



**INTER NETWORK**

Intercultural education. Teacher training and school practice.



# REPORT ON THE STATE OF INNOVATION ON INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

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## Contextualizing the State of Innovation

The INTER Network (<http://internetwork.up.pt/>) is a group of 23 different institutions (universities, research centers, schools, different associations, consulting companies, a centre of resources under the Spanish Ministry of Education, etc.) from 12 countries -Spain, Italy, Portugal, Norway, Slovenia, *Île de la Reunion* (France)-, Great Britain, Austria, Latvia, Poland, Malta and The Netherlands. Our purpose is to improve quality in Education and want to contribute to innovate in schools by assisting them in adopting and implementing an intercultural approach.

Our specific aims are:

1. To define, exemplify and promote intercultural education as an approach to deal with cultural differences at school in terms of theoretical foundations and practical implications.

2. To critically assess the European, national and local educational policies and practices developed in relation to meeting the needs of culturally diverse students and communities, specifically those initiatives named “intercultural”.

3. To elaborate and implement teacher training initiatives in the network institutions (masters and other postgraduate courses, seminars, workshops, etc.) in order to support teachers to deal with cultural diversity in a flexible way by adopting an intercultural approach in their daily practices.

4. To elaborate, implement and disseminate tools to analyze, support, manage and improve the intercultural approach in schooling practices, in relation to curriculum and institutional dimensions.

The INTER Network continues and deepens a series of joint projects on intercultural education and racism.

The first project was a Socrates Comenius titled *INTER – A Practical Guide to Implement Intercultural Education at School* (2002-5),<sup>1</sup> focused on developing, using and validating a practical guide that facilitates analysis, implementation and improvement of intercultural education in schools. The resulting INTER Guide, for initial and in-service teacher training<sup>2</sup>, is available in six European languages. In 2005, the INTER project was awarded the **European Award for Intercultural Education** by the Evens Foundation<sup>3</sup> in Antwerp (Belgium) and in

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<sup>1</sup> <http://inter.up.pt/>

<sup>2</sup> INTER Group (2006). *Culture Is Our Focus, Diversity Is Our Normality. INTER Guide to implement Intercultural Education*. Vienna: Navreme.

<sup>3</sup> [www.evensfoundation.org](http://www.evensfoundation.org)

2006, it was also awarded the “Premio Aula” for the best educational materials of the year by the Spanish Ministry of Education.

*INTER: A Euro-Latinamerican Postgraduate Programme on Intercultural Education*, funded by the ALFA European Cooperation Programme (2007-9), expands the engagement of the group to Latin America. The work plan foresees the joint development of an M.A. curriculum on "Intercultural Education," to be implemented thereafter at participating universities in Europe and Latin America.

Our purpose with all these projects is to transform educational ideas and practices from an intercultural perspective. We all agree that current educational systems do not equally benefit all students, and we propose intercultural education as a useful approach to change school and to contribute to transformation of society into a more inclusive and fair one.

We use to start each one of our projects analyzing the previous state of the art, the context of each participant institution and country as well as the needs we are able to identify regarding the implementation of intercultural education. One of the conclusions of these analysis use to point out the fact that we use the same terms but we do not always mean the same ideas; that is to say, that the surface of our common assumptions could hide some disagreements that need to be deeper analyzed.

This is why it was decided that one of the first tasks of the current Network project would be to develop again a State of Innovation. The team that overtook the coordination of this task decided to start analyzing partner's ideas within the INTER Network. This Report shows the results of this analysis.

## **Gathering our ideas**

The original INTER Network proposal deal with four different dimensions on Intercultural Education that constitute the structure of our common work:

- a) theoretical foundations
- b) teacher training
- c) school practices
- d) resources and communication.

In order to find out what Intercultural Education means for different partners and also to benefit from each other ideas, we thought that a questionnaire could be a useful tool to gather opinions in a short time from such a wide and scattered group.

Our intention was to get answers from a personal (instead of an institutional) point of view and along three different lines: ideas on the topic, analysis of the own context (defined by each partner on a professional, national, European or whatever other basis), and the distance between both, the ideas and the

context. Asking about gaps we tried to clarify and refine the limits of our agreements and to point out our major disagreements on what partners think Intercultural Education is, how it should be implemented and which are the main difficulties we find on putting our ideas into practice. Our first draft of the questionnaire was piloted first among the members of the group in charge of the final analysis, and with the adjustments we did after this first experience we sent the questionnaire to the whole group of partners, giving them the possibility to answer it individually or collectively, or to apply it to colleagues indeed.

We included the following guidelines to fill in the questionnaire:

- *We expect that you answer from your own perspective, giving us few and significant references only when you think they are necessary*
- *We don't want long answers but meaningful ones, so please take your time to think about them*
- *When we ask about the context we expect you to talk about what you know / work / are interested in, and it should not be only focused on your national context; remember this is a European network and we need to offer a global perspective*

Let us start by speaking about the questions and deal afterwards with the answers.

Regarding **Theoretical Foundations** we asked:

- What do you think Intercultural Education is?
- Is it different from how is it used in your context?
- Please, give us five meaningful theoretical references and tell us why do you choose them

About **Teacher Training** we wanted to know:

- Competences and skills an Intercultural teacher should have
- Programs in Intercultural Education you are aware of
- Needs or gaps you see in this area
- Further comments and suggestions to improve Intercultural Education

On **School Practices** we tried to find out:

- Practices you know which follow Intercultural Education perspective
- Gaps between Theory and practice (including Teacher Training Programs)

And finally we intend to know about **Resources and Communication**:

- Resources you are aware of following an Intercultural perspective
- How do you think communication among members of a school community should be from an Intercultural approach?
- Gaps you see from this perspective

The main problems identified in answering the questionnaire were related to the ambiguity of some of these concepts, which are used in a different way in different contexts, and also to the difficulty in limiting and defining a context to cross-compare it with personal ideas. We, the members of the group in charge

of the analysis, participated answering the questionnaire as well. This fact made us aware of the difficulties and made it possible for us to help partners to clarify the questions up to a certain point. With this intention we organized a general virtual conference that was held at the Network virtual platform.

## Analyzing responses

The answers we got did not have information about the specific people answering the questionnaire, since we gave the possibility of working it individually or collectively, and we did not ask for any information about the respondents. The answers were written in four different languages (Spanish, English, Italian and French), but we have to be aware also of the fact that some questionnaires were answered in one languages and then translated into English by different people. Perhaps the more explicit case of translation misunderstanding we are aware of was about the expression “to increase differences” that puzzled us until we spoke with the people who apparently had wrote it and found out that they were as puzzled as we were, because what they really meant was “to value differences”.

We dealt with the complexity of the answers from a two-fold perspective. On the one hand we wanted to point out our common ideas, what we already shared, what we already agreed on. On the other hand we have also identified our disagreements as material for further discussion and enrichment.

To make the analysis, we first reduced the answers to short sentences, and from there we tried to extract what we thought were the underlying concepts; of course, it is important to notice that this process is embedded in our own interpretation. After that, and as a way to validate the process, we turned it around, searching for the concepts in the answers provided by the questionnaires. Our purpose was again two fold: first, to confirm that the concepts selected were actually used by participants; and secondly, to contextualize them and use some excerpts as examples. This complex process let us easily compare and group the main ideas.

We presented a paper on the preliminary results in Warsaw Conference and we concluded trying to open a general discussion among partners on some ideas that we thought needed more discussion. We also opened a forum in the virtual platform to keep alive this discussion, but until now nobody has participated. We still hope that this Report will encourage the discussion.

