

# National State of the Art and Gap Analysis - Data Collection and Analysis in Slovenia

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Ecosystem of Needs, Practices Target  
Groups, Stakeholders and Mode of  
Work Report**



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# National Report – Slovenia

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# Introduction

Within the PASSAGE consortium, Slovenia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Lithuania will be taking appropriate measures to cope with increased level of third country nationals arriving in these destinations. In turn, this increase has been instrumental in revealing several limits of existing policies (either national, regional, or European) and current capacities for migrants' integration to local societies, in the field of educative integration. This gap was especially evident in the case of the early stage of arrival (i.e., reception), where integration action needs to be reinforced and supported to promote basic EU values and principles of inclusivity, diversity, and civic openness.

This document will serve as basis for further elaboration and could serve as comprehensive reference on the level of understanding, knowledge, and awareness of youth in all European participating countries, in issues related to pedagogies and pedagogical integration in the EU.

Within this document, partners will conduct a literature review of the pedagogical models and administrative structures and practices in securing the integration of children from a migrant background who enter new school environment. All partners will collect data from various resources, which will be summarized in the present report for further development. Part of this activity is the analysis of the limited findings available so far regarding comparative approaches and the utilization of integration in schools. Ecosystem Mapping State of The Art and Gap Analysis Report will be further developed into the compilation of national reports and a Transnational PASSAGE Ecosystem of Needs, Practices Target Groups, Stakeholders and Mode of Work.

Texts included in this Report should not be older than 2000, including books sections, scientific articles, policy briefs, policy documents (e.g., parliament reports, etc), grey literature (e.g., project reports).



# 1. Literature Review

## State of The Art and Gap Analysis

### Introduction to the national school system

Primary education in Slovenia is compulsory and lasts for nine years. Children enroll in the 1st grade of primary school in the calendar year when they turn 6 years old. Thus, children enter the first grade of primary school between the ages of five and eight months to six years and eight months. As primary education is compulsory, a pupil cannot be expelled from school, but may be transferred to another school for educational or upbringing reasons. Pupils' complete primary education when they successfully complete the ninth grade. Primary school comprises primary and general lower secondary education. In accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, primary education is compulsory and is financed from public funds. Schools run a single program over a nine-year period, so students typically complete elementary school by age 15. Primary education is provided by public and private schools, institutions for the upbringing and education of children with special needs and accredited organizations for adult education.

Primary schools are established by municipalities, and the public network of primary schools provides access to education to all residents of Slovenia. Municipalities provide places in public schools to all children residing in the area of a particular school. Funds are obtained from the municipal and state budgets and other sources. In Slovenia, we have a wide network of primary schools, which ensures that children go to school as close as possible to their home.

Primary education is accessible to all residents due to its extensive network of primary schools. All children residing in the Republic of Slovenia have the right to primary education under the same conditions. Local communities determine the school district when each primary school is established. Parents enroll a child in primary



school in the district where the child resides. However, they can also transfer it to another school.

Parents have the right to choose a school for their child's schooling that is not in the school district in which they reside. Principals are autonomous in deciding on a parent's application, taking into account the capacity of the school. An additional criterion - and at the same time the only limitation on the autonomy of principals in this regard - is whether enrollment in a school outside the school district would affect the status or organization of the school. This means changing an independent school into a branch, closing the school, or the need to create a new department due to the enrollment of a student from another school district.

The school year begins on September 1 and ends on August 31 of the following year. Classes run until June 24, and for 9th graders through June 15. Classes are held 5 days a week, from Monday to Friday, on Saturdays only exceptionally. Classes in all schools take place in the morning and may not start before 7.30am. The lesson lasts 45 minutes. The school schedules the lessons for each day of the week.

In the field of primary education, Slovenia has a number of systemic measures that help ensure equal conditions for all students, regardless of their socio-economic situation or other personal circumstances. These measures include, but are not limited to, free textbook rental, subsidized school meals, an extended program, co-financing of a school in nature, adapted education for children with special needs, and the like.

Textbook funds in primary schools allow all students to borrow textbooks free of charge. In addition, the state co-finances the creation of textbooks for the Italian and Hungarian national communities, for blind and partially sighted students, and for students in schools with an adapted curriculum.

For first graders and those attending school from more remote places, the local community organizes free transportation along with the school. Free transport to



school is also provided if the competent authority for road traffic prevention finds that the safety of the pupil on the way to school is endangered.

In addition to the compulsory program, the primary school also offers an extended program in which students participate voluntarily. The extended program includes extended stay, morning care, additional classes, supplementary classes, extracurricular activities, and classes of optional electives.

The network of public primary schools is complemented by private primary schools, which can be established by domestic natural or legal persons. By implementing their own program, they enable the choice of education in accordance with diverse worldviews. Private schools that implement publicly valid primary education programs are partly funded by public funds.

The nine-year primary school program includes students with special needs who, in the opinion of the expert commission, can meet the standards of the primary school program if we provide them with additional professional assistance and adjust the organization, method of checking and assessing knowledge, progress and timetable.

