis

Moving from Pupils to *Teachers Level,* column one of Table 5a indicates the degree of agreement with respect to equal rights for homosexuals. The results point out that there are significant differences between women and men, with the respondent women agreeing more to equal rights than their male counterparts. This is also true with regard to openness towards homosexual students and co-workers.

When looking at the country variable, using Belgium as the base level, one can observe that respondent teachers in the Netherlands are more in agreement with homosexual rights than respondents in Belgium, while Greece, Poland and Hungary are less tolerant. The largest negative effect is observed in Greece with Poland and Hungary having smaller negative coefficients. Greece also seems to be the country with the highest rejection of public affection among homosexuals and one of the countries with the lowest inclusion of teachers towards LGBT students. With respect to the level of education, it can be observed that teachers who have a master's degree are more accepting of seeing homosexual affection in public. Also, teachers between 30–39 years of age tend to modify their teaching style to include LGBT pupils while older teachers show no significant coefficient for inclusion.

Similar to Table 4a, Table 5b shows that significant differences exist between males and females. It seems that the latter perceive less progress in LGBT matters and also, have more positive tendencies with respect to transgender students. At the same time, less progress is perceived in Hungary with a coefficient of -1.910 and Poland with -1.380 significant at the 1 % level, in comparison to Belgium.

It can also be observed that teachers in Poland are less willing to interfere in case of bullying, with a significant coefficient of 1.489 at the 1 % level. This means when altering between the base of Belgium and Poland, teachers in Poland have a final score 1,489 higher in this measure of not reporting. Further, teachers in the age cohort from 40–49 years seem to perceive significantly less improvement in LGBT matters than their younger counterparts. Polish, Hungarian and German teachers score significantly higher when it comes to the perception of transgender as an illness when compared to the base of Belgium. Additionally, teachers at professional schools are more likely to view transgender as an illness and express a significantly less perspective towards trans individuals.

5.3 Comparison 2017–2021 – Pupil level

Moving into the intertemporal analysis for Pupils Table 6a shows how the results have changed with time. With the first independent variable being a year dummy set to 1 for the year 2021 and with 2017 as baseline. The year dummy shows that overall, there has been a significant positive effect of time on all four dependent variables. Hence, this implies that in these four years, perspectives have improved on the equal treatment of homosexuals; people are more comfortable with observing homosexual affection in public, and are both more open to talk about LGBT topics as well as feeling more comfortable to come out as homosexual.

However, this effect is not the same across different countries as seen by the interaction between the country and year variable. Poland and Hungary both a significant positive interaction for the first two columns, while for all other the interaction has a significant negative effect. Hence, in Poland and Hungary there is both an increase in the acceptance of equality and a reduction in the consideration of same-sex couples in public as problematic. For the third and fourth column the effects are less clear, while Poland and the Netherlands show a significant positive coefficient regarding their openness to talk about sex matters, there is no significant effect for Hungary and further, there is a negative effect for Germany and the UK. Finally, column four has a significant negative coefficient for the interaction variable across all countries, pointing towards less fear of coming out as homosexual.

5.4 Comparison 2017–2021 – Teacher level

When conducting a similar temporal cross-section for teachers, the results in Table 6b show similar trends. On the same note as to Table 6a, we can observe that the interaction term for year and country in columns 1 and 2 are positive only for Poland and Hungary.

On the contrary, by looking at model 1 one can observe that Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom has negative coefficients on the interaction term which implies that since 2017 there has been a decline in concern about LGBT issues.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to examine the current and past perspectives of teachers and students across Europe on LGBT topics. To do so, this paper adds to the literature by pointing out the current situation of sexual minorities in the school systems of several European countries, a topic that has not been widely covered. In addition, it also highlights that the parents' perspective on LGBT issues plays an important role in shaping children's views. Furthermore, by taking panel data collected in 2017, it was possible to show that opinions of Western European countries regarding the equal treatment of homosexuals and transgenders are regressing. These issues are of great importance, as they highlight the general trend in many developed nations to slowly return to more traditional values. This is portrayed, for instance, by the laws against sex education in Florida with the "Do not say gay" ban.

First, the differences between European countries in their teachers' and pupils' perspectives on homosexuality and transgender as of 2021 were examined. When looking at the findings, there are several conclusions that can be reached. When comparing the different nations considered by this study, there were stark differences in the 2021 attitudes towards LGBT people. Most pronounced is the divide between Western European countries, such as Spain, Germany and the Netherlands, which have high scores for acceptance and equal treatment of homosexuals and transsexuals, and Eastern European countries, which show a trend toward more conservative values. Mole (2016) states that the European Union has been one of the driving forces in equal rights movements for LGBT people in the Western world. This goes in tandem with the much later entry into the Union by Poland and Hungary in 2004 and could explain the differences in attitudes.

Moreover, Mole (2016) points to the fact that, in former members of the Soviet Union, the struggle for national identity is still ongoing, whereas the Western European nations considered in this study have a longer history of governance under democracy and independent statehood. In addition, a study by Nagoshi et al. (2008) showed that there exists a clear connection between transphobia, right-wing authoritarianism, and religious fundamentalism. Hence, Polish and Hungarian attitudes can be partially explained by their more religiously influenced right-wing political system. In a similar note, Slootmaeckers (2019) argues that nationalism is a system of competing masculinity, and often uses homophobia as a means to hold up existing gender hierarchies. This connection between the concept of traditional masculinity and homosexuality was also part of this study, and could be clearly observed when looking at the scores for the female dummy in teacher and student samples. In both cases females seemed to be significantly more likely to accept equal rights for homosexuals and transgender, as well as being more comfortable with open portrayals of homosexuality in public. This is underlined by Nagoshi et al. (2008), who show that men score significantly higher on both homo- and transphobia, in line to what this present study found.

Second, the impact of parental acceptance on pupils' perceptions of LGBT issues was explored. When analyzing the responses on students' perceptions of homosexuality and transsexuality, it was observed that parental acceptance was a strong predictor of the results. More accepting parents positively influence their child's openness to coming out as homosexual or transgender, as well as increasing the child's likelihood to have a more favorable opinion on questions of equal rights and comfortableness with homosexuals in public. This was further underlined by the results of the mediation analysis which pointed towards a significant parental influence. Academic literature on the topic of parents influences on their children's attitude to LGBT communities is sparse, making this an important finding and opening up new avenues of study on origins of homo- and transphobic behavior.

As a third research question, the intertemporal component 2017–2021 of the study provides insight into the progress of inclusion of LGBT individuals in each respective nation. Importantly, the geographical divide portrayed in earlier models can be found once more but showing the reverse picture when studied over time. Compared to the 2017 survey, it became salient that the Western European countries seemed to regress on issues of equal treatment with significant negative interaction variables in many cases. Meanwhile, Poland and Hungary showed progress in the categories of equal treatment of LGBT people, as well as the level of comfortableness with seeing them in public. An explanation for this could be an overall higher level of exposure to the topic trough membership in the European Union, and a slow subsiding of national struggle and search for national identity in both nations. On the other hand, homosexuality has become a more tangible topic for most people through the greater inclusion of homosexual and transgender individuals in media (Garretson, 2015). Further, it seems that a contributing factor is the generational divide in opinions, as younger people tend to be more accepting of LGBT people. Thus, over time, homophobic sentiments seem to fade from society (Garretson, 2015). Additionally, Garretson and Ayoub (2016) showed that an increase in acceptance for homosexuals globally had been spearheaded by larger opportunities for homosexual individuals to represent their views in public.

Whilst these explanations can be used to clarify the shift in attitudes in Poland and Hungary, a more difficult question arises to what made the Western European participants regress in their acceptance towards LGBT individuals. An explanation for this could be the fact that the aforementioned dynamics of inclusion in the media, and the increased public presence of homosexuals' exposure, has already reached a certain threshold after which its effects become marginal. While this could lead to a stagnation in attitudes, the negative coefficient of the interaction variable cannot be clarified by this. Hence, a further examination of this effect is necessary. One factor that may have contributed to these results, and which could explain this tendency to some degree is the COVID-19 pandemic, as many students are influenced in their attitudes towards LGBT people by sexual education in their respective schools. With a large number of classes moving online and a general

tightening of educational schedules, this influence could have weakened or even subsided giving way to more homonegative attitudes.

This is closely associated with parent's influence, which, as this study was able to show, has a large impact on children's opinions. Since parents' attitudes influence children's views on LGBT matters, it is possible that schools previously pushed pupils towards a more open point of view, while parents acted in the opposite direction. Hence, a subsiding of the school's influence would lead to children learning homophobic attitudes at home, in turn explaining regressing views in LGBT equality issues in the western European nations. The importance of the parental influence was further underlined by the mediation analysis, confirming that indeed a parent's attitude is partly determining their children's views on the issue of homosexuals and transgender. For all models, partial or complete mediations were observed across all 6 dimensions and 8 models.

The results reported in this study have the potential to open up several branches of future research. First, given the results, it can be said that there seems to be a clear connection when it comes to acceptance of homosexuality between on the one hand, the Eastern and Western European countries and on the other hand, male and female participants. Hence, there seems to be a salient connection between the concept of masculinity and the acceptance of LGBT individuals. Countries and individuals more in tune with a traditional concept of masculinity seem to be less likely to accept sexual minorities, while simultaneously being less in favor of equal rights. This result gives way to further research into the link between concepts of masculinity and national identity with openness towards LGBT individuals.

Additionally, this study made clear that parents' attitudes matter significantly when it comes to their children's views on sexual minorities. These results give room to future studies examining how large the parental influence on children's opinions regarding trans- and homosexual individuals is when compared to the impact school lessons have. Moreover, the parental influence is a largely new discovery made by this study and should be looked into more closely especially under the addition of the cultural, political and religious background of the parents. This could generate insightful perspectives of what drives parent's and children's opinions on LGBT communities. Hereafter, it would also be of interest to investigate whether these believes are persistent or if they can be changed in later stages of life.

Finally, it was shown, that in recent times there seems to be a negative trend in the perceived and actual treatment of homosexuals and transgender in countries that had previously scored higher on these metrics. As stated, this also opens avenues for several potential research topics on why this turn around occurs and how it may be connected to schooling and education. Furthermore, there is the option to choose broader samples including schools with students from different social backgrounds.

When looking at ways to improve the standing and situation of LGBT individuals in European societies, there are two possible angles that this paper identified. First, schools were shown to still be problematic environments prone to harassment of LGBT pupils. To counteract this, steps should be taken to educate not only students but also teachers on sexual diversity and gender issues. Since for instance in Poland teachers were shown to be unlikely to interfere in bullying of LGBT pupils. The second discovery this paper made is that the role of parents is impactful in shaping their children's viewpoint on these issues. Hence, the aim should be to increase parent's awareness. However, this might be rather difficult to implement as the mediation analysis showed that much of parental acceptance was steered by the general cultural environment of the nation they inhabited. Nevertheless, it could be useful to offer educational programs on the issues of LGBT students to parents at their children's school to alleviate some of existing negative sentiments. Furthermore, and most importantly, sex education highlighting diversity should play a more prominent role in the curriculum of European schools, given that today's children are tomorrow's parents. Since the results of this study pointed out that a certain level of acceptance is passed on from parents to children, by educating children about LGBT issues today, we can create future generations that are more accepting of sexual minorities.

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Appendix

All statistics belonging to this article are available at:

https://kuleuven.box.com/s/6scm7w1b02z1jvd3imgcy569ni5xda15

Education for children with Albinism in Tanzania. A cooperation project of the University College of Teacher Education Styria and the University of Moshi

Andrea Holzinger[1], Ursula Komposch[1], Gonda Pickl[1] & Martin Hochegger[2]

Abstract

Based on the Erasmus+ project "Inclusion of children and young people with disabilities in Tanzania – transfer of knowledge and experience in the field of school inclusion" of the University of Teacher Education Styria and Mwenge Catholic University in Moshi in Tanzania, this article briefly describes how transnational cooperation can take place on several levels to achieve a better global understanding of inclusive education. The cooperation between the University of Teacher Education Styria and Mwenge Catholic University is related to a project of the organization Lebenshilfe Graz and Styria, Missio Austria and the government of Styria. On the one hand, the focus of the article is on the situation of people with albinism in Tanzania and on a short presentation of two schools where children and adolescents with and without disabilities (also pupils with albinism) are taught together, the St. Francis Primary School, and the St. Pamachius Inclusive Secondary School. On the other hand, the Erasmus+ project is described in greater detail, thus providing sustainable insights into the professionalization of teachers in inclusive settings as well as into the education system of the two participating countries Austria and Tanzania (Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark, 2020).

Keywords

Inclusion, albinism, transnational cooperation, human rights, teacher professionalism

1 University College of Teacher Education Styria, Institute for Early Childhood and Primary Teacher Education, Graz, Austria

2 Lebenshilfe Steiermark

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1 Introduction

Since 2011, the University College of Teacher Education Styria has been cooperating with university colleges and universities outside Europe. The project described in this article is the first cooperation with an African university, the Mwenge Catholic University in Moshi, Tanzania. Both the University College of Teacher Education Styria as well as the Mwenge Catholic University in Moshi, Tanzania, are centres for teacher education. Internationalisation in lecturing and in research is an integral part of the strategic orientation of both institutions.

Being Austria's first UNESCO university college, the University College of Teacher Education Styria has a strong focus on sustainable development, on education towards democracy and peace, on human rights and human rights education, and on Global Citizenship Education in the areas of teacher education, advanced training, and in-service training.

That focus is the starting point for the central objectives of the mobility project: The exchange of knowledge and of experience regarding school education of children with disabilities, and the specific training of teachers for children with special needs will contribute to implement the "Sustainable Development Goals by 2030", and the "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities". The central goal of both agreements that can be brought to realisation timely and sustainable, is the education of people.