While writing a paper for the Proceedings of Warsaw Conference we had the impression that we needed to keep on exploring the answers in order to reflect more exhaustively the richness of the partners' ideas. Once this second analysis was done by the coordinators, we met face to face in Verona with the rest of the Work package team to share our ideas for the final Report. As a consequence of this meeting it was decided to open a google document for a while in which we all could keep on contributing to the interpretation and further discussion of the answers.

# Theoretical foundations on Intercultural Education

The first dimension of analysis regards to the theoretical assumptions on what Intercultural Education is. To gather information about partners' ideas, we asked them the following questions:

- What do you think Intercultural Education is?
- Is it different from how is it used in your context?
- Please, give us five meaningful theoretical references and tell us why do you choose them

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Our first conclusion is that, generally speaking, we agree more on theory than in what has to do with practice. With this we mean that **our theoretical ideas on what Intercultural Education is** have more in common than what we think about how its practice should be.

Most of us agreed that Intercultural Education has to do first of all with **culture** in general, or **cultures** in particular, and some of us even identify it with **cultural awareness**. We have some examples from partners' own words about what intercultural education is:

*The promotion of practices and knowledge towards the development of a critical cultural awareness, involving the fostering of an active citizenship*

*One important element is to reflect on the concept of culture as a dynamic element. It prevents from the danger of categorizing people in an essentialist way*

*On peut aussi aborder l'interculturalité à travers des contenus spécifiques pris dans l'actualité mais aussi dans la vie de la classe ou de l'établissement scolaire, dans les cultures des différentes ethnies*

*Teaching about other cultures, not limiting ourselves to only these cultures which we can encounter in our country*

The other two ideas related to Intercultural Education partners agreed on more are **equity** and **inclusion**. Here are some examples:

*It makes people ready to live in a fairer and plural society, recognizing cultural diversity. It intends to promote active participation and to assure equal opportunities*

*To include everyone as they are and see differences as enrichment in the society*

On a third level partners have stressed the ideas of **collaboration, participation, exchange, and relation**, which we consider slightly different ways of expressing the same idea. In our partner's words:

*An educational practice to build a curriculum as a participative process including different social actors, necessities, and educational demands*

*It emphasizes interaction, dialogue and considers relationships as a chance of growing*

Finally, we would like to point out three ideas that partners identify with Intercultural Education that are also related to each other: **learning, understanding, and questioning**.

*It implies continuous reflection and questioning of assumptions, principles and practices*

*To become more competent in making contacts with other people and to recognize and use different situations, communities, relations in our life for (especially social) learning*

*It is necessary to learn to coexist, to respect, to learn, to value the things that make us different...*

As a result of the second round of analysis we maintained we added some new concepts to the previous ones. They were:

**Respect, Citizenship, (mutual) Understanding, Common/shared values and Growth**, on the first place.

*To respect individuality and diversity to live in a changing multicultural society*

*To develop empathy, tolerance and respect*

*To foster an active citizenship*

*To search for similarities and mutual understanding*

*To grow on a personal and collective level*

*To make us conscious of common values*

*To identify similarities*

*Accepting the universal meanings of different cultures*

On the second hand, **Relationship, Assimilation and Communication**:

*To become competent in making relationships*

*To bring minorities close to the majority*

*To communicate and collaborate with others*

We also added **Experiences, Cultural relativism, Curiosity, Critical awareness, and Consciousness.**

*Teaching/learning process based upon the experiences of people involved in it*

*To accept norms but to critically think about them to change them*

*To promote critical cultural awareness*

*Accept diversity while questioning our own values*

*Awareness of different world visions*

And finally, we included some other concepts that appear in the partners' questionnaires, such as **Minorities** and **Europe/European identity.**

*Education of minorities within the majority*

*To identify similarities to build European identity*

*To understand cultural diversity and interconnections among European countries*

Reflecting on some of the concepts shared by partners, it seems as if we were speaking about three different dimensions that are part of the definition of Intercultural Education.

The first dimension is related to the “**aims**” of **intercultural education**; here we have concepts as equity, inclusion, mutual understanding, respect, citizenship and growth. And we also find the concept of Europeanism/European identity.

The second dimension refers to the “**means**”, **strategies or processes to apply an intercultural approach in education.** Here we are speaking about learning, understanding, questioning; and the group of “relation” terms: communication, relationship, exchange, and participation, cooperation, collaboration. And here appears also the concept of assimilation.

The third dimension of concepts makes explicit which are the “**materials**”, **the tools to build an intercultural society.** The concepts we can include here are: curiosity, critical awareness, cultural relativism (and we have to explain what we mean and discuss on it), consciousness and experiences. And we should

include here the concepts of differences, cultural diversity and minorities as well.

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Regarding the second question of the first dimension, when we asked **whether these ideas on Intercultural Education are put into practice** in our own contexts, answers were divided between those of us who said plainly no, and those who thought that they are. But it is important to notice that people who said “yes” specified very close and specific contexts, such as, the Inter Network itself or some other project they are involved in, or their own classroom or some university courses. On the other hand, those who answer “no”, many times explain that, in their contexts, Intercultural Education is identified only with minorities and immigrant students, and associated with the idea of deficit and compensation. Thus, in spite of the opposite answers (some said plainly yes, some others plainly no) **we see here a general agreement** shared by almost all partners, and this is the idea that Intercultural Education is put into practice only in small contexts very close to the members of the INTER Network.

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The third question of this first dimension asked for significant references on Intercultural Education. Some references have been introduced by partners, some other are simply mentioned. So we have ordered them into three categories: “commented references”, “web sites” and “other references”:

**Commented references:**

**Abdallah-Preteuille, M. (1999). *L'éducation interculturelle*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.** This author establishes a conceptual framework to define intercultural education. She proposes intercultural approach as a paradigm to understand diversity in education. She proposes to foster and identify the “intercultural archipelagos”. The book offers meaningful ideas about what intercultural education means and which are the practical implications of this approach.

**Aguado, Teresa (2003). *Pedagogía intercultural [Intercultural Pedagogy]*. Madrid: McGraw-Hill.** This is a clear explanation of what Intercultural Education is. Based upon the idea of cultural diversity, it deals with theory, social context, methodology, research, competencies, mediation, continuous education and virtual learning/teaching process. This book makes a timely reflection on the state of innovation of the intercultural approach in education, having in mind all the theoretical inputs as well as the practical implications (political, social) that have influence on the current state of implementation of the intercultural education. It provides a very clear framework on the situation and prospective of research and practice in this area.

**Aguado, Teresa; Gil Jaurena, Inés; Mata, Patricia (2006). *Educación intercultural: una propuesta para la transformación de la escuela*. Madrid: Los Libros de La Catarata.** This book presents Intercultural Education as a

new approach to transform schools, providing with tools to reflect on our current ideas on diversity, ideas to analyze and challenge educational policies, and specific proposals and strategies to change schools.

**Alred Geof, Byram Michael, Fleming Mike. *Education for Intercultural Citizenship*. Multilingual Matters Ltd.** Examines citizenship education from the perspective of interculturality in order to extend its meaning and significance within and beyond the nation state, and in education in the nation state. This encapsulates many of my beliefs.