### Systemic regulation on the education of newly arrived immigrants and refugees

We cannot yet speak of the education system in Slovenia as multicultural education, but it is true that in recent years some foundations have been laid in our country for the development of such education, especially since 2007, when the Strategy for Integration of Migrant Children, Pupils and Students was adopted into the system of education in the Republic of Slovenia. Before that the Strategy for the Education of Roma in the Republic of Slovenia (2004), later the Guidelines for the Education of Children of Foreigners in Kindergartens and Schools (2009), supplemented as Guidelines for the Inclusion of Immigrant Children in Kindergartens and Schools (2012) and the Code of Intercultural Dialogue for Adult Educators (2010).



Notwithstanding the above, in the past the Slovenian education system has proven to be solidary, inclusive, and successful in accepting those who have taken refuge in us due to the wars in the Balkans.

The Strategy (2007) states that according to the provisions of school legislation, children of foreign citizens residing in the Republic of Slovenia have the right to enroll in primary and secondary school under the same conditions as children of Slovenian citizens. Citizens of other EU Member States, Slovenes without Slovene citizenship and refugees can study under the same conditions as Slovene citizens, and other foreign citizens on the principle of reciprocity (based on international agreements, the Minister of Education determines the number of enrollment places for these students). The Kindergartens Act does not specifically mention children of foreign nationals, but the law states that pre-school education is conducted according to the principles of equal opportunities for children and parents, taking into account the differences between children and the right to choose and be different.

The right to include immigrant children in the Slovenian educational system is dealt with in the Organization and Financing of Education Act, the Primary School Act, the Gymnasiums Act, the Vocational Education and Training Act, the Temporary Protection of Displaced Persons Act, the Aliens Act, the Aliens Act international protection, the Rules on the examination and assessment of knowledge and progress of pupils in primary school and the Rules on norms and standards for the implementation of educational programs and the educational program in the field of secondary education.

Based on the Strategy for the Inclusion of Migrant Children, Pupils and Students in the Education System in the Republic of Slovenia, as an integral part of the national strategy for the integration of immigrant children, the Guidelines for the Education of Foreigners in Kindergartens and Schools issued by the Institute of Education to





external collaborators, and the amended edition with the amended title of the Guidelines for the Inclusion of Immigrant Children in Kindergartens and Schools has been available since 2012. They are intended for educational institutions (pre-school education, primary and secondary education, and education in dormitories for pupils and student dormitories) in the Republic of Slovenia. The Guidelines represent the implementation of the measures expressed in the Strategy and define (Guidelines 2012, pp. 1-2) “primarily strategies, adjustments for work and ways of cooperation and involvement of children and their parents, in order to help kindergartens, schools and dormitories in planning educational -educational work with children who, as citizens of other countries, are newly included in our system of upbringing and education.

In September and October 1992, there were 17,000 temporary refugee children from Bosnia and Herzegovina in Slovenia, for whom classes were organized in primary schools with a Bosnian-Herzegovinian curriculum. In the following years, the number of refugee children decreased, so that in the 1995/96 school year these children gradually began to be included in Slovenian primary schools. Even then, Slovene teachers received basic guidelines, which meant a step towards better and easier integration of temporary refugees into the Slovene school environment (Topić, 1995).

Given the fact that we focus on the school field, the term immigrant is used (in Slovenian documents) in accordance with the interpretation expressed in the Strategy for the Inclusion of Migrant Children, Pupils and Students in Education (2007, hereinafter the Strategy) and recent school documents in this field, such as are the Guidelines for the Inclusion of Immigrant Children in Kindergartens and Schools (2012, hereinafter the Guidelines), which are the implementation of the Strategy for the Inclusion of Migrant Children, Pupils and Students in the Education System and the White Paper (Krek, Merljak (ed.), 2011, below) White Paper).



According to the definition in the Strategy (2007, p. 8), immigrants in the Republic of Slovenia can thus be divided into several groups:

- former immigrants who have Slovenian citizenship: these are persons who were born in the Republic of Slovenia and have lived here since birth (second and third generation of immigrants - their mother tongue is not Slovene), or persons who were not born in Slovenia and acquired citizenship ;
- persons who do not have Slovenian citizenship, namely persons with a permanent residence permit in the Republic of Slovenia and persons with a temporary residence permit in the Republic of Slovenia;
- applicants for international protection and persons with international protection;
- citizens of the Member States of the European Union;
- children of Slovene emigrants and expatriates (with or without Slovenian citizenship) who have returned to their homeland.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport offers hours of additional professional assistance in learning Slovene to schools that include immigrant students in the first and second year of schooling. The current legislation (Article 81 of the Education Organization and Financing Act) provides a normative basis for providing funds from the state budget for learning Slovene as well as teaching the mother tongue for immigrant pupils and students involved in regular primary and secondary education.

The approximate number of these students who study in Slovenia for the first and second year is obtained at the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture indirectly, on the basis of received applications from schools to finance hours of additional professional assistance for teaching Slovene. Additional professional assistance (hereinafter DSP) in learning Slovene has been provided to immigrant students



studying in the Republic of Slovenia since the end of the 1990s, and with the 2010/2011 school year such assistance is provided to immigrant students in the second year of schooling. Based on the applications received by schools for the approval of DSP hours for immigrant students, it can be seen that on average around a thousand children are enrolled in primary schools annually in the first year, while 500 to 800 immigrant children remain in the second year.