According to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, all individuals with disabilities have the right to live on equal footing with others in their social environment, and to have access to inclusive and free high-quality primary and secondary schools (United Nations, 2006).

The "Sustainable Development Goals by 2030" aim for all girls and boys to be able to graduate from free, fair, and high-quality primary and secondary schools by 2030. To achieve that goal requires a distinct increase in qualified teachers, and international cooperation in teacher education (United Nations, 2015).

2 General information about Tanzania and people with disabilities in Tanzania

Tanzania is located on the East coast of Africa on the Indian ocean. Dodoma is the capital city, and the official national language is Kiswahili, with English also being widely used. Tanganyika became independent and a republic on 9th December 1961 and 1962 respectively. Zanzibar became independent on 10th December 1963 and the People's Republic of Zanzibar was established after the Revolution on 12th January 1964. The two sovereign states formed the United Republic of Tanzania on 26th April 1964 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021, p. 1). The population of the United Republic of Tanzania has increased

more than four times from 12.3 million in 1967 to 57.6 million in 2020 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2021, p. 20). The prevalence rate of people with disabilities, aged 5–24, is 2.3 percent in Mainland Tanzania and 1,8 percent in Zanzibar. These rates indicate that over 600,000 children and young people in Tanzania have a disability (UNICEF, 2021, p. 39).

Visual impairments and mobility impairments represent the largest proportion of disability types in Tanzania. Difficulties in seeing were with 3,7 percent the most reported form of disability, followed by mobility with 3,1 percent, hearing with 1,9 percent, cognition with 1,5 percent and communication with 0,8 percent (Shughuru, 2013, p. 342).

In developing countries like Tanzania, poverty and diseases are still widespread. In these countries, people with disabilities are particularly affected by poverty, and consequently live a life on the margins of society. 80 percent of all people with disabilities worldwide are living in developing countries. The culturally specific definitions of disability and the treatment of individuals with disabilities in different cultures show a worldwide alignment with the medically shaped concept of disability in the dimension that disability is also a social phenomenon. What differs considerably between the different cultures, however, is the concrete social situation of people with disabilities (Neubert & Cloerkes, 2001, pp. 5–6). The treatment of people with disabilities in Tanzania is still strongly influenced by the traditional worldview, and disability is tried to be explained with associated ideas, such as superstition. The behaviour towards people with disabilities is determined by the life within the extended family and the associated obligations. Within these extended families, individuals with a disability are mostly equal members, with the family providing the framework for their support and for being responsible for their care, upbringing, education and employment. However, due to the increasing rural exodus, extended families are increasingly dissolving. In the cities, institutionalized support services are not always available, with the consequence that the nuclear family must bear the burdens and challenges resulting from a disability (Müller-Mbwilo, 2008, p. 44). The differences in the response towards individuals with disabilities are influenced by society. Furthermore, in the different regions of Tanzania the reaction towards individuals with disabilities is different and, for example, depends on the type, but also on the visibility of a disability. Reactions towards individuals with disabilities have a wide range, reaching from highly negative reactions such as neglect and discrimination, to overprotection of individuals with disabilities (Kern, 2013, p. 66).

Tanzania signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 30 March 2007 and on 10 November 2009 respectively, and the Optional Protocol to the (CRPD) on 29 September 2008 and 10 November 2009 respectively (Shughuru, 2013, p. 342).

Against the background of the state of Tanzania having committed itself to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, there are some attempts to implement this very convention. For example, there are organizations representing and advocating

for the rights and welfare of persons with disabilities. In Tanzania, there are a total of ten Disabled Peoples' Organizations (DPOs) working for the rights and welfare of people with a wide range of disabilities, for example in the areas of visual impairment and blindness, hearing impairment, cognitive impairment and others, but also specifically for albinism, called Tanzania Albino Society (TAS) (Shughuru, 2013, p. 352).

3 People with albinism in Tanzania

Albinism is a genetically inherited condition resulting from a lack of (or the transport of) melanin pigment in skin, hair, and eyes, occurring worldwide, though in varying prevalence, regardless of ethnicity or gender (Brockmann, 2011, p. 15). There are two types of albinism, one being the oculo-cutaneous type with both skin and eyes being affected by the lack of melanin, the other type being the ocular type with only the eyes being affected (Brockmann, 2011, p. 21). Common to both types is the vulnerability to sun exposure and the increased risk of getting skin cancer. The different types of albinism also differ in the degree of the affected individuals' visual abilities. The lack of melanin displays itself in the iris, the retina, and in the visual nerve, leading to various forms of visual impairment. Individuals with albinism often compensate for the increased sensitivity to light with strong sunglasses (Käsmann-Kellner, 2005, p. 13).

In some parts of the world, especially in some African countries, albinism is still profoundly misunderstood, both socially and medically. The physical appearance of persons with albinism frequently is the object of erroneous beliefs and myths influenced by superstition, which foster their marginalization and social exclusion (Ero et al., 2021).

In Africa, Tanzania scores highest in the birth rate of people with albinism. Current estimates indicate that 18,000 people with albinism are currently living in Tanzania (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, 2021, p. 18). In some African countries, and in Tanzania in particular, people have different perceptions about individuals with albinism. The major problem seems to be the lack of education and missing experiences regarding interactions with individuals with albinism. "Zeruzeru", a swearword for colored persons with white skin, literally means "double zero" and sometimes is used to replace the birthname and is extremely shameful for the affected individuals (Bieker, 2003, p. 47). Superstition, prosecution and repudiation from society lead to affected individuals being the target of so-called witch doctors. Based on the belief that individuals with albinism own magical powers, their skin, blood and hair are used sometimes for making potions (Neumann, 2009, p. 11). In some areas the hair is used to knit fisher nets, supposedly leading to a good catch (Van der Horst-Tenberken, 2011, p. 27). Another belief is that persons with individuals are spirits rather than human beings, yet another reason for discrimination and threat to their lives (Kajiru & Nyimbi, 2020).

While the body parts are said to bring good luck and wealth, living people with this genetic defect are considered a bad omen or cursed. As a result can be, that people with albinism avoid living in public, children with albinism (often) do not attend school, and their special needs are not considered. Without education, they have little chance of finding a job as adults and are therefore exposed to a particularly high risk of poverty (United Nations, 2019, p. 12). Even the simplest aids, such as sunscreen to protect against the increased risk of skin cancer or eyeglasses to prevent impaired vision, are not available. Around the years 2007 and 2008, people with albinism, particularly in rural Tanzania, were murdered because their body parts were irrationally believed to have the potential to lead to economic wealth. Nearly 60 incidents were reported, and criminal charges were filed against the suspects. Many people continue to express anger at the way the government has responded to the incidents and the way the cases have been delayed in the justice system (Shughuru, 2013, p. 354). Because of the high incidence of persons with albinism in Tanzania compared to other African countries, a self-help organization called "Tanzania Albinism Society" aims to fight for the rights and needs of individuals with albinism, to support the families, to explain the etiology of the disorder, and to fight against disadvantage, mistrust and prejudice in the society (Bieker, 2003, pp. 47–48). The International Albinism Awareness Day on June 13, established by the United Nations, has been very welcome, creating a platform of awareness. This internationally recognized day aims to raise awareness of the sometimes-serious human rights violations, stigma and discrimination faced by individuals with albinism in many countries around the world and to show that affected persons are human beings just as any other persons in the world (United Nations, 2019).

4 Transnational cooperation on multiple levels

The cooperation of the University College of Teacher Education Styria with the Mwenge Catholic University is connected to a project of the organisation "Lebenshilfe Graz and Styria", Missio Austria and the government of Styria. Within this project, two schools where children with and without disabilities are educated together, the St. Francis Primary School and the St. Pamachius Inclusive Secondary School, are accompanied and supported. Both schools also educate children with albinism who frequently also display impairments in the areas of vision and hearing. The cooperation of those two schools will be strengthened even more with the aim to facilitate the transfer from primary to secondary school also for children with disabilities or albinism.

4.1 "Love, Live, Hope" – the lived school vision of the St. Francis Primary School

The educational programme at the Primary School St. Francis of Assisi has a wide range. There is an intensive elementary education programme for children with and without disabilities as well as for children with albinism starting at the age of three. The focus is on early intervention in the areas of distinct disabilities (blindness, hearing loss and elements of Montessori education). In the regular primary school, work is done on 8 school levels on another inclusive issue – expressed in an excerpt from the mission statement: "Can we tell a blind or deaf child that he or she cannot learn in school?". Intensive school and extra-curricular support are guaranteed as a large part of the pedagogical staff also lives on "campus", and the pedagogical staff also includes blind and deaf teachers who are treated and employed equally to their colleagues without disabilities. In addition, there are separate support conferences for individual children with special support needs. Still, quite a few children with albinism are not admitted until they are 10 or 12 years old. They have not had the opportunity to receive school education, although just like for all children it is important for them, too, to receive basic education. Their education is also accompanied by internal differentiation and individual support. Some children are orphans because their parents had died prematurely due to the still widespread HIV-disease or the enormously rampant malaria. For these children, but also for those who come from distant villages, full accommodation in the school and the associated school home is necessary.

At the same time, there is a large influx of children with albinism. Accommodations must be created also for these children; therefore, work is currently underway to expand the number of school home places. With the support of Missio Austria, the province of Styria, and the organisation "Lebenshilfe Graz and Styria", new places are currently being created.

Under difficult external conditions, another school motto is being followed in an admirable way: "Don't be afraid to be who you are, someone out there needs to meet someone like you".

4.2 St. Pamachius Inclusive Secondary School

Under the guiding principle "Building a community that is properly educated with discipline and respect for all" and the vision "to be a diverse inclusive secondary school committed to academic excellence and integrity", this school has been run by the Diocese of Moshi since February 2019. At this secondary co-educational inclusive school for young people aged 14 and above, around 240 students are currently taught in English, Kiswahili and sign language in relation to all the subjects prescribed for a secondary school, and are thus also prepared for university studies.

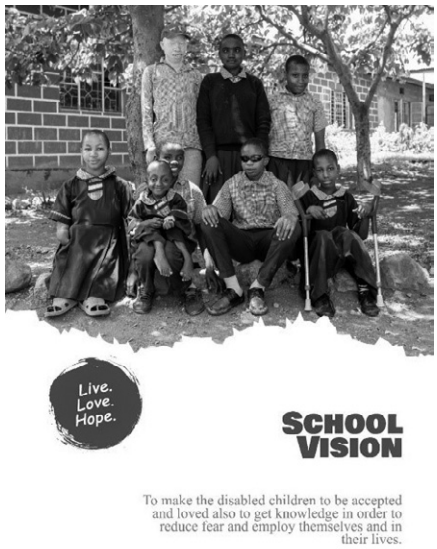

Figure 1: School Vision – St. Francis Inklusive Primary School, Tanzania

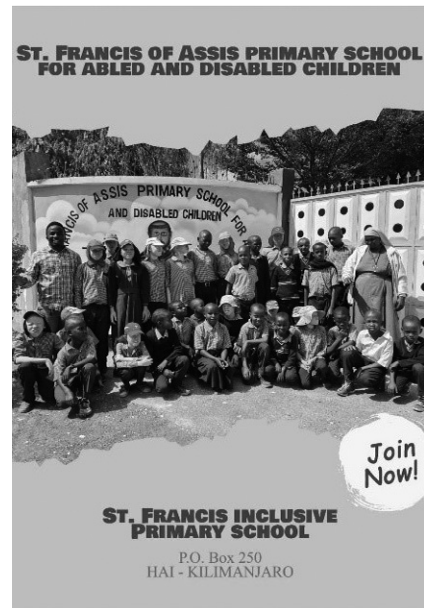

Figure 2: Folder St. Francis Inclusive Primary School, Tanzania

Sign language is used not only throughout the lessons, but also in leisure time; all young people, whether deaf or not, learn sign language, thus creating the possibility of a true encounter at eye-level. The offer to acquire sign language skills also is open for young people with albinism. Currently, more than 50 young people with sensory disabilities are being taught, and there is a strong focus on individual learning support for all pupils. After-school assistance is available for pupils with special care needs.

All facilities – school classrooms, school dormitories for girls and boys, public spaces, library, church, and leisure facilities – are designed to be barrier-free. Such an ambitious concept is cost-intensive. The school operation as well as the expansion of the school dormitory and further school classes are financed, among others, by church organisations, such as Missio Austria, and by private donors.

The headmaster's motto is: "Inclusion is the best option for Tanzania, Africa and the world". Due to the great success of this school model, an expansion of the school classes and of the school home currently is in progress.

4.3 Expansion of the school network

The next step in the expansion of inclusive school models is the project "Inclusive eco-social vocational school on Kilimanjaro". The aim is to provide training for young people with and without disabilities in "rainforest protection" and "forestry and reforestation" as a contribution to averting climate catastrophe in the vast savannahs and steppes around Kilimanjaro.

4.4 Charta for children's rights

Furthermore, in cooperation with the Austrian organisation "Lebenshilfe" (described above), Missio Austria, and the local school administrations, a Children's Rights Charta is being drafted for all inclusive church-schools, and subsequently for all schools and school homes of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Moshi. A draft is already available. The next step is to involve the new church leadership of the Diocese of Moshi in the recognition process. In this context, according to the project initiators Patrick Asanterabi and Martin Hochegger, it is envisaged that after completion and acceptance of this charter by the new bishop, all teachers and educators should be enrolled at Mwenge Catholic University through further training on child rights issues.