**Banks Jim: *An Introduction to Multicultural Education*. Boston: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon, 1994; Fourth Edition, 2008.** Translated and published in Japan by The Simul Press, 1996. Translated and published in Greece, 2006. This book gives an excellent overview of the major issues in the area of multicultural education. The most recent Volume will also include key authors from Europe.

**Barañano, A., J. L. García; M. Cátedra y M. J. Devillard (Coords). 2007: *Diccionario de relaciones interculturales, diversidad y globalización*. Madrid: Editorial Complutense, UCM.** This book with several articles presents an interesting picture to clarify concepts connecting with IE

**Bauman, Z. (1999): *La cultura como praxis*, Paidós, Barcelona.** Analiza las diferentes formas en que se utiliza el término cultura, como concepto, como estructura y como praxis. Para el autor la cultura es un aspecto vivo y cambiante de las relaciones humanas por lo que se debe entender y estudiar como parte integral de la vida.

**Bhatti, Ghazala, Gaine Chris, Gobbo Francesca, Leeman Yvonne. *Social Justice and Intercultural Education*. Trentham books Ltd.** Encapsulates the richness offered by the discourse of social justice and explores how it is understood in Europe and its connection to intercultural education as interpreted in different parts of the EU.

**Bourdieu, P. (1985), *Sistemas de enseñanza y sistemas de pensamiento*. In J. Gimeno Sacristán y A. Pérez Gómez, *La enseñanza: su teoría y su práctica*. Madrid: Akal Universitaria, 20-36.** The school culture acts building in the individuals specific thinking categories which are mediators in the communication. The autor shows how the teaching modifies the content of the cultural referencies transferred by the educational encounters and legitimize a "class cultura" based in the supremacy of some specific ways of thinking and express.

**Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge Univ Press.** Bourdieu goes beyond Marxism in his description of the social, economic and educational capital that communities and individuals take with them into the educational realm.

**Cieślikowska, D., Kownacka, E., Olczak, E., Paszkowska-Rogacz, A. (2006). *Career Guidance and Inter-cultural Challenges*. Warszawa:**

**Koweziu.** It covers career guidance topics in a context of inter-cultural challenges. Moreover, the book presents differences in social functioning of people who originate in different cultures; it gives properties to the dynamic of acculturation and strategies for combating the double-sided nature of culture. Additionally, it contains particularly useful content for career counselors, regarding inter-cultural communication and intercultural competence in vocational guidance.

**Cohen Elizabeth: *Designing Groupwork: Strategies for the Heterogeneous Classroom.*** This book goes beyond methodology and uses a powerful sociological lense to examine status differences in classrooms and what can be done about this

**Cushner Kenneth *International Perspectives on Intercultural Education.*** **Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.** This volume is an attempt to expand the dialogue about multicultural education.

**Dewey, J. (1963). *Experience and education.* New York: Collier Books.** In this book Dewey rethinks education and purports a new education featuring reforms that have reappeared in each era of progressive reform: disciplinary learning conducted in more experiential ways; interdisciplinary curriculum aimed at making connections among ideas; cooperative learning; shared decision making among teachers, students and parents; "detracking" to make a challenging curriculum available to more students. The intercultural approach in education rethinks education and have clear coincidences with Dewey's reformist proposal.

**Feito, Rafael: *Otra escuela es posible [Another school is possible].*** **Madrid: Siglo XXI. 2006.** The author has in mind the idea of the title to try to convince the reader, theoretically and practically that it is possible to have a different school

**Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Continuum Pub. Co.** He says teaching is not to transfer knowledge, but to build the conditions to create knowledge. He proposes a meaningful theory about teaching and learning as processes interconnected that require the personal implications of the participants. A classic approach to the empowerment of disadvantaged communities through education

**García Canclini, Nestor (2004): *Diferentes, desiguales y desconectados. Mapas de la interculturalidad.* Editorial Gedisa, Barcelona.** Enfoque original y multidisciplinar, sociología, la antropología y las teorías comunicacionales. Sabe describir de manera muy cercana el mundo globalizado, definir en qué consiste la interculturalidad, y dibujar con ejemplos concretos todo este panorama. Con todo ello ofrece una visión muy crítica de la realidad en la que no dejan de aparecer grietas que abren posibilidades para la transformación social. Canclini junta tres objetos de estudio que se suelen analizar por separado: Las diferencias, que normalmente estudian las teorías de lo étnico y lo nacional. Las desigualdades sobre las que el marxismo y otras corrientes

macro sociales se centran. Y las conexiones y desconexiones foco de atención en los campos comunicacional e informático.

**Grañeras, M. et al. (1998): “La investigación sobre educación intercultural”, en Grañeras, M. et al.: *Catorce años de investigación sobre las desigualdades en educación en España*. Madrid. Centro de Publicaciones. Secretaría General Técnica, pp.111-150.** En este capítulo se repasan distintas definiciones de educación intercultural y se destacan sobre todo las contribuciones del Consejo de Europa, para quien es necesario orientar el pensamiento de los ciudadanos/as hacia la diversidad cultural para poder evolucionar en un nuevo concepto de sociedad y ciudadanía. Se destaca, fundamentalmente la relación entre la educación intercultural y los valores democráticos.

**Hernández y Del Olmo. *Antropología en el aula. Una propuesta didáctica para una sociedad multicultural [Anthropology in classrooms. A didactic proposal for a multicultural society]*.** It has a propose to focus the teach from cultural diversity perspective

**Hofstede, G. (2007). *Cultures and Organizations. Programming the mind*. Warszawa: PWE.** This book shows great strength and range influence of culture and cultural differences has on an organization and management. Author explained what culture itself and cultural phenomenon are (e.g. values, norms, symbols), what national culture is (based on research conducted in several dozen countries). It also shows what the practical consequences of cultural differences are and how to combat them to make international understanding between nations, organisations, and people. Author illustrates changes that we can observe in relations between culture and organisations in times of progressing integration and globalization.

**INTER Group. *INTER Guide: a practical Guide to implement Intercultural Education at school*.** I think this document exposes my meaning of IE well and it treats some of the elements connecting with the teach in schools, the elements who needs to be rethinking and to be changing

**INTER Group: *Actas congreso Inter. Congreso internacional de educación intercultural. Formación del profesorado y práctica escolar*. Madrid: UNED. 2007.** This CD is a compilation of the papers and workshops of the INTER Conference which took place in Madrid in 2004 and a very good way to take a look at what it is going on on Intercultural education

**INTER Group: *Culture is Our Focus, Diversity is Our Normality*. Vienna: Navreme. 2006.** This is a Guide to put Intercultural Education into practice. It is divided into 8 Modules, each addressing a different topic: 1) compulsory education, 2) Diversity versus homogeneity, 3) School, home, community, 4) theoretical assumptions, 5) Educational Policies, 6) Evaluation, 7) School structure, and 8) Teaching and Learning strategies

**INTER Group: *Racism: What It Is and How to Deal with It*. Vienna: Navreme. 2007.** This work was intended as a practical tool in schools to open

up a dialog on racism. It contains formal information as well as activities to do in the classrooms and different ways to approach the subject. I think that antiracis education is a very important area of Intercultural Education.

**Keast, John. *Religious Diversity and Intercultural Education: A Reference Book for Schools*. Council of Europe** This reference book covers some of the theoretical perspectives, some key conceptual elements of intercultural education on various approaches to teaching and learning, some aspects of religious diversity in schools in different settings, and some examples of current practice in some member states of the Council of Europe. Most useful!