In 2008, a provision was included in the Rules on the examination and assessment of knowledge and progress of pupils in primary school, which allows the possibility of adjusting assessment for immigrant pupils. In accordance with the Rules on Assessment and Advancement of Students and the Advancement of Pupils in Primary School, the methods and deadlines for assessing knowledge, the number of grades and other . The knowledge of an immigrant student can be assessed according to his / her progress in achieving the goals or standards of knowledge defined in the curricula. Adjustments are decided by the teaching staff. Adjustments for knowledge assessment are taken into account for a maximum of two school years. Immigrant students from other countries may, at the end of classes in the school year in which they are enrolled in primary school for the first time in the Republic of Slovenia, be assessed in individual subjects and advance to the next grade. The teachers' council decides on the promotion on the proposal of the class teacher.

Immigrant students from other countries whose mother tongue is not Slovene and who are entering primary school in the Republic of Slovenia for the first time in the 6th and 9th grade are taking a national knowledge test on a voluntary basis this school year.

As can be seen from the above, the Republic of Slovenia has recently taken many steps in the education and inclusion of immigrant children in upbringing and education, which need to be formed into a systemic, coherent whole. We are working



towards upgrading existing solutions in the field of integration of immigrants, providing funds for the transfer of existing content and materials and their inclusion in the further education process, as this is necessary for the successful implementation and continuation of what has already been done.

### Limited findings and evaluation of existing pedagogical integration models and practices

Given the special dimension of inclusion of children of applicants for international protection and children with international protection, who primarily need to be provided with basic living needs and given the fact that these children come from non-Slavic speaking areas, which represent a more demanding dimension of Slovene language learning, the Ministry of Education, science and sport recommend a two-step model of integration. We relied on the results of the projects "Involvement of migrant children in education 2008-2011" and "Developing interculturalism as a new form of coexistence 2013-2015", co-financed by the European Social Fund. The model presents various activities that can be offered to immigrant children and their parents during the time of inclusion in a new linguistic and cultural environment, which includes the social, linguistic and cultural field.

Inclusion is divided into two periods, i.e., INTRODUCTORY AND CONTINUATION. Before joining the regular classes, an introductory class is organized for the mentioned children, which lasts for 20 hours. After the introductory class, the children join the regular classes, where they receive additional professional assistance in learning Slovene.

Children are invited to the 20-hour INTRODUCTION ROOM program upon enrollment in school. We are talking about learning the Slovenian language and integration into the new environment, so we have in mind both linguistic and social



inclusion. In the week before the start of regular classes, they get to know the school premises, individual professionals, the immediate surroundings of the school, socialize with peers and make new acquaintances and friendships. The introductory class can be prepared and organized at an individual school, or at one school, where students from different schools in an individual municipality or region.

After the introduction, the student is included in the CONTINUATION, where he receives additional support for two school years, as the program includes activities offered by both the school and the local environment (learning Slovene as a second language, teaching aids, individual programs for students, adaptations of teaching methods and forms and adjustments of assessment during the school year, support in involvement in extracurricular activities at school and outside, various holiday opportunities and activities in the local environment, advanced language courses and support in organizing supplementary lessons of mother tongues and culture of immigrant children ).



## 2. Field Research

### Analysis of the focus group research with teachers

#### Self efficacy

There were 5 teachers involved in the focus group research. Focus group took place on ZOOM, and lasted for 48minutes. All teachers were female with more than 5 years of experience in teaching. Each of them has at least one immigrant children in class, and based on their experience, this number is growing each year. Teachers reported that they believe they are sufficient enough in the classroom when teaching children with immigrant background, however that does not mean they don't encounter difficulties.

Teachers assess their self-efficiency as good, however they are often put in situations that require extra effort. Having a child with the immigrant background in the classroom presents doubled work for them to carry out their activities. They must put a lot of effort into developing work methods, especially didactic aids. The situation they face are not stress free them, but on the other hand they also did not report of any stress-situations, for example: if they come to disagreement with an immigrant child parents. Furthermore, they describe immigrant parents as very collaborative and willing to help their child. Teachers face differences in children's grades and abilities. Some children were assessed with excellent results in their homeland, while in our country their knowledge was assessed with an insufficient grade. Parents find this very difficult to accept, they do not understand how grading can be so different here. Their Childs' education does not always come first. They often struggle with other essential living problems, such as how to earn enough to feed their child and to provide them with suitable living conditions.



Participants/teachers did not report of being overworked; however they wish to be heard from the authorities and policy makers to make them teaching native born and immigrant pupils a bit easier.

### Implementing Practices

Teachers have to put a lot of effort into developing work methods, especially on didactic aids when there is an immigrant in the classroom. They must prepare a lot of pictorial material, various illustrations of the material, they have to use literature written in a certain language and prepare translations. They pointed out that their knowledge is not broad enough and that they do not often feel competent enough to work with immigrant children.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when the work took place from home, the teachers organized themselves and worked with each immigrant child separately, offering them additional classes, real-time translation, a lot of pictorial material, and additional presentations of the material. We adapted to the current situation, preparing Power Point presentations just for them, just to give them the material in the most understandable way possible. Here they are left to their ingenuity of what they will use, how much, when, and how. They try to figure out which work methods are most successful by using them multiple times. However, they are not always successful. Sometimes they find that two students cannot use the same thing, so they always try new things.