5 Key points of the Erasmus+ project

5.1 Project goals

The focus of the Erasmus+ project – Higher education student and staff mobility between Programme and Partner Countries – in the first phase from 2020 to 2023 is the mobility of teachers from the two universities with the aim of establishing a transfer of experience and knowledge with regards to school and university education. The participation of teachers in study programmes by both universities is seen as an important factor for the internationalisation of higher education. The participants in the mobility programme should enable sustainable insights both into the professionalization of teachers and into the education system of the respective other country; thus, the participants are to become active mediators of intercultural competences.

Mwenge Catholic University (MWECAU) became a full-fledged university in 2014 and comprises the faculties of Education, Science and Arts and Social Sciences. Courses offered by these faculties include education, sociology and social work, geography and environmental studies, mathematics and statistics, business administration, project planning and management, master's degrees in business administration and education, and a doctoral programme in education. The university has a policy of open access and equal opportunities for students and staff. MWECAU has started to establish a new programme to train teachers for students with special needs. Since there is only one university that trains

such teachers the demand is great. Having started with 31 students at the beginning, the university currently is attended by around 5,000 students.

The teachers of the University College of Teacher Education Styria will provide courses at Mwenge Catholic University in the areas of inclusive education and support for children with motor and sensory disabilities, and will support the university in developing programmes for the education and in-service training of teachers and educators with a focus on human rights education, inclusion and special education. Another objective will be advising the teachers of the university with regard to accompanying the two schools described above in their school development.

The teachers from Mwenge Catholic University will attend courses at the University College of Teacher Education Styria with a focus on human rights education, inclusion and special needs education. Furthermore, they will visit schools with long-term experience in supporting children and adolescents with motor and sensory disabilities.

The student mobility envisaged in the second phase focuses on the development of international educator competences such as cultural empathy and open-mindedness in a global context in order to develop a mutual understanding of each other's culture and to contribute to reducing the potential for global conflicts. Furthermore, the acquisition of competences in the field of inclusive education and special needs education against the background of different cultures and educational policy frameworks is to be promoted.

As participants in the teacher mobility on the part of the University College of Teacher Education Styria, a team of six persons will cover the following fields of expertise: organisational development, human resources development, inclusive education, human rights education, support areas of vision, hearing, and motor skills. Furthermore, teachers and students from Mwenge Catholic University will be introduced to possibilities of augmentative and alternative communication modes to support children and adolescents with complex communication needs.

Participants in the teacher mobility of Mwenge Catholic University are persons who are responsible for the development of study programmes and for further training in inclusion and special needs education, as well as persons who are involved as lecturers in the in-service training on the Children's Rights Charter for the teaching staff of the two project schools.

5.2 Project activities to date

Due to Covid-19, the meetings between the participants of the two universities so far have been exclusively virtual. The first meeting took place in January 2021, the second in April 2021, the third in July 2021, and the fourth meeting is planned in November/December 2021. Each meeting had a different focus. While the first meeting focused on getting to know each other personally and introducing the respective institution, the

Figure 3 and 4: Screenshots of third meeting of the project partners in July 2021

second meeting presented the school system of the respective country as well as the school support for children with disabilities. In the third meeting, the expectations of the teachers at the University of Moshi were discussed. Objectives are insights into the curricula of the University of Teacher Education Styria, how student teachers can acquire a basic understanding of inclusive education as well as competences for supporting children with disabilities at school. Furthermore, concrete examples are expected of how materials and specific aids can be used to teach pupils with physical and sensory disabilities. The fourth meeting will focus on the concrete planning of the 10-day mobility of the teachers of the University College of Teacher Education Styria, including school visits and meetings with regional persons responsible for the implementation of inclusive education for children with albinism.

The mobility of teachers of the University College of Teacher Education Styria in November/December 2021 cannot be specifically reported on here, as at the time of writing this article it is yet to come.

6 Outlook

The project aims to support the international conventions mentioned at the beginning of this paper – "Sustainable Development Goals by 2030" and "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" – in the field of education, and to actively contribute to teacher education at Mwenge University in Moshi focusing on the acquisition of inclusive competences. Professional competencies of teachers are considered indispensable for the design of an inclusive school system (UNESCO, 1994). Without a systematic reform of pedagogical competencies, an inclusive school system cannot be realised.

Furthermore, an important objective of the mobility programme is to contribute to a better global understanding, and to facilitate the development of international teacher

competences such as cultural empathy in a worldwide context. Styrian and Tanzanian teachers and students should develop a mutual understanding of each other's culture, gain international experience and knowledge, and build a mutual understanding of Europe and Africa respectively. Finally, the mobility represents a broadening of one's own linguistic, cultural and political perspective and a big step towards global understanding as well as professionalization for the profession of teachers.

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Becoming a Feminist. Ways of upbringing and socialisation in the family and education. Polish perspective

Justyna Ratkowska-Pasikowska[1]

Abstract

The presented text is an attempt to describe the process of "becoming" a feminist. It is also an attempt to answer the following questions: what determines being a feminist, and is every woman a feminist? What impact do the family and education have on the process of becoming? The main thesis is that the process of "becoming" a feminist is determined by the environment and primarily through strong relations with the Other. Analysis was conducted on auto-narrations of women, Polish women declared feminists, who describe their path to "becoming" a feminist in the book "Feministki. Własnym głosem o sobie" (Feminists. In their Own Voice – translator's note: own traslation), edited by Sławomira Walczewska.

Keywords

Narration, feminism, femininity, culture, "becoming" process

1 University of Łódź, Łódź, Poland

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1 Introduction

> "Nature does not define woman: it is she who defines herself by reclaiming nature for herself in her affectivity" (De Beauvoir, 2014; translator's note: own translation)

> "A woman is merely a bridge, an intermediary between the powers of nature and culture (i.e. man). A feminine creature constitutes chaos and the gates of hell. She is the stealer of semen" (Janko, 2012, p. 63; translator's note: own translation)

My objective is not to provide an in-depth description of what feminism is nor to describe the transformation which women's movements have undergone with respect to the second and third wave of establishing feminism throughout the world. I am primarily interested in the relationship within families and in the mechanism of "*becoming*" a feminist. Why "becoming"? The accepted formula of *becoming* is a category established by Simone De Beauvoir. In her book "The Second Sex", in the chapter titled "Childhood," she writes: "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman" (De Beauvoir, 2014, p. 319). According to this sentence the act of becoming is determined by social and cultural processes, including internalised socialised stories. This of course is not the rule. Being/becoming a feminist may also be determined by the situation in which a person functions, her lifestyle, as well as significant Others, who influenced the shaping of femininity, including the so called "feminist identity" (Titkow, 2005, p. 37).

2 Content Analysis as an Exploratory Method

Qualitative content analysis (Nasalska, 1982) was conducted in order to establish the most important general trends in the situation of "*becoming*" a feminist. In her analysis of the content, Ewa Nasalska lists three features of qualitative content analysis:

1) analysing not only categories which frequently appear in a given text but also those which occur rarely and are important for given content; 2) taking into account the context of the content in which the analysed categories occur; 3) taking into account the circumstances in which a given statement was made (Nasalska, 1982, p. 61) (Translator's note: own translation).

Analysis was conducted on twelve women's auto-narrations (two women were interviewed by the author (Ten women were asked to participate in the study and only two responded. I would like to express my gratitude for their help and involvement in responding to the questions.), while ten stories come from the book "Feministki. Własnym głosem o sobie", in which women describe the process of becoming feminists, i.e. key situations in their experience and the experience of feminism. The participants also had direct or indirect impact on the shaping of feminism in Poland. According to the editor of "Feministki. Własnym głosem o sobie" the sample of women (10 participants in the project

"Feminisms of the World") "was not meant to be representative, although the purpose was to show the discourse in its diversity" (Walczewska, 2005, p. 18). The research was conducted in the form of an interview, during which the women were recorded and then their statements were transcribed. These transcriptions were then subject to "smoothening their roughness in order to make reading more accessible, without changing the structure of the statements or correcting in which the participants of the project expressed themselves" (Walczewska, 2005, p. 18). The sample included two respondents who are representatives of professionally active women and members of the Women's Council, an advisory body to the president of Slupsk. These participants were interviewed by the author of the study.

Content analysis was conducted in the following manner. First short notes were taken on the margins of the available feminist narratives. The next step was to distinguish the types of information presented in the analysed narratives. The following stage consisted in categorising the subject of the analysis and in determining the main categories important for the purposes of this text. Each narration was treated in the same way. From the presented narrations, the author managed to extract the following categories: the history of women in their families, childhood, family home, Others – significant people who influenced the shaping of a "feminist identity" and the so-called feminist revelation (term adopted from Walczewskax.

3 What Does Becoming a Feminist Mean?

There are many myths surrounding feminists. Debates on the topic are still an element of political conflict. This was well described by Agnieszka Graff in her book titled "Świat bez kobiet. Płeć w polskich życiu publicznym" ("A World Without Women. Gender in Polish Public Life" – translator's note: own translation) (2001). In the chapter "Dlaczego nikt nie lubi feministek?" ("Why No one Likes Feminists" – translator's note: own translation) Graff writes: "A feminist should hold a knife between her teeth, talk about the fall of family, a hundred orgasms and at least two clitorises, and about the feminist plot to castrate men. A feminist has to be obnoxious and her every word should reaffirm what everyone already knows, i. e. that no one likes feminists" (2001, pp. 208–209).

Why else do we dislike feminists? Graff states that "no one likes us because we're ugly, frustrated and full of venom, we don't shave our legs, we hate men, and apart from that we lack logic, women's intuition and common sense" (2001, p. 209). In her book Graff refers to the novel "Nigdy w życiu" by Katarzyna Grochola, which contains the following fragment: "a feminist is an unfulfilled woman who always wears trousers, and who can only envy feminine women their femininity, while she herself does not pay attention to her views or appearance" (Graff, 2001, p. 228, after: Grochola, 2001, p. 88) (translator's note: own translation). Such an image of feminists lies at the base of the question the women

were asked during the interviews, i. e. what they think of feminists, who feminists are, and what makes one become a feminist? The first woman provided the following explanation of who a feminist is:

> *I believe that a feminist is a woman who believes that men and women have equal rights. However, I have come across an opinion (which I disagree with) that only those women who fight actively (lethal weapons are a must) are feminists. Those who act "against" men* (Agnieszka, age 48).

The second interviewee stated the following:

> *Every woman, well almost every woman I know is a feminist, though sometimes they do not know it yet [...] and the word, similarly to gender and LGBT, still has strange connotations in many communities. These of course, result from a lack of knowledge. If we take advantage of the privileges earned by our great grandmothers, our grandmothers and our mothers, such as access to higher (third-level) education, the right to vote, and the ability to work in any profession, I can't understand how we can deny the ideals or the social trend – whatever we want to call it – which simply provides equality, freedom of choice or the right of self-determination to women. I believe that being a feminist means self-determination, and living without cultural or religious restraints. It is a partnership in relationships and an equal voice in every discussion. It is freedom. We often encounter stereotypes, e.g., a woman who does not work professionally and does not earn money is not a feminist. I know women (not many, but nevertheless) who consciously chose to live this way. Is this also an instance of freedom of choice and self-determination, a "social" "contract"?* (Małgorzata, age 56).

The presented statements highlight the categories of equality and freedom, the two key values that people around the world "fight" for. This invites consideration of a new vision of femininity, which would also serve as an instrument to eliminate fears of becoming a woman, which result from social pressure on women. Janko writes "[...] why do I also have to be THIS!!! I even thought of wrapping her [breasts] with tape. But I still felt the inevitability of fate" (Janko, 2012, p. 47) (translator's note: own translation). She goes on to write: "I'm so scared of being a woman: Being a Woman. Please, God, I don't want to be a woman. I'm terrified of being a woman ... God, let me remain a nobody whom no one sees, just for a little longer ..." (2012, p. 51). A feminist approach, as a cognitive value, constitutes an awakening to change the current state of knowledge and to achieve transformation. This is beautifully phrased by Lewis Carroll in Alice in Wonderland: "Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise" (Carroll, 2004, p. 76).

Jaworska-Witkowska writes:

> Becoming oneself as a constant process of infinite identity which is not supported by a name, in a constant identity Alice comprehends in yet a different manner: "Who am I then? Tell me that first, and then, if I like being that person, I'll come up; if not, I'll stay down here till I'm someone else" (Jaworska-Witkowska & Kwieciński, 2011, p. 297, after: Carroll, 2004, p. 20).

Another category revealed in the analysis is independence, understood according to Lucyna Kopciewicz (2003, p. 208) as liberation. An independent woman "has certain elements

which are unfeminine: self-confidence, feistiness, independence, assertiveness, courage, facing danger (a masculine type of "confrontational" power), and most importantly a relative freedom of femininity from male-centric references" (Kopciewicz, 2003, p. 208). Positions of thought in reference to the above-mentioned categories also highlight changes in the linear character of the approach towards femininity.

3.1 Herstories – The Family

Most of the stories highlight the women's family history, which influenced their process of "becoming" a feminist. Women who fight and who display bravery have an impact on history. The statements presented below refer to categorised statements, which in turn constitute the proper context of understanding the conducted analyses.

Thus, we perceive feminism as:

1) a source of strength

> [...] I found a woman who is 94 and lives in Warsaw. She told me the history of the members of her family who were killed. There were two women – one was a member of the anti-German resistance who was brutally killed in Pawiak (translator's note: a prison used by the Gestapo during the German occupation of Poland). The other woman was shot in a street in Warsaw. She was pregnant at the time ... Their fate was terrible, but the knowledge that they were so brave and that I had support from women in my family gave me strength. Both the women who fought in the war, and those who hid somewhere and later began a new life here in the Recovered Territories, in extremely difficult conditions, were courageous. Finding the women from my family and learning about their lives is very important to me. By contrast, my father seems very disappointing (Tarasiewicz, 2005, p. 25).