**Kuper, A.(1999): *Cultura. La versión de los antropólogos*. Paidós básica, Barcelona.** Rastrea el concepto de cultura desde los debates de principio del siglo XX hasta Parsons. Expone las razones que niegan el determinismo cultural.

**Malgesini, G. y Gimenez, C.(2000): *Guía de conceptos sobre migraciones, racismo e interculturalidad*. Ed. Consejería Educación Comunidad de Madrid.** Considero que es un buen glosario de términos, tiene rigor y en muchos casos se muestra el recorrido histórico, ayuda a conocer y problematizar. Creo que es bastante imprescindible definir qué entendemos por muchos de los conceptos que manejamos.

**Nesbitt, Eleanor. *Intercultural Education*.** This book has been written for teachers, teacher trainers and their students, and others working with children and young people. A most valuable resource.

**Nieto, Sonia: *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education*.** Sonia Nieto looks carefully at the sociopolitical context of teaching. It is especially strong when looking at the role of teachers and her arguments for a caring pedagogy.

**Sabariego, M. (2002): *La educación intercultural. Ante los retos del siglo XXI*. Bilbao. Desclée de Brouwer.** En esta publicación se presentan los antecedentes del término educación intercultural, los significados que se le atribuyen en los diferentes países, tanto europeos como americanos, y la vinculación del término a la reivindicación de derechos y mismas oportunidades de las clases sociales y de las minorías étnicas más oprimidas.

**San Román, T. (1996): *Los muros de la separación. Ensayo sobre alterofobia y filantropía*. Tecnos, Barcelona.** Resulta de gran ayuda para analizar nuestra posición frente al otro, nuestros presupuestos ante la diferencia, para acercarnos a los argumentos que justifican las distintas posturas. Quizá está más relacionado con racismo.

**Szarota P. (2006). *The Psychology of Smile. Cultural Analysis* (s. 43-60). Gdańsk: GWP.** The book has an interdisciplinary nature and can be interesting for professionals of different disciplines, as well as simple, demanding and intelligent readers, due to the character of its content and formulation. Attractiveness to this book is being added by lightness of moving between

topics while discovering new subjects, broad study perspective, as well as good, colorful and never boring language.

**Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona. *II Congreso Internacional de Etnografía y Educación*. September 2007, “Migrations and citizenship”.** The publisher collects ethnography investigations mainly of educational context. It presents a picture about how to confront teaching in multicultural context. It includes theoretical foundations and analysis criticism of these too

**Vygotsky, L. (1998). *Mind in society*. MA: Harvard University Press.** Dewey wrote: “It exists a tight and necessary relation between the real experience and the education processes”. Those authors emphasized the importance of the cultural and social context in the educational processes. Vygotsky defined the concept of “potential development area” which focuses on the idea: we learn thanks to the interactions with others, either teachers and our peers.

**Walzer, Michael (1997). *Las esferas de la justicia. Una defensa del pluralismo y la igualdad* [Spheres of Justice. Defence of Pluralism and Equality]. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.** For me it has been a crucial reference to reflect on and understand the social justice debate, and the variety and complexity of the factors implied in this subject. It also provides with a powerful proposal for analysing the causes of unfairness, exemplified in several and different real situations.

**Wenger, E. (2001): *Comunidades de práctica. Aprendizaje, significado e identidad*, Paidós, Barcelona.** Presenta un amplio marco de referencia conceptual para concebir el aprendizaje como un proceso de participación social. El compromiso en la práctica social, es el proceso fundamental por el cual aprendemos y nos convertimos en quienes somos. La unidad básica de análisis no es el individuo, ni las instituciones sociales, sino las “comunidades de práctica” informales que forman a las personas en su intento de lograr un objetivo común. Explora la intersección entre cuestiones relacionadas con la comunidad, la práctica social, el significado y la identidad.

#### **Web sites:**

**“Literaterras” group:** [www.letras.ufmg.br/bay](http://www.letras.ufmg.br/bay) - (formed by experts from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Belo Horizonte – Brazil, and from other institutions) – Their aim is to foment and disseminate collective processes from literature production, such as the literature production from the ingenious people from Brazil and México. They are involved in the Intercultural Course of Indigenous Teachers from the UFMG.

**Laboratorio de Estudios Interculturales:** <http://www.ugr.es/~ldei/>. It is a good archive with information about IE, mainly researchs in context with minorities

**ZARA:** Das e-learning tool zum Anti-Diskriminierungs-Training. (CD – look [www.zara.or.at](http://www.zara.or.at)) – As one of its many tasks, ZARA undertakes social information and awareness activities. ZARA offers training courses to

businesses and educational institutions, as well as an annual training course in anti-racism work.

### Other references:

Adams, M., Bell, L.A., Griffin, P. (eds.) (1997). *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*. New York and London: Routledge.

Aguado, T. et al. (1999): *Diversidad cultural e igualdad escolar. Un modelo para el diagnóstico y desarrollo de actuaciones educativas en contextos escolares multiculturales*. Madrid. CIDE.

Arango, J. (2002): ¿De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de multiculturalismo? En *El País*, 23-03-02, pp-11-12.

Banks J. *Introduction to Multicultural Education 2002*

Becker, Howard S. (1963): *Outsiders*. New York: The Free press

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## Teacher Training

The second Dimension of the analysis concerns Teacher Training. We wanted to know what the members of the Network thought about teacher training in intercultural Education. We were interested in partners' opinions on the issue but also their perception about their contexts, and the gaps they identify between what they think it should be and what they thought it is. Besides these gaps we were interested in their ideas on how this gaps could be overcome. We asked the following questions

- What kind of competencies, skills, attitudes, etc., do you think an intercultural teacher should have? How do you think a teacher could be trained on these?
- Tell us about Teacher Training programs / initiatives you are aware of to train a teacher in IE. What opinion do [have] you about them?
- In your opinion, which are the needs/gaps in this area?
- Do you have any other suggestions, comments on how to improve teacher training on IE?

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The first question referred to **Intercultural competences required for teachers**. We analyzed answers in a slightly different way we did in the previous dimension: We reduced the answers to short sentences but unlike what we did on Theoretical assumptions, we did not reduce the sentences to concepts. We tried instead to match the sentences with the categories (concepts) previously identified in the first dimension, and only if we could not identify any relationship, we introduced new concepts. With this procedure we were looking for correlations among ideas on what we think Intercultural Education should be in theory, and competences, skills, attitudes, etc. we think teachers should have in order to put Intercultural Education into practice.

Even though most of the ideas used in this section can be easily with the categories of the first dimension analyzed (i.e. Theoretical assumptions), their frequency of use shows significant differences:

Partners identified ideas about Intercultural Education mostly with the addressing of *differences* (either in a positive way, as a possibility, or in a negative way, or as something that need to be solved), and also with the building bridges –or common values- among them, stressing the need to live, participate and collaborate.

But most partners have stressed *Flexibility, Communication and Critical thought* as the most important competences, skills and attitudes for intercultural teachers; and only after these *Awareness of differences* become important, together with *Equity, Awareness of own prejudices and stereotypes* and *Empathy*. Some of us have also claim the importance of *Respect, Participation*, and the need *To Teach about other cultures*. With less agreement we have quoted *Openness to change, Curiosity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Collaborative work*. Finally, the ideas of *Openness to the environment, to become a role*

*model*, to develop common values, and *Cultural relativism* have also reach agreement to a certain point.