There are no extra developed internal guidelines within their school for better integration of immigrant children. They also know where to find some tools for teaching, however, most of materials are written in foreign languages, which needs to be translated to be useful to them. They will be more than happy to test new tools and new approaches on integration of immigrant children in education.



## Cultural competency

The teachers pointed out that these children are very well brought up. They are cultural, respectful, not degrading. They are not aggressive, rather passive and introverted. They often have low self-esteem because they find it difficult to integrate into society. Because of their ignorance of the language and often other beliefs, they often do not feel accepted. Teachers are always looking for ways to involve them in the educational process and bring them closer to their peers. One method that is usually successful is for the immigrant child to present to the class their culture, their country, place of birth, language, religion, and customs. We encourage Slovenian children to help their classmates learn Slovene, invite them to the playground and play with them. Teachers often organize class hours where they teach children that immigrant children are an added value to the class, a contribution, and that they can learn a lot from them. Immigrant children are constantly encouraged to attend various activities in their free time, especially sports or something for their entertainment.

## Competency/Preparation

Slovenian teachers report that they do not have many manuals or tools for working with immigrant children. There are recommendations from the Ministry of Education and textbooks, such as Good Day Slovene, there is also a Learning Center. Basic guidelines are also given by the institution, which teachers follow. A manual was also published by the Faculty of Arts in Maribor, which is freely accessible and covers working methods for the inclusion of immigrant children from kindergarten to high school.

Nowadays there is a lot of training for teachers, "KATIS", and also at the faculties, the subjects cover the methods of work for the inclusion of immigrant children. Teachers attend seminars on this topic as much as possible. They pointed out that in such





trainings, examples of methods or techniques are often presented too ideally and fairy-tale-like. In actual practice, most of them are difficult to implement.

Teachers reported that during their University education, they did not receive any additional information on how to integrate (successfully) immigrant children into education. They believe that in those times (their university period), there was no need for that, however things have changed since then. Nowadays, there is a strong emphasis on that matter, therefore current generations are much more prepared for these situations. They have also pointed out that they are often left to themselves to figure out these "complex" situations.

### Student needs

Teachers describe the Slovenian system of integrating immigrant children as too loose. The demands on native born children are much higher than on immigrant children, who are not even expected to know the language (at first). They agree that they do not need to be immediately assessed, that they need more help and adjustment in mastering the subject matter, but a language course before entering school would be necessary in their opinion. It should also be mandatory that a child with immigrant background must first take a one-year Slovene language course, otherwise he or she cannot attend school. Teachers accept every child and do their best, but the Slovenian system is still child-friendly and teacher-unfriendly. They believe that this is not doing children a favor, as it is also very difficult for them to integrate into society, to educate, to work because they do not know the language.

The biggest challenge facing teachers is knowing the Slovene language of the whole family who moved to Slovenia. Children join a class without knowledge of Slovene, there are not many extra hours, and there is not enough support from parents. Namely, they speak their language at home, and this presents an additional problem for children in learning Slovene. They pointed out that even short holidays at school



can be a problem, as the child does not speak Slovene again during the holidays and all knowledge is lost even in such a short time. They note that it would be necessary to involve parents even more in the education process, as for them the goal is not to learn Slovenian or finish school, but to work and have better material opportunities. In most cases, parents expect their children to do everything in school, that the school will also take care of homework and learning. This is a big problem for teachers. It is important to note, however, that this does not happen in all cases. Some parents seek help from relatives and other local organizations to help them learn the language. They are also conscientious in attending parent-teacher meetings and offer support and assistance to children in integrating into school.

### Motivation

During the focus group teachers showed a high level of motivation. On one hand each situation with integrating a newly arrived immigrant child into their classroom is a challenge, however they see the positivity in this. After a child accomplishes set targets they feel like they managed to help them, that their effort has been paid off.

The only de-motivating factor could be that teachers are involved in devising a strategy to include immigrant children, but only in school level. Not systemically, e.g. at the ministry. Often, they are not even heard at a higher level. Even if they call.

For the extra time they put to successfully integrate immigrant children in education, they do not get any salary incentives or "rewards". There is also no additional allowances or any other incentives. Of course such incentives would be welcome in their opinion, but on the other hand they do not expect in to be introduced, no matter how much they would like it.

They also believe it would be welcome for other organizations outside the school to help families learn the language and spend their free time.



### 3. Analysis of the focus group research with stakeholders

Focus group took place and date on 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 on ZOOM. Altogether 12 participants were present at the meeting. Among them several principles of primary schools, adult education centres, school legal representatives and members of the decision-making commissions. Duration of the focus group was 52 minutes.

#### National strategy and guidelines

Involvement in the preparation / design of guidelines, manuals

Participants reported that they are not directly involved in drafting the organization's guidelines, nor guidelines on the national level. They somehow feel left out of the centralized process of writing the legislative and guidelines for integration of immigrant children in Slovenian school system. Which in our opinion indicates on rigid system of the Slovenian education system. Two years ago, some of the present participants took part in the national project "renovation of the Primary School", which was meant as a preparation room/preparation time for immigrant children to acquire satisfactory level of language which is the basis for upcoming schooling. However, this reform was later not fully adopted, so language remains the biggest challenge in integrating immigrant children into the education system, in the opinion of the participants.