The stories contain unfinished chapters of searching for oneself through the prism of the stories of other women. An attempt at finding one's identity and constituting oneself as a whole.

2) source of representation

> There is one more thing I have to mention – the role of women and of female friendships in my life. It is the final, most serious, and most profound stage in feminist education and a time of maturation (Iwasiów, 2005, p. 178).

3.2 Childhood and Family Home

Another category is childhood and family home. Even if the women's narrations do not describe childhood as a developmental stage in a positive sense, its content certainly influenced the process of "becoming" a feminist. Below I would like to present narrations which belong to the presented category. The author highlighted certain parts intentionally because they indicate the women's narrative context.

We can certainly notice a specific tendency to construct a feminist identity connected with growing up at home with or without men – fathers, who play a key role in the process of "becoming".

3) A world without men

> Ever since I remember, there were no men in the lives of my grandmother or great-grandmother, while my mother had a brief relationship with my father. I am the result of that relationship. My father left Poland and I haven't seen him for over ten years. I was raised by three women, who had traumatic experiences, who were very lonely, and for whom the post-war reality was very difficult and terrifying (Tarasiewicz, 2005, p. 23).
>
> I grew up in such an environment, and I believe that it had a tremendous impact on me. I did not know men in my immediate surroundings. Even during my parents' brief relationship my father studied in another city, and I spent my entire time with women. Perhaps I did not sense that a man is necessary, e. g. to provide for the family (Tarasiewicz, 2005, p. 23).
>
> As for my spiritual or intellectual development, there was no man present. Only a romantic vision of my father who sailed away as a hero (Tarasiewicz, 2005, p. 23).

4) The family as an anti-world

> Our family was a strange place, an anti-world, though it was pleasant to be in it. We were free from any pressures [...]. My brother, mother, grandmother and I spent a lot of time with each other, talked a lot, and practically had no demands of each other (Lipowska-Teutsch, 2005, p. 61).

4) I, the oddity

> As for my family, its influence on me and on my feminism was primarily to go in a different direction from what was set out for me. I have three younger sisters, aged 23, 15 and 11 years old. In my family, I function as a more or less harmless freak. For my parents, especially for my father and his second wife, a feminist is a frustrated woman who hasn't found a man (Gruszczyńska, 2005, p. 151).

Another statement comes from a woman who had great support from both of her parents and had a lot of freedom.

5) Freedom to act

> At home, I always received support and I almost never fought with my parents. My parents never forced me to do anything, for example, I didn't have to play the piano. Actually, I regret not having learnt to play an instrument, but that was how it was – if I didn't want to do something, I didn't do it, and my parents didn't force me. I had a lot of freedom to act and to shape my identity (Regulska, 2005, p. 85).

The next narration belongs to a woman whose parents raised her as a woman who works professionally who has abilities and possibilities to act in a creative manner.

6) Excerpts from home (term borrowed from Jaworska-Witkowska (2011, p. 179)

> Parents played a crucial role in my upbringing. I wasn't raised as a poor, sick person who needs to be taken care of, who can't manage, who is frail and can't do certain things because of that. I think they actually went too far in the other direction, explaining to me that that's how it is, you have to put it behind you and function as best as you can (Regulska, 2005, p. 86).

> My home [...] shaped my identity by treating me not as a future wife or mother, but as a professional woman, a woman with interests and abilities which should be developed (Regulska, 2005, p. 87).

Sometimes the difficult situation of divorce can induce one to begin searching for oneself. A sad childhood, responsibility for the parents.

7) Family as a source of suffering

> [...] the issue of gender did not exist as a problem in my imagination until my parents' divorce. [...] I had a terribly sad childhood. I was a terribly sad girl. Some years later, many people told me that I was a sad-faced, serious, contemplative child responsible for the fate of the world. I simply felt responsible for my parents' marriage, and that overwhelmed and saddened me (Graff, 2005, p. 91).

> [...] a childhood deprived of warmth left its marks. I know that I can't deny my mother's love for me because I think one has no right to do that. Those are very private, individual issues, and I think that she loved me in the way she was brought up to do. My rigorous grandmother couldn't have raised my mother differently (Titkow, 2005, p. 47).

> My mother was my only biological parent, and I was in a state of a long emotional entanglement with her, in a terribly negative sense (Umińska, 2005, p. 129).

According to Monika Jaworska-Witkowska "raising daughters in a patriarchal mechanism of sense regulation, in a claustrophobic sphere of feminine desire, first requires the (self)raising of mothers. A mother who feels proud of her womanhood and who uses her anger in a creative way, will not become the torturer of her daughter. She will understand her desires, her needs and her rebellion [...] we still do not know as much as we should to prevent our children from falling away from the area of our conscious and mature responsibility" (Jaworska-Witkowska, 2011, p. 192).

A difficult childhood, interwoven with female independence and a father who believes in the ideas of femininity, such as independence and work.

> I shouldn't be asked that question. "Warped" childhood. I was surrounded by remarkable, independent women – a suffragette grandmother, a mother who pursued various passions, scientists, etc. A father who always told me that "the sky is the limit," and who kept repeating until his death that I can be whoever I want to be, as long as I'm not dumb ... And that you have to work hard on yourself, read, study, and be open. Then the strength that is in you will allow you to be free and independent and make money. Today, from the perspective of a mother of adult children, including a daughter, I'm convinced that the family environment has tremendous influence on our attitudes, worldview, and our attitude towards the world. It is fundamental (Małgorzata, age 56).

Others – Significant People Who Influenced the Shaping of a "Feminist Identity" (Feminist identity – a term borrowed from Anna Titkow). In the content analysis of the statements made by the women we can see the role of the so-called Other, who played a significant role in forming and shaping feminist attitudes. Each woman talks about a person who is especially important. Sometimes the Others are important figures of the scientific world, sometimes a female friend from university, sometimes their neighbour or mother. Thus, the first initiatory event, i. e. meeting the authority figure, seems of key importance.

8) Female symbiosis

I can refer only to myself – I felt I'm a feminist after "my first" Women's Congress in Warsaw several years ago. This attitude, emotions and worldview were awakened in me by Professor Środa and then by Professor Płatek. The rhetoric and argumentation presented by these female scientists appeal to me. It was only "after" this that I became aware of the relations within the family and started consciously identifying them in this (feminist) vein. (Agnieszka).

My friend Ewa played an important role in my life. I met her in my first year at university. My first area of study was Polish philology. I wasn't even seventeen when I took the entrance exams. I met her on the first day of the exams. She was a beautiful, happy, incredibly interactive person [...] (Lipowska-Teutsch, 2005, pp. 61–62).

An important event was meeting a certain lady who tried to take her own life after a long period of being persecuted by her husband. She was a catholic from a rural community who suffered from persecution, violence and humiliation, without end or protest, in silence and in solitude. She believed that if she fulfilled all her duties as a mother, wife, and catholic, and that if she bore her cross, she would be rewarded after death [...]. She tried to take her life by drinking a corrosive substance. She wanted to die but not right away because she wanted to confess and be absolved form her sins, so as not to go to hell. She went ahead with her plan and died in agony. This terrifying story motivated me to do something (Lipowska-Teutsch, 2005, pp. 55–56).

I got a feminist's phone number and I remember writing it down under "f" in my planner. I visited Bożena and suddenly I felt immense relief and a sense of being at home. [...]. Thanks to Bożena, and later to my friendship with Kazia Szczuka, being at home in feminist thought and accepting my Jewish identity were somehow combined (Graff, 2005, p. 98).

my conscious contact with feminism began through Ewa Farnus, my friend from university (Limanowska, 2005, p. 111).

3.3 Feminist Revelation

Every event has its beginning. There is always a turning point, a moment of initiation, an existential crisis which coerces us to take some course of action. Issues related to the feminist "revelation" also had their beginning. Analyses of narrations showed that in one case it was emigration, in another health, and in yet another it was sheer chance.

9) Existence

My feminism emerged through the experience of emigration (Regulska, 2005, p. 78)

Another element which shaped me as a person and made me sensitive to otherness is my health. [...] This certainly shaped my identity as a fighter, a tough person who knows that there are no boundaries or obstacles, and if such obstacles occur, you just have to come up with ways of overcoming them (Regulska, 2005, p. 86)

I was close to never becoming a feminist. When I think of myself in high school and of my opinions at the time, I realise that only an accident prevented me from ending up as an extreme right-winger, completely certain that only I am right. I could just as well have proven myself there and be sure that

it is the right option. My sense of social justice probably comes from reading *Winnetou* (Limanowska, 2005, p. 120).

Feminism, in my case, began in an ostensibly purely intellectual way (Umińska, 2005, p. 133).

4 What Now?

Feminist values emerge in the process of socialisation, identification, as well as acculturation and generational transfer. Thus, according to Ostruch-Kowalska (after George Herbert Meade) experience "has significance [for, J. R-P] the social formation of one's 'self.' According to this theory identity is not something 'given' – it is bestowed in acts of social recognition" (Ostruch-Kowalska, 2003).

10) Extensions as Impulses

In the case of my son, I'm raising him to respect women, women's rights, human rights and to be tolerant of others (Tarasiewicz, 2005, p. 33).

I think that I will discretely support my granddaughter in her independence, though it seems that she has an excess of it, and that no one imposes restrictions on her (Titkow, 2005, p. 51).

I consider myself a feminist – says Zosia's mother. – Feminism is a life philosophy which says that women can do what they want, that they have a right to self-determination, and to feel good about their choices regardless of what they are. When Zosia said that she didn't want to have children, I realised that respecting my daughter's choices meant that she may want something different than I do (Manthey, 2017).

My daughter learnt about feminism at home. We often talked about it at the table. She learnt that she should make decisions about herself and that she can do it [...] She also had difficult relations with her father, which remain complicated to this day (Regulska, 2005, p. 88).

5 Conclusions

In the presented content analysis, I managed to distinguish the following categories: the history of women in their families, childhood, family home, Others – significant people who influenced the shaping of a "feminist identity" and the feminist revelation (term borrowed from Walczewska (2005). Each of the presented categories is a collection of stories of women's experiences on the road to "becoming" a feminist. The presented narrations turn out to be a representation of complex emotions, which allow us to consider the process of becoming a feminist. Such consideration makes it possible to perceive the variant of freedom which appeared in each presented narration. Each woman experienced an internal metamorphosis, a transformation of the "training of invisible, toxic" (Jaworska-Witkowska, 2011, p. 192) methods of education. The eponymous process of "becoming" a feminist was derived from the narrations. This also indicates a type of "awakening

integrated with experience" (Jaworska-Witkowska, 2011, p. 198). A reflection on the issue of becoming a feminist may become crucial to psychological, sociological and pedagogical reflection, for it is tied to the issue of becoming aware of one's possibilities, and one's potential. The process of "becoming" is also a process of connecting two worlds: being and not-being a feminist. This relationship is important due to a possible confrontation between the poles of identity. I believe it is also important due to the fact of establishing new paths of cognition for the understanding of what feminism is and who feminists are also in the educational perspective.

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Exploring geographical imaginaries of international student teachers

Vera Spangler[1] *& Thilde Juul-Wiese*[2]

Abstract

This chapter identifies how geographical imaginaries play into student teachers' decision making of study and work abroad destinations, and explores how these predominantly collective, historic imaginaries are rooted in complex power relations, global hierarchies and postcolonialism. Drawing on two sets of data combining incoming and outgoing student mobility to and from Denmark and through the use of a mapping method, we explore student teachers' geographical imaginaries, enclosing their preferences and perceptions of different places. This allows us to analyse students' (implicit) geospatial associations and perceptions of where 'good' education and 'proper' knowledge come from. Exploring geographical imaginaries of international student teachers becomes of specific importance and interest as our findings highlight global power relations between the providers of ideas, knowledge and practices and the implementers in specific educational contexts. Hence, this chapter serves as a jumping-off point for further critical reflection on how higher education internationalisation and the internationalisation of teacher training (re-)produce unequal, historically shaped perceptions and an uneven spread of mobilised knowledge.

Keywords

Internationalisation, teacher education, student mobility, geographical imaginaries, knowledge hierarchies

1 Department of Sociology, University of Surrey, Guildford, England

2 Department of Educational Anthropology, Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, Copenhagen, Denmark

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1 Student mobility and internationalisation within Europe

Internationalisation has developed as one of the key policy strategies and goals of higher education institutions' strategic plans (Altbach, 2007), and mobility is one of the key mechanisms through which internationalisation occurs. Often, internationalisation and, notably, mobility, are described as beneficial, inherently good and a neutral process (Morley et al., 2018). Higher education internationalisation has been deemed instrumental to exchanging and producing knowledge and to educate globally engaged students for an ever more interconnected and complex world (Roy et al., 2019). Yet for some years now critical perspectives on the development and current orientation of internationalisation have emerged (e.g., Stein, 2019; Adriansen & Madsen, 2019), expressing concern about the risk of reproduction of already uneven global hierarchies through mainstream internationalisation activities, particularly in institutions of the Global North and Western/ized higher education institutions. Within Europe, mobility tends to be oriented towards an only rather small group of countries with flows of students streaming from more marginal to centre places, creating clear disparities between countries in terms of an uneven spread of international students (Brooks & Waters, 2011). Wealthier countries are favoured study destinations compared to their counterparts in the south, and students from Western Europe show less interest in studying in eastern European countries (Rivza & Teichler, 2007).