There were other ideas only mentioned once that we think also important to include here: Coherence, to have high expectation on students, responsibility, conflict-resolution skills, the idea of citizenship, relationship, patience, the ability to listen and dialogue, resilience, enthusiasm and the ability to speak and teach a second language, anti-racist education, coordination, eagerness to learn, ability to contextualize, mediation skills, cultural awareness and to develop a sense of Europeanness.

We see that most of these categories are involving ideas that could be understood as different or complementary angles of the same core, which is represented more by the ability to adjust oneself to different environments and contexts and critical awareness of the self than by stressing the idea of difference or even diversity. In this way what we claim about intercultural teachers has to do more with diversity of any student than with students of “other cultures”, that is to say that the cultural differences we identified in the first dimension with Intercultural Education, are less important as teacher competences than a general ability to reflect and change with the social environment.

And we share most of the ideas, and even when we do not, we are stressing different angles of a complex ideal teacher who should be flexible, use critical thought, have good skills to communicate, inspired by the idea of equity, being aware of the limitations of prejudices and stereotypes, use empathy as a tool and be able to manage differences. S/he should show respect to students, promote participation and be able to teach and learn about other cultures, be open to change, be curious, develop cooperative work, value diversity and oriented to inclusion, use cultural relativism as a tool, but also be able to build common values, become a role model and be open to the environment.

And even when we do not explicitly share ideas such as the need for anti-racist education, to develop mediation skills and resilience, be patient and able to coordinate, listen and contextualize, capable of developing dialogue, enthusiasm and eager to learn, it is easy to see these categories closely related with the former ones.

But there are two ideas, only once used each, that we are not able to know whether they are shared or not by the rest of the partners: the need to develop a cultural awareness and a sense con Europeanness. This is so because we perceive a certain contradiction with the main ideas stressed above, such as flexibility or critical thought. We see these most easily related with the idea of perceiving diversity, cultural differences, or just plain differences, as a challenge to be solve, a menace to manage and also with the need of building bridges or common values as a way to facilitate Education for all.

Nevertheless we think we have reached an important agreement regarding what we thought an Intercultural teacher should be and which were her/is most important abilities, skills or capabilities.

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Our second question on Teacher Training Dimension asked partners about **Teacher training Programs or initiatives in Intercultural Education** they were aware of, and also about their opinion on them.

This question was not answered in all the questionnaires. Those who did answer could be easily divided into a group of affirmative answers, providing examples, such as:

“one can find these throughout Europe, often by international organizations such as the Council of Europe, as well as universities and NGOs. Too hard to select one particular training”

“multidisciplinary programmes with an accent on the local problems of the state (i.e. in Latvia multilingualism, bilingual/multilingual education)”

“1) <Malas que contam histórias> project, 2) <The Other of Me> workshop, 3) <Pedagogias interculturais e migrações europeias>, and some curricular units and doctoral and master programmes”

“1) Course <Formação Intercultural de Educadores Indígenas (FIEI)> from Universidade federal de Minas Gerais, as an interesting experience of the involvement of the target group in the creation and management of the initiative, and 2) Course <Creación de Ambientes Interculturales en contextos educativos interculturales ([http://www.oui-iohe.qc.ca/cours/4\\_fr.aspx](http://www.oui-iohe.qc.ca/cours/4_fr.aspx)) a distance learning initiative that allows professional who work in the field of indigenous education to reformulate their performance in accordance of equate quality and cultural pertinence”

There are others who answered also yes but referred only their own programs:

“Programmes for in-service teachers that we are implementing focusing on sociolinguistic, cultural, psychological, and methodological aspects of Intercultural Education and multilingual education”

“In each teacher training program at my Department Inclusion and Intercultural Education are the overall topics”

“As a Centre for Intercultural Studies, we proposed an initiative with teachers and an action with students in reference to Intercultural Education in school years 2003-04, 2004-05”

“There are some initiatives (for example, the INTER Project and Guide, that provides a useful tool for training and auto-training, but they are punctual actions and not included in the core curriculum”

Those who answer “no” explained that even though some programs or initiatives are called Intercultural education courses, they do not follow this perspective in their opinion, such as:

“Regarding Compensatory Courses organized by the Community of Madrid, they are measures focusing on immigrant students to compensate cultural gaps, they talk about educational needs by country of origin, and even provide advice on how to understand students behavior by referring it to the country of origin”

“Some courses known as Intercultural Education courses do not agree with my ideas on what Intercultural Education is, such as those providing prescriptions to specific problems, or problems identified with minority students”

“I think that, generally speaking, those initiatives propose interculturalism as whether it was something concerning others or as a subject to speak about, but using an intercultural approach means for me to make teachers think about themselves and their practices”



To the third question on Teacher Training focused on **needs or gaps** that partners perceive **regarding the implementation of Intercultural Education** everybody answered yes, and they offered different ideas and suggestions.

The most generalized claim in the answers to the questionnaires is the *gap between theory and practice*, and the need to

“to start introducing the intercultural approach in the curriculum, now it is only <attached> to teacher training programs that reinforce the idea that Intercultural Education is something <special> aimed at <specific people>”

“Our special challenge is how to connect and transfer IE values and concepts into everyday school practice”

“We need to develop ways to implement Intercultural Education in schools”

Besides this gap appreciated by many answers, there are other interesting ideas that we will introduce in two different ways: gaps or criticisms, and needs or suggestions.

As **gaps**, the following were mentioned:

- lack of information
- avoidance of self criticisms
- previous trajectories of students are not taken into account
- no connection between the board of Education and Educational policies and school life

- teachers' motivation
- training of teachers, both in-service and initial
- antiracist education
- the training of teachers lacks contextualization
- cultural diversity is perceived in a very simplistic way
- teacher training in practice
- practical knowledge
- life-long teacher training
- political will to include Intercultural Education in the training of teachers
- lack of participation of social actors in decision making
- avoid perspectives that promote assimilation of minorities

As **needs**, partners identified the following:

- To introduce Intercultural Education in the formal initial teachers training
- To introduce Intercultural Education in in-service teachers training
- Guidelines to develop school curriculum
- More didactic materials
- More space in schools
- Antiracist Education
- More tools to put Intercultural Education into practice in classrooms
- Training initiatives aimed at teachers and head teachers together
- Mandatory Intercultural Education Courses in initial training
- Dissemination of best practices
- To build an international network of teachers working in Intercultural Education
- More support for Intercultural practices
- More involvement of stake-holders in training (parents, school staff, social workers, students)
- More practical knowledge to use in classrooms
- it is important to consider that Education is Intercultural or it is not education
- action-research

It is important to underline that together with the gap between theory and practice, many partners claim that more training in practice is needed, what others emphasize as more practical knowledge, and also that a better communication among social actors (policy designers, parents, head teachers, teachers and other school staff, pother workers, and students) is crucial.



The final question for this Dimension on Teacher Training was to ask for **further comments or suggestions to improve the training of teachers** in Intercultural Education. Most of the answers claim further and better teacher training, emphasizing the need to facilitate (with ideas, exchange, materials, critical thought, theory reflection, an extra teacher in the classroom, involvement of the whole school, more time for teachers, a more stable career for teachers, etc.) the transformation of the current school into an Intercultural education center. More specific suggestions are:

- To develop a Master's degree in Intercultural Education with the possibility to offer it on-line to facilitate teachers involvement
- Training on L2
- Encourage teachers to travel
- More discussion and dissemination of practices
- Reflection on how to implement Intercultural Education



## School practices

The third dimension of our analysis concerns School Practice. We were interested in gathering opinions regarding the practice of Intercultural Education, and again we tried to get partners' reflections on gaps they perceived between their ideas in theory and the practice in the school of their environment. We asked the following questions:

- Please, tell us about school practices and activities you are aware of (by experience or reference) which follow your IE perspective.
- Do you see any gaps between theory and practice, and between Teacher Training and school practice? Please, tell us about these gaps and give us proposals you think could reduce these gaps



The answers to the first question of this dimension show a main disagreement, very easy to perceived, at least on a first look: there are some partners who see their ideas on Intercultural Education put into practice in their environments, and give some or even many examples of this, and there are other partners who clearly do not. But let us take a closer look.