#### Staff training

Participants of the focus group and their fellow colleagues are involved in regional trainings, such as the successful integration of immigrant children in school. Every year, teachers who start working with immigrant children receive additional education or training at seminars. In addition, teachers who have gained insight into working methods from abroad are trying to transfer these practices to us. One of the



respondents described in detail of their involvement in the international project which resulted in transferred a manual from Switzerland to their school.

### Slovenian school system and support programs for immigrant children

Primary schools provide teaching aids for immigrant students. Last year, for the first time, primary schools had several additional hours to work with immigrant children and an additional teacher whose job is systematized at the state level to provide support to students. With this, the situation has visibly improved compared to previous years, although organizations point out that these hours are still insufficient.

The problems the participants of the focus group they in adult education organizations were also highlighted, because while there are additional hours per one student in regular schooling, there are none in adult education. And in adult education, this makes it impossible for them to work individually with immigrants. They also highlighted that they have to operate with guidelines that are written for children, while they lack guidelines for adult education. It is not about including immigrants in an already completed group, as is the case in primary schools, but about gathering individuals from all winds and forming one group. Adult education institutions would therefore need different guidelines for adult primary schools, and not enough has been done by the state in this area. Adult guidelines need to be targeted.

### Existing practices and long-term predictions

#### How is it done?

Primary schools include immigrant students in the individualized work plan itself. This means that when an immigrant child enrolls in school, he/she expresses his/her wishes and goals for the school year and then the teachers together with the parents and



the child go through the program for the school year and also try to realize it together. They find this participation very important in designing an individualized plan, where the goals, strategies and methods of work are presented to the student. Teachers therefore adapt some methods of work in their work, use tools to better include the immigrant child.

External organizations provide additional learning assistance for children of applicants for international protection, spending free time for immigrant children and learning the Slovenian language for the whole family. Primary schools try to connect with other local organizations that offer children leisure activities.

Those involved strive to build a respectful relationship with immigrant families and create a positive experience for them by joining school. They especially highlighted Albanian families, who are very close to each other and often know each other. Thus, they found that if one Albanian family has a positive experience of inclusion in school, this good practice spreads rapidly among others, attracting more children and families to our environment.

### Most common issues and problems on integration of immigrant children in school

As the biggest problem, they highlighted language skills. Pupils are integrated into the class without knowledge of Slovene. They have the opportunity for one year not to be assessed and to progress normally to the next grade, but their knowledge of Slovene is still poor, so they cannot learn the subject matter well enough. Participants suggested a solution on the national level that will include this one-year course, a preparatory course which will make it easier for immigrant children to attend other classes without any bigger obstacles.

Focus group participants highlighted that it is important to take into account that the immigrant child at school is included in his/her age group or that he/she progresses



to the next grade, regardless of his/her previous language skills. They also strive to keep children progressing regularly through other classes. Also, they recognize the biggest problem in children not knowing the language, and consequently school subjects cannot be learned properly.

Immigrant children often find it difficult to integrate into the school environment and education system because they do not have parental support. They come from completely different social backgrounds, and education does not mean as much to them as in European countries. School is often not a value that they would highly appreciate, so even parents do not encourage children to attend school, do homework to attend teaching aids. In the past, it happened that they didn't even come to the learning aid, even though they took a lot away from it. The last year is much better, because counsellors work in organizations with teachers, who especially encourage parents to get involved in school obligations, to enrol in the Slovene language course themselves.

Participants perceive problems with the differences that occur between immigrant children according to the countries they come from. In their opinion it is a big difference between a child who is from Africa or Afghanistan, where there is an Islamic school and a completely different school system, or between a child who is from the countries of the former Yugoslavia and understands at least some Slovenian or Croatian, Serbian or Bosnian.

Those involved pointed out that international documents from the OECD do not help them much because they are not focused on education. They believe that there is no document or regulation in the international language that could be used in Slovenia.

### International cooperation



Primary schools participate in various international exchanges, mainly in the Leonardo da Vinci program. The participants highlighted the models of inclusion of immigrant children that they had the opportunity to see in Scandinavia. They are also trying to put these into practice in our primary schools, although the Slovenian system does not allow everything. Methods they had the opportunity to see abroad and highlighted as good:

- one-year language course before entering school,
- several additional hours for individual assistance to immigrant children,
- active involvement of parents (language course for parents, informal gatherings, counselling, etc.),
- Active involvement of immigrant children in informal gatherings outside school, in their free time (children learn the most in an informal environment when they spend time with their peers during, for example, sports activities).



# 4. Analysis of teachers' perspective on integration of immigrant children and refugees

## Socio demographic information

Data gathering was conducted through an online questionnaire/survey, which were forwarded to primary school teachers in Slovenia. Questionnaire was translated to Slovene for better understanding and to avoid any discrepancies. The gender ratio was 83,3% of female respondents and 16,7% of male respondents. Most of respondents were primary teachers with a minor share (4,2%) of high school teachers.