The above points towards the importance of exploring the spatial aspects of student mobility. A geographical perspective can, first of all, help us to map patterns and flows of students. We can trace the geographic movements of students, following them between regions and countries. In classic migration theory, we would simply analyse certain push and pull factors for a decision whether or not to move from one place to another. What would remain unexplored is the content of the line between the two places. The content of this line manifests an interesting space for exploration as it holds much meaning and experiences (Cresswell, 2006). Thus, in this chapter, we seek to understand qualitatively what lies beneath such flows and patterns. Recent writings have increasingly focused on place in terms of particular destinations students choose (Beech, 2014, 2019) because of, for example, shared culture (Nachatar Singh et al., 2014), social networks and bonds (Beech, 2015; Geddie, 2013), or accumulating cultural capital used as a mark of distinction (Prazeres, 2018; Findlay et al., 2012). This chapter identifies how geographical imaginaries (Said, 1978; Appadurai, 1996) play into student teachers' decision making of study and work abroad destinations, and explores how these predominantly collective, historic imaginaries are rooted in complex power relations, global hierarchies and post colonialism. Drawing on two sets of data combining incoming and outgoing student mobility to and from Denmark, we explore student teachers' geographical imaginaries, enclosing their preferences and perceptions of different places. This allows us to analyse students' (implicit) geospatial associations and perceptions of where "good" education and "proper"

knowledge come from. Exploring such geographical imaginaries of prospective international teachers becomes of specific importance and interest as our findings highlight complex, global power relations between the providers of ideas, knowledge and practices and the implementers in specific educational contexts. This is significant in terms of the often presented picture of internationalisation as neutral and its assumed benefits. It is also significant in relation to the critical issue of the physical flow of students from more marginal to wealthier northern countries and the often opposite direction of knowledge transfer (Brooks & Waters, 2011), and recent greater recognition of mobility's role in knowledge production (e. g. Madge et al., 2009, 2015; Jöns, 2015).

2 The internationalisation of teacher training

The teaching profession and the education of teachers is strongly locally entrenched and designed around the demands of a particular national professional profile (Sieber & Mantel, 2012). Generally, student teachers belong to the least mobile groups of international students (EHEA, 2015). Yet, the internationalisation of teacher training is receiving increased attention around the globe, which can be perceived as a response to arising pedagogical challenges in a globalised world (Larsen, 2016; Abraham & von Brömssen, 2018). Knight (2008) defines internationalisation more generally as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education" (p. 21). An important rationale for internationalisation of teacher training is to promote intercultural competence in an attempt to increase teachers' global understanding and their ability to implement such approaches into their classrooms (Cushner, 2007; Phillion et al., 2009). There are calls and aspirations to increase international student mobility for prospective teachers to acquire and understand the advantages of intercultural competences through personal experiences abroad, linking to the rising awareness that teachers are multipliers of mobility and motivators for their future pupils (EHEA, 2015; Sieber & Mantel, 2012, Cushner, 2011). Yet, what happens when teachers from all over the world come together in one place, or when student teachers choose to do a teaching internship in another country? Does this mobility enable meaningful interaction, and does it lead to personal and professional reflection? Or can it also reinforce ethnocentric views about themselves and others? In this regard, it is important to understand the impacts of internationalisation and mobility for prospective teachers as their experiences abroad set the stage for reflection and self-transformation in terms of personal and professional development, knowledge acquisition, and application of skills.

3 Methodology

This chapter is based on data collected through ethnographic fieldwork at a Danish higher education institution with incoming international student teachers from 19 countries and amongst 23 Danish student teachers engaging in outgoing mobility to nine different countries. Thus, we draw on two data sets comprising incoming and outgoing mobility to and from Denmark. We use qualitative data collected through the so-called mapping tool (Donnelly et al., 2020), combined with semi-structured individual, pair and small focus group (up to five students) interviews and post study interviews. Donnelly, Gamsu and Whewall (2020) propose a new method, which they call the "mapping tool" aimed to elicit the relational construction of people and places. The tool was developed based on their study into the geographic im/mobilities among higher education students in the UK. Participants create a visual representation of their geographical imaginaries, colouring or marking their perceptions and possible preferences of different localities, which is then followed by an interview approach wherein the participants tell about their maps.

Inspired by this approach, we printed out blank maps of the world, omitting place names. We presented the maps to the participants prior to the interview and asked them to colour them in accordance with a colour key. The two sets of data (incoming: 35 maps; outgoing 20 maps) were carried out separately. The incoming students were presented with the following set of questions: Where do you plan to teach? Where would you like to teach? Where do you think teachers are most respected? Where is the best place to teach? (see map 1). The outgoing students were asked to colour in places based on the following aspects: Places you want to do an internship, places you might consider doing an internship, places you do not wish to do an internship, and places you do not know/care about. All students were free to choose as many places as they wished.

The mapping tool was in both cases used in an integrated way within the interview process and students were asked to narrate their thoughts while colouring the maps. Thus, the students narrated their geographical horizons, which Jensen (2015) conceptualises as "references to geographical places and narratives tied to these places" (p. 44). We gained empirical insight into the students' worldviews and imaginaries by listening to how they portray places and spaces while engaging actively with the map. However, the method is experimental and there are limits to it. For example, it can be argued that these maps are a static representation of the student teachers' spatial understandings; nonetheless, it is still found useful for uncovering their worldviews and their boundary construction of the world in relation to education.

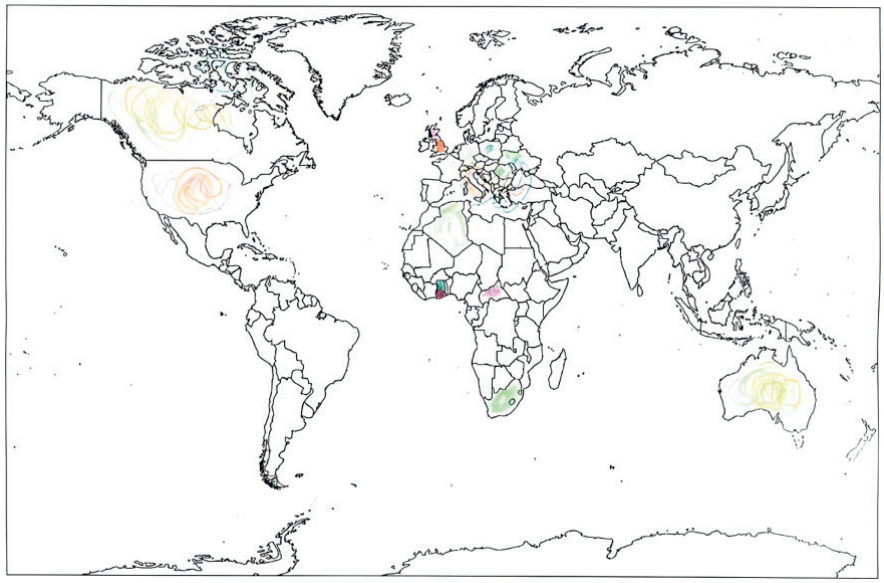

Figure 1: "I think the best place to teach is where there is peace" – Student from Ghana

4 Geographical imaginaries

Within the following analysis, we will illustrate both incoming and outgoing students' perspectives and experiences. We portray empirical data about students' imaginaries concerning three interrelated themes: The collective nature of imaginaries, positioning of the "Other" and the "Self", and (global) hierarchical structuring of people, places, education and knowledge.

When Maebh, an incoming student from Ireland, coloured her map in, she reflected on places where she would like to teach and said,

> *I had a friend that worked in Zambia [...] She was there over the summer, and she just loved it. She said it was so amazing. They were so respectful and kind over there and the children were really willing to learn and she said it was a whole different experience and it is something you have to do in order to fully understand it, so I think that'll be cool, I think it'll be nice to be able to say that you've done that.*

While Maebh studied for one semester in Denmark, friends of hers studied at an institution in Finland. Based on their stories, she added, "*The teaching system is one of the best in the world, it seems to be they are the unspoken heroes of teacher education, it seems to be inclusive*". Caja, an outgoing Danish teacher student, studying for one semester in Norway, had also considered studying in Finland. Her comment holds similar ideas as those of Maebh's friends. She said, "*At some point, they [the Finns] were elected as the best public school [in the*

world] and I thought it would be interesting to experience the differences between our and their teacher education".

Even though imagination is generally thought of being more of individual nature, geographical imaginaries are not merely representational but are held to be performative in nature as the stories told cause people to act in relation to and through such imaginaries. Imaginaries about other places and lives circulate among people and through their social networks. Salazar (2011, p. 576) describes historically laden and socio-culturally constructed imaginaries as

> socially shared and transmitted (both within and between cultures) representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices.

Historically laden and socio-culturally constructed imaginaries are often at the root of many journeys (Salazar, 2011). Students receive information from their social network or university webpages, playing into their imagined experience of being an international student and other geographical imaginaries about their study destination more widely (Beech, 2014). Many of the incoming international students, for instance, knew other students who had studied in Denmark. Additionally, by studying together for one semester, international student teachers learn from each other and hear about other education systems around the world, constructing geographical imaginaries about such places. Especially previous students' experiences seemed to be influential for the Danish outgoing student teachers in choosing and rejecting specific places for being either "useful in the future" or "just a vacation". Furthermore, descriptions of schools, pedagogy, culture, possibilities of taking vacations, trips, and climate were highly influential on the students' final choices. Josephine (see map 2), an outgoing student explained, "*It's what I've heard from friends. The ones who have been to Peru and Ghana [...] – it's been an amazing trip. [They said] 'We were just tanning every day. We did this and that.' Also the ones in the Philippines. But there wasn't any teaching and preparation. They didn't learn a thing about that*". Josephine herself eventually went to Iceland, which she considered to be more like Denmark and thus a place she could learn more from visiting. Hence, the geographical imaginaries that students construct relationally also influence what they expect they can learn from studying or teaching in particular places, implicitly mirroring global hierarchies of knowledge.

As marketing strategies, universities often build their identities around the place they are located at, which is present already in their very names. Individual higher education institutions develop distinctive place identities, where place and geographical location become central to themselves (Beech, 2019). The Danish higher education institution from our study emphasises that it sees a significant benefit in being part of a connected Europe and a strong Nordic region. The institution states that the academic programmes offered to represent a unique Nordic perspective, providing an excellent opportunity for

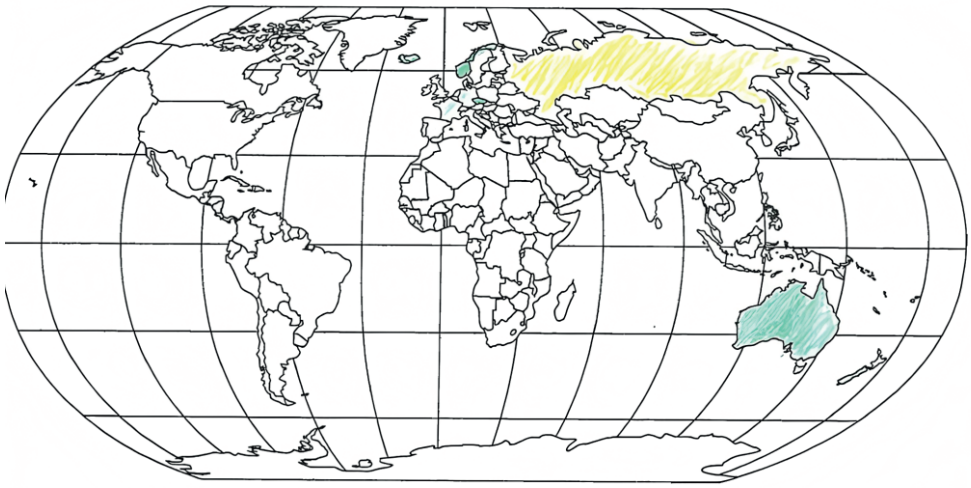

Figure 2: Josephine

international student teachers to learn about the famous Scandinavian welfare model. Consequently, a Scandinavian or Nordic education is constructed as being highly valuable. Many of the incoming students echoed these discourses throughout the mapping tool narratives. Students specifically linked Denmark as their choice of study and work destination with their future professions as teachers. Paula from Spain (see map 3), for instance, said, "*We have always learned that Nordic countries are the best places for teachers. Where the education is more valued, more dynamic, more innovative*", and Shoma from Japan mentioned, "*Nordic country is very famous for high level of education system*".

Most incoming students described Denmark as being known for its good education system, often referring to the Nordic or Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) in general. Many incoming students reduced their home countries to inferior places, describing the education they received in Denmark as better. They were encouraged also by the Danish institution selling their unique Nordic education to prospective international students on their webpage. Consequently, many of the students' home countries were "othered" as moving to a Scandinavian country to study (or work) would enable students to receive a highly valued Western education, enabling them to improve their social status (Beech, 2014).

Several outgoing Danish students shared this idea of Denmark and the Nordic countries as highly ranked in an imagined hierarchy of educational systems. This imagined hierarchy influenced where the students chose to either study or teach depending on what they wanted to gain from the trip. Some of the outgoing students, for instance, wanted to experience something "completely different" from the Danish system, which they imagined

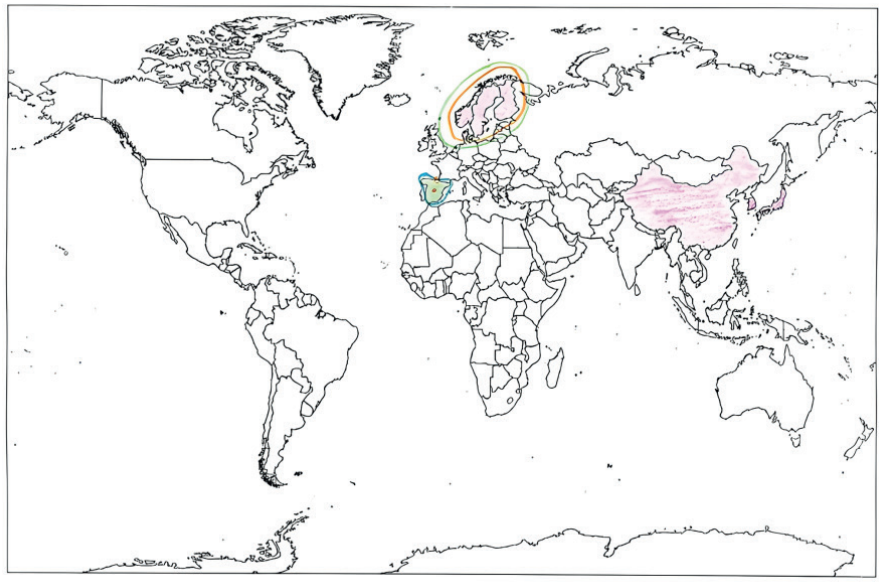

Figure 3: Paula

would be possible in for example the Philippines or African countries, but also in countries such as China or Georgia. Stine, an outgoing Danish student, chose to go to Tanzania, and reflected that she had experienced something completely different compared to if she went to, for instance, Sweden. Stine said, she "*Wanted to experience something that is SO different from what I and what we do. Both to be inspired by it but also to be confirmed that... that the way I want to be a teacher is the right way*" (see map 4). If they wanted to learn something for their future practice, something they believed they could more actively use as teachers, the outgoing students were however more likely to choose what they considered to be countries with similar educational systems such as Norway, Iceland or the Faroe Islands. Thus, for both incoming and outgoing students, geographical imaginaries about educational systems played a crucial role within their decision-making.