There are more answers saying that yes, Intercultural Education is being used (15 answers) than those who said no (only five answers). Some are more or less in between: "none except some actions", "only a few interesting projects", "none as a school but some practices".

Among those who answered yes, many quoted their own practices "yes, my research projects", "yes, some Comenius projects I have participated in", "yes, some after-school projects", "yes, some activities", "yes, in schools with large ethnic groups", and so on.

Other partners offered general ideas they thought were included in some projects or activities, and provided examples, such as "collaboration of people who are not teachers", "assemblies" "Simulation and cooperative learning", "Theatrical Lab", "Other cultures Lab", "<One Worlds> project promoting cultural and linguistic diversity among children", "to translate grade reports" "to promote activities aimed at intercultural interchange", "measures to assure participation of immigrant families", "to learn about Jewish holidays", "contribution to rebuilding Afganistan", "to learn about the everyday life of people in Latin America", "To value children", "The program of peer mediation in the Community of Madrid", "Atlántida project", "trips to developing countries", "teachers working in teams", "some action research in my school". Most of these examples, though not all, bring us back to the idea of identifying Intercultural Education with cultural differences and other cultures.

There are only few clear yes, but they have no problems in giving examples (some of them provide the same or similar examples), and neither they do in

justifying why they thought these are environments where Intercultural Education is put into practice. Here are some excerpts from questionnaires:

“Yes, there are so many. The best practices are characterized by: 1) whole school approach, 2) involvement of all, 3) commitment to caring, 4) sensitiveness to common needs, 5) connections with Human Rights Education, 6) challenging projects, 7) to work cross-curricularly, 8) allow research, 9) address diverse sexual identities, 10) see culture as something dynamic, and 11) good use of arts”

“Yes, some experiences are: 1) Learning Communities, 2) multilingual programs, 3) democratic Schools; some practices: 1) Accelerated schools, 2) five principles for effective learning (Berkeley, San Francisco)”

“Yes, 1) organized in open landscapes, 2) teachers working in teams, 3) they plan the work together”

“Yes, <Linking Classrooms> of the Community of Madrid, I think they will contribute to reach this objective of Intercultural Education, as long as: 1) students receive customized attention, 2) prepare the rest of students to respect and coexist, 3) sol academic gaps, 4) make multiculturalism a source of mutual enrichment, 5) work in an harmonic way, 6) reflect all this in the society at large”

“Yes, Bilingual Reform in Latvia (2004)”

“Yes, 1) Learning Communities, 2) Peer tutoring, 3) Peer mediation, 4) assemblies”

“Yes <Linking Classrooms> of the Community of Madrid, as well as like programs in other Communities of Spain, because: 1) they ease the transition of immigrant students into the regular system, 2) provide the student with communication skills in Spanish, 3) work in an individual way, 4) get these students into contact with the new culture that is foundation for a good integration”

Finally, it is interesting to notice that some practices were offered as examples of Intercultural Education by some partners, and the same practices are offered by other partners just the opposite, as practices that from the perspective of the person answering the questionnaire lack an Intercultural approach. The most significant are Compensatory programs, Linking Classrooms in the Community of Madrid, and Intercultural events. We can explain these contradictory answers in two ways: a) they emphasize different aspects of the same practice (i.e. in Linking Classrooms some point out to the variety of students while others stressed the fact that these students are being taught apart from the rest of the school), and b) the persons who answered have different ideas on what Intercultural Education is, ones seem to link Intercultural Education with “different cultures”, while others identify it with inclusion of all students *at the same time*. This contradiction could be easily traced down to the first dimension

of the questionnaire where a major disagreement appeared among those who closely link Intercultural Education with “cultural differences”, “others”, “minorities”, “ethnicity” and even “culture”, and other partners who criticize this identification and claim for a wider sense of the intercultural approach, as an educational perspective for ALL students (since we are all diverse) and not for specific groups labeled as “different”. This second sense has more to do with the concepts of “inclusion”, “participation”, “shared values”.

.....

Regarding **gaps between theory and practice, and teacher training and school practice**. Here we all agreed. We all see these because:

- there is a lack of capacity to transfer theoretical thoughts into practice
- because of what we say and what we do
- the workload of teachers prevent them from having the time to put it into practice
- teachers think that a multicultural activity is an intercultural approach
- teachers identify Intercultural Education with the teaching of immigrant students
- Education is embedded in tradition and it is difficult to change
- it is difficult to include students with so many different needs
- teachers were trained from a monocultural approach
- intercultural Education implies interaction among equals and the school promotes unequal power relationships among individuals
- Laws in Education promote compensation instead of Intercultural Education

One partner answered that there are many gaps between theory and practice but that this is NOT the problem, the problem should be to influence the theory from a reflection on practice.

There were other suggestions as well. Many claimed that to identify Intercultural Education with education for immigrant students or with teach/learn about other cultures is a mistake, and here our main disagreement comes again to the surface.

Partners offered the following ideas to fill in the gaps:

- To customize teaching to adjust it to every student
- Exchange languages between immigrant and non-immigrant students
- To involve the whole community
- To share practices and resources
- To become a lifelong learning
- To pay more attention to ‘white privilege’, and to ‘social justice’
- Raise teachers’ salaries
- To make expectations and ideas explicit
- Empower the teachers
- Reflect on the kind of citizens we want to educate
- To bring critical reflection to policy-makers
- To critically think about teachers’ own practice

- To integrate teacher training into the everyday practice in schools
- To build networks of exchange
- To exchange between academic institutions and schools
- To be involved in Education in an active and democratic way

## Resources and communication

In the last dimension of the questionnaire, we intended to know about **Resources and Communication**. The questions we included were the following:

- Resources you are aware of following an Intercultural perspective
- How do you think communication among members of a school community should be from an Intercultural approach?
- Gaps you see from this perspective

.....

To the first question of this dimension, partners answer in two different ways. Some of them (five questionnaires) understand “resources” mainly as human resources and strategies. But most of responses identify them with “material resources”: books and articles, audiovisual materials and web sites.

Those who refer to Human resources mention the following ones:

- intercultural mediators that works linking school, families and community;
- NGO members and immigrant associations that develop awareness campaigns on anti-bias education and knowledge of other cultures.
- Social services staff working in cooperation with schools.
- Educators and monitors, usually belonging to ethnic minorities or representing people with special needs who provide support in classrooms
- Teachers, members of Family Associations and parents and students in general who works for avoiding the folclorical vision of intercultural education
- Researchers and University teachers, as well as Social workers
- Peoples knowledge and experiences can be resources

Some examples of the strategies identified as resources are:

*cooperation, communication, consciousness of one's emotions and recognition of the ones of others, management of conflicts and development of a critical and not homologues thought*

*the technique of the "Newspaper intercultural" to encourage the dialogue between the students, to question the representations, the prejudices.*

Material resources provided by partners are organizing in four groups: commented references, plain references, web sites and other.