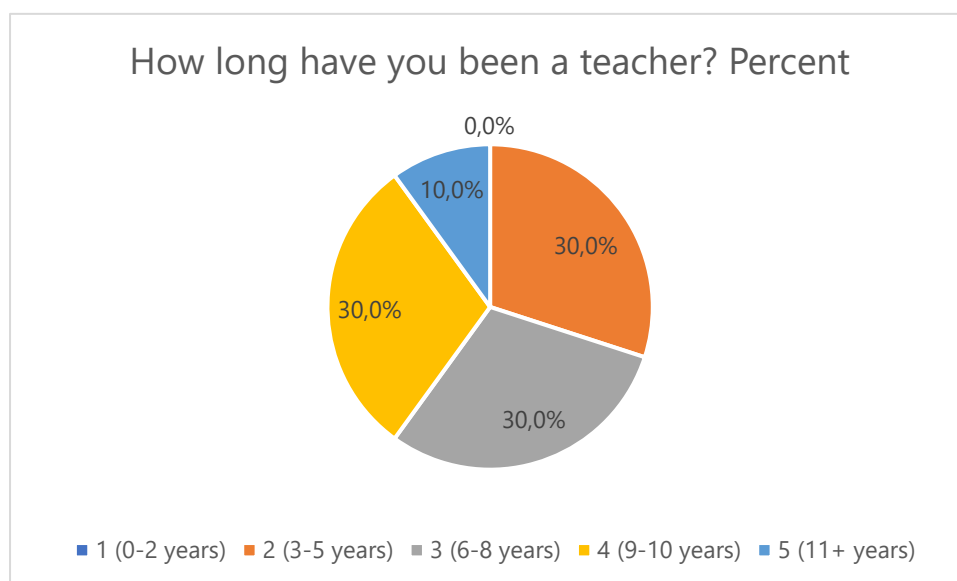


Figure 1: Number of years of practice

Figure 1 show that three categories of teachers were equally represented except for teachers with 2 (or less) years of experience and 10% of teachers that are the most





experienced. This was probably due to the fact that younger generation is more susceptible to being involved in the international projects.

### Quantitative analysis

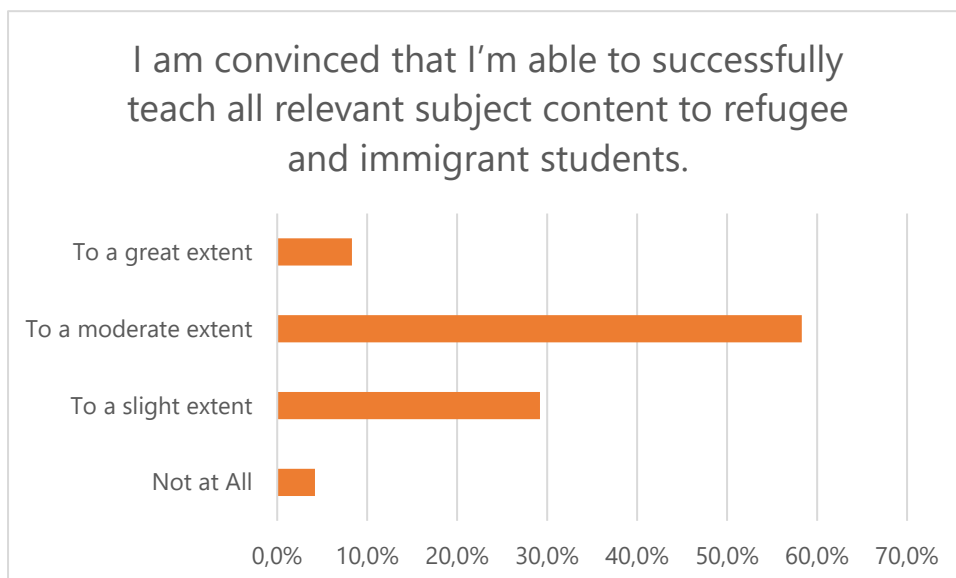


Figure 2: Self efficacy

On average we can say that Slovenian teachers are proportionally confident in their efficiency. Very small proportion of teachers do not feel confident or efficient in their every-day work with immigrant pupils or have doubts in their abilities. However, it is important to point out that only 8,3% of teachers are fully convinced that they can teach all relevant subject content to refugee and immigrant pupils, and 58,3% of those that agree to a moderate extent” and 29,2% to a slight extent.