Said (1978) was the first one to coin the term imaginative geography. In his work "Orientalism", he used it to describe the binary distinction between the West and the East. While Asian nations were perceived as irrational, distant and defeated, European nations were instead considered powerful. The West, as the more dominant of the two, created and produced representations of the "Other", or exotic East. One of the characteristic traits of colonialism is that it created inferiority, producing hegemonic epistemology and denying (epistemic) diversity, which necessitated the "Other", considered irrational and uncivilised (Breidlid, 2013). Said (1978) explains that there happens a "universal of designing in one's mind a familiar space which is ours and an unfamiliar space beyond which that is theirs" (p. 54). His idea of imaginative geography can work across contexts and any comparison between the unfamiliar "theirs" and familiar "ours" (Beech, 2014),

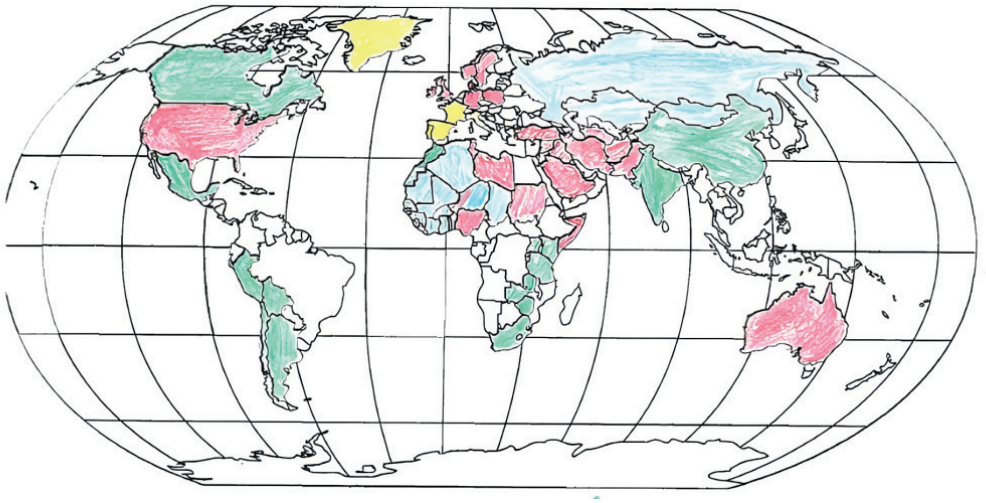

Figure 4: Stine

offering a perspective on not only images of the "Other" but also of the "Self" (Valentine, 2014; Kölbel, 2020). During a focus group interview with incoming students from Ukraine, Larysa said,

> *I would also like to work as a teacher in China and Japan, first in China, because I have lots of friends who tried that and their stories and experiences they have brought back with them to our country. I am proud that I know these people and that they try to apply the knowledge they got in our country and not elsewhere, so that they really try to improve our education system.*

We can read in Larysa's account how she establishes an imagined picture of an overseas education through the stories of her peers. She perceives her friends' experiences and acquired knowledge from those places abroad as beneficial to improve their own education system. In a focus group interview with incoming students from Georgia, one of them explained that one of the reasons she wanted to be an international student was to learn about other systems to be able to compare, take things with her and change the situation in her home country. Both students reduce their home countries to an inferior place, implicitly categorising the places hierarchically. Danish outgoing students also expressed that an aim of studying or teaching abroad was to be able to compare and be inspired by other ways of doing and understanding education. Although they were excited to experience other educational systems, they did not necessarily expect to learn much about teaching, pedagogy or didactics. During an interview, Josephine, the outgoing student we have already met above, said,

> *There is something in my head asking me "what would I be doing in Africa? Can they teach me anything? [...)] what can they give me that I can bring home and use in my practice?" And I have difficulties seeing what I can bring home from Africa because they are so far behind with their educational system.*

Josephine expresses a perception of African countries as inferior to her home country Denmark. We can read in several of the empirical accounts of both incoming and outgoing students' an implied hierarchical structuring of places and educational systems (see Kölbel, 2020), which seems to play an (implicit) impactful role in their decision-making and imagined valuable learning and development of their teacher professionalism.

Most prominently among the countries where the incoming students would like to teach were Denmark, Australia, and Finland. Denmark was also coloured in by the majority of students as the best place to teach, which they linked to their experiences throughout their stay. Interestingly, students from Switzerland, Germany and Australia named their own countries the best place to teach. Sadie (see map 5), an incoming student from Australia, chose places in her home country where she would like to teach, for instance, on the Queensland Coast because "*It was nice and sunny*". Sadie could also imagine teaching somewhere in Indonesia and continued saying, "*It's kind of a poor country so it would be nice to teach some kids English [...] and it looks so beautiful*". Her friend Hailey had been in Cambodia for volunteer work, and when reflecting on the question of where teachers may be most respected, she referred as well to Indonesia, and said,

> *Maybe especially international teachers are probably more respected in this area because of the poverty I have seen, and so, I feel like, they liked it when people come to volunteer and teach students about other cultures and teach them English because they know it's gonna benefit them in the future.*

When telling about her map, Alba (see map 5), an incoming student from Spain, said, "*I would like to teach about sexual education and personal development, and I think the southest countries are the places where always need this kind of education, so I think I would like to teach there*". On her map, she drew a triangle pinpointing down to what she considers the "southest" places.

An incoming student from Georgia coloured South Africa green and commented, "*Because it is a developing country, not really well-developed, so maybe I could be one of the people who could help them to reach the goal to be a developed country and to have a good educational system*". Galina, an incoming student from Russia, reflected, "*Africa, it's not a really rich country. I think education for them is like something really special, and I think, and I hope and I am almost really sure that they really respect their teachers because for them it's not like common, it's not for everybody*". The narratives of the incoming students show certain collective ideas and complex imaginings of Asian nations and predominantly African countries as inferior. While expressing imagined experiences about teaching "them", the students position themselves in a superior role, imagining helping "them in need".

These views were shared by the outgoing students, who also wanted to "do good", specifically in Global South countries. A few students expressed a dream of working in or starting a school in countries which they perceived as "being in need". Stine and Lise, two outgoing Danish students, spent six weeks in Tanzania and spoke about building a library

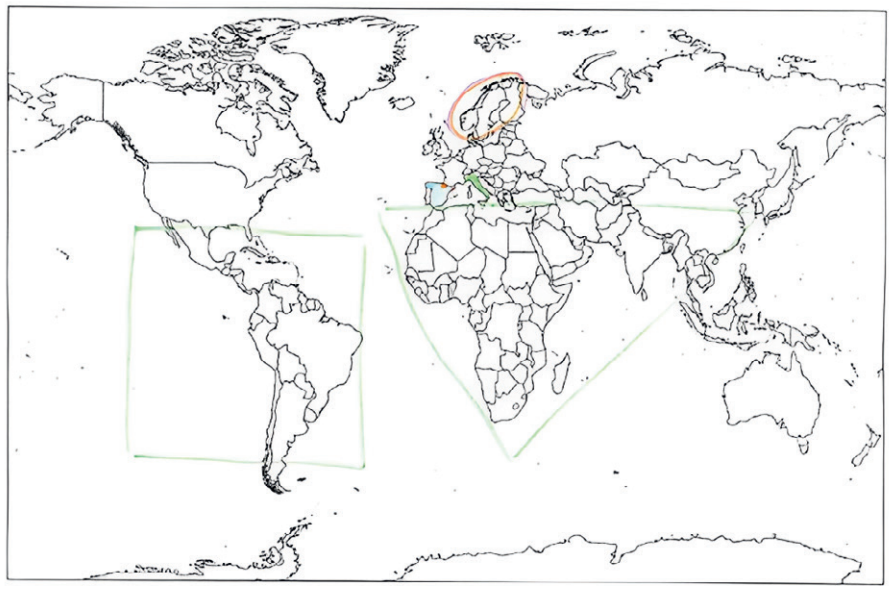

Figure 5: Alba

there. Both understood reading fiction as important and explained how it would stimulate pupils' imagination, which they felt the pupils, they taught during their stay lacked in. While talking about her map, the outgoing student Josephine (see map 5) pointed to the African continent and said,

> *I've already talked a bit about this idea about building schools or developing schools. It is probably in this area. [...] Yes, Africa and Greenland [...] I think there is a big potential for development there. It could also be here in Asia. This is Indonesia, right? It could also be Brazil, that is, South America.*

These conceptions, both of the incoming and outgoing students, bring to the forefront postcolonial discourses of power and academic imperialism, reinforcing popular beliefs and prejudices, and within our context playing key to developing perceptions of people and places (Beech, 2014). Geographical imaginaries can become crucial factors in both forging bonds within groups and differentiating groups, creating boundaries between them. Often places are classified or categorised by geographical imaginaries as better than others, hence positioning places hierarchically, becoming commonly involved in processes of othering (Brooks, 2019; Watkins, 2015).

5 Conclusion

We used the mapping method combined with students' narratives to elicit knowledge about socio-spatial hierarchies in which international student teachers' perceptions and decisions about where to work and study are enclosed (Donnelly et al., 2020). International student teachers were interesting candidates to explore complex imaginative geographies that influence their decision of where to study and work and what places around the world they may perceive as "good" places in terms of "good" education. At the beginning of this chapter, we posed the following questions: What happens when student teachers from all over the world come together in one place or when student teachers choose to do a teaching internship in another country? Does this mobility enable meaningful interaction and does it lead to personal and professional reflection? Or can it also reinforce ethnocentric views about themselves and others?

Based on our empirical data, we showed how students' imaginative geographies of people and places were influenced by postcolonial ideology. The binary distinctions between an "us" and "them", creating "our" world and a distinct "other" were apparent throughout both incoming and outgoing students' narratives with reinforced discourses of academic imperialism and global hierarchies. Among both groups of students, there was a clear academic imperialism relating to choosing Denmark over other places by portraying Scandinavian countries, and Western education more generally as more innovative and developed compared to other places. The students' narratives within both sets of data mirror implicit, underlying hierarchies of (global) knowledge. We come to see that while "international" experiences can have a reflective and transformative potential, the differences student teachers encounter while studying abroad can also reinforce ethnocentric views about themselves and others. Overall, this chapter seeks to push the boundaries of how we think about the effects of higher education internationalisation and globalisation processes within educational contexts.

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Living and Learning in Summer Camps – On the Importance of Children Summer Camps in Today's "Bildungs Landscape"

Herbert Zoglowek[1]

Abstract

Bildung is still the mainstay concept of German pedagogy. Nevertheless, not only the term "education" itself but also the ideals and goals associated with it are very diverse. These are shaped, influenced and changed by respective societal values, but on the other hand, Bildung can also influence them. Changes do not necessarily have to mean innovations, but it is also possible to fall back on the tried and tested, which perhaps only needs to be seen in a new light and strained. Summer camps, an "invention" of progressive pedagogy, can be such a pedagogical concept. Already carried out more than a hundred years ago, summer camps still endure. The significance and possibilities of summer camps will be reflected and discussed in this paper.

With reference to Humboldt's bildungs ideals, the concept of education will first be examined more closely and discussed in terms of its actuality. Finally, the special possibilities of summer camps with their specific bildungs moments will be discussed, including Pestalozzi's elementary bildung and his concept of visual pedagogy (Anschauungspädagogik).

Bildung in the sense of self-development and self-realisation can certainly be approached with the concept of "head, hand and heart" (Pestalozzi) as it is aimed at in summer camps.

The reflections and orientations in this article are initial considerations and approaches for a project in which former participants of Soviet and Russian summer camps are asked in qualitative interviews about their experiences, "bildungs moments" and lasting impressions.

Finally, the aim of the project is to create a contemporary "bildungs concept" for summer camps after a pedagogical analysis of the descriptions received.

Keywords

bildung, summer camps, learning with "head, hand and heart", self-realisation

1 University in Tromsø – The Arctic University of Norway, Alta, Norway

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1 Introduction

Bildung has always been a rich concept that can be discussed ambiguously. However, its fundamental importance is never questioned. Social changes lead to new demands on bildung and bildungs-systems, but it is always about the individual's development in and with society. Basically, this is not a sole task of the school, but of life. The focus is always on the individual itself. This is how 'humanistic bildung' is still understood today in the sense of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835).