**Commented references:**

**GRAMC. (Grupos de Investigación y Actuación sobre minorías culturales y trabajadores extranjeros). "INTRODUCCIÓN A L' EDUCACIÓN INTERCULTURAL".** Girona; GRAMC, 1992. Unidad didáctica y materiales de un curso de formación dirigido a educadores. Comprende cuatro apartados: marco conceptual, características de un proyecto de Educación Intercultural, actitudes básicas y materiales curriculares.

**INTER Group (2007). *Racism: what it is and how to deal with it. A Guide to talking about racism.*** Vienna: Navreme Publications. It is a tool for training and auto-training not only for teachers, but also for all kind of educators and people interested in. It intends to promote reflection on this relevant issue and provide with resources and key ideas to deal with racism, starting from make it visible by "talking about it". This resource, in my opinion, has two advantages: the first one is that it is based on youngsters opinions and concerns, and has been developed in a collaborative way, with the contributions of a large number of people, so it is also based on plural approaches and perspectives; the second advantage is that it does not intend to convince of anything, nor set principles or guidelines; it only tries to "start" a permanent dialogue on racism, accepting that it is a complex reality in which we all are implied, and that the best strategy to struggle it is not to ignore it.

**INTER Project (2005): INTER Guide. A practical guide to implement intercultural in schools.** [www.uned.es/interproject](http://www.uned.es/interproject). The INTER Guide The INTERGuide has been designed as a practical tool to provide the reader with support in analyzing, implementing and improving Intercultural Education in school practices. While writing it we have been focused in teachers in training and teachers in service, but we hope it could be also useful to anybody with a direct or indirect interest in thinking critically about Education, as well as to those who are not satisfied with the current state of the art for whatever the reasons and want to change and improve the ways in which we are currently teaching and learning. What the Guide provides the reader with are mainly challenges to re-think and re-shape her/his current ideas and practices about Education.

**Ruiz de Lobera, Mariana (2004). *Metodología para la formación en educación intercultural [Methodology for Training on Intercultural Education]*.** Madrid: MEC. This book provides the reader with a clear and deep introduction to the intercultural education assumptions; having the current social reality as a framework, it links theoretical findings with daily life questions and concerns. And it deals with a very necessary, but difficult and not usual subject, as it is training methodology. Although it is not directly aimed at teachers, it offers a suitable and relevant selection of group dynamics. The dynamics can be likewise applied to teacher training or as a tool for teachers to be used with their students with the aim of increasing their knowledge and sensitivity to intercultural issues.

**Senge, P. (2000). *Schools that learn.*** New York:Doubleday. The book is an important resource for all those wanting to tackle the challenge of integrating family, school, community and policy makers in a coalition on behalf of equal

opportunities for all. Education is showed as an ongoing process, with enough time to learn new ways of teaching, to unlearn old habits.

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### **Web sites:**

ALFA Programme: <http://www.programainteralfa.org/index.htm>

Aula intercultural: <http://www.aulainter-cultural.org>

Books for children and youths to help Intercultural Education: There are different reading Guides, for adults and children, but the one I know and recommend can be found in: [http://publicaciones.casaarabe-ieam.es/otras\\_publicaciones/simsim2008.pdf](http://publicaciones.casaarabe-ieam.es/otras_publicaciones/simsim2008.pdf)

CREADE <http://www.mepsyd.es/create>

DevelopmentEducation.ie – [www.developmenteducation.ie](http://www.developmenteducation.ie)

Edualter: <http://www.edualter.org>

[Global education](http://www.gloaleducation.edna.edu.au/gloaled/page1.html) - [www.gloaleducation.edna.edu.au/gloaled/page1.html](http://www.gloaleducation.edna.edu.au/gloaled/page1.html)

<http://understandingrace.org/>

IAIE: <http://www.iaie.org/>

INTER Group: <http://www.uned.es/grupointer/>

INTER Network: <http://internetnetwork.up.pt/>

[Latin America Bureau](http://www.lab.org.uk/) - [www.lab.org.uk/](http://www.lab.org.uk/)

[Oneworld.net](http://www.oneworld.net/) - [www.oneworld.net/](http://www.oneworld.net/)

[Oxfam Coolplanet for teachers](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/) - [www.oxfam.org.uk/education/](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/)

The Big Myth [www.bigmyth.com](http://www.bigmyth.com)

The Journal Intercultural Education  
<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/14675986.html>

The UNESCO guidelines on Intercultural Education  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001478/147878e.pdf> (though I feel the notion of culture is essentialized)

[www.lettras.ufmg.br/bay](http://www.lettras.ufmg.br/bay)

[www.zara.or.at](http://www.zara.or.at)

**Other:**

- The INTER education pack DVD KALEIDOSCHOOL
- CEJI's work on religious diversity
- Education packs by the Southern Poverty Law Center in the USA
- Also in the USA, the work by Seeds for Peace and the Tannenbaum Center
- The No Outsiders project in the UK
- Project 'Welcome to my Neighborhood' in the Netherlands
- Local scientific surveys of language and ethnodemographic situation, international education surveys.

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The second question of this dimension tried to find out how should be communication among educational agents: school-family-community, and ask for meaningful examples.

The concepts that partners link to an intercultural communication in this context are **collaboration, horizontality, reciprocity, respect, coordination, proximity** and **commonality**. Here we have some excerpts of partner's responses:

*To give parents, children, school staff and community members opportunity for creating a list of common values*

*Close collaboration between school, home, community*

*It should be based on esteem and mutual respect in order to promote equal opportunities of development*

*The communication should be as horizontal as possible*

*Communication among school community should be fluent, continuous, based on reciprocity, positive, focused on the improvement of the learning processes and not on failures (specially student's failures), not limited to punctual activities and moments, open, flexible,, based on a shared vision of educational aims*

Some of the answers put again the focus on **differences**:

*Good communication taking into account linguistic and cultural differences*

*to set up arrangement that everyone gives presentations of their specialities, for example clothes, food, dancing, etc*

And there are two responses that outlined the **difficulties on communication**, especially between school and parents:

*Communications between the different actors of the school community is difficult because the community doesn't form a homogeneous Group and it didn't know how to create strong ties outside of tensions and conflicts. There is very little implication of the families in the school life. Contacts are rare. It seems me that the school doesn't consider the family like a true partner. The used language is not always accessible for the underprivileged or illiterate families*

*The rules that should regulate this collaboration are not all defined, there is no consensus. I have young colleagues who think that parents should not give opinions about what we do inside school. And there is something worse: in many occasions even for me it is better than parents do not know about what I do that is close to the intercultural approach*

The meaningful examples of intercultural communication provided by partners are linked to the ideas of **open schools** and **learning communities**:

*Communities are invited to be part of the school culture and that school activities also take place in surrounding communities*

*Learning communities are a good example of this kind of communication among school, family and community*

*"Open door" schools*

*Equal participation of parents in school. The school seeks and already has links with the members of the community. School is not limited by the curriculum, it goes beyond it.*

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Regarding the third question, needs and gaps regarding resources and communication identified by partners are the following:

**Resources needs:**

- active participation and creation of human resources
- handbooks, guidelines and examples of good practice for teachers
- different training models for teachers