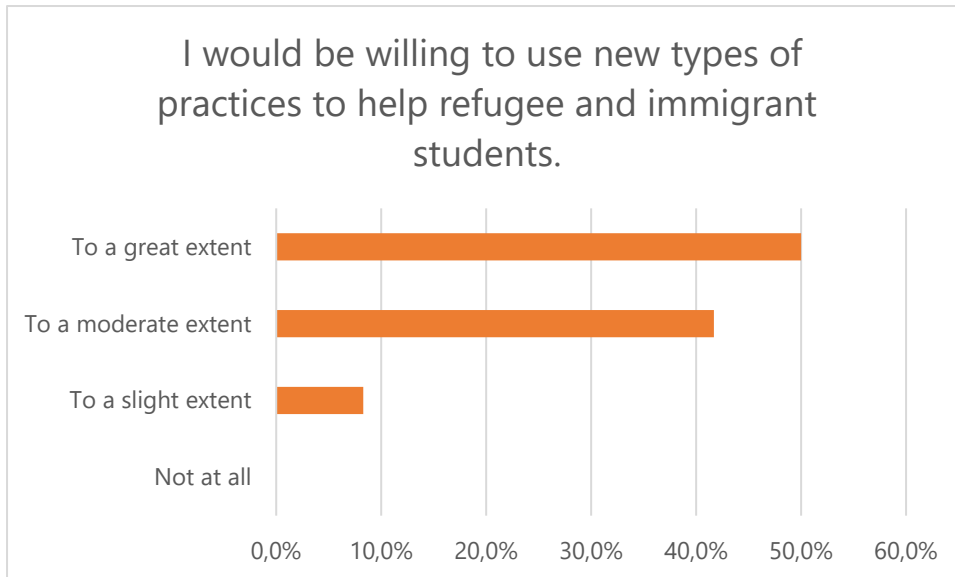


Figure 3: Implementing Practices

When comes to the implementing and using new practices in the classroom while teaching immigrant pupils, majority of teachers would be willing to use new types of practices, use treatment manuals, use research on how to implement practices for immigrant children. This trend indicates that objectives of the Passage Project are fully in place. Figure 4 above confirms our aspirations that teachers really need new and innovative approaches in teaching immigrant children.

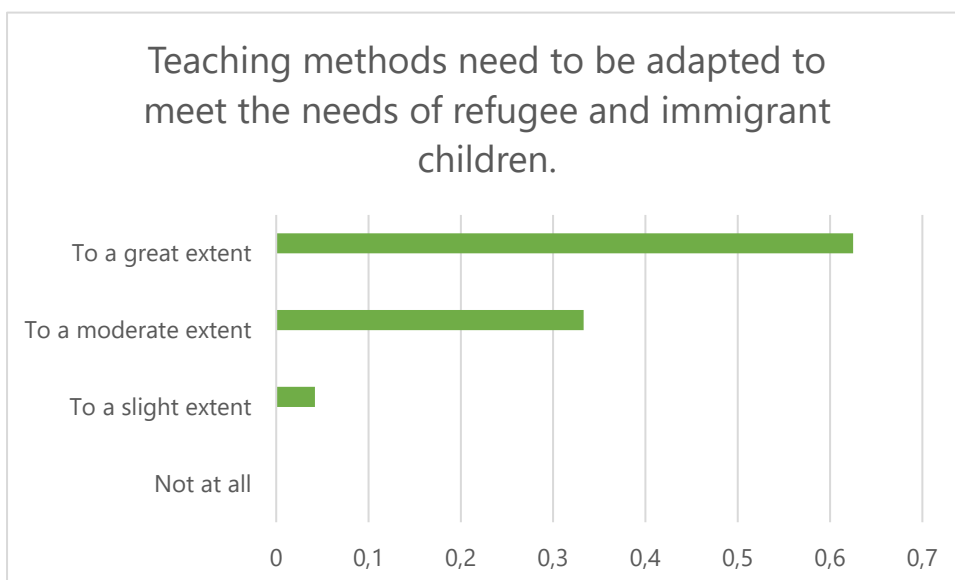


Figure 4: Cultural Competency



On average Slovenian teachers are aware of the diversity of cultural backgrounds of refugee and immigrant children, and that the learning process can be binary. They don't see cultural differences as an obstacle, rather than an opportunity to learn about their cultural characteristics. While conducting the research, we discovered on multiple occasions, that language is one of the most important factors for teachers on integration of immigrant pupils into the Slovenian education system. Nevertheless, more than 60% of teachers agree to a great extent that their teaching methods need to be adapted to meet the needs of refugee and immigrant children.

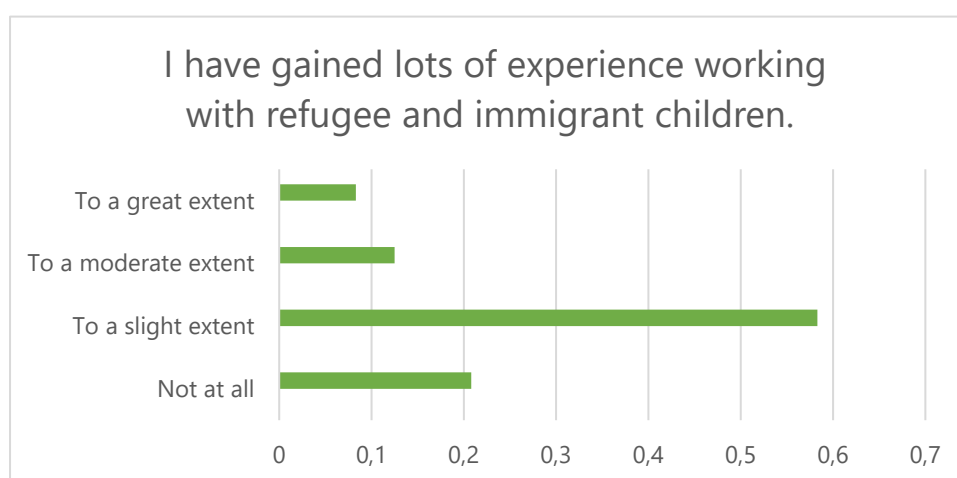


Figure 5: Competency/Preparation

Slovenian teachers show a lower degree of agreement with sentences that express their university preparation for teaching immigrant children. On several occasions they expressed that they only agree to a slight extent that they have received sufficient in-service professional development on how to best support refugee and immigrant pupils. Furthermore, only 8,3% of teachers fully agrees that they have gained lots of experience working with immigrant pupils. It's also necessary to point out that teachers do not acknowledge their school devotedness of time and energy to discuss effective practices to promote the well-being of refugee and immigrant students.