In the search for current learning and bildungs offers adapted to today's demands, which take into account globalisation, digitalisation as well as changes in the natural space of movement, it may also make sense to look back. Once before, at the beginning of the industrial age, society and the education sector were confronted with similar questions. At that time, one answer has been: summer camps. The purpose of this article is to examine the tradition of children's summer camps and to discuss their possible significance for humanistic or general bildung. The idea of such events often referred to as holiday camps or holiday colonies, goes back to the philanthropic ideas of Johann Bernhard Basedow (1724–1790), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) or Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), and spread throughout Europe. Progressive pedagogues such as Walter Bion (1830–1909) in Switzerland, Kurt Hahn (1886–1974) in Germany or Stanislav Shatsky (1878–1934) in Russia and the Soviet Union, to name just a few, were inspired by these ideas and tried to implement them concretely in summer camps.

In today's Russia, summer camps for children are still popular, but in Western Europe they have more or less disappeared as a mass movement since the 1970s. The same is true for Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, in modern form and with reference to alternative pedagogical concepts – such as experiential education – summer camps are increasingly being offered again in work with youth under the direction of youth, welfare or church associations with different and diverse objectives and activities.

When we talk about children summer camps or holiday camps, we do not mean leisure activities, but rather learning and bildungs activities in the broadest sense, which are offered during the holiday period, i. e. the time when school is not in session. The significance of summer camps is therefore not to be discussed from the perspective of leisure activities but whether and in what way they can contribute to the education of the individual in particular and to that of society in general.

Summer camps have received little academic attention so far. This gap will be addressed by retrospectively interviewing former participants in Soviet and Russian summer camps regarding their experiences and "bildung moments". The discussion of the concept of bildung in this article should be understood as the theoretical introduction and framing of the planned project.

2 Reflections on the concept of bildung

Bildung is a specifically German word whose equivalent interpretation and meaning in other languages cannot be easily transferred. This is also a problem of this article written in English. Therefore, in order to avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations, the German term "bildung" is used throughout.

2.1 Wilhelm von Humboldt and humanistic bildung

As early as Goethe (1749–1832), we can read that bildung is not a predetermined form that one strives to fulfil but a processual state that changes permanently through reflexivity. Bildung is thus both the process of bringing forth and the result of bringing forth (von Goethe, 1987). While the young Wilhelm von Humboldt was initially guided by Christian Neoplatonic ideals when describing the humanist ideal of bildung – "for all bildung originates solely in the soul's inner being, and can only be induced, never brought about, by external events" (cited in Lichtenstein, 1966, p. 41; own translation) – he later argued for a more enlightened pedagogical understanding of a (new) humanistic bildung. Bildung means here taking enlightenment into one's own hands. Not from the top down or from the outside in, but rather the other way around, from the inside out. Self-active bildung at the same time also establishes the conditions in which the self can realise itself in society. This modern concept of bildung proves to be open and offers a variety of individual human possibilities. The formation of the personality is an individual project that each individual must tackle for him- or herself and keep going throughout life.

The question of what exactly constitutes bildung, or what the "right" methods and objects of bildung are, continues to provoke debate. With the advent of the digital age, this question takes on a new timeliness and relevance. If more than two centuries ago the prevailing utilitarianism of the Age of Reason and a century later the emerging Technological Age were countered by the concept of bildung and filled with appropriate content, it remains to be seen what kind and what appropriation of bildung are important in today's more and more digitally oriented world of living and learning and will determine educational thinking.

The humanistic grammar school (humanistisches Gymnasium), a creation of Wilhelm von Humboldt, had the task of passing on classical humanistic content, ideals and values. Seen in this light, the German "humanistisches Gymnasium" may be regarded as the birthplace of the humanistic concept of bildung, and thus primarily beneficial to the educated middle classes. Fundamentally, however – and this was true for Humboldt from the very beginning – the concept of bildung is related to each individual human being. Everyone can and must educate themselves, regardless of which society, community or age group they belong to. And: bildung is first and foremost self-bildung. From the very beginning, personal freedom was regarded as an important element of the self-bildung. As

early as 1834, the political scientist and liberal politician Carl von Rotteck (1775–1840) defined the bildungs mandate of the state as "the guarantee of personal freedom, i. e. the free self-bildung of all" (von Rotteck, 1834, p. 577; own translation). The reform impulses of the Prussian school system initiated by Humboldt were consequently directed at all learning and bildungs institutions at the time, from elementary schools to universities. Irrespective of class and religion, the aim was to open up a certain general bildung to everyone, which at the same time would also be the basis of a special qualification, and which would thus be able to assign everyone his or her place in the world of work and life. Thus, in the early 19th century, the guiding idea of a "general bildung" emerged, which can be seen as a variant or even the basis of the classical humanistic idea of bildung.

The three-tiered education system developed by Humboldt and designed in Prussia, with elementary-, school- and university education, is based precisely on this idea of bildung and the liberal reform ideas. The young person is regarded as an independent learner and thinker whose individual development is to be promoted in the various forms of school. In the Königsberg School Plan (1809), he describes the core objectives of the three stages of bildung as follows:

> The purpose of school instruction is the exercise of abilities, and the acquisition of knowledge, without which scientific insight and skill are impossible. Both are to be prepared by it; the young person is to be put in a position to be able to collect the material, to which all his own work must always be connected, partly now really, partly in the future as he pleases, and to train the intellectual-mechanical powers. He is thus occupied in a double way, once with learning itself, then with learning to learn (von Humboldt, 1809, as cited in Flitner & Giel, 1982, p. 169; own translation).

And further on:

> There is definitely certain knowledge that must be general, and even more so a certain bildung of attitudes and character that no one should lack. Everyone is obviously only a good craftsman, merchant, soldier and businessman if he is in himself and without regard to his particular profession a good, decent person and citizen, enlightened according to his status. If schooling gives him what is necessary for this, he will later acquire the special skills of his profession very easily and will always retain the freedom, as so often happens in life, to pass from one to the other (von Humboldt, 1809, as cited in Flitner & Giel, 1982, p. 218; own translation).

Humboldt had in mind a school that was geared towards understanding and comprehension. A school with a friendly atmosphere, with great seriousness in its demands and with great freedom for the children to fulfil these demands. Only what one has really grasped – in both senses of the word – is not forgotten; what is merely learned, on the other hand, is quickly forgotten again.

When Humboldt describes bildung as "the connection of our ego with the world to the most general, active and free interaction" (von Humboldt, as cited in Hastedt, 2012, p. 94; own translation), he also draws attention to the fact that bildung is the constant forming – and here again in the double sense of the German word bildung: formation and

education – of the individual in society. However, the results of this multifaceted (self-) bildungs process are never concrete and especially not completely predictable. Different contexts or social conditions influence in different ways each unique personality as well as unique cultural patterns. Not only people as such, but also their words, values and ideas are shaped by these patterns.

2.2 Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and general bildung (Allgemeinbildung)

If academic freedom is an important core element for the humanistic ideal of bildung in the school and especially in the university period (Paulsen, 1906), Humboldt himself referred to and recommended Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi when it comes to the practical introduction and implementation of the humanist understanding of bildung in the primary school. The principles of Pestalozzi's "elementary method", based on his pedagogical credo "learning with head, heart and hand" became the programme of school bildung in the elementary sector of both the Humboldtian school reform and the progressive education movement that followed about a hundred years later. Pestalozzi was a follower of Rousseau's ideas on education and worked throughout his life to translate his mastermind's idealistic theories into practical teaching. Like Rousseau, he believed in the educational value of direct experience and learning in context.

The view resulting from the sensory impression is the keystone of Pestalozzi's whole theory, a knowledge gained directly from a specific object (Green, 1969). Pestalozzi believed that society in general had a rather corrupting influence on the inherently good nature of young, innocent minds. Unlike Rousseau, however, he saw a positive effect and great benefit in learning through social interaction.

With his concept of visual instruction, Pestalozzi can be seen as a decisive forerunner of the progressive education (Reformpädagogik) of the late 19th and early 20th century. On his Neuhof estate in rural Switzerland, Pestalozzi established an "educational institution for poor children" which was both a boarding school and a self-supporting farm. Here he and his wife Anna Schulthess took in poor and orphaned children as home schoolers, who were taught according to his concept of elementary bildung with "head, heart and hand", following an educational plan that was both academic and experiential. In summer, the children were expected to work in the fields; in winter, they were expected to spin and weave. During breaks and even during manual labour, they were to be taught the elements of reading, writing and arithmetic (Green, 1969).

With regard to his bildungs concept and the orientation and alignment of learning and bildungs situations, Pestalozzi can thus definitely also be regarded as an important pioneer of summer camps. He tried to apply the concept of "visual or object pedagogy" (Anschauungspädagogik) throughout the year in his school institutions. His basic elementary ideas were later followed up and implemented in different ways, for example in summer camps. According to Pestalozzi, concretely formulated learning contents are relatively

unimportant. What is more important for him is what happens in the child through engagement with a (learning) material. The content should not simply be absorbed, but the person should be changed, strengthened and educated by dealing with the content. It is about the development of one's own strengths and talents. The mental, physical and emotional powers – head, hand and heart – must be developed in a holistic way. How this can be achieved seems immediately obvious to Pestalozzi: "Each of these individual powers is essentially developed naturally only through the simple means of its use" (PSW, 1927, vol. 28, p. 60; own translation).

3 The use of "head, heart and hand" in children summer camps

What kind of bildung can now be expected or aimed for in summer camps? Since the usual specifications and requirements of state institutions do not standardise summer camps, they give all participants (teachers, guardians and children) a wide field for their own initiative, for pedagogical experiments and for trying out alternative teaching and learning methods. For the guardians, who are usually young teachers still in training, summer camps also provide invaluable opportunities for experience in dealing with children and their development. They do not have to follow predefined standards, but on the other hand they have to develop important premises for community life and individual development together with the camp participants. The direct experience of life and community becomes clear as the core and starting point of an individual bildung. Education in a children summer camp can be seen as an education as close to life as possible, in which the children acquire knowledge, skills and abilities in a self-determined way through communication and interaction with peers and teachers, through playing together in nature and through teamwork in the field. The bildungs incentive as well as the bildungs value of this kind of education consists of everyday play, physical work in the garden, in the field or in the forest and simply spending time together in experience-stimulating natural areas.

4 Specific "bildung moments" in summer camps

If one tries to look at summer camps from the perspective of special bildungs incentives and bildungs values, some specific "bildung moments" can be worked out, which can be further developed into an alternative summer camp pedagogy. The media-centricity, which is often seen as problematic nowadays, the overabundance of entertainment possibilities, the overstimulation in many directions or even a deeper breakdown of values in the society poses many problems for the education and bildung of today's generation that have not yet been solved.

To be quite precise, we must first state that the school is, first and foremost, a teaching institution, not a bildungs institution. Everybody is responsible for his or her own bildung,

once the school has provided the basics, i. e. the skills and abilities for it. Bildung as a learning task of life could then be tackled in the concrete, common and free life situation of the summer camp. The bildung effects of these moments mentioned seem to meet today's requirements just as they did in the founding years of the summer camp movement.

4.1 Rules, rituals and community forms

In the development and establishment of certain rituals and rules, work is done consciously to achieve a psychosocial attitude as well as a sense of community. In particular, living and experiencing nature addresses social and, to a certain extent, nature-spiritual behaviour, as is also expressed, for example, in the Scandinavian and especially Norwegian outdoor tradition, the Friluftsliv (Hofmann et al., 2018). The jointly organised activities that serve to organise daily life or the structure of the day, such as camp construction and maintenance, campfires, harvesting natural fruits and stockpiling supplies, which develop and order community and a sense of community, form important building blocks of the individual practical bildung of each individual.

In this context, the absence of parents and school as well as the usual circle of social friends proves to be a way to temporarily mitigate the subjectivity experienced so far. In other words, the children do not have to find themselves, but can simply play a role without expectations being placed upon them. According to the American sociologist Richard Sennett, role-playing was already the predominant form of public life in earlier times. Organised activities, common clothing or signs of recognition emphasise the collective character. By exposing everyone to the same conditions, a sense of "all being in the same boat" is created that overrides subjectivity in favour of a greater sense of community. "In a ceremony, people are relieved of portraying the kind of person they are, of speaking on behalf of themselves; the participants enter a larger, shared, expressive domain" (Sennet, 2013, p. 92). In this understanding, summer camps today can also be seen as the opposite of social media platforms like Facebook or others. Instead of showing their subjectivity in a virtual space and being bound by expectations, camp is a physical space that allows people to play a role and avoid what Sennet calls the "tyranny of intimacy" (Pfaller, 2008, p. 304).

Participation in rituals, as Pfaller explains, allows an emotional closeness to emerge. This, as well as the aforementioned suspended subjectivity of rituals, creates a spiritual dimension, which, however, is not to be understood in religious terms, but, referred to as "sacre quotidien", denotes a sacredness that

> is not that of institutionalised religions, but rather grasps the small and also large forms with which people interrupt their profane everyday life and give it a festive as well as socially bonding dimension [...] [Sacredness] encompasses all practices that generate social commitment and solidarity (Pfaller, 2011, pp. 222–223; own translation).

The social component of camps, the ritualisation of shared activities, as well as the suspension of subjectivity and the spiritual dimension of the "sacre quotidien" provide interesting angles of entry and conceptual tools for thinking about the intended bildungs ideal in a broader sense.

4.2 Role play and free play

The importance and meaningfulness of role play have already been briefly touched upon. Certain rules and rituals are adopted by the children in role play or, even better, developed by them. They re-enact the environment they have experienced, or they playfully try out their own new ways of solving problems or creating new forms and adopt them if they succeed or if they like them.

According to the "game theory" developed by the Dutch sociologist Johann Huizinga, teaching and learning need games and rituals. Huizinga (2016) points out that play is something superfluous. Games are interludes of our everyday life, but they have an important meaning for being together and living together. Human bonds are formed in play, similar to rituals. In a certain way, games are thus also connected to the "sphere of the sacred".