- learning materials for pupils and students
- agreement on sharing of common aims among teachers-families-communities
- more opportunities for communication
- to increase resources in school, specially human resources
- schools should adapt their communication system to the needs and characteristics of the members belonging to the educational community
- action-research
- some specific training on the fundamentals of IE could be necessary (culture, identity, relationship, interaction...)
- There are many resources, it would be necessary to disseminate them, we need to identify the appropriate ones
- There are a lot of resources that is possible to use, but is a challenge to adapt this to different situations

### **Communication needs:**

- to promote contacts and networks among teachers and with other members of school community
- Funds for resources and support
- to decrease the importance of text books
- To eliminate the stereotype about parents as “the enemy”
- To promote among school staff the need to open the school
- Specialized teacher training in all educational levels, especially in Secondary Education
- There are lots of resources but they are scattered around and it is difficult to access them
- A process of “de-centring” that encourages the understanding, the exchange and the development of common values

### **GAPS**

- personal background and beliefs
- educational framework, political issues, national policies, culture of school
- lack of time for a comparison among teachers
- no reliable methodological practices
- need for more staff
- need for teaching equipment
- This is not generally taught in pre-service training
- School teachers do not have easy access to internet and also mobility facilities
- Different languages and attitudes can make a gap

### **Communication gaps:**

- teachers positioning themselves as “experts” in a different level (better and higher) than families
- isolation of teachers. Sometimes due to their fear to be “observed and evaluated”
- consideration of schools and classrooms as “fortresses”

### **Resources gaps:**

- There are useful resources but they are badly disseminated and distributed

- Lack of new and adequate pedagogical material
- families do not know the language
- long work journeys that makes difficult finding time to take care of the subjects of their children
- lack of economic resources, physical spaces to meeting

## Discussion and proposals

Regarding partners' answers on what Intercultural Education is, we found out that the most repeated concepts were **Culture** and **Difference**. But both were used with very different meanings, even opposite, if we consider our interpretation of the context where these words appear.

Roughly speaking, we can divide answers in two groups. One of them seems to reflect a static vision of culture that lead us to conceive it in an essentialist manner, as a kind of cluster inside which we can classify people according to some features (differences), assuming that everybody within the same cluster or group share the same way of thinking, behaving and living. In this sense, culture is conceived as an object, instead of considering it as an operational concept that refers to a process.

Consequently, culture is seen as something closed, fixed, that we can teach or learn about. The following excerpts show examples of this approach to culture:

*We are talking about teaching about other cultures*

*Knowledge of other people's cultural norms*

*Curiosity to know about other cultures*

However, some other partners show a concern about this way to think cultures, and pointed out the need to consider culture in a dynamic, non essentialist way:

*One important element is to reflect on the concept of culture as a dynamic element. It prevents from the danger of categorizing people in an essentialist way*

In the same way, many partners stressed that Intercultural Education has to do with **differences**. Even though none of the partners focused on this idea as the most important, many used it as a concept in the shadow when speaking about any of the above mentioned. The discourses showed that when partners were speaking about culture, equity and inclusion, collaboration, exchange, participation and relation, and even learning, understanding and questioning, they were thinking about **differences**.

From our point of view, answers show two ways of thinking about differences. Some partners refer to differences in a way that allow us easily think that all our differences are included (for example, when "different backgrounds", "different ways", etc., are mentioned). But there is another way to refer to differences (for example, "to accept differences") which assumes that some people are different and some other are not; that means that only a group of people is defined on

the basis of their differences, and that these differences put in front of the rest of us a challenge that should be answered in some way<sup>4</sup>.

We think that **culture** and **difference** are the actual key concepts underlying our assumptions on Intercultural Education, and more discussion is needed in order to clarify how we conceive them, as they determine our understanding of the intercultural approach and its implications for changing educational ideas and practices.

Other concepts to be discussed are **Europeanism**, as part of the aims of intercultural education; **assimilation**, as a process to build an intercultural society; and finally **minorities** as material to work from an intercultural approach.

Regarding **Europeanism**, or **the building of an European identity**, we consider this as a very narrow approach to the intercultural issues. Although we are working in a project of European scope, in our opinion the intercultural education approach goes beyond frontiers and closed identities.

On the other hand, **assimilation** would be a wrong approach from an intercultural perspective: it leads to the invisibility of diversity. This concept usually appears linked to **minorities**, another controversial concept if we consider it as a material to work on intercultural education.

Together with the assumptions about culture and difference, we have identified other two relevant matters for discussion among partners regarding teacher training.

In the first place, some partners think that intercultural competences cannot be taught nor learned. It seems to mean that not everybody can become an intercultural teacher: only teachers with a specific way of thinking (some kind of social ideals or “ideology”) or possessing a special character could be able to do it.

On the second hand, and referring to teacher training needs, while a group of partners point out the need of reflection and analysis of their own ideas and practices, some other asked for a more practical training, focused on tools and strategies that teachers can easily apply to school practice, a kind of “recipes” for multicultural school environments.

Regarding **School practices**, it is interesting to notice that some were offered as examples of Intercultural Education by some partners, and the same practices are offered by other partners just the opposite, as practices that from the perspective of the person answering the questionnaire lack an Intercultural approach. The most significant are Compensatory programs, Linking

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<sup>4</sup>Inés Gil Jaurena arrived at the same conclusion in her Ph D thesis titled “El enfoque intercultural en la educación primaria: una mirada a la práctica escolar” [*Intercultural Approach in Primary Education: School Practice at a Glance*] Madrid, UNED, 2008.

Classrooms in the Community of Madrid, and Intercultural events. We can explain these contradictory answers in two ways: a) they emphasize different aspects of the same practice (i.e. in Linking Classrooms some point out to the variety of students while others stressed the fact that these students are being taught apart from the rest of the school), and b) the persons who answered have different ideas on what Intercultural Education is, ones seem to link Intercultural Education with “different cultures”, while others identify it with inclusion of all students *at the same time*. This contradiction could be easily traced down to the first dimension of the questionnaire where a major disagreement appeared among those who closely link Intercultural Education with “cultural differences”, “others”, “minorities”, “ethnicity” and even “culture”, and other partners who criticize this identification and claim for a wider sense of the intercultural approach, as an educational perspective for ALL students (since we are all diverse) and not for specific groups labeled as “different”. This second sense has more to do with the concepts of “inclusion”, “participation”, “shared values”.

Finally, in the dimension of **resources and communication**, we would like to point out to the fact that two of the responses focused on the difficulties and limitations of the family-school relationships. One of the answers blames the families for their lack of involvement, while the other blames the teachers who are interested in maintaining families away from school. This is so because sometimes teachers believe that families are opposed to some innovative methods related to the Intercultural approach, and some other times because they think plainly that families must not interfere in school.

As a result of the process of analysis of the questionnaires, and having in mind the agreements and disagreements, our proposal is to use them to deepen and make more complex the concept of Intercultural Education and its relationships with teacher training, school practices and resources. To do so we think further discussion on the following questions could be a starting point, not only among partners but also among the community at large:

- We agree more on theoretical ideas than in what we consider an intercultural practice. How can we overcome this gap?
- Some people relate intercultural education with the building of Europe. In which sense do you think both ideas can be related?
- Regarding the concept of difference. Do you think that intercultural education has to do with differences? In what sense?
- Many partners think that intercultural competences cannot be taught and/or learned. Do you agree? Why? And, which do you think are the implications of both positions in the selection of teachers?
- Some of the identified teacher training needs on intercultural education focus on practical knowledge and tools to be easy implemented, others insist on research and reflection. Which aspects do you think should have more weight in the teacher’s curriculum?