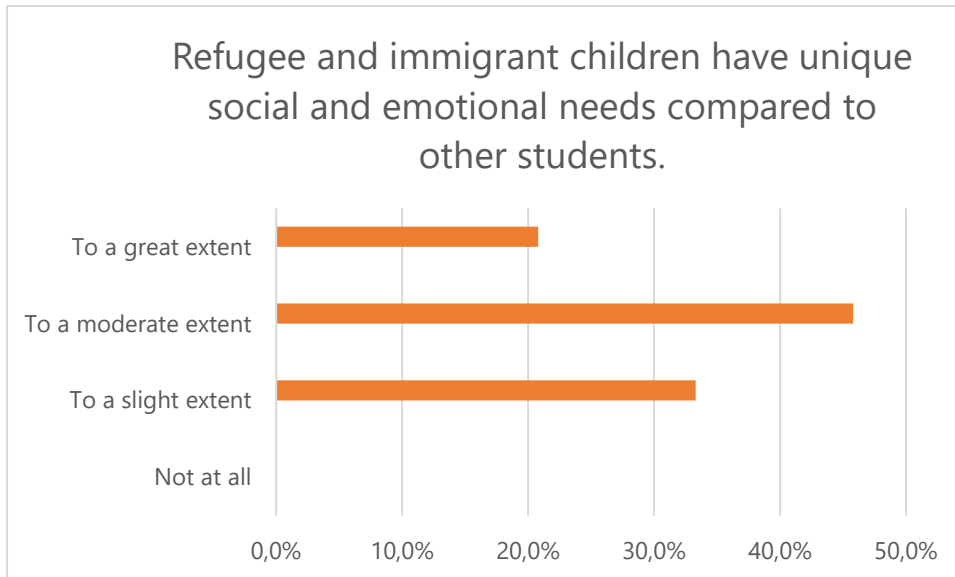


Figure 6: Student needs

The most divided were teachers on questions that concerns the needs of immigrant pupils. 45,8% of teachers agreed to a moderate extent that refugee and immigrant children have unique social and emotional needs compared to other students. However, It's also interesting that teachers do not perceive that immigrant children have more social problems, or that they are more anxious or nervous compared to native born students. Furthermore, they also do not believe that immigrant children have more symptoms of depression, or that they have any behaviors' issues.



## 5. Conclusion

We cannot yet speak of the education system in Slovenia as multicultural education, but it is true that in recent years some foundations have been laid in our country for the development of such education. The desk research of the Slovenian education system has proven to be solidary, inclusive, and successful in accepting those who have taken refuge in us due to the wars in the Balkans. In the field of primary education, Slovenia has a number of systemic measures that help ensure equal conditions for all students, regardless of their socio-economic situation or other personal circumstances.

Teachers reported that they believe they are sufficient in the classroom when teaching children with immigrant background, however that does not mean they don't encounter difficulties and they also pointed out that their knowledge is not broad enough and that they do not often feel competent enough to work with immigrant children. Therefore, they would be more than happy to test new tools and new approaches on integration of immigrant children in education. Teachers often feel that they are often left to themselves to figure out these "complex" situations.

Some stakeholders pointed out that they somehow feel left out of the centralized process of writing the legislative and guidelines for integration of immigrant children in Slovenian school system. Which in our opinion indicates on rigid system of the Slovenian education system. As a curiosity, primary school education for adult education don't exist, therefore, adult education organizations must use the same guidelines that are primarily written for 6-year-old pupils.

Quantitative analysis revealed some interesting features on the perspective on integration of immigrant children and refugees in Slovenia. Analysed data confirmed that Slovenian system is not very multicultural, as the Slovenian teachers are not very



confident in teaching immigrant children. Only a small proportion share of teachers was completely confident in their abilities and knowledge on how to integrate immigrant children in education. Lack of self-confidence may be the consequence of absence of multiculturalism in Slovenia. However, teachers are very open to try new tools and didactic aids, as they complained that there are not enough such tools at disposal to them. Most of the findings followed focus group researches where teachers exposed lack of training during their university study, but it's important to point out that this was almost a decade ago.

The presented paper highlights the need of teachers for new/innovative tools. Objectives and aims of the PASSAGE project are fully in line with the predicted needs of teachers that will be the main target group of the Project. Presented findings represent high value information that could be used in the future to enrich knowledge on the integration of immigrant children into education system, with emphasis on the Slovenian education system.



## 6. Literature

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