In contrast to curriculum-prescribed play activities, which tend to be instrumental-methodical, free or open play activities represent non-instrumental learning. This usually takes place in extracurricular and voluntary activities. Open tasks give the pupils a great deal of creative freedom both in the selection and setting of objectives as well as in the implementation and design of the play activities. The absence of instrumentality in the activities in the summer camps is something essential. Free from any short-term instrumentality, summer camps open up a space for experimentation for both the guardians and the children and enable a form of sociability. At the same time, fellow players are also important "mirrors" and feedback for their own learning development and thus also for their own bildungs process. However, such play and experimentation spaces are not to be seen as replacing alternatives to traditional schooling, but as an important meaningful addition, much like the dacha does not replace the apartment block, but is an addition that allows for a temporary escape, for example.

4.3 Nature as an arena for living and learning

Summer camps usually take place outside, in nature. This is no coincidence but is rooted in the fact that special qualities are ascribed to nature itself. Experiencing nature is considered to be particularly conducive to development and learning because it is based on direct, unmediated experience. The relationship of humans – as biological and cultural living beings – to nature is not only given because humans belong to nature, but it is also the result of a culturally mediated relationship. This relationship encompasses differ-

ent dimensions of mental, affective, and action-related engagement with nature (Mayer, 2005).

The importance of nature for human development is addressed, among other things, in the "biophilia hypothesis" (Kellert & Wilson, 1993) as well as in the psycho-pedagogical approach of Erich Fromm (1999a), where personality development and personal development are to be understood in connection with the relationship to nature. Summer camps open up diverse experiences of nature and nature-related social experiences, which can be reflected and discussed especially within the framework of Fromm's concept of "productive character orientation" (Fromm, 1999b). Our relationship to nature and our understanding of it, and thus of ourselves, is influenced by nature-related concepts that we ourselves have experienced, learned or adopted.

To illustrate this point, let's look a little closer at the characteristics of Russian nature with regard to summer camps. Russia is characterised by its vast and relatively flat landscape, which creates a strong contrast between summer and the rest of the year due to its special climate. While nature is perceived as an obstacle and a challenge in winter, summer with its white nights is a great contrast to the rest of the year. With the successes of industrial development, a large proportion of people were also given the opportunity to change their place of residence and life in the summer. Workers went on holiday or moved out of their apartment blocks to their dachas, students worked in student brigades far away from home, and children were sent to summer camps. Summer camps do not only mean an interruption of the normal everyday life, but also a different way of gaining experience and developing oneself (Kharabaeva & Bigell, 2021). Learning does not take place according to predefined learning and development plans, but through natural stimuli and experiences. Ultimately, these cannot be planned at all, but arise from the situations in life in the community and the activities in and with nature.

Seeking out and living in nature is therefore also not to be understood as a kind of escape from culture, but rather as a contrasting experience, especially in today's modern society. The American nature writer Edward Abbey speaks of a "different mode" in this context.

> What makes life in our cities at once still tolerable, exciting and stimulating is the existence of an alternative option, whether exercised or not, [...] of a radically different mode of being out there, in the forests, on the lakes and rivers, in the deserts, up in the mountains (Abbey, 1991, p. 29).

While in the common sense, a stay in nature is merely for recreation or to temporarily switch off, a summer camp in nature is to be understood in a different context. For example, there is the aspect of work. All those involved in the summer camp experience work activities in various forms, such as order duty, kitchen duty or fire duty. Or there is also direct work in agriculture. The general meaning of work, the educational aspect, is that one learns to change the world through common work, to experience a different sociability and to work ideally on a (new) society.

4.4 Personality, character, identity

It has been pointed out elsewhere that, according to Humboldt, bildung is understood as personality formation in the sense of human development through the connection between self and world. In contrast to learning as a process of knowing and being able, bildung is thus understood as a process of becoming. This idea is also expressed by Fromm (1999a) in his psycho-pedagogical concept of "productive character orientation". This concept refers to biophilia, i. e. the importance of nature for human development. In this understanding, personality development and self-realisation are seen in close connection with our relationship to nature.

> Biophilia is the passionate love of life and all living things; it is the desire to promote growth, whether it is a person, a plant, an idea or a social group. The biophilic person prefers to build something new rather than preserve the old. He wants to be more rather than have more. He has the capacity to wonder, and he prefers to experience something new rather than find the old confirmed. He prefers to live the adventure rather than security. He has more of the whole in mind than just the parts, more structures than summations (Fromm, 1999b, p. 331; own translation).

The environment and the pedagogical implications of summer camps have the potential to realise these aspects. Summer camps open up diverse experiences of nature and nature-related social experiences. The philosopher Peter Bieri points out that bildung in the sense of instruction or formation has the aim of *being able to do something*, to master skills and to perform tasks, while bildung in the sense of self-realisation means *to become somebody* (Bieri, 2012). This process of becoming, growing up and growing into the world is an individual process, but it is highly dependent on the environment and circumstances in which someone lives and grows up. People and the world around us can provide decisive impulses and help, but ultimately each person is responsible for how they interact, i. e. what they make of these situations. Summer camps make it possible to participate in activities in nature that have a given framework but whose approach and outcome are open.

5 Outlook

In view of today's demands on schools and bildung systems, which are primarily determined by an economic dimension, it is important to discuss and shape the educational policy goal of "employability" in a diverse and controversial way. In the question of employability and competitiveness of future generations, vocational education and training and general human education should not become two contradictory or opposing directions. What can bildung look like in the global knowledge society? As the vocational future becomes less and less predictable, there are calls for a different kind of general bildung. However, does this contemporary general bildung need to be redefined, or can we still rely on the original, timeless understanding: autonomy and personal development? Humboldt's basic definition – the connection of the ego with the world to the most general, active and free interaction – should certainly still hold. A humane general bildung

is achieved through an educational, i. e. liberal, cognitive-reflexive, value- and sense-oriented as well as holistic and future-oriented learning. Bildung is a comprehensive process that shapes both the personality and society. Summer camps in the form discussed here can contribute to this in many ways.

It has been shown that summer camps are not merely a relic of the past, but that their playful and experimental character can still be groundbreaking. Some moments relevant to general bildung have been examined in more detail. How and to what extent these have a bildungs effect needs to be examined more closely. In order to understand the common mechanisms of summer camps and the underlying values, it is also necessary to analyse the spatial and temporal structures of the camps. The descriptions of ritual, play orientation and nature as a learning arena already suggest some possibilities. The orientation of traditional summer camps in the great outdoors facilitates interaction with the material world and learning about and in nature. As an important aspect, the renunciation of almost any form of direct instrumentalisation should be emphasised in particular, which is extremely conducive to the creative work of both the students and their teachers.

A conceptual framework and a possible set of tools for a deeper understanding of summer camps have been presented, thus also drawing academic attention to this bildungs alternative. Summer camps should not only be seen as reminiscences of past times. We think, they still have great potential to contribute to the bildung of present and future generations.

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Authors

Edvina Bešić is a university college professor of inclusive education research and didactics at the University College of Teacher Education Styria (Graz, Austria). Her research areas are inclusive education of students with special educational needs and migrant students, intercultural education, intersectionality, participatory research with children, and digitalization within inclusive education.
Contact: edvina.besic@phst.at

Mihaela Brumen, researcher and teacher trainer at the University of Maribor. Her research interests are focused on learning and teaching languages to young learners.
Contact: mihaela.brumen@um.si

Štefan Chudý, Associate Professor, Director of the Institute of Pedagogy and Social Studies in the Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc. Chairman of the Council of the Pedagogy Doctoral Study Programme (English and Czech version) and supervisor of eight Ph.D. students (and former supervisor of seven Ph.D. graduates). Specialises in qualitative research and the philosophical and sociological aspects of the education of teachers starting out in a university setting. Author of more than 120 scientific papers and author or co-author of five monographs.
Contact: stefan.chudy@upol.cz

Monika Gigerl, Dr., is a professor at the University College of Teacher Education Styria. She has 26 years of teaching experience in primary and middle schools in inclusive settings. Based on her studies in applied ethics and social pedagogy, her main areas of work and research are humanities in primary education, human rights, inclusion and ethics.
Contact: monika.gigerl@phst.at

Trinidad Hernández Recabarren is Lecturer at the School of Business and Economics (SBE) at Maastricht University. She has a Master of Science in International Business, with specialisation in Strategic Corporate Finance from Maastricht University, and is currently pursuing a Master of Advanced Studies in Economics at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. The research interests of Trinidad include behavioral economics, behavioral finance, education economics and business ethics. Trinidad Hernandez participated in the project "All Inc!"-publication which addresses LGBT+ perspectives in education across Europe.
Contact: trinidad.hernandezrecabarren@student.kuleuven.be

Elisabeth Herunter, Mag., is a linguist and a professor of language education at the University College of Teacher Education Styria. Prior to this, she gained professional, teaching and research experience in the field of speech, language, and communication disorders

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at the outpatient clinic for the deaf at the Hospital of St. John in Linz, colleges for speech therapy, and the universities of Salzburg and Graz. Her research interests are in the areas of inclusion and language education.
Contact: elisabeth.herunter@phst.at

Martin Hochegger, BEd, Teacher, social manager and managing director retired. Currently working as a consultant and enabler of social projects in Austria and Tanzania. Bruno Kreisky Human Rights Prize Winner 2022.
Contact: hoch7@live.de

Oliver Holz is professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business at KU Leuven. He has a Master degree in Educational Sciences, Psychology and Physical Education and a PhD in comparative education. He is member of the research group "Leuven Economics of Education Research (LEER)". Topics as cross-country comparisons, gender education and diversity studies belong to his expertise. Oliver Holz is participant in and coordinator of different European projects. He is president of the annual conference IPiE "International Perspectives in Education". He published his work in different journals and books in different languages.
Contact: oliver.holz@kuleuven.be

Andrea Holzinger, Dr., was a professor at the University College of Teacher Education Styria and taught in the field of inclusive education in primary and secondary education. Her research focuses on the professionalisation of educators in elementary and primary school as well as on inclusive education.
Contact: Andrea.Holzinger@phst.at

Erika Hvala, the assistant principal in the kindergarten. She is involved in several (inter) national projects at the pre- and primary school level.
Contact: erika.hvala@guest.arnes.si

Thilde Juul-Wiese is from Denmark, where she studied a teacher degree in English, social science and religion. Subsequently, she studied a master's degree in Anthropology of Education and Globalisation at The Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, where she is now pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Anthropology. Thilde's Ph.D.-project is concerned with the mobility of preservice teachers, internationalisation of higher education, imaginaries, and hierarchies of knowledge.
Contact: thi@edu.au.dk

Ursula Komposch, Mag., is a professor at the University College of Teacher Education Styria. She has teaching experience in schools in inclusive settings. Her main area of work and research are diversity and inclusion, inclusive education and inclusive didactic.
Contact: Ursula.Komposch@phst.at

Iva Koribská, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Pedagogy and Social Studies, where she works as an assistant. Focuses on the education of adults and on critical thinking in higher education. She teaches courses in Andragogy and Androdidactics, Human Resources Management and Critical Thinking. Also teaches foreign students in the Erasmus+ programme in the Productive School Environment and Introduction to Andragogy courses.
Contact: iva.koribska@upol.cz

Douglas Carlton McKnight recently finished his Ph.D. in German Literature and Language from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. (USA). Currently, he is an independent researcher based in Graz, Austria. His research interests include twentieth-century German-language literature, modern European history, and Second Language Acquisition.
Contact: douglasmckn@gmail.com

Danping Peng, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Pedagogy and Social Studies, graduate from the English version of the Pedagogy programme. Specialises in school management and leadership, pedagogical diagnostics and comparative pedagogy (in English study programmes and the Erasmus+ programme), author of several research papers and a monograph on these issues. Works as the Erasmus+ coordinator at her institution.
Contact: danping.peng@upol.cz

Gonda Pickl, Dr., was a professor at the University College of Teacher Education Styria. She taught in the field of speech, language, and communication disorders in schools. Her research interests are in the areas of inclusion and professionalization.
Contact: gonda.pickl@gmx.at

Jitka Plischke, Assistant Professor at the Institute of Pedagogy and Social Studies; teaches school didactics/general didactics and disciplines focused on intercultural education and education for pupils with a different mother tongue. Her research and publishing activities mainly concern issues of teacher training (e. g., teacher beliefs, teaching methods, novice teacher), education for pupils with a different mother tongue (author of two monographs), and the intercultural context of education. She supervises seven Ph.D. students in the Education doctoral study programme.
Contact: jitka.plischke@upol.cz

Justyna Ratkowska-Pasikowska, PhD in educational sciences; research with an emphasis on human sexuality, normativity and sexual minority, specialist in psychological help in the field of sexology, employed at the University of Lodz as an Assistant Professor; 14 years of experience in working in Higher Education, various publications related to literature, femininity, sexuality and gender.
Contact: Justyna.pasikowska@now.uni.lodz.pl

Vera Spangler studied a bilingual teacher degree in English and art at the University of Education, Freiburg, Germany and holds a master's degree in Anthropology of Education and Globalisation from the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, Copenhagen, Denmark. Vera is now pursuing a PhD at the University of Surrey, Guildford, England. She is interested in the internationalisation of higher education, spatial and mobility theories, and creative methods.
Contact: v.spangler@surrey.ac.uk

Herbert Zoglowek, PhD, Professor of Sport Science (em.) at the University of Tromso – Norway's Arctic University, and Visiting Professor at Akademia Pomorska in Slupsk, Poland. Author of several books and numerous articles within sports pedagogy, ball games and friluftsliv/outdoor education.
Contact: herbert.zoglowek@uit.no